

The Last City in the End

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Character: [Phil Watson \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [Ranboo \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [TommyInnit \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [Toby Smith | Tubbo](#), [Wilbur Soot](#), [Dave | Technoblade](#), [Technoblade \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [Zak Ahmed](#), [Darryl Noveschosch](#), [Original Characters](#), [Ender Dragon \(Minecraft\)](#), [Clay | Dream \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [Sapnap \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [GeorgeNotFound \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#)
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The Last City in the End

by [ultimateFangirl910 \(kraefandoms\)](#)

Summary

The passage 27.3 was in the Resurrections section. With shaking hands, Philza opens to the page and reads:

*The Angel of Death shall return
And by His blood
Shall our Mother return as well*

He lets out a shaking breath. For a second, he wonders how this could be, how they could have found him. But then again, as he rereads the passage, he wonders if it was always going to happen, that he was only allowed to escape because of what he had done, and the promise written by someone long ago that he would return.

(Reading the other fics in this series is not necessary to read this one!)

We Laid Our Names to Rest Along the Dotted Lines

Chapter Summary

Welcome to my Fantasy AU! May I interest you in Philza Minecraft?

Chapter Notes

chapter title comes from the song *Mars by Sleeping at Last*

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

He is falling.

It feels like a single moment stretched for a year: hair flowing around his face, wings not yet completely unfurled, dark feathers suspended in the air around him, eyes wide, heart hammering far too fast in his chest, reaching a single hand out in front of him as if reaching out to be caught - an uncontrollable impulse.

A hand reaches back and grabs him by the wrist.

His heart skips a beat. No, no, not this.

Even falling is preferable to this.

Violet eyes meet his own, and he finds it hard to breathe as fear constricts around his chest.

“Let me go!” He shouts, feet hitting the smooth glass of the top of the building, and he tugs his arm sharply. Neither of them budge.

“I will not!”

He yanks his arm back again, feet slipping, wings barely keeping him upright. The grip on his wrist slips a little, but his opponent recovers quickly, grabbing onto his sleeve.

“I am not letting you go,” she hisses, eyes flashing, dark wings spread out behind her.

“And I am not staying!” He shouts back, pulling his arm back, frantically now.

She grits her teeth in a furious snarl, pulling back on him. Her wings beat the air around them, pushing his hair out of his face like the wind he’d expected at the top of the building.

Of course, there is no wind here, no breeze to bring life to a land that should be dead.

With a shout that echoes in the silent air, he manages to pull his arm free, and for a brief moment, despite tumbling backwards, all he feels is relief.

A hand grabs his wing, and panic floods his system.

He spins in the air, pain shooting up and down his wing as he struggles to right himself, to break free, to do anything.

A sickening crack sounds as his body hits the glass roof, his wing screaming in pain as the bones snap upon impact, and it's dizzying, his vision blurring, and he tastes the fear at the back of his throat.

“Where are you going to go now?” She hisses, pulling him to eye level.

He forces himself to meet her eyes, her stunning purple eyes, and with as venomous a voice as he can muster, he says: “Anywhere that's not here.”

He kicks off the building with all of his strength, out of her reach, and even though he knows that death approaches with the ground, even as his instinct is to spread out his wings and fly - and though he'd love to, he knows that the break will stop him from going far - he feels a small amount of vindictive victory.

However, most of what he feels as he falls towards the stone beneath him, struggling for control he knows he will never achieve, spiraling haphazardly, is fear.

Philza Minecraft wakes up before he hits the ground.

He takes a deep breath to settle himself, stretching out his dark wings. He lets it out slowly, pushing his hair out of his face. The birds singing outside comfort him; the sound of a gentle breeze outside reminds him he is home.

Home, he thinks fondly as he hears shouting outside the room, and with all that brings with it.

After a moment of listening, he feels that whatever is happening is not an argument he needs to break up nor a disaster he needs to avert, so he changes into actual clothes, takes a quick look in the mirror to make sure he's not a mess, sighs deeply, and leaves his room to find out what his sons are up to now.

In the kitchen, his five sons appear to be trying to make breakfast.

The only one who actually appears to be doing any cooking is Technoblade, frying eggs, looking like he's trying not to murder Tommy or Wilbur, who shout at each other over who burnt the bacon. Tubbo sits on the counter beside the stove, legs swinging as he dips a slice of toast into a jar of honey and eats it. Ranboo leans against Techno, doubled over laughter at whatever Wilbur and Tommy are saying.

Philza leans against the wall, smiling fondly at his children, these kids he found and took in and made into a family for himself and each other.

He knows it won't last, not forever anyways, but he's sure they'll grow into fine, young men.

He's going to be so proud of them.

Though, right now, as he chuckles to himself as he watches Techno hit Tommy on the head with a spatula and Wilbur fake cry over burnt bacon and Tubbo and Ranboo egg on their brothers, right now he thinks that it'll be a little bit before that happens.

“Aren't you all up early,” he calls out.

Tubbo looks up as Techno, Wilbur, and Tommy jostle each other loudly. “Well, we thought we'd

give you a nice surprise for once. But as you can see, it's not going very well. Wilbur and Tommy burnt the bacon, and Ranboo was supposed to be helping Techno."

"And what did you help with?" Phil asks, moving to lean across the counter to face Tubbo.

"I made toast," Tubbo says with a smile.

"And I am helping with the eggs," Ranboo adds, stepping to take Techno's spot in the kitchen, moving the done eggs off the hot pan.

"Mhm. I see."

Ranboo smiles smugly, turning off the stove and crossing his arms.

"How burnt do you think the bacon is?" Tubbo asks, staring at the other three.

Phil shrugs. "I guess I'll find out."

He walks into the kitchen and gently maneuvers around in the small space to his eldest twins and youngest son. He places a hand on Techno's and Tommy's shoulder each, and their squabbling pauses for a moment, though Phil knows the moment he leaves it'll start up again.

"So how burnt is the bacon?" He asks.

"Wait, is that why you and Wilbur were arguing? You burned the bacon?" Techno asks, aghast.

"Oh, don't worry, dad, it's salvageable," Wilbur interrupts.

"That's what I like to hear," Phil says.

"You burned the bacon?" Technoblade repeats.

"I didn't do shit," Tommy says. "That was all Wil."

"I asked you to help and you didn't," Wilbur replies, grabbing the plate of bacon. "You want some, dad?"

Phil smiles. "Yeah, I'll take some."

"Oh, is the bacon ready?" Ranboo asks, leaning into the conversation.

Phil laughs, passing the plate to him.

Breakfast passes quickly: Wilbur and Tommy plan some adventure into the woods, Tubbo and Ranboo wander off around the property, Techno leaves to visit their neighbors and old family friends, Skeppy and Bad. As the sun moves overhead, Philza finds himself content with what he's built, far from where he was, both in time and space.

Chapter End Notes

this idea has consumed my brain so now I must write. Enjoy! :)

I Live My Waking Life Looking Backwards

Chapter Summary

Philza gets some visitors

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Pluto by Sleeping at Last*

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

Wednesdays are for going to the market.

Philza demands the whole family goes, unless they have a really good excuse. He argues that it's because he doesn't have telepathy, he doesn't know what they want to eat for the week, but really, he admits to himself and no one else, he enjoys spending this time with them, watching them go from stall to stall, booth to booth, arguing over what they need and want.

It's not always the easiest ordeal, though.

Tommy, the youngest son, has a reputation for mischief. He banters with each and every vendor, bargaining and arguing his way through every exchange, trying to get the best deals so that he can sell to someone else for something better. It's gotten him into trouble on more occasions than Philza cares to count. Most of the time, the vendors just roll their eyes and ignore him, but that is a trick they end up learning over time. Not everyone knows it though, and there have been a few times where Philza or his other sons have had to bail Tommy out of jail or save him from a fist fight.

Tubbo is personable and talks with all the vendors. With his kind heart and gentle soul, he normally ends up smoothing over any altercations Tommy gets himself into. Luckily, the two are nearly inseparable, so wherever Tommy is getting into trouble, Tubbo isn't far behind. When the vendors ask Philza about either of them, they always lump them together. His other sons are their own people, but it's always "Tubbo and Tommy" or "Tommy and Tubbo" when it comes to the two of them. Philza can't help but smile fondly in those scenarios, knowing that even when the world might seem against them, they'll always have each other.

Ranboo always gets looks. Hybrids are rare, Ender hybrids even more so. People who are two different types of hybrids, like Ranboo, are the rarest of all. Many of the returning vendors have gotten used to Ranboo by now, and they know Ranboo's personality well. The other vendors, who come and go irregularly, often stare and whisper. Philza's heart aches as he watches the way Ranboo's eyes flicker from person to person, his ears and tail twitching nervously. It's not always safe for hybrids, but with the crowd Ranboo hangs out with, Philza doesn't worry much for his safety.

Wilbur is much like Tubbo, personable and talkative, but also quite a fair bit like Tommy: a little wild and playful. His mouth runs and although his tongue is silver and his words honey, when he

speaks, there's an edge, a darkness that sometimes Philza worries about. The new and infrequent shopkeepers love Wilbur, dazzled by his words and his songs; the older and regular ones know that as long as Wilbur is talking and singing, they're safe. When he's quiet, it means he's thinking; when he's thinking, it means there's trouble on the way. Philza has had to come save Wilbur from many incidents caused by Wilbur getting a little too quiet that has left quite a large amount of damage.

Technoblade has a reputation: a fighter, a brawler, one of the most victorious people in the Overworld and the Nether alike. Add to that the fact that Techno is a Nether hybrid, which are also uncommon, and you've got someone who collects stares. With his tall stature and his feats and the rumors, people cower when Techno walks by. Philza knows the voices that follow Techno hunger for blood and violence, part of the reason why he has the nickname of "Blood God", but Philza also knows his eldest son spends most of their trips in the market doing his best to ignore the whispers around them. When people stop to ask him questions, Techno becomes nervous, and while his brothers tease him, Philza remembers what it's like to be that young and that famous.

Lastly, Philza himself gets many stares. Even those who have been here a long time whisper when he walks by: Slayer of Dragons, the Man with One Life, the Man who was Lost to Time, the Angel of Death. The last one always sends shivers down Philza's spine, but that doesn't change that most of the rumors are true: at sixteen, Philza Minecraft left for the End, killed a dragon, and then disappeared for five hundred years before coming back. People say it was *the* Ender Dragon, the goddess worshipped in the End, instead of just a normal dragon, but Philza denies it every time they say it. But that never stopped rumors, and it doesn't explain how he was lost in time for five hundred years, but when he came back, he had hardly aged a day. Between that, his only having one life at birth, unlike the normal three, and his brief stint as an adventurer, there are tall tales and epic stories about him.

Philza doesn't like talking about it, especially not in detail.

Today, however, is normal. Well, mostly normal. Maybe it's his nerves from his nightmare the other night, but he keeps thinking he sees figures weaving in between the stalls, people staring at him but not whispering.

But otherwise, it's normal. They get their food for the week, Wilbur picks up a new instrument, Techno retrieves his armor from the blacksmith, Tommy causes a little trouble. All in a day's trip.

When they get home, Skeppy and Bad are waiting for them.

"Hi Mr. Minecraft!" Bad says, waving cheerfully.

Philza smiles at the pair, and what a pair they were. Badboyhalo, the nether demon hybrid, and his best friend, Skeppy, the nephew of the current king, with his diamond skin disease. They complemented each other well though: Bad's cheerful personality with Skeppy's dry, sarcastic humor.

"What are you doing here?" he asks politely.

"Well, we were going to ask if we could borrow-" Bad begins.

"Steal," Skeppy interrupts.

"Borrow," Bad insists, "our friends for something."

"By something, he means we're trying new fighting techniques for fending off multiple people,"

Skeppy explains.

“No! Don’t say that! You’ll scare him off and he’ll say no!” Bad complains.

Tommy’s eyes light up. “Can we?” He asks, spinning to face Philza.

Philza smiles. “Sure. Why not. I’ll take care of bringing this all in.”

“Really?” Tommy asks, eyes and smile wide.

Philza nods, and his kids immediately burst into excited chatter amongst themselves. He smiles as he watches them all run off after Bad and Skeppy with promises they’ll be home by dinner.

With a sigh, he turns to their collection from the market. He makes quick work of putting it away, and when he’s done, he stands in the kitchen with his hands on his hips.

That’s when he hears the knock on his door.

Damn, he thinks, smiling, as he walks to the door. *I was hoping to have a relaxing afternoon.*

As he opens the door, his light-hearted mood dies. Two enderman hybrids in netherite armor stand in the doorway, purple eyes fixed on him. Suddenly, he feels that his suspicions earlier in the market were justified.

“Angel of Death,” one says in Ender, bowing his head slightly.

Philza looks between the two of them towering over him, and he can’t help but feel a little nervous. Between their height, the netherite armor, and the enchanted netherite axes strapped to their backs, he feels quite apprehensive.

“Greetings, boys. I thought I saw you earlier in the market, but I wasn’t quite sure. You should have said hello,” he says, fighting to keep his tone light.

“Angel of Death,” repeats the other. “We are here to take you home.”

“What do you mean? I am home,” Philza shifts uncomfortably, but he keeps his eye contact with them. He knows where the weapons in the house are like the back of his hand, should it turn to that, and he suspects it will.

“We are here to take you to the City,” the first one says.

Just the mention of the City sends a shiver down Philza’s spine. “No. I will not go.” He shakes his head once.

The enderman hybrids draw their axes simultaneously, a smooth, fluid, graceful movement. “We are allowed to return you by force if needed. Just so long as you’re alive,” the second one continues.

“If you think I’m going to go easy, well,” Philza forces a chuckle. “You are dealing with the Angel of Death.”

The hybrids both lunge for Philza at the same time.

He leans back to dodge one axeblood while the other hybrid surges to move behind Philza. He drops to the ground while the one behind him tries to grab him, spinning around to kick his legs out from underneath him. The hybrid falls with a grunt, and Philza seizes the opportunity to

scramble to his feet and leap over to the wall with the swords. He grabs one and spins around to face the furious hybrids. He puffs up his wings, hoping desperately that maybe the sight of their Angel of Death with a sword would be enough to scare them.

They both study him emotionlessly. "We're taking you in whether you like it or not," the first says stubbornly, still speaking Ender.

"Try me, bitch," Philza snarls.

They both run at Philza from opposite sides, and he sighs, rolling his eyes dramatically.

The first attacks from the front, swinging his axe high. Philza counters by swinging low from the other side, hitting the hybrid in the side, the netherite armor clanging against the diamond sword. The axe blade soars right in front of Philza's nose, though Philza doesn't flinch.

The selfish part of him would rather die than go back to the City, back to that forsaken rock in the middle of the void.

The selfless part screams at him to stay here, stay alive for his sons.

The second comes up behind him, grabbing from under his arms. Philza hisses in surprise, and the first knocks the sword from his hand.

Snarling, he jumps up, kicking the one in front of him in the chest and the face as he flips over the second, using his wings to land lightly on his feet and suplex the hybrid onto his kitchen table. Dazed, the hybrid drops his axe and Phil grabs it quickly, spinning around and slicing neatly through his neck.

The body disappears in a simple flash of red - respawning somewhere else, hopefully far from here, Philza thinks - and Philza spins to find the other only to run face first into oh, *ow, fuck, that hurts*.

The hybrid grins maliciously from above Philza's new spot on the floor, holding one of Philza's own frying pans.

"Stealing my kitchenware, are we," Philza grumbles, reaching a hand up and feeling the blood drip from his nose, all while keeping an eye on the hybrid.

The hybrid shrugs with a smirk, and Philza takes advantage of the hybrid's distraction, lunging up with his sword off the ground, sending it through his neck.

He, too, like his companion, disappears with a red flash.

Well, that's a relief, he thinks. *No mess to clean up after like a final death*.

He groans softly, leaning on his kitchen counter, sword in hand, axes and frying pan on the ground.

Philza stands, sighing, and brushes off the dust off his shoulder and wings. Damn end stone dust. It was going to take quite a bit to clean it up.

As he brushes the dust off, he notices a piece of paper on the counter. *Huh*, he thinks, picking it up. It's stiff paper with a slight purple tinge, the way most paper from the End was - sugarcane isn't a native plant, but chorus plants could work for paper in a pinch - and as Philza runs his fingers over it he notices writing on one side: "27.3".

A dull chill runs down Philza's spine as he reads it. Considering his would-be kidnappers were

Enderman hybrids, there is only one book they would be referencing. A book that Philza owns, but not by choice.

At the bottom of the bookshelf in the family room, where none of his sons would notice it, lay a copy of *The Book of Eyes* .

His hands tremble as he reaches for it, and Philza pauses for a moment to stare at them. He can't help but feel cold.

The passage 27.3 was in the Resurrections section. With shaking hands, Philza opens to the page and reads:

The Angel of Death shall return

And by His blood

Shall our Mother return as well

He lets out a shaking breath. For a second, he wonders how this could be, how they could have found him. But then again, as he rereads the passage, he wonders if it was always going to happen, that he was only allowed to escape because of what he had done, and the promise written by someone long ago that he would return.

He sits down on the couch and leans back, dejected. Of course, he reasons to himself, his copy is a translation from Ender, as most people were banned from reading *The Book* in its original language: for anyone other than high-ranking priests, it was considered heresy. Ender is a flowery language, with words often containing multiple and similar meanings, and often using many words when few would do.

However, Philza has a sneaking suspicion that this may be one of the clearer passages, and that someone now knows where he is. Someone looking to bring the Ender Dragon back to life.

Someone who needs his blood to do it.

He shakes his head. *Let them come* , he thinks. *They can't make me go* .

He stands, dropping the book on the counter. He leaves to go get the broom. Damn end stone dust, he thinks miserably.

Chapter End Notes

oooooo why do all my good fanfic ideas need fight scenes ughhhhhhhhhh

Many thanks to GarnetsAndRoses for helping me with the fight scene and looking this over for me!

Trouble Finds Me

Chapter Summary

We all return from whence we came eventually.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from the song *Roots* by *Imagine Dragons*

Philza stares out the window fondly at his sons arguing outside. The plants have gotten out of control, and he'd sent the five of them out to weed and trim and water them.

After yesterday, he's hesitant to have them too far or too close.

The idea of them being too far is terrifying in a bone-chilling, mind-numbing way. What if the people hunting him went after his sons instead? If he was too far, he couldn't help them, couldn't protect them, couldn't save them. He wouldn't be able to keep them safe, and that thought scares him more than the thought of being back in the City.

Too close is a different story. If they were too close, they'd be caught in the crossfire of whatever it was that was happening. Not that Philza knew one hundred percent what that was. He knows they're after him, but if they know about his sons, what's stopping them from using his sons as bargaining chips. Then neither he nor his sons would be safe, and that fear is like a fire in Philza's veins, the kind of fear that kept him up late last night as he worried.

He can't tell them, of course. They would all lose their minds, a couple of 14-, 15-, and 19-year-olds being told that their dad may or may not be the actual Angel of Death from Ender religion. They'd be even more terrified by the fact that he's currently being hunted to fulfill a prophecy that would only end with his death.

No, it is far better to stay quiet, keep fending off his assailants for as long as he can.

The sudden sound of boots on the hardwood floors sends Philza whirling around to see four enderman hybrids behind him, once more decked out in netherite armor.

"Fuck," Philza hisses in surprise, eyes going wide.

This time, there is no banter as they rush towards him, and gritting his teeth, Philza rushes towards them, towards the blades that lay on the other side of them.

Their arms get in the way as they grab at him, and Philza twists and turns as he struggles to break free, as they pull on his limbs, restraining him.

Part of him wants to shout, but the idea of bringing his sons into this mess, unarmed and unprotected, fills him with sickening dread, so he swears to himself to keep quiet, keep quiet as he struggles against his opponents, reaching a hand out to the blades that are still too far out of reach.

Arms reach around his neck and torso from behind, covering his nose and mouth with stiff fabric, and Philza's eyes go wide as he struggles to break free while not breathing in whatever they're trying to drug him with.

The other hybrids go to help pick him up, grabbing his legs, and he thrashes and kicks out desperately, even as the world goes fuzzy and dark at the edges.

An elbow lands deep in his stomach, forcing him to gasp for air, breathing in the laced fabric, and the world spins.

The hybrid holding the fabric to his face leans his face down to Philza's ear, and the last thing Philza hears before the world goes dark is a soft saying in Ender, a saying Philza knows very well, a line from *The Book of Eyes* that became popular for when someone refused to admit defeat: "And so the Angel refused to call out to our Mother, knowing very well that She would not help Him now."

Tommy laughs as he pushes open the backyard door. "I'll ask Dad about it when I—" His sentence dies in the air as he takes in the scene before him: pale yellow dust littering the floor, pans and books knocked to the floor, stray feathers on the ground, and no Dad in sight.

"Wil! Techno!" He shouts, voice strong despite the fact that Tommy feels like he's shaking, feeling rooted to the spot, unable to move but unable to look away.

"What is it, Tommy?" Wilbur shouts back, but Tommy can't find his voice, not with the overwhelming sensation that something is wrong, that something is horribly wrong.

"Tommy?" Wilbur repeats, closer now. "Tommy, what's—" Wilbur cuts off with a gasp as he takes in the scene, and the ice in Tommy's gut grows colder with the realization that Wilbur's also afraid.

"Dad?" Wilbur shouts. "Dad!" He rushes past Tommy into the kitchen, hand brushing Tommy's shoulder as he walks past.

Tommy's eyes follow his older brother as Wilbur spins in circles, looking lost and bewildered. It wasn't as if the five of them hadn't been left home alone while Philza took up an adventuring job, but it wasn't ever without warning, and certainly not ever leaving a mess like this.

No, this was no planned trip.

"Dad!" Wilbur shouts again, frantically.

"What's going on?" Techno says, entering behind Tommy.

Tommy just mutely shakes his head. Techno freezes behind Tommy as he studies the scene.

"Why are we all just standing here?" Tubbo asks, Tommy turns to look at his other two brothers, and as the rest of his family comes inside, he can't help but stare forlornly outside. Maybes and ifs fill his mind as he stares at the garden, and he longs for that time a few minutes ago when he was happy, joking around with his brothers, with his father still here.

"This is end stone dust."

Tommy turns to look at Ranboo, kneeling on the floor, dust on his fingertips, head tilted.

“They, whoever took Dad, must have tracked it in on their boots. They’re from the End.” Ranboo’s voice is soft, and Tommy wonders how he can think so clearly and feel anywhere near as lost as he does.

Ranboo looks up at them, and Tommy sees his own tears reflected in Ranboo’s eyes.

“Are you certain about that?” Techno asks, kneeling down to look Ranboo in the eyes.

Ranboo nods.

Techno looks up at Wilbur, and the two of them stare at each other, and Tommy wonders what they’re thinking, if they’re having one of their telepathic twin conversations.

He wonders what they’re going to do now.

“Mr. Minecraft- whoa, what’s going on here?”

Tommy’s heart skips a beat, and he spins around to look at Bad and Skeppy standing in their doorway.

“He’s gone,” Tommy says in a soft, wavering voice. “Dad is gone. Someone took him.”

May Death Find You Alive

Chapter Summary

Oh, hello Badboyhalo and Skeppy. What are you doing here?

Chapter Notes

chapter title from the song *Uma Thurman* by *Fall Out Boy*

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

Techno stares dully at his two friends. “What are you doing here?”

The voices whisper, but they’re saying so many things that he can’t quite make out what they’re saying.

“I, uh, actually wanted to ask Philza a question about this book I found,” Bad raises a book in his hand. “But actually, looking at this, I think I know what the answer is.”

“Wait, you dragged me here to ask Philza a question about a book?” Skeppy asks.

“It’s a special book,” Bad says, eyes gleaming.

“And you have your question answered?” Techno asks, lifting an eyebrow drily.

“Mhm! He *is* the Angel of Death from *The Book of Eyes* .”

Chat falls silent at Bad’s words.

Techno stares blankly at Bad, but Ranboo lets out a little gasp and spins around from facing Techno to look at Bad. “You think he’s the what? Where did you get that?”

“I think he’s the Angel of Death,” Bad repeats, and Techno knows all the eyes in the room are on the nether demon hybrid before him. “And as for where I got this,” Bad shrugs uncomfortably, exchanging a small look with Skeppy. “That’s another story.”

“Hold up.” Raising both his hands in the air, Wilbur takes a step forward. “What is this book, and who is the Angel of Death?”

“I…” Ranboo trails off, eyes never leaving the book in Bad’s hand, and Bad takes the opportunity to speak: “*The Book of Eyes* is more or less the Ender Bible. In it, it describes the creation of the End by the Ender Dragon Goddess, who ends up being killed by the Angel of Death.”

“Oh, like all those rumors about Dad?” Tubbo asks, and Techno feels a sudden wave of apprehension roll over him.

The voices whisper that those are no rumors, and Techno has no doubt that they’re right.

“The ones he denies?” Tommy speaks up. “But if he did do those things, why would he deny them?”

Techno sighs, looking away, when he sees a piece of paper on the floor, with numbers written on them. He picks it up. It’s not like any other paper he’s seen before, with a purple-grey tinge and rough, uneven surface.

The voices chorus about the End.

“Bad, do these numbers mean anything?” Techno asks, offering the paper to his friend.

Bad studies it carefully. “Well, it looks like it’s on chorus plant paper. The numbers might be a passage in here.” He taps the book thoughtfully.

“Wait, so what did happen here?” Skeppy interrupts. “Cause Tommy said Philza’s gone, and it’s one hell of a mess here.”

Wilbur shakes his head, and Techno ignores the ache in his heart as chat murmurs about violence and blood and death. “We have no idea,” he says, voice cracking a little.

Bad looks up from the book. “Well, I imagine they’d be taking him back to the Last City in the End.”

Ranboo scoffs. “That’s not... that can’t be a real place. That book is fake,” he says. “It’s full of half-truths and mysticism.”

“What’s the Last City in the End?” Tommy asks.

“It’s kind of like the villagers’ ‘Eden’,” Ranboo says. “A mythical place that doesn’t exist.”

“But what if it does?” Wilbur asks. “What if it’s there and Bad’s right? They took him there?”

“The distance it’s probably at would explain a time shift of five hundred years,” Bad says, flipping through the pages.

“That’d be... hundreds of thousands of blocks.” Ranboo’s protests hang in the quiet air of the room. “Even at the furthest reaches of what we can reach in the End, time shifts only displace you a couple of months!”

Chat murmurs in the back of Techno’s mind, and he can’t help but feel uneasy.

Bad smiles cryptically, then looks back at the page of the book, smile fading quickly. “Oh. Ohhhh no.”

“What?” Tommy asks. “What is it?”

Techno looks at Bad, and for the briefest moment, Bad meets his eyes, and Techno lets out a short breath as chat whispers about death and dragons.

Bad visibly swallows.

“Bad?” Skeppy asks, placing a diamond hand on his friend’s shoulder. “What is it?”

“27.3. Those were the numbers on the paper. They’re part of the Resurrection section of the book, which details how the Ender Dragon would be brought back to life.”

“And?” Wilbur asks, voice tight.

“The Angel of Death shall return, and by His blood shall our Mother return as well.” Bad’s voice falters as he softly reads out the line.

Techno lets out a long, shaky breath as he realizes what that means. “They want to kill him to bring back the Ender Dragon,” he murmurs, voice wavering.

“What?” Tubbo exclaims. “No, they can’t do that.”

“They’re going to.” Techno doesn’t dare look his brother in the eyes.

Chat murmurs viciously, and Techno shuts his eyes as they whisper. *Blood, blood, death, kill them, hurt them, blood, death, blood for the blood god, hurt them for even looking at your father, blood, death.*

“So, what do we do?” Ranboo asks, and Techno turns his head away from him as well. “There has to be something we can do.”

“We go save him.”

Techno looks sharply up at Wilbur, standing above him, fists clenched.

Wilbur looks back at Techno, and suddenly Techno knows. He knows all the anger and love inside his brother at this moment.

Philza gave them more than a home, he gave them love, and a family, and a place to stay that was safe, and a promise to be there for them always, and he always was.

If it were the other way around, he’d do everything and anything in his power to come save them.

“We go save him,” Techno repeats. The voices murmur their agreement.

“Right,” Tommy says, and out of the corner of his eye, he can see his brother’s smile. “So, Bad, does that fancy, little book of yours tell us how to get to this Last City in the End?”

Chapter End Notes

edit: some of yall were really just gonna let me write "room of the air" huh /lh

We Had a House Down Here (But I Lost It Long Ago)

Chapter Summary

The Angel of Death has arrived.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Sisyphus* by Andrew Bird

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

The memories were all faded at the edges from time, but Philza still could remember the day he'd left, clear as day.

His mom, with eyes that matched his own, waved at him, tucked inside his father's arm, and Philza had waved back.

Back then, it had been much of the talk of the town that Philza was a hybrid, a source of many rumors, but his parents had paid them no mind. They stung him anyways, and Philza was desperate to prove himself, prove his worth despite the giant wings on his back that he had yet to grow into.

He was off to kill a dragon.

And then he didn't come back, not even after he'd returned to the Overworld, for how could he bring himself to go back home when his parents were no longer there? Where was the victory in that?

The fight had been difficult. He'd gone alone, stubborn and ready to be something more than he'd been. At the time, he'd just thought it was a normal dragon, but having seen others now, he knows there was something special about that dragon. No dragon looks the same, of course, despite what people claim, but that's like saying that every person looks more or less the same.

This one was even more different. She was larger than most dragons he's seen, and gold and silver and diamond adorned her wings and claws, something he hadn't thought twice about at the time, just trying to get through the battle and be victorious.

And victorious he was.

In his dream, much like in his memories, he couldn't help but go through the end gateway: he was curious, too curious, despite being tired from the treacherous battle and ready to go home to his parents.

In his dream, unlike in truth, he knows what's on the other side.

His eyes open, and for a moment, he stares at the blank ceiling. He doesn't dare move, doesn't dare find out if this is just a continuation of his dream or if it's real, if he's really awake.

Out of the corner of his eye, he sees pale purple curtains block the window.

He shuts his eyes tightly. *Not here*, he begs silently, though he's not sure who he asks. *Anywhere but here*.

He reminds himself of the last thing he was told before being taken, that he should not ask for anything, for no god above will listen to him.

The anticipation of knowing for certain grows in his skin and his bones, an itch he knows won't be fixed until he gets up.

He opens his eyes again, fighting back the burn of tears as he gets up, the tense anxiety causing his shoulders and the bridges of his wings to ache. He stretches, but it barely helps.

He stands, sighing, and his eye catches on the mirror on the wall.

If he is where he thinks he is, he looks much differently than he did. At sixteen, his dark wings made him seem slight, his face unscarred, no dark circles under his eyes nor stubble on his face. Now, he looks tired, grown into a man with something to lose and a destiny to fight and wings that make him look powerful and bold.

He turns away, heart feeling cold.

The first thing he tries to do is open the door. Expectedly, it was locked from the outside. *Of course*, he thinks as he scoffs.

He meanders through his... cell seems to harsh a word, with as nice and spacious as is the area he's in, but a gilded cage is still a cage.

Apartment, he decides.

The rest of it seems... decent. A well-stocked fridge with every imaginable food in it, spacious rooms, a large bed. Overall, it's nice, if minimalist and plain. Philza longs for the clutter and sense of home of his house: boots and weapons and instruments strewn about, nicks in the table, tableware that has broken and fixed and chipped more times than he can count.

The least plain item in the whole apartment was a bookshelf, but Philza couldn't bring himself to look at the titles long.

He stands in front of the window, blinds closed. He grabs them gently as he steels himself. This is the moment. This is the moment that proves if he's really where he thinks he is.

Really, he already knows, but this is the moment that makes or breaks it.

With a sharp movement, he pulls the blinds apart.

The world seems to freeze, and Philza can't breathe as he takes in the scene before him, the Last City in the End. It stands, just as shining, all glass and polished endstone and obsidian and chiseled purpur, just as he remembered it.

A sob catches in a throat, and he realizes he's crying, and he can't breathe, and he crumples to the floor, wrapping his wings around himself, as the tears stream down his face. No, no no, *no*.

He forces himself to take a deep breath and hold it, finger nails digging into his shoulders. Slowly, he lets it out, shaking slightly.

Ok. Ok, he's been here before. So he'll be able to figure out where he is.

Trembling, he forces himself to stand, placing his palms on the cold glass of the window.

This place is more familiar to him than his childhood home was at this point. He could do this, he could find out where he stands.

He traces the skyline with his eyes, the spires of downtown, where his last home here was, the market... where was it? There was the church, so where was...

Philza's mouth runs dry as he realizes where he was, what was missing from his skyline. He's near the church, at one end of the market. Of course, there was one building missing, and he knew where it was.

The Dragon Castle. The tallest building in the Last City, where he'd taken off for his flight out.

His next breath in is a short little gasp. Even if he could make it out of his apartment, even if he could make it to the top, even if he could make the flight back...

Well, his chances are even worse this time around.

With a groan, he shuts his eyes. Something snaps, deep in his chest, and it turns into a shout, a yell, wordless fury and pain and fear. It leaves him panting, tears streaming down his face once more in earnest.

"Fuck!" He shouts, though no one listens, and it seems he killed the only one who would have.

Chapter End Notes

am I happy with this chapter? NO. did I originally think it would be cool to write?
YES. am I glad it's done so I can move on to *fun* stuff? YES.

The Master of My Sea

Chapter Summary

Five brothers discuss how to save their father.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Believer* by *Imagine Dragons*

Tubbo's hand grips Tommy's tightly as they sit in a small corner of the library at the palace.

It hadn't been a far trek to Skeppy's home, but Badboyhalo had insisted they move somewhere better, somewhere safer than their home.

The idea of their home, standing empty, the endstone dust not yet swept up, sends aching pains in Tubbo's chest, and he squeezes Tommy's hand.

Tommy squeezes back.

Badboyhalo's been reading, flipping pages quietly, murmuring to himself and to Skeppy, who leans over his shoulder.

Tubbo and his brothers sat in various chairs and on the floor, not daring to be too far from each other. Technoblade lounges in his chair while Wilbur perches on the arm, picking at the threads of his shirt nervously. Normally, when Dad saw that, he'd hem it, but he wasn't here to-

Nope. Bad train of thought, Tubbo interrupts himself, screwing his eyes shut.

After a deep breath, he turns his gaze to his other brothers. Ranboo sits at the foot of Technoblade's chair, next to Tubbo, leaning against their other brother's leg, looking weary and lost in thought. Strangely, despite the fact that Badboyhalo has the book, Tubbo thinks that Ranboo might actually be one who knows the most about any of this.

Tommy sits in the chair behind Tubbo, leaning forward, head on Tubbo's head, hand entwined with Tubbo's own. He's still quite quiet, though, Tubbo supposes, they all are right now, and Tommy was the first to walk into the house to find their dad missing.

They sit quietly for a while, the loss feeling like a weight, dragging on Tubbo's heart and lungs, and he wants to say something, but he can't find the words, so he just sits, trying not to cry.

"Where," Wilbur clears his throat. "Where are we at, Bad?"

Badboyhalo's nose scrunches as he reads. "Well, supposedly there's a place you can go, uh, Dr-Draegocost? I don't know, it's Ender. And it looks like there's a ferryman there. If you pay him, he'll take you to the Last City."

Ranboo hums softly, looking lost in thought. Wilbur, on the other hand, scoffs derisively. “What kind of price?”

“I, uh,” Badboyhalo shrugs. “I don’t know.”

“God’s Landing,” Ranboo murmurs, and Tubbo jumps in surprise at his voice.

“What?” Skeppy asks.

“Draegocost. It means God’s Landing. It’s.” Ranboo clears his throat. “It’s near where I used to live, I think, before I came to live here. It’s basically the edge of the world. Kinda a cool tourist site, I guess, if I remember correctly. Not a popular one. There was a man there, who had this cool boat that was floating. I guess I always thought it was an attraction, but no one ever rode with him. Said his prices were too high.”

“That’s not ominous at all,” Technoblade mumbles. Tubbo shrugs in response.

“What do you mean ‘edge of the world’?” Tubbo asks Ranboo, turning to look at his brother

Ranboo shrugs, hair moving to cover his eyes slightly. “It’s just the void past there. Not like how spawn islands have gaps. It’s just nothingness for as far as you can see.”

Tubbo frowns slightly. “Really?”

Tubbo keeps his eyes on his brother, and he has a sense his other brothers do the same.

“So we go there.” Wilbur’s voice is set, and Tubbo takes a moment to notice how, even when the rest of them are close to tears and lost, Wilbur’s angry. It’s like the loss sparked a dark flame somewhere in his brother. Even Technoblade, for his reputation of violence, just looks lost and anxious compared to Wilbur.

“We still don’t know what the cost is,” Ranboo murmurs, looking up at Wilbur.

“That’s not true,” Skeppy interrupts. “It’s written here.”

“Have you been reading over my shoulder?” Badboyhalo asks, incredulously, suddenly sitting up.

With a tilt of his head, Skeppy replies: “Yeah? You hadn’t noticed?”

Tubbo looks at them with wide eyes. “Well?”

“A treasured item.”

Tubbo’s heart drops as he thinks of going back home with no Dad there. Of course, they’d have to return anyways to collect their supplies to go find him anyways.

But that doesn’t change the fact that he’s not ready. He’s not sure he’s ever going to be ready to return to a home with no Dad.

The way Ranboo tenses across from him and Tommy grips his hand tightly lets him know he’s not the only one who isn’t ready.

“Alright. A treasured item. That’s all we need to get there?” Wilbur stares at Badboyhalo intensely, and it almost frightens him how rigid Wilbur seems.

Badboyhalo and Skeppy both nod.

“Right.” He nods back, once, sharply. “Then let’s do it.”

Badboyhalo frowns. “Not right now, you aren’t.”

“What? Do you hear yourself? My dad’s in trouble!” Wilbur shouts, standing abruptly and Tubbo’s eyes widen as he sees the fury within.

“And if you go as you are,” Badboyhalo says calmly, evenly, “You’ll be exactly no help to him. You need to rest. You don’t have to do it at home, but you do need to sleep. The End is dangerous, and you’ll already be at a disadvantage as emotional as you are. Well, maybe not you, Wilbur,” he adds hastily, seeing Wilbur’s furious expression. “But I doubt your brothers will let you go alone, and they need it.”

Wilbur freezes at that, before turning to look at his brothers, a lost look finally appearing in his eyes as he realizes he won’t be going alone. He swallows, then nods. “Yeah, yeah, alright.”

“Good,” Badboyhalo says. “You’ll leave in the morning then.”

Wilbur nods, not looking at his friends, and Tubbo nods back.

“In the meantime, think of what the item will be,” Skeppy suggests.

Tubbo closes his eyes and sighs.

What’s a treasured item of mine?

His thoughts immediately fly to his stuffed bee, one of the only things he has left from before he was adopted, before he was found in a box on the side of the road. *No, not that*, he thinks, then he comes to a horrible realization. That had to be the item, he reasons, specifically because his first thought was “no, not that”, because he didn’t want to give it up.

But his dad is worth infinitely more than that bee ever was.

He’s certain of that. He opens his eyes, giving Tommy’s hand another squeeze. “Yeah, that’s probably a wise move,” he murmurs.

“Speak for yourself, I already know what I’m giving up,” Tommy says, and Tubbo almost jumps at hearing Tommy speak for the first time in what feels like ages.

“Well, at least I’m not the only one,” Tubbo says, smiling, but it doesn’t help the ache of hurt and sorrow in his chest as he says it.

I'll Be the Watcher of the Eternal Flame

Chapter Summary

An old friend comes to visit Philza in his cage.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Immortals* by *Fall Out Boy*

Philza stares out the window blankly. Even though he's sure the ambient temperature is fine, he can't help but feel cold. Numb. Lost.

He spent his anger already. Shouting for hours until it hurt, and continuing to yell, to curse everything from the sun to the moon to the void, until he had no voice left.

After that, he sat in cold silence.

Before him is his city, his home, a malicious part of him thinks, and he'd been a fool to even try and reason otherwise.

It wasn't, he tried to remind himself. His home was the Overworld, with its green forests and blue oceans.

Here, the only oceans were voids, and the plants were purple and white.

As he stares, his memories decide to play in his mind, memories from the last time he was here.

He hadn't understood why everyone wasn't able to take their eyes off him, why some people hadn't wanted a single thing to do with him.

The first time he'd read *The Book of Eyes*, he had laughed. To think that *this* was the reason people didn't like him? A book that to him wasn't real and never would be?

But as he stayed there, he realized how serious it was, why they wouldn't let him leave, and why few people ever trusted him.

They blamed him.

And Philza didn't want any part of it. He just wanted to go home.

He had spent so much time flying around the island, testing his boundaries and strengthening his wings, and he slowly learned the City's ways, its locations, and its customs. He'd learned how to speak and read Ender, learned the species that lived in the City, learned what it was like for the first time to be with other hybrids, where his nonhuman qualities weren't the reason why people stared at him wherever he went.

He had spent a lot of time sitting on random rooftops, eating whatever food he bought from the market and reading every book he could get his hands on, with nothing on his mind except his plans for escape and the songs of the ender doves that joined him.

It hadn't been his worst time, all things considered, but that hadn't changed the fact that he was scared, he was lonely, and he was homesick.

Strangely, it wasn't all that different than how he felt now.

Noises just outside his door shake him out of the past.

He feels the hair on the back of his neck rise as people stand outside the door, and he can just barely hear voices, but not what they say. *Strange, wanting me so in the dark I don't know what they're saying*, he thinks.

He hears the door unlock, and he tenses, wondering if he should run for it, if he would make it, but just as quickly, he hears it open and shut behind his visitor.

Well. In that case, he didn't have to be cooperative.

"Leave," he says, and even to himself, his voice sounds cold, distant, angry.

"You don't want to see an old friend?"

Philza's eyes widen as he recognizes the voice, and he spins around to face her.

Moira looks almost the same as she did all those years ago: wavy, platinum blonde hair down to her waist; pale skin; violet eyes; large, dark wings that match his own. She smiles and spreads her arms out like she's showing something off. "Did you miss me?" she asks, black lipstick curving into a small smile.

He stares at her, breath catching in his throat. "How did you know I was here?" He asks, and he almost smiles until she replies.

"I'm the one who tracked you down to bring you in."

He releases the breath sharply, and disappointment and shame bring his shoulders down.

Of course, she did.

"Why?" He asks, and this time, the coldness is intentional.

She shrugs, inspecting her long, dark nails. "So this isn't going to be a happy reunion, I see."

"You just admitted that you're the reason I'm here! And you want me to play nice?"

Moira sighs, rolling her eyes. "You know damn well why. Cause the Book said it would happen and I wanted to see it."

"And you really think I'm the Angel of Death?" Philza spits out the words like they're poison. He hadn't spent years in the Overworld denying that nickname for nothing, ignoring and shooting down the rumors of his deeds just to have to face it all before his death. The fear worms around in his chest, ice and shards digging, making his chest hurt and his breath short.

"If the shoe fits," she says with a shrug.

Play it cool.

He chuckles drily. "I'm no Angel of Death."

"I'd say otherwise."

"I'm not," he insists.

"You are!" She shouts. "Quit fucking denying it! We both know it's true."

"Bullshit," he hisses.

"Just admit it!"

"I am not the Angel of Death!"

"You are!"

"I am not!" He shouts. He stands there, panting, staring at her. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he realizes this is a lost fight: he's here, he's probably the one who killed the Ender Dragon, and he's probably the only one who's ever left the Last City.

"I can't be," he says, voice wavering, and he feels cold again, cold, lost, and helpless, and he can't help but think of his family, the hurt in his chest as he misses them dearly.

"But you are," Moira says softly, with a smile that reaches her eyes. "And because of you, we're going to have our Mother back."

Philza scoffs. "You really believe that, don't you?" The backs of his eyes burn slightly, and he wonders when he's going to wake up from this nightmare, if it will ever end.

"You don't?" She asks in a challenging voice.

He turns and stares stonily out the window, intentionally giving her a cold shoulder.

But he knows she's right. There's... there's no way he's at least not going to die here. And so far, that damned book seems right. All of what he remembers, all of what's been quoted at him has come true.

Moira puts a hand on his shoulder. "Phil," she starts to say softly, but he interrupts her.

"Don't. Don't you fucking dare."

"I'm not allowed to care?" She asks, incredulously.

"You lost that right when you decided a god was worth more than a friend."

She moves her hand, and he feels her eyes on the back of his head.

"Alright. Then I'll go. I'll be back, though. Don't want you to get too lonely."

And with that, she's gone, and he's alone once more.

This Ship Will Carry Our Bodies Safe to Shore

Chapter Summary

In a place with no stars, no moon, and no sun, five brothers set out.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Little Talks by Of Monsters and Men*

Something Wilbur hadn't expected for the End was how cold it was.

Techno, beside him, shivers underneath his cloak. As a Nether hybrid, Wilbur knows that his twin is more susceptible to cold than others, and Wilbur, unwraps his scarf and gestures towards his brother with it. Techno's eyes narrow, and Wilbur can feel the worry and guilt and how much he misses their father roll off of him in waves.

Wilbur does have to admit, this is something their father would do.

But Techno lets him put the scarf over his head, and Wilbur sighs a little to himself.

As they walk through the end, Ranboo guiding them, Wilbur can't help but worry about if they fail.

He and Tech would have to raise their brothers themselves. And, sure, they'd have help - they are, after all, Philza Minecraft's sons, whether he's there or not, and the community respects him enough to watch over his sons - but the idea of taking care of his brothers terrifies Wilbur.

He reaches a hand out to his twin, and Techno takes it, gloved hand warm and soft against Wilbur's own hands. He'd never cared much for gloves, and in the cold, he regrets it a little.

In front of them, their brothers meander, Tubbo and Tommy talking to each other, and Ranboo leading the way.

Ranboo actually looks a touch at home, here, in the End. Being an enderman hybrid, the cold doesn't affect him as much, and he smiles bravely at Wilbur as he looks back.

"We're here," he calls out.

Wilbur takes in his surroundings, feeling a little concerned.

Whatever city or town was here is long abandoned. Attractions are broken down and rusted, homes caving in on themselves. There are no signs of fire, or any other cause that Wilbur can think of that would have caused this.

"What happened here?" Tubbo whispers.

Ranboo shakes his head. "I don't remember anymore."

They walk through the rubble silently, the dust from the end stone silencing their footsteps. Wilbur squeezes his twin's hand, and he's relieved to get a squeeze in response.

But there, by the edge, a man sits in a boat and throws a fishing rod into the void.

It strikes Wilbur as a little odd.

Ranboo approaches, and he clears his throat. "Are you the ferryman?" He asks.

The man turns, and Wilbur blinks in surprise. It's a phantom hybrid, which is unusual, though less so in the End, he reasons.

"Depends where you want to go, and what you're willing to pay."

"The Last City in the End." Ranboo's voice is strong, and Wilbur wants so desperately to reach out, to hold his brother close.

Last night, they'd held each other close, promising whatever happened, they'd stick together, they'd be a family, they wouldn't leave each other.

Early this morning, they'd collected their supplies and their fare silently, almost mourning whatever it was they all knew they were going to lose on their way to save their father.

The hybrid stares at the five of them evenly. "Do you know what the fare is?" He asks.

They all nod.

"Are you willing to pay it?"

"We are," Wilbur says, and he's surprised his voice doesn't shake.

"And do you know that where you seek to go, there is no returning from?"

Wilbur swallows hard.

"Our father did it," Tommy says, challengingly.

The ferryman freezes at that. "You're..." He studies them all curiously. "You're his sons. Not by blood, I'm guessing, but I can see it in the way you carry yourselves. It's fascinating, really."

Wilbur gapes a little at being read so easily. "How did you know?"

The ferryman smiles. "I don't give my secrets. But I will give something else." He leans in close, expression suddenly serious. "You're not going to make it back."

"We'll see about that," Tommy says darkly.

"At the very least, I'd rather be with my dad there than without him at home," Ranboo says.

The ferryman shrugs. "Suit yourself," he says, reaching out with an open palm, and Wilbur knows what he's expecting.

With a sigh, he unstraps the instrument from his back, his very first guitar, and hands it to the ferryman.

“Mm. Good choice,” he says. “Welcome aboard.”

Wilbur climbs into the boat and stares at his brothers, watching one by one as they give something up in order to gain something else: Tommy hands over a “wait” disc, Tubbo hands over his stuffed bee from before they adopted him, Ranboo hands off a journal. It isn’t until Techno drops something small, something green that Wilbur makes a comment.

“Is that your emerald? The one Dad gave you?” He asks, alarmed.

Techno stares up at him, surprised. “I don’t have much in the way of possessions, y’know. My hobbies include fighting, and I am absolutely not giving up something that might help us save Dad.”

“But... your emerald,” Wilbur says, sadly, softly, and he thinks of his own, back at home.

“I’ll live,” Techno says stubbornly.

The ferryman pockets the emerald as Techno climbs aboard, and Wilbur reaches a hand out to him once more. His twin hesitates before taking it, and Wilbur pulls Technoblade close. Their other brothers stand near, and Wilbur opens his other arm to them, beckoning them close. Tubbo moves in first, followed by Ranboo, then Tommy.

The ferryman studies them, then grabs his oar. “It’s time. Unless, of course, you’re having regrets? I’d be happy to return your fare. Once we leave, I will not stop until we get there.”

Wilbur sets his shoulders. “No.”

No one else says anything for a moment, and the ferryman shrugs. “Of course not.” His voice is tinged with sadness, though Wilbur doesn’t know why.

The ferryman turns and unties his barge.

Wilbur stares over the edge, curiously. It’s not like the void has anything in it, and while the floating boat was probably magic, there was no wind nor sails to help move the boat out from the island.

The oar dips into the void, and with a broad stroke, the ferryman pushes off, and the boat floats forward. Wilbur’s heart pounds a little faster in his chest - this is it, this is the point of no return, they’re going to save Dad, they’re going to *see* Dad - and the island behind them starts to move away.

His breath catches a little, and he grips his brothers tightly, holding them close, and the motion of the boat is the first thing to stir his hair and push it into his eyes since entering the End.

They wait in silence, not daring to speak as the islands disappear behind them, and none appear in front of them.

After the islands are finally out of sight, the ferryman finally speaks again. “You might want to get comfortable. It’s going to be a while.”

Wilbur stares, and after a moment, he nods, crouching down to take a seat, pulling his brothers with him. They comply, strangely silent and unresisting, as the reality sets in: they’re going where no one else has been in a long, long time, and they don’t know if or how or when they’ll come back.

“So, how did you know?” Techno asks, and Wilbur’s head snaps to look at his twin.

The ferryman smiles down at him, leathery wings drifting behind him gently. “You have his resilience and courage. Not many would be willing to go after a dangerous, powerful man, to save him from a fate he earned from himself. Save, of course, maybe his children.”

Wilbur chuckles. “Brave enough to go save him but not brave enough to live a life without him.”

“Well, few ever choose to live a life without that which they love, and those who do...” The ferryman trails off with a shrug. “We’ll just say that they’re never the heroes.”

“Are you saying that we are heroes?” Tommy speaks up, blue eyes peeking out from under a fur-lined hood.

The ferryman shrugs. “In your own story, probably. But if you succeed, you won’t be, not to the people of the Last City.”

“Do they hate him?” Tubbo asks, voice small.

The ferryman hesitates.

“Just answer,” Wilbur says. “It won’t change anything now. We’re saving him either way.”

The ferryman looks at him, green-gold eyes bright against the void. “Oh, that I have no question about, Angelson. But not many like to hear that others hate the things they love.”

“They want to kill him,” Techno says drily. “I think we know they hate him.”

The ferryman shrugs. “Some don’t. It was written, after all, so they believe it was meant to be. But they all do believe that he should die.”

“And we’re going to prevent that,” Ranboo declares.

“Mm, well, you’ll try. But neither you nor I can predict the future.”

Wilbur pauses, thinking about his words. “You called me ‘Angelson’,” he says.

“You are the Angel of Death’s son,” the ferryman says with a smile.

“So we’re all Angelson,” Wilbur replies.

“Indeed.”

“Kinda has a ring to it,” Wilbur murmurs with a shrug. “Might use it in a song.”

“I think Dad would cry,” Techno says, but he smiles a little, and Wilbur grins back.

“Well, I’d give it a little bit of time after we get out of this,” Wilbur reasons.

“If,” the ferryman corrects, and Wilbur suddenly feels the oppressiveness of the void around them, the fact that they are truly isolated and alone. “If you get out of this.”

The darkness threatens to consume them, and silence does, as the ferryman continues to row them deeper into the void.

This Hill I'll Die On

Chapter Summary

Some preparations before death.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from the song *Constellations* by *The Oh Hellos*

Philza awakes early to a knock on his door.

He didn't remember falling asleep, and judging by the fact that he's curled up on the floor by the giant windows, he hadn't planned on it either. Though, at the end of the day, he admitted it made sense. He hadn't slept since he first woke up here, being so worked up and anxious and afraid that his eyes didn't stay closed for long.

Groaning, stretching out his half-asleep limbs, he pushes himself to his feet.

"I can't open it from this side, but you're welcome to come in," he shouts bitterly.

The door opens to reveal a short phantom hybrid, purple-black hair cut short and curling in odd angles; leathery phantom wings held low, showing their nervousness.

"Hi," they say. "I'm here to tailor your outfit for the ceremony tonight."

"Tonight?" Philza asks, caught off guard.

They nod shyly, and the guards shut the door behind them.

"And I need a special outfit?" He asks dubiously.

"Well, I mean, maybe not need, but," they shift uncomfortably. "They want you to wear it."

Philza studies them closely. They're nervous, though he doesn't know for what reason: his title or his reputation. He sighs. A nervous tailor would only end with getting stuck with pins, and as much as he doesn't want to be here, he doesn't want the experience to be more painful than it needs to be.

"Well, I don't have any say in the matter," he says, giving his best smile.

They smile in turn, but it's small and brief. They look about the age of Wil and Techno, and the thought of his sons leaves him a touch winded.

"Do you care where I set up?"

"Wherever's best for you," he says, softly.

They nod, and quickly set up their mirror and table, placing scissors, needle, thread, and measuring

tape together, before gesturing at him to come closer.

The tailor works in silence, obviously having questions, but Philza doesn't start any conversation. He'd rather be distant, he thinks bitterly, and a line from *The Book of Eyes* suddenly comes to mind: "The world was as cold as She was, and it hurt like a wound."

He could try to be better, part of him thinks, but he doesn't want to. What was the point?

The door opens and closes again, but in his current position, he can't see who has entered. He holds his posture and ignored them.

"I see you're getting ready for tonight."

Ah. Moira. Of course.

"You didn't know?" He asks, calmly.

"I did. I just didn't expect you to be so cooperative."

"I'm not a big fan of being stuck with pins."

"Fair enough."

They stand in silence a moment more, and he watches the tailor look between the two of them awkwardly.

"So, why the wait?" He asks, keeping his chin up as the tailor carefully maneuvers pins into the fabric.

"Waiting for the right moment," Moira says. "Times and astrological happenings in the Overworld and tides in the Nether and such."

"And the right conditions didn't happen last time I was here?"

"You hadn't left yet."

Philza lets out a long sigh, and the tailor pauses for a moment, gold-green eyes studying him carefully.

"Anything else?" Moira asks.

Philza stares at his reflection, and for a moment, he doesn't see his reflection, he sees his younger self and his sons.

The thought of his sons without him...

"I wish my sons were here."

The tailor's eyes widen at this, freezing, leathery phantom wings slightly puffed up.

Moira laughs, sending chills down Philza's spine. "You wish your sons could see their father die?"

The question causes Philza to freeze, and he feels sick to his stomach and dizzy. He opens his mouth to say something, but she laughs again, doubling over, and it feels like the ground has given out from underneath him and he's falling, falling far down into the void.

“Leave,” he gasps.

“What?” Moira asks, wiping a tear from her eye.

“Leave,” he repeats, though barely any louder than the first time.

“What, for telling you the truth? That if they were here, they’d be watching you die, and I know you well enough to know that you don’t want that?”

He stares at her, aghast, eyes burning with unshed tears. “Of course, I don’t,” he says, and his voice trembles as he fights not to show any weakness.

She smirks. “So then what’s the problem?”

He sighs, shutting his eyes, and all of the bravado he made himself show seemed heavy, and he takes in how tired he is.

“Leave,” he repeats, voice more steady.

Moira studies him. “You know, you once trusted me. I was your friend. But you left that. Why?”

“I wanted to go home,” he says, opening his eyes, and while he still can’t look at her, he sees her posture, for the first time in the past couple of days, finally not as confident as she wanted to be.

“You could have had that here,” she says, and he hears the unsaid *You could have had that with me*.

“Moira. You did mean a lot to me,” his voice softens as he speaks, but he still can’t look at her. “But you couldn’t replace my family then, and you can’t replace it now.”

“And your family wasn’t there when you returned last time, and your family certainly isn’t coming for you now,” she replies, and Philza sighs sadly.

“I sure hope not. As you said, I don’t want to have them watch me die.” He finally returns his gaze to his reflection and watches his own tears fall down his face, though his expression is unreadable.

Moira sighs. “You always were dramatic.”

The sounds of the door follow her, and once she’s gone, Philza sighs, though he’s not sure if the emotion he’s feeling is loneliness, loss, or relief.

“Do.” The tailor pauses, uncertain. “Do you really have children?”

“Hm. Five sons.”

They look up at him, and he sees the wonder and surprise in their eyes. “Tell me about them.”

“Well, I have two twins, they’re the eldest. Wilbur and Technoblade. I adopted Technoblade first, he’s a piglin hybrid. He’s a terrific fighter, but not so great with words or people sometimes. He tries his best, but I think he’s not always sure what to do.”

The tailor chuckles a little.

“Wilbur’s a musician, and he has a great way with words. He’s not too shabby a fighter either, he just prefers to talk his way out of his problems. He’s human, and sometimes I feel like he’s the epitome of that, feeling everything so strongly, but he still has so much love in him, y’know?”

The tailor smiles. "Sounds like a handful."

"Only when he wants to be," Philza says, lips twitching into a rueful smile. "Then there's Tommy. He's my youngest, also human. He's definitely a handful. He just. He wants to do everything, and sometimes I wonder if the world just isn't ready for him yet."

The words are flying from his lips now as he thinks about how he wants to remember them, his sons.

The tailor grins. "I think it will be."

Philza chuckles. "I hope so. Then there's Tubbo, who's practically inseparable from Tommy. He's a ram hybrid, and all the patience Tommy doesn't have, he does have. It's good," here, his voice catches a little, "that they have each other. He always helps others, even when sometimes I'm not sure they deserve it."

"Good match for his brother, then."

Philza nods. "Then there's Ranboo, he's our latest addition. He's half enderman hybrid, half some other type of hybrid that we don't know yet. He has some memory problems, but he's intelligent and kind and caring."

His tears have stopped, but Philza's chest hurts as he thinks of them, as he thinks of what's to come.

"It sounds like you love them a lot."

"I do," he says.

The tailor sighs, standing. "Well, I'm finished here," they say.

"Thank you."

They smile, but it fades after a minute.

"I-" They sigh. "If I were your sons, I'd be proud to be yours."

A ghost of a smile traces Philza's lips. "Well, I don't really care about that, but I'm proud of them. I just hope they're safe at home."

Hung Pictures of Patron Saints Up on my Wall

Chapter Summary

Welcome, boys, to the Last City in the End

Chapter Notes

chapter title from the song *Saint Bernard by Lincoln*

Also, early update today! Cause I'm awake and require :sparkle: VALIDATION :sparkle:

“Ranboo, wake up, we’re almost here,” a voice says, shaking Ranboo awake.

Blearily, he opens his eyes, and for a second he’s startled by the darkness before he remembers where they are: the Void in the End.

He sits up, and he’s glad to notice that he’s not the only one who fell asleep: Tommy and Wilbur look just as sleepy as he feels, though Tubbo and Technoblade look like they haven’t slept.

Behind them, Ranboo sees something and his eyes widen as he takes it in.

“That, young man,” the ferryman says, leaning over to him, “is the Last City of the End.”

Ranboo stares, breath catching as he takes it in. If he’s ever seen anything like this, he certainly doesn’t remember it, but it calls to his bones and soul, and he can’t help but think: *Now this is what it means to be from the End. This is my legacy.*

Spiraling, tall buildings made of glass and obsidian and amethyst loom up over the end stone floating in the void. Though there is no light, they gleam regardless. Black and violet banners hang in the air, though no breeze causes them to float. As they get closer, Ranboo notices more and more details: lampposts with gold and obsidian designs and pale, cold light; the way that most of the buildings are relatively the same, with pale, golden walls and curtains that are just barely purple; that the buildings on the outskirts are plain, modest, simple, short, but the ones as you look closer to the middle are taller, more intricate designs, with much more purpur, gold, obsidian, and amethyst. One building, the tallest, in the middle, is the most resplendent: it’s almost like a large castle, with more glass than Ranboo has ever seen on a building, though many of the windows are covered in curtains.

“Which building is that?” He asks the ferryman, gesturing at it.

The ferryman’s eyes study it. “That, Angelson, is the castle. Supposedly, it was once home to the Ender Dragon goddess, when she chose to be here. It’s almost exclusively used for ceremonial purposes now. The last major event to happen there was probably when your father left. It’s most definitely where they’re keeping him now.”

“When he left?” Wilbur asks, curious.

“They say he climbed to the top of the tower and jumped off and flew away.”

“He didn’t go through that?” Technoblade interrupts, gesturing upwards.

Ranboo looks up at the floating bedrock above them, shimmering with dark, green energy.

“The end gateway? No. It’s well-protected most of the time, except for events where the population is required to be there, such as tonight.”

“Tonight?” Ranboo asks, heart skipping a beat.

The ferryman nods. “Well, a few hours from now. We’ve arrived just in time for your rescue attempt. Tonight, they sacrifice your father to bring back our Mother.”

The air on the barge suddenly seems much colder, and Ranboo shivers as he moves closer to his brothers.

“Well, not if we stop them,” Tommy says, and Ranboo watches the anger and fear flicker in his younger brother’s eyes.

“If,” the ferryman repeats.

“It’s no ‘if,’” Wilbur says, voice frigid.

The ferryman hums at that. “As you wish to see it.”

The barge goes silent at that.

“Where’s the closest point to the castle? Can you drop us off there?” Tubbo says after the pause.

“I will,” the ferryman replies.

The next few minutes pass in silence until the ferryman pulls up behind a small house with a trellis of weird purple vines growing.

“Here’s the best spot I can offer you.”

Ranboo nods and grabs his supplies - sword, bow, arrows, chest plate.

The ferryman seems uncertain for a moment, mouth hanging slightly open. “If you do make it,” he says.

The five of them all turn to look at him, Ranboo and Tubbo still in the boat, Technoblade on land, and Wilbur and Tommy already starting up the trellis.

“If you do make it,” he repeats. “Come visit me and I’ll return your items.”

“And if we don’t make it?” Technoblade asks.

The ferryman shrugs. “Then I don’t imagine you’ll be living a life where those things matter if you’re still alive at all.”

Ranboo nods. “Great news,” he says, stepping off the boat, Tubbo hot on his heels.

The ferryman stares at them a moment longer. “Good luck, Angelsons.”

With that, he pushes off into the void, away from them.

“Well, he was cheerful,” Tubbo says in a small voice.

“C’mon,” Wilbur says, a little roughly. “We’ve got to get going.”

The five of them climb upwards, onto the roof. Wilbur locks his eyes on the castle and pushes forward, and Ranboo feels just fine letting him take the lead, hanging in the back with Tubbo and Technoblade.

Wilbur’s path takes them along rooftops, increasingly more uphill. Below them, citizens laugh and mingle amongst each other, clearly in a good mood. Markets are in full swing, people shouting loudly beneath them.

Eventually, their path takes them to a decent-sized break in the rooftops.

“We’ll have to jump,” Technoblade says. “C’mon.”

One by one, they all run and jump to the other side, and Ranboo sighs with relief as he watches each of them make it.

Then, it’s his turn.

Ranboo runs after his brothers and makes a leap forward, but the shingles under his feet slip as he jumps, and his heart skips a beat as he tumbles forward, falling, falling, falling.

His brothers shout, and Ranboo shuts his eyes shut, thinking about how he’d rather be up there with them, and-

He lands on a flat, slightly grainy surface.

He can hear his brothers gasping: “He just-” “Where-” “-disappeared-” and when Ranboo opens his eyes, he realizes where he is.

“What the-” Ranboo gasps and his brothers spin around from where they stood at the edge, looking for him.

“Ranboo!” Tubbo shouts, and his brothers are suddenly all there, crouched around him.

“How did you do that?” Technoblade demands, but Ranboo shakes his head.

“You just teleported!” Wilbur exclaims. “Did you know you could do that?”

Ranboo shakes his head again. “I... I didn’t,” he says, gasping for air.

“That’s fucking awesome,” Tubbo says, eyes wide.

“Yeah, I really liked not falling to my death in the middle of a city that I didn’t think existed two days ago,” Ranboo says, and his heart is finally starting to slow, his lungs taking in air at a normal rate. “That’s something I don’t need to write in the memory book.”

“That will be useful,” Tommy says, smiling.

After the realization that Ranboo is okay, his brothers stand, and Wilbur offers his hand to Ranboo. Grateful, he takes it.

“The castle’s just there,” Technoblade says, pointing.

“We should head in, set up for saving him. I think our best bet is during the ceremony,” Wilbur says.

“With everyone there?” Tommy asks, dubious.

“It’ll be easy to get lost in the crowd.” Wilbur studies the building. In the front, lots of people walk in and out, mainly End hybrids, Ranboo notices - enderman, phantoms, endermates, shulkers, silverfish - though there’s quite a few with wings, like Dad.

Wilbur points. “Seems like a decent way in and out, don’t you think?”

Technoblade sighs and Ranboo can tell he’s out of his depth, that the strain of worry and fear and that generally ill-feeling, cold pool of anxiety that Ranboo knows he feels in his own gut are starting to get to him.

“Why not?” Tommy mumbles. “It’s not like the odds are stacked against us already.”

Wilbur grins coldly. “Perfect.”

Reaching For the Heavens Only Bark at the Stars

Chapter Summary

I'm evil, and you love me for it /lh

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Rather Die by Barns Courtney*

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

The hall is lined with purple torches, and the cold light makes Philza's heart heavy.

The enderman hybrids beside him march him to his fate, two in front, two behind him, two holding onto his elbows, despite the fact that he is handcuffed in a roofed hall and there is nowhere for him to go.

Well, he says he's handcuffed, but this isn't the first time he's been in a sticky situation and has needed to break out of handcuffs. He's been quietly fiddling with them behind his back the entire time they've been walking.

Finally, *finally*, he hears a quiet click, and the handcuffs loosen around one wrist. He quickly stops moving his wrists; he doesn't want to give away his freedom just quite yet.

Now comes the part where he has to think: how is he going to get past his guards? They're almost at the doors at the end, and Philza can hear the crowd on the other side. From here, it sounds like whispers, but he knows that in there, it's probably deafening.

He figures his best chance is when they go to open the doors to usher him inside. They'll be a little distracted, what with crowd control and the doors themselves, and it will give him the chance he needs. Kick down the guards, take to the air, dodge the crowd inside: just a few small steps and he'd be able to break free.

The plan falls apart in his mind as the guards behind him teleport to the door to open it.

Fuck.

Well, there goes... just about every step of that plan. They can teleport. Of course. Enderman hybrids. It had been so long since he'd been in the End that he forgot that they could do that in the End.

His heart sinks, and his mouth runs dry.

As they march inward, Philza takes in the crowd: their fine clothes, the way they fall silent as he enters, the curious stares.

He feels cold and alone, and he can't remember the last time he's been so afraid.

His thoughts spin in his head: *you're going to die, this is it, this is the end, you brought this on yourself, you're going to die, you're going to die, you're going to die*. His breath is short, and he tries to force himself to breathe in through his nose, out through his mouth, like he taught Techno-okay, maybe he shouldn't think about his son, that just caused his heart rate to spike even worse, and he can hear the rapid *thump, thump, thump*, in his ears, and his head tilts forward, hair covering his face as he attempts to ground himself.

I will not die losing my head like a chicken, he tells himself. *I will die with my head held high.*

Forcing a deep breath into his lungs, he straightens up, eyes facing forward.

They lead him to the center of the room, where a priest stands, decked in fine fabrics. Others stand on the podium with her, Moira among them.

He makes level eye contact with her, and she smirks. He keeps his expression neutral.

The guards leave him in the center of the podium, stepping off, leaving him alone in the middle of a crowded hall.

"Kneel," the priest says.

Philza contemplates not doing so, but he sees the way the guards have their hands on their swords, and he decides that's maybe not his smartest choice.

So, he kneels.

The priest gestures with an open hand, and one of the other members passes her a potion bottle. Looking at the color, Philza knows exactly what's in it.

"Is a poison potion really necessary?" He asks, fighting to keep his voice from wavering.

"You do have a reputation, Angel of Death," the priest says. "We'd rather succeed in our ceremony tonight."

She uncorks the bottle and brings it to his lips. The grasp is firm, but he knows that this isn't how he wants to go. "Drink," she says.

Philza fights to keep his lips shut, the glass of the bottle slicing his lip.

"Drink," hisses the priest, bringing the bottle back, and Philza snarls at her.

She moves to bring the bottle back towards his face, but suddenly it shatters, poison and glass flying everywhere, nicking his face and it stings, but Philza just barely saw the arrow that broke it, and he looks up to the balcony where it came from.

He gasps as he takes in the scene on the balcony, a half-strangled name caught in his throat as he sees one of his eldest twins standing there, bow in hand, a determined expression on his face: "Wil."

Part of him is elated: of course, he is, it's his son, it's his wonderful son, and he can see his others behind Wilbur, and he wants to cry as relief threatens to consume him. They came, *they're here*.

The other part of him is screaming: why, why are they here, why did they follow him. Do they not know the horrors and pain waiting for them here?

Wilbur speaks, voice echoing in the hall: "You let go of my father right now."

A strangled sob escapes Philza's lips, and he's sure there are tears streaming down his face, but he's smiling and gods, he's never been so proud or so scared.

Then, the chaos erupts as his five sons jump down from the balcony into the crowd.

He's pushed this way and that, and Philza surges to reach his sons, and he can see the blood and blades flying, and he runs towards them, fighting against a panicking crowd, and suddenly they're within reach, and he wants nothing more than to break down and hug them.

But he can't, not while they're still here, not while they're still in the middle of a battle.

So when Tech offers him a sword, he takes it, swinging it with ease, trying to clear a path for them to escape.

"Boys!" he shouts, looking over his shoulder, hair half blinding him, but he sees them behind them, and they run up the stairs of the castle, and he pauses, letting them run past him upwards, and he can't help but count as they go: one, two, three four, five. The relief he feels is indescribable, moving him almost to tears, but he's not free yet, he's not gone yet, and his feet and his heart race as he follows them.

The shouts follow him, and Philza's breath catches in his throat as he looks behind him to see so many angry people, so many people calling for his blood, and now, potentially, his sons' blood.

He can see the enderman guards teleporting through the crowd to reach them, and Philza turns back to where he's running, pushing his sons forward. "Move!" he shouts, and he knows he's failing now to keep the fear out of his voice.

They run up the stairs, though partway up, he sees more guards, and he shouts, grabbing his sons and pulling them down another hallway.

His heart races as they run down the halls, but of course, he gets dead-ended by a balcony.

He leans over the edge, swallowing hard as he takes in the mob beneath them. He spins back around to see the guards in front of him, and he grabs his sons and holds them close, breath uneven. His wings fold around his sons as he pulls them against him, wondering how he's going to make it, how he's going to keep them safe.

"Dad?" Tommy asks, and Philza looks down at him, blue eyes wide and afraid, and Philza shakes his head just a little.

Moira steps out of the crowd in front of them. "Well, isn't this a surprise?"

Philza tenses.

She sighs as she takes them in. "I'm assuming these are your sons. It's a pleasure to meet them, though I think you wish I weren't."

He doesn't answer, just takes in this moment, heart racing, blood from the cuts on his face moving sluggishly down his cheek, breath shaking.

This is the new worst moment of his life, he thinks.

Moira shrugs. "No matter. But we'll have to reschedule the ceremony now." She sighs dramatically. "What a shame. But at least your sons will be here to see it." She grins at that, and Philza immediately pulls his sons closer, wraps his arms and wings around them tighter. His sons

grab onto him in return, Tommy and Wilbur and Ranboo closest to him, Tubbo and Techno on the edges moving in closer to the protection of his wings.

“Leave them out of this,” he says.

Moira laughs, and it chills Philza to his core. “You don’t have a say in this.” She stares at them, eyes lingering on each one longer than Philza is comfortable with. “But no matter.” She grabs a potion from one of the guards’ belts and flings at them.

Philza flinches, curling in on himself and his boys, but the potion hits the ground, fumes floating upwards, making Philza’s vision spin and limbs weak.

“Detain them once they’re asleep,” Moira says, and through blurry eyes, he watches her turn around and the guards approach them.

Then, the world turns dark.

Chapter End Notes

I'd say I'm sorry, but y'all know I'm not, right?

ALSO 1K hits and 100+ kudos POG???

Til Old Satan Stands Impressed

Chapter Summary

Back home...

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *As the World Caves In* by Matt Maltese

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

Skeppy watches the way Bad's fingers drum against the book, the way he keeps opening the book and closing it, the way he can't sit still, and sighs to himself.

It's been a little over a day since their friend and his brothers left for the Last City in the End, and with every passing hour, Bad just seems to get more nervous, to the point of jumpiness. His eyes dart from surface to surface, then back to the book, when it's not in his hands. They tried to spar earlier, and Bad jumped at every stick cracking in the woods, every bird whistle.

Skeppy's never seen Bad like this, and his own worry brews like poison in his gut.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Skeppy finds himself asking for the third time in the past day.

"I mean, what's there to talk about?" Bad says.

"The fact that you look ready to jump out of your skin?" Skeppy suggests, drily.

"I do not look like I'm ready to jump out of my skin!" Bad protests. "I just..." he sighs, and Skeppy thinks *finally, I've made some progress on getting him to talk*. "I'm worried about them," Bad admits.

There's something, Skeppy thinks. "Why? They're all competent."

Bad's fingers drum on the cover of the book again, and Skeppy wonders if his friend knows something he doesn't.

"Right?" Skeppy asks, voice tinged with a little more worry than he would have liked, but there's nothing to do about that now.

Bad sighs. "I don't know. I feel a little lost here. I..."

Skeppy moves to sit in front of Bad, putting a hand on his shoulder. He's not normally the one to comfort people, but he's seen Bad do it hundreds of times, it can't be that hard. Bad stares at his hand in surprise before putting his own hand on it. Not for the first time, Skeppy wonders what it would be like to feel the warmth of Bad's hand on his own, but with the crystals growing in his skin, he knows he probably never will.

Bad leans his cheek against their hands, sighing softly, eyes shut. "I just worry."

"Wh... what would help you not worry?" Skeppy asks.

Bad lifts an eyebrow. "Are you trying to make me feel better? Who are you and what have you done with my Skeppy?"

Skeppy and Bad both grin at each other briefly, but it fades far too fast for comfort.

Bad shakes his head. "You know the feeling when you're on the edge of a cliff, but you can't see the bottom so you don't know if it's far away or up close?"

Skeppy nods.

"I can't... I can't help but feel like the bottom is much further away than we think. That there's more to this all than we expected."

"So what do you want to do?" Skeppy asks.

Bad's fingers drum on the leather cover of the book, rapid pace causing Skeppy's heart rate to race in turn. Bad's normally the optimistic one between the two of them. If he's nervous and uncertain, well...

Skeppy thinks he should be too.

"They need a back-up plan," Bad says finally.

"And you want that to be us?" Skeppy asks, surprised.

Bad shakes his head. "Just us two won't be enough," he murmurs softly.

Skeppy tilts his head, confused. It wasn't often that Badboyhalo thought of himself as incompetent for something.

"Why not?"

Bad laughs and the way it shakes sends chills down Skeppy's spine. *Oh, Bad's really scared. Like, genuinely worried for the others.*

"They're up against *the* Ender Dragon goddess, Skeppy! If she's real, I'm ready to believe quite a few of the stories in here! And most of them are drenched in blood! Like, listen to this!" Bad flips open the book and skips a few pages. "Like, in this one, she rips a whole army apart for being insolent and challenging her! A whole army! I just..." Bad looks off, eyes a little vacant.

"So we don't bring an army," Skeppy jokes, but it falls a little flat, and Bad looks at him with a lost expression.

"We bring only specialists?" Skeppy suggests, and Bad's eyes light up.

"Skeppy, you're a genius," he says, voice barely a breath.

"Well, I know I am, but I'm not sure what was so special about what I said." Skeppy studies Bad, eyebrows knitting together.

"Specialists! I'll ask Dream, George, and Sapnap to help us!"

Immediately, Skeppy groans. “And leave me here? Alone? Again?”

Bad blinks at him, mouth slightly open. “I don’t want you getting hurt,” he says softly.

“And you think I want you getting hurt?” Skeppy exclaims. “You think I *want* to get hurt either?”

“Well, no, but-”

“I’m coming with you. They’re my friends, too,” he declares.

Bad laughs. “Didn’t think I’d ever hear you admit that.”

Skeppy gasps in faux-anger. “How dare you?”

Bad chuckles. “Alright, well, they’re in town, so I’ll contact them and let them know. The sooner we get going, the better.”

Skeppy sighs, staring out the window. “I wish you had better friends.”

“Oh, hush, you’re my friend, aren’t you?”

“Yeah, but I’m not annoying like Dream, or pretentious like George, or just a dumbass like Sapnap.”

“Language!” Bad says, and Skeppy rolls his eyes.

“But promise me, you won’t leave me, okay?” Skeppy says.

Bad looks at him, and Skeppy wonders if he can see how serious he is right now.

“You really want to come?” Bad asks. “No joke?”

Skeppy shakes his head.

“Are... are you sure? It could be dangerous, but you and I both know that I’ll be okay as long as you are.”

“Am I really okay if I’m not sure if you’re okay or not? Besides, we both have all three lives. We’ll make it.”

Bad looks away, absent-mindedly squeezing Skeppy’s hand as he does so. Skeppy squeezes back. “We’ll make it.”

Bad lets out a shaky sigh. “Okay. Okay.”

“Okay.” Skeppy grins.

Bad smiles back. “And, for the record, you’re not too shabby at this.”

“Oh, you fucker-”

“Language!”

oh, did you really think I was going to address the cliffhanger yet?

no.

The Blood is Rare and Sweet as Cherry Wine

Chapter Summary

I may not be able to write fight scenes but I can do something better :)

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Cherry Wine* by *Hozier*

ALSO TAGS HAVE BEEN FULLY UPDATED TO THIS CHAPTER. ratings still the same. don't think I have anything else to add but if I missed something you think should be in the tags lemme know.

It has been far too long since Philza has seen his sons, though he recognizes it's been, at most, a few hours.

Well, actually, he's not sure about that.

He remembers passing out, and he remembers waking up here, in his "apartment", without his sons.

He also doesn't know what strength potion they used on them, so it could have been 30 minutes, it could have been a day.

But it hurts less to tell himself it has only been, at most, a few hours.

In the meantime, he's been left, alone, with his thoughts.

He's come up with several questions for his sons, namely "why?" and "how?", though there are a few other questions as well.

Why did they come to rescue him? Why did they choose that moment? How did they get here? How did they figure it out? What were they thinking?

Well, actually, the first and last ones weren't that hard to answer, Philza thinks to himself, and it almost makes him chuckle. They're his sons, of course, they wouldn't let this lie.

They love him, and Philza's heart aches as he thinks it.

He loves them, too. If it had been the other way around, well, he wouldn't have thought twice, now would he? It's no real wonder that they did what he would have done, but that doesn't make it hurt any less, that they're in trouble for doing the right thing, that they're in trouble because of him.

A knock at the door sounds and Philza quickly stands and rushes over as it opens, feeling hopeful, truly hopeful, for the first time since coming back to the city.

His sons might be there.

The door opens to reveal no sons, only Moira.

Philza lets out a dejected sigh. "Oh."

"Expecting someone else?" Moira asks, walking in.

Philza doesn't answer, thinking the answer to be obvious: of course, he was, he wants to see his sons.

The door stays open, but he sees the guards on the other side. Best not to push it, especially with his sons now in the mix.

"You're wondering about your family?" She asks.

He scoffs. "What do you take me for? Of course, I am!"

She chuckles, shaking her head. "They don't look much like you. They sure act like you though."

He shrugs, trying to act nonchalant. "More than blood, we are."

She gives him a sideways look out of the corner of her eye. "Like we once claimed to be?"

Philza winces a little at that. He remembers that evening, warmer than the ones before it and the ones after, the two of them drinking chorus fruit wine on a rooftop.

It had been a week before he left.

She scoffs. "I trusted you, y'know? I thought..." She sighs. "I thought that if you changed your mind, our Mother would just respawn again, like she did every time someone killed her, then decided they didn't want to leave. But you just couldn't stay, could you?"

He doesn't answer.

"You were my friend!" She shouts. "And you left!"

"I had to!" He snaps.

She sighs, clearly still upset, and he stares at her evenly.

"Where are my sons?" He asks. "I want to see them."

Moira smirks, and down the hall, a scream echoes.

Philza's blood runs cold, and he gasps as he recognizes that scream: Wilbur.

"Wil!" He shouts, and he's running out the door, down the hall, to that scream, he has to save his son, *he has to save his son* -

He's nearly flying now as he runs, feet barely hitting the ground. Behind him, he hears the gentle vwoops as the guards follow him, but he doesn't care, hell, he doesn't think he could care less.

He's close now, he can tell by the noises. He's never been in this part of the castle before, but he can see iron bars, arms strapped down, blood and a dark substance, too dark to be blood but he has no idea what it is, and he calls out, rewarding his with a brief glimpse of eyes, blue, green, red,

brown, and he reaches a hand out and-

The guards grab his arms and drag him backward, and Philza screams. It's a wordless scream, and he can't control it, the rage and sorrow and anger and hurt and fear all fighting for dominance inside him. *How dare they* and *what did I expect* and *what if* and *what could I have done* and *if only they'd stayed home* all shout for his attention, and the hot tears stream down his face as they drag him down the hall, and yet he still fights, doing everything he can to keep moving, keep his arm outstretched for the door handle he's now moving away from.

Unceremoniously, they dump him in his room and leave, the door locking surely behind them. He rages and shouts, curses flying from his mouth, fingernails run ragged from clawing at the door, shoulder bruised from slamming into it, trying to break it down.

As quickly as they came, his emotions left him, and Philza stares blankly at the door, breath uneven and ragged.

He feels... tired.

He sinks to his knees, facing the door, back to the window, to the world that he once abandoned. And for that abandonment, they repaid him sevenfold.

He wraps his arms around him, shaking, and he hates himself for being helpless and he hates himself for his self-pity, but he can't do anything about either of those things, and he wonders when his room became so cold, so he wraps his wings around himself too.

His fingernails dig into his skin, rough edges not sharp enough to draw blood but sharp enough to hurt. Tears continue to roll down his cheek, but he pays them no mind. The silence around him is deafening, but he can still hear his thoughts, whispers of *why* and *please don't* and worry and fear.

This is worse than falling, he thinks.

And he sits there, the world spinning around him, unmoving.

This House of Mine Stands Strong

Chapter Summary

A reunion of sorts.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Natural* by *Imagine Dragons*

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

The halls they're led down are dark, barely lit with pale purple and blue flames intermittently spaced.

It lends itself a certain sort of aesthetic, Wilbur supposes, but he's also not in the mood to appreciate it.

Well, he'll appreciate it a little. It definitely reflects his mood: somber with a lot of fear and very little hope.

His arm aches heavily from the ink they just embedded in his skin, and he's sure his brothers feel similarly, though as of now, they are all silent.

It's unusual, Wilbur thinks, and it definitely doesn't help the fear constricting his chest.

Suddenly, they stop in front of a door with more guards, shaking Wilbur from his thoughts. One of the guards opens the door, and Wilbur blinks as bright light blinds him.

He gives his eyes a moment to adjust before looking back in the room.

His father sits on the floor, wings hiding most of his form, and Wilbur thinks he's never seen Dad like this.

The woman clears her throat and Philza looks up.

For a moment, Wilbur sees something dark in his eyes, but his dad's eyes suddenly widen, and he springs to his feet running towards them, and Wilbur runs towards him in turn, his brothers close on his heels.

His father takes them in with open arms, pulling them all in tightly.

Wilbur buries his face in his father's shoulder, and for a moment, he feels safe: his father is okay and alive and unhurt, his brothers are there by his side, he's wrapped up in his father's arms and wings, and the world disappears for just a moment, to just this: being okay.

After a moment, Philza leans back, keeping them in the circle of his wings, and Wilbur smiles, closing his eyes gently as he places a hand on his cheek briefly, before moving it to do the same to

his brothers. *Not enough hands for all of us* , Wilbur thinks a little giddily.

“Are you alright? I heard screaming earlier-” *Ah, that was Dad earlier* , Wilbur thinks with a pang, and he immediately rolls up his sleeve to reveal the tattoo.

His dad’s fingers ghost over it, and he can see Philza trying to piece together what happened, reading the galactic print.

“Wither ink,” supplies the woman.

Philza freezes, and Wilbur watches as his father’s expression goes blank, leaving only rage in his eyes.

“All your sons have the tattoos, though his are the worst, considering he’s the one who actually committed the act of disrupting the ceremony.”

Wilbur can see his other brothers nervously tracing their own tattoos, buried under their sleeves, and though his dad’s grip remains gentle, the facade breaks, and he can see all the rage and fear that were hiding underneath.

“It didn’t hurt that bad,” Wilbur says with a smile, and blue eyes snap upwards to meet his own.

His father's eyes catch on something else, a dark, silver-blue bracelet they put on Ranboo. "And that?"

"To keep him from teleporting. He is an enderman hybrid, after all."

His dad lets out a shaky breath, staring at the bracelet and the tattoo, and Wilbur's heart aches.

After a moment, they switch to the intruder, and Philza straightens up, puffing his wings out a bit, and as they make eye contact, Wilbur can’t help but notice their similarities: same pale, blond hair; same dark wings with purple and light grey mixed in; same pale skin. In fact, Wilbur thinks, the main difference between them was the color of their eyes: Dad’s are blue like the ocean or the sky, hers are purple.

“Leave, Moira,” he says, and Wilbur notices the way he pulls on them, pulls them closer to them.

She stares at Philza a moment longer, before shrugging. “As you wish.”

The door clicks locked behind her, and as soon as she’s gone, Philza pulls them all back into a hug. It’s tight and constricting, but Wilbur can tell by the way his dad is shaking that he’s almost in tears and trying not to cry all over them, so he leans into the hug.

“It’s okay, Dad,” Ranboo says softly.

Dad pulls back just a little, and Wilbur can see that no, he’s not succeeding at not crying. “You shouldn’t even be here!” He protests.

“You expected us to go ‘oh, there’s evidence Dad has been kidnapped, guess I’ll just move on’?” Techno asks incredulously.

“They- Did they leave the house a mess?” Dad asks.

“I went into the kitchen and you were just gone-” Tommy’s voice starts to break at the end of that, and Wilbur pulls him in closer. “You were just gone and the kitchen was a mess and there was end stone dust all over.” Tommy hiccups at the end of it, and Philza pulls him in closer.

“How’d you know it was end stone dust?” He asks, rubbing small circles in Tommy’s back.

“I’ve seen it before,” Ranboo says, quietly, and Philza sighs.

“Well, and then Bad showed up and was like ‘ah, my suspicions I just conveniently arrived in time to confirm are correct! Philza Minecraft is the Angel of Death!’ and of course none of us knew what that meant and Skeppy was just upset Bad had dragged him to our house to ask you about a book-” Tubbo continues for Tommy.

“Bad figured it out?” Philza asks, then pauses. “Wait, book?”

“Bad has a copy of *The Book of Eyes* . Don’t know where he got it,” Ranboo mumbles, cheek pressed against Dad’s shoulder.

“How do you know- you lived here. Right.” Dad sighs. “And then you came to rescue me. How’d you even get here?”

“Some ferryman, I guess,” Techno says with a shrug.

“Ah,” Philza says. “Yeah, I remember that from the book.”

“Wait, so these people really think that you’re the Angel of Death?” Wilbur asks.

Philza sighs, shaking his head. “At this point, I don’t think there is that much of a doubt, but I sure as hell don’t want to die, and I don’t want to be here.”

Wilbur listens to the shaking in his dad’s voice, and his chest feels tight. “Well, then we make sure that you don’t.”

“Wil, I don’t think it’s that easy-”

“We make sure that you don’t,” Wilbur interrupts, and he knows his brothers and father are staring at him, but he doesn’t care. “We’ll... we’ll figure it out. We have to.”

Beside him, Techno nods minutely. “We have to,” he repeats.

Dad reaches up and runs a hand through Wilbur’s hair. “We’ll try,” he says, but Wilbur knows it’s an empty promise, and his heart sinks.

I have to think of a way out of this, he thinks miserably. I have to. Or else.

Chapter End Notes

I originally described this chapter as “a reunion between father and son (and son and son and son and son)”

Water to Wine and the Finest of Sands

Chapter Summary

What's this? A relatively peaceful chapter?

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Gold* by *Imagine Dragons*

Philza wakes to gentle light and gentle warmth.

He cracks an eye open to look around, and he smiles at the scene he sees: he's crashed on the bed that his apartment had (granted, he doesn't think he's used it yet until now), and his sons are all curled up around him, Techno gently snoring; Tubbo tucked inside Philza's arm in between Techno and Philza; Tommy wedged in between Techno and Tubbo, head resting on Tubbo's stomach; Wilbur on Philza's other side, curled into a ball, Ranboo asleep on the other side, head resting on Philza's arm.

It's peaceful, for once. Philza smiles contentedly, lazily.

It won't last, he knows, but for a moment he can pretend it will.

Slowly, carefully, Philza untangles himself from his sleeping sons, and miraculously, none of them wake.

He silently walks to the kitchen and digs into the fridge, taking out eggs and bacon and bread. He smiles as he finds a frying pan and lights a fire on the stovetop, preparing the bacon for frying.

As he cooks, his sons, one by one, make their way out to the kitchen, and Philza smiles at them as they sit down: Ranboo, Techno, Tubbo, Tommy, then Wilbur. As they eat, they wake up a little more, and soon enough, the sound of chatter echoes through the apartment cheerfully.

The peace is disturbed a little by a loud screech, and Philza looks up from his own breakfast to see Techno having wedged open a window.

"I don't think it opens any more, but the fresh air should be good," Techno says with a shrug.

Curious, Philza makes his way over to the window. Just outside, a bird nest sits in the vines outside.

"What kind of birds are those?" Wilbur asks, peering out the window.

"Ender doves," Philza says with a smile, stretching a hand outside. One of the birds chirps happily and jumps in his hand. "Like I am."

"Wait, it's specifically a bird species from here in the End?" Tommy asks, eyes wide. "I just

thought it was some generic type of bird.”

Philza smiles at the bird. “Nope.”

“That’s kind of cool, though,” Ranboo says in awe.

Philza holds the bird in his hands, and he turns to smile at his sons, and for a moment he thinks he could live like this: a utopia hidden from the world where his sons could be safe, where birds sang and the species he resembled lived, where there were markets and fresh clear air, where he didn’t have to worry.

But then, behind them, he sees her, and he’s reminded of why he left: the perfection was only an illusion, no safety could truly last here for them.

“Moira,” he says in as calm a voice as he can manage. “What are you doing here?”

“Just stopping by,” she replies coolly.

Philza opens his hands back outside the window, and the bird flies off. “While you’re here, do you mind if I ask you a favor?”

“Ask, and you may receive.”

“I’d like to show my sons the market.” He returns his gaze to her and smiles a little, despite himself. “I have a lot of good memories of it, and I’d like to share it with them.”

She tilts her head as if thinking. “I do believe we can fit that into the schedule, what with the fittings and the ceremony.”

“Fittings?” He asks, confused.

“For your sons. They are going to be at the ceremony after all.”

Philza’s blood runs cold, and as his sons all turn on Moira, shouting, all he can think is how *no, this can’t be, his sons can’t be forced to watch him die, he can’t be killed in front of his own sons*.

He turns his gaze back outside, staring longingly at the world outside. In another time, maybe, he could have had that.

But that is not this timeline.

He notices the shouting has fallen quiet, and he looks back up. “What?”

“I said that yes, you can go to the market.”

Philza looks at her, and he wonders, briefly, if she can see how hurt he is, but if she does, she doesn’t say.

“Thank you,” he says after a moment.

She nods. “Anything else?”

He shakes his head.

With a small bow of her head, she leaves, the door locking shut behind her.

The apartment is silent except for the quiet chirping of the ender doves outside.

“Do.” Tommy pauses before continuing, swallowing hard. “Do we really have to see you die?”

The question sits cold and heavy and dark in Philza’s chest, and the world seems to be spinning out of control, and it’s a little hard to breathe. “I don’t think I have a say in the matter, Toms.” His chest is tight, and Philza thinks he might be shaking but he can’t tell.

“This is bullshit,” Wilbur says darkly, hair covering his eyes, blocking his face from Philza’s view.

“I agree,” Philza says, and he tries to push down the sense of helplessness threatening to rise. He’s not sure he’s succeeding. Actually, he’s sure he’s not succeeding, but he keeps trying, despite his breath coming in short, quiet bursts now. “But that doesn’t mean I can do anything about it.”

“We have to do something!” Techno shouts angrily, baring his teeth in the direction of the door, and all Philza can do is shake his head, helplessly.

“Dad?” Ranboo asks softly, and Philza’s chest seems even tighter, and breathing is even harder now.

“I don’t know,” he gasps. “I don’t know what to do.”

He hasn’t realized Tubbo walked up to him until his sons hug him, and Philza hugs him back tightly.

“I don’t know what to do,” he repeats, shaking his head. “I’m so sorry.”

His other sons draw near, and he opens up his arms to let them in, pulling them close as if it could give him any comfort.

“I’m so sorry,” he repeats, softly, unsure of who he’s trying to apologize to: himself, his sons, or the world.

Did You Make It to the Milky Way to See the Lights All Faded

Chapter Summary

these bitches unprepared. good for them. good for them!

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Drops of Jupiter by Train*

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

This is not the pleasant trip Badboyhalo was hoping for.

First of all, Skeppy could not manage to get along with anyone. Maybe he was biased: after all, the first time he and Dream met, Dream had proceeded to insult both Badboyhalo and Skeppy at the same time, implying what Badboyhalo had done for Skeppy was out of pity and that Badboyhalo was weak. It was one of the few times Badboyhalo had ever really truly seen Skeppy angry. On the other hand, George and Sapnap had not been in that altercation. Skeppy seems intent on bothering the muffin out of them anyway.

Second of all, the End is cold. As a Nether hybrid, Badboyhalo doesn't do well with the cold. He links his arm with Skeppy and shivers violently. Sapnap doesn't seem to be doing very well either, huddled in between George and Dream, shaking as well.

Third, Draegocost was far away. He reasons he should have guessed by the name and Ranboo's reaction, but that doesn't change the fact that it's far away.

But they have everything they need: their prized possession, their armor, their weapons, and most importantly, each other.

As they approach, Badboyhalo can't help but stare: the whole town seems deserted, and the void is so close that it terrifies him, and he can't help but feel absolutely and utterly alone, despite his friends close, and Skeppy closer.

"What... happened here?" George asks, aghast.

Badboyhalo shakes his head.

"We could ask him," Skeppy says, pointing out a cloaked man by the void.

As they get closer, Bad realizes that it's no man at all, instead, a phantom hybrid.

They approach the man warily.

He stares at them. "You don't happen to be headed to the Last City as well?" He asks as he studies them.

“H... how did you know?” Sapnap asks.

The ferryman frowns. “I guessed. Though, it’s odd. Normally very few people come this way, especially since Draegocost was deserted, but this week... two groups of five, it seems.”

Badboyhalo sighs with relief. His friends were here. They were safe, here, at least earlier this week.

“Friends?” The ferryman asks politely, noticing Badboyhalo's reaction.

He nods.

“Interesting,” the ferryman says, “That you should be friends with the angel’s sons.”

Badboyhalo straightens up with a grin. “So I was right!”

Dream looks a bit taken aback. “So I’ve challenged the Angel of Death’s son to a duel? A champion of the Blood God? And lived?”

“To be fair, it was a nonlethal duel,” Skeppy grumbles.

The ferryman looks amused. “The piglin hybrid? He looks like a formidable fighter.”

“He is,” Skeppy says, and Badboyhalo smiles. “And he beat Dream.”

The ferryman shrugs. “Of that, I am not surprised. However, I am curious as to why you all are choosing to go to the Last City.”

Badboyhalo exchanges a look with Skeppy, and he sighs as fear creeps up his spine like frost. “I’m the one who told them about the Last City in the End, and I feel... responsible for making sure they make it back home, their father included.”

Skeppy nods at him with a small smile.

The ferryman sighs, closing his luminous eyes, leathery wings lowering behind him, and Badboyhalo can almost feel the remorse the hybrid holds. “You know there is no return from the Last City in the End?”

“I’m sorry, what?” George asks, alarmed.

“Bullshit,” Sapnap complains.

“The Last City in the End hasn’t met me yet,” Dream says, grinning.

The ferryman lifts an eyebrow. “The only one who ever has is the Angel of Death himself, and look where that landed him. So make your choices wisely, friends of the Angelsons.”

The threat hangs in the air, heavy and stifling, and suddenly, Badboyhalo is terrified, a deep, unsettling type of terror, like standing on the edge of a crumbling cliff, not knowing if the ground under you is about to collapse and take you with it.

Badboyhalo sighs, and turns to look at his friends. “I understand if you wish to turn back now, after hearing... that.” He gestures at the ferryman. “But I’m going. I have to. Mr. Minecraft’s kids wouldn’t be in this situation if it weren’t for me, and they’re my friends. I’m helping them, even if it means I never come home. Besides, so long as Skeppy is safe, I’ll be fine.” He gives a grim smile.

“I’m going with you,” Skeppy says immediately, and it’s like ice stabbing Badboyhalo in the chest, but he’s already had this argument with Skeppy, and he knows his friend’s stance won’t have changed in the few hours since then.

Dream shrugs. “I’ve faced worse. I’ll live.”

George and Sapnap exchange worried looks behind Dream’s back, and for a moment, Badboyhalo doubts they will come with, but he sees the determination they both hold themselves with, and he knows where Dream goes, they’ll follow.

“Count us in,” Sapnap says with a smile, George nodding beside him.

The ferryman shrugs. “Well then, payment?” He offers his hand out to the adventurers.

Badboyhalo goes first, the small, smooth crystal already in his hand. As he presses it into the ferryman’s hand, he doesn’t dare look at Skeppy. How could he? He was giving away one of the first things Skeppy had given him, or at least one of the first things that was a physical item, that wasn’t a home or a friend.

Badboyhalo doesn’t look at the others as they join him, but Skeppy grabs his arm, and Badboyhalo wants to lean against him, his oldest and closest friend. He almost does, but he resists, shutting his eyes tightly instead.

What is he doing, putting Skeppy in danger like this, he wonders.

But it’s too late for that doubt now. The boat rocks unevenly as the ferryman pushes off from land, into the void. The only thing Badboyhalo can do now is hold his friends close and hope that they’ll make it back home.

Badboyhalo reaches into the inside pocket of his jacket and runs his fingers over the gilded title on the book that sits there, close to his chest.

This better be worth it, he thinks, and he can feel his heart hammering in his chest as the islands disappear behind him into the inky void.

Chapter End Notes

Hello! You may have noticed this is going to be a series now! The series has no name yet, but I've come up with enough short stories in the same universe that I feel like I need it. I don't know when I'll post the first chapter of the second work, but I do know what it's about and I have it at least plotted out! So there's that!

(If you have suggestions for a series title, I’m open to hearing it! I have. No ideas tbh)

I'm Not Your Protagonist (I'm Not Even My Own)

Chapter Summary

explanation time (for the characters)

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Sweet Hibiscus Tea* by Penelope Scott)

“So, this cult,” Wilbur says, sitting down next to Philza. “What do they even really want you for? Bad didn’t really give that many details, nor did the ferryman, nor did the cultists. What’s going on here? Why do they want you dead so badly?”

Philza smiles at the cult description despite himself, but his expression falls soon after.

“What do you know, so I know where to start?” He asks, dread pooling in his gut.

“You’re called the Angel of Death, they say you killed the Ender Dragon, and they want you dead.” Techno’s voice is even, but quiet, and Philza wants to pull him close and wrap his arms around him and tell him that they’re safe.

But that would be a lie, and right now, that would hurt them more than the truth, no matter how sharp and jagged and painful the truth is.

“You’ve been here before, five hundred years ago, probably due to an End time shift,” Ranboo murmurs.

Philza’s heart aches even more violently.

“They want to kill you to bring back the Ender Dragon,” Wilbur adds darkly.

Philza sighs and nods. “Yeah. Yeah, they do. All of that is... well, a lot of people here think it’s true, but I don’t... I don’t know what to think.”

“There’s some book involved,” Tommy says.

Philza nods. “*The Book of Eyes*. It dictates a lot of this. It tells the story of the Ender Dragon goddess. I, well, if I’m really the Angel of Death, then I’m in it. So far, it seems that it is talking about me.”

“Why?” Tubbo asks.

“Well, there are a few certain facts about the Angel of Death. One, they kill the Ender Dragon goddess. Two, they end up in the Last City for a while, then they leave. Three, they come back, at which point, they’re truly the Angel of Death.” Philza pauses there, making a face. “Well, no, they’re truly the Angel of Death once they leave. Something about no one wanting the leave the

Last City long enough to actually do so. The Angel of Death is supposedly the only one who does. Once they come back to the End, they get killed and in that act, the Ender Dragon goddess is brought back to life. Supposedly the cycle continues for eternity, but the Angel of Death changes every time, until one day the Ender Dragon is never revived again.”

“So because someone else did it, you have to do it?” Techno asks.

Philza shrugs. “There’s no record of there actually being another Angel of Death before me, and the Last City has extensive records on just about everything.” He sighs, pushing his hair out of his face.

“So they removed them?” Wilbur asks, but Philza shakes his head.

“Most people here, they’ve lived here for ages. There are no mobs, there’s no violence, and there’s plenty of magic to live forever. I would’ve heard about it one way or another. I genuinely think that I am the first Angel of Death.”

“So, if you die, the cycle continues? Who would it be passed to?” Tubbo asks.

Philza shrugs. “The Book doesn’t really specify. In some translations, it’s random. In others, it’s the angel’s son. Depends on the translation.”

“Son by blood or by name? Cause, the ferryman, he called us Angelsons,” Tommy asks, eyes wide.

Philza leans back in his seat, sighing deeply. “I have no clue, mate.”

“Great,” Techno mumbles to himself. “Imagine if I were both the Angel of Death and a Champion of the Blood God. Exactly what I need in life.”

Wilbur and Tommy both chuckle to themselves at that, and Techno gives them a small smile.

A lull passes over them as they think about what Philza’s told them.

Ranboo looks over at him from where he’s standing by the bookshelves. “These are all in Ender.”

Philza shrugs. “I’d assume so. It is the native tongue of most people here. I learned it pretty quickly when I was here, but it could be argued it’s in my blood or something.” He spreads out his wings a little for emphasis.

“There’s a copy of *The Book of Eyes* in Ender here,” Ranboo says softly.

Philza looks over at him surprised. “Really?”

Ranboo nods, eyes wide and curious as he takes it off the shelf.

“Why is that a surprise?” Techno asks.

“It’s forbidden to read it in Ender unless you’re a high-ranking priest. The translation from Ender to Common can be... difficult. Ender’s a hugely different language than Common. It’s a lot more flowery and metaphor-heavy.”

“That sounds... suspicious,” Wilbur comments.

Philza simply shrugs. He doesn’t have anything to say on that matter.

“Though, in that case,” Tubbo says. “It makes sense that there’d be a copy in Ender here.”

Considering this is the Ender Dragon's Castle or whatever, and you're the Angel of Death."

Philza sighs and shrugs once more. The thought of all his sons being brought into this... it's heavy dread in his stomach and chilling fear down his spine and dizzying anxiety in his mind, and he feels sick.

Ranboo cracks the book open, curiously, and Philza shuts his eyes. He's not going to stop Ranboo from reading it, especially since they're already in this position.

"Wait, so after all your trash-talking of this book all the way here, you're just going to read it?" Tommy asks incredulously.

"And miss out on the opportunity to see if there's any mistranslations or hidden meanings in the Ender version? Anything that might save us?" Ranboo shoots back, and Philza can't help to smile a little. Oh, how he loves his sons.

"Can't argue with that one," Wilbur says.

"Yeah, ok," Tommy concedes.

"You'll keep us posted?" Techno asks, voice soft with worry.

"Mmm," Ranboo replies, but Philza can already tell his newest son is already lost in the book.

"Don't read standing up. Come sit down," Philza calls out, still not opening his eyes.

Silently, Ranboo moves to sit next to Philza, and he can't help but smile as Ranboo curls against him subconsciously.

On the other hand...

Philza isn't sure what Ranboo is hoping to find. A loophole, maybe. But he doesn't have high hopes. This is a dead end, and Ranboo's looking for false hope where there isn't any to be found in the first place.

In the end, Philza doesn't think he'll find anything, but maybe, just maybe, a touch of hope is what they need.

After all, he lived five hundred years trying to prove to himself that his life wasn't scripted by destiny. Why should he stop now just because he might be proved wrong? Is it the fear of falling from the grace of being free from fate? Or is it the fear of failing to live up to what he's tried to be his whole life, a hero? He doesn't know, and he doesn't think he'll ever know.

Something Just Like This

Chapter Summary

A nice little day trip

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Something Just Like This* by Coldplay & the Chainsmokers

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

Chat's whispers wake Techno up at dawn.

FIELD TRIP POG!! FIELD TRIP E FIELD TRIP FIELD TRIP FIELD TRIP!!!

He groans and rolls over on the sofa, pulling his pillow around his ears, though it does nothing to stop them.

At least, he thinks it's dawn. The streetlights outside grow dim and bright in what Techno thinks is supposed to mimic a daylight cycle, but he genuinely has no clue. There's no sun or moon in the void the End is in, and since getting here, time feels like it doesn't truly exist either.

He sits up, grumpy, and he's certain he looks like a mess, long hair tangled, and he squints out the window.

The city below already seems filled with life. Technoblade's not sure it ever went to sleep to begin with.

He shuffles to the kitchen and goes through the motions of making coffee.

It's not unusual for Techno to be the first one awake - the voices like to start early - but normally, Philza is awake soon after. But looking at his father yesterday and the day before, Techno's not sure how much sleep Philza's gotten in the past few days. Definitely not enough, he thinks, and chat murmurs their agreement.

To his surprise, and his comfort, Philza is up soon after, and Techno hands him a mug.

"Thanks, Tech," Philza mumbles, still half-asleep.

Dadza!! Awakeza dadza good morning!! Chat practically sings with delight at seeing Philza, and Techno smiles despite himself.

It doesn't take long for the others to join them in the kitchen, and they dig through cabinets and the fridge to feed themselves. It's odd to see them up this early, but Technoblade's willing to blame the fucked-up way time seems to work here in the end, throwing their normal sleep schedules apart.

The morning grows older with a relative sense of peace, and Techno basks in it while it's still

around. He knows it won't be for long, and he can't completely fight the chill that thought fills him with, but the warm glow of comfort in the apartment soothes him well enough.

Soon, though, it's time to go out into the Last City in the End.

Despite the guards carefully watching their every move, despite Moira's presence in the group, despite the fact that it feels like their world is about to fall apart far too soon, despite the fact that they're far from home, Philza Minecraft looks... happy.

Technoblade's chest aches as he looks at his father.

And it's not that the market in the Last City isn't nice. It is. Purple and grey and white fabrics cover far more stalls than Technoblade can count, filled with armorers and blacksmiths and farmers and craftsmen and artists and artisans, the scent of sweet bread and smoky meat and ripe fruits in the air, bright colors and the sound of laughter.

It's all just oddly like the Overworld, and it's all just a little too much for Technoblade, even if he refuses to show it.

Chat murmurs almost aggressively, but Techno does his best to tune it out and focus on his breathing.

In front of him, something catches his eye.

His father grins, chatting away with his brothers, Techno can't help the ache in his chest. His father looks so happy here. Why did he ever want to leave? It's paradise, almost, especially for his father.

He loves you E he wanted to be free he had a family he didn't want to stay endza pog he can't stand pure peace you're his family-

Techno groans a little to himself. *Please shut up for a little bit, chat*, he mentally pleads.

They wander through the market, and Techno ends up near Moira.

He honestly doesn't like her. Dad doesn't like her, so Techno doesn't either. Plus she seems to hold herself as if she thinks she's better than the rest of them, and it makes Techno want to challenge her to a duel and beat her to a pulp.

However, right now, she doesn't look angry or condescending like the other times he saw her.

She notices him staring, and Techno immediately looks away.

That's awkward technoawkward yikes bitch is looking at us E, chat murmurs.

"You know," Moira says, and internally, Technoblade groans. *Oh, fuck, she's talking to me.* "I've never seen your father this happy here," she continues, and Techno's surprised enough to say something.

"But he looks so happy to be here. I can't even figure out why he left," Techno protests.

She smiles, and she looks a little sad and a little defensive. "He missed his family," she says simply, then she turns that sad, uncomfortable smile to Techno. "But this time around..." She trails off.

"He has us," Techno fills in. Moira nods. "But he doesn't want us here," he counters. "He's about to die, and we're going to be forced to watch it!"

She shrugs. “But if that weren’t the case, I don’t think he’d ever want to leave again. If his family were here the first time around, I don’t think he would’ve ever wanted to leave.”

Techno scoffs.

“He would’ve never become the Angel of Death,” she says.

“But he killed the Ender Dragon,” Techno points out.

She laughs. “Many people have. But what sets your father apart is that even after having paradise, he gave it away for something else.”

“And you wouldn’t have traded your family for paradise?” Technoblade asks.

“Would you?” She asks.

“Of course,” Techno says immediately. “They’re my family. I love them, more than I could ever love paradise.”

Moira looks at him, conflicted, but she falls silent after that.

Technoblade shrugs and moves closer to his family.

Dad is talking: “- and over there is the stall I first tried karoyanet. I still think they have the best recipe in this whole city.”

“Karoyanet?” Tommy asks, eyes wide, and Techno chuckles at how excited his brother looks.

“It’s like steak, except not? It has a lot of chorus fruit-based stuff in it. I don’t really know how to describe it. We should stop there next, actually, if Wil, you’re done looking at that guitar?”

Wilbur gives Philza pleading eyes. “I want it so bad.”

Philza sighs, smiling. “Okay, I’ll buy it for you.”

Techno smiles as he watches Philza barter with the vendor, and he wonders for just a moment what it would be like if they lived here, happy.

Techno no /rainbowchat you have to escape E they’re going to kill dadza and you want to live here? Blood for the blood god!

Technoblade shakes his head a little. Chat is right. They need to focus on how to get out of here.

Unfortunately, he has no idea where to start, and he’d like to pretend he’s safe and happy just a little longer, and his chest feels like it’s being squeezed too tight.

He sighs to himself as they continue the tour of the city. Maybe he can get something done while they’re out, even if it’s come up with failed plan after failed plan.

Though, as they approach the karoyanet stall and Techno’s stomach growls, maybe food would be nice too.

pspsps if y'all want more of this series, the first chapter of the next fic is out? maybe go check it out? that one won't update as fast as this one but hey not all of them can be "updates daily"

I Only Ever Wanted to Come Home

Chapter Summary

sometimes getting your emotions out in the air is having a bitter shouting match with your ex-best friend

(actually no that's a terrible idea)

Chapter Notes

chapter title from the song *Millenia by Crown the Empire*

The apartment seems colder and quieter than Philza let himself get used to over the past couple of days.

It had been comfortable at least to have his sons by his side once more. Even with death looming over him, even with danger surrounding them, even with constant aching fear, having his sons with him filled a hole that Philza hadn't even realized was there.

And it's not like they won't be back soon, he tells himself. They're just getting fitted for their outfits for...

Well, for his death, he thinks with a pang.

He buries his face in his hands where he sits on the couch.

The world threatens to tip over on its side as he grows dizzy, his breath short and ragged and uneven. How could he do this to his sons? Why? The tears fill his eyes and spill down his face into his palms, and he's sure he's shaking violently, wings wrapped around himself tightly

Get a grip! The malicious part of him thinks, and he struggles to try to do so, forming fists with his hands and digging his nails into his hands.

"Aw, are you crying?" A voice calls out, and Philza jumps to his feet immediately, fists ready, wings puffed out.

"What the fuck do you want?" He snarls at Moira.

"I just wanted to talk. I thought you might be, well, lonely without your sons here." Her voice is like poisoned honey, and it makes Philza's skin crawl.

"And whose fault is that?" He asks drily.

"Well, yours," she said.

"Mine?" He scoffs, incredulous. "Mine?"

“If you’d never left…” her voice trails off suggestively.

“It’s my fault for wanting to go home?”

She shrugs and sits on the sofa where he was once sitting. “You know, I can not, for the life of me, wrap my head around why someone would ever want to leave here. But your son can.”

Philza’s mind whirls as he tries to figure out which son spoke to Moira, before he remembers the trip to the market. “Technoblade,” he whispers.

She shrugs. “A champion of the Blood God, no? Interesting that the Angel of Death should adopt him.”

He mirrors her attitude. “I didn’t know when I adopted him. He was only a year old.”

Moira’s purple eyes look at him briefly. “That young?”

He nods, and she laughs. “Of course, you always did have a soft heart.”

“Nothing wrong with that. Tell me what he said.”

She looks away, almost as if she feels guilty, but Philza dismisses the thought immediately.

“Just that he, too, would pick his family over paradise.”

Philza feels a surge of pride, and he grins. “That’s my boy.”

She scoffs as she looks up at him, eyes full of hurt. “You’d encourage that?”

“Family means everything to me. It’s no wonder they would pick up my morals.”

“And look where that got you!”

“You say that like I chose this life,” Philza counters bitterly.

“You killed the ender dragon.”

“I didn’t know what that meant at the time.”

“And even after you learned what it meant, you still chose to leave! Admit it! You did choose this!” Moira shouts angrily.

“I only ever wanted to go home!” Philza shouts, rage turning his voice to venom. “That’s all I ever wanted. I wanted to prove I was a worthy son to have in a world where I was always given side-eyed looks and was whispered about behind my back! I wanted to show my parents that they had a son to be proud of despite my differences from everyone else we knew!”

“So you gave up someone who already accepted you for that?” Moira shouts back, tears streaming down her face.

“I did! And I would do it again!” As soon as the words leave his lips, the enormity of what he just said hit him, how it would hurt Moira, but he couldn’t bring himself to take it back.

Why would he? It was true. If he had killed the Ender Dragon goddess today instead of when he was sixteen, he would still be fighting to get back home to his family, to his sons.

Moira gives him a hurt look, suddenly quiet.

Philza lets out a long breath. "I shouldn't have said it like that, Moira. You were my best friend, and nothing could ever change that I could never have replaced you. But it's true. You weren't my family. You *aren't* my family."

"So that's where your loyalties lie," she says simply. "Your family? Even if they hurt you?"

Philza gives her a confused look. "They've never hurt me."

She scoffs. "Look at yourself. You're so worried about them, all the fucking time. I can see you tearing yourself up about it."

"Isn't that the price of loving someone?" He replies with a rueful laugh. "To care about someone means to never want to see them hurt. The worst part of it is that I'm going to see them hurt one way or another. That's being a father, though."

"But it's your fault this time." Moira's voice is sharp and deadly, a knife flying through the air, aiming for the weak point in his armor, under his shield, right where it will hurt the most, and Philza knows this. He *knows* it's going to hurt, so he takes a deep breath and lets it out slowly.

"It is. And it's one of two regrets I will take with me to my death."

"And what's the other regret?" She asks, angrily.

"That I couldn't convince you to let me go. Or to come with me. You were my friend. But you believed so much in this," he gestures around him, "that you couldn't see me. You just saw someone who could have been the Angel of Death or that could have been with you until the end of time. But you couldn't have both. And, inadvertently, by choosing to go home..." Philza tries to laugh but it sounds broken and lost, even to his own ears. "Well, I guess I chose my fate."

"You did," Moira says, voice quiet, and it almost sounds mournful. "But I already grieved for my friend who jumped from the top of the castle and flew away." She looks up, purple eyes almost aflame. "I have no one to mourn now, Angel of Death."

Philza smiles grimly at her. "'And, by that draw of the bow, the Angel was cursed by our Mother forevermore: May your grave be forever unmarked, and your birth forever forgotten'," he quotes bitterly.

"As it was written," she says with a smile. She leaves, the door slamming behind her dramatically.

Philza lets out a breath he didn't know he was holding, and the dread creeps up his spine, ice and guilt threatening to suffocate him.

Did he do the right thing in saying those things? Did he do the right thing in burning that last bridge?

It's not like it could be rebuilt now, and after quoting that book that his former friend believed in so highly, he's not sure she'd be willing to do so even if they could.

He sits back down on the couch with a sigh. He doesn't want to be forgotten save for the text of a book that haunts him even in his dreams. But what choice does he have?

He looks at his hands to notice they're shaking, though he doesn't know when the tremors started.

He buries his face in his hands once more, wrapping his wings around himself tightly.

It's the Edge of the World (and Western Civilization)

Chapter Summary

The rescuers have reached the End.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Californication* by Red Hot Chili Peppers

Sapnap does not like the End.

He didn't like it any of the times he went to kill a dragon on his own. He didn't like it during any of the Manhunt videos with Dream. And he certainly didn't like it now that they were stuck on an island, literally hundreds of thousands of blocks away from anyone else from their home.

It didn't help that the ferryman was an asshole. He just left them against some abandoned wall by some houses, said good luck, then fucked off.

They sat there, behind the house, arguing how to traverse the city, where to even begin to look for Philza and his kids, for a few minutes until the person who lived there sticks his head out of the window and shouts at them to shut up or move on.

The five of them stare at the inhabitant in shock.

"Look, I don't know why the ferryman ditched you all here, but I'm trying to take a nap. I'm meeting a friend for dinner in three hours, and I need my beauty rest. Shut up or leave," the shulker hybrid complains, dark circles under his eyes.

Sapnap turns to look at Bad, eyes wide. Bad only returns the expression.

"Alright, we'll leave," Skeppy says, quietly, then grabs onto Bad's sleeve, pulling him along the edge, and Sapnap follows, Dream and George behind him until they spill into an alleyway in front of some houses.

"Well, I mean, he sure didn't seem suspicious of us, despite the ferryman saying we were the first people here in a while, other than Mr. Minecraft's kids," Bad says at last.

"Maybe the others won't be as well," Dream says with a grin.

"I'd rather not push our luck," George says, looking uncomfortable and on edge.

Dream elbows him playfully, and Sapnap grins at them.

"Let's take a look around then, get acquainted with the place," Skeppy says, shifting from foot to foot, and Bad nods.

“It’s our best bet, at any rate.”

They wander through the city, and Sapnap can’t help but stare and admire the buildings. He’s never been one for architecture - having traveled from city to city for most of your life will do that, even though a fair part of the traveling was voluntary, exploring with Dream and George, taking on quests where they could - but this is something he’s never seen before. The end stone is polished to the point of shining, and many of the buildings are mostly glass, with detailing in purpur and obsidian, and as they move into the city, gold and amethyst start appearing, and the buildings grow taller and more well-designed.

After a while, more and more stores and cafes and booths start appearing, and after their long trip through the void, Sapnap’s stomach growls as he smells the food.

Bad gives him a careful, side-eyed look. “Maybe we can stop, grab something to eat, talk about our thoughts so far.”

Sapnap gives him pleading eyes. “Can we?”

Skeppy grins. “That sounds amazing!”

Bad picks a cafe and leaves the other four at a table, making his way inside to order. After a few minutes, he returns with hot food and beverages, and Sapnap sighs longingly as he stares at it.

“Bad, I think I love you,” Sapnap says, grinning.

Bad snorts inelegantly, trying not to laugh, and Skeppy shoots daggers at Sapnap, while George and Dream laugh, and Sapnap snickers, looking directly at Skeppy.

They dig into the food quickly, and Sapnap closes his eyes as the flavors wash over his tongue, steak and chorus fruit and chocolate, and something else he can’t quite identify but tastes amazing nonetheless.

The table falls silent as they eat, too busy fueling their bodies and enjoying the food to speak, and Sapnap can’t help but feel content, despite the circumstances.

“So what are we thinking so far?” Skeppy asks after he finishes, wiping his mouth with a napkin.

“So many things,” Dream says, looking around them, eyes wide and a grin on his face.

“This is cool,” Sapnap agrees.

“This is nuts,” George hisses.

“It’s incredible,” Bad whispers in awe. “I’ve never seen anything like this before.”

Sapnap shrugs with a smile. “This is pretty fucking cool.”

“Language,” Bad counters, and beside him, Skeppy snickers.

“Shut it, diamonds,” Sapnap says.

“Is that a challenge?” Skeppy counters with a grin.

Sapnap just sticks his tongue out in response.

“Oh, you’re fucking on, bitch boy-”

“Language!” Bad shouts, causing some of the passersby to give them strange looks. “And no challenge!”

“Aww, but I like a challenge,” Dream complains.

“We still have to find Mr. Minecraft-”

“Why do you keep calling him that?” Dream asks, looking at Bad with a pained look.

“Having asked him that question before, it’s apparently because it’s a ‘matter of respect’, despite the fact that Philza has told us we can call him Philza at least half a dozen times,” Skeppy says, looking bored. “Though, I guess we could call him by his full title, Sir Philza Minecraft, the Angel of Death, Slayer of Dragons, the Man with One Life.”

“Sir Philza Minecraft?” George asks, confused.

Skeppy rolls his eyes. “My uncle made him a knight to justify his low taxes and to thank him for saving my life at least once.”

“Oh, that’s right! You’re some pretentious prince boy!” Sapnap says, grinning evilly at Skeppy.

“Call me that again and I’ll stab you.”

Badboyhalo rolls his eyes at this, and Sapnap laughs.

“Wait, I have an idea,” Dream says, standing abruptly.

“What are you-” George starts to say, but Sapnap hears his jaw snap shut as Dream walks up to a random citizen walking by.

“Where are they keeping the Angel of Death? My friends and I, we just arrived here, and we heard the ceremony hasn’t happened yet.” Dream gives them a winning smile, and they giggle, then point at the massive castle looming over the city.

Ah , Sapnap thinks, feeling apprehensive. That doesn’t look like fun.

Dream walks back to the table and sits down. “Well, he’s in the castle. I’m willing to bet his sons are there too.”

George looks at him aghast. “Why did you think that was the correct fucking plan to figure out where they were?”

Dream shrugs. “Seemed direct.”

Badboyhalo groans and Sapnap rolls his eyes. “Dumbass,” Sapnap says with a smile.

Bad glares at him. “Language, Sapnap. Don’t make me say it again.”

“So we know where to focus our search and studying,” Dream says. “Why don’t we head over there and see what’s open to the public?”

“That’s a terrible idea,” Skeppy says.

“Plus,” Sapnap adds, “that’s literally the largest building in this whole End-forsaken place.” He pauses. “It’s weird to call it End-forsaken when it’s literally. You know. In the End?”

Skeppy looks at him, astonished, and Bad sighs dramatically.

“Let’s get started then,” Dream says, standing again. “C’mon.”

I Don't Ever Want to Let You Down

Chapter Summary

Fitting time for the boys

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *It's Time* by Imagine Dragons

As Ranboo stares in the mirror before him, he wonders if this is a person he would be happy to be in another time.

Maybe, he decides. If he lived in the End longer, if he weren't adopted by Philza, if he believed anything *The Book of Eyes* said to be true.

But in this time, his brothers stand in the same room as him, getting fitted for long, draping costumes made of purple and gold and white fabrics, and his father is who knows how far away, locked inside a cage, terrified.

Ranboo's terrified, too.

At least the tailor seems nice. They study him with golden-green eyes, a phantom hybrid like the ferryman was. They don't speak much, and when they do, their voice is soft like a whisper.

His brothers also seem to be quiet, and he wonders what they're thinking. Are they nervous? Are they busy thinking about how to get out of this?

He meets the tailor's eyes and looks away immediately. *That was uncomfortable*, he thinks immediately, turning back to his own reflection.

He has to admit, the outfit has an appeal. He truly looks like he's from the End now: the white fabric contrasts against the dark half of his skin, and the purple and gold make his green and red eyes seem even brighter than normal. His tail twitches nervously, but his reflection doesn't look nervous. Instead, he looks a touch regal, the motion of his tail making him look a touch irritated rather than afraid.

The tailor pins something dark to his shoulder on the pale side, balancing out the contrasting design. As Ranboo looks at it, he realizes it's a wither rose, formed by fabric.

Ironic, he thinks a touch bitterly, the tattoo on his left wrist aching with phantom pain.

The tailor looks at his reflection. "You know, when the Angel mentioned his sons, none of you are what I was expecting."

"What were you expecting?" Ranboo asks, politely.

They shrug. “Maybe something a touch more... I don’t know. Maybe something like him.”

Ranboo smiles ruefully. “Well, we’re all a little bit like him, or so I’ve been told.”

They smile at his reflection. “You’re nice and polite like him.”

Ranboo blinks in surprise. It’s not often he’s described to be like his dad. Technoblade was, with his fighting ability. Tommy was, with his inability to stay out of trouble. Wilbur was, with his way with words. Tubbo was, with his willingness to help everyone.

It wasn’t that Ranboo didn’t want to be like Philza. It’s just that he was often seen as the other kid, the newest one.

“You really think so?” He asks.

The tailor nods.

“Thank you,” Ranboo says with a soft smile.

They grin, before turning to look back at his outfit. “Do you like it?”

Ranboo stares at his reflection and sighs forlornly. “It’s nice,” he says at last.

“But you don’t want to be wearing it,” they say, and he nods. They smile a little sadly. “We don’t always get what we want,” they say.

“Are you happy with what you have?” Ranboo asks.

They pause at that, and the two of them stare at each other’s reflections. Ranboo can’t help but see someone uncertain and questioning their life, and he wonders if this is their first time, or if, like him, it’s something they’ve done hundreds and thousands of times before.

“I thought I was,” they say at last. “But these days...” They shrug, staring at their own reflection sadly. “I try. But I think I’d be lying if I said I was.”

“So what are you going to do about it?” He asks quietly, uncertainly, and they look up at him, eyes wide briefly, before looking away.

“That sounds like what I imagine your father would sound like if he weren’t here,” they say instead.

Ranboo laughs a little to himself. “I’ve been told I’m an old soul.”

They smile. “Wisdom and age are not the same things,” they say.

“And you’re avoiding my question,” he says quietly, and then cringes. *Ah, that was probably too direct, that’s awkward.*

The tailor sighs. “I don’t know what I’m going to do. I don’t know what would help.”

Ranboo shrugs. “If you don’t know what will help, then anything might help.”

They look up, eyes almost glowing despite the brightness of the room. “You really think so?”

“Anything is worth trying. I mean, look at my brothers and me. We came here because we were going to try anything, just because it might help.”

“Did it?” They ask, voice flat.

“Well, not yet, but that doesn’t mean it won’t, in time.” He pauses. “At least, I’d like to think that,” he admits, and fear wraps around his heart, sharp barbs digging in.

The tailor nods. “I’d like to think that too.” They study his outfit. “I think this is done. I imagine you’ll want to talk to your brothers. Let’s get you out of this.”

Ranboo nods, sensing that the conversation is over. “Thank you,” he says simply, and they nod in response.

Ranboo meets his own reflection’s eyes, and for the first time, he understands what the tailor meant. He finally sees the piece of his father he internalized in his own reflection, and he smiles a little.

He looks over at his brothers. They’re still in varying states of being fitted for their uniforms: Techno towering over his tailor, looking uncomfortable in the outfit; Wilbur making small talk with his tailor, eyes narrowed, and Ranboo can guess he’s trying to get any information he can out of them; Tommy complaining to his tailor, who looks tired of Tommy; and Tubbo, who, like Ranboo, is done with his fitting.

Ranboo walks over to Tubbo and sits next to him on the ground.

Tubbo looks up at him. “You and your tailor were talking a bit,” he comments.

Ranboo shrugs. “They said I was like Dad, and seemed to think that was a good thing.”

“You are like Dad, and that is a good thing, so they aren’t wrong.”

“You think I’m like Dad?” Ranboo asks, caught off-guard.

Tubbo smiles, nodding.

Ranboo smiles, leaning against Tubbo. “Thanks.”

Tubbo smiles, leaning back against Ranboo. “For what? It’s the truth.”

Shaking the Wings of Their Terrible Youths

Chapter Summary

One last night(mare) before the ceremony.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Angel of Small Death and the Codeine Scene* by Hozier

Exhaustion begins to set in as Philza looks out across his sons, fast asleep in the living room of the apartment that they'd been stuck in, though Philza knows it will probably be their last night in this room, if things go well or if things go wrong.

He doesn't want to be tired tomorrow, he thinks, sighing to himself as he stares at them lovingly.

He walks through the room one last time, gently running his hand through his sons' hair one last time before he himself goes to sleep.

"I love you," he whispers into the silent night air, and though he gets no response, he knows what they would say if they were all awake.

He treads softly as he makes his way to the bedroom, and he lies on the soft, cold blankets, staring blankly up at the ceiling.

He shuts his eyes, and the world goes dark as he falls asleep.

The world is still dark when he opens his eyes, but a different kind of dark. This one is not warm and familiar. It's the cold, unforgiving void.

He's flying, wings beating a familiar rhythm behind him, and he stares into deep violet eyes he hasn't seen in five hundred years, though it feels like less time to him.

"Angel," the dragon says.

"Come for your revenge?" he asks.

The dragon laughs, a harsh sound that rattles in Philza's ears. "This is no revenge. This is just doing unto you what you did unto me."

"I didn't know any better," he says, pleading tone creeping into his voice.

"No one knew better the first time any sin was committed," she replies.

He stares at her, mouth partially open as he searches his mind for any retort that would work. "Do I not deserve forgiveness?" He asks at last.

“For murdering your mother?”

“You’re not my mother,” he replies immediately. “Thanks to you, I never got to see my mother again.”

“You could, tomorrow,” the dragon replies with a cruel smile.

“Not if it means leaving my boys,” Philza says, mouth dry. “That’s too high a price.”

“Sometimes we all have to give up that which we love.”

“Not this,” Philza says, and suddenly, in his hand, he recognizes he’s holding the hilt of a blade. The unenchanted netherite sparkles darkly against the void.

“And what are you going to do about that? Kill me?” She asks, smiling as if she had just told a clever joke.

“If that’s what it takes,” he says, lifting his blade.

She snarls, and in a flash, they charge at each other.

Teeth just barely miss his skin as she snaps at him. He grimaces, then spins his blade, digging it into her skin. She screams, twisting in the air, and it sends him flying, blade still stuck in her skin, wings beating fast to right himself.

She lets out a terrible scream, diving at Phil with jaws wide open, and he barely manages to get out of the way, breathing hard, sweat dripping down his face.

“You’re going to die,” she says, voice colder than the Ender air, and Philza grimaces.

“Not if I have anything to say about it,” he says, voice just as cold, and he flies towards her.

Bedazzled talons barely miss him as he tears his netherite blade free from her skin, letting himself fall - controlled, he reminds himself - dragging the blade across her stomach.

She roars as she twists in the air, violet eyes like flames as they follow him.

Philza twirls the blade in his hand, grinning with determination. “You have no control over me or my fate,” he shouts, hoping that she won’t see through his act, his false wall of confidence.

She responds with a terrible screech, diving for him, claws outstretched, and he retaliates in kind, diving under her claws and swinging his blade upwards into her leathery wings, and she howls, wings beating haphazardly, pushing Philza’s hair behind him and into his eyes.

With his off-hand, he pushes the hair out of his face and mouth, grimacing.

She takes advantage of his distraction, going in for the kill, talons covered in diamonds and gold and lapis and netherite looming over him formidably.

Using one hand to block his face, Philza jabs blindly. Dark blood rains down on him as he hits his mark, but it doesn’t stop the momentum of her talons, the danger coming from above, and he flinches, curling into a ball in the air, hugging his legs close to his chest, hoping that becoming a smaller target will save him, that she’ll miss once more.

For a moment, nothing happens. For a moment, time is frozen, Philza’s heart in his throat, wings keeping him in the air, blade pointing outward towards the threat, the dragon’s blood splattered

across his face.

Then, time resumes, bringing a horrible act with it.

Blinding pain tears through his wings and Philza tumbles, blade falling from his hands, but he doesn't stop tumbling, and fear spikes through his chest as he tries to flap his wings, but it does nothing but send sharp spikes down his wings and his back and his shoulder, and his eyes are blinded with tears.

He screams for a short moment in pain and frustration as he struggles to right himself before it hits him that he's moving.

He falls, wings in pain, red droplets of blood and dark feathers clumped together falling with him.

He looks up, end stone approaching him rapidly, and above him, she laughs.

"It was never meant to be," she says cruelly, and his eyes widen, and he opens his mouth to ask forgiveness, to scream, to do anything and-

He sits upright, gasping for air. He turns to look at his wings, and relief washes over him as he takes them in, undamaged and whole.

He wraps them around himself like a blanket and he sighs. So much for getting rest before the ceremony, he thinks, ruefully. If that was my last rest before he dies, that was terrible.

If the Heaven Ain't Got a Vacancy

Chapter Summary

One last day

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Planetary (GO!)* by *My Chemical Romance*

When Tommy awakens, everyone else is already awake.

This, in and of itself, is not a surprise. Tommy likes his sleep, though sometimes he wakes up before Wilbur, and sometimes he wakes up after.

Breakfast passes easily, and Tommy grins at his brothers and father.

If he forgets what's supposed to happen that night, then maybe, just maybe, everything feels okay.

This could have been any other normal day back home, but yet, Tommy can feel it, the deep undertone of fear and guilt.

They laugh and talk as if they were at home, albeit a little less argumentative than normal, but Tommy knows he's not the only one who can barely look at his brothers or his father.

He knows why, at least for his part. He's not *stupid*. He knows the moment he does, he'll just burst into tears, and wouldn't that be embarrassing, being the little brother who cries when they're afraid.

So, he just refuses to talk about it or acknowledge it. None of them do either, and a small worry worms its way into Tommy's chest.

Has he said everything he wants to?

No, best not to think like that. They're making it out alive, Tommy swears by it.

But what if it all goes wrong?

Tommy refuses to acknowledge the fear.

There's a knock at the door, and all five children stare with apprehension as Philza goes to answer it.

Instead of anyone other than the usual guards being there, there's just a box full of fabric.

"Your uniforms," one of them says.

Dad makes a face, and Tommy can't help but make one as well.

“It’s best to be in them and ready to go in an hour,” the other says.

Dread runs up and down Tommy’s spine like a bug, and he fixes his dad with wide eyes as Philza nods and shuts the door.

“What happens if we aren’t?” Wilbur says, defiance coloring his voice.

“We don’t want to find out, I don’t think,” Dad says quietly.

“I think I do,” Technoblade retorts.

Dad sighs. “ *I* don’t want you to find out,” he corrects himself, and Wilbur and Techno exchange sad, worried looks.

He carefully lays the fabrics out on the table, and quietly, one by one, Tommy and his brothers each grab theirs.

As he disappears into a quiet corner of the apartment to put it on, Tommy can’t help but hate himself for this. Look at him, going quietly into that good night. What a fucking coward.

He puts on the outfit blindly, smooth silks and rough chorus fibers sending alternating sensations across his skin.

I hate this , he thinks bitterly.

He catches a glint out of the corner of his eye, and he pulls open a cabinet door to reveal a full-length mirror.

The person staring back at him looks like him but also doesn’t.

I look like Dad , he thinks, before being taken aback by that thought. *Why did I think that?*

But, as he stares at his reflection, Tommy has to admit two things. One: the outfit doesn’t look half bad on him. Of course, he could pull off any outfit, so this is no surprise. But he can tell that the tailor actually put effort and care into making this outfit, and that thought causes a bitter taste in his mouth and a pool of guilt in his stomach. He doesn’t want to be wearing any kind of special outfit for the day his dad dies. Two: he realizes he has no idea what Dad looked like at his age. He could ask him if they make it out of this alive.

No, he corrects himself. *When* they make it out of this alive.

As he makes his way back to the main room, he can’t help but stare in awe at the rest of his family. All the tailors clearly put love and care and pride in the outfits and making them look good, and Tommy feels bitter about it.

He wonders if the tailors are out celebrating somewhere, and the thought causes toxic rage to bubble in his stomach.

He turns his gaze to his dad, which he immediately realizes is a mistake.

Philza Minecraft stands, looking impassive. Dark fabric lined with gold and embroidered with an even darker color and purple hangs from his shoulders like a robe, giving him an impressive silhouette and making his father’s eyes even more striking than normal. His golden hair frames his face almost raggedly, giving the appearance of having fought to reach this spot, though his clothes are neat. His large, dark wings are puffed up, just enough to make him look even more

intimidating, small white and purple spots looking like eyes surrounding him, and they're neatly groomed as he always keeps them. Tommy suddenly can see the man fit the title of Angel of Death.

Then, his dad smiles at him, noticing Tommy staring, and opens his arms to his youngest son, and the illusion is shattered.

Tommy immediately goes in for the hug. "I don't want to go," he mumbles, face pressed against Philza's shoulder.

"I know," Dad replies softly. "I know."

"I don't want *you* to go," Tommy says.

His dad pulls him closer, and Tommy buries his face into his shoulder, holding him tight, afraid to let go.

His other brothers fill in where they can. Wilbur slides in between one of Dad's arms and Tommy, resting his head on Tommy's shoulder. Tubbo fits under Tommy's arm, arms holding Philza and Tommy both tight. Ranboo stands opposite Wilbur, under one of Dad's wings, arms reaching around Tubbo and Dad. Techno is wrapped up inside Dad's wing next to Wilbur, arms wrapping around all of them.

Tommy shuts his eyes tight, trying not to cry, but his eyes water anyways, and he sniffles.

"Toms," Dad says softly. "If you cry, I will cry, and I don't think any of that."

Tommy chuckles, and even though it's a wet, sniffling laugh, the others chuckle too, covering it up, until Wilbur hiccups, and Tommy's sure they're all about to cry.

"The crying threat applies to the rest of you, too." Dad's voice is muffled, and Tommy doesn't dare look up at him. He's pretty sure Philza is already crying, and he doesn't want to confirm his fears.

They stand like that a moment longer, though it feels a little like an eternity. On one hand, Tommy doesn't want to trade this moment, being safe and held close by his family, for the world. On the other, he desperately wishes it were any other circumstance than this.

They pull apart, and Tommy doesn't miss Philza wiping his eyes, Techno covering his face, Tubbo turning to hug Tommy instead.

Tommy wraps his arms around Tubbo, pulling him close. "We're going to be okay," he says softly, though he thinks it's to himself.

They don't have a plan, other than something Techno quietly whispered to them, one at a time, except for Dad, and Tommy hopes it works, it has to work, he tells himself.

Then, a knock sounds at the door, and it opens before any of them move.

The guards stand, fully decked out in enchanted netherite, and Tommy's skin crawls as he takes in, fully, how little a chance they actually stand.

"It's time," says one of the guards, and Tommy swallows hard.

I'll Never Be Your Chosen One

Chapter Summary

the ceremony :)

Y'all like pain right?

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Broken Crown by Mumford and Sons*

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

Philza stares dully at the guards. Several of them surround his sons, not actively restraining them, but they're watching, regardless.

He looks away, feeling sick to his stomach.

Several more approach him, gesturing at him with handcuffs. He sighs as they stand behind him, grabbing his wrists, closing his eyes, and he can't help but wonder what he did to deserve this.

The handcuffs click tightly around his wrists, and Philza grimaces.

His sons stare at him, eyes wide and afraid, and his heart aches, so, *for them*, he tells himself, he forces a smile to his face.

"Dad, wait-" Techno says, pushing through the guards. "I, I want one last hug."

Philza's eyes widen. Techno's not normally touchy-feely or expressively emotional, so if he's feeling bad... well, Philza hates to imagine how the others are feeling.

Techno wraps his arms around Philza, and even with the handcuffs behind him, he does his best to lean into the hug, resting his chin on his son's shoulder.

Techno places something in his hand behind his back. Instinctively, Philza grabs it. It's small and fits well in his hand. His eyebrows furrow for a moment, confused, but he quickly schools his expression into something more akin to concern. Whatever Techno just handed him, it must be important, and he doesn't want to lose it.

Philza nods at Techno as he steps back.

"I love you," Philza says, and Techno's eyes glisten just a little bit as he nods.

"Love you too, Dad," he mumbles, and the guards watching his sons corral them out the door, each of them looking back at him with fear.

Philza stands there for a moment, head slightly bowed, eyes tightly shut, and he wishes that he

were home, that his sons were home, that this was just a terrible dream.

Then, the guards grab his elbows and guide him down the hall.

Their footsteps echo hauntingly, but Philza keeps his eyes shut, focusing on his breathing. In for four, hold for seven, out for eight, he tells himself, but his chest still aches as he tries to breathe, and he tightens his hand around the object Technoblade gave him. He still has no idea what it is, but he trusts Techno gave it to him for a reason. The corners dig into his palm, and it grounds him just a little.

Too quickly, they're back in the hall. The crowd is louder this time when he enters, and he can see them eyeing his sons on the podium, curious and cautious.

The guards force him to kneel, none too gently, and Philza does his best to hide the grimace from his sons.

"Today," the priest begins. "We are here to witness the resurrection of our Mother. Joining us tonight," they grin, "is the Angel of Death, and his sons."

A wave of murmurs wash over the crowds, and Philza refuses to look at them, his boys, his sons. Do they know he loves them? Did he tell them enough times? He tightens his grip on the object in his hand.

This time, when the priest tries to force him to drink the poison potion, there is no one to save him, and he coughs viciously after it slides down his throat, body spasming, and he grits his teeth, forcing himself to stay upright.

If he's going, then he's going to go fighting to keep any and all of his dignity, he decides.

The priest grabs their ceremonial knife, and the netherite gleams in the darkness. The priest presses it gently against his throat and Philza resists the urge to gasp due to the coldness of the blade.

"And with your blood shall our Mother be renewed."

The blade slices neatly through his throat, and it hurts both more and less than Philza expected it to.

The item Techno handed him heats up in his hand before exploding into a bright green flash, and as it blinds him, Philza sighs with relief.

A Totem of Undying . Oh, his clever, clever boys.

The warm glow envelops him, the cut on his neck soothed, though the spilled blood still runs, dripping onto the collar of his tunic.

Philza opens his eyes as the glow fades, but a dark one replaces it, purple and foreboding, and the relief dies, cold dread replacing it.

The wind picks up, tangling his hair as it's blown out of his face, and his breath seems caught in his throat as the realization strikes: the Ender Dragon goddess is still being revived.

A vortex forms, angrily spinning, pale blue sparks of electricity flying in short bursts, and the crowd is shouting, though Philza can't hear what they're saying over the sound of the wind.

Suddenly, he catches a glimpse of wings, dark eyes, long talons, and the vortex disappears as *she*

arrives, and his mouth is dry as all he can do is stare.

She roars, and as she does so, everything seems to shatter at once - windows, doors, weapons, armor, even Philza's handcuffs.

As the glass flies, as the guards cower uselessly, he runs towards his sons, crashing into them and covering them with his wings, and he holds his breath.

If any of the glass hits him, he doesn't feel it.

She does a large, lazy loop in the castle, jewels shining, before she settles down in front of Philza, the crowds screaming and running from her. As she lands though, she transforms. Where once there was a dragon, there stands a lady, impressively tall with pale purple eyes and long, dark, wavy hair. Her dark gown is adorned with gold and purple, gems of all kinds sparkling in the cold light, amethyst and lapis and diamond. With a sigh, she rakes her nails through her hair, and he catches a glimpse of long, black fingernails.

She smiles lazily.

Philza stares at her, covering his sons with his wings, eyes wide, heart in his throat.

She smiles, revealing the slightest hint of fangs. "My angel," she says in a much kinder tone than he expected. "It's been so long."

He struggles to breathe, eyes fixed on her.

She offers a hand to him. "Come with me." She pauses, looking at his posture with careful lilac eyes. "Bring your sons. It will be alright."

Philza looks at his sons, feeling lost, but he only sees his own emotions reflected back at him.

"I won't hurt them," she says, smiling gently. "I promise. Besides, I'm alive, you're alive. What more could either of us ask for?"

He looks back at her, and even though every bone in his body screams at him that something's wrong, he offers her his hand.

She grins, fangs flashing again in the pale light.

Chapter End Notes

chapter total updated because I realized 1) I forgot a chapter and 2) y'all really are attached to that tailor, so I thought I'd give you a little epilogue with them in it :D

also if you saw me accidentally update this yesterday no you didnt

With Slum Religion and Coca-Cola

Chapter Summary

Meanwhile:

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Volatile Times* by IAMX

“Where... is everyone? We take a few hours to rest and everyone’s just... gone?” George says, voice quiet.

“I don’t know,” Badboyhalo admits, look at his friends, and he realizes he’s afraid.

“Let’s try for higher ground, maybe we’ll see something,” Dream says, mask hiding his emotions, but his voice is still quieter than normal, and Badboyhalo’s been friends with Dream long enough to know that it means he’s nervous or uncertain, and neither of those are good options right now.

Dream picks a fire escape ladder and starts making his way up it, George, then Sapnap following him.

Badboyhalo gestures at Skeppy to go before him, and Skeppy nods, a grim, determined expression on his face.

The view from the top is stunning if dead silent.

“This... this is odd,” George says softly.

“We gotta head towards the castle,” Dream says. “Remember? The ceremony is tonight? And that’s where they’re keeping him?”

Badboyhalo nods grimly.

Dream picks his way across the rooves, and Badboyhalo follows, carefully picking his steps.

“I don’t like how quiet this is,” Sapnap says. “There’s no way that everyone here is actually in that castle for the ceremony.”

Skeppy looks over the edge of the roof. “Well, I haven’t seen anyone. Maybe they actually are.”

“They are willing to kill someone for this,” George agrees.

Badboyhalo frowns nervously. Hopefully, saving their friends doesn’t put them on their hit list as well, but he has no idea. He’s just been telling himself that his friends are mostly safe as well.

He hasn’t really allowed himself to think about the alternative.

As they get closer, Dream suddenly stops, seeming tense.

“Dream?” George asks.

“Something’s wrong. I can feel it.”

Badboyhalo stares at him.

Suddenly, a green flash shines from the hall, followed by a purple flash.

The purple one lasts much longer.

Badboyhalo gasps, mouth dry, and he grips Skeppy’s arm tightly. He’s pretty sure he’s digging his nails in, but he can’t bring himself to loosen his grip as fear causes him to freeze up.

Then, he hears it.

It’s a deep roar, unlike any ender dragon he’s ever heard, and he can see it from here, the silhouette of something much larger and much more dangerous than anything Badboyhalo’s ever seen before.

“Dream?” Sapnap asks, eyes wide, turning to face his friend, but Dream only shakes his head.

“No,” Badboyhalo whispers.

“No, no no no,” Skeppy says, pupils tiny and he grips Badboyhalo tightly.

George looks pale as he stares at the castle.

“No!” Skeppy shouts, voice cracking with anguish, gripping Badboyhalo tightly, and Badboyhalo returns it, and he can’t help feeling as if Skeppy is the only thing keeping him to the surface, that if he were to let go he’d be falling.

“We failed,” Dream gasps.

Badboyhalo covers his mouth with his free hand, tears welling up, and he feels shaky and uneven, leaning against Skeppy for support. “No,” he whimpers.

“Fuck!” Sapnap shouts, and for once, Badboyhalo can’t find it in himself to yell at Sapnap for it.

I Never Said I'd Leave This City

Chapter Summary

what's the Ender Dragon's endgame here???

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *That Green Gentleman by Panic! at the Disco*

Everything about this seems wrong.

Philza holds his sons close as they walk down halls he's never seen in the castle before, tapestries and painting covering the normally bare end stone walls. His eyes jump from item to item and then back to the dragon.

She smiles at him, once every few moments, and he's worried. He's read *the Book of Eyes* . Only one of them was meant to survive. Either this is just as much a surprise to her as it is to him, or it's a trap.

With the way she smiles, Philza suspects the latter.

However, he also suspects if he doesn't follow, she could always still kill him - or his sons, he thinks with a sinking heart - so he continues after her, his sons looking between the two of them, eyes wide.

"Dad," Techno tries to whisper under his breath, but Philza shakes his head. He makes eye contact with his eldest son, uncertain.

Techno catches the look in his eye and nods, mouth a tight line.

Philza sighs to himself, returning his gaze to the ender dragon goddess in front of them.

Eventually, after walking for what seems much longer than Philza expected, they enter a small area, bedrooms branching off. If Philza's apartment was nice, if minimalist, this was the definition of grandeur: plush sofas, overflowing bookshelves, warm lighting, and huge decorative tapestries lining the walls.

Philza can't help but let out a little gasp. Everything else in the Last City has felt cold, despite its beauty. This is...

"It's beautiful here, isn't it?" The dragon asks, interrupting Philza's line of thought, and he jumps a little, pulling his sons closer to him.

She laughs. "You don't have to be afraid," she says.

"Forgive me if I chose to be wary," he replies.

She smiles. "I will." She takes a seat on one of the chairs, and with a gesture of her hand, the other chairs and sofas rearrange themselves to form a semicircle around her. "Why don't you have a seat, and we can have a chat, Angel?"

Philza flinches at the name, though he tries to hide it. Her eyes twinkle, and he knows she saw it. That can't be good, he thinks.

"Would you prefer I call you something else? Philza, perhaps?"

He studies her, carefully. "I would," he says, slowly.

"I'll keep that in mind then, Philza."

He nods, sitting on the sofa opposite her. His sons sit close, and Philza can't help but pull them closer.

"That was a clever trick you pulled. Which one of you thought of that?" She asks, tone light, a playful smile on her lips.

None of them speak up.

"You do know I already know?" She asks, and cold fear runs down Philza's spine. "I'm not angry, or disappointed. I honestly didn't know what would happen. It's not like Totems form here in the End after all. I hadn't taken into account that the Angel might only have one life to begin with, or that they would use a Totem of Undying."

"Some things left up to fate?" Wilbur asks suddenly, and Philza's gaze switches quickly to him, giving a slight shake of the head. *Don't draw attention to yourself, Wil, please*, he thinks.

She grins, however. "Exactly! Being a goddess, well, it's a little boring. Especially if you set so much in stone at the beginning. You have to let some things out of your control, or the world you're left with... well. It's dull. It's boring." Her eyes glint dangerously as she speaks, and Philza sits, tense, eyes locked on her.

"Interesting," Techno murmurs quietly.

"Is it, though?" She asks conversationally. "Doesn't it make sense that I'd think of that ahead of time?"

Techno shrugs.

"So, what do you want?" Philza says, abruptly, voice cold but steady.

She stares at him, eyes wide with false surprise. "What do I want? Well, I have to think on that," she says with a grin. "You see, my original plans for this evening was that I'd be alive and you wouldn't be, or you'd be alive and I wouldn't be. But," she gestures. "Neither of those guesses were correct."

"Can we leave?" He asks tersely.

She laughs, sending cold dread down his spine. "Well, no."

Philza pulls his sons tighter, his worries whispering in the back of his mind. "Why not?"

"Well, I do have to figure out what to do with you."

“Because we weren’t both supposed to survive.”

She nods.

He lets out a long sigh, leaning back into the sofa.

“I might let you leave. I have to think about it first, though. On one hand, you’ve done your job, haven’t you? I was alive, then I was dead, now I’m alive again! On the other hand, well. You are the Angel of Death, whether you like being called that or not. It’d be handy to have you by my side.”

“For what?”

She shrugs. “Haven’t thought that far ahead. In the meantime,” she gestures around her. “Make yourself at home, Philza and sons.” She nods. “Good talk.”

With a small purple flash, she disappears. A twin flash appears outside the window, a giant dragon spinning circles above the city.

Philza stares silently.

“What...” Tommy whispers.

“I have no idea,” Philza says quietly, and he hates how lost and tired he sounds. His sons curl up against him, and he pulls them closer to him.

“We have to get out of here, whether she allows it or not.” Techno’s eyes meet Philza’s as he speaks, and Philza nods.

“I know. I just don’t know how we’re going to do it.”

“We figure something out. Techno figured out the Totem, Ranboo helped Bad figure out the Book, Dad figured out how to escape last time. We’ll figure this out too,” Wilbur declares.

“I sure hope so,” Philza says. “But as of right now...” He trails off, letting the *I have no idea* unspoken.

None of his sons say anything to that.

Do We Get What We Deserve

Chapter Summary

No one's really happy here.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from the song *Way Down We Go* by KALEO

Tubbo watches the Ender dragon as she talks to his father, suspicion and dread brewing in his gut.

He can't hear what she says, or what Philza responds in turn, but he sees the way they talk. Her pale purple eyes flash dangerously, her fangs glinting in the light. Dad's blue-green eyes look dull, following the goddess's fluid, relaxed gestures. Tubbo watches Philza shrug at something she says, and the dragon's grin growing wider, fangs more prominent than ever.

Tommy sits beside Tubbo, arms crossed. "I don't like this," he murmurs.

"Me neither," Tubbo agrees, watching the jeweled rings on her long talons gleam, diamond and lapis turned into soul fire as the warm light of the apartment. She gestures, fingers spread wide, her grin devious, and Dad looks wary, shaking his head once, giving a short, one-syllable response, one that Tubbo can guess from here: "No."

"I'm afraid to get closer to find out what she's saying," Tubbo says, annoyance and worry creeping into his voice.

Tommy looks over at him, blue eyes matching the jewels, though it's a familiar fire, one that makes Tubbo feel safer, despite everything. "I do know I don't trust anything she says."

Tubbo nods. "Glad we're on the same page there."

The goddess repeats her previous statement, more forcefully, and Dad makes a face, responding in kind.

She turns her gaze to Tommy and Tubbo, and fear lances down Tubbo's back, adding to the pool in his stomach. With a lazy grin, she turns back to Philza, whose eyes widen slightly.

"Oh, I don't like that," Ranboo says, leaning down so his face is even with Tommy and Tubbo's.

"Oh, you don't trust her either?" Tommy asks as Tubbo keeps his eyes fixed on the goddess and his father. Philza says something sharply, wings slightly puffed out and chin raised. The goddess laughs.

"Oh, absolutely not."

"Good," Tubbo says. "Cause we need to get out of here, with Dad."

“Well, we have to figure out how.”

“What about your teleportation?”

Ranboo shakes his head. “I have no idea how to control it.”

“What does the book say?” Tommy interjects.

Ranboo shakes his head again. “I haven’t really had the chance to read it,” he admits.

“Can we change that?” Tubbo asks.

Ranboo shrugs. “I think we’re in a safe enough position that I’ll be able to, provided she doesn’t catch me reading it. I might be the Angel of Death’s son, but I don’t know if that places me in a ‘high-enough ranking’ to be allowed to read it in Ender.” He puts air quotes around part of it, and Tubbo wants to smile, but he’s nervous and afraid.

There’s something missing here, something the dragon knows and the rest of them don’t.

It bugs Tubbo. He should be able to figure this out! He’s smart!

Is he smart enough to outsmart God, though? The doubt brews in the back of his mind, and Tubbo adjusts how he sits, pulling his legs closer to his chest, wrapping his arms around them as he stares, deep in thought, at the goddess and the angel.

“Read it anyway,” Tommy says. “We’ll cover for you. Let Wilby and Tech know, too. They’ll help.”

Ranboo nods. “I know. They’re spying on Dad and the goddess, too. I just wanted a change in perspective.”

“What are they thinking?”

“Oh, mostly that whatever the goddess is planning with Dad isn’t good.”

“Well, no shit! We know that. Anything else?”

“Chat doesn’t like her?”

“Oh, are they saying that instead of ‘E’ or whatever Techno normally complains about?”

“Yeah.”

Tubbo blinks. “Chat normally knows things we don’t, right?”

Ranboo shrugs. “Maybe. I don’t know. I’m not the one who hears them.”

“Techno’s mentioned it before, I think,” Tubbo continues. “Maybe they know what she’s planning, or how to get out of here?”

“We can ask,” Ranboo says dubiously. “But you know Technoblade doesn’t like talking about them unless he has to.”

Tubbo looks back at the goddess. “They’re the domain of a different god. It’s possible she doesn’t even know about the voices.”

Tommy smiles at that. “Tubbo! You genius! Chat can tell us things and she won’t be able to do a goddamn thing about it!”

“I think the word ‘goddamn’ is a bit on the nose here, Tommy,” Ranboo says with a smile, earning him a whack on the arm as Tommy makes faces at him.

“But,” Tubbo interjects. “We need a plan in case that falls through.”

Tommy shrugs. “Do plans ever really work for us?”

“This is serious,” Tubbo hisses. “This is for Dad. We barged in here without a real plan and look where that got us! Front row seats to what was supposed to be Dad’s death.”

Tommy and Ranboo stare at him, eyes wide, and Tubbo sighs. “Sorry. I’m just on edge,” he says hastily, and Ranboo gently puts his hand on Tubbo’s shoulder.

“I’ll read the book and see if it has answers. I’m going to go back to Wilbur and Technoblade, though, since they’re more hidden than you two are.”

“We’re not really trying to be hidden,” Tommy admits, and Ranboo smiles, giving a small wave as he walks off.

There’s a moment of silence once he’s gone, Tubbo watching the dark, tired expression on Dad’s face, the vicious grin on the dragon’s face.

“We’ll make a plan,” Tommy says quietly.

“I know. And I didn’t mean to snap like that. I’m just…”

“Scared?”

Tubbo nods.

“I know, big man.” Tommy wraps his arms around Tubbo, pulling him closer, and Tubbo leans his head on Tommy’s shoulder. “I know.”

“What are we going to do?” Tubbo whispers. “We’re up against a goddess.”

“We’ll figure it out. I mean, we have a champion of the Blood God, Wilbur, a half-enderman half-who-knows-what hybrid, the Angel of Death, me, and you, big man.”

“Will that be enough?” Tubbo asks, voice barely above a whisper, watching the Ender dragon, apparently satisfied with her work, walk away, a smile on her face, leaving Philza alone.

And Dad looks… tired. Uncertain.

Afraid, a voice whispers in the back of Tubbo’s mind, but he pushes the thought away.

Philza smiles at them warmly, but Tubbo can see the way his wings are still slightly sticking out, the way his eyes never fully leave the goddess, always watching.

“It has to be,” Tommy says, a certain sense of finality to his voice. “We don’t have any other choices here.”

Throw My Troubles on a Burning Pile

Chapter Summary

The boys meet a potential friend.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Burning Pile by Mother Mother*

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

They sit at the table mournfully.

Skeppy sits beside Bad, rubbing small circles on Bad's back, his own gaze empty and lost. George sits quietly, hands folded, lost in thought. Bad has his face in his hands, not talking. Sapanap sits in between Dream and Bad, hand caught in his hair, fingers tapping against his skull, looking angry at the world but angrier at himself. Dream...

Well, Dream feels lost. They failed. He never fails. That's the mantra he's lived by for the majority of his life, he can't just lay down and accept this.

But with death... is there anything to do other than accept it?

So, he listens to the people of the Last City as he stares blankly into his mug of coffee.

Thankfully, he tells himself later.

But he hears it, the quiet whispers of rumor and half-truths.

"Did you hear?"

"They say he's-"

"- that the Angel of Death-"

"- still up in the castle-"

"- used a Totem of Undying-"

Dream blinks, replaying the information in his mind, then he snaps his head towards the passerby, eyes widening.

They don't notice him, but his teammates do.

"What is it?" Sapanap asks, sounding tired and frustrated.

"They just mentioned the castle and a Totem of Undying," Dream says, quietly.

Bad looks up for the first time in a long time, eyes red from crying. “They what?”

“A Totem of Undying? But who...”

Skeppy and Bad share a look, Skeppy grinning and Bad in shock. “Technoblade,” they say at the same time.

“Is he really that clever?” Sapnap asks, and Dream nods.

“If any of them would be, other than Philza, it’d be him.”

“And they didn’t catch it?” George asks.

“We did see a green flash of light,” Dream points out, a small smile forming on his face.

Bad stands abruptly, eyes alight with hope. “We have to go see them.”

Dream nods, standing himself. “Alright. Let’s go then.”

The others stand as well, George and Sapnap looking nervously at each other.

Dream leads the way through the city, eyes locked on the castle. He knows if there’s even a chance in hell that Philza is alive, that his sons are alive...

He has to help them get free.

He can’t fail.

Dream looks back at the others. Bad’s eyes are locked on the castle, pale eyes unmoving, mouth a small determined line, hood pulled over his horns and hanging low into his eyes. Skeppy has his arm entwined with Bad’s, his expression almost Bad’s twin, save for the small spark of worry when he looks at his friend. George and Sapnap talk quietly to each other, eyes scanning the tops of the buildings, partially obscured by Bad and Skeppy.

Dream turns his gaze back in front of him.

As they approach the castle, Dream quickly cuts into an alley and starts scaling a fire escape, pulling himself up without a word to the others.

They follow, of course.

Dream’s... not really sure what he’s doing. Acting out of pure instinct, he guesses.

He gently leaps from the rooftop onto a balcony of the castle, gesturing at his friends to stay as he walks into the building.

He makes a few paces into the building before he sees one of the guards, long blonde hair tied into a low ponytail under her helmet.

She sees him, and she doesn’t look impressed. *Shit*, Dream thinks. *Gotta talk myself out of this one.*

“My, what’s a pretty lady like yourself doing in a place like this?” He blurts out.

She laughs, looking surprised. “Is this not a pretty place?”

“Not as pretty as you are.” Well, that’s true. Her purple eyes seem to laugh when she does, dark wings not unlike Philza’s, and even though she looks young, Dream can’t actually tell how old she is. Her blonde hair looks silky and soft, like the feathers of her wings, like she cares about her appearance.

“Thank you.”

“But you didn’t answer my question,” Dream continues with a small smile. “What are you doing here?”

“My job,” she says, light mood suddenly gone once more, and she looks down the hall, and Dream follows her gaze to the large, double doors that lie there, dark purple wood gilded with fine spirals and designs that look vaguely like eyes. Dream can’t help but feel as if he’s being watched, even when he turns away from it.

“Watching the Angel?”

“Preventing anything from getting into our Mother’s quarters. Such as yourself.” She nods at Dream. “But also... yes. Watching the Angel. Preventing his escape.” She chuckles to herself, looking a little rueful.

“What?” Dream asks kindly.

“Just... He wasn’t always the angel. He was once my friend.”

Dream’s eyes widen as he understands the implication. “You were here the last time he was here?”

She nods.

“You’re five hundred years old?” Dream exclaims, feeling a little shocked. *Was he really just flirting with a five-hundred-year-old lady?*

She laughs at that, and Dream can hear laughter from outside the balcony. He turns and glares, face heating up, at Sapnap and Skeppy, George and Bad snickering behind them.

“Quit it,” he hisses, mortified.

The lady laughs. “I think it’s best for you to go now, so you don’t embarrass yourself again.”

Dream nods, face flushed.

“But, before you do...” She looks back at the doors, and Dream notices the way the smile falls, a forlorn sadness replacing it. “If... whatever you’re planning. If you need my help...” She offers her hand to Dream. “My name’s Moira. Just ask for me.”

Dream gives her a skeptic look. “And you can’t just let us in now?”

“And let you just be killed? I’m saving your life here. I’m offering you what I can do.” She gestures with her hand again. “I won’t offer again.”

Dream takes it, shaking it once. “I appreciate it.”

“And tell Philza I send my love, alright?”

Dream shrugs. “I’ll see about that one,” he says, a teasing smile on his face, and she laughs.

Dream turns back to the balcony. “Alright, let’s regroup. We need a better way in that won’t kill us immediately.”

“Aw, there go my Friday night plans,” Skeppy grumbles, and Dream vaults lightly over to the roof.

He looks back, once, as they leave, and he sees a smile on Moira’s face, one that seems relieved.

Dream smiles back.

Chapter End Notes

Releasing the first chapter of another fic in this series today! Do you like Punz and Purpled as brothers? Do you like angst? Well, since I accidentally mentally let this series get out of hand and I need to establish connections for a later fic, I have a new short story!

Damn This Flood By Holding Tough

Chapter Summary

the goddess and her angel have a talk.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from the song *Hold Tough by Bug Hunter*

The day seemed to pass far too slowly for Philza's liking.

He hasn't seen enough of his sons as he'd like, either. The ender dragon goddess kept trying to talk to him, kept trying to be near him, that coy smile on her face all the while, and what Philza knows is that as much as he doesn't want her near him - *he doesn't trust her, he doesn't like her, he's terrified being left in the dark like this, especially when all he wants is to go back home and be safe* - he knows he wants her near his sons even less, so he humors her as much as he can.

She talks to him, of course, mentioning all the ways the world could be better, and while Philza can't argue with some of what she says, he doesn't really understand why she's telling him all this.

Eventually, he snaps.

"What do you want?"

She laughs, pearly fangs more visible than normal, and Philza pushes down the queasy sense of fear that rises up.

"What do I want? To rule the world. As nice as this city is..." she trails off with a shrug. "Why stop here? I could have the End! Hell, I could have all of the realms."

"Then why won't you let me go? I highly doubt you need a mortal's help for that."

She grins, almost lazily. "Do you know how easy a change that would be for me?"

Philza stares blankly ahead of him for a moment as he processes that. He's always been very aware of the fact that he only has one life left. The mark on his wrist that looked distinctly different from anyone else's helped with that. But to not worry about that...

"Why would you? What do you need me for?" He asks, blinking.

Her grin never leaves her face as she looks at him. "You're the Angel of Death."

Philza looks away. It's certainly not that he doesn't like bloodshed. He's used to it by now, though his adventuring jobs. But killing people just for the sake of scaring others...

"I see you're hesitating," she says.

He shakes his head. "I might have blood on my hands, but that doesn't mean that I want to make others' problems worse. Or make more problems at all."

"What are you afraid of?" She asks, tilting her head. "The title is already yours, why not act like it?"

"I never wanted the title in the first place," Philza says simply.

She sighs, pushing her hair out of her face, and Philza is struck by what an odd situation this is: the ender dragon goddess in human form, asking Philza, the man who was supposed to be her killer, who *was* her killer, to help her in global conquest. Even odder, Philza realizes he knows that he doesn't want to say yes.

"But you have it."

Philza shakes his head. "I'm not going to live up to the title."

She pauses. "So you don't want to help me?"

"No."

She smiles, a little sadly, then turns his gaze away, and Philza follows it.

As she sees what she's looking at, his eyes widen and he shakes his head minutely. Three of his sons sit, brown, blue, and red and green eyes meeting his own.

"You better not be implying what I think you're implying," Philza says, voice low.

"And if I am?"

"You better not hurt them," he whispers, feeling sick to his stomach.

"I don't want to," the goddess says, voice sweet. "But I am going to get what I want from you, and, well, if I have to do something drastic..."

Philza forces his gaze away from his sons to stare into pale purple eyes, his own eyes wide.

"They're innocent in this."

"Are they? If you died, wouldn't one of them have taken your mantle?"

"I am still alive, and you're going to leave them out of this," Philza says, snarling.

"Hm." She pauses, inspecting her talons. "And how much say do you really think you have in the matter?"

Philza's blood runs cold and he freezes, staring blankly over her shoulder.

"Mhm. That's what I thought," she says, grinning, and her fangs flash in the light. She pats his shoulder and breezes past him. "Let me know when you've thought about it some. I'll be interested to hear what you say."

And she's gone.

Philza stares blankly at the space where the goddess was just standing a moment ago, stomach churning and feeling lost.

If he were here alone, he'd at least play along until he could find the weak part of the goddess's proverbial armor, fake the role until he could escape. If he were here alone, he could just openly defy her, risking his own life in order to escape and be free once more. If he were here alone...

But he's not, he reminds himself. He has others here depending on him.

He looks over at his sons and forces a smile on his face. They smile back, Tubbo and Tommy looking afraid, Ranboo having gone once more.

He makes his way over to them, ruffling Tubbo's hair as he sits down on the couch next to them. "What are you two up to?"

"What does she want?" Tommy asks, blue eyes meeting his own, and Philza's heart sinks.

"I don't know for sure yet," Philza says.

"So we're not going to be allowed to leave soon," Tubbo says, thoughtfully.

"I..."

"Tubbo's right, isn't he?" Tommy interrupts.

Philza closes his mouth and nods.

"Damn," Tommy says, looking cross.

Philza sighs, nodding. "Yep."

Tubbo hums thoughtfully, pausing as if organizing his thoughts.

Whatever Tubbo's planning, Philza suddenly thinks it's better if he doesn't know about it. *Like the Totem*, he tells himself. The less he knows, the less the goddess will be likely to find out about.

"We'll figure something out," Philza promises, but even to his own ears, the words sound hollow, and he knows he can't guarantee anything, but he says it anyway, trying to let them know that he was going to keep them safe no matter what.

Tommy nods, looking at Tubbo. "We will," he agrees.

Tubbo nods his head as well.

You Looked at Death in a Tarot Card

Chapter Summary

translations are fucky

Chapter Notes

chapter title from the song *Dying in LA* by *Panic! at the Disco*

Finding the time and safety to read was easier than Ranboo expected.

The dragon seemed... preoccupied, to say the least, with Philza.

Actually reading and translating the text is much harder.

Ranboo wants so desperately to rely on what he already knows, what little from the Common translation that has stuck in his residual memory, no matter how hazy it is. It's frustrating, really. He can remember what the translation is supposed to be of a religious text for something he doesn't believe in, but he can't remember what his birth parents looked like.

But he has his future at stake, so he lets go of the past, just a little bit, to read what is presently in front of him.

Translating is a... slow process.

Ranboo has never hated Ender for being a metaphor-based, flowery, inconsistent, malleable language more. Growing up speaking it, never being exactly sure what the people around him meant had been difficult enough. Relying on the fact that there are multiple meanings now, years later, is frustrating to hell and back.

Eventually, the words finally seem to slide into place in his mind, and the meanings click, the way Ranboo thinks the passages are meant to be read.

Suddenly, something jumps out at him, and Ranboo rereads the passage he just read, eyebrows furrowing.

Ranboo gasps as he understands the meaning of the text, eyes widening as he flips back to the page he just read, hands shaking.

"Ranboo?" Tubbo asks, but Ranboo can't find it in him to respond, rereading words and fixing the translation he once thought he understood.

"Ranboo," Wilbur says, placing a hand on Ranboo's shoulder, and Ranboo looks up, terror filling his mouth with a bitter taste.

For a moment, all he can do is stare, feeling hopeless and lost.

“Tell us,” Tommy says, blue eyes wide, and he looks frightened, truly frightened for the first time... maybe ever that Ranboo has ever seen, though maybe he’s forgotten. It’s been a long five years since he was first adopted, he wouldn’t put it past him to have forgotten something, though normally he’d write it down.

Thinking of writing things down, Ranboo’s fingers itch for the book he left back home, but he knows that the others will help him write it all down if they get home.

No, Ranboo tells himself, looking back at the book in his hands. *When they get home*.

Ranboo clears his throat, looking back at the pages, feeling his brothers’ eyes on him, causing his skin to itch. “The... the first passage. The one about Dad’s death. When it said by his blood, the dragon would be brought back to life... It literally meant blood.”

Technoblade’s eyes widen. “He was meant to survive all along?”

Ranboo nods, frantically turning the pages. “Later on, when we thought it said that someone would take his place, it really translates to... sort of an ascension type thing? Where he becomes even more powerful as the Angel of Death.”

The brothers fall silent, the revelation hanging heavy in the air.

“That’s what she wants with him,” Wilbur says, voice dark.

“What does the rest say?” Tubbo asks, brown eyes wide.

Ranboo flips a few pages to find the next section to translate, the section that could make or break this situation, and with shaking hands, he turns a page, and his heart sinks.

“The pages are missing,” he says quietly, turning to show them the book, the ending completely torn out.

They all fall silent again, and Ranboo feels dizzy as his breathing gets away from him.

“Shit,” Tommy hisses.

“So,” Tubbo says slowly. “We don’t know what kind of fate we’re trying to prevent?”

“We do know we have to save Dad,” Wilbur says, eyes flinty.

“Preferably before he ascends or whatever,” Technoblade adds.

Ranboo nods, feeling a little shaky. “What do we do then?”

Wilbur and Technoblade exchange glances, while Tommy and Tubbo do the same. Ranboo looks helplessly at the book in front of him.

“We figure out what she wants with him,” Technoblade says at the same time as Tommy, who says: “We get ourselves the hell out of here.”

They stare at each other angrily.

“Those... don’t really go together,” Ranboo says hesitantly.

Wilbur snickers at that.

“Technoblade, you’re a bitch,” Tommy declares.

“What? Your idea is dangerous and reckless! If we don’t find out what the goddess wants, there could be consequences. If we know what she wants, then we can win future battles before they’re even started!” Technoblade shoots back.

“Aw, Techno’s using logic,” Tommy says dismissively. “Bitch boy.”

Tubbo coughs into his elbow as he attempts to stifle his laughter, and Ranboo makes eye contact with him, a small smile on his face.

“I think I’m gonna go with Tommy on this, actually, Techno. If we get out of here, with Dad, and go somewhere she can’t reach us, then we don’t have to worry about any future problems,” Wilbur says.

Technoblade frowns, crossing his arms. “Well, in *The Art of War* -”

“Shut up about *The Art of War* ! Shut up about *The Art of War* !” Tommy shouts, throwing his hands in the air, looking equally furious and exasperated.

Tubbo snickers and Ranboo moves *The Book of Eyes* in front of his mouth to hide his smile.

Wilbur pats Technoblade’s shoulder soothingly. “If we fail, we can do your idea.”

Technoblade’s frown deepens. “I think if we fail, we’re cutting dangerously close to the idea of losing at least one of our lives. Plus, we’ve slept here, which means that our new spawn point is also here. So we’d get no closer to getting back home, *and* the people here will hate us more.”

“So we don’t fail,” Tommy says with a shrug. “Easy.”

Ranboo sighs, hugging the book to his chest. “Gods, I hope you’re right. Have we made a decision then? All in favor of Tommy’s plan of just getting out of here as soon as possible?”

His brothers nod, except for Technoblade, but his eldest brother makes no further comments.

“Great. Then, on that note, how are we getting Dad out of here?”

Hold Her Down With Soggy Clothes and Breezblocks

Chapter Summary

An olive branch

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Breezblocks* by Alt-J

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

“Time,” Wilbur calls out, lounging against Techno on one of the sofas scattered in the dragon’s living spaces.

“Eight and a half hours, give or take,” Techno responds, softly.

“Has it really been that long?” Tommy asks, worriedly picking at his nails.

“Since we last saw Dad? Yes,” Techno closes his eyes, tilting his head, almost as if listening to something, and Wilbur has no doubt he’s trying to see if chat has something interesting to say, an answer to their predicament.

“I don’t like this,” Ranboo says softly.

“None of us do, bitch boy, that’s why we’re all here, not arguing,” Tommy complains, but there’s no bite to his insult, and Wilbur tries to resist the urge to pull him close. On the other side of Tommy, Wilbur notices that Tubbo has failed to resist the same impulse, and he holds Tommy’s arm within his own.

“Well, we were, until you decided to call me bitch boy,” Ranboo teases, a small smile on his face and Wilbur watches the way his younger brother’s fingers trail up and down the spine of the book, holding onto it as if it might be taken away.

Wilbur turns back to Techno, who seems to no longer be listening to the voices. “Anything?” He asks, softly.

Techno shakes his head. “Mostly that they don’t like the goddess. A few other things, but couldn’t really catch it, unfortunately.”

“Damn,” Wilbur murmurs.

“I hate that this would be easier if we knew where the goddess took Dad,” Tommy complains. “We can’t do this without him.”

Wilbur pushes down the concern at the amount of worry in Tommy’s voice, and he watches as Tubbo squeezes Tommy’s hand comfortingly.

“We can’t,” Techno agrees. “He doesn’t need to know the plan, but we still need him.”

Out of the corner of his eye, Wilbur notices a brief flash of movement, and he turns to face it.

Moira, *that bitch*, Wilbur thinks viciously, walks down the hall towards them, the heavy wooden door falling shut behind her solidly.

“Look who decided to stop by,” Tommy calls out, baring his teeth, and Wilbur can’t help but grin at the doubt that crosses the woman’s face.

She puts her hands up as she approaches them. “Truce?”

“What do you think?” Wilbur asks, turning to his brothers. “Do we allow a truce with the woman who has betrayed our father?”

Moira flushes at that, and Wilbur smirks. He knows he’s not being forgiving right now, but he’s pretty sure that she was hoping for their dad to die, and that’s his father. If she’s upset because they’re rude to her, well. That’s her own damn fault, isn’t it?

Tommy crosses his arms, towering over her. “Hm. No.”

“I’m gonna have to agree with Tommy on this one,” Techno says, a callous grin on his face, and Wilbur can almost hear the voices that haunt his twin screaming for blood.

Ranboo taps his chin, thinking. “Yeah. No.”

Tubbo shrugs. “I don’t really see why you’d think we would.”

Moira sighs, rolling her eyes, then unsheathes her sword in a grand gesture. “I suggest you better listen. The dragon may seem fond of your father, but I can guarantee she could care less if you live or die.”

“Oh, so is this how you convince people to listen to you? By threatening them?” Wilbur asks, nonchalantly inspecting his nails.

Moira pauses, reconsidering. Grumbling to herself, she resheathes the sword. “Look, I want to help you escape,” she says, and Wilbur’s eyes widen, but he keeps his stare focused on his nails, trying to ignore the way his heartbeat quickens at the prospect of going home, his family intact.

“And what’s in it for you?” Techno asks, crossing his arms, and Wilbur mimics his pose.

Moira at least has the decency to act sheepishly. “None of this was supposed to happen,” she says softly.

“Bullshit,” Tommy says, standing up straight.

“Philza was my friend,” she argues.

“Was,” Tubbo repeats.

She flushes at that.

“So answer the question: what’s in it for you?” Techno repeats.

“I want to fix things,” she snaps. “He’s alive, and our Mother is alive. What more could I ask for?”

“Tough luck with that,” Ranboo mumbles, and Wilbur’s heart sinks as he notices the way Ranboo slouches in on himself, looking uncertain and afraid, *The Book of Eyes* still held tightly against his chest.

“Why?” Moira asks, purple eyes widening and wings spread out a little bit.

The brothers exchange a nervous look, and Wilbur bites the inside of his cheek, concerned.

“What’s wrong?” She demands, and Wilbur notices the way she places a hand on the hilt of her sword and looks around, and in that instant, Wilbur wonders, for the first time, if she might be an ally.

“None of your business,” Tommy snaps.

“Listen here,” she snarls. “I didn’t know any of this was going to happen, so I buried the hatchet thinking I burned my bridge with Philza. Things have changed.” She sighs, pushing her hair out of her face. She opens her mouth, trying to find something to say, and Wilbur stares at her flatly until she shuts it again.

“Things have changed, but that doesn’t mean we’re just going to let you in. You hurt our Dad,” Wilbur says, keeping his face emotionless. “We aren’t going to forgive you for that.”

She looks away. “Fair enough.” She turns and leaves, blonde ponytail swishing over her shoulder as she walks. “By the way,” she calls out as she pushes the door open. “Your friends say hi.”

Wilbur stares after her, mouth partially open as the door slams shut and locks behind Moira. “Friends?” He whispers, feeling lost.

Tommy scoffs. “Who even knows we’re here?”

The pause that follows causes Wilbur’s chest to constrict with worry, and he can tell by the small gasp Techno makes that his twin feels the same way.

“Bad and Skeppy,” Tubbo whispers. “But they wouldn’t, would they?”

“I think they did,” Ranboo says.

Wilbur turns to Techno and meets his eyes. “Fuck,” Wilbur says.

Chapter End Notes

HAPPY BIRTHDAY PHILZA MINECRAFT, THE ONLY MAN EVER, CREATOR OF MINECRAFT!!!!

today I am going to think really hard about him and also maybe post fanart of him.

I Had to Fall to Lose It All

Chapter Summary

Finally! Chat decides to be helpful for 30 seconds!

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *In the End* by Linkin Park

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

Finally, after about fourteen hours of nothing from Dad, or the dragon, chat decides to be helpful.

Explore E there are so many rooms you haven't explored here yet /rainbowchat E E E E BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD E

“Finally, not a terrible idea,” Technoblade says, sighing to himself.

“What?” Wilbur asks.

“We haven’t really explored this place. Chat says we’re missing stuff.”

“So let’s go,” Tommy says, jumping to his feet.

“What?” Technoblade asks.

“We haven’t seen Dad in far too long,” Tommy says, rocking back and forth on his feet. “We need to get him out of wherever he is.”

“Tommy’s right,” Ranboo agrees.

Technoblade meets Wilbur’s eyes, and Wilbur nods. Technoblade sighs. “Alright. Let’s go.”

Technoblade walks down hallways silently, footsteps as quiet as he can make them, his brothers following him, trying to mimic his attitude, some - Ranboo, Tubbo - doing better than others - Tommy, Wilbur.

Once, he tries listening to chat again for more advice, but whatever possessed them to be helpful is no longer there: *E E E E humina humina humina humina E E E E E E E /rainbowchat E E E E*.

Why are you like this, Technoblade thinks bitterly, opening door after door, peering inside.

Finally, he opens one to complete darkness, but suddenly Wilbur puts a hand on his shoulder, eyes widening, and Technoblade pauses.

A quiet voice speaks softly, and Technoblade’s ears strain as he tries to pick up the individual words.

“Holy shit,” Tommy whispers, and Technoblade looks up to see what Tommy is looking at.

Technoblade’s eyes meet his father’s from across the room, blue eyes unreasonably bright in the dark room, unreasonably bright against the black liquid dripping from his lips.

Chat screams for blood and Technoblade decides to give it to them.

Giving in to chat’s demands was different each time he did it. Sometimes, it was difficult, like slowly walking into ice-cold water. Other times, it was like letting go and falling, not knowing what the landing would be like but knowing you would reach the ground one way or another.

Today, it felt like flying.

The world turned red, and though he had no weapon, Technoblade lunged for the goddess, fingers outstretched, and he digs them into her face, snarling as he does so.

She hisses, eyes brightening, as purple blood streamed from her face, tore from her skin by Technoblade’s fingernails.

“Blood champion, this isn’t the fight you want.”

“That’s where you’re dead wrong,” Technoblade retorts, swinging his fist, feeling a satisfied smirk make its way to his face as it connects with her nose, and she screams, not in pain but in anger.

She launches herself at him, and chat cheers.

Fighting is like a dance to Technoblade, fluid, graceful, beauty condensed into a single act. Normally, Technoblade finds himself leading, his partner following his blade and attacks.

This was not a partner he could lead with.

The goddess might not have been armed either, but the first time her claws connect with his skin, his cheek stinging as blood drips downwards from pain - and probably something else, he thinks as he notices the way his blood on her nails looks quite the wrong color - he realizes that maybe, just maybe, challenging a goddess to a one-on-one duel was not his smartest choice.

“You’re a fool,” she snarls as he just barely manages to duck under her jab, eyes wide as his hair flies around his face.

“And you’re hurting my father,” he replies, hating how his voice sounds shaky and small and quiet, and he grits his teeth as he runs towards her, slamming his elbow into her stomach.

She groans, pushing herself off the floor quickly.

Technoblade swings with his left fist, hoping to catch her off-guard, but she sidesteps easily, a slight grin on her face, and she slams her body against his, sending him sprawling on the floor.

Embarrassing BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD get up get up get up BLOOD FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT she’s kicking your ass! Technoloser BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD

Technoblade’s eyes widen as she lifts her foot and rolls out of the way, barely escaping before she slams her foot down where his ribs would have been a moment sooner. He pushes himself up, fighting for his breath, and he barely catches a glimpse of Wilbur and Tommy supporting Dad, blond hair covering his face, and for a moment, Technoblade tells himself that everything was going to be okay.

Unfortunately, the goddess notices them too.

She sighs dramatically. “I think you’ve gotten far enough,” she says gesturing lazily, and, in a flash of purple, dozens of blades float in the air, and Technoblade’s breath catches in his throat, watching them point at himself and his family.

WHAT E dude she was just toying with you WTF BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD

Wilbur and the others freeze, and Technoblade stares at them.

“Put the Angel down.”

Tommy and Wilbur exchange a look, Tubbo and Ranboo behind them, and they carefully set down Philza.

“Now. I suggest you leave. I’ll decide what to do with you later.”

A chill runs down Technoblade’s spine and he looks around, desperately, looking for anything that could help.

“Now!” She shouts, and Technoblade jumps, despite himself.

“No!” Tubbo replies, looking angry.

She lifts an eyebrow. “Alright, then,” she says and snaps her fingers.

The room changes quickly, purple particles surrounding them, and Technoblade recognizes it as the main room of the royal suite.

Wilbur spins around, looking bewildered. “What-”

“Fuck!” Tommy hisses.

Technoblade stares up at them, eyes wide, horror and fear sending chills down his spine.

“Fuck,” Tubbo agrees, looking pale.

“Shit, shit, shit,” Wilbur hisses.

“We failed,” Techno says, reaching up for his cheek, hand pulling away covered in blood, tinged with purple and pink.

“We have to take care of that,” Ranboo says, gesturing at Technoblade.

“We have a lot of things we need to take care of,” Technoblade agrees, staring up at his brothers, and he can’t help but feel completely and utterly lost.

Chapter End Notes

SOOOOOO ABOUT YESTERDAY’S STREAM HUH????? ;-;

also, not as happy with this chapter but ehhhhh

Farewell, I've Gone to Take My Throne Above

Chapter Summary

Philza makes a deal against his better judgement

Chapter Notes

chapter title from the song *Warriors* by *Imagine Dragons*

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

Philza Minecraft is in so much pain, but for a moment, his sons are there, and it makes the emotional pain go away, at least.

Then, the dragon says something, tone sharp, and although his spinning mind doesn't make out the words, he knows that she's angry, more than angry, she's furious.

His sons exchange a look, and he tries to tell them to just listen to her.

The wither poison in his veins causes his landing, even gently paced by his sons, to hurt, pain flaring up his bones, and he grimaces.

The world around him seems to spin, but as he looks up, his sons gone, though for how long they've been that, he has no idea, and he meets the glowing purple eyes of the ender dragon goddess.

"What are you going to do to them?" He asks, voice sounding uneven and rough, even to his own ears.

"Kill them," she says immediately, and panic rises in Philza's chest, the emotional pain coming back with a vengeance.

"Please," he begs helplessly.

"And I'm going to make it painful," she says, eyes flinty.

"Don't do this," he pleads, leaning his head back against the wood paneling of the wall.

"You will join my side regardless of what happens to them, but maybe, once they're out of the way, you'll give in easier. In the meantime," she reaches into her pocket, and the glass vial catches in the light, and Philza closes his eyes, the pain in his chest and his veins aching deeply.

"What can I do to make you leave them alone?"

She pauses, holding the vial of wither poison in her hands. "Is there anything you won't agree to?"

"Nothing." He says without a second thought, and then Philza watches the way she grins, and he

knows what she's going to ask.

"Help me take over the worlds."

He offers her his hand, despite the fact that it shakes, the poison weakening him and the world seems to spin far too fast, and he doesn't know what's causing it: the poison, the fear for his sons' lives, or the fear for what's to come.

She takes his hand. "Good choice. I promise, no harm will come to your sons."

Philza slumps in relief, closing his eyes as his mind spins, empty, dizzying circles, making his thoughts unclear, and he coughs, black sludge rising from his throat and onto his face, and he grimaces in disgust and pain.

"In that case," she waves a hand, and the constant, throbbing ache disappears. "No need for this anymore."

Philza opens his eyes to look at her. "When do we start?" He asks, a bitter taste in his mouth.

"Soon," she reassures him. "I have an announcement to make to the people of the Last City, and," she gives him a once-over look, lilac eyes looking almost disappointed, "you look like shit, my friend."

Philza's blood boils at being called her friend, though, he supposes, after a while, he won't mind as much.

"Well," he says, looking down at himself, robes covered in blood and black goo, a side effect of the wither poison. "That's not my fault," he continues drily.

She laughs, cold and sharp, and Philza closes his eyes as the noise washes over him, chilling him to the bone. "You're funny," she says.

"And you're downright hilarious," he sasses.

She grins, fangs glinting, and for a moment, she almost looks monstrous: long claws almost as long as her fingers themselves, skin forming patches of dark scales, purple eyes glowing, a small pair of leathery wings on her back. "I sure am," she says.

"So what will I be wearing for the announcement?" Philza asks, forcing his tone to be friendly, the way he used to in front of the courts of lords and ladies, kings and queens, the way he used to in front of enemies who didn't know yet the cost of crossing him.

She tilts her head thoughtfully. "Something suiting the title of Angel of Death."

"Of course," he says. "I expected nothing less. I was hoping for something a touch more specific."

She smirks. "I'll design something."

"Any ideas so far?" Philza asks, not really caring about the answer. His mind, now together and collected unlike it was under the poison, thinks back to his sons. *I can't see them like this*, he thinks, dread pooling in his gut. *They'll think I've given in. They'll think I've given up.*

The goddess smiles. "Something dark, all black. Lots of jewels, though. How do you feel about some," she gestures vaguely, fingers moving, the jewelry sparkling in the warm light, "I don't know, gold, amethyst, obsidian decorations." She runs a hand over the feathers on one of Philza's

wings, and he represses a shudder.

“I’m not much of a jewelry man,” he says, forcing his voice to be neutral.

She sighs, looking disappointed. “Not even a little bit?”

The juxtaposition from her earlier attitude is striking, and Philza can’t help but feel lost: gone was the angry, vindictive venom, replaced by what he could only describe as joy, despite the dark light sparkling in her pale eyes.

Maybe that’s what being a goddess is like, he thinks. *Maybe after years of being by her side-*

No, he can’t think like that. He can’t, he can’t, he can’t. He’ll get the upper hand in this, he has to.

“I’ll accept a little bit,” he says with a shrug.

“There’s my angel,” she says with a smile, giving him a gentle nudge with her elbow.

Philza grins playfully, but inside he feels cold and bitter.

He’s going to make her pay, he decides.

Chapter End Notes

not the biggest fan of this chapter either, but don't worry Philza totally has a plan (wait wait let me double-check that- no he doesn't. he is acting purely on impulse)

Venom on My Tongue

Chapter Summary

An announcement is made, and some friends temporarily reunited.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Chlorine by Twenty One Pilots*

Tommy doesn't know where the guards are taking them, but despite the chill of the Ender air, he's glad to be outside. The void might be dark and scary, looming over them ominously, and the air might be still and cold, not a breeze to change it up, but at least he's no longer inside.

His brothers walk beside him, the guards doing no more than keeping them contained, and they pass a large crowd as they walk.

"What do you think is happening?" Tommy asks.

"I think we'll find out, whether we want to or not," Wilbur says darkly under his breath.

The previous night had been a sleepless night of constant worry, the five of them holding close to each other, armed with what little they could find: forks, pans, heavy books.

But nothing came to attack them.

Ranboo had been the first to guess that Dad had said something to the goddess so that nothing would hurt them.

Tommy hoped to hell and back that he was wrong.

They approach a podium, and out of the corner of his eye, Tommy thinks he sees something bright green move, a quick flash in the shadows.

Huh. Weird.

The guards stop moving at the edge of the podium, and just past them, Tommy can see the goddess, dark hair curling around her, chin tilted up, and a grin on her face.

"That can't be good," Techno says, fiddling with the edge of his sleeve nervously.

"Well, obviously, none of this is good," Wilbur replies sharply.

"I think he's referring to the fact that she's looking pretty smug today," Tubbo says.

"I think Wilbur knows," Ranboo interjects.

The dragon clears her throat, and Tommy's eyes widen as her voice is suddenly projected into the

crowd, sounding as if she were speaking to Tommy alone in a private room.

Must be magic, he thinks before concentrating on her words.

“My dear citizens,” she begins with a grin. “I have a wonderful announcement to make. Yesterday, my dear angel and I,” she gestures to the other side of her, and Tommy gasps as his dad steps forward, chin up, posture upright, and Tommy knows Philza must know they’re there, but if he knows it, he doesn’t acknowledge them, and Tommy’s heart catches in his throat. “Have made a plan to conquer the other planes.”

Techno sucks in a gasp between his teeth, Ranboo’s eyes widen, Tubbo squeezes Tommy’s hand tightly, and Wilbur bares his teeth, but Tommy can’t help but feel... empty.

Why would Dad agree to that? Why would he-

The realization sinks in, and Tommy wants to curl into a ball, guilt making him feel small. Philza agreed to it to save them, he thinks miserably. This is their fault.

She continues, Tommy tuning out the rest of the speech, focusing on the way that Philza stands, emotionless, eyes fixed on the crowd in front of him, or on the goddess, but he never once looks at his sons.

“Tomorrow,” the goddess declares, her words cutting into Tommy’s consciousness once more, “we will have a festival to celebrate the arrival of this great time in our history. Then, we will go to war.”

The crowd cheers and Tommy stares at his brothers.

“Well, I know what we’re doing tomorrow,” he says quietly.

“Going to the festival?” Tubbo suggests.

“Going to the festival,” Techno confirms.

“Fun,” Wilbur says, voice cold and bitter.

The announcement carries on for a little bit, before the goddess gestures to Philza, taking a step back, and Tommy’s heart seems to freeze as he watches his dad bow his head respectfully, before stepping forward.

When he speaks, his voice has the same quality to it that the goddess' did, and Tommy can’t help but notice the way that his dad’s eyes seem physically brighter, glowing against the darkness of the void.

“I’m not a man of many words,” Philza begins, a small smile on his face and Tommy strains his ears to listen to every change in cadence in his voice, for anything to prove that his dad hasn’t completely given in to the dragon’s control. “But what I do know is that what we’re going to accomplish, it’s going to be the greatest feat ever committed. Part of that greatness will come from the fact that we did it in our Mother’s name. We will do great things, so long as we have her by our side.”

The crowd cheers as he takes a step back and Tommy grabs Tubbo’s hand, squeezing it tightly. “No,” he whispers.

The guards lead them away, the crowd dispersing as well.

A solemn silence hovers over the group for the majority of the walk before a lime-green figure drops down from a rooftop in front of them. Four other figures follow.

“Dream!” Technoblade gasps and the guards seem to freeze.

“Let us talk to them, please,” Wilbur says. “They’re friends of ours.”

The guards nod to each other - "one minute," the tallest one says - and they take a step back, letting Dream, George, Sapnap, Skeppy, and Bad into their circle.

Bad hugs them all tightly, and Tommy leans into it, feeling glad for the sense of home it gives him.

“What the hell was that?” Dream asks, his mask hiding his face, and Tommy grimaces.

“I don’t know.”

“You’ll be there tomorrow, though, right?” Sapnap asks, fiddling with the hilt of his sword.

Ranboo nods.

“Good. We have a plan,” Skeppy says, a confident smile on his face.

“It better be good. And by good, I mean better than what we’ve tried,” Techno says, voice low.

George eyes the guards warily. “Can’t give away too much right now.”

"Fair enough," Techno agrees.

The guards move closer, and Bad clears his throat. “We’ll see you tomorrow?” He says with a cheerful smile, but Tommy can see how forced it is.

“Of course,” Wilbur says with a grin.

The hunters make their way out of the circle, thanking the guards as they go, and Tommy turns to his brothers. “Do we stand a chance?” He asks quietly.

“I think so,” Tubbo says.

“Maybe,” Technoblade says, thoughtfully. “Just maybe.”

They Finally Found Me (The Renegade Who Had It Made)

Chapter Summary

ah finally a break in Philza's shit luck

Chapter Notes

chapter title from the song *Renegade* by Styx

Philza stares at his reflection with disgust, and he can't help but wonder once more how he managed to get into this position.

Ah, that's right, the universe took one look at me, aged sixteen, almost a decade and a half ago from my perspective but five hundred years ago from almost everyone else's perspective, and said let's put you up against the Ender Dragon Goddess. Oh, you beat her? Okay, welcome to the Last City in the End. Oh, you left? Congrats! You're the Angel of Death! Now suffer, because you obviously haven't enough, Philza thinks bitterly.

His reflection stares back.

Philza thinks the goddess went overboard with the outfit. The dark tunic, adorned with amethyst and gold, is designed so that he can move easily in it. His wings are decorated with gold and obsidian and diamond, and while the weight is unfamiliar, it's not completely uncomfortable. She insisted on adding eyeliner around his eyes - *for the aesthetic*, she said - and it makes his eyes even brighter. Although, they already had seemed far too bright over the past couple of days, and he didn't know why.

The goddess, however, seemed overwhelmingly excited about this.

What does she know that I don't? He asks himself, not for the first time.

Soon enough, he'll find out, he decides, and he leaves the room to make his way to the festival.

Since agreeing to play the role she asked, Philza has not been watched closely, has not been followed by guards.

It's like they trust him, he thinks, and part of him wants to laugh, while the other part questions what he's going to do to betray them. It's not like he has any real power, any real plan.

His eyes widen as he walks outside. The Last City looks even more resplendent than normal, the common people dressed in their finest clothes, free food and attractions lining the streets, and laughter and music fills the air.

Philza almost wishes he could enjoy it, though he fakes the part, smiling and talking to the people who recognize him, eating good food, keeping an eye on the time passing.

Soon, too soon, he makes his way to the podium, where the goddess greets him.

“Did you have fun?” She asks, a slight purr to her voice.

He nods with a smile. “It’s wonderful out.”

Philza stares out over the crowd starting to form in front of the podium, and he resists the urge to look for his sons, to see if they’re there yet.

“Could you imagine if everywhere were like this?”

He pauses to think. If the world were entirely this cold, still, timeless place... He knows the people who live here are happy, that they think it’s paradise, but he knows many of them were born here, or at least in the End. Most of them have never seen the Nether, never seen the Overworld. They don’t know what they’re missing.

They never will, if the goddess has her way. She plans on keeping the citizens already here “safe” from the rest of the world, using Philza and herself to fight the planes and take them down.

He’s terrified of what it means that she thinks he’s powerful enough for that.

“It’d be... something else,” he says.

She grins. “It would, wouldn’t it?” She takes a step back, and that’s when he sees them.

The five of them stare at him, and Philza almost makes the mistake of trying to make eye contact with them, but no, he can’t, he won’t fall for it.

He tunes out the beginning of the goddess’s speech, hearing a few words about glory and might, and he chooses to stare blankly out at the crowd instead.

Do they know what they’re about to lose?

“And now is our time to rise to glory,” the goddess says. “You, here, are the chosen ones, destined to always uphold my name. I will make the rest of the End fall in our name, and choose fighters from there. You will always be safe here.”

A commotion breaks out in the crowd, and Philza notices the guards falling, one by one, some turning into red puffs of smoke, others laying in the streets, never to get back up.

Philza’s eyes widen as he notices the five figures surrounding his sons, passing them weapons, and he realizes who they are, what they’re doing.

Well, no time like the present, he thinks and he turns to the dragon.

“Actually, about that,” he says.

“What are you doing?” She says voice low.

He gives her a sharp grin. “I’m the Angel of Death. What do you expect from me?”

Her eyes widen, and she runs towards him, hand reaching out. With a sarcastic salute, Philza leans backward off the stage, wings spreading out behind him, and he twists as he approaches the ground.

He begins to glide before he hits the ground, kicking up off the ground and soaring higher above

the crowd.

Behind him, he notices Moira charge at the dragon with her blade, only to be rebuffed with a snarl, launched into the crowd.

Huh. Interesting.

He watches the way the goddess grimaces, her form changing into something much more dangerous.

He dives towards his sons, landing on the ground, and they surge towards him, and he hugs them tightly, the crowd around them screaming and panicked, but here, with his sons, Philza can't help but feel a touch of peace, despite everything.

"You're okay?" Ranboo asks, voice wavering.

"I am. I just, I had to figure out how to get her to leave you alone, but-" He looks up at the sky. "We have bigger problems now."

"Yeah, no shit!" Skeppy says, and Philza directs his attention to his saviors.

"Thank you," he says, and they nod.

"You would have done the same for me, or Skeppy, or any of us, really," Bad says, and Philza shrugs.

"You got a weapon?" He asks, and Dream wordlessly unstraps the sword from his back and passes it to him.

The netherite sword fits nicely in Philza's hand, the balanced blade feeling comfortable.

"Thank you," Philza says with a small nod.

"Wait, Dad," Wilbur calls out, eyes wide. "What are you doing?"

"Something I've already done before," Philza says with a rueful smile.

"Dad!" Techno shouts.

"I love you," he says simply, smiling at his sons, and then he kicks up off the ground.

If she wants an Angel of Death, Philza thinks, the cold air pushing his hair out of his face, then she's going to get one.

Philza rises up in front of the dragon, his wings beating steadily in the still air, netherite blade in his hand, and for a moment, he can't help but feel he's exactly where he started.

"I'm taking you down if it kills me," he says, and he lunges forward, raising his blade.

An Open Book With a Torn Out Page

Chapter Summary

what is destiny to a man who decides he has everything to fight for?

Chapter Notes

chapter title from the song *Neptune by Sleeping at Last*

Philza meets the dragon's eyes the entire time he lunges towards her, and she lunges back, dark wings and body almost invisible against the void around them, the only things defining the edge between goddess and sky being the gold and jewels adorning her wings, and the bright purple eyes meeting his own.

Philza swings the blade down towards her skull, a perfect arc downward, and she twists out of the way, eyes widening and teeth bared, and she glares at him.

He spins to avoid her claws as she swipes at him, then twists out of the way of the dragon's breath she shoots his way, the purple particles barely missing him. His wings beat the air around him steadily, and Philza looks up, meeting the bright purple eyes above him once more.

He soars over the cloud towards her, aiming for the throat as he lashes out, and he feels a touch of confidence as he watches the purple blood spill from the wound.

Of course, the wound wasn't deep enough to do much more than anger the goddess, and although Philza could claim he drew first blood, he hisses as claws come down onto his left arm, the goddess drawing blood equal to that which she lost.

Philza rolls in the air to dodge her next attack, swinging his blade as he does so, drawing more blood from the goddess in front of him, striking the underside of one of her front legs, and she hisses viciously.

"What did you think you were going to achieve by this?" She asks, voice low and heavy as she snarls the words, flinging them like poison.

"I'm hoping for just about anything at this point," Philza counters, swinging the blade towards her jaw, and she snarls, biting at the blade, puny compared to her large canines.

"You'll fail," she growls, lunging forward, and Philza just barely manages to twist out of the way of her teeth slamming shut into thin air.

He pants, feeling a little bit out of breath, gritting his teeth, and he flies towards her like an arrow, dragging the blade into her wings, and she screams, the gash in her wing providing a perfect window to the empty void around them.

She spits at him, dragon's breath spewing towards him, and Philza coughs viciously as it flows

over him, his skin prickling and burning, and with a desperate flap of his wings, he pushes out of the toxic cloud.

He coughs once more, wiping the blood off his face when he's done and he grimaces. Dragon's breath could be deadly, though now that he was free from the cloud, he knows he's mostly free from the effects.

The goddess swings down with her talons once more, and Philza barely manages to spin out of the way, cursing himself for allowing his mind to wander from the enemy in the middle of a battle.

He lunges forward with his blade, but she easily twists out of the way, laughing as she does so.

He turns to face her again, and his eyes widen as he sees the claws flying down towards him, and this time, he can't escape quite quick enough, and the claws rake against his face, barely missing his eyes, and he gasps in pain, bringing his free hand up to his face as the blood drips down, blinding him in one eye.

He pulls his hand away to see it stained red, and he shakes it to get as much blood off of it as possible, the red drops flying down to the ground.

Below him, he catches a glimpse of his sons.

They're counting on you, a voice whispers in the back of his mind, and he knows, *he knows* that they are.

For a moment, he wishes desperately that he could tell them one last time that he loves them, blood dripping from the cut across his face.

When did he decide the battle's already lost?

Philza shakes his head and turns to the dragon. "Only one of us makes it out this time," he declares.

The dragon grins. "Which one of us do you think it's going to be?"

"I *know* it's going to be me." He tightens his grip on the sword and pushes towards her, hacking at her legs as he approaches, a hot fury bubbling up in his chest, and he bares his teeth, feeling more angry and feral and wild and *powerful* than he thinks he ever has.

She laughs, countering his attacks. "What makes you so sure?"

"I'm the motherfucking Angel of Death, and I am fighting for something worth more than you could ever imagine," Philza declares.

She frowns at this, eyes glowing, and she swipes at him, dark talons swooping down towards him in the darkness.

They almost hit, Philza barely twisting out of reach, and for a moment, he's stunned by this situation: why did he think he could defeat a god in a fair fight?

"You know the fate of this is already foretold," she calls out. "Why are you fighting against your destiny?"

Her claws swing at him from the other side, dark blades against an even darker sky, and Philza decides *fuck it*.

With a vicious scream, Philza throws the blade at the dragon, one last, desperate attack in a battle

he's convinced he's destined to lose.

Well, if I go out, hopefully, I go out doing some good. I don't have anything left to lose, he thinks, gritting his teeth, watching the blade soar through the still air.

The blade hits true, right in her heart, and she growls, the growl turning into a scream, and she lashes out with her last breath.

Philza's wings feel like they're on fire as the dragon's claws tear through them, her eyes burning bright like twin suns as white light consumes her.

Philza Minecraft, the Angel of Death falls, the explosion from the dragon's death causing his vision to go white, and, feeling a small sense of peace, he shuts his eyes, letting gravity pull him down.

Black Birds Were Flying (Watching As You Fell)

Chapter Summary

:D

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Home to Me by Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*

He is falling.

It feels like a single moment stretched for a year: hair flowing around his face, wings not yet completely unfurled, dark feathers suspended in the air around him, eyes wide, heart hammering far too fast in his chest.

Philza Minecraft is afraid. He won, but as he falls from the sky, blood streaming from his wings, he wonders at what cost.

He flaps his wings, once, instinctively, and despite the pain, he realizes that he might make it to the ground okay.

He flaps them again, righting himself, and even though it hurts, it hurts so bad, and he's dizzy, and in pain, he's going to make it.

He did make it, he thinks, the hope and relief leaving him light-headed, and when he lands on the ground, stumbling, and his sons catch him, he can't help but sob, just once, wrapping his arms around them.

The world finally feels alright. He's safe, his sons are safe, his destiny is his own once more.

He couldn't ask for anything more.

"We have to go," Dream interrupts, and Philza lifts his head to notice the whole city staring at them, shock and horror and, worst of all, fury.

"Shit," Techno hisses.

Philza struggles to get his feet underneath him, and he backs away from the crowd slowly, his heart still pounding, and his head feels like it's stuffed full of cotton, but that's something he can't afford to worry about right now.

The first blade barely misses them, and Wilbur yelps in surprise and Philza pushes them, stumbling as he does so: "Go, go, go."

They run through the city, Dream, George, and Sapnap in the lead, Badboyhalo and Skeppy behind them, and Philza shouts directions as he can, Tommy and Ranboo helping him keep upright,

Techno and Wil running beside Badboyhalo and Skeppy. Tubbo runs beside Tommy, holding onto his brother's elbow for dear life.

Suddenly, they reach a clearing, and above them, Philza can see it: the End gateway. Unprotected for once: of course, it is, everyone was at the festival.

As they stand underneath it, Dream rummages in his bag.

"Dream," Sapnap says, opening a hand to Dream expectantly, but Dream looks up, mask emotionless, but his voice very much not.

"I forgot them."

"Forgot what?" Badboyhalo asks, looking down the one alleyway to the End gateway nervously.

"The ender pearls."

George groans and Philza grimaces as he realizes what Dream's saying. They have no way to get through the End gateway. They're trapped.

Ranboo looks up at the portal, red and green eyes wide. "I think I have a plan."

He quickly maneuvers Philza entirely towards Tommy, expression almost a determined grin.

Philza stares at his son, perplexed, but Ranboo grabs onto Skeppy, who squeaks in surprise, and with a flurry of purple particles, they both disappear.

Techno and Wil's eyes light up, and Philza gasps.

He's an enderman hybrid. Or, well, at least partially one. Of course, he can teleport here in the End, Philza thinks with a giddy smile.

With a few more flurries, Ranboo reappears, looking a little drained, wobbling on his feet a little, but he grins.

"How quickly can you do that again?" Badboyhalo calls out. "Cause they're going to be here quick."

Dream stares at Ranboo. "Take Bad next."

"What? No! Take your dad! He's hurt!"

Philza shakes his head. "I'm staying until everyone else is gone."

"Is this really the time to be arguing?" Techno hisses.

George raises his hand. "I'll go next, as long as Bad or Sapnap go after me."

Sapnap nods and Ranboo grabs George's arm, and they disappear.

"You know we aren't leaving until you do, right?" Wilbur asks, looking fierce, and Philza sighs, shutting his eyes.

"We'll talk about that once the others are through."

Ranboo returns quickly, offering his hand to Sapnap, who takes it.

“Bad, you’re next,” Sapnap calls out as they disappear, and Philza sighs.

The first clang of the blade hitting the walls around them makes him jump.

Badboyhalo turns to the rest. “Can you handle this without us?”

Technoblade nods. “As long as you leave me a sword and a shield.”

Badboyhalo looks at Dream, nervously, handing his gear to Technoblade. “Dream, you’re next, alright?”

“And leaving them here alone?” Dream asks, almost seeming outraged.

Badboyhalo shakes his head. “We’ll know where the End gateway is. We’ll be able to get back.”

Dream pauses at that, thinking, before turning to Technoblade. “You alright with that?”

“Dad said he’s not leaving until we’re gone, and I’m not leaving until all my brothers are through,” Technoblade declares, and Philza nods at him, his heart simultaneously feeling heavy and light.

Ranboo reappears, another blade just barely missing his ear. “Fuck!” he says, jumping in surprise.

Badboyhalo grabs onto Ranboo’s arm. “Let’s make this quick.”

“Let’s,” Ranboo agrees as they disappear once more.

Philza leans against Tommy, the world seeming dark, and the next few moments pass around him, unnoticed.

When the world returns, it’s just him and his sons, the mob approaching far too quickly.

“Ranboo,” Wilbur says, fear and worry coloring his voice.

“I’m gonna try something,” Ranboo says, sounding nervous and uneven. “It might go poorly, but I’m not taking any chances.”

“Ranboo-” Philza starts to say, but Ranboo grabs him, grabs them all, and the world disappears then reappears dizzily, and Philza stumbles against his sons, almost crashing into the end stone beneath them.

“Whoa, Mr. Minecraft, you alright there?” Badboyhalo calls out, and Philza lets out a sigh of relief, sitting on the end stone.

They’re free, he thinks, and he laughs a little, despite everything.

Ranboo sits next to him, head leaning on Philza’s shoulder, and even though his arm aches in protest, Philza just pulls him closer.

“Better than I was,” he says, smiling. “M actually pretty tired, to be honest.”

“I’d imagine so,” Dream says. “But we should head back.”

“I just need a moment,” Philza says, shutting his eyes.

The world goes dark, and Philza goes with it willingly.

With Shortness of Breath, You Explained the Infinite

Chapter Summary

let's go home.

Chapter Notes

chapter title from *Saturn by Sleeping at Last*

When the world is no longer dark, Philza finds himself laying on the end stone, his back and head aching but otherwise feeling fine.

The darkness of the void above him is disorienting, and he doesn't know where he is. Shouldn't it be light out? Why is he not in bed, at home? Or, though it would be worse, why is he not in that cursed apartment, locked away in his tower?

As his memories catch up, he abruptly sits up with a loud gasp, and around him, his sons complain loudly, sounding grumpy and mildly in pain, but Philza can't think about that, not right now.

He escaped.

He fucking escaped.

He stands despite the dizziness of getting up too fast, staring upwards at the End gateway above him.

He's no longer in the Last City in the End.

It hits him, suddenly, how certain he'd been all that time that he was going to die there, and he gasps, fighting to breathe, and he's sure he's wavering, wobbling as he tries to stand upright, and he wraps his wings around him.

"Dad?" Wilbur asks, and Philza spins around to face him and pulls him into a tight hug.

They made it. They all did.

His other sons all run towards him, joining the hug, and Philza wraps his arms and wings around them, letting out a long sigh, and he's sure there are probably tears streaming down his face, but he's safe, they're safe, they made it out, and more importantly, they're all together.

"Let's go home," he says, choking up.

"Let's," Tommy agrees, sounding tired.

Philza lets go, then notices it's only the six of them. "Where are the others?"

“They went on ahead,” Techno says with a shrug. “I told them we were safe, and they didn’t have to stay if they didn’t want to. Managed to convince them of that. Plus, I think Bad said something about making sure it was all clean and comfy and whatever at home.”

Home . The word itself fills Philza with a sense of peace.

“That sounds nice,” he says, a smile forming on his face.

They travel across the end stone plains, Philza keeping his sons close, smiling as Wilbur pulls Techno tightly towards him against the cold End air that never felt cold to him, grinning as Ranboo, Tommy, and Tubbo run around them, laughing.

The portal frame back home rises above them, indestructible bedrock rising up above them, and Philza can’t help but wonder if it will look the same as when he went through the portal all those years ago.

He pauses right before the portal, fear gripping him tightly. What if he’s lost more time?

He stares, feet unmoving, before the portal, staring at it blankly as memories rush back into his mind: the dizzying sensation of being somewhere familiar yet unfamiliar, the painstaking process of trying to put himself together in a world that had gone too far without him, the late nights missing home, and although he had physically been there, he wasn’t, not emotionally.

“Dad?” Tubbo asks, holding onto his sleeve, and Philza takes in a shuddering breath.

“Dad,” Wilbur says, hands on his shoulder.

Philza stares at the portal, unseeing.

The inky darkness calls to him, and part of him wants to walk in, just go home, where everything is safe.

The other part of him is terrified of what lies on the other side. Will it be the world he left? Or will he be cursed to miss another five hundred years? Will his home still be standing? Or will he be forced to make a new one, planks of wood in his hands and a deep longing in his heart?

Is he going to go home? He wonders, the thought echoing in his mind.

He lets out a shaky breath, then looks up at his sons.

Whatever happens. Whatever happens, at least I’ll have my family by my side this time.

“Let’s go through. All together,” he says quietly, ignoring the curious and worried stares. He reaches his hands out, taking the hands of the two closest to him, Wilbur and Tubbo. Tubbo reaches out for Tommy; Wilbur, for Techno. Techno grabs Ranboo’s hand, and, together, they stand at the edge of the portal, reflecting the starry sky that might lay on the other side.

Whatever happens , Philza thinks again, and together they step through.

The temporary darkness is disorienting and dizzying, and Philza holds his breath until it fades.

The scene on the other side is familiar, and the people there are familiar as well.

Philza lets out a sigh of relief, closing his eyes.

He’s where he belongs.

The others were waiting, though they weren't alone. Skeppy's uncle, the king, stands by the portal, talking to his nephew and Badboyhalo, several members of the Royal Guard milling around. Dream, George, and Sapnap look up as they exit the portal, wide grins on their faces.

Skeppy turns around, eyes going wide, and a relieved smile on his face. "You made it!"

Philza nods, a tired grin on his face. "We did. We made it."

The king pats Skeppy on the shoulder, before turning to Philza. "Let's get you home then."

"Home," Philza says, blinking tiredly. "That sounds nice."

He lets his sons guide him out of the stronghold and into the daylight outside, only thoughts of home on his mind.

The green leaves fall in the wind as he walks home, and if there's a skip in his walk as he goes back home, no one dares to mention it.

And when he pushes open the door to his house to find it clean with a fire roaring in the fireplace and food prepared for them in the fridge, well, he's not going to be the one to complain.

He's just happy to be home.

Just to Hide Outside Your Door

Chapter Summary

One month later

Chapter Notes

chapter title from the song *From Eden* by Hozier

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

When his sons had told him Dragocost was abandoned, nothing left but partially destroyed houses, Philza hadn't realized it was this bad.

The city that he'd arrived in, that he'd found Ranboo near, is nothing more than a husk of what it once was.

He stands at the epicenter, and he can't help but feel lost, wandering the streets he was once familiar with.

Eventually, though, he makes it to his destination.

"I'm assuming you don't want to go to the Last City," the ferryman says with a sly smile.

Philza crosses his arms. "I absolutely do not."

The ferryman hums and stares out into the void. Though Philza can't see anything except for darkness, he knows what lies out there, and he shudders.

It took so much of his willpower to even go to the End, despite it being a month since he was last here.

Maybe he should have let himself heal more, but there was something he needed.

"My sons, they said that if they returned, you'd give them their items back."

"And, of course, you don't want them anywhere near the End? So you're retrieving them yourself, despite the fact that you can barely stand to be here." The ferryman doesn't look at him while he speaks.

"That is correct."

"Let me gather the items."

Philza stands in silence, not bearing to look into the inky darkness nor the empty city behind him, so he stares into the end stone planes, chorus plants blooming, bringing color to the monochrome environment.

“How is it there?” Philza asks after a moment, the silence overwhelming.

“Oh, there are people trying to escape since you ruined their way of life, but none have succeeded,” the ferryman says with a small shrug.

“I assume you haven’t been helping.”

The ferryman grimaces. “We all have roles to play.”

“Are you certain you’re playing the one you want to be playing?”

The ferryman shrugs, picking the items up off the floor of the barge and handing them to Philza.

One notebook, one stuffed bee, one music disc, one guitar, one emerald.

Philza puts them in his bag with care.

“Do you think any of them will escape?” Philza asks softly.

“Why? Hoping someone will replace you?”

Philza scowls. “I wouldn’t wish that on anyone.”

The ferryman laughs at that. “You really are an odd one, Angel of Death.”

“I didn’t choose any of this,” Philza says.

The ferryman nods. “Well, I will tell you what you did choose.”

“To kill the dragon? To leave the Last City?” Philza asks bitterly.

“No. You chose to raise five brave, kind sons who have good taste in friends, and in people in general.”

Philza pauses at that. “I’m not sure I chose that either,” he says. “I think I just got lucky in finding them.”

“You’re the one who shaped them,” the ferryman says. “Now, go return to them.”

Philza nods. “Thank you.”

The ferryman smiles and Philza leaves, kicking up off the stone into the air, his wings carrying him into the inky void.

He had lied to the ferryman. He hadn’t even told his sons he was going. They were all planning on leaving for the End the next day, but Philza knew that he couldn’t bear to think of them being in the End.

The ferryman had been right on that part. Maybe the old hybrid knew something Philza didn’t.

So when he arrives back home after having left, unannounced, early in the morning, his sons all look up in surprise from their spot in the kitchen.

“Where were you?” Techno asks, sounding genuinely worried.

“Went to collect something,” Philza says, lifting his bag, and his sons gather close with anticipation as he opens the bag.

He places them one by one on the counter in the kitchen: notebook, guitar, bee, disc, emerald.

His sons stare at the objects then back at him.

“You got them for us?” Tommy asks, voice small.

Philza nods with a small smile.

“Why?” Ranboo asks, picking up the notebook and leafing through the pages gingerly.

“Couldn’t stand the thought of you without them.”

“But we were going to get them ourselves tomorrow,” Wilbur protests, holding his guitar with care.

“Couldn’t stand the thought of you in the End without me.”

“You could have come with us,” Techno points out, holding the emerald, tilting it to see the light’s reflection move.

“I know. I just...” Philza sighs with a shrug. “I don’t know where to begin.”

“Is it one of those things where we’ll find out one day?” Tubbo asks.

“Maybe. Hopefully not,” Philza says.

“I think it has to do with family,” Tommy says, nodding.

“Maybe,” Philza says. “I don’t know.”

His sons all stare at him, eyes wide with surprise and something else Philza can’t place.

“Thank you,” Wilbur says simply.

“I love you,” Philza replies, just as simply.

His sons chorus ‘I love you’s back at him and Philza smiles. It was nice to be home again. Hopefully, he would never have to leave again.

Chapter End Notes

Uh next chapter is an epilogue sort of thing? So this is the last real chapter I guess :)

With Golden String, Our Universe Was Clothed in Light

Chapter Summary

EPILOGUE

since y'all loved the tailor so much + a sort of familiar face

Chapter Notes

chapter title from the song *Sun by Sleeping at Last*

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

Kailyre remembers the day the Angel of Death and his sons left the Last City in the End like it was yesterday.

The glowing blue eyes, purple flurries of enderman teleportation magic, dark wings, and a mismatched pair of red-green eyes were burned into their memory.

The other thing they remember is that while everyone around them raged and wept, Kailyre couldn't help but feel happier than they could ever remember.

Then the City started falling apart, the infrastructure crumbling and the people in mourning, almost as if they would never stop.

They waited, for a while, for the next Angel. But when no one came through the gateways, even after months of waiting, the people started to lose hope.

Kailyre, on the other hand, gained hope.

They tore through the stories and old news articles on how Philza Minecraft escaped, and slowly, they made their own plan for escaping, spending months training their wings to be strong and carry them far, scouting around the city for escape routes.

The End gateway was off-limits. Despite everything, there were those who believed their Mother would return and fought to keep everyone in.

Most people who tried to escape died, losing life after life until they had none left.

Kailyre knew they had to survive.

One day, in the middle of the night, their time came, and they followed in the Angel of Death's footsteps, jumping off the highest tower of the Dragon's Castle and disappearing into the void.

Beneath them, the sole guard watching over the castle stares up at them, purple eyes and blonde hair unmoving, dark wings not flapping even once to try to stop Kailyre.

If anything, Kailyre thinks they see the guard smiling proudly.

They land, what feels like days later, and they close their eyes, laying on the end stone. They wonder if this is what he did when he escaped, fatigue taking over their bones.

When they're rested, they continue onwards, finding a portal and jumping in, not a worry in their mind.

The world they find is very different from the one they left.

There is so much, everywhere, and Kailyre wanders for what feels like forever, trying to see and experience everything: the badlands, the forests, the villages, the towns, the Nether, the strongholds, the people, the food, the culture.

They learn a few things.

It has been several hundred years since the Angel of Death returned from his second trip to the End, several hundred years since he died a peaceful death, surrounded by his family.

Kailyre wishes they could have told him everything he did for them.

They also learn that this is a very different world from the one he left either time, but they don't mind that as much, sitting in a cafe, enjoying a drink.

Their chair gives out from under them, the wobbling leg having finally decided it had enough.

"Shit," they hiss, their drink spilling on the floor and they land on the floor.

"Are you alright?" Someone asks, reaching a hand out to them.

Kailyre looks up.

The purple-gold eyes and mismatched skin remind them of someone - the Angel's son.

They gasp out a thank you, taking the hybrid's hand.

"Don't worry about it," he says, waving a hand. "Can I buy you a drink? Since you spilled yours?"

Kailyre nods, flushing.

The gentleman does so, and when he returns, they ask a question: "What's your name?"

"Ranbob," he replies, extending his hand, and Kailyre shakes it.

"I'm Kailyre."

"Kailyre. What a great name," he says, smiling.

They chat for a while, Kailyre enjoying the drink in their hands when Ranbob asks a question: "Where are you from?"

"You probably won't believe me," they say, nervously scratching the back of their neck.

"Try me."

"The Last City in the End."

Something in his eyes lights up. “You know, my great-great-great-great-grandfather was the Angel of Death,” Ranbob says with a grin.

Kailyre’s eyes widen. “Philza,” they whisper.

“Yep.”

“He was a good man,” Kailyre says immediately. “I mean, when I met him, I was stuck playing a role, doing my job so I could survive, just being a tailor, but what he taught me when he left is that I didn’t have to be that. So I left. I’ve never been more glad of anything else I’ve done in my life.” They pause, suddenly feeling self-conscious. *Oh, they’re rambling, aren’t they? This is awkward.*

Ranbob stares at them with wide eyes and a smile. “You’re the tailor? You know, my great-great-great-grandfather spoke of you.”

“What did he say?” They ask nervously.

“That you seemed like a good person.”

Kailyre flushes. “I didn’t feel like a good person.”

Ranbob shrugs. “Doesn’t matter if you feel like one or not. What matters is that you are one. Grandpa Ranboo was a great judge of that.”

“Do you think I was a great person?”

“You were kind even when you didn’t have to be. And it looks to me like you left a terrible situation even though it was hard. Sounds like you’re a great person to me.”

Kailyre grins. “Well, if that’s all it takes,” they say with a shrug.

“That’s all it takes,” Ranbob confirms with a grin.

Chapter End Notes

YO THIS IS FINISHED! I REALLY HOPE YOU ENJOYED!!

I am continuing this series! Next longer fic is gonna be more SBI+, though not focused on all six (well, not completely), though I have a longer Dream Team Plus fic and a short Wilbur + some friends fic in the works as well. They're all leading somewhere and I hope you stick around!

It's been a pleasure writing for y'all.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!