

## Never Coming Home

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## Never Coming Home

by [electribunny](#)

### Summary

No longer freaking out, he looked around. The sky was blue and cloudless, and the sun was glowing bright. He looked down, where Left Boy and Right Boy were standing in lush, green grass.

He looked up. They were at the gates of a huge castle, tall and white. He stared in awe. He had never seen a building that large in his life, guarded by an equally large marble wall.

“Whither art we?” He asked.

Right Boy smiled and extended his arms out.

“Welcome to Apotheosis, kid.”

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A poor orphan boy from Shakespearean times. When he's taken into another strange dimension by a set of twins who speak English in a way he's never heard, what is there to do but adjust?

## Notes

if you came here from the mapleport au all I've gotta say is: sorry lol.

anyway, welcome! this is the first chapter of what noir and I have named the apotheosis au! i said it in the tags but it's worth mentioning again; this fic is NOT gonna be a happy one. it's very angsty, and will have some pretty violent scenes, especially toward the end. if happy endings are your thing, go read our mapleport au.

for those of you who are new, noir is one of my best friends, and he works with me to make au's! on top of being my beta reader, he helps with note taking, keeping things consistent, and giving ideas. i don't know where i'd be without him.

anyway, this fic is gonna be pretty short. it's not a huge project, it's just kinda meant as a filler between mapleport and the next big project noir and I are working on.

so sorry for the long beginning note, enjoy! fic title is from ghost of you by mcr!

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

## **he will take them away from you.**

It was sunny. That was nice because normally it was rainy, and the streets were wet, and it was muddy and it would stick to his feet and it was hard to get off. But it was sunny, so the streets were dry, and all he'd have to do to get the dirt off his feet was brush it off.

A cart barreled down the street, and Henry jumped out of the way to avoid its path. He stopped and stared for a bit longer, before remembering that he had a mission.

Sister Kate had sent him out with a paper, a basket, and instructions on how to get to the right farm. He didn't know what the paper said, he didn't know how to read, but that was fine. He was just happy to leave the orphanage.

He wandered around until he found the building she had described. He stopped to say hi to the pretty brown horse that was standing outside. There was a sign on the door, but since it was letters and not pictures, he ignored it. He reached up and knocked on the door.

"Come in, anon!" A voice yelled. Henry reached up and pulled the door open. A man was sitting by the fire, and he visibly softened when he saw who was knocking.

"Come hither, young lad!"

"Art thee talking to me?"

"Aye! Come hither!" The man beckoned him over with his hand. Henry nodded and walked up to the man.

"Sister Kate asked that I bring this hither, sire. Doth thee know a man called Thomas?"

"I am Thomas, peat. Bring yond to me." Henry nodded and lifted the basket into Thomas' lap. He watched as Thomas' eyes scanned the paper.

"Thee can read?!" Henry asked, forgetting his manners in his excitement. The only literate people he'd ever known were the nuns and the priest. Luckily for him, Thomas just laughed.

“Aye. What is thy age, lad?”

“Five!” He held up five fingers.

“And thy name?”

“Henry, sire.”

“Well, Henry. Wait Hither, well enow?” Henry nodded, and Thomas got up, taking the basket and the note with him. He took the contents of the basket out, grabbed a piece of charcoal and paper, wrote a note, and handed the basket back to Henry.

“Prithee, Henry, bring this to Sister Kate.” Henry nodded and went to leave, when he was once again stopped. Thomas grabbed the loaf of bread on the table, and cut off a slice, before slathering a side in butter. He handed it to Henry.

“This is for thee, aye?”

“I thank thee, sire!” Henry bounced on his feet, excited for the treat. Thomas smiled and ruffled his hair, before sending him off.

Henry took his time walking back to the orphanage. He didn't want to have to share his bread.

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The sun was barely starting to rise, and yet there was Sister Margaret, standing in the doorway and ringing a cowbell. Henry groaned and rolled over, pulling his blanket over his head.

“Ho, none of that!” Sister Mary pulled his blanket away from him, and he almost cried. “Today is thy Lord's day! Not thy resting day! Up, up!”

He joined the rest of the kids that were being corralled into the front room. He grabbed a bowl and a spoon from the pile and waited in line for his oatmeal. The chairs at the table were reserved for the big kids, so he went to his favorite corner on the floor, and settled down. After everyone had their food, and Sister Margaret led them in prayer, he got to eat.

After breakfast was finished and bowls were washed, they were corralled toward

the bathing room. The Sisters made quick work of cleaning all the kids. Henry waited in line, and once it was his turn, Sister Margaret quickly pulled off his nightgown and placed him into the water. He yelped as the frigid water hit his skin, but he knew better to complain. She grabbed a soap bar and quickly scrubbed down his hair and body, before dunking him under once more to rinse him off, and then taking him out, handing him a cloth to dry himself with and pushing him off toward Sister Kate.

Sister Kate was gentler with him. Henry always thought she was the nicest of the nuns. She helped him dry off, and began dressing him. She buttoned up his nice white shirt, tucked it into nice black pants, and slid socks over his feet, along with dress shoes. She brushed his hair so that it laid flat on his head, and sent him off with a kiss on the forehead to wait with the other kids.

While he waited, he wriggled his feet in the shoes. He only ever wore shoes with his Sunday clothes, and the feeling was unfamiliar to him.

Once all the children were dressed, they were marched off to the church and sat in the pews, where they waited for the rest of the town to arrive. Once they did, and the building began to fill up, they grabbed their music and started to sing with everyone else. Henry only pretended to sing. He couldn't read the music, and he didn't have the words memorized. They were written on the paper in neat print, but that wasn't any help to him.

After they sang, they sat down and prayed again, and then he sat and listened to the Pastor talk, even though he didn't understand what he was saying. After that, he stood up and pretended to sing again, and then it was time to sit and wait quietly until it was time to leave.

"Henry." Sister Kate grabbed his hand and dragged him up from his seat. "Henry, someone hither wishes to speak to thee." Henry was pulled down the aisle and stopped in front of Thomas, who smiled at them.

"Joyous Sunday, Henry! Tis the Lord's day!"

"Joyous Sunday, sire." Henry parroted.

“Hold thy hand out, peat,” Thomas instructed. Henry did as he was told. A small, circular piece of metal was placed into his hand.

“Doth thee know what it is?” Thomas asked.

“I am afraid I do not, sire.”

“Tis a pence coin. For thou. To buy whatever you’d please.” Henry looked down at his hand in awe, admiring the small coin.

“Henry.” Sister Kate nudged him. “What doth thou say?”

“Thank you! Thank you, sire!” He beamed up at Thomas.

“My pleasure, young lad. I’ll be taking my leave now. Good day, Henry. Good day, Sister Kate.”

“Good Day, Thomas.” Sister Kate smiled at him, and then he left.

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The Nuns had Holy work to do, and so the kids of the orphanage were left alone in the chapel. Normally, they would’ve gone off and run wild without supervision, but they feared punishment for ruining their Sunday clothes. Additionally, Sister Margaret had given them a stern reminder before they left that God was always watching them. So, the kids were resigned to sit in the pews, making quiet conversation or staring at the stained glass, waiting for their guardians to return.

Henry’s coin felt like it was burning a hole, between his sock and his shoe, where he had carefully hidden it before any of his fellow orphans could see. He feared getting it stolen. He itched to run out into town and spend it, but the few shops in the town weren’t open on Sundays, and besides, Sister Mary would never forgive him for dirtying his nice clothes. So he sat, and admired the stained glass painting of Mary and Jesus, and waited.

Finally, though, the nuns returned. Opposite to his usual behavior, Henry rushed to be first in line for confession. He sat on the floor and blabbed to Pastor John about how he struggled to get up that morning, and how he lied to get out of fieldwork on Wednesday, and then finally, *finally*, he was released. Sister Kate walked him and the first batch of kids back to the orphanage as the sun set, and he happily skipped along. As soon as they were in the building, Henry rushed to stache his coin somewhere safe. He was changed into his normal day clothes in preparation for dinner, and then he got to go outside and play.

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Henry wasn't even upset when he was woken up the next morning. He rushed out of bed with a spring in his step and was one of the first in line for breakfast. He only half-listened to the morning prayer, and was then shoving his food down as quickly as he could.

After being dressed by Sister Mary, Henry was about to leave, when there was a strong knock on the front door. Sister Kate rushed to open in, and in walked Thomas. His eyes scanned the room, and they stopped on Henry.

"Henry! Come hither, lad!" He called. Henry grinned and ran toward him, accepting the hug that Thomas offered.

"Good day, sire!" Henry smiled up at him.

"Good day, Henry!" Thomas smiled and ruffled his hair. "Doth thou spent thy pence coin?"

"Not yet, sire," Henry answered. Thomas nodded.

"I hath't a gift for thee." Thomas smiled at him. He pulled something out of his pocket and handed it to Henry. Henry inspected it. It was a small toy soldier, uniform painted on in shiny paint, wooden sword in hand.

Henry gasped. "I thank thee, sire!" He bounced on his heels in excitement and gave Thomas another hug. Thomas just laughed.

"Go and play peat. I need to speak with Sister Kate." Henry nodded and went to go play with his soldier.

His name and the word “adoption” came up a few times in the conversation, but Henry didn’t know what adoption meant, so he just ignored it. All he knew is that when Thomas left, he stopped to give Henry an extra hug.

Henry was too enamored with his soldier to remember his coin. That was alright, though. There was always tomorrow.

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The next day Henry was once again in a good mood, and he went through his morning as usual. Sister Mary dressed him up in a loose white shirt and soft khaki-colored pants, and he was off. Henry grabbed both his coin and his soldier, gripped them in his hand, and wandered off into town.

He didn’t even know where to start. He had never had his own money before. And he could spend it on whatever he wanted! It was exciting.

He was so distracted in his excitement, that he missed the horse and cart barreling down the street. Luckily for him, a hand gripped his shirt collar and pulled him out of the street.

Henry looked up at his savior, and found it in a tall, lanky young man, with a mop of curly brown hair. He then had to shake his head to make sure he was seeing correctly, because there was another teenager who looked exactly the same standing directly right of him.

“Are you sure this is the right one?” Right Boy asked.

“Why wouldn’t he be?” Left Boy asked.

“Uh, because he looks like literally every other medieval peasant boy in existence?”

“Do you see any other young blonde kids running around out here?” Left Boy elbowed Right Boy.

“You’re causin’ a scene, Will.” Right Boy rolled his eyes. He looked down at Henry. “Hey, kid,



what's in your hand?"

Henry took a moment to process what right boy was saying. He and Left Boy talked weirdly.

"Thou two speak strangely." Henry voiced his concern.

"Ah, shit." Left Boy groaned. "Uhhh...whateth isth in thoust handeth?"

"You suck at this." Right Boy laughed.

"I'd like to see you do it better, Techno." Left Boy pouted.

"What art thou holding?" Right Boy asked him.

"Wherefore?" Henry asked, hesitant. He was terrified of getting his items stolen.

"Curiosity." Right Boy responded.

"...A toy soldier. And a pence coin." Henry eventually answered. Right Boy gave Left Boy a smug look.

"Don't act so high and mighty. This means I got the right person." Left Boy shot back.

"You know what? Fine. We both win. Come on, kid." Left Boy grabbed his hand and began dragging him off.

"Wherefore!" Henry whined, digging his feet into the ground.

"Because." Right Boy groaned.

“No! I doth not want to!” Henry dug his heels further into the road.

“Jesus kid, do you have to cause a scene?” Right Boy rolled his eyes. Left Boy let go of his hand, only to pick him up. Henry started squirming in his arms, trying to escape. Left Boy fumbled, but eventually got a sturdy grip on Henry. Henry began screaming then, so Left Boy clamped a hand over his mouth, and the trio ran out of town and into the forest.

Eventually, Henry tired himself out, and he accepted his fate, settling into Left Boy’s arms. Once Left Boy was certain he wasn’t going to start screaming again, the hand on his mouth was removed.

“See buddy? This isn’t so bad, huh?” Left Boy soothed, leaning forward to press a soft kiss to his forehead.

“Wherefore art thou taking me?” Henry muttered, leaning into the touch as Left Boy began stroking his hair.

“We’re almost there. You’ll see.” Left Boy responded.

“Will, he’s asking *why* we’re taking him, not where.” Right Boy chimed in.

“Really? Oh. I’m not too sure. Phil just asked us too.”

Henry didn’t know who Phil was, but he didn’t feel like asking. He leaned further into Left Boy’s chest.

“You think this is far enough out, Wilbur?” Right Boy asked.

“Yeah.” Left Boy nodded.

“Cool.” Right Boy pulled a very fancy-looking key out of his pocket. Henry stared in awe as he placed the key into thin air, and a door suddenly appeared. Right Boy opened it, and a blinding white light shone through. Henry buried his face into Left Boy’s chest to shield his eyes.

“It’s okay buddy. We’re almost there.” Left Boy muttered to him. He was carried through the door.

Suddenly it was still. And quiet. Henry cracked open his eyes and looked up at Left Boy.

He screamed.

“Woah, buddy!” Left boy said, reaching forward to try and comfort him. “It’s okay!”

“T-thou! What?” He stuttered out. Left Boy’s eyes were no longer a comforting brown, in fact, they lacked a pupil and iris altogether, glowing white. He had a matching pair of feathered wings, also glowing white. His clothes had changed too, and he was now wearing a white t-shirt, along with loose white pants. A glance toward Right Boy confirmed that he had gone through the same transformation.

“It’s okay. You’re okay.” Left Boy kept his voice calm and steady. “Do you want to touch them? Would that help?” Henry nodded, and reached forward, running his hands through Left Boy’s feathers. They were soft, and after a few seconds, Henry settled again, satisfied.

No longer freaking out, he looked around. The sky was blue and cloudless, and the sun was glowing bright. He looked down, where Left Boy and Right Boy were standing in lush, green grass.

Henry looked up. They were at the gates of a huge castle, tall and white. He stared in awe. He had never seen a building that large in his life, guarded by an equally large marble wall.

“Whither art we?” Henry asked.

Right Boy smiled and extended his arms out.

“Welcome to Apotheosis, kid.”

## **you'll connect with the others,**

### Chapter Notes

i am so sorry about the dialogue. it gets better next chapter, I promise. special apologies to non asl speakers, it might be a tiny bit hard to understand what erets saying here. asl speakers, ur in luck, bc I used asl grammar for her spoken lines!

anyway besties my first day of in person school is tomorrow, wish me luck, lol. enjoy the fic!

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

The castle gates opened automatically as they approached, and Henry watched in awe as Left Boy carried him into the castle. Once all three were in, the gates slammed shut behind them.

As they neared the doors of the castle, Henry noticed three other kids sitting on the steps. There was a boy about his age, dressed the same as Left and Right Boy, and two girls, a blonde one, and one with brown curls. The girls wore the same shirts as the others, but had long skirts that stopped at their ankles. All 3 kids had the same eyes and wings.

It was a little scary.

“Found him you!” Curly Girl shouted out, waving as the three approached.

“Yeah, we did!” Right Boy called back.

“How was it?” Blonde Girl asked.

“Pretty easy.” Left Boy responded, adjusting Henry in his arms.

“Old he what?” Curly Girl asked.

“Dunno.” Right Boy shrugged. “Kid, how old are you?”

“Five!” Henry lifted his hand up to show five fingers.

“That good. Tubbo friend play with need.”

“What?” Boy His Age looked up.

“He’s your age.” Left Boy nudged his head toward Henry.

“Gnarly!” Boy His Age grinned up at him. “What’s your name, dude?”

It took Henry a little while to figure out that he was the one being addressed. All the new people he had encountered spoke in such a strange way to him, it was a bit overwhelming.

“Me? I am He-”

“Woah!” Left Boy slammed his hand over Henry’s mouth. “Whatever you were about to say, don’t.”

“Wherefore?” Henry asked, confused.

“You pick a new name here.” Left Boy said. “Any name you want. You get to be whoever you want here. But, you can’t ever say your old name, okay? That’s the one rule. Understand?”

“Wherefore?” Henry asked again.

“That’s just what Phil says.” Right Boy shrugged.

Henry nodded. He tried to think of a new name.

He adjusted his grip on the toy soldier and pence coin in his hand. Thomas would be blown away next time he visited the orphanage, and Henry told him about the adventure he went on.

He liked Thomas. Thomas was nice.

“I want to be called Thomas.” He said.

“Thomas! That’s a darling name!” Blonde Girl smiled at him.

“Yeah, good choice, Tommy.” Left Boy reached forward to ruffle his hair.

“Tommy?” Right Boy raised an eyebrow at him.

“It’s a nickname, Techno.”

“I think work well!” Curly Girl chimed in. “Name me Eret.” She smiled at him.

“And I am Niki! It’s a pleasure to make your acquaintance.” Blonde Girl waved at him.

“I’m Tubbo, dude!” Boy His Age Said.

“My name’s Wilbur.” Left Boy said. “And that’s my twin brother, Technoblade.”

“Tech...no...blade?” Tommy tried the name out.

“Hey, I thought it sounded cool.” Techno mumbled, looking down.

“You’re a funny egg, Techno.” Niki laughed. “Tommy, have you eaten yet?”

“Aye, breakfast!” Tommy smiled at her.

“Oh, that totally sucks man. It’s almost dinner here.” Tubbo said.

“You don’t mind, do you?” Wilbur asked him.

“I suppose not.” Tommy responded.

“Cool.” Techno said. There was a bell tower somewhere in the castle, and it began ringing as he spoke.

“Would you look at that? Dinnertime.” Techno said, entering the castle. Everyone else followed. Tommy stared in awe as they walked through the rooms.

“Wilbur?” He asked.

“Yeah, what’s up?”

“Art thou having trouble breathing?”

“Are you?” Wilbur asked.

Tommy hesitated, and nodded. He hadn’t noticed it at first, but the longer he spent in this new place, the harder it got for him to take in new breaths.

“Don’t worry, buddy. Just a few minutes longer and it’ll all be fixed, promise.”

Tommy nodded. Wilbur hadn’t led him astray so far.

They rounded the corner, into the largest dining room Tommy had ever seen. A huge marble table, with 7 giant chairs to match. Three on each side, one at the head.

At the head of the table, sat a man. He had the same wings as everyone else, except his were much larger. When he stood, Tommy had to strain his neck to look up at him. He was probably as tall as 3 Tommy's stacked on top of each other.

"Phil!" Niki shouted out. The other kids followed suit in their greetings. They all seemed very excited.

"Dinner family tonight?" Eret asked.

"Yeah, I'm eating dinner with you guys tonight." Phil smiled at her. "Wilbur, Techno, did you find him alright?"

"Yup!" Wilbur smiled up at Phil. "He's right here." Wilbur held up Tommy, and Phil bent down to take him. Tommy shrieked at the height change, reaching forward to dig his fingers into Phil's shirt.

"It's okay kiddo, I won't drop you." Phil smiled at him. "Have you picked a name yet?"

"Thomas!"

"But I nicknamed him Tommy!" Wilbur chimed in. Phil laughed.

"Tommy, huh? Are you having a hard time breathing?" Phil asked him.

"Mhmm." Tommy nodded. Each breath was an astronomical effort.

"Well, I'm going to fix that for you, okay? But, it's going to hurt a bit, got it? It's only for a few seconds though, after that everything will be all better."

"Must it hurt?" Tommy asked.



“Yes, it has to. I’m sorry.” Phil said, carrying him to his chair. He sat down and settled Tommy into his lap. “I’m gonna do a countdown so you can prepare for it, okay?” Tommy nodded, and took a deep breath.

“Okay.” Phil grabbed something, although it looked invisible to Tommy. He tied whatever it was, and lifted it over Tommy’s head.

“Three. Two. One.” Phil dropped the invisible object onto Tommy’s shoulders. It burned where it touched, and he cried out in pain. Then, Phil was reaching behind him, and tightening it. It burned worse as it closed around his neck, and Tommy screamed, vision whitening out as the pain increased. It completely cut off his airflow, and he gasped, trying and failing to breathe. He instinctively reached his hands up to pull the object off of his neck, but his hands were slapped away. The pain was in his whole body now, and he kicked his feet, trying to escape. He squirmed in Phil’s lap in an attempt to free himself, and suddenly there was a hand holding him still. The pain crested, and Tommy screamed as loud as he could. A hand came to muffle him, and he leaned forward to bite it.

Suddenly, it stopped. Tommy froze for a moment, greedily taking in as much air as he could. After a few seconds, he began sobbing. He buried his face into Phil’s chest, searching for comfort.

“Oh, Tommy.” Phil sighed, running his fingers through his hair. “It’s alright. You’re safe. You’re okay. That wasn’t so bad, was it? How do you feel?”

“Scared.” Tommy wailed out, sobbing harder.

“Shhh. It’s over now. You’re okay. It’s okay.” Phil leaned down to kiss the top of Tommy’s head. “Here, I know what will make you feel better.” He snapped his fingers, and suddenly a maid appeared next to him, the same pale white as the castle, with translucent skin. She was holding a gold encased hand mirror, and she handed it over to Phil.

Phil took the mirror and handed it to Tommy. Tommy held it up and looked at himself. His eyes had lost their pupils and blue irises, instead glowing white like everyone else’s in the castle. On his back, barely peeping over his shoulders, were two white tufts.

“Those are your wings, Tommy,” Phil spoke to him in a calm, even voice. It made him feel better. “They won’t grow big enough for you to fly for a while, but you still have them. Now you’re like all your brothers and sisters, see?”

“I doth not have any siblings?” Tommy looked up at him, confused.

“Yes you do!” Phil smiled at him. “Tubbo, Niki, Eret, Techno, Wilbur. They’re all your siblings now!”

Tommy didn’t quite understand, so he ignored Phil, instead reaching his hand up to touch his wings. They were soft. After a few more seconds of looking, he handed the mirror back to Phil. Phil handed it to the maid, who disappeared as quickly as she had appeared.

“Do you feel well enough to sit by yourself in your own chair?” Phil asked. Tommy thought about it for a second, and decided he was. He nodded, and Phil carefully lifted him up, placing him down in the seat closest to him. The chair automatically brought itself up so that Tommy was level with the table, but it was still huge for him. He swung his feet experimentally. He had never gotten to sit at the dinner table before.

“Before we eat, Will, Techno, c’mere for a sec.” Phil beckoned them over, and they hopped out of their seats and walked over. “Now that you’re back these don’t need to be so long.” He mumbled, reaching behind Techno’s neck, and adjusting something that Tommy couldn’t see. Once he was done with Techno, he moved on to Wilbur, and did the same. He yanked on it, and Wilbur went flying backward towards Phil.

“Whoops! Too tight, sorry Will.” Phil laughed, and adjusted the invisible object once again to his liking. Once he was satisfied, he sent Wilbur and Techno back to their seats.

“Well.” Phil smiled at the family. “Ready to eat?” The kids all nodded, and he snapped his fingers once again. A whole wait staff appeared, the same translucent white as the maid from earlier, and made quick work of setting the table. As soon as the food was set out and plates were places, they disappeared. Tommy stared in awe. He had never seen that much food in his *life* , and a lot of it was stuff he didn’t even know existed. He sat frozen as everyone began filling their plates.

“You can have some, Thomas.” Phil prodded. “This is for you, too. You’re one of us now.”

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Phil disappeared pretty quickly after dinner. He brought Tommy right to the doors of his wing of the castle, made it clear that Tommy was never to go in there, and left. Tommy nodded, and went

back to the dining room to find the rest of the kids. As soon as Wilbur confirmed Phil was gone, he turned to Tommy.

“Hey, Toms. Do you still have those things you brought with you? The coin? And the soldier?” He asked in a hushed voice.

“Aye.” Tommy nodded, patting his pants pocket.

“Great. C’mon.” Wilbur grabbed Tommy’s hand, and led him down some halls into a room. Wilbur shut the door, and Tommy looked around. The room had shelves full of books, and boxes. On one of the shelves across the room, there was a box with a shiny front. There was a picture on it, but it was moving. Another similar box sat on a desk. There was a rug on the floor, and many types of seats.

“This is our playroom.” Wilbur gestured to it all. “This is where we hang out after dinner. Phil doesn’t really want us in here during the day though. Now come here.” Wilbur brought Tommy to one of the shelves, and moved one of the boxes. Behind it was another box, which he gingerly pulled out.

“This is a secret box. We don’t tell Phil about the secret box, okay?” Wilbur locked eyes with Tommy.

“Wherefore?” Tommy asked, cocking his head to the side.

“He’d get upset. He doesn’t like us having things that he didn’t give to us.”

“That doth not seem very kind.” Tommy mumbled.

“Oh, no, Phil’s nice! He’s really nice. He just has some weird rules.” Wilbur reassured him. “But if you put your coin and soldier in here, he’ll never take it from you, promise.”

“Art thou sure?”

“Positive. Tubbo’s had his action figure in here for God knows how long.” Tommy hesitated,

before pulling his things out of his pocket and placing them into the box.

“Wonderful.” Wilbur smiled at him. “Can you pinky promise me that you won’t tell Phil about the box?” Tommy nodded, and reached his pinky out toward Wilbur.

“Awesome. Now that that’s done, you wanna learn what a computer is?”

“Com...puter?” Tommy asked.

“Yeah, this is gonna blow your fuckin’ mind. Freaking mind, sorry. Don’t tell Phil I said that. It’s only got like solitaire and minesweeper on it because it’s from the ’90s but it’s better than nothing. Man, I miss my Switch. I miss Minecraft. Don’t tell Phil I said that either.” Tommy didn’t have a clue what Wilbur was going on about, but he seemed happy, so he let him talk.

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Tommy’s head felt fuzzy. He couldn’t wrap his head around the concept of a computer. Or the TV. Techno complained about how the only 3 tapes they had were a recording of the Superbowl, an episode of Judge Judy, and half a Rachel Ray recipe (whatever those were). Tommy didn’t understand his discontent at all. You put a black box into another black box and then a picture showed up in the big black box. And it moved! And made noises! It equally perplexed and fascinated him.

Techno and Wilbur went through a long series of contests to see who would get to use the computer, and Techno won. He was about 5 minutes into explaining Minesweeper to Tommy when the bell once again rang.

“Oh, bath time!” Niki announced. “Tubbo, who do you want to bathe you?” She asked him. Tubbo thought about it for a moment, before pointing to Niki.

“I’m honored! Let’s blouse!” She smiled at him, reaching out for his hand, before leading him out.

“You gotta take a bath too, Tommy.” Techno said, turning him around in his lap so Tommy was facing him instead of the computer. “Who do you want your bath from?”

“I recently bathed! Just two days ago!” Tommy protested, pouting at Techno. He hated bathtime.

“Well, we bathe every day here, sorry buddy. You gotta pick someone.” Techno shrugged.

“Wilbur.” Tommy mumbled, crossing his arms.

“I’m Tommy’s favorite!” Wilbur singsonged, lifting Tommy from Techno’s lap and spinning him around.

“Whatever.” Techno rolled his eyes. “I’m going back to Minesweeper.”

Wilbur set Tommy down, and led him to yet another room. There was a whole room dedicated to just the bath. Tommy voiced his awe as Wilbur began removing his old clothes.

“Two, actually. Tubbo’s in the other one right now. Lift your arms, please.” Tommy obeyed. Once his clothes were discarded, Wilbur lifted him into the tub. Tommy froze, bracing himself for the cold water.

It was warm. He snapped his eyes open in surprise.

The bath was actually...quite pleasant. Wilbur used a special kind of soap Tommy had never seen before. It lathered like normal soap, but was in liquid form. There was a separate soap for his hair, his body, and his wings. He put a cream in Tommy’s hair called conditioner. The whole time, Wilbur talked to him gently, explaining exactly what he was doing, and why it was good for him.

Once he was done, Wilbur lathered his body in floral-scented lotion, and dressed him in pajamas. A white pair of pants and a matching button-up shirt, with holes in the back for his wings. It was a fabric Tommy had never seen before, and he rubbed his hands all over it in curiosity.

“It’s silk,” Wilbur explained. “You ready to go back to the playroom?”

Tommy nodded, and let Wilbur carry him back. Techno was still glued to the computer, and Tubbo was sitting on the floor with Eret.

“I gotta go take my bath now, will you be okay without me?” Wilbur asked. Tommy nodded, so Wilbur gave him one last squeeze on his hand, and left. Tommy wandered over to Tubbo and Eret.

“How bath?” Eret asked.

“...Pleasant. I wast surprised.” Tommy answered honestly.

“Techno says you have a toy soldier,” Tubbo said.

“Aye.” Tommy nodded.

“That’s dope. I have an action figure. Do you know what Voltron is?”

“He from Shakespeare time! Obvious not!” Eret laughed, reaching forward to ruffle Tubbo’s hair.

“Chill!” Tubbo giggled, reaching up to try and pull her hands out of his hair. “I was just asking!”

“What is a Voltron?” Tommy asked.

“Oh! It’s a robot man made of 5 robot lions. They fight space battles.” Tubbo explained, like it was the most obvious thing in the world. “Do you wanna play together? Your soldier and Voltron can fight battles together. They can be best friends! We can be best friends too, if you want.”

“Aye!” Tommy grinned at Tubbo, and jumped up to grab his soldier.

## Chapter End Notes

i've left some clues in there, but just in case ur curious/can't guess, here's the time period each kid is from.

tommy: 1500's  
the twins: 2020's  
tubbo: 1980's

niki: 1920's

eret: 3000's

phils around 8 feet tall btw. i couldn't explicitly mention it bc tommys a little boy he doesn't know how much 8 feet is.

## they'll help you when you're injured,

### Chapter Notes

hey besties sorry this chapter took so long. i wasn't intending this at all but returning to school full time really zapped my energy. i was just so tired last week. hopefully won't happen again, sorry!

reminder to heed the warnings in the tags. they're there for a reason.

comments and kudos are forever appreciated!! enjoy!!

my tumblr/twitter: electribunny

noir's tumblr/twitter: h0n04rys3n10r

fic discord server: <https://discord.gg/EwNBrGPMCP>

“Thou art a bitch!” Tommy yelled out, letting his bare feet carry him down the halls of the castle. The past three years had left him more than familiar with its layout, and he sprinted without a second thought as to where he was going.

The front doors opened automatically as Tommy approached (they always did), so he didn't slow his pace as he ran outside.

He didn't bother with running down the stairs, instead leaping and letting his wings carry him to safety.

His feet collided with the soft grass. He took off running once again, but only made it a few steps before a pair of strong hands were wrapping around his waist, and tackling him to the ground.

Tommy landed on his stomach, and he rolled over, bringing his wooden sword up to block the blow that he knew was coming.

He grinned in satisfaction as he heard the scraping of wood colliding with wood. However, it quickly faded as his sword was dislodged from his hand, and sent flying away.

“I don't think eight year olds should be running around calling people bitches, Tommy.” Techno laughed, sitting on Tommy's thighs to make sure he didn't run.



“Blame thy brother, not me.” Tommy pouted, all dramatics. “He’s a horrible influence.”

“Oh, is he?” Techno raised an eyebrow.

“Yes! He taught me so many swear words. He made me like this, Technoblade. It’s his fault.” Tommy tried to hold back his giggles. It didn’t work.

“I think he taught you them with the intention that you’d *avoid* using them, Tommy.” Techno shook his head.

“Well, I know them all now. Would thou like to hear? Fuck, shit, bitch, ass, pu-”

“Ookay, that’s enough.” Techno said, reaching forward and tickling Tommy’s sides. Tommy erupted into giggles and began squirming, trying to free himself from his brother.

“Get off of me you, you wench!” He shrieked out, although it was almost incomprehensible between his laughs.

“Wait, what did you just call me?” Techno leaned back, stopping his movement to give Tommy a confused look. Tommy took the opening and wriggled his feet free. He kicked Techno’s chest, and scrambled to his feet as his brother stumbled. Techno got up quickly, and Tommy rushed forward, driving his elbow into his stomach. Techno fell backward, and Tommy grinned in triumph as his brother propped himself up on his elbows.

“I win, *bitch!*” Tommy made sure to put extra emphasis on the explicative.

“Fine, fine, you win.” Techno shook his head at him, although any malice was offset by the horribly fond grin on his face.

“This is amazing for me, Technoblade.” Tommy said, sitting down in the grass. He reached a hand out and pulled on one of Techno’s bright pink curls, just to watch it bounce back to position at his shoulder.

“Hey, don’t mess with my hair.” Techno swatted him away.

“I just beat thee in a fight, I think I can do what I want.” Tommy shot back.

“With your words, not your fists. Wilbur would be proud of you, but I’m barely counting it.” Techno laughed.

“Oh really? Beca-” Tommy’s retort was interrupted by a blood curdling shriek somewhere in the castle. Before he could process what was happening, Techno was scooping him up into his arms, and sprinting toward the source of the noise.

---

“Gross.” Techno commented, taking a closer look at Eret’s leg. As soon as he figured out that no one was in immediate danger, his demeanor returned to its usual state. Tommy was glad. Techno was supposed to be the strong one. He didn’t like seeing him afraid.

“I know.” Wilbur agreed, poking a bit of bone that was sticking out. Eret hissed, and gripped Niki’s hand stronger. Tubbo hid his face in Tommy’s shoulder.

“What the hell even happened?” Techno asked, inspecting the leg.

“T-tripped. Was walking with Niki. Fall down. This happen.” They hissed out, obviously trying to push through the pain. Tommy winced in sympathy. It looked pretty bad. Their bone was sticking clean out of their leg, and blood was slowly but steadily pooling out of it. The deep red was a stark contrast to the pristine white of the floor.

“What are we going to do?” Niki asked, looking up at Techno.

“I don’t know why you’re looking at me. Do I look like I know how to fix a broken leg? I’m sixteen.”

“Yeah, but you’re the oldest.” Wilbur pointed out.

“By like two minutes.” Techno rolled his eyes. “If I had medical supplies, I’d try. But I really don’t know what we’re supposed to do here.”

“I wish we just had *something*.” Wilbur whined, rubbing his temple. He began pacing, and went to snap his fingers. (A nervous habit, Tommy had noticed.)

The second he did, one of the maids appeared. They all jumped.

“I. I thought only Phil could do that.” Wilbur mumbled out, shocked.

The maid shook her head. She set down the items in her hands. Gauze. Medical wrap. Needle. Thread. Scissors. A leg brace. Three wooden boards. Leather straps.

“Uh-Thank you?” Techno said.

The maid nodded, and disappeared as quickly as she arrived.

“That was strange.” Niki said.

“It was.” Wilbur agreed.

“Well, now that that’s solved. I guess the first step is to clean it? Here, uh. We’ll get them to the bath. Somehow.” Techno said.

In the end, Niki and Wilbur worked together to carefully lift Eret into Techno’s arms. He cradled them in his arms, bridal style, to try and avoid irritating his injury. Wilbur hoisted the wooden boards into his arms, Niki grabbed the leg brace, and Tommy’s arms were filled with the small things. Tubbo was tasked with opening doors for them.

And slowly, the group made their way to the bathroom. Techno carefully set Eret down on a bench against the wall, and Wilbur and Niki deposited their supplies onto the ground. Tommy followed suit.

“Okay, Tommy, can you go and get Eret some new clothes? And Tubbo, will you take their dirty clothes to the laundry?” Wilbur asked them. Tommy nodded, and left the room.

On his way to their bedrooms, he passed the hallway Eret had fallen in. Two of the translucent castle maids were there, silently mopping up the blood. Tommy stopped, so they did too, looking up at him.

“Um, hello?” He waved at them.

They stared for a couple seconds. They went back to their mopping.

Tommy tried to ignore how strange that made him feel, and continued walking. He carefully opened the door to their bedroom. Six king sized beds, exactly identical, the beds perfectly made.

That wasn't what he was there for. He walked past, pushing open the door to their closet. He went over to Eret's section, looking over the clothes. He thought about it for a second, and decided a skirt would be better for their legs than pants. He grabbed a new t-shirt, and a new skirt, and bundled them up into his arms, making his way back to the bathroom.

The blood wasn't in the hallway anymore. The maids weren't either.

Tommy walked back into the bathroom, clothes in hand. Eret was sitting on the edge of the tub, sweating despite the fact that they were only in their boxers. Niki had a hand towel, and was dipping it in the water, bringing it up to wipe their face. Techno was laying out their supplies on the table, preparing to use them. Wilbur had another towel, and was carefully cleaning the wound.

“I brought the clothes back.” Tommy announced.

“That's great.” Wilbur tried to smile at him, but it looked more like a grimace. “Just set them down on the bench, okay? Then go sit with Tubbo.” Tommy nodded, and did what he was told.

They all seemed very stressed. They were working in complete silence, besides Eret's heavy breathing, and whimpers of pain. Tommy reached out for Tubbo's hand. The other boy took it instantly.

“T-Techno.” Wilbur finally breathed out. “I...think it’s clean.”

“Alright.” Techno nodded at him. “I think I figured out how we’re going to do this. Help me sit them on the table.” Wilbur nodded, and he and Niki carefully maneuvered them to be on the edge of the table, legs dangling off.

“Okay, the first thing we gotta do is put the bone back. I think.” Techno mumbled. “This is gonna hurt like a bitch.” He looked up at Eret.

“Figured.” Eret nodded back. Techno took a deep breath, counted down, and snapped Eret’s leg back into place.

The scream was haunting. Tommy winced. Once Eret was done shrieking, they began crying again. In response to their sobs, Niki rushed up, grabbing a bowl and filling it with water. She grabbed her hand towel, and resumed wiping their tears, trying to comfort them.

“On the bright side, that should be the worst part.” Techno said. “Now we...sew it shut?”

“Niki. I think you better do this. You’re the best seamstress out of us three.” Wilbur suggested.

Niki handed the towel to Wilbur, who took over her job. She grabbed the needle and thread, and began sewing Eret’s leg back up, with instructions from Techno. Tommy was thoroughly grossed out, but also couldn’t look away.

Once the leg was sewn up, things went rather quickly. There was gauze to stop the bleeding, and medical wrap to hold the gauze in place. The leg brace was gingerly slid onto their leg. The three boards were placed on the sides and the back of their leg for extra stability, and finally, the leather straps were wrapped around it all to keep it in place.

It didn’t look great. But Eret’s leg was in the position it was supposed to be, so Tommy counted that as a success.

They leaned onto Wilbur and Techno, and hobbled all the way back to their bedroom. It was only about three, but they still passed out the second they hit their bed.

---

Tommy whined as the light to their bedroom was turned on. Him and Tubbo went to bed earlier than the other four, which normally wasn't a problem. They snuck in quietly, and Tommy was normally fast asleep by the time they came in to go to bed.

Except, with Eret's leg, they couldn't quietly waltz in. They had to turn the light on, escort them to bed, undo everything on their leg to check on the progress, and then put it all back.

After three days, it was starting to get on Tommy's nerves just a bit. They always came in right as he had gotten to sleep.

"Sorry." Wilbur whispered to him, shooting him a grin.

Tommy groaned, and hopped out of his bed. He toddled over to Tubbo's, getting under the covers. Tubbo pulled him close with no protest. They pulled the covers far over their heads to block the light.

Tommy fell asleep again to the concerned mumblings of his siblings, and Eret's whimpers of pain.

---

Day five of Eret's broken leg was just like any other day. They woke up, the three older siblings checked on Eret's leg. They went to breakfast. Wilbur taught school to Tommy and Tubbo. They went to lunch. Techno taught fighting to Tommy and Tubbo. They did whatever for a few hours. They went to dinner.

They made their way into the dining room, Wilbur and Techno helping Eret hop along. Tubbo opened the door for them, and they all made their way in.

Tommy gasped in excitement when he saw a seventh chair at the table.

"Phil!" He shouted out. At the noise, the rest of the siblings stopped too. Phil coming to family dinners was the only time they saw him, and that itself was a rarity. In his three years in the castle,

Tommy had probably seen Phil only about 18 times.

“Kiddos!” Phil grinned at them. “Come sit down!” They nodded, and Tommy, Tubbo, and Niki made their way to their seats. Wilbur and Techno were still helping Eret, and Phil frowned as he noticed them.

“Kids?”

“Yeah?” Tubbo responded.

“What happened to Eret’s leg?” Phil asked.

“They broke it.” Techno explained. “We tried to fix it up the best we could.”

“We got the supplies from the castle maids! Wilbur summoned them! I didn’t even know he could do that! Isn’t that awesome!” Tubbo chimed in, excited.

“I...didn’t know you guys could do that either.” Phil said, shocked. “Techno, how long has their leg been broken?”

“About five days.” Techno said, hoisting them into their dinner chair with Wilbur’s help.

“Well.” Phil said, getting up and going to take a look at it. “You guys sure did put a lot of care into fixing it up.”

“We did.” Wilbur nodded.

“It’s not perfect, but it works. Who did it?”

“We worked together.” Techno said.

“Yeah, but you did about 80% of it, Techno.” Niki chimed in.

“This was really resourceful Techno. I’m proud of you.” Phil said, reaching out to ruffle Techno’s hair. Techno beamed at the praise. Phil’s presence was rare. His approval was even rarer. Compliments from him were like gold, as far as the kids were aware.

“Wilbur, Techno, help me remove all this stuff, okay?” The boys nodded, and quickly got to work, removing everything from their leg. Tommy grimaced at the wound. It was healing up nicely, but it still looked pretty gruesome.

“This might hurt. Hold my hand if you need to, okay?” Phil looked up at Eret, and they nodded, reaching out. Their small hand intertwined with Phil’s large one.

Phil placed his free hand on the broken leg. It glowed white. Eret hissed out in pain. But after a few seconds, the light faded. Tommy looked at their leg.

The wound was...gone.

“Here, try walking on this for me, got it?” Eret nodded, and hopped down the chair. They landed on their good leg, and took a hesitant step out with their bad one.

They seemed pleasantly surprised when they put their leg on the ground. They stamped on it. They looked up at Phil. They shifted their weight onto it. They looked back up at Phil.

“It...all better.” They said, shocked.

“Well, I’m glad.” Phil smiled. “Let’s eat now, alright?” The group nodded, and they settled into their chairs, preparing for dinner.

Once their plates were full and they began eating, Phil set down his utensils, addressing them.

“Kids?”



“Yeah?” Tommy asked. He stopped eating. Everyone else did too. It was rude to eat while Phil was talking.

“Why didn’t you come get me? This was serious. Why did you think you could fix it yourselves?”

The room was silent as they all contemplated it. Finally, Wilbur spoke up.

“We thought we weren’t allowed to.”

“What made you think that?” Phil asked, smiling at Wilbur. It didn’t quite meet his eyes.

“Well, when Tommy...” Wilbur started, but faltered. Tommy froze, knowing exactly what he was referencing.

Tommy himself hadn’t remembered the actual event, too enveloped in his hazy mind, thanks to his fever. Tubbo had lied in bed with him the whole time. The others took turns taking care of him.

But his fever wasn’t improving. And after four days, Wilbur had gone to the doors of Phil’s chambers, sobbing, pounding on them, begging for him to come help. According to Techno, he was there for hours.

Phil never came. Wilbur assumed he was being punished for bothering him.

Techno said Tommy almost died. The only reason he didn’t was Wilbur taking his recovery into his own hands.

“When Tommy what, Wilbur?” Phil prodded. Tommy shifted uncomfortable in his seat.

“Uh, nothing.” Wilbur mumbled.

“No. I don’t appreciate liars, Will. What happened?”

“You’ve just made it clear that we’re not supposed to bother you when you’re in your chambers.”  
Techno chimed in, covering for his twin.

“Alright. Don’t tell me.” Phil leaned back in his seat. “But next time, you come get me, okay?  
Eret’s leg could’ve been ruined forever.”

The kids all nodded. Phil took a bite of his food. They took it as their cue that they could eat too.

Dinner was silent. The air felt suffocating.

## he'll protect you from outsiders,

### Chapter Notes

welcome back. don't really have anything to say so...welcome back.

my tumblr/twitter: electribunny

noir's tumblr/twitter: h0n04rys3n10r

fic discord server: <https://discord.gg/EwNBrGPMCP>

“This is fucking stupid.” Tommy mumbled.

“You're only saying that because you don't get it.” Tubbo chastised, setting down his flower crown. “Let me see yours, I'll tell you what you did wrong.”

Tommy sighed and handed it over. Under normal circumstances, he'd admit to being a bit antsy. However, if he didn't look entertained, Wilbur would surely drag him off to do school.

They didn't do school daily anymore, not with Tommy and Tubbo being 17, but Wilbur still insisted on them doing something educational whenever possible. Even Niki and Eret still found themselves being pestered by Wilbur. Niki and Eret. Who were 19 and 21.

“You're doing your loops clockwise. It's supposed to be counterclockwise. No wonder your flowers keep falling out.” Tubbo laughed fondly, handing Tommy a fixed crown. Tommy grabbed another daisy from the pile and continued chaining them together. His work wasn't nearly as nice as Tubbo's.

The front doors to the castle opened, and both Tommy and Tubbo glanced up, seeing who was approaching. A few seconds later, Wilbur emerged, sliding down the railing of the staircase and setting himself down in the grass next to the boys. Tommy groaned when he saw the book in Wilbur's hand.

“Hey guys.” Wilbur grinned at them.

“Hi Will.” Tommy deadpanned.

“You'll never guess what I found.”

“What?” Tubbo asked, grabbing one of his completed crowns and sliding it over Wilbur’s head.

“A copy of King Lear.”

“Wilbur, we just did school yesterday.” Tommy complained.

“Yeah, well, this is barely school. I’ve only got one copy so I’m just going to read it to you. Just a bit every day. Maybe make you answer some questions.”

“Well that isn’t fair. Tommy was alive at the same time as Shakespeare.” Tubbo pouted.

“I was also only there for four years, Tubbo.”

“Yet you spoke like a medieval peasant until you were like twelve.” Tubbo rolled his eyes.

“Not true!” Tommy smacked Tubbo in the back of the head with the tip of his wing.

“Tommy, when I woke you up yesterday morning you asked me ‘What doth thou want?’” Wilbur mocked Tommy’s peasant accent.

“Fuck you! I was half asleep! And Tubbo literally called something radical the other day!”

“Techno did a fucking backflip! I think it was justified!” Tubbo threw his hands up.

“Okay children. And Tubbo.” Wilbur giggled at his own joke. “Quiet down. I’m going to start reading now.”

“Nooooooo.” Tommy whined.

“I think you’ll like this one, Tommy. It’s about this old King, and he’s dividing up land to his three daughters. And he does it based on how much they say they love him. So the first two really kiss

his ass to get as much of it as possible. But the last one, Cordelia, is honest with him. So King Lear gets pissed and kicks her out the kingdom but turns out the first two fuck him over and the only one there with him before he dies is Cordelia. It's a good story."

"Well, way to spoil the whole thing you massive dickhead." Tommy rolled his eyes.

"There's way more to it than that. It was just a summary. Okay shut up. I'm going to read now."

Tommy sighed, but listened intently as Wilbur started reading. He leaned against Tubbo, and continued with his flower crown.

---

Tommy grunted as his back collided with the foam mat on the floor. He couldn't even catch his breath before Techno was on him, forearm pressed against his neck.

"Will you fucking get off of me?" Tommy glared at his brother after a minute. "You won. It's finished."

"Your stance should be wider than it was. Standing with your feet too close makes you easy to knock over. We've been over this, Tommy." Techno scolded. Tommy just glared at him. His pink curls, now reaching his waist, cascaded around his face.

"Maybe it's not my stance that makes it easy to knock me over. Maybe it's the fact that I'm 17 and you're 24. A full grown adult."

"I could've taken down a full grown adult at your age." Techno shot back, finally freeing Tommy. "Although, I will say the hair tie thing was pretty smart. Having my hair down was pretty distracting." Techno picked up his hair tie from where it was discarded after Tommy had yanked it out of his hair. Techno didn't put it back in it's bun, and instead elected to braid it.

"Now, if you try that again, nothing will happen." Techno grinned at him.

"Have you ever considered straightening your hair?" Tommy asked, getting up and jogging to the

side of the room, where his water bottle was placed.

“No.”

“Why not? I think it’d look cool.” Tommy said, before popping the cap off his water and chugging it.

“It connects me to Wilbur.”

“Aww, you care about your bubble.” Tommy mocked.

“Yes. I do. I was the first kid Phil ever took in, you know. At first it was just me, but I refused to eat or sleep until he went back and got Wilbur too.”

“I know this. Wilbur tells the story anytime he gets slightly emotional.”

“Yeah, but you’ve never heard it from me before.”

“That’s true.” Tommy shrugged.

“Alright, get up. One more round and then it’s Tubbo’s turn.” Techno said. Tommy nodded, and slid himself off the floor.

“I’ve got a question.” Tommy said, paying extra attention to his stance as he and Techno began circling each other.

“Yeah?”

“Okay, I get why you taught everyone how to fight when we were young. And it’s good that we know basic self defence. And I get why Wilbur taught us school when we were young. And it’s poggers that I know how to read and shit. But...”

“But what, Tommy?” Techno threw a punch. Tommy ducked. A flash of pride flickered on Techno’s face for a split second, before his indifferent demeanour returned.

“Why do you still do it? We’re grown now. What’s the point anymore?”

“Well. I want you five to be able to defend yourselves from **any** danger if you have to. If something happens and you have to take on a skilled fighter, I want you to be prepared.”

“What would even happen? We’re safe here. Nothing ever happens in the castle.”

“Just in case Tommy.” Techno’s voice was strained. “Just in case.”

“Fair enough.” Tommy threw a punch, and was not shocked in the least when Techno dodged it, and threw one of his own. Tommy stumbled back, but didn’t fall. Techno glanced at his feet, and gave him a quick thumbs up. “What about Wilbur, though?”

“Will’s always valued education. He thinks knowledge is more powerful than anything else. Wilbur thinks you could win a war by being well spoken enough.”

“And what do you think?” Tommy asked, jumping to avoid Techno’s kick.

“I think there’s certain situations where knowledge can be incredibly useful. Be grateful, Tommy. You’re in a position where you get to learn a lot of things about a lot of things. Don’t ever take your education for granted.”

“You’re avoiding the question.” Tommy pointed out. Techno tackled him to the ground.

“I know.”

---

Tommy sighed, laying down and using Niki’s lap as a pillow. He closed his eyes, enjoying the sun.

On day two of Wilbur reading King Lear, Eret had walked by, and been interested. And then Niki. And Techno apparently already knew the story, but he wasn't too keen on being left out. So the group of siblings met in the yard every day, and listened to Wilbur read to them.

It was nice to hear English in the format that he was used to. Tommy still sometimes felt like a bit of an imposter speaking "modern" English. He ran his fingers through the grass absentmindedly, and let himself enjoy the story.

Until Wilbur was abruptly interrupted by a noise Tommy had only heard once before in his life. He sat up, and stared in shock as the gates to the castle walls opened.

Four figures started walking in, and Techno immediately sprung up, between them and the newcomers, assuming a battle stance. After calmly setting down his book, Wilbur went to stand next to him.

"Let's talk to them first, Tech." Wilbur said, placing his hand on Techno's shoulder. "We can't assume they're here to hurt us."

"But I don't want to be caught off guard if they are." Techno mumbled, eyes glue to the four people.

"What about a compromise? Lower your fists?"

"Fine." Techno lowered his hands, although Tommy could see that they were still in a fighting position. Tommy subtly adjusted the way he was sitting, so he could get up easily if he needed too.

Tommy stared in awe as the four got close enough to be distinguishable. The first reminded him an awful lot of Phil. He stood at about 8 feet tall, and his wings were larger than the other three's. However, unlike Phil, glowing white light shone from his whole face, not just his eyes. Tommy couldn't see what his face looked like.

The other three had the same wings and eyes as Tommy and his siblings. But, unlike Tommy and his siblings, they weren't dressed the same. The one to the tall man's right was wearing a blue t-shirt and jeans. The one to the left black sweatpants and a white t-shirt. The one to the left of sweatpants man black cargo pants, with a black hoodie.



Most things in the castle were so startlingly white. They looked very out of place.

“Wow. That’s a lot. I feel sorry for you guys.” Tall Man commented. He lifted a finger up, and counted them. “Six of you? Woah.”

“Dream. Stop being cryptic. You’re going to scare them.” Blue Shirt mumbled.

“Well, *I’m* not going to tell them what’s going to happen. Phil can.”

“*Dream*. You’re going to scare them.” Blue Shirt gritted out through his teeth.

“You’re right, I’m sorry George.”

“Well don’t apologize to me.” George rolled his eyes.

“I’m sorry guys.” Dream addressed the group. “I’m not here to hurt you guys. In fact, I didn’t even know you were here.”

“Then why are you here?” Wilbur asked, skeptical.

“Just need to see Phil. Do you know where he is?” Dream asked.

“Not at the moment, no.” Wilbur responded.

“I’ll wait for him. It’s fine. I’m Dream. These are my friends, George, Sapnap, and Bad. They’re like you guys.” Dream pointed to each of the individuals as they spoke. Tommy relaxed a little bit at that.

“I’m Wilbur.” Will responded. “These are my siblings. Technoblade, Tommy, Tubbo, Eret, and Niki. I don’t recommend waiting for Phil. It might be a month or two.” Wilbur said.

“He’ll come, don’t worry. I digress, it’s very nice to meet you guys.” Tommy couldn’t see it, but he somehow knew that Dream was smiling at them. “Do you mind if we sit with you guys until Phil comes?”

“I...guess?” Wilbur said. “You’re welcome to join us. I was just reading King Lear.”

“Oh! One of my favorites.” Bad commented. “It’s a shame boat fees were so expensive when I was on Earth. I would’ve loved to sail to England and see it’s first performance.”

“Bad, you know you’re welcome to go to 14th century England whenever you’d like.” Dream said.

“I do, but it’s not the same.”

“You’re...from the 14th century too?” Tommy asked, hesitantly.

“Kind of. It was 1625 when I joined Dream.”

“Ah. I was taken in 1572.” Tommy said. He didn’t miss the strange look the four newcomers shared.

“What?”

“Ah, nothing.” George smiled at him. “I’m from 2063.”

“2063?” Eret asked. “Were you there for the space war, then?”

“Yeah!” George perked up. “Made it pretty high up the ranks. Got to meet Commander Silver a couple of times.”

“Commander Silver is real! I thought he was an urban legend!”

“Yes he’s real!” George laughed. “What year are you even from!”

“3042.”

“George met Captain Iron, whatever, whatever. I met *George Washington*. I was in the Revolutionary War, bitches.” Sappnap said. As he began answering excited questions from Wilbur, George leaned into Dream, mumbling something to him. He probably assumed they were all distracted by Sappnap, but Tommy was more interested in eavesdropping than American History.

“Taken. He said taken.” George muttered.

“I know.” Dream responded.

“And Wilbur implied that they only see Phil every few months. It reminds me of how you used to be.”

“I *know* .”

“Sorry. I wonder where their tethers are.”

“We can check.” Dream said. “Bad, did you bring the glasses?” He spoke up.

“Maybe? I know I have a sheet of film, though.” Bad responded.

“That’ll probably work better actually. Let me see. Please.” Bad nodded, and grabbed a roll of film from one of his pockets. He dumped it out of the tube, and into his hands. Whatever the film was, it was dark purple, and shimmered in the light.

“Whatever they are, it can’t be worse than the handcuffs.” George joked.

“Are you bringing up every shitty thing I’ve ever done on purpose? I’ve literally changed.” Dream said, setting down the foil, and turning to George. When George didn’t respond, Dream unrolled the foil, and looked at them through it.

Tommy watched Dream stiffen. He watched George lean over to look. He watched as George's face fell.

"...Turns out there is something worse than the handcuffs." He said. At that, Bad leaned over too, and gasped at what he saw.

"Sapnap. You have to look at this." Bad said, interrupting Sapnap as he spoke. Sapnap leaned over, staring into the film.

"Oh my god." He said. "I-woah."

"They're so short, too." Dream said, voice obviously shocked.

"What?" Tubbo asked. "Can we see?"

"Absolutely not." Dream immediately rolled up the film and handed it back to Bad. "Absolutely not. Anyway, Sapnap, what were you saying about the Boston Tea Party?" Dream asked, obviously trying to change the subject. Sapnap started speaking again, although it wasn't with the same energy as before.

"Um, well. So, I grabbed this crate of tea, and-" Sapnap was interrupted by the castle doors slamming open, and Phil came running out.

**"Stay the fuck away from my children!"** He bellowed out, grabbing Dream by the shirt collar and pulling him up off the ground.

"Your children?" Dream laughed. "Please, they're more like your pets. You fucking dressed them up in matching outfits! Not even I ever did that!" Dream gestured to them.

"What have you told them?" Phil gripped Dream's shirt tighter.

"Nothing. Don't worry. Although I really should've. You're going to have to tell them eventually.

You're not doing them any favors by keeping it a secret. You should know better, Phil. The Authorities aren't going to like this."

"Don't act so high and mighty. You're not any better than me, Dream. Remember Alyssa and Callahan?" Phil laughed. Tubbo curled up into Tommy. Tommy wrapped his arms around his brother. He had never seen Phil look so scary in his life.

"ALYSSA AND CALLAHAN WOULD STILL FUCKING BE HERE IF IT WASN'T FOR YOU! YOU FUCKING HYPOCRITE!" Dream shouted. He shoved Phil off of him.

"You know what? I actually came here to tell you I forgive you. But now I don't think I do." Dream took a step back. "If I were you, I'd start preparing for The Authorities to come, Phil."

"You *wouldn't* ." Phil said, shocked.

"Oh, so it's fine when *you* do it. No, no, I get it." Dream said, voice dripping with sarcasm. "Come on boys, we're leaving." He turned around, walking away. His friends followed suit. Dream stopped, and turned right toward Tommy and his siblings.

"I'm so sorry." He said, voice suddenly soft and soothing. "None of this is your fault. I'm so sorry you were all put in this position. None of you deserve this."

"What!" Wilbur shouted as Dream turned to walk away. "What isn't our fault!"

"Quiet, Wilbur." Phil scolded. "Let them leave. They shouldn't even have been talking to you anyway."

"Why?" Wilbur asked.

"I fucking told you to be quiet, Will."

## and still, none of it will matter,

### Chapter Notes

i totally spoil the ending for king lear (yes, the shakespeare play) at the end of this. don't think anyone cares but i figured i'd warn y'all just in case.

i take my ap lit test on wednesday. wish me luck im so fucking nervous lol.

anyway enjoy!

my tumblr/twitter: electribunny

noir's tumblr/twitter: h0n04rys3n10r

fic discord server: <https://discord.gg/EwNBrGPMCP>

Phil dragged them into their room, bolted the door behind him, and proceeded to grill the six kids until he had gotten every last detail about their conversation with Dream.

As soon as he was certain they hadn't lied or omitted anything, he had stormed out without a goodbye. As soon as he was out of earshot, they glanced at each other, nervous.

Techno, ever so brave, spoke first.

“So, I'm assuming no one else knows what the hell just happened.”

The group shook their heads.

“We should write down a list of questions. Try and find answers. We're not going to figure it out by sitting here.” Wilbur said, rushing up to grab a piece of paper.

Tommy couldn't help but smile at his brother. Wilbur couldn't stand lacking knowledge about anything. He didn't like not knowing.

“I really think we should just take a moment to collect ourselves here.” Eret said.

“We don’t have time.” Niki mumbled out. “We don’t know what The Authorities are. Or when they’ll get here. Or what they’ll do. We should prepare.”

“You’ve been spending too much time with Wilbur.” Eret said.

“She’s right though. We have to be prepared.” Techno said.

Tommy noticed Tubbo inching closer and closer to his bed. Tommy silently patted the mattress next to him. Tubbo scrambled up to sit next to him.

“Okay. List.” Wilbur said, returning. He sat on the other side of Tommy. The rest of the siblings, getting the memo, all moved to Tommy’s bed.

“Don’t get why we have to be doing this on my bed. There’s five others.” Tommy mumbled out, trying to bring some sense of normalcy to the room. He was ignored.

“Just start calling them out.” Wilbur mumbled, uncapping the pen in his hand.

“Who are The Authorities?”

“What’s gonna happen when they come?”

“Why doesn’t Phil like Dream?”

“Why doesn’t *Dream* like *Phil* ?”

“What did they see through the purple film?”

“Who are Alyssa and Callahan?”

“What was Phil so afraid of them telling us?”

“How did Phil know they were here?”

“What is Phil hiding from us?”

“Has he been lying to us the whole time?”

“He can’t lie to us if he never talks to us in the first place.”

“Techno!”

“What? I’m right.”

“You are, but that doesn’t mean you have to say it.”

“Guys, we’re getting off topic.” Wilbur was interrupted by the dinner bell ringing.

“...Should we go?” Tubbo asked, oddly quiet.

“It’s not like Phil’s going to be there.” Eret said. “We might as well go eat.”

---

Phil was there. Tommy made sure to sneak a glare in Eret’s direction. He just rolled his eyes back at Tommy.

“I. Ah. What do you guys like to eat?” Phil asked once they were all seated. His voice cut aggressively through the silence. The kids all looked at each other. They didn’t say a word. They looked back at Phil.



“Will you guys at least try and act normal, damn it! I’m trying to eat dinner with my kids!”

Tommy flinched.

“Potato soup.” Techno said.

“Absolutely not.” Tommy fired back. For probably the first time in his life, the quip felt foreign on his tongue. Every signal in his brain was screaming at him, insisting that it wasn’t the time for banter.

The satisfied look on Phil’s face said otherwise.

“I like pasta.” Niki spoke up.

“I think pasta is a lovely suggestion, Niki.” Eret agreed.

“Yeah. Pasta sounds good.” Wilbur nodded.

“Everyone’s fine with pasta?” Phil asked the table. They all nodded, and with a snap of his fingers, the castle maids were there, placing dishes of every type of pasta imaginable on the table.

Dinner’s were usually grand, but this was a whole new level of scale. Every pasta. Every sauce. Variations of garlic bread and side soups.

A potato one was set right in front of Techno.

“Any drink they want. Anything. They can have straight vodka for all I care.” Phil addressed one of the maids. She nodded, and produced Phil’s glass of wine, before moving on to Tommy.

“Uh. Just a coke. Please.” She nodded, and a glass of soda appeared in her hands. She set it down.

“Thank you miss.” Tommy said. She froze, and stared at him like he had two heads. After a few seconds, she seemed to remember Phil was standing right behind her, and hastily got back to work.

Dinners were always a happy memory for Tommy. A place to relax after the events of the day, and laugh with his family. They were extra special when Phil was there, and they all scrambled for his attention.

Dinner always left him with a warm feeling in his chest.

This one was ice cold. It was the same painting, but in different colors. The same song, but in minor key.

Tommy sighed, and pushed his spaghetti around his plate with his fork.

---

“Alright Tommy, your turn.” Wilbur tossed the Expo marker to him. Tommy purposely let it fall to the ground next to him with a whine.

“I just don’t understand when I’ll ever need to use calculus like, ever.” Tommy said, reaching down for the marker.

“Be grateful. I had to teach myself this shit.” Wilbur grinned at him. “Derivative. Go. C’mon, you got this.”

“I don’t think he does.” Techno joked.

“Well then why don’t you come do it yourself.” Tommy grumbled, working out the problem with familiar ease.

“Because I don’t need the practice.”

“Fuck you.” Tommy turned to Wilbur. “Is this right?”

“Nice job Tommy.” Wilbur gave him a thumbs up. “Eret, you wanna take this next one?”

“Not really.” Eret said. He got up anyway.

The door creaked open. All six of them turned their heads toward it.

“...Phil?” Wilbur asked. “Is everything alright? Do you need something?”

“Ah, no. Just wanted to spend some time with you guys. That's fine, right?”

“Sure?” Niki said. They all looked at each other, confused.

Phil never spent time with them. Tommy bitterly thought about how they had raised each other. Not him. Not their supposed father.

“Wonderful.” Phil smiled, walking in. He settled onto the beanbag next to Tommy. “What are we doing?”

“Calculus.” Tubbo responded.

“Really? I didn't think this is how you guys spent your time.”

“It's mostly Will. He taught himself everything so that he could teach us.” Niki said.

“Did you now?” Phil asked, smiling up at Wilbur. He nodded.

“That's really commendable.” Phil said. Wilbur looked conflicted at the praise. Tommy could see why.

He was feeling awfully conflicted about Phil too.

“Well, by all means don’t let me interrupt you.” Phil said, gesturing for Eret to continue. He nodded, and continued his work.

“You got it right. Would you look at that!” Phil said. “I got the next one. Make it a difficult one, Wilbur.”

Will nodded, and copied a problem from the textbook in his arms. Phil got up, and began writing on the board. It was solved in seconds. Tommy stared in shock.

“That’s...correct.” Wilbur nodded. “That’s correct.”

“Gimme that book.” Phil reached out for it, and Wilbur handed it over.

Tommy preferred it when Wilbur was his teacher. But, Phil wasn’t horrible. He knew much more about calculus than Wilbur did, to say the least.

---

Tommy was pretty good at sparring. As long as Techno wasn’t his opponent, he found himself winning most of the time.

Niki was the exception. She was ruthless.

“You know I’m going easy on you because I would never hurt a woman.” Tommy said, wincing as Niki dug her fingers further into his shoulder blades.

“Yeah, that’s why you’re so out of breath right now, huh?” She laughed.

“It’s for your ego. Women deserve to have high self esteem.”

“That’s enough Tommy.” Techno laughed, stepping in. He tried to hide his sigh of relief as Niki’s iron grip released.

“Wilbur, Tubbo, you’re up.”

“No fair! He’s massive!” Tubbo complained, but got up anyway.

“You think whining like that is going to work if you have to actually fight someone larger than you? It’s very likely Tubbo, especially considering your size.”

Tubbo just rolled his eyes, and flipped him off, before getting into position. Techno signalled the fight, and they began.

Tubbo actually held his ground pretty well. Tommy was proud.

Phil walked in just as Tubbo yanked on Wilbur’s wing, sending him flying to the ground. He took his chance with a grin, rushing forward and pouncing.

Wilbur struggled to get up, but Tubbo had already stabilized their position.

“Woah, nice.” Techno complimented. Tubbo jumped up and cheered. As he did, Phil wandered into the room.

It didn’t phase them as much anymore. After the impromptu calculus lesson from Phil he had left, and they all expected that to be the end of it. But he showed up again for dinner that night. And the next day, when they were sitting outside listening to Wilbur read, Phil silently came up, and took the book from Wilbur, taking his place.

Tommy was a bit ashamed to admit that he fell asleep to Phil’s reading. The man himself had shaken Tommy awake once it was time for dinner.

He ate with them again that night.

“What are we so excited about?” He asked, laughter in his eyes.

“I won!” Tubbo said. “Wilbur and I were sparring and I won!”

“Really?” Phil asked, amusement evident in his eyes. “Do you guys spar a lot?”

“Yeah! We all do. Techno teaches us.”

“If it was anyone, it’d be him. He’s always been a fighter.” Phil smiled. “Techno, do you ever participate in the sparring matches?”

“Yeah, all the time.”

“Good.” Phil nodded. “So you’re not out of practice.”

“No.” Techno responded.

“Great.” Phil grinned, getting into fighting stance and rushing forward. Techno was shocked for half a second, before he sprung into action.

Tommy cheered as soon as he realized what was happening. The other five soon followed, yelling words of encouragement to Techno.

It was a surprisingly long fight. But when Techno lost (for the first time in years.) he didn’t even look upset. He took the hand Phil offered to help him up, and laughed.

They all laughed along too.

---

“You guys sure do get up to a lot.” Phil said, cutting a piece off of his steak. “I’m really glad I

limited your technology time as kids. You seem very well rounded.”

“We do?” Eret asked, looking up from his plate.

“You do.” Phil nodded. “You’ve all grown up to be wonderful people. I’m proud of you all. Really, I am.”

Tommy’s gut stirred at the praise. How long had he wanted this? For a father that was actually around. One who spent time with them during the day. Who noticed their interests. Who told them he was proud of them.

Now that he had it, he didn’t know how to feel.

“Oh. Um. Thank you.” Tommy said. His cheeks felt red.

“I mean it.” Phil smiled at them. “So, what else do you guys get up to? Besides school and fighting.”

“Wilbur makes music.” Tommy immediately jumped in, wanting to brag about his brother.

“Well Tommy taught himself gymnastics.” Wilbur shot back.

“Tubbo paints.” Techno said.

“And Techno handmakes swords.”

“Niki knows ballet.” Eret said.

“Eret can do voice impressions.”

“Voice impressions?” Phil asked.

“Yeah.” Eret nodded.

“Like what?”

“My best one is Elmo.”

“Please don’t do the Elmo voice.” Tubbo whined.

Eret turned to him with a shit eating grin. “Tubbo, give me your fucking money!” He said, before freezing, remembering that Phil was sitting at the table.

To their shock, Phil just let out a hearty laugh.

“I’m sorry for doubting you.” He grinned at Eret. The whole room seemed to relax at Phil’s positive reaction.

They went through comfortable conversation as they finished their dinner, and when it was done Phil snapped his fingers, and the maids came to take it all away.

“Well, that was certainly a fun dinner.” Phil smiled at them. “I’m going to head off now. But I’ll see you guys tomorrow, okay?”

Tommy nodded, and was shocked when he realized that he fully believed he would be seeing Phil the next day.

He was silent as the group walked to their room. Wilbur seemed to notice him falling behind, and went to join him.

“Everything alright?” Wilbur asked.

“I guess.” Tommy mumbled, kicking the spotless floor with the tip of his foot. “I’m just feeling a



little conflicted about Phil. I mean, I've always wanted him around more, but now that he actually is, I don't know how to feel. Like, I'm happy he's here? But I'm also angry that you and Techno did all the hard work and he just gets to reap the benefits. And I'm also confused? Why now? Does he have an ulterior motive for something? Fucking...I don't know, man."

"I think we're all feeling that way right now." Wilbur mumbled, reaching over to ruffle his hair.

---

"So Cordelia dies? That's it? That's how it ends?" Tommy looked up at Wilbur.

"At least King Lear got to make amends before she did." Tubbo responded.

"Still a shitty finale. Wilbur, you lied to me. You said I'd like this one."

"I never said the story had a happy ending, Tommy."

## he will take them away from you.

### Chapter Notes

hi. i know this chapter is late. the executive dysfunction/depression/ed/cfs combo really came and kicked my fucking ass. so sorry about that. but it's here now.

please please PLEASE heed the tags, especially for this chapter.

although this fic started out as just something to buy noir and I time to work on our next big au, we're both really proud of what we've really created here. I've never written heavy angst like this before, so it was amazing to step out of my comfort zone!! enjoy the chapter!!

my tumblr/twitter: electribunny

noir's tumblr/twitter: h0n04rys3n10r

fic discord server: <https://discord.gg/EwNBrGPMCP>

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

Tommy was awoken by shuffling in the room. Grumbling, he went to throw a pillow toward whoever was making the commotion. When he heard Phil's laugh instead of the usual mumbled apology, he shot up.

"Sorry mate." Phil whispered. Tommy got the feeling he was smiling at him, but the only thing he could see in the dark was the glow of Phil's eyes. "I didn't mean to wake you. I just needed Techno for a second. Go back to sleep."

Tommy was too tired to think about how strange that was. He buried his face in his pillow and went back to sleep.

He was awoken again 10 minutes later. This time, he just pretended to stay asleep.

"Uhh, Will." Techno whispered. Tommy heard him shake Wilbur awake.

"Huh? Is everything okay?"

"Shhh! Everyone's still sleeping."

“Oh.” Wilbur said. “Why are you waking me up?”

“Phil wants you.”

“Why didn’t he just wait until morning? I’m tired.” Tommy heard the thump of Wilbur falling back onto his pillows.

“No, Wilbur. It’s important. He. Um. He took me into his part of the castle.”

“What?!”

“Shut the hell up!” Techno whisper yelled. “Everyone’s sleeping!”

“Sorry, sorry.” Wilbur said, much quieter. “What did he want?”

“I. Ah. He asked. He asked me...I.”

“Shhh. It’s alright Tech. You don’t have to tell me. I’ll be right back, hopefully.” Wilbur slid out of bed, and Tommy heard him slowly shuffle out of the room.

A few seconds passed.

“It’s rude to eavesdrop, Tommy.” Techno mumbled.

“Sorry.” Tommy whispered back. “Phil woke me up when he went to get you.”

“Just go back to sleep, okay?”

“Alright.”

“I love you, Tommy.” That got his attention. Techno showed his love with actions, never with words.

“What did Phil want?”

“Nothing. Don’t worry about it.”

Tommy got the feeling that he very much should be worried about it.

---

The next time Tommy woke up was when he was actually supposed to get up. He started the morning as normal, trying to avoid the strange looks Wilbur and Techno were giving each other. As per usual, Tubbo was nagging him to get dressed so they could go down to breakfast. Tommy took his time out of spite.

They made it about two steps into the hall when three castle maids appeared. One grabbed Techno’s arm. The other Wilbur’s. The final one, Tommy’s.

They didn’t have time to protest before they began being dragged off toward Phil’s quarters. When Tubbo tried to follow, another maid appeared, directing him toward the dining room.

The message was clear. They were supposed to be separated.

Tommy stared in awe as they passed through the doors into Phil’s quarters. The pristine white of their part of the castle was like soot compared to his part of it. Everything was massive, somehow more grand and extravagant than their area. He felt like a kid again, experiencing the castle for the first time.

The three of them were thrown into a bedroom. Tommy glanced up at the maid. For a quick second, she flashed him a sad smile, before her stoic demeanour returned. The three maids turned around and left. Tommy heard the telltale sign of the door locking.

Tommy stopped to look around. The room was massive. The bed in the middle was massive. The

chandelier hanging from the roof was massive.

Everything was large, expensive looking, and blindingly white. Tommy felt a bit disoriented.

“Techno?” Wilbur whispered. That made Tommy turn around, returning his attention to his brother.

“Wilbur.”

“Did he ask you...the question?”

Techno nodded.

“Who did you...”

“You. Of course.” Techno rushed out. “Who else? It was always going to be you.”

“Oh.” Wilbur sighed. “I picked Tommy.”

“I assumed so.”

“I don’t feel well.” Wilbur’s voice cracked from the strain of trying not to cry.

“I know.” Techno whispered. “I know.”

“I hate to interrupt but can someone please tell me what’s going on?” Tommy asked.

“You don’t want to know.” The tears were freely falling from Wilbur’s eyes now. Tommy tried to ask again, but Wilbur’s wing was around his shoulders, pulling him into his chest. Techno joined the hug.

He was crying as well. Technoblade. Was crying. Full out sobs.

It was a bit inevitable that Tommy started crying too, even though he didn't quite know what was going on.

---

They spent the day doing...nothing. Once Wilbur and Techno calmed down they focused all their energy on Tommy. Making sure he was happy. It reminded him a lot of when he was a kid. Techno told stories. Let Tommy braid his hair. They played games together.

And now. Tommy sat on the ground between Techno and Wilbur, cocooned on either side by their wings. He felt protected, in the halo that they created. Wilbur was singing nursery rhymes, like he always used to do when Tommy was upset. Normally Tommy would complain about how childish the activity was. But it seemed to make Wilbur feel better. So he let him sing the itsy bitsy spider, and tap his fingers across his arm to be the spider. Boop him on his nose and tickle his sides.

Maybe it wasn't entirely for Wilbur. Maybe Tommy was enjoying it too.

He felt young again. Safe. Naive.

Wilbur was just starting on the next song when the castle maids returned again. Getting the message, the three got up. They were led back through the hallways toward their part of the castle.

Right before they crossed the doors, Techno turned to him.

"Tommy." He had never heard Techno's voice crackly from crying before. He never wanted to hear it again.

"Yeah?"

"If all of your siblings were in danger, and you could only save one, who would it be?"

“Huh?” Tommy stared at him.

“That’s what he asked me.”

There was a pit in Tommy’s stomach.

“Do you think...?”

“I don’t know Tommy.” Wilbur tried to smile at him. It looked horribly fake. “I don’t know.”

Tommy felt incredibly nauseous. He tried to swallow it as they entered their bedroom.

Their siblings were fine. More than fine. Red faced and grinning, laughing with each other.

“Tommy!” Tubbo smiled at him. “You’re back! Oh man, we really had the best day with Phil, but I really wish you would’ve been there.”

“Oh, yeah?” Tommy asked, inwardly cringing at how awkward he sounded. Tubbo seemed so happy. He didn’t want to ruin that.

“Yeah! We did tons of stuff!” Niki chimed in. “Really, a wonderful day.”

“Well, I’m glad you had fun.” Wilbur said.

“What did you guys do?” Eret asked, poking his head out of their closet.

“Not much.” Techno said. It was technically true.

“Oh, well, I hope you get to join us next time.” He smiled at them. “I’ll be right back though, I

called dibs on first bath.”

Tommy waved at him. He shared a glance with Techno and Wilbur. He knew they were all thinking the same thing.

There wasn't going to be a “next time.”

After everyone bathed and had gotten ready for bed, Wilbur insisted on reading them all a bedtime story. Just like he did when they were young. Niki gave him a bit of a questioning look, but no one protested. So he began reading.

After the story, Tommy went straight to Tubbo's bed. Tubbo didn't say a word either, just let himself be pulled into Tommy's chest. It was only after the lights were turned off that he spoke.

“Are you alright?” He asked, voice laced with concern.

“Yeah.” Tommy whispered. He nodded again, trying to convince himself just as much as Tubbo. “Yeah. Just missed you today.”

“Aww. I missed you too, Tommy.”

---

The next morning they weren't stopped, so the trio assumed they were good to go to breakfast with the rest of their siblings.

Phil was there. He looked like a fucking mess. He tried to smile when he noticed Tommy glancing at him.

Niki, Tubbo and Eret seemed to sense the tense atmosphere. Tubbo kept glancing across the table at Tommy, trying to get answers. Tommy just smiled at him and shook his head.

As normal as Phil was trying to make it, breakfast felt awkward, and forced. The meal ended in



silence, and after the castle maids cleared the table, they sat for another five minutes.

There was a pounding on the door. Phil sat up straight in his chair.

**“PHILZA!”** a voice boomed. Tommy jumped. Phil sighed, and got up from his chair.

“Come on, kids.” Phil said. He ushered them all out of the room toward the front door. Tommy felt like he was going to throw up. He stumbled on his feet, reaching out for whoever was closest.

Tubbo grabbed his right hand. Wilbur grabbed his left.

Tommy stared in shock as they walked out into the front yard.

Phil was tall. Massive, even. But next to **THESE PEOPLE**, he looked like nothing more than a toy doll.

“Philza, Philza, Philza.” One of **THEM** tutted, like a parent scolding a child. “You of all people should really know better.”

“I know, sir.” Phil mumbled, ducking his head.

“Luckily for us, Dream believes in reciprocity. Don’t you, Dream?”

“I don’t know why you made me come watch.” Dream said, from where he was standing next to the **TALL FIGURES**. “I don’t want to see this.”

Tommy hadn’t even noticed Dream and his friends until they were pointed out.

“It’s only fair, don’t you think?” Another one of **THE FIGURES** said. “He took delight in watching Alyssa and Callahan’s tethers get cut. I figured you’d like to be here.”

“I don’t like it, for the record.”

“Too bad.” THEY smiled at him.

“Phil, who are these people?” Techno asked.

“Oh, how rude of us.” THE MIDDLE ONE said. “We are THE AUTHORITIES. We set the rules for Philza and his kind. *Very easy to follow rules*, if you ask me.” The last part was directed at Phil, full of venom.

“Selfishness isn’t a desirable trait, Philza.” THE ONE on the right said. Phil nodded.

“Hypocrisy isn’t a desirable trait either.” THE ONE on the left chimed in.

“Enough. We may scold him later. We’re here for a reason.” THE MIDDLE ONE said. “You’ve picked out which ones are getting their tethers cut, correct?”

“Yes.” Phil said. His voice was quiet.

“Sorry? I couldn’t hear you.” THE MIDDLE ONE said, sadistic grin spreading across THEIR face.

“Yes. I did.” Phil shouted out.

“Who?”

“Niki. Eret. Tubbo.”

“Huh. I would’ve kept Niki if I were you, but to each their own.” THE MIDDLE ONE shrugged. THEY snapped THEIR fingers. Maids appeared, similar to Phil’s, but larger in size.

They grabbed Niki. They grabbed Eret. They grabbed Tubbo. In his peripherals, Tommy saw Bad take a step forward. He saw Dream grab his arm, and pull him back.

THE ONE on the right pulled out a pair of scissors. They gleamed in the sunlight. Tommy brought his free hand up, shielding his eyes.

“No use in waiting.” THE MIDDLE ONE said, grabbing the scissors. THE LEFT ONE grabbed Eret by the hair, lifting him up into the air. Eret’s wings instinctually fluttered, trying to support his weight as the ground was taken from him.

THE RIGHT ONE grabbed something. Tommy couldn’t see it. It was invisible. Whatever it was, THE MIDDLE ONE lifted up the scissors, and cut it.

Rope. It was a rope. One end, connected to Phil. The other, wrapped tightly around Eret’s neck, the skin chaffed, red, and bleeding.

Eret, who no longer had wings, and who was kicking and screaming. Or, trying to. No sound was coming from his mouth. Eret, who was now indistinguishable from any other human.

THE LEFT ONE let go of Eret unceremoniously. He fell straight through the ground.

He was...gone.

George let out a gut wrenching sob, and buried his face into Sapnap’s chest. Wilbur’s hand tightened around Tommy’s. Tommy fell to the ground, no longer able to support his weight.

Gone, gone, *gone*. He was fucking gone.

Tommy swallowed down the vomit crawling up his throat. He glared over at Phil. He **hated** Phil. Despised him with every bone in his body. It was Phil who took them in. It was Phil who let them form meaningful relationships with each other. It was Phil who decided he wanted nothing to do with them until they were going to be taken.

He wanted to scream at Phil. Shout about how he’d never ever forgive him. But the words weren’t

coming to his mouth. So he just stared at where Eret used to be, and began sobbing.

Niki was taken next. Tommy almost couldn't watch as she was lifted into the air. But he knew this was the last time he would ever see his sister again. So he stared, as she sobbed. As her tether was cut and her wings were taken.

Before she was dropped, she tried to smile at Tommy. It was entirely forced. Her shaky hands went to form a heart.

She was gone before the two halves were connected.

"I'm sorry!" Dream shouted out, interrupting the process. He too fell to the ground. "I'm so fucking sorry!!" Bad stepped forward, and placed a tentative hand on Dream's shoulder. "I never should've said anything. You're being punished for something that isn't your fault." George and Sapnap sat down too, and all four were on the ground, holding each other.

"No, Dream." THE RIGHT ONE said. "You did the right thing. You should be proud of yourself."

Tommy's attention was torn away from Dream by Tubbo's yelp of pain. He watched in horror as his best friend was lifted into the air. He knew what was going to happen.

For something so monumental to him, THE AUTHORITIES treated it like normal day to day business.

The scissors went to cut the tether.

"TOMMY!!" Tubbo used his final breath to scream out his name. Tommy wanted to scream right back, but he couldn't find the words.

As Tubbo fell to the ground, he reached out for Tommy. Tommy, who ran toward Tubbo and grabbed his hand before he could even tell what he was doing.

Tubbo looked up at him. Only his head remained above the ground.

His eyes were brown. Tubbo's eyes were brown.

"Tubbo." Tommy finally whispered out.

"Let him go, Thomas." THE RIGHT ONE said. Tommy ignored THEM.

"Thomas, you have to let him go." THE LEFT ONE prodded.

"He can't breathe. Let him go, *Henry*." THE MIDDLE ONE barked out.

Tommy took one last look at his best friend.

He let go.

## Chapter End Notes

psst the chapter titles make a poem when u combine them together.

anyway id like to clarify that tubbo, niki, and eret don't actually die. when their tethers r cut and they fall through apotheosis, they end up back on earth, exactly where and when they were first taken. they don't have any memories of apotheosis, and the only evidence they were ever there was they have strange, unexplainable emotional attachments to things. (for ex. there's a kid in tubbos daycare named tommy. he starts crying when he meets him. no one has any idea why.)

## End Notes

sorry about the shakespearean english. it's only really for this chapter. promise.

comments and kudos are forever appreciated, so please leave either if you feel so inclined!

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