

Wasting Your Time

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Rating: [Teen And Up Audiences](#)

Archive Warning: [Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings](#)

Category: [Gen](#)

Fandoms: [Minecraft \(Video Game\)](#), [Video Blogging RPF](#), [Dream SMP](#)

Relationships: [Wilbur Soot & TommyInnit](#), [Jack Manifold & TommyInnit](#), [Tommyinnit & Ranboo & Toby Smith | Tubbo](#), [tommyinnit & sam | awsamdude](#), [TommyInnit & Ranboo](#), [TommyInnit & Tubbo | Toby Smith](#)

Characters: [TommyInnit \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [Wilbur Soot](#), [Sam | Awsamdude](#), [Toby Smith | Tubbo](#), [Ranboo \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [Jack Manifold](#)

Additional Tags: [Implied/Referenced Suicide](#), [Suicidal Thoughts](#), [Suicidal TommyInnit \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [Suicidal Ideation](#), [basically big tw on mention of suicide](#), [tubbo and ranboo are mentioned but they show up eventually](#), [sam is mentioned alot but you get him for like one chapter too](#), [Bittersweet Ending](#), [good luck](#), [we have a beta its rachael and she wants me to make you cry](#), [Derealization](#), [Hallucinations](#), [Kinda](#), [Hurt/Comfort](#), [Hurt TommyInnit \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [Angst](#), [Fluff and Angst](#), [tommy heals but you have to work for it](#), [Proceed with caution](#), [Dissociation](#), [TommyInnit Needs a Break \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [TommyInnit-centric \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [Wilbur Soot-centric](#), [TommyInnit Needs Help \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [TommyInnit Needs a Hug \(Video Blogging RPF\)](#), [Alternate Universe - Modern Setting](#), [Suicide Attempt](#)

Language: [English](#)

Series: [Part 1 of Jubilee Failed](#), [Part 1 of shutupanakin \(writing edition\)](#)

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Wasting Your Time

by [shutupanakin](#)

Summary

“Wh— what?” Tommy choked out, his voice hoarse from the lack of use all day.

The man rolled his eyes, as if he didn't just ask a completely impolite question. “I said, do you have any booze?”

Tommy sat still. He reached into his jacket pocket, his hand finding only a plastic pen. Could he stab this man with a plastic pen?

Tommy pulled said piece of plastic out, visibly holding it up. “I have a pen.” Something about the bemused look on the man's face made Tommy click it, and again, repeatedly.

click click click click click click click click—

...

or; Tommy planned on dying. He meets Wilbur instead.

Notes

my [twitter](#)

my [discord server](#)

the [playlist](#) for this fic

Please do not comment about typos, or constructive criticism! Please respect this boundary!

Each chapter is tagged with a content warning-- but please note that Wasting Your Time will contain themes of;

- suicidal ideation
- suicidal thoughts and intents
- suicide overall,

This is an AU based off of their Dream SMP characters, a characterization. Tommy exhibits reckless behavior, so it should go without saying that You Should Not go to your local train station in the middle of the night.

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

- Translation into Русский available: [Тратя своё время](#) by [YumBum](#)

In The Spirit of Being Inconvenienced

Chapter Summary

content warning for thoughts and planning of suicide and mention of alcohol

Chapter Notes

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

Tommy stared at the yellow line, centimeters away from his feet. The announcement of the incoming train ringing in his ears, feeling the approaching vehicle vibrate the concrete under his feet. He forced his head up, glaring at the incoming lights.

Tommy squinted. He threw a glance at the only other person waiting on the 11:25 pm train—a little old lady, Tommy was sure that he had at least a foot on her. Her wrinkled hand clutched a brown cane, the other one on her ruby red purse.

Tommy would hate to inconvenience her.

Tommy stepped a few inches back, safely behind the yellow line. The train slowed to a stop, waiting a few moments before the metal doors pulled open in front of him, clicking with a metallic sound. There were a few stragglers at the front, where the elder woman had gotten, and a couple sitting in the midsection. Tommy ducked his head and grabbed a seat at the back.

Tommy threw his feet up on the empty seat next to him, resting the back of his head against the warm glass. Another few seconds and the doors hissed shut. The train pulled away, the lights in the tunnel buzzing past him.

Tommy mentally tallied how many people were in here with him; the three at the front, with the elder woman who was with him on the platform, and the couple. Six people whose nights he could've possibly ruined. Delaying a train at this time of night would be rude.

Sam would be sleeping, he had morning classes that he couldn't afford to stay up late for. When Tommy slipped out of their flat his older brother had been snoring away peacefully in his room. The thought of Sam makes Tommy pick at a loose thread on his jacket, pulling it with his fingernail. He didn't want to think about Sam right now.

Tubbo would be up, definitely. His absent sleep schedule sucked. He was probably in a discord call with Ranboo, talking or playing *CSGO* or messing around in *Minecraft*, he didn't know. On a normal night, he'd probably be with them. Laughing so hard and loud that it makes the neighbor's dogs bark. Falling over in his chair... and Sam would sleep right through it, like he always did.

Wasn't exactly a *normal* night, though.

Honestly, he hasn't had a *normal* night in a while. Tubbo, often Ranboo, would text him; “*wanna play?*” Or “*why aren't you in VC?*” And Tommy would reply, “*sorry, don't feel like playing*”, or, “*can't, got a bunch of homework.*” Sometimes that wasn't a lie. Then, Tubbo just stopped asking. And of course, Tommy couldn't blame him, it hurt, yeah, but Tommy unintentionally ghosted them.

He just couldn't stand to be in that call, after the last few times. Tubbo and Ranboo giggling at each other, poking fun with inside jokes that Tommy didn't understand. Little moments like those would have Tommy faking a yawn and saying goodnight. He didn't want to ruin their fun.

Tommy's phone buzzed, the little bit of reception that he got down here snapping him back to his current reality. The train had stopped at the next station, the couple standing and the old woman following. Tommy's eyes followed them as they left, debating if he should follow. Another buzz. Tommy turned his attention back to his phone.

Tubbo at 11:30 pm

Toommy

Tubbo at 11:30 pm

do u wanna play Terraria

His fingers started typing, beginning a message, but shook his head, shoving his phone back in his pocket. His activity on discord was already invisible. Tommy didn't know what to say to him. He didn't want his last possible text to Tubbo to be something as simple as a turndown to play a game.

A thump from across Tommy startled him, the cause of the sound being a man with a mess of curly brown hair mirroring his position across the aisle. His leg up and arm resting on the top of the seat. Brown eyes framed with round glasses met Tommy's.

"Got any booze, kid?" The train was pulling away.

For no particular, definitely unrelated reason, Tommy wished that he had just gotten off.

"Wh— what?" Tommy choked out, his voice hoarse from the lack of use all day.

The man rolled his eyes, as if he didn't just ask a completely impolite question. "I said, do you have any booze?"

Tommy sat still. He reached into his jacket pocket, his hand finding only a plastic pen. Could he stab this man with a plastic pen?

Tommy pulled said piece of plastic out, visibly holding it up. "I have a pen." Something about the bemused look on the man's face made Tommy click it, and again, repeatedly.

click click click click click click click click—

The man waved his hand, leaning forward. "Fucking— stop that! That is annoying."

Tommy grinned, it didn't reach his eyes. "I know," He said, pocketing the pen. "and you are a loser."

The man gasped in a show of dramatics. Bringing his arm up to his forehead, the brown fabric of his coat covering his eyes. "Oh, woe me, the tragedy, insulted by a child!"

Tommy scowled. "You're a real prick."

The older man didn't falter, continuing his tirade. "Poor, poor me. All thy've ever wantedth was thy vodka. A cruel fate!"

Tommy didn't know why he egged this on. He could pull out his earbuds and tune out his nonsense until Tommy or him got off the train, whichever was coming first. "Your Shakespeare sucks," Tommy grunted. "*Wantedth* isn't a word, bitch."

"Then you know Shakespeare?"

Quickly, Tommy shook his head. "Absolutely not. None of that nerd shit. I just paid enough attention in Lit to know you're a fucking moron."

His eyes narrowed at Tommy, or more so, what he was wearing. "What sport do you play?"

Tommy's eyebrows shot up, what made him ask that? "Pardon?"

He groaned, rolling his shoulders. "Your jacket, you insolent toddler," He gestured vaguely at Tommy. "what sport?"

Tommy looked down, glancing at the red thread he was picking at earlier. "Oh," That came out quieter than Tommy wanted, a whisper. "it's my brothers," There was Tommy's voice. "Got it when he was visiting the states." Tommy shook his head, brushing the thought of Sam away. "And my names Tommy, dickhead."

The complete ass, he had the audacity to hum *at him*. "Wilbur Soot,"

Tommy scoffed. "That's a stupid fucking name."

"You are a child." Wilbur chided, there was no true heat behind his words.

Tommy shrugged. "You're a bitch."

Another stop, Tommy tallied that as the third one; another stop he hadn't gotten off at. This wasn't meant to be a trip, he remembered. The ticket, which sat folded in his pants pocket, was one way. Tommy had bought it out of... what was it? Courtesy? He hadn't intended to survive long enough for the ticket collectors to come around.

Excuses. *Excuses*, that's what this was. Tommy was making excuses, simple as that. He wanted to go through with this, he was sure of it. He'd thought about this for weeks, planned this out for days, he figured out which day and which time of night would have the least people. But there were still people, there was the old lady and couple who had gotten off earlier and the four people at the front and the—

Well, there was Wilbur Soot, who for whatever damned, unknown reason, had sat down across from Tommy. Now Tommy was stuck with him until either of them get up and leave. He silently wondered who would go first.

No one had gotten on, or left. The train moved on.

“So uh, where—“ Tommy stumbled, swallowing. “Where you headed?”

Wilbur shrugged, Tommy furrowing his eyebrows. “Nowhere in particular, just felt like getting on. You?”

The fuck did that mean? Tommy thinks. “So you just... got on, no reasoning. Just like that?”

“Just like that. You didn't answer the question.” Tommy groaned. Tommy was edging back to wanting to punch his stupid face.

“Not when you answer so vaguely,” Tommy cried. “I'm not going anywhere in *particular* either, for your information.”

“Really?” Wilbur pushed, incredulously. Like he had the right to be skeptical.

“Really.” Honestly, who did this irritable dickhead think he was? Tommy shuffled, folding his arms. Maybe he will get off at the next stop, he won't ever have to ever see the enraging presence that was Wilbur Soot and his stupid *Reagan and Bush* sweater again.

Reagan, Reagan... that was an American President, right? The more and more he observed the man, it could be concluded without a doubt that he was a loser. Not only that, but an irritable one. An irritable *loser*. A fate, worse than death— he'd say it was a cursed existence, if you asked Tommy.

Tommy shifted uncomfortably, becoming too aware of the hard plastic seat underneath him. “I just needed to get out tonight. Don't know why.”

Wilbur rapped his knuckles against the window, in a rhythm that Tommy didn't recognize. “Running from something? School? Parents?” He grinned. “Girlfriend?”

Tommy's face twisted in disgust. “I— no-no-no. To all of those! Down the list, no, no, and *no*. ”

“Running to something then?” *You could word it like that.* Tommy frowned, decidedly not answering. “What, were you gonna jump then?”

Tommy knew that Wilbur was joking, but he couldn’t help the way he flinched. “I wasn’t going to jump, bitch— do you do this to every stranger you meet on the rails? Interrogate them for their life story?”

Wilbur pointed his index finger towards the front of the train. “They would not care, you know,”

Tommy’s mouth was dry. “What?”

“Them,” Wilbur gestured. “everyone, they would complain about the delay, they— they would be at best inconvenienced. At worst angry at *you.*”

“You’re real emo, you know,” Tommy deadpanned. “A right gothic.”

“I prefer poet,” Wilbur corrected. “I am not wrong though, the people here, no sympathy. No empathy. Just inconvenienced.”

“You’re inconveniencing me.” Tommy expressed.

“Because you were going to jump?”

“*Oh—*” Tommy snapped. “That’s none of your business! Stop trying to psychoanalyze me you pretentious prick, what I came down is none of your con—“

“So you were going to? That is what you came down here to do?”

Whatever battle they were fighting, Tommy was losing, and he was *exasperated.* “Oh, so, what if I was? Why do you care?”

“Come on,” Wilbur said, swinging his legs over the seat and standing up. How his legs weren’t asleep, Tommy didn’t know. Tommy hit his asleep leg, silently cursing it.

“Wha’?” Tommy asked, narrowing his eyes. “What makes you think I wanna get off with you?”

Wilbur shrugged. “Well, I have nowhere to go, and you have nowhere to go, and to be honest this is getting depressing. And, I would rather not leave a possible suicidal teenager alone. Also, I know a store outside this station.”

Tommy groaned. “Oh no,” He said. “I’m being kidnapped. No, stop, someone help please.” He stood up, shaking the static-like feeling out of his left leg. Begrudgingly following Wilbur when the sliding doors pulled open. “Is this the part where your gang comes around the corner in a white van and shoves me in?”

“I don’t have enough friends for that.” Wilbur insisted, leading Tommy up the concrete stairs of the station.

Tommy couldn't help his smile. "I believe you." Wilbur blew air out his nose, hopefully in amusement.

Tommy checked his phone, the bright light illuminating his face as he and Wilbur stepped out of the tunnel. 12:13 *am* stared back at him, along with a few more texts from Tubbo. Tommy pocketed it.

Tommy breathed in the crisp midnight air, after almost an hour in the underground, the fresh air felt nice. The area was rural, decently lit for the middle of the night. Tommy turned to look at Wilbur. "So where we goin? Pub? Club? I don't have a fake ID, big dubbs."

"No," Wilbur shook his head, starting his trek up the hill. "Store, if you can call it that. He is open until three."

They crossed the street before Wilbur came to a stop, tapping his foot against the ground. "This it?" Tommy asked, reading the sign. Wilbur giving an *mmm-hmm*— in response.

JACK OF ALL TRADES

That was... lame, Tommy thought. "I can't go in though." Tommy double-took, stepping back.

"What do you mean you can't go in?!" He hissed.

"Got banned," Wilbur replied, as if it was the simplest thing in the world.

"How?"

Wilbur slapped him on the shoulder. "Story for later, my young friend. Maybe refrain from telling Jack I sent you in, though."

Tommy huffed. "You suck." He stuffed his hands in his jacket pocket. "You're not gonna ditch me here are you?"

Wilbur rolled his eyes, holding up three fingers. "I swear on it." His smile grew, eyes shining.

He sighed. "Why am I going in again?" It seemed rather pointless, to take Tommy to a store he wasn't even allowed in. With a quick glance through the windows, Tommy guessed it was some sort of gift shop, snow globes, and odd-looking jewelry lining their respective shelves.

Wilbur tilted his head. "Because it will give you something to do other than to ride the tube to the end of the tracks trying to make up your mind." He answered.

"When you put it like that," Tommy grumbled, pushing open the door, triggering the bell at the top to ring. The inside was small and warm. It was definitely homey.

“Hello!” A heavy accented voice greeted Tommy looked up, a shaved-headed man wearing a striped hoodie smiling at him. Jack, he assumed. He sat behind the counter, his legs perched up on the counter. He put down the magazine he had been reading. “What brings you here this time of night?”

Tommy’s mouth formed into an ‘o’, he didn’t expect to have to make conversation with *another* stranger tonight. “Oh, um,” He cringed, running his hand through his hair. “out for a walk, saw you were open.” He lied, Wilbur had said not to bring him up.

Starting to pick at the thread again, his eyes scanning over the snow globes and miniature statues. His attention fell on a bowl of pins, some were round and others were shaped. The scan bars on the back faded or scratched out.

He reached in, moving around the pins. He wasn’t really searching for anything specifically. Tommy rubbed his thumb over the bee-shaped pin he had pulled out. “How much?”

“The pin?” Tommy nodded. “Two pounds,” Jack answered.

Tommy blinked. “That’s ridiculous.” He grumbled, opening his wallet. He handed it to Jack, fiddling with the bee pin.

“Have a goodnight now!” Jack called as Tommy left, stepping outside. Wilbur was there, like he said he’d be.

“Did you get banned for complaining about his obscure prices?” Tommy sneered, making Wilbur laugh. “Absolute ridiculousness.”

“What did you get?” Tommy opened his palm, showing the bee. He attached it to his jacket, the needle clicking into place.

“Jackets blank, thought it could use something,” Tommy explained, walking beside Wilbur. “I’ve been completely ripped off, though. You did this to me.”

“No no, mister Jack Manifold did that to you. Not me.” Wilbur expressed. “I merely brought you there.”

“To be scammed.” Tommy insisted.

Their walk back to the tube station was pleasantly uneventful, Tommy didn’t comment on how Wilbur got on the opposite platform they got off of. He guessed that was the sign that this night was coming to an end. They were going back in the direction they came.

Tommy silently wished that they didn’t, that they kept going. The idea of returning home was becoming less and less appealing. The robotic voice echoed through the speakers, announcing the incoming train.

Tommy resisted the urge to make a jumping joke, knowing that would earn him a smack against the head or something. So he stood behind the yellow line, Wilbur at his side. The inside had a single man, at the front alone. Tommy ignored him, hitching his seat at the back, Wilbur sitting across from him.

“This wasn’t how I planned my night, by the way,” Tommy grumbled.

“I know,” Wilbur told. “I am sure this had the better outcome though. I will make you a deal, okay?” Tommy nodded, starting to play with the edge of his sleeves. “If you can make it to the end of the week without, trying to jump in front of another train, or try to kick a chair out from underneath you—“

“That would be a really lame way to die,” Tommy interjected.

“I am giving an example, Tommy,” Wilbur huffed. “If you make it through the end of the week, come back here. Same day.”

Tommy considered it. “Same time?”

Wilbur shrugged. “Sure, although I would not recommend making a habit of sneaking out in the middle of the night.”

Tommy pinched the bridge of his nose, contemplating. This offer— there was no reason he had to take it. He could get off and never see Wilbur again, it wouldn’t change anything. The world will continue spinning, they would both move on, Wilbur would eventually forget about this strange encounter, and so would Tommy.

They stopped, again, no one getting on or off. Wilbur was still waiting for his answer. Tommy didn’t have it.

This was nice though, Tommy thought. It was nice to leave that flat, to get off his mattress. To have a reason to ignore the discord messages from Tubbo and Ranboo. He didn’t have to lay in bed, dreading going to his classes the next day, because he was occupied. He had something to do.

“Alright,” Tommy said. “I’ll take that bet, big man.”

“Deal?” Wilbur reached his hand out, Tommy leaned forward, shaking it.

“Deal,” Tommy gave a toothy smile. “I’ll try not to become a tube line statistic until next week.”

“That is not funny,” Wilbur warned, although there was no true malice in his tone. “I will have you know statistics are no laughing matter.” Tommy barked out a laugh, the serious expression Wilbur carried dropping. If the stragglers at the front were giving bewildered stares at Tommy, he didn’t notice.

“It was...” He wheezed. “It was kinda funny. If anyone gets to joke about that it’s me, alright? Isn’t that some, therapist shit or something? Using humor to cope? That’s me. I’m doing that.”

“You should try that, seeing a therapist,”

Therapy was useless, at least to Tommy. He didn’t need someone in a fancy office to tell him something was wrong with him, he *knew* damn well what was wrong with him. No pens, or

clipboards, or uncomfortable couches, or ticking clocks, and judgemental eyes will be able to tell him something that he didn't already know.

Tommy thinks Sam knows one, or at least she's studying to become one. A school friend that Tommy's met maybe twice. The mere idea of dumping his shit on her, he almost felt bad! *No thank you*, Tommy thought. He would be avoiding that.

"Nah," Tommy brushed it off. "I don't do that. Don't need that. Won't do anything for me."

Tommy didn't realize how long they had been talking, because when the train slowed into a familiar station, Wilbur pulled himself up. Tommy frowned, watching the man stand next to the doors, waiting for them to pull open.

"So, see you next week Toms?" He teased.

Tommy groaned in annoyance. "We are certainly not at *Toms* yet, big dubbs."

"I will get there I'm sure," He said, stepping out. "Farewell Tommy!" He waved, Tommy's urge to punch those stupid glasses off his face coming back.

Tommy flipped him off, watching the curly mop of brown hair disappear as the train started moving, the platform and the man with it being replaced by the cement walls.

His stop was next, he realized. Tommy would get off, he would walk home and slip into his bed and would have to *pray* that Sam's heavy sleeping habits had not changed; that he hadn't gotten up and realized that his bed was empty, or that the door was unlocked. The thought of Sam sitting there on the couch, waiting for him to enter the door like some sort of walk of shame—

Tommy quickly checked his phone, looking at the notifications. He breathed in relief, no notifications from Sam. No missed calls, no voice mails, no worried text messages; all things that would indicate Sam was awake and that he knew Tommy was out.

Shakily, Tommy stood up. The doors clicked open, waiting for him to exit. He could just keep going the other direction, he thought. He made no promise to Wilbur to return home.

Tommy stepped out, the doors hissing shut behind him. Wind bristled through his hair as the train moved again, almost taunting him. *Look at me! Look what you missed!*

He chose not to, though. Tommy didn't because of a bet, and he didn't even place money on it. A simple bet of wills was supposed to keep Tommy running till the end of the week. It wasn't like Tommy didn't enjoy Wilbur's company either, it was... nice, having someone to just talk to, to engage with. He didn't have to raise his voice or make a scene to get him to listen to him.

He would never tell Wilbur that, though. He was fucking irritating enough.

Tommy shoved his hands in his pockets, leaving the station. He'd come back, alright. If not just to prove something to Wilbur but to himself, maybe.

He *really* should've put money on it, though.

Chapter End Notes

my [twitter](#)

my [discord server](#)

the [playlist](#) for this fic

Hi! :D thank you for reading, I'm excited for where this is going to go. Thank you to Rachael for editing and helping me plot, shes the one that came up with the pen line.

I'm an editor on Instagram! shutupanakin on ig and shutupanakins on twitter, contact me there for any questions or concerns.

Ramblings Of Dead Men Walking

Chapter Summary

“Oh,” Tommy said. “The bee. Uhm.” He ran his hand through his hair. “Reminds me of my friend. Tubbo. I guess. He has this thing, yeah? For them. Since we were kids.”

Tommy remembered, when they were kids, when Tommy’s parents were still alive and Tubbo’s hadn’t split yet. They were in his yard, Tommy was throwing around a baseball. He was getting better at throwing, he couldn’t wait to show Sam— when Tubbo had yelled for him to look. He thrust his cupped hands into Tommy’s face, showing him the bee he had captured.

Tommy had been around Tubbo in person twice this week. If he saw the bee pin he didn’t say anything.

“Why are you not hanging around him then?” Wilbur asked, and Tommy bit the inside of his cheek. He knew the answer to that. He just didn’t like it.

“I don’t think he wants me around anymore,” Tommy admitted.

tw for suicidal ideation

Chapter Notes

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

Tommy is a fucking idiot.

No, no, no, it went beyond that, beyond that plain idiocy, Tommy was a fucking moron.

He desperately wanted to just forget about the deal he made. It sat in the back of his mind, collecting dust and forming cobwebs. Whenever he began to think about it, whenever he opened that door and the sun would hit it with its light; Tommy promptly closed it.

But it would always just creek back open, whenever Tommy was sitting in a lecture and he felt like tearing his hair out. When Tommy had managed to hang around Tubbo and Ranboo, and he felt like *screaming*, throwing a fit, wanting to make his existence known. When he had come home and Tommy would make himself dinner and sit at that stupid empty table *alone* because Sam was working or studying.

The light would hit it, and Tommy remembered he had a bet of wills to win. Against fucking Wilbur Soot. That pretentious *prick*.

Tommy is a fucking idiot because he came back. The 11:25 train was coming in, Tommy was alone on this stupid platform. No old lady to distract him, to make him hesitate, no one was here this time to make him reconsider against just—

He could—

He could just—

No.

He had a bet to win.

Tommy glared at the lights, the train skidding to a perfect stop in front of him. Tommy entered swiftly when the doors opened, grabbing the same spot at the back as he did last time. There were two other people at the front. Not together, he would imagine.

He threw his leg up on the plastic seat, ignoring the nauseating feeling that was settling in his stomach. What if Wilbur was just screwing with him? What if he didn't show up?

Why would he? There was nothing that he personally gained by showing up. It was a bet of wills. Maybe he made this deal to give himself some peace of mind, a pity play. To keep the random kid he met in the middle of the night alive, to give the man a heroic ticket. *Look! It's Wilbur Soot! He saved a child from his own stupidity!* A self-righteous savior play.

What a *dick*.

Tommy wondered if Wilbur was thinking that way about Tommy, too. If he was waiting for the tube to come, debating whether or not he showed up. Whether or not Tommy truly didn't make it to the end of the week, or if he thought Tommy decided he had better things to do with his time.

Tommy was determined to prove him wrong.

They were slowing. Tommy screwed his eyes shut. He didn't want to glance out the window, he didn't want to be disappointed at the lack of that stupid mess of brown hair. The doors hissed open and Tommy didn't open them.

Tommy counted his fingers.

One.

Two.

Three.

Four.

Five.

Six.

“You look stupid,”

The doors whizzed shut, Tommy's eyes snapped open.

There was Wilbur Soot, with his stupid glasses and dumb-looking *Bush and Reagan* jumper and Tommy was wishing that he was less relieved to see the man.

“I win,” Tommy blurted. Wilbur took his place, sitting opposite Tommy. “I made it to the end of the week.” *I proved you wrong.*

“Think you can do one more?” *What?*

“I said nothing about that big man,” Tommy objected. “if you wanna do this again we’re gonna have to put money on it.”

Wilbur rubbed his face, exasperated. “I am *not* gambling with a child. I had a buddy for that.”

“I am seventeen,” Tommy objected. “Where’s your buddy now?” He sneered.

Wilbur shrugged. “Unavailable. I can not talk to him anymore.”

Tommy picked at the thread, resisting the urge to pull it. “Why is that a fucking pattern with you? Can’t talk to this person, can’t talk to that person— do you just get into the habit of making people dislike you?”

“Do you dislike me?” Wilbur pushed.

“I’m trying to,” Tommy told truthfully. “it is kinda a shit thing to do, though— to drop friends. Act like they don’t exist anymore.”

The train stopped. No one got on. Tommy found himself grateful for that.

“Why did you get the bee pin?” Wilbur asked, Tommy's eyes fell to said pin, resting easily in the fabric of his jacket. He had forgotten about it, truth be told. No one had pointed it out or asked about it. Not even Sam, *who he got the jacket from*, when Tommy saw him had pointed it out.

“Oh,” Tommy said. “The bee. Uhm.” He ran his hand through his hair. “Reminds me of my friend. Tubbo. I guess. He has this thing, yeah? For them. Since we were kids.”

Tommy remembered, when they were kids, when Tommy’s parents were still alive and Tubbo’s hadn’t split yet. They were in his yard, Tommy was throwing around a baseball. He was getting better at throwing, he couldn’t wait to show Sam— when Tubbo had yelled for him to look. He thrust his cupped hands into Tommy’s face, showing him the bee he had captured.

Tommy had been around Tubbo in person twice this week. If he saw the bee pin he didn’t say anything.

“Why are you not hanging around him then?” Wilbur asked, and Tommy bit the inside of his cheek. He *knew* the answer to that. He just didn’t like it.

“I don’t think he wants me around anymore,” Tommy admitted.

Another station. One of the stragglers at the front left.

“Why do you think that?”

“What are you trying to do?” Tommy snapped. “Psychoanalyze me? Am I your fucking psychology research project or something?!”

“I am trying to help, you irrational child,” Wilbur stressed.

Tommy relaxed, the glare that had grown on his face only dropping a bit. “I... I— there’s this guy, Ranboo, and I like him, alright? Like he’s cool. He’s from America— living with his cousin, yeah? One of my brother’s friends. That’s how we met. I introduced him to Tubbo and —“

“They got along better than you thought,” Wilbur finished.

Tommy nodded. “Yeah,” He was picking at the thread again. “it’s not like... they completely ignore me. They still invite me to stuff. And ask me if I want to play Minecraft. But it’s third-wheeling, right? Like nothing, I say lands with them. I don’t think they do it on purpose, because Ranboo is such a people pleaser; the biggest one I know, and Tubbo’s so fucking clingy. He’s a pushover, too. But they have fun together, whether I’m there or not, it doesn’t matter. So why— why bother getting into the voice call, just to sit there talking to myself while they enjoy each other?”

“So you are feeling left out,” Wilbur concluded. Tommy shrugged.

“Yeah, I guess. It’s why I like talking to you.” Tommy admitted. “Because you listen to me, the things I say have a bigger impact than a pebble on the pavement. With you it’s— it’s like a crater. But I don’t need to be a world-destroying asteroid when I’m talking to you. I can just be a pebble and still get my point across. You listen to what I say and you *respond*.”

With them, it was like he was a ghost. Like in *Phasmophobia*, or something. They’re trying to communicate with him, but are only hearing every other word. Incoherent babbling. With Wilbur, they’re both ghosts— making fun of the idiots with their magic boxes trying to communicate with them.

“Aw, *Tommy*,” Wilbur cooed. Tommy threw his hands up.

“And you ruined it, you’ve ruined it, Wilbur Soot. You are terrible, downright awful. I’m never saying anything positive about you again.”

Wilbur grinned mockingly. “Oh, Tommy— it is alright that you like talking to me!”

“Fuck you!” Tommy retorted. “You’re a fucking wrongen!”

“I like talking to you too,” Wilbur offered.

They stopped again, someone had gotten. They spared a mere glance at Tommy before sitting in the midsection.

Tommy crossed his arms. “You’re okay I guess,”

“You should probably get on that though,” Wilbur said, Tommy looking at him questionably. “talking to your friends, I mean. Figure things out. I mean, they are doing it on purpose, they are shit friends.”

“They are not!” Tommy hissed. “They’re not doing it on purpose. They wouldn’t.”

And he was right, they wouldn’t. He’s known Tubbo *forever*, they’ve been stuck together since Tommy could count— so what if Tubbo might have gotten sick of him, just a little? It’s not on purpose, he knew that! But he had someone new to hang around, someone else to laugh with, someone to tell the same jokes he told Tommy and they would laugh because they would be new. Tommy gets it. He does! That doesn’t mean Tubbo was—

That didn’t mean Tubbo was a bad friend. It’s not on purpose. It’s not.

Ranboo was well, Ranboo. That guy couldn’t hurt a fly, even if he wanted to. He had been in the UK for a few months at this point, Tommy did his job of being the placeholder friend—he showed him around, he was his friend when he didn’t have any; now he did. He still cared about Tommy. Tommy knew that! The— the stupid fucking good morning texts, the ridiculous little signs he’d leave in Tommy’s house in Minecraft, the checkups. Ranboo was a good person.

And Tommy? Tommy wasn’t. But he tried.

So if he was jealous of that, of that relationship, of that quick forming bond—he kept his mouth fucking shut.

“They’re not,” Tommy repeated. “I don’t want to ruin their fun.”

“But you are not having fun,” Wilbur pointed out. “and if they are your friends they should care about that.”

“And what am I supposed to do then?” Tommy cried. “They’re all I got! If I— if I lose them then have nothing. I’d rather sit and deal with it than just lose them.”

Tommy meant it, in the most literal way possible, that he would rather *die* than lose them. He’d rather have died knowing they still cared about him even just a little bit than live not having them in his life.

Another station and Tommy glared at the doors, daring anyone to enter.

No one did.

“You are scared,” Wilbur said.

“I don’t like being alone,” Tommy admitted. He shook his head. “Nope, I’m done talking about this. I’m done.” Topic change, topic change... “Why are you wearing that stupid jumper again?”

Wilbur looked down, pulling at said jumper. “It is... my Tuesday jumper?”

“That’s lame.” Tommy deadpanned. “Of course you correlate your outfits with days of the week.”

“You are literally wearing a varsity jacket, you do not play a sport.”

“Hey!” Tommy exclaimed. “It’s my brothers! And— and why the fuck do you have a Reagan and Bush sweater, anyway?! You’re fucking British!”

“It is *cool*,” Wilbur dejected. “A friend and I used to go on eBay and buy American President jumpers.”

“Nerd.” Tommy yawned. It was late. “Lemme guess— you don’t talk to this guy anymore either?”

“Yep.” He said, popping the p. “He stopped visiting me a while ago.”

“It’s because he buys U.S President jumpers off of eBay.” Tommy pitched his voice lower. “*Sorry, can’t pay the bills this month Sandra! I just couldn’t resist this two hundred pound Obama sweater.*”

Wilbur stood up, and Tommy realized that the train was slowing. *Oh*. Were they going back to that shop then?

“Come on,” Wilbur gestured. “you can get another pin or something.”

“I’m going to get scammed again,” Tommy grumbled, bouncing his legs as he waited for the doors to click open.

“You are helping a small business,”

“‘You are helping a small business’, shut up.” Tommy drawled. Someone who was on the platform entered the front, not sparing a glance at Tommy.

Tommy walked alongside Wilbur, exiting the station. They passed a woman who was standing outside a pub, smoking. Tommy only nodded at her.

“Can you tell me what got you banned now?”

“I do not think I will,”

He groaned. “Oh, you cryptic bastard— what if I do the same thing *you* did and get banned too? Who am I supposed to go to in the middle of the night to get pins?”

“You are gonna get pins again?” Wilbur asked. Tommy nodded his head.

“I think so. I kinda like the bee, and nothing else in there has really interested me, ya know? Could use more of them on this,” He gestured to the front of his jacket.

The blinking sign came up, Tommy standing underneath it. “I will be here,” Wilbur said.

“This is ridiculous,” Tommy complained. “what happens if you go in? Can’t bygones just be — bygones? Is that how ya say it? Jack seems nice. I’m sure he’s not as much of a prick that you’re making him out to be.”

“Nope,” Wilbur shook his head. “No can do, Toms.”

“Ugh,” The bell rang, the door shutting behind him with a thud. Jack Manifold sat at the counter, face leaning on his hands. His eyes met Tommy’s as he entered.

“You again?” He greeted, rather rudely. Tommy gave a small wave, approaching the bowl of pins, looking through it.

“We have to stop meeting like this,” Tommy joked, picking up a circular white pin. An empty smiley face stared back at him.

“We have to stop meeting in the middle of the night,” Jack corrected. “what are you doing out this late anyway?”

“Work?” Tommy said it more like a question, pulling out his wallet. “Late night shift, that. Yeah.” Tommy cringed. Jack didn’t question it, taking the two pounds Tommy had placed on the counter. Tommy turned the pin in his hand, clipping it into his jacket. “Thank’s Jack!”

“See ya kid!” He called, Tommy swiftly exiting. Wilbur stood waiting for him.

“What did you get this time?” He asked, Tommy held out his jacket. Wilbur squinted at the smiley face. “That is ironic.”

Tommy punched him in the shoulder, lightly, keeping his pace with Wilbur. “It’s not for me dipshit,” Tommy explained. “Sam—my brother— has this friend, Ranboos cousin actually. He’s got this stupid fucking hoodie. Ugliest shit I’ve ever seen man, bright green. He’s like a walking traffic light. Has this giant smile on it. Reminded me of him. Everything about that guy. Fucking weirdo.”

“Because he wears a smiley face?”

“No,” Tommy said. “Because he is *American* .” He emphasized.

“Ah,” Wilbur realized. “That explains it. Perfectly reasonable explanation. You ever been there?”

“No, but Sam has. He studied abroad there for a few years before—“ Nope. Tommy’s night was picking up. *Nope*. “Anyway, he came back. Friends with a bunch of them too.”

“I have been,” Wilbur hummed, reminiscing. “California. La Jolla. Sometimes I wish that I stayed.

“That sounds made up,” The cool nighttime air disappeared as they entered the underground again, descending the stairs.

“It could have been. It was nice, sunny. More than here. Cleaner.”

“Why don’t you go back then?” Tommy pushed. “If it’s so much nicer there than here. If I had the chance I’d get the fuck out of here too.”

Tommy did *not* want to go to the states, fuck that. But oh, what he would do to be able to just leave. Travel. Not have to stay in one spot. That sounded nice, being able to pick up and leave whenever he felt claustrophobic. He couldn’t though, because he had Sam and school and Tubbo and Ranboo and he’s standing in quicksand and he’s sinking and he *can't get out*
—

He’d go to Rome first maybe, if he could pull himself out of the quicksand. Berlin? Paris? Ugh, the *French*. No. Vienna would be nice. Tubbo’s mom lived there. Tommy remembered that he would visit her there during the summers. He’d always excitedly show pictures he had taken to Tommy when he had returned.

“I can not leave,” Wilbur answered, Tommy’s attention snapping back to him. “Stuck here for a bit, unfortunately.”

“Oh,” Tommy frowned. “Well, that’s something we have in common I guess.”

When the train arrived, they boarded. This time, there was a group at the front, engaging in an incoherent conversation. Tommy didn’t bother eavesdropping, snatching his spot at the back.

“You want to make another deal?” Wilbur asked, sitting down.

“Like, we do this again? Do you still think I’m gonna jump?”

“Maybe,” Wilbur admitted. “You sounded like you wanted to earlier.” Tommy knew what he was referring to, to his word dump about Tubbo and Ranboo. Tommy was hoping that he would forget that. “I want to add something to it though.”

Tommy's eyes glinted. “Money?”

Wilbur glared. “No. I am not giving you money.”

“*Ughhhh*—” Tommy leaned back. “Come on, I’ll stay alive for money, okay? I’ll do that. I’ll take that bet!”

“I want you to talk to your friends. Tell them what you told me.”

No thank you, he was not doing that. The train stopped. No one got on, the group didn’t leave.

“Now that bet I’m not taking. You can keep your money.”

“Tommy.”

“No— no you don’t get it! That will ruin everything!” Tommy expressed. He couldn’t. He *couldn’t*. “I’m not going to ruin it for them.” He affirmed.

“It is being ruined for you though,” Wilbur hummed.

“Fuck you,”

They stopped, the group got off. A man entered.

“Listen to me,” Wilbur said. “They are not going to hate you. They are not going to hate each other either. You tell them—“ He pitched his voice. ““Hey guys, I am feeling ignored and like I am third wheedling but I have been avoiding telling you that because I think it will ruin your fun’ *mememememe*—“

“I do not go *mememememe* !” Tommy argued. Completely inaccurate imitation.

“Do that,” Wilbur continued. “If it goes well, come back, right? If it fixes your fucking communication issues, come back here.”

“That’s your bet?”

“Mm-hm.”

Tommy was going to develop gambling addiction or something. If that was how that worked. He didn’t— he didn’t want to tell them, he couldn’t! Why should he ruin everything just to prove to this asshole that he was wrong?!

“And if I don’t show up, I’m right. I proved you wrong.”

“I am not wrong though,” He teased.

“Oh get your head out of your ass!” Tommy scolded. “You’re so full of yourself aren’t you?!”

“I am not full of myself,” Wilbur tapped. “I just know when I am right.”

“You’re a bitch.”

Wilbur didn’t hesitate. “You are a gremlin.”

Another station and the man had gotten off, glaring in Tommy’s direction. Tommy resisted the urge to flip him off. It was just them now.

“You’re going to be proven wrong by a gremlin, then I’ll never have to—“ Oh. “I won’t ever see you again.”

“We better hope I’m right then!” Wilbur laughed, clapping his hands together. “That would be unfortunate.”

It would suck, Tommy agreed. Because man, was Wilbur Soot fucking irritating; but if he lost Tubbo and Ranboo this week, he— he wouldn't show up. Because he won. Wilbur would enter and there would be an empty seat, and he would know he lost.

Maybe, maybe Tommy could fib. If that happened. Act like they went okay. It was up in the air, Tommy was already building the lie that he would tell to Wilbur in case that happened.

“Alright, Wilbur. I'll take that bet.” Tommy decided.

“We need to find a different word for that,” Wilbur said. “Bet. That is morbid—“

“You're morbid.”

“It is *morbid*,” Wilbur continued. “Placing bets on human life. It lessens the value, takes it—and makes it hollow, and if we are hollow, what are we then? We are no better than the people that glare at you when you laugh, or the ones that complain about a delayed train.”

“Wilbur,” Tommy said, slowly. “It's a word.”

Wilbur's shoulders fell. “Words are powerful, Toms.”

“I think calling it a bet is okay. Right? Because it's a bet on me.” Tommy explained, carefully. “It's at my own expense. Nothing is being placed on it, it's... it's more of a test of wills if anything.”

“A test,” Wilbur repeated.

“I hate tests.” Tommy rambled. “We both have a thesis, opposites of each other, and we're both trying to prove the other wrong. Like a science experiment or something.”

“I could work with that,” Wilbur calmed. The train stopped again. It was Wilbur's stop. Another night, ended by a train station. Wilbur stood up, standing at the doors, waiting for them to open. “Farewell, my fellow science experiment.” Wilbur joked, Tommy groaned, he didn't agree to be called that. “See you next week!”

“You hope!” Tommy called. Tommy hoped, but he wouldn't say that either. A man brushed past Wilbur as he exited, not sparing him or Tommy a glance as he sat in the midsection.

That heavy feeling returned, settling in Tommy's stomach. He would have to face Tubbo and Ranboo, this week. Probably a conversation that would be easier to do in person, so he would have to wait a few days. It wasn't just his friendship with them on the line now, anymore. He had the curse that was Wilbur Soot *and* being bad at lying. His poor, poor unfortunate luck.

Tommy, for the first time all night, pulled out his phone. A few from Ranboo, but nothing concerning. No indication that Sam had caught him. *Thank god.*

Tommy got off at his stop, not giving the man a glance. The possible things he could say to them running through his head as he ascended the stairs, he needed to word it out carefully. Maybe write like a notes app vent, or something. He needed to think this through carefully. He would do that tomorrow, though.

Right now, he wanted to go home, and collapse on his bed and pretend the last to Tuesday didn't happen. He could live with that. He would be perfectly contempt with that!

But he couldn't, unfortunately. He was cursed with the miserable existence of Wilbur Soot.

Chapter End Notes

my [twitter](#)

my [discord server](#)

the [playlist](#) for this fic

ayeee, thank you all for your support and wonderful comments last chapter! They were all so lovely.

Fun fact; like two weeks before I published this I and crow cult learned the difference between the British Tubeline and American Metro system. I was originally describing that. Rewrote some lines but I'm sure I missed a bit.

here is the [playlist](#) I made for this!

Ruining The Color Blue

Chapter Summary

When they pulled into their next stop, Tommy didn't shut his eyes this time. He watched Wilbur come into view through the window. Wilbur entered swiftly, following behind a man that nabbed a seat in the front.

“Hello, fellow science experiment,” Wilbur grinned, placing himself down opposite to Tommy. “I assume it went well?”

If Tommy was in a worse mood he would curse him out. “I'll have you know, it went exceptionally well, Mr. Soot. I even walked here with a bit of pep in my step. I did that! Not you!”

as always, cw for suicidal ideation

Chapter Notes

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

Tommy was not proven right.

In better words, his thesis, his argument, it was wrong. He was wrong, okay? He could admit that! He was wrong and Wilbur was right. Wilbur, him, and his stupid antithesis. Wilbur got the good grade, Wilbur got the pat on the shoulder from the teacher. Tommy got credit for participation. Tommy got a pity smile and a gold star sticker and a ‘good job! You tried!’

Tommy should be happy. He is happy! He talked to Tubbo and Ranboo. After they were all done with classes on Friday, because Tommy had waited that long— he talked, and they listened! They did!

“ Would you guys be happier if I— I don't know. Stop hanging around you, or something?”
He was picking at the thread, pulling it so tight he could feel it move the inside of his sleeve.

The answer he got? They said *no*. Ranboo was quiet, letting Tubbo babble. Then Ranboo would reword what Tubbo said, more coherently. And Tommy resisted his urge to just *scream*, because that was their dynamic. Of course it was! Tubbo was the controlled forest fire and Ranboo was damage control.

What Tommy did not expect was when he had pointed that out, his friends didn't let him burn out like he thought they would. Tommy wasn't the tree burning up, Tommy was the water that Ranboo was using to put it out.

They had hung out at Ranboo's all weekend, after that. Sam was busy and couldn't handle the noise, Tubbo's dad worked nights and refused to leave the house to them alone. Ranboo's cousin was cool about it, thank god. The guys' friends were fucking *awesome*, Tommy thought. The shorter American was telling him about Molotov Cocktails and one with the stupid fucking glasses tried to teach him and Tubbo some clutch in *Minecraft*.

Tommy wasn't afraid to admit that he lost.

The train, as it always does, stops in front of him. Tommy didn't hesitate this time, grabbing his seat at the back. There might have been more of a skip in steps this time, but no one he knew was there to point it out. The woman at the front promptly ignored him. He sat down, hands tucked firmly in his jacket pockets.

He did not doubt that Wilbur would show up this time. The man himself had indicated that he'd love being proven right. Tommy was willing to let him take this, to take this ego boost. Tommy knew when to admit that he was wrong— he was, okay?

"I like your pin." Ranboo's cousin said, passing him a coke from the fridge. "Smile. Nice."

Tubbo looked at him, his eyes settled on Tommy's jacket. He reached out, fabric gripping up in his hand. His thumb ran over the yellow and black pin. "Bee." Tubbo tilted his head. "When did you get this?"

"Oh. Uh." Tommy stuttered. "Uhm. Two weeks ago! There's this cool shop a bit out that sells them."

Tommy fiddled with the bee, adjusting the diagonal position it had fallen into. He didn't tell Tubbo or Ranboo about Wilbur— he didn't know how to explain it. How to explain *him*. He didn't want to tell them what had led him to go to the train station in the middle of the night. That was a conversation that Tommy was simply not ready for, yet.

Wilbur was also eerie, and he was sure that only Tommy himself could deal with his weirdness for a whole night. He would probably psychoanalyze Tubbo and make him cry, or monologue to Ranboo and give him a breakdown. He'd keep them separated for a bit, Tommy decided.

When they pulled into their next stop, Tommy didn't shut his eyes this time. He watched Wilbur come into view through the window. Wilbur entered swiftly, following behind a man that nabbed a seat in the front.

"Hello, fellow science experiment," Wilbur grinned, placing himself down opposite Tommy. "I assume it went well?"

If Tommy was in a worse mood he would curse him out. "I'll have you know, it went *exceptionally* well, Mr. Soot. I even walked here with a bit of pep in my step. I did that! Not you!"

"Of course you did, they were your words, I just gave you a motive." Wilbur hummed.

Tommy scowled. There it was. “You’re a prick,”

“A correct prick.” Wilbur said. “So your friends took it well then?”

Tommy hesitated. “Well. You could say that? They’re trying, now. They’re listening. I’m not just hitting the pavement anymore. But we’re talking! And we spent the whole weekend at Ranboo’s!”

“So you are getting somewhere,” Wilbur concluded. Tommy nodded.

“It— it’s nice enjoying myself, hanging out with them. Ya know? Like it’s not a chore. It’s easy. I don’t have to zone out to be around them.”

They stopped. No one got on, the man remained at the front.

When Tommy was around them, he would have to do that. Zone out. Sometimes it wasn’t on purpose, other times he just found himself *begging* to just go, anywhere else, but he was too aware to go away, their voices were too loud and the air was too cold and Tommy couldn’t fucking breathe—

He didn’t feel that way all weekend.

Tommy didn’t feel trapped. He was in the present. He was in the present and he was *happy*. If not just for a few moments, Tommy was okay and he didn’t have to think about anything else.

“So it worked,” Tommy said. “It did! We’re working on it; this weekend was fucking great though. I know how to make a Molotov Cocktail now—“

“You *what* —“

“I didn’t actually make one,” Tommy emphasized. “I was just taught how! It’s quite easy actually! Ranboos’ cousin, one of his friends just... it was a lot of vandalism advice.”

Wilbur groaned. “Please do not get arrested for vandalism. You need better influences.”

“*You’re* a bad influence,” Tommy waved him off. “don’t worry big man. Can’t come to see you if I’m arrested. Sam would also kill me. In cold blood. Dead, I would be dead as fuck, man.”

If Sam had to bail him out for something as stupid as setting something on fire, he would be so fucked. Oh, Sam was so fucking overbearing when he was paying attention, he would *never* hang out with Ranboo again. Or Tubbo for that matter. Sam would deadbolt his door closed. Tommy would never see the sun again. Screw prison, *Sam* would lock him up himself.

Tommy will not be doing that, thank you. If anyone offered to help him burn something down, he would certainly *not* be taking it.

They stopped. A woman got on, the clanking of her jewelry as she sat down echoing in Tommy's ears.

"How am I a bad influence?" Wilbur enquired.

"HAH!" Tommy blurted. "Look at me! Mr. Soot! I go on trains in the middle of the night! I gamble with teenagers. I am *suuuuuuch* a good role model."

"I do not gamble with teenagers!" Wilbur cried. "No money has been placed! I told you that!" Wilbur accused. "Also I am not the one telling you to blow stuff up."

"*Mememememe* — I said *nothing* about blowing anything up," Tommy argued. "I was at *most* implying arson. I said absolutely nothing about exploding shit! That's you!"

Wilbur slapped his hand against his forehead. "Oh, you insolent child!"

"Oh, you cryptic old man!"

Wilbur shot up. "Hey!"

"I hardly know anything about you," Tommy retorted. "You— you could be a war criminal or something for all I know—"

"Do I look like a fucking war criminal to you?" Wilbur interrupted.

"... You could be!" Tommy exclaimed. "What's your favorite color?"

"What is *your* favorite color?"

"Red. Answer the question."

Wilbur groaned. "Blue. Used to be teal."

"Why did it change?" Tommy pressed.

"There is not enough of it here," Oh god, Tommy thought. *Here we go*. "The sky is cloudy. The water is gray. It is muted, it is drowning in black and white film instead of saturation. I wish there was more of it. Especially down here." He longed, Tommy was exasperated.

"Wilbur, we are *underground*. Look at the graffiti." Tommy deadpanned. "Or just go on *Google* man. Color blue— not everything needs to be a Greek tragedy."

"That is not a natural blue," Wilbur objected. "It is artificial! From a spray bottle, or on a screen!"

"I'll bring you some flowers or something, okay?" Tommy snapped. "You'll get your fucking blue."

"I will sneeze on you."

Tommy hit the side of the seat. "You will not!"

Wilbur made a face, rearing his head back. “A—a— *ACCCHOO*. Like that. But you will not be expecting it.”

“Fuck you! And your blue!” Tommy exclaimed, Wilbur cackled.

“And why do *you* like the color red so much then?”

There was no special reason as to why Tommy enjoyed red. When teachers asked in primary school he gave it as a response, no deep or intricate thought attached to it. That was the difference between him and Wilbur. Everything Wilbur did and said seemed to have some sort of deep thought attached to it, everything he said was planned out, and said carefully.

Tommy was decidedly not that.

Tommy existed in the moment and Wilbur existed around it, quietly observing. Whispering. Taking notes.

“No reason,” Tommy shrugged. “It’s just kinda nice. Loud.”

“Like you.” Wilbur teased.

Tommy groaned, hitting the back of his head against the glass. “Stop patronizing me! I’m done doing color theory with you!”

“Oh I can do color theory—“

Tommy put his hands out, gesturing for him to stop. “No, no. Please do not. I’m begging you. I can only handle so much of your monologues.”

Wilbur scoffed. “My ‘monologues’ are fantastic, I will have you know.”

“You should write songs,” Tommy said. “You’re a right emo; you— you— you could take all that messed up shit up there,” Tommy pointed. “and make stuff. I dunno.”

“I mean I used to,” Wilbur breathed. “not anymore though.”

“Why not?” Tommy pushed.

“Have not felt like it.” He said simply. “No fun in doing it anymore. Can not even sing to anyone.”

Tommy’s brows furrowed. “That’s shit,” he grumbled.

“Poor me, having to exist being *friendless!*” Wilbur sighed. Tommy knew he was being dramatic, but it still made Tommy glare.

“Hey!” Tommy objected. “I’m your friend!”

“That just makes me sad,” Wilbur groaned, rubbing his face. “we are friends?”

“*Nooo*,” Tommy drawled. “I only meet mere acquaintances on the tube line in the middle of the night.”

“You came back here because of our deal,” Wilbur pointed out. Tommy’s brows creased, because technically he was right. To be proven right, to be proven wrong, that’s why he kept coming here. Some sort of odd mutual trust and genuine curiosity enabled Tommy to keep coming back.

Sam might call it a lack of self-preservation.

And he wouldn’t be wrong, sneaking out in the middle of the night, to a tube station, alone, to meet a practical stranger was in every right dangerous. The first time Wilbur had stumbled into the seat across from him, Tommy couldn’t bring himself to care about that part, the danger. If Wilbur had mugged him then and there it wouldn’t have changed anything.

Once again, the thought of not seeing Wilbur again was bothering Tommy. Did Tommy want to make another deal? To continue this odd tradition? Tommy felt, alright. Kinda. He was *happy*. This was a good weekend. His classes yesterday were bearable, the overwhelming feeling to pull his hair out was muffled under the warmth in his chest.

Did feeling better mean he would never see Wilbur again? Surely they could keep doing this. Just a... check-up.

“You should play again,” Tommy suggested. “if not for anyone else, then just for yourself ya know?”

“Do you play anything?” Wilbur asked.

“I know piano,” Tommy thought. He hadn’t played said instrument in a bit. He had a keyboard that sat in his closet collecting dust. He hadn’t taken it out since he moved into the flat with Sam. “I haven’t played it in a while. Too much noise.”

Their stop was coming, Tommy realized. Tommy hit his leg awake, standing up. “Guess we will dive into that later,” Wilbur said. Tommy shook his head.

“No, no,” Tommy was going to put a stop to that right now. “I’m not you. There’s no deep, depressing reason. I just don’t play anymore. Stop psyche evaluating me, or whatever the fuck you people call it.”

“Alright, alright.” Wilbur said lightly. Taking the lead as Tommy followed him out. “Are you still going to get pins?” Tommy hummed an ‘mm-hmm’ in response.

“I like the pins,” Tommy confirmed. “Do you want anything?”

Wilbur shrugged him off. “Nah,” He waved. “Knick knacks, I would have no use for that. Nowhere to put them.”

“Are you homeless?” Okay, that was a bit rude, Tommy would admit. But that *slipped*. “Because that would explain a lot actually.”

“No,” Wilbur said immediately. “I have a house, Tommy.” He groaned in exasperation. “Believe it or not, I can exist in different places other than a *tube station*.”

“No, but it makes sense! Every time I see you you’re wearing the same shit!”

“It is my Tuesday jumper,” Wilbur defended. “I already told you that.”

“*It is my Tuesday jumper*.” Tommy mocked. “Fuck you. You don’t have a house.”

They stopped outside the glowing *Jack Of All Trades* sign.

“Get something cool this time. Like an orca.” Wilbur suggested as Tommy pushed open the glass door, Tommy mumbling a ‘will do’.

Jack leaned over the counter, scrolling through his phone. His eyes met Tommy as he strolled further into the shop. “Hello again!” He put his phone down on the counter. “I was wonderin’ if you were gonna show up.”

“It’s become a habit,” Tommy said, reaching into the bowl.

“What’s ya name again?” Jack enquired.

Oh, Tommy realized. “Tommy,” He answered. He took the blood-orange-flame-shaped pin in his hand, placing it on the glass counter.

“You’re gonna run me out of pins,” Jack joked, sliding the pounds over to the register.

“You’re gonna run me broke,” Tommy joked back. He clipped the pin in, securing it. “Bye Jack!”

Jack waved as Tommy pushed out the door. Wilbur stood waiting for him, raising his eyebrow as Tommy showed him the new pin. “You did not get an orca,” Wilbur pointed, disappointed.

“He didn’t have any orcas, big dubs. Is that why you got banned?” Tommy asked, turning backward as he walked in front of Wilbur. “He didn’t have any orca merch? Is that it, Wilbur? Have I cracked the mystery yet?”

“Nope!” Tommy’s excitement visibly dropped. “Good guess! Still wrong.”

“*Ughhhh*,” Tommy groaned, kicking a stone. “Fuck you, man. Just tell *meee*,” Tommy begged.

“No,”

“Please.”

“Still no.”

“Did you steal something?”

“No.”

“Did you kill his mother?”

“ *What ?!*— Tommy, no!”

“Are you a felon, Wilbur?”

“Let me stop you while you are ahead,” Wilbur said. “The answer is no, no, and *no*. To everything.”

Fuck you, Tommy thought. He didn’t like not knowing things. He’d figure it out. He would drop it for now, because this clearly wasn’t getting *anywhere*, but he’ll make Wilbur slip. He will! He just needs to catch him off guard. He could do that! Outsmarting Wilbur would be a feat, an *accomplishment*.

“I’ll figure it out, you watch,” Tommy grumbled.

“Good luck with that Toms,” Wilbur hummed.

“I don’t need luck,” Tommy stated. “Just my big brain.”

“You do have a big head,” Okay, that was *mean*, Tommy thought.

“That was unnecessarily rude,” Tommy stated. “I can’t believe you’ve done this to me, Wilbur. My self-esteem. It’s ruined.”

“Oh come on,” Wilbur retorted. “I have a big forehead. Look.” Wilbur lifted the curly bangs that framed the front of his face.

“Oh no,” Tommy cried. “Don’t do that, please. My eyes! I can’t stare directly at it!”

Wilbur fixed his hair, chuckling. “My jumper buddy used to call me Forehead-Bur.”

Tommy snickered. “Jumper buddy sounds cool.”

“He really is not. He is a real loser.”

“Like you?” Tommy chortled.

Wilbur scoffed. “Shut it!”

When they got to the station, two women were standing together on the platform. Tommy nodded politely while Wilbur simply ignored them. When it had pulled in, Tommy trailed Wilbur to the back. The two women had sat down at the front.

“Got any plans for this week?” Wilbur asked, Tommy shrugged.

“Got a test Thursday. That’s about it.” Tommy thought. “I think Tubbo wanted to go to the mall Friday, dunno. I’ll have to text him.”

It would be the next time that Tommy would see him; his, Ranboo's and Tubbo's schedules made it difficult to see each other during the week. Tommy was no longer actively avoiding them now, though. Maybe Tommy could set up a game of *Pub G*, or *CSGO*.

He was starting to feel guilty for blowing them off, actually. Tommy would have to make up for that. He didn't really regret coming to see Wilbur, he couldn't. If Tommy was given the choice between playing a first-person shooter game on a Tuesday night with them versus... this...

Tommy knew what he would choose.

They stopped. No one on or off.

"You have anything planned?" Tommy asked.

Wilbur did not look like he was expecting to be asked. "Hmm," He wondered. "Might go see my dad. Been a bit."

Tommy did *not* know why that had shocked him so much. A father! Everyone had a father, Tommy knew that alright? That was completely logical.

Wilbur had just, given off the feeling of someone who didn't have anyone. Wilbur was a feather floating in the wind. Tommy supposed that feather had to come from a bird then, perhaps it was missing it.

"You should bring your dad something," Tommy said, shaking off the frown.

"Like what?"

"Like— like a snowglobe or something man, I don't fucking know. Flowers!"

"He likes birds," Wilbur thought aloud.

"Chicken," Tommy decided.

"*No*,"

"Chicken," Tommy repeated. "You gotta let me know how that goes next time."

"Next time?"

Oh.

They stopped. The two women left, the brunette left quickly while the blonde frowned at him.

Tommy forgot that they hadn't even thought of another deal yet. Did they need that at this point? Couldn't Tommy just show up and trust that Wilbur would be there, deal in the air or not?

“I... I—I think I want to keep doing this?” Tommy admitted, pulling at his hair. “Showing up. And talking, to you, ya know? I enjoy it. I keep thinking like, what deal, what bet this time we could make again. And nothing comes up.”

“You want another deal?”

“Do you?” Tommy asked, genuinely. “I don’t... I don’t want to make you feel like you have to come back here.”

They stopped. A small group got on, this time kids around Tommy’s age holding bottles wrapped in brown bags.

Wilbur thought for a moment, like he was musing over his next words carefully. “As long as you need me, we can keep doing this,” Wilbur said softly.

Catharsis, there it was. Tommy swallowed. “Okay. We can do that.” It was another deal, in all technicality. An extended one at that. Conditional.

But Tommy was relieved from that pressure of not knowing if there will be a next time. Because now he knows for sure there will be! And another after that!

Wilbur might have started as a buffer to what Tommy considered the inevitable, a simple delay. Despite the serotonin high that he had for the past few days, Tommy hadn’t forgotten about Wilbur. He hadn’t forgotten about why he met him in the first place.

Did he want to anymore?

Tommy didn’t have an answer, apparently.

That’s why he *needed* these meetings with Wilbur to continue, they got him to the end of the week, they got him through his current problems. He helped him fix his relationship with Tubbo and Ranboo. Maybe Tommy wanted to figure out what he could solve before he left. What he fixes— then he’ll decide.

He’d make up his mind then.

Because was Tommy’s decision to make, not Wilbur’s. Not Sam’s, not Tubbo’s, not Ranboo’s. His. He knew that. Alright! Tommy knew that.

They stopped. The loud group got off.

Tommy eyed them as they left. “It looks like you asked the wrong teenager for booze,”

Wilbur cackled, his boisterous laugh filling the now mostly empty train car. “I had forgotten I did that,” He giggled, wiping away at his eye.

“I didn’t!” Tommy pointed. “Man, I thought you were going to stab me. Or demand for my wallet. Or *both*.”

“You thought *I* was going to mug you?”

“You asked me for booze!”

“I was breaking the ice!”

“You break the ice by asking for *alcohol*?”

“Yeah! You looked miserable. I thought you could use a good laugh.”

“I didn’t,” Tommy said. “I clicked a pen at you. I was prepared to stab you with that in case you were a wrongun.”

“Oh no, *ink poisoning*,” Wilbur dismayed. “What will I do?”

“Go to the ER,” Tommy replied. “But you’re probably banned from that too.” Wilbur was silent. Tommy had meant that as a *joke*. “Wilbur...”

“It is a long story,”

“Oh my god.”

“It is!”

“Geez man,” Tommy rubbed his temple. “And you scold *me for making* jokes about Molotov Cocktails!”

“They are mini bombs.”

“And you’re not allowed in places in half of England!”

“I did not set anything ablaze, Tommy,” Wilbur said, rising. His stop was next. The night was coming to an end. “Try not to get arrested between now and next week.”

There it was, his confirmation. “No promises big man!” The train was stopping. “Try to stop pissing people off!”

“See you, Tommy!” Wilbur stepped out, not looking back at Tommy.

When they moved again, Tommy startingly realized that he was alone. Just him. Two weeks ago, Tommy would’ve killed for this. He would’ve *died* for this.

Tommy sat alone, and the flashing markers of the tunnel *were too bright* and the rumbling, vibrating feeling of the tube going at its ungodly speed was nauseating because Tommy should’ve been—

He could’ve been—

Tommy shook his head. Squeezing his eyes shut. He could drown out the lights. He was okay. He was alone, and that was okay. It didn’t matter. Being alone didn’t make a difference. Nothing changed. The time of the night was really starting to become very prominent to

Tommy. He wanted to go home and just *sleep*. Tommy checked his phone, no new messages other than some old Instagram notifications.

When his stop came up, he practically bounced up and sprinted off of the train, pushing past a concerned-looking ginger woman. He was up the steps before the train could even pull out.

Tommy was alive for right now, and he was okay with that.

Chapter End Notes

my [twitter](#)

my [discord server](#)

the [playlist](#) for this fic

ughhh sorry for the wait, I'm usually a bit faster at this! I really disliked writing this chapter, definitely my least favorite chapter thus far.

WYT!Tommy 🍷 DSMP!Wilbur
trauma dumping
on strangers

Hypocrites Don't Know They're Hypocrites

Chapter Summary

Tommy laughed hollowly. “Hey, big man,” Tommy said, rubbing at his eyes. Wilbur sat down next to him. Not across, like the last three times. “I tripped.” He held up his palms, showing Wilbur the scraped-up skin. “My knee is also fucked.”

“Ouch,” Wilbur grimaced. “Are you okay?”

That was a simple question. Are you okay? It was three words. A common courtesy to ask someone who was injured. Tommy shouldn't be breaking down the way he is over it.

Tommy hit his forehead against the back of the plastic seat. “No,” Tommy answered.

“Bad week?” Tommy nodded. “So that is why you look like shit.”

Tommy groaned. “You're kicking a man while he's down, Wilbur,” Tommy complained. “I had to run here. Sam went to bed late.”

Chapter Notes

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

Tommy had tripped on his way here.

Sam had gone to bed *late*. Tommy couldn't hate him for it, because he had stayed up to try to *talk* to Tommy— he was trying. But Tommy had a place to be. He *relied* on Sam's strict sleeping schedule for this. And god, did Tommy feel guilty for *brushing him off*, and saying he was tired and pretending to be asleep when he was really mapping out ways he could climb out of his fourth story window.

When he had heard the soft shut of Sam's door, Tommy *ran*. He practically fell over himself trying to get out of the building.

Tommy booked it to the station. He practically bounced while getting his ticket. He was regretting not doing any sports while in school, because by the time Tommy had descended the stairs into the underground he was heaving for air. Tommy was on the last two steps when his foot caught on his untied shoelaces and he was sent face-first into the cement of the platform.

Luckily, Tommy didn't fuck up his face, because he caught himself with his arms. Tommy bit back the pain and sprinted into the already immobile train, making it before the doors had closed on him.

Tommy fucking hated his luck, because when he entered, there was a *man*, sitting at the back of the train.

Not in his spot, three seats ahead of his and Wilbur's row, but he was still... there... which made sense! Alright! It was public transport. Tommy knew he would have to run into this issue eventually. But this was just the fucking *cherry* on top of his fucked up sundae.

Tommy gave him a harsh glare— and deep down he felt bad, because the man hadn't done anything wrong technically— before grabbing his seat, three rows behind. Hopefully, he'll get off soon. The train was already moving again by the time Tommy settled in.

Tommy observed the damage he did to himself, finally being able to catch his breath. His jacket saved him from completely messing up his elbows, although the fabric had gotten marked up. His palms however were completely scraped. Tommy turned his eyebrows down, gnawing at the inside of his cheek. Tommy pulled the end of his sleeves over his palms. He'd wash them when he got home.

Tommy reached over, tying up his sneakers. He was in such a rush to get out of the flat that he had forgotten the simplest task. Tommy was practically still putting on his shoes when he left the apartment. He had run this entire way with no issue, *of course*, the tube station stairs ended up being the thing that fucked him up. A guilty part of his brain wanted to blame Sam for this. He was the reason why Tommy was almost late. He was the reason Tommy didn't tie his shoes, why his hands are now scraped up, and why his knee is aching. Sam is the reason why Tommy sitting in a cold lecture room every week studying shit he doesn't *like* and why Tommy was in a phone call with Tubbo Friday night not *breathing* because he had received a heavy email from his professor about a test he had *failed*—

Tommy shook his head. He wiped the tears that were forming away with his sleeve. He was alright. He was okay. That happened *Friday*. Tommy didn't have class tomorrow. He could tuck that away for now and not have to think about it. He could ask his professor about extra credit. He could save this. For Sam, he could save this. For Sam.

Tommy didn't want to be a fucking mess when Wilbur showed up. This was the best part of Tommy's week. He couldn't ruin it by having a breakdown, not right fucking now. Tommy leaned on the seat in front of him, placing his forehead against the plastic. Tommy pulled at his hair; he was alright. He can deal with this. He could ride this out and he would be *alright*.

“You look like shit,”

Tommy's head shot up, turning at a quick speed to look to his left. Wilbur was standing there. Stupid hair. Stupid glasses. Stupid Reagan & Bush jumper covered up by his stupid brown coat. Tommy hadn't realized they stopped. He peeked his head over the seat. The man didn't leave. He would just have to deal with Tommy's voice then.

Tommy laughed hollowly. “Hey, big man,” Tommy said, rubbing at his eyes. Wilbur sat down next to him. Not across, like the last three times. “I tripped.” He held up his palms, showing Wilbur the scraped-up skin. “My knee is also fucked.”

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Tommy groaned. "You're kicking a man while he's down, Wilbur," Tommy complained. "I had to run here. Sam went to bed late."

"Your brother right?"

"Yeah," Tommy grumbled. "He wanted to *talk*."

"Talking to your family is healthy, Tommy."

"He has bad timing," Tommy scowled. "I needed to get here."

"You blew him off for a stranger at a tube station?"

"You're not a stranger," Tommy dejected. "And... I didn't blow him off. He was asking me about school— how I was enjoying my classes and shit."

They stopped. The man three seats in front of him moved up, not before giving Tommy a nasty look. Tommy wasn't in the mood to react.

"And you are not enjoying them," Wilbur concluded. *Right, as always.*

"You read me like a fucking book don't you?" Tommy snapped. "I hate them, man."

"What are you studying?" Wilbur inquired.

"Architecture."

"Architecture is cool."

"No, it's fucking not." It was *not*, Tommy was starting to despise it. Everything was going in one ear and out the other.

"Then why are you studying it?"

"Because of Sam," Tommy answered. "It's what he did— is doing. He's finishing his degree right now."

Sam was *supposed* to finish it last year, in the states. But he had stopped his year to come back to England after the crash. Tommy was about to turn sixteen. He was in his last year of secondary school and Sam was still away. It was too early in the states to call him.

"Why are you doing what your brother wants you to do?"

“It makes him happy?” Tommy answered. “He loves that shit. I’ll put up with it if he thinks I love it too. Which sucks because I *can’t* tell him. I can’t talk to him about it because I—I... I’m going to flunk out!” Tommy cried. “I failed a test that was supposed to save my grade. I’m so fucking *screwed*, Wilbur.” Tommy put his head in his hands, pinching his nose. He was absolutely fucked and he couldn’t tell Sam because he would be *so* disappointed. Tommy couldn’t deal with that, he couldn’t. He would frown in disappointment, realizing just how bad Tommy was *bad* at Sam’s life passion.

They stopped. The man left, being replaced by a younger one.

“It is not your job to make him happy,” Wilbur said softly. “Besides, I am sure he would be happier knowing you were enjoying what you are doing.”

“It *is* my job,” Tommy hissed. “I’m the reason he came back. He came back from the states because of *me*. Making it easier for him is the least I can do!”

And maybe Sam would, maybe Sam would be happier knowing Tommy was succeeding at what he loved instead of failing what he hated. But that was *hypothetical*.

“And what is making it easier for him, Tommy?” Wilbur pushed. “Flunking out of college? Do you think that is what he wants?”

“*No* !” Tommy snapped. “It’s—“

Well, it was dying.

That was his cop-out. That was always going to be his cop-out.

Because it made Sams life *easier*. Sam wouldn’t have to worry about supporting him anymore, Sam wouldn’t have to worry. He could go back to the states. Sam wouldn’t have Tommy anchoring him down. Sam wouldn’t have to worry about Tommy.

“Tommy,” Wilbur breathed. “I do not think Sam would be happy with you *dying*,”

Tommy didn’t understand how Wilbur read him so *easily*, was Tommy really that much of an open book?

If so, *why couldn’t Sam read him like that?*

“It would be easier for him,” Tommy mumbled. “He would grieve, alright? He’d be sad as shit. I expect that. But he could do so much *more*, he could have his life back!”

“What about *your* life, Tommy?” Wilbur snapped. “Are you willing to throw your life away on a *maybe*? On what you think *he* wants? On what other people want? What do *you* want, Tommy?”

“I don’t know!” Tommy expressed.

Tommy could punch him. Wilbur was right next to him. Tommy could push him over and leave at the next stop. Tommy would run, Wilbur would call for him, maybe, and Tommy

wouldn't listen.

They stopped.

Tommy didn't get up.

"I don't know what I want," Tommy repeated. "I haven't thought about that in a while."

That was the truth, Tommy hadn't. Since Sam came back, he's tried to be easy. He tried not to argue, if Sam told him to do something Tommy *did it*.

"I—I'm not afraid of Sam, or anything," Tommy continued. "He would never hurt me. He has never hurt me." He assured. Wilbur was quiet, letting Tommy speak. "That's not what I'm afraid of. I... I basically ruined his life, ya know? He came back here for me."

"Has he told you that?"

"No!" Tommy defended.

"Then how can you possibly know he thinks that?"

Tommy didn't respond. Because Tommy didn't have an *answer*. He had just assumed. Tommy always guessed he was right when it came to Sam.

When they stopped again, Wilbur stood up, letting Tommy out. Tommy winced, putting weight on the leg with the *not* fucked up knee.

Wilbur, unfortunately, took notice of it as they exited the train. "That still hurts?"

"Yeah dickhead," Tommy hissed through his teeth. "It still fucking hurts."

Tommy rubbed at it. He could hide his scraped-up hands from Sam, he could just shove them in his pockets. That was easy. Hopefully, his knee felt better by tomorrow, Tommy didn't know how well he could hide a *limp*. If Sam were to even notice it.

"Want to go see Manifold again?" Wilbur asked. Tommy was grateful for the subject change.

"Always," Tommy grumbled. "Who else am I supposed to buy tacky pins from?"

"Well, there *is* a convenience store in the opposite direction if you want to—"

"No, no!" Tommy cut him off. "I'm loyal now to Mr. Manifold— I cannot betray him like that."

"So you do not think he is overpriced anymore?"

Tommy scoffed. "Nah. His prices still suck. But it's called being a loyal customer, *Wilbur*." Tommy emphasized.

When they came to the flickering neon sign, they unceremoniously stopped.

“Any requests this time?” Tommy asked, Wilbur shook his head.

“If there are no orcas it is a solid *no* from me.” Wilbur expressed. Tommy huffed, pushing open the door, the familiar sound of the bell ringing over his head.

Jack was slumped over on the counter, head in a book. He glanced up tiredly at Tommy approaching.

Jack yawned. “Hey, Tommy,”

Tommy looked through the pin bowl. “Ow do?” Tommy greeted.

“Fucking tired, mate,” Jack yawned again.

“You should close earlier, man,” Tommy suggested, dropping a white sheep-shaped pin on the glass counter.

“Was gonna,” Jack grumbled, taking the pounds. “was waiting for you, actually.”

Tommy stiffened, furrowing his eyebrows. Jack was waiting for him?

“Oh,” Tommy managed out. “Sorry.” He said shortly.

Jack waved him off. “Ah, don’t worry about it. See you next week.”

Tommy secured the pin in his jacket. “See ya next week.” Tommy mirrored. “Try to get some sleep Jack!” He called.

Wilbur, of course, was waiting for him. “No orca?”

Tommy stifled a laugh. “No, sorry Will,” He pointed at the new sheep pin.

Wilbur scrunched up his nose, making a noise of disgust. “Sheep smell,”

“You smell!” Tommy retorted.

“I smell like nothing, thank you,” Wilbur said.

“I bet animals hate you.” Tommy chastised Wilbur nodding in agreement.

“They do! I freak them out.”

“You freak me out.”

“Fuck off, fucking gremlin.” Wilbur poked.

Tommy used to have two dogs— when he had to move in with Sam, the building keeper already had a no animal policy, so of course, they refused to let them bring the two large canines into the two-bedroom flat with them.

Tommy remembered begging Sam to find a different place, to look at different flats. Sam's hands were tied and Tommy didn't get his way.

Tommy hoped they were happy in their new homes. Because Tommy wasn't.

When Tommy and Wilbur boarded the tube, there was no one in the back this time, *thank god*, Tommy thought. Tommy had nearly lost it at the man that kept giving him nasty looks last time.

There was a teenager, maybe a little older than Tommy, at the front. They didn't spare Tommy a glance.

Wilbur sat down next to him, adjusting his glasses. "Are you going to talk to your brother?"

No, Tommy was not circling back to this. "About what?"

Wilbur sighed in exasperation. "Tommy."

"No, I'm not talking about this again." Tommy refused. "Next subject. Next topic. Talk about something else, Wilbur."

"I am pretty keen on talking about this, actually,"

"*No*," Tommy asserted. "I'm not."

"What would you like to study, Tommy?" Wilbur pushed. Tommy didn't have the energy to push back.

"Editing," Tommy sighed. "Like, film and stuff."

"That is definitely better than architecture,"

"*I know* ." Tommy expressed. "I know that, Will! And I would be doing it if I could, but I can't—"

"Because of Sam." Wilbur finished, Tommy clapped his hands together.

"Yep! There you go, you got it!" Tommy patronized.

They stopped. The teenager left, but an older woman boarded in their place.

"I think you should switch studies," Wilbur suggested. Tommy slapped his forehead, he wasn't going to drop this.

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because it's not what Sam wants."

Wilbur sighed. "You do not have to care about what other people want all the time, Tommy."

“I don’t give a shit about what other people want! Just Sam!” Tommy defended.

“Really?” Wilbur taunted. “It seems that is the *only* thing you care about, each time you talk to me. Like Tubbo and Ranboo! You think about how just you *living* affects others, and it makes you want to stop!”

“What’s the point then?!” Tommy cried.

“Making everyone happy all the time is an impossible task,” Wilbur said. “Sometimes you have to deal with the fact that you can not just please everyone all the time.”

“Then what can I do?” Tommy groaned— Wilbur wasn’t giving him any answers.

“Make yourself happy. Do what you wanna do. Put your foot down to him, Tommy. Hell, grow a spine.”

The train slowed. No on or off.

“And what do I do if I lose Sam because of it?” Tommy asked.

“Sam is not going to hate you for pursuing what you enjoy, Tommy.”

“He might.”

“That is purely hypothetical. I did not hate my brother for doing *fencing* instead of music with me.”

“I’m not your brother.”

That sounded a lot harsher than Tommy *meant* it to. Tommy was just stating a *fact*. Something that they both knew was true. A fact. They couldn’t change that. Tommy couldn’t look at Wilbur’s expression. He picked at the thread to stop himself from digging his nails into his arm.

The *I wish I was*, went unsaid.

Maybe in another lifetime, they could’ve been. There, Tommy would’ve followed Wilbur to the end of the world. Perhaps Wilbur would sing him the songs he talked about writing.

This was unfortunately not that timeline.

Tommy had Sam, and he loved Sam, and it was unfair to treat him otherwise.

“I— I’m sorry,” Tommy stumbled, rubbing his face. “That was mean. I... I just don’t want to disappoint him, ya know?”

They stopped, again. The older woman left. Two men and a woman boarded, laughing with each other. Tommy assumed they were drunk.

“It is okay,” Wilbur assured. There was no pain in his voice. “and yeah, I know. But you are *miserable*, Toms.” He said. “I do not think your brother wants you to be miserable either.”

“Well,” Tommy hesitated. “I mean. There is an alternative—“

“Not that.”

“Ugh, okay.”

“Tell your brother you do not enjoy architecture, okay? Then you can tell him that you are also *failing* it.”

“I don’t want to do that.” Tommy groaned.

“Would you rather he find out when you are kicked out of school?” Wilbur chided.

Tommy crossed his arms, leaning back into the hard plastic. “Good point,” Tommy murmured. “If you are wrong— I’m going to rub it in your face.”

“I am never wrong,” Wilbur remarked, confidently.

“You better fucking hope. If Sam grounds me and I’m still studying architecture by next week I am going to push you into the tracks, asshole.”

“You can try,” Wilbur jokes. “I do not think you will be very effective.”

“I’ll drag you with me,”

Wilbur’s stop was coming. Another night was closing.

He scooted out of the seat. “Let me know how it goes,” Wilbur hummed.

“If I don’t show up I’m either dead or grounded,” Wilbur chuckled; like it was a joke. It was not.

“See you next week Tommy.”

Tommy mumbled a good-bye, watching Will leave.

Tommy opened his palms. The stinging pain had subsided, the scrapes were still visible though. Tommy checked his sneakers, making sure the laces were still tied.

His palms weren’t the issue, though. His knee was. Maybe he could avoid Sam in the morning. Tommy didn’t have any classes tomorrow— he could tag in his room until Sam left. Tommy can do that. Then, Tommy could tell him that he had fallen down the stairs when he had gone outside for a walk. That was a lie that Tommy could spin.

On some level, Tommy felt guilty lying to him. Tommy just couldn’t tell him. He wasn’t necessarily *lying*, just narrowly avoiding the truth. He was just *not telling*.

When Tommy's stop came, the drunken group at the front was calling for him. Tommy ignored them, he *did* however speed walk out the doors once they were open. Tommy rushed up the stairs, he didn't see anyone follow him, but Tommy wanted to put distance between him and them. Tommy was not getting mugged. Nope. Fourth time doing this and he hasn't gotten jumped. Tommy was not breaking that—

Tommy's foot slipped, missing the step by an *inch*. By an inch! Tommy caught himself on the railing, not before hitting his *sore knee* on the cement stairs.

“ *Mother FUCKER—* “

Chapter End Notes

my [twitter](#)

my [discord server](#)

the [playlist](#) for this fic

Thank you to Mal, Ren, and Shuki for being my beta readers/editors for this chapter :)

I think I was too heavy on the internal monologue in the beginning so the dialogue at the end just ended up feeling... weird. flow is off but I liked this chapter a lot more than the last.

Also!! School started, posting this on the first day of senior year, so updates might be a little spread and thin.

Some Truths and a Weighted Lie

Chapter Summary

Tommy allowed himself to wonder if Wilbur's friends had wondered what he was doing; though that burned out because from the way the man talked it didn't sound like he had any friends.

He had a brother, Tommy knew that. He had some sort of past with Jack, which got him banned from his shop. Tommy recalled him briefly describing a sweater buddy and his gambling buddy, but it didn't sound like either of them were in his life.

Tommy was pretty sure he hadn't even given him their names. That was... startling, Tommy realized. Just how little Tommy actually knew about Wilbur. It was even more startling that Tommy wasn't sure if he wanted to know more, either. Wilbur existed out of their friendship, out of the hours in the past month they had spent together—the image was difficult to imagine.

But that was ridiculous because Wilbur existed and he had a life outside of Tommy; it was selfish to think otherwise.

“You are thinking too hard,” Like a knife through butter, Wilbur's voice cut through Tommy's thoughts.

Chapter Notes

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

Tommy had made sure he had tied his shoelaces, this time.

Tommy had the *time* to make sure that his shoelaces were tied, because he wasn't in a rush to get to the station compared to last week. The thought caused ghost pains to flare up in his knee, but he knew it had stopped aching days ago. The scrapes in his hands faded with them.

Not quick enough though, because Sam had noticed. He only noticed when no was pulling at the thread in his jacket, trying to explain why he wanted to change his major.

“I— I don't think I like architecture,” Tommy admitted, his voice tight.

Sam was tired; Tommy could see it in the way his eyes drooped. Tommy felt bad, keeping him up. Sam needed his rest. He had an early shift. This could wait. He wouldn't bother Sam with his nonsense, not tonight. That wasn't fair of Tommy.

“Sor—sorry,” Tommy said, pushing his chair back. “You can go to bed, I'll—”

Tommy nearly jumped out of his skin at Sam grabbing his wrist, quickly letting go at Tommy's nervous yelp "Sorry," Sam quickly apologized. Tommy avoided his eyes. "What happened to your hands?"

Tommy's eyes fell down to his palms— he didn't think Sam would have noticed. "I fell," Tommy mumbled, sitting back in his seat at the unsteady kitchen table.

"You don't like architecture?" Sam asked, Tommy nodding vigorously. Not liking it was a severe understatement. Tommy would say that he was miserable— miserable enough to go to the tube station once a week in the middle of the night to talk with a man he would argue knew more about him than Sam.

Tommy wouldn't tell him that though. He wouldn't tell him about Wilbur.

"I want— I want to change it," Tommy said finally. "we don't have to right now of course," Tommy added. "I don't want to stress you out or, or—"

"Tommy," Sam stopped him. His voice was incredibly soft. "It's fine."

Tommy was now in the process of switching from architecture to film and production; if Sam didn't like it, he didn't show it. He was the utmost supportive, frustratingly so to Tommy. Tommy had expected to be yelled at, to be told off.

He almost wanted to be told off, because that would mean that he was right, and he would have felt less guilty for waiting this long and to assume Sam would pressure him into continuing something he had no passion for.

The robotic voice of the intercom snapped Tommy out of his mind, announcing the incoming train. He wasn't alone on the platform this time. There was a woman who stood several meters away. Tommy had politely nodded at her when he arrived. She nodded in response.

When it arrived, the metallic doors slid open, and Tommy booked it to the back. There was no one, no man sitting back here this time. Just Tommy, and eventually Wilbur. The woman sat in the middle, the back of her head facing him.

Tommy scrolled through his phone— he wanted to check if Tubbo or Ranboo had texted him yet. They had stopped asking him to get on-call during the night on Tuesday, used to being turned down. Only Tubbo had asked him what he had gotten up to when Tommy was going to see Wilbur. Tommy, fortunately, did not have to come up with an excuse because Ranboo scolded him for prying.

Tommy allowed himself to wonder if Wilbur's friends had wondered what he was doing; though that burned out because from the way the man talked it didn't sound like *he had any friends*.

He had a brother, Tommy knew that. He had some sort of past with Jack, which got him banned from his shop. Tommy recalled him briefly describing a *sweater buddy* and his *gambling buddy*, but it didn't sound like either of them were in his life.

Tommy was pretty sure he hadn't even given him their names.

That was... startling, Tommy realized. Just how little Tommy actually knew about Wilbur. It was even more startling that Tommy wasn't sure if he *wanted* to know more, either. Wilbur existed out of their friendship, out of the hours in the past month they had spent together—the image was difficult to imagine.

But that was ridiculous because Wilbur existed and he had a life outside of Tommy; it was selfish to think otherwise.

“You are thinking too hard,” Like a knife through butter, Wilbur's voice cut through Tommy's thoughts. Tommy's head shot up, pocketing his phone. Tommy scooted over a bit so Wilbur would have more room.

They had stopped. With a quick scan, Tommy can guess that Wilbur got on alone. The woman was still there. “How could you tell?”

Wilbur pointed at his forehead. “I can see a vein.” Tommy scoffed, slapping the man's hand away as Wilbur laughed. “How did it go with Sam?” Wilbur asked in between giggles.

“Got a new major!” Tommy beamed, his smile wide. “Bye-bye architect. Sam took it better than expected.”

“That is good!” Wilbur celebrated. “Do you know when you start your new classes?”

“No,” Tommy shook his head. “We are still in the process of switching. It's dropped now though.”

Wilbur frowned, his eyebrows turning down in thought. “Why did it look like you were about to pop a vein then?”

Oh, Tommy thinks. He could lie— Wilbur would catch it. Wilbur would know. Wilbur would push.

“I was thinking about you, honestly,” Tommy confessed.

They stopped. A trio of young adults got on.

“Oh,”

“Yeah.”

“Why?”

Tommy sighed. “I was just thinking—”

“I could tell.” Wilbur hummed.

“Fuck off— I was just *thinking*...” Tommy trailed. “I hardly know anything about you, yeah? You know my friend's names and about Sam and what I'm studying in college and I...”

Tommy stopped, realizing that he was rambling.

“Sorry.”

“You should stop doing that,” Wilbur said, Tommy furrowing his eyebrows in confusion.

“Stop what?”

“Apologizing. You do it a lot. You do not owe everyone an apology for speaking, Tommy.” Wilbur explained.

Tommy was slack-jawed. He wouldn’t say that he had a *problem*. “It’s courtesy.”

“Nothing about you is courteous.”

“You are avoiding telling me about yourself, *Wilbur*. You can’t get out of this by trying to psychoanalyze me.” Tommy huffed. “No, no! I’m dancing through your mind games this time, big dubs. I’m going to be the one doing the mind gaming.”

“The mind gaming?”

Tommy nodded. “You are going to be so mind gamed.”

“Okay,” Wilbur laughed. “Mind game me.”

“What’s your brother’s name?”

“Techno,” Wilbur answered simply.

Tommy scoffed. “There is no way that’s his name. What’s his real name?”

“Technoblade.”

“That’s even worse.” Tommy groaned. Wilbur was bullshitting him. He *had* to be. “You’re lying to me.”

“I would not lie to you,” Wilbur stated. Tommy’s lips turned down in a frown.

“You wouldn’t?”

“Never.”

They stopped. The woman got off.

“What’s he like?”

Wilbur was silent, his forehead creasing. “A real nerd. He is really deep into mythology, and that type of stuff. I played guitar, he did violin. I tried to get into parties, Techno was worried about his fucking—*fencing finals*.” Wilbur gestures.

“He sounds cool,” Tommy said. Wilbur made a noise that sounded of exasperation.

“He is a hardass.”

A shocked laugh escaped Tommy’s mouth, dissolving into a fake cover-up cough. “Is it because his name is Technoblade?”

Tommy wasn’t looking at Wilbur, but he could feel the man’s eyes roll. “Are you not going to let that go?”

“Ah big man, I’m never letting that go. You’re related to someone called Technoblade.” Tommy teased, knowing that he was pushing it, leering at him. He knew Wilbur could snap at him in annoyance and shut down his next question— Tommy had faith that he wouldn’t though.

“He is my twin actually.”

Tommy choked. “There’s more than one of you?”

“No, no,” Wilbur interjected. “There is just one of me, I am afraid.”

“Unfortunately.” Tommy agreed, mockery lacing his voice. “Do you like him?”

“Course?” Wilbur creased his brows. “Just because we are different does not mean we do not love each other.”

They stopped. The group got off— two men took their place.

Tommy thought of Sam, and quickly shut that thought out. He slammed the door and swallowed the key; this wasn’t about Tommy, this wasn’t about Sam.

“And he likes you?”

“He does.” Wilbur mused. “I think the word you are looking for is *love*, Tommy.”

Tommy groaned in disgust. “Don’t say it.” He whined.

“*Love, love, love—*” Wilbur taunted in a sing-song voice that made Tommy want to get off at the next stop.

“Stop— stop that!” Tommy hissed. “And you call *me* a child!”

Wilbur made an amused sound. “You are a child.”

“Why do you talk like that?” Tommy pressed, now agitated.

“Like what?” Wilbur’s eyes blew open.

“Like— *that. You are.* Say you’re.”

Wilbur’s face grew into a cheeky grin, and Tommy wanted to punch him. “*You’re* a child.

“I...I— and you’re a fucking old man!”

“I am twenty-four!” Wilbur cried.

“That’s ancient,” Tommy replied. “that’s at least two decades.”

“*Two decades*—” Wilbur repeated, breaking off into a laugh.

The train stopped and Wilbur got up, still shaking with laughter. “It wasn’t that funny,” Tommy commented, trailing the man out of the sliding metal doors.

“I thought it was hilarious.”

“Are you making fun of me?”

“Absolutely not,” Wilbur denied. “You should do standup.”

They passed a woman on the stairs on their way out; Tommy ignoring the disgusted look she passed in his direction.

“Do people just naturally dislike you?” Tommy asked, his mind drifting back to the faceless strangers that had the misfortune of sharing the tube with Tommy and Wilbur.

“I think they are looking at you,” Wilbur speculated.

“Wha... ?” Tommy trailed. “*Pft*, nah. People love me. Especially women you know.”

“Somehow I doubt that.”

Tommy blew air out of his nose in frustration. They were approaching the flickering *Jack of All Trades* sign. “I’m going to prove you wrong— so wrong. You’re gonna beg for my forgiveness when you see all the numbers I’m drowning in.”

Wilbur looked at the flickering sign. The *A* in *Jack* had gone completely out. “I hope you understand that Manifold doesn’t count.”

Tommy didn’t dignify Wilbur with a response, entering the shop instead. The bell dinged over his head.

Tommy blinked.

There was a *woman* at the counter.

Why does this keep happening to him?

Tommy knew that realistically, he couldn’t be Jack’s only customer. That’s not how you keep a business open; Tommy understood that. Tommy was just— Tommy had gone in here every Tuesday night, between eleven pm and twelve am, and it was empty besides himself and Jack.

“Heya Tommy!” Jack peaked over the woman, waving him over. “I was just wonderin’ when you’d show up. Telling Niki about ya.”

Oh, so this was just Jack's *friend*. *Thank god*. Tommy couldn't stop himself from smiling. *Jack was waiting for him*. "I thought you had another customer. Was worried I had competition." Tommy reached into the bowl, scanning the pins.

Jack looked at the pink-haired woman, who had been dubbed Niki. "He's joking. I get plenty of customers."

"I believe you, Jack." Tommy caught her eyes, pulling out a pin with a music disc printed on it. The upturn of the corner of her mouth and her little head shake told Tommy otherwise

"I don't," Tommy deadpanned, placing the pin and the pounds on the counter. "Me and my pins keep this place alive, you know."

"That is entirely untruthful."

Tommy hummed. "You're in denial. It's the first stage of grief. It's okay, Jack. We're here for you." Tommy looked at Niki. "Well, she is. I got a train to catch and a friend to annoy. See you next week!"

"Nice meeting you Tommy!" Niki said, Tommy giving her a small wave before exiting the shop.

Tommy immediately showed Wilbur the pin. "A vinyl," Wilbur said with a hint of amusement.

Tommy scowled. "Music disc."

"It is a vinyl."

"Wrong, actually," Tommy corrected, securing the pin into his jacket. "it's a music disc."

"It appears we are at a standoff," Wilbur fiddled with his glasses, starting the walk back to the station.

"No, you are in a standoff with yourself. I am right." Tommy insisted.

"You are definitely in a mood tonight," Wilbur pointed, and Wilbur's tone was light and joking and of *course* he didn't mean anything bad by it but—the comment made Tommy's feet stick to the ground. Was he?

Wilbur must've realized he wasn't being followed, because moments later he turned to see Tommy's state of immobility.

"That isn't a bad thing," Wilbur was quick to comfort.

Although his expression and voice were genuine, Tommy still faltered. Whatever faux confidence he had gained was gone now. The persona was gone, leaving just... *him*. He thought Wilbur was enjoying the bit. "I... I could stop if it's annoying?"

Wilbur's expression was soft. "Do not worry about it." He said. "You having fun is not annoying," Wilbur reassured. Tommy didn't reply. He forced his feet to move instead, so he could keep up with Wilbur. "I am sorry," Wilbur added.

Tommy allowed himself to slip back in. He was fine. "Looks like you're the one apologizing now, big man."

"Oh man, you got me there."

"A straight-up hypocrite you are." Tommy chimed. "Are you above your own morals, Wilbur?"

"I am, just a bit."

"Elaborate on that?"

"No, I do not think I will."

"Fuck you."

When they reached the station, Tommy realized they had narrowly avoided missing the train. Tommy let out several curses as the metal doors nearly shut on him. It wouldn't have been the *end of the world* if they had missed it; Tommy and Wilbur would have had to wait fifteen minutes for the next one. It would have just been a disturbance in routine. Tommy hated those.

Tommy had blamed his near-breakdown for their tardiness, but also—

"Did you know Jack has *friends*?" Tommy asked, sliding into his window seat. The train was more occupied than normal, so he kept his voice above a whisper for an attempt at politeness. There were only two other people in the back with them, a few seats ahead of Tommy and Wilbur's.

"Was someone else in there?" Wilbur asked, Tommy nodding.

"I was absolutely scandalized, Will."

Wilbur hummed in amusement. "Did you catch their name?"

"Oh— *yeah*. Uh. Niki."

Wilbur was silent for a moment, and panic fluttered through Tommy's chest, fearful that he might have brought up a possible bad memory, or one of the many someones Wilbur had pissed off that were just not in his life anymore,

Instead, Wilbur just smiled. "I know her,"

"Did you piss her off too?" Wilbur shook his head.

“She still visits me sometimes; you know Niki always brings the best flowers.” Wilbur thought. “Sometimes Jack comes with her, not in a bit though.”

“Wha’?” Tommy wondered. “I thought Jack hated you?”

“Where did you get that from?”

“You’re banned from his shop?”

“Unrelated reasons,” Wilbur waved off.

Tommy squeezed the bridge of his nose. “Jesus fucking christ,” Tommy groaned. “you are a true enigma.”

They stopped; two women and a man got off.

“I know,” Wilbur says with a hint of pride.

“*Mememememe*—” Tommy mocked. “Am I the only one you terrorize?”

“Nah. You are not the only one,” Wilbur said. “Techno is my neighbor. I terrorize him too.”

Tommy massaged his temple. He didn’t know if Wilbur acting as he does with Tommy with others was concerning or reassuring. It certainly wasn’t *jealousy* that he was trying to massage out of his head. No, that would be *ridiculous*, Tommy decided. Wilbur had a brother. Wilbur had a family. Wilbur had other friends. Tommy was being ridiculous.

“I think I’m done mind gaming,” Tommy yawned.

“Are you?”

“Mm-hm.” Tommy hummed. “It’s exhausting. I don’t get how you can do it so easily.”

“Practice,” Wilbur mused. “and I do not get tired.”

“Tubbo’s like that,” Tommy compares. Tubbo had dropped school completely at the beginning of September; his sleeping schedule suffered as a direct result. Tubbo would end up staying up for three days and proceeding to crash for thirty-seven hours.

They stopped, no one had left. But two men had entered, grabbing seats near the midsection.

“How is it going with them?” It took a moment for Tommy to realize just *what* Wilbur was asking Tommy. The troubles he had with Tubbo and Ranboo had been in the back of his mind.

Tommy had told them about dropping architecture before Sam, the night before Tommy had gone to him. Voiced his complaints and worries to them in a quiet voice in a discord call. Tubbo suggested being upfront and blunt about it, *rip off the bandaid*, Tubbo would say. Ranboo was Tubbo’s opposite, suggesting easing Sam into it.

“We’re— we’re good?” Tommy said. “They helped me, uh,” He pulled at the thread on his sleeve. “Helped me figure out how to approach Sam.”

A month ago, he wouldn’t have even bothered to go to them. Surely, they had better things to do together than listen to him *complain*.

A month ago, Tommy wouldn’t have bothered trying to switch. Sam was too busy, Sam was too *good*, and Tommy would’ve—

Tommy would have—

He didn’t, because of a now-forgotten deal with the man sitting next to him.

“You are thinking again,” Wilbur pointed out.

They stopped— Tommy sadly realized that the next one was Wilbur’s.

“I wish you would stop doing that,” Tommy whined, rolling his neck. “I *know* when I’m thinking, you don’t have to point it out.”

“What was it this time?”

“You,” Tommy admitted. “again.”

Wilbur’s expression was laced with amusement, his eyebrows raised above the circular glasses. “I am right here, you know.”

A sigh climbed out of Tommy’s throat. “I *know*,” Tommy stressed. “I know that, *obviously*, you dickhead.” He grumbled.

“You want to share with the class then?” Wilbur joked, vaguely gesturing to the other passengers.

Tommy swallowed, tugging lightly at the thread. “I was thinking... I don’t know, man. About Sam, and Tubbo and Ranboo, and that shit and...” Tommy trailed. Wilbur was silent, nodding at Tommy to continue. Tommy mentally thanked him for the lack of smart remarks. “I wouldn’t have been able to talk to them— or, or *Sam*. I would have just...”

Tommy snapped his fingers. What was it? *What was it? What was it—*

Wilbur caught his stumbling. “Died?”

Tommy nodded, his throat tight. “Yeah— *that*. And I didn’t, yeah? I met you instead.”

“You are not alive just because of me, Tommy,” Wilbur said softly, and Tommy breathed in relief because Wilbur *understood*, he understood Tommy.

“But *I am* .” Tommy pressed desperately. “You... *you—*”

“I just gave you directions,” Wilbur interjected. “You are the one who mapped it out. You deserve that credit.”

Tommy shook his head in disagreement. “I could’ve gotten on another train, or you could have sat down somewhere else, and...”

“I think we still would have met,” Wilbur thought, and Tommy’s eyes moves from his palms to Wilbur’s face.

“You do?”

Wilbur hummed. “I do. Somehow, someway, in one way or another, we would have.”

Wilbur’s stop was coming up, the train was slowing. Tommy couldn’t help the frown that had formed on his face, because this conversation was *far* from over. Tommy hadn’t even built up to his *thank you*.

The train stopped, and Tommy gripped the plastic seat in front of him so tightly to keep himself from standing up and following Wilbur out.

“See you next week?” Tommy said instead. His knuckles were turning white.

“Of course,” Wilbur promised. “Remember what I said, okay?” Wilbur reminded.

“Yeah, yeah,” Tommy grumbled. “I think you’re wrong.”

“I am never wrong,” Wilbur called confidently, and Wilbur was gone.

Tommy didn’t even get to say *thank you*, he thought bitterly. He would next week, whether Wilbur would accept it or not.

It was luck that Tommy had met him, not fate.

If Tommy had gotten on an earlier train, or a later one for that matter, he would’ve missed Wilbur. Tommy can picture Wilbur stumbling into the back of the near-empty train, and instead of greeting Tommy, he would sit down across from an empty seat.

Or maybe, Wilbur would go towards the front and start up a conversation with another stranger.

“You got any of that shit flavored candy?” Wilbur would ask the elder woman with the ruby-colored purse, because she had gotten on alone.

And Tommy would sit, alone. Working himself up to jumping. He wouldn’t have gotten off with Wilbur to go to Jack’s shop. Tommy’s jacket would be void of any pins, left blank.

Tommy ran his hands over the pins, rubbing his finger against the cool plastic of the new disc pin.

Wilbur started off as a distraction, someone who would merely delay the inevitable. A buffer. Then, he was a bet, a deal, testing to see who was correct and who was wrong. Tommy remembered the desperate feeling, wanting to prove to the smug bastard who looked like he knew everything that he could be *wrong*.

After that, he was just— Wilbur was just Tommy's *friend*. He wasn't a stranger or a delay, or a deal anymore.

Tommy had a million words and *more* on his tongue for Wilbur, but those will wait for now.

Chapter End Notes

my [twitter](#)

my [discord server](#)

the [playlist](#) for this fic

heyyy, heyyyy,,

So sorry this took so long yall, I missed you. I had to restart this chapter halfway through because I didn't like the tone and where it was going, and I didn't really like this chapter either but I wanted to get something out asap. I said this last chapter but school had just started for me and that and the general disliking of the chapter had me unmotivated. I AM however excited to write the next chapters so regular updates will be back soon.

I have a [discord](#) now!! Come yell at me there :D

BIG thank you's too Lailetta, starbird__, and toxicargarian for beta-ing this chapter!!

Abandoning Your Anchor

Chapter Summary

“You okay?” Tommy asked, Wilbur taking his seat next to Tommy.

Wilbur rubbed at his temples. “Headache,” He replied.

“Oh,” Tommy said. “I’ll try to keep my Tommy-ness on the down-low for today, just for you big dubbs.”

“Do not do that,” Wilbur advised, waving him off. “I am fine,” He emphasized.

trigger/content warning for direct mention of suicide.

Chapter Notes

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

Tommy was humming to *The Beatles* when the train arrived. He was tapping his leg to the beat with his index and middle finger. Tommy had *Yellow Submarine* doing loops in his head since he had heard it the morning Sam had taken him to his classes.

Tommy wasn’t alone on the platform— a man that had to be around Sam’s age was there with him, meters away from an elder woman. Not the same one from that first night. The woman who carried the ruby red purse had white hair; the woman now was simply salt and pepper colored.

When the doors clicked open, Tommy resumed his spot in the back. They both sat separately at the front, not glancing back at Tommy. Tommy resumed his tapping, this time his knuckles against the metal beneath the window.

Tommy had started his new classes yesterday. He and Sam had spent the last week working to change it, and guilt weighed down Tommy’s chest thinking about the hours Sam had racked up on the phone. He had assured Tommy that it was okay, to not worry about it.

His schedule was different now, because of the change. He had some classes tomorrow, although they were luckily *not* in the morning. Tommy would have hated to have to set up another day with Wilbur— that would be inconvenient, for the both of them. The nights during the weekend on the tube line were busier, it was one of the reasons why Tommy had initially chosen Tuesday.

Wilbur was also well... *Wilbur* . Tommy could hear his grumblings if they were to change the day. Tommy wondered the length of the monologue that he could spring from that.

The man had glanced back at Tommy, a disgruntled look on his face. Tommy and he made eye contact for a brief second before Tommy's eyes shot down, the rhythm that he had fallen into fading.

Tommy's cheeks burned, *that was embarrassing*. Tommy didn't think he was being that loud, at least not enough to warrant such a disapproving look from a stranger.

He *was* just a stranger. *Someone who Tommy will never have to see again*, Tommy reminded himself, in a voice that almost sounded similar to Wilbur's, *so who cares?*

Tommy thinks back to the woman with the red purse, and the man, and the countless strangers that Tommy had passed and received odd looks from in the past few weeks.

So who cares?

Tommy decided that he didn't.

Tommy resumed his tapping, a smug look settling on his face. The man only turned around once in annoyance to see Tommy's expression.

By the time the train had started slowing for Wilbur's stop, Tommy's tapping was accompanied by humming. Maybe after his classes tomorrow Tommy could pull the dusty keyboard out of his closet. Tommy remembered the chords, despite his recent disuse of it. Maybe Tommy could pull some sheet music from google.

Sam got home after Tommy, whether or not Tommy was picked up by Ranboo's cousin or he had taken the bus home. Because of their conflicting schedules, Tommy could do this *without* obnoxiously disturbing Sam when he had UNI work.

Tommy wondered if he could convince Wilbur to bring his guitar, one of these days. Tommy remembered that he said he didn't make music anymore, but Tommy was a consistent nagger. He was sure he could press Wilbur into it.

He never gave a reason *why*, Wilbur didn't give much of a reason *why* he did anything.

Metallic doors slid open, and Wilbur entered. His hands were stuffed in the pockets of his coat, head tilted down. Wilbur's round-rimmed glasses looked like they were about to fall off the bridge of his nose.

He was frowning.

Not in a disapproving way, like the one he would sometimes give Tommy.

Any thought of music, or pestering Wilbur to bring his guitar died on Tommy's tongue.

"You okay?" Tommy asked, Wilbur taking his seat next to Tommy.

Wilbur rubbed at his temples. "Headache," He replied.

“Oh,” Tommy said. “I’ll try to keep my Tommy-ness on the down-low for today, just for you big dubb.”

“Do not do that,” Wilbur advised, waving him off. “I am *fine*, ” He emphasized. “Why does the guy upfront look like he wants to strangle you?” Wilbur asked, gesturing to the same man who had been glaring at Tommy.

Tommy snorted. “Oh, now *he* got annoyed by my Tommy-ness.”

“What did you do?” As an answer, Tommy started tapping on the metal beneath the window again.

“Just *that*, ” Tommy scoffed. “And a bit of humming. Just enough to piss him off.”

Wilbur laughed, and Tommy grinned. There it was. “That is my boy! What song was it?” “Yellow Submarine,” Wilbur groaned.

“The Beatles?”

“ *What ?* Are you too good for the Beatles, Will?”

“I am,” Wilbur hummed in agreement.

They stopped, and the man got off. Tommy flipped him off as he left.

“Well *I* like them, you pretentious *prick* ,” Tommy scowled, Wilbur laughed. “So does Sam,”

“How is he?” Wilbur asked.

“Great, actually,” Tommy answered truthfully. “Took me to my new classes yesterday.”

“How are those going?”

“Fucking— better than *Architecture* .” Tommy scowled. “I’m not pulling my hair out or— or getting bored? Ya know? And *Filmography* is just so cool man. You’re gonna go to the theatres in a few years and see my name on the big screen.”

“Tommy,”

“And— and I probably will have to take Tubbo as my plus one, ya know. Or Sam. Probably Sam—”

“Tommy—”

“Oh don’t worry big man,” Tommy waved. “I’ll get you in. Special ticket just for you! I’m the *director* , they can’t say no to me, ya know. And if they do I’ll—”

“ *Tommy*, ” Wilbur said a final time, cutting Tommy off mid ramble. His frown was back, and Tommy snapped his mouth shut. He got lost in his rambling, forgetting about Wilbur’s headache.

“Sorry,” Tommy said, his voice lowered. “I forgot about your headache, I’ll tone it down so ___”

Wilbur waved his hand. “It is not that, do not worry. You are fine.”

Tommy pursed his lips. “Are *you* fine?”

Wilbur hesitated, then nodded. “Yeah, I am fine.”

They stopped, no one on or off.

Tommy deepened his own frown. “Are you sure? I’m not— well, *you* , but I’d like to think I’m pretty observant, ya know. A few years ago Tubbo broke his arm when he fell on it during football, ya know. And I knew *before* him that it was broken. Absolute moron, he—”

“Tommy,”

Tommy could’ve slapped himself. “Sorry.”

“Do not apologize,” Wilbur sighed, rubbing his face. “You have nothing to be sorry for.”

They’ve had this conversation already, Tommy remembered. So he just swallowed, and said; “Okay.”

“I do have a question, though,” Wilbur finally said. Tommy pulled at the thread.

“Yeah?”

Wilbur sighed. Whatever the man was trying to ask, he was visibly struggling. He pinched the bridge of his nose, adjusting his glasses.

“Why did you want to kill yourself, Tommy?” Oh, directly on the nose, right to the face, Tommy thinks.

He *could have* worded that better, Tommy groaned internally.

“That’s a loaded question, big man,” Tommy laughed nervously. “Haven’t— haven’t we spent the last few weeks... I don’t know... going over that?”

“Refresher? If you— for my sake of mind,” Wilbur said.

“I... I guess it’s because of how shitty... everything felt, yeah? It was going so shitty with Tubbo and Ranboo, and *Sam*. And I was about to flunk out, and I hated it, yeah? I felt so *trapped*. But it’s not like that anymore? My friends *listen* , and Sam is trying and I know that he cares.”

Tommy didn’t add the *it’s because of you, you did that* , because he knew Wilbur enough that he would shut him down.

“Do you still want to?” Wilbur finally asked.

That was *also* a loaded question. Something in the air tonight must've made Wilbur feel more emo, to be asking all these questions.

Did Tommy want to?

“No.” Tommy decided, and it felt like the truth.

Wilbur was looking at him. Tommy focused on the thread. He didn't like it when Wilbur looked at him so *sadly*.

They stopped again— Tommy didn't bother looking up to see if anyone came on or exited.

“Why do you still come to see me?”

“Because you're my friend, Will?”

Tommy looked up to see Wilbur's expression soften.

It was a stupid question, Tommy thinks. Tommy could be well into his thirties he thinks, and he would still come to see Wilbur. He could be directing the next big blockbuster and he would *still* come and see Wilbur.

Wilbur did something unexpected— his arms wrapped his arms around Tommy, being pulled into a *hug* . It should've been awkward, with the angle and both of them sitting down, but it felt nice. It felt *right*.

“Can you promise me something?” Wilbur says.

“Mm-hm,” Tommy hums against Wilbur's black jumper. Considering that he wore this stupid *Reagan and Bush* jumper every time Tommy saw him, it didn't smell bad. It didn't smell at *all* .

“Promise me that you will not jump.”

Tommy furrowed his eyebrows, he thought they were *past that* . “What?”

“Just promise.” Wilbur pushed.

“Okay,” Tommy says. “I won't jump. I promise.” He pulled out of Wilbur's arms. “Besides, can't you have you losing your only friend.”

The sound Wilbur made was between a scoff and a laugh. “Oh, you *child* .”

Tommy snickered. “No, no, I get it. I'm too important to lose! You would be ever so *lonely* .”

“I have friends, Tommy,” Wilbur said, exasperated.

“Yes,” Tommy agreed. “You have *me* .”

“I also have *Niki* , and occasionally Jack—”

“Occasionally?” Tommy asked. “You still haven’t explained why you’re banned.”

“It is not important,” Wilbur said. Their stop was coming up— maybe Tommy could ask Manifold what happened, maybe *he* would be more willing. “Do not theorize on it too much.”

Tommy stood up with Wilbur. He didn’t need to shake his leg awake, thankfully.

“Oh I’m theorizing big dubbs,” Tommy said, exiting the train with Wilbur.

“And what are your theories?”

Tommy blinked. “I’ve got nothing.” He admitted. “That’s the point of *theorizing*, Will. I’m getting there.”

“I am sure you will.”

“Do not condescend me.”

“I am not!”

“*Memememe I’m sure you will* — you are. You dickhead!” Tommy pointed a finger accusingly.

“You child.” Wilbur jabbed light-heartedly.

“You suck,” Tommy grumbled.

“Love you too,” Wilbur hummed, stopping in front of Jack's store.

“*Blah blah blah*,” Tommy complained. “Love you too, whatever, you still suck.”

The “A” in Jack was still out. Tommy doubted he could afford an electrician to fix it right now.

“This is where we part?” Wilbur asked, shoving his hands deep into his coat.

“I mean,” Tommy glanced back at the door, then turned back to Wilbur. “Jack loves me. I could get him to unban you.”

Wilbur frowned, and Tommy faltered. But he schooled his expression back into one of neutrality. “I doubt that.”

“You watch,” Tommy said. “Jack will be begging to have you back as a customer.”

Wilbur smiled in defeat. “Okay, Tommy.”

“Don’t *okay Tommy* me,” Tommy huffed. “I’ve got this.”

Wilbur nodded encouragingly. He smiled. “I believe in you.”

“You better,” Tommy said, giving one more look to Wilbur before entering the store, the tell-tale sound of the bell alerting Jack.

“Hi, Tommy!” Jack yawned, peeking from behind the counter.

“Hey, Jack.” Tommy greeted, reaching into the bowl of pins. “How’s the night going?”

“Just you, again,” Jack said, leaning his chin on his palm.

Tommy’s hand found a gold, crown-shaped pin. The gold was faded into a murky yellow, but Tommy placed it on the counter with his pounds anyway.

“I have something to ask you, by the way,” Tommy said, Jack, sliding away from his precious money.

Jack’s eyebrows shot up. “What is it?”

“What happened with Wilbur?” Tommy asked, thumb pointing to the door. “Because—”

“Wilbur?” Jack cut off, face falling into a deep frown. “Wilbur Soot?”

“Yeah? You know many people named Wilbur?” Tommy asked, sarcastically. It was meant to be lighthearted, but Jack looked borderline— *angry*. Whatever Wilbur had done must’ve *really* pissed him off.

“The hell are you on about, Tommy?” Jack asked, and *yeah*, Tommy took a step back. Jack was angry.

“Well— well I was just gonna ask you if you could, I don’t know... Un—unban him but if what—”

“Tommy.” Jack cut off.

“Yeah?” Tommy said, his hand tight on the crown pin.

“Wilbur Soot is dead.”

That was impossible, Tommy thinks, because Wilbur was right outside. Jack was a moron, Tommy was *just* with Wilbur. He had been with Wilbur all night.

“No, he’s not?” Tommy laughed, although this wasn’t a very funny joke. “You’re fucking with me.”

Jack shook his head, his expression falling into something less angry, and more confusion. “I’m— I’m not, Tommy.” His voice was sad, Tommy startlingly realized. “It’s been about a year now.”

“That’s not a funny joke, Jack,” Tommy warned.

“I’m not?”

Tommy's heart dropped, because Jack was serious. Jack truly believed— but that was impossible, because Tommy was just talking to Wilbur. Unless some tragic incident happened in the last two minutes, Wilbur wasn't *dead*.

“You're lying,” Tommy said. “You're— you're a—” Tommy stumbled back, legs carrying him away from the counter. Jack was lying. Jack was lying. Jack was lying. Jack was a liar. Tommy was joking around with Wilbur just moments ago.

Tommy couldn't hear whatever Jack was saying, he didn't want to, because Jack was lying. Tommy would go outside and Wilbur would be there to ask him what pin he got

Tommy nearly fell through the door, pushing it open and slamming it shut behind him. The slam didn't register.

“Wilbur?”

Wilbur wasn't there.

Chapter End Notes

my [twitter](#)

my [discord server](#)

the [playlist](#) for this fic

and the pattern breaks.

this chapter was planned since the beginning, it was something that I was really excited to write.

shorter by like, fifteen hundred words because 1/3 of the usual set up is missing.

Ty to Mal, Eevee, and Lailetta for beta-ing this chapter!

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Autophobia

Chapter Summary

Tommy's eyes stared holes into his monitor, feeling them burn against the bright LED lights. Wilbur can't be— Wilbur lied. Wilbur lied. The air in his lungs felt trapped. Like this impossible realization had personally hit Tommy in the chest with a truck. Wilbur lied. Wilbur was dead. Tommy pulled at the thread on his sleeve.

The thread snaps.

And Tommy breaks with it.

cw & tw for dissociation, panic attacks, mentions of character death and suicide

Chapter Notes

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

“... Wilbur?”

Wilbur didn't appear around a dumpster, accompanied by his stupid grin. Tommy whirled around in a full three-sixty. Wilbur wasn't behind him, preparing to jump Tommy to startle him. Time outside Jack's shop was frozen, unmoving. No Wilbur leaning over him, curious eyes trying to peek at his new pin. There was no boisterous laughter or sharp comments— just Tommy and the street frozen in time.

Wilbur is dead, Jack's voice taunted.

“Wilbur!” Tommy yelled, masking his rising panic with anger. “You're so fucking funny Will, come out!”

No callback from Wilbur, just unsettling silence and the buzzing from the *Jack of All Trade* sign. The sound sent creeps up Tommy's spine. There was no Wilbur here to drown out the sound.

The street remained still. Wilbur wasn't here. Tommy swayed on his feet. *Wilbur wasn't here*. He must've gone back to the station. If Tommy ran he could catch up with him. Tommy would catch him and scream at him for his sick joke with Manifold and it would be *fine*.

The door behind Tommy jerked open. There was a hand on his shoulder. Tommy jumped away from it, swerving around to see Jack. Jack was talking to him. Jack. Not Wilbur. Jack. Wilbur was gone. *Wilbur wasn't here*. Jack's hand returned, squeezing Tommy's shoulder.

“—mmy. *Tommy*. ” Jack shook gently. “Tommy, mate, breathe.” That was a silly request, Tommy *is* breathing.

When he tried to tell Manifold that, the only thing that came out of Tommy’s throat was a low whine. He tried to shake away Jack’s now iron-tight grip. Jack pushed him down, forcing him to sit down on the sidewalk.

Tommy doesn’t need to sit, Tommy needs to find Wilbur. Wilbur left. Wilbur *left* him. Tommy needed to catch up to him before he got on the train.

Jack was crouched next to him. Tommy tries to swat him away. “I— I... I need to find...” There’s his voice. It’s raspy and Tommy can hardly hear himself but it’s *there*. “I need to find... Will.. he's probably—” Tommy tries to stand, but his chest hurts.

“Head between your legs, mate,” Jack directs. Tommy’s hands pull at his hair. He needs to get up. He needs to find Wilbur and scream at him for setting him up with this stupid prank, for leaving him.

He had no right, *he had no right*. He had no right to just *leave* him here.

“I need to find Will,” Tommy keens. He tastes salt. Tears. They shouldn’t be there, Tommy’s not crying. He can’t be crying, there's nothing to cry about because Wilbur’s not dead. He just left.

Jack is pulling him up. Tommy’s leaning on him. He needs his feet to work, he needs to get back to the train station. Wilbur is there, waiting for him, surely.

Jack says something about taking Tommy home, and Tommy wants to tell him no. Tommy can get back home fine, he just needs to find Wilbur first. Tommy tries to wiggle away from Jack, but his throat is tight and it *hurts*. Tommy tries to call for Wilbur again, because this is his last chance to appear out from whatever car he’s hiding under and apologize.

But Wilbur doesn’t come out, and Jack guides him to a car that must be his. Tommy can vaguely make out Jack asking for Tommy’s address as he slips into the driver's seat. Tommy’s able to mumble out coherently enough for Jack to type it into his phone.

Tommy is tempted to open the door and roll out of the car. He wants to yell at Jack, accuse him of kidnapping. But Tommy’s arms remain wrapped around his legs, chin resting on his knees. Jack doesn’t scold him for this, other than to put his seatbelt on, which he doesn’t need to tell Tommy twice. He hated being in the car, especially with a driver he wasn’t familiar with.

Wilbur would’ve scolded him more, he would have pushed harder. Wilbur wouldn’t have moved the car until Tommy was in a safer position. But Wilbur wasn’t here. Wilbur was at the station. Wilbur left him. He left Tommy.

Wilbur was acting strange tonight, sure. But Wilbur was always like *that*. He was vague and cryptic and *odd* and Tommy knew that, he had known that since their first meeting. So he knew that it was out of character for Wilbur to just *leave*. He was so insistent on Tommy

staying safe and keeping Tommy alive, he wouldn't just up and leave without so much as a *goodbye*. Wilbur always said bye to Tommy, why wouldn't he have this time?

Had Tommy said something wrong? Something to make Wilbur want to leave? To just abandon Tommy like that? Tommy glanced at Jack. The older had tried making small talk, but quieted at Tommy's lack of response. Jack had looked genuinely thrown off by Tommy mentioning Wilbur. Jack had said Wilbur was dead.

Wilbur Soot wasn't fucking dead, that would be very hypocritical of Wilbur to be dead. It would be ridiculous. There was no plausible explanation to that, Wilbur wasn't—

Tommy isn't crying because Wilbur's dead, Tommy is crying because Wilbur left him and Tommy doesn't understand *why*.

The drive took a shorter amount of time than it would have on the train. Jack eventually stopped trying to make small talk, the only noise that filled the vehicle being the radio at a soft volume and the sound of the tires moving against the road. Tommy occasionally sniffed, but his throat remained too constricted to talk. If Tommy *could* talk he would've demanded answers. He would've yelled at Jack to stop the car, to take him back, to tell Tommy where Wilbur was. He would have forced Jack to let him out of the car.

Instead, Tommy stares mutely through the window as Jack pulls up to Tommy's flat complex, stopping next to the side of the pavement.

"Tommy," Jack says. Tommy turns his head to stare at him, letting that be the indication that he was listening to Jack. "Mate, I...I don't know what's— what's going on. I don't know what Will was, to you... he never mentioned— *ughhhh*," Jack groaned, rubbing his face. "I'm sorry, Tommy. Here, uh—" Jack grabbed the pen that sat lousily at the back of his dashboard. He grabbed Tommy's hand. "Can I, uh?" Tommy nodded, letting Jack scribble on the back of his hand. A phone number. "Just—call me, if you need anything, okay Tommy?"

He won't. He's still pissed at Jack, but instead, Tommy nods again, his lips glued shut in a frown.

Tommy all but stumbles out of Jack's car, slamming the passenger door shut. He doesn't hear Jack pull away, so Tommy tries to not look back at the car when he enters the building.

Tommy doesn't miss the way his legs wobble when he climbs up the stairs, or the shakiness of his hand when he grips the railing. *He's tired*, that's it. Tommy's tired. Tommy is so *tired*. This isn't even the latest Tommy's stayed out, not by a longshot. He had to have beaten his usual returning home time by thirty minutes.

Tommy inserts his key, hastily opening the door to the flat. He doesn't kick off his sneakers, or hang up his jacket— Tommy books it straight for his room, kicking his door shut.

Tommy all but floated to his desk. His chair made a squeaking sound when Tommy sat down in it. His hands hover over his keyboard. Tommy types slowly, one key at a time.

Wilbur Soot.

There was nothing incriminating, at first. Some unrelated Facebook and Instagram pages—Tommy checked, none of them were Wilbur's. *His* Wilbur's. Just people who had the misfortune of sharing his name. Tommy's on the second page of Google. He's so tired, and his bed is right *there*. But he can't sleep *now*, not when he has to find Wilbur.

Tommy's on the verge of giving up when he finds it at the bottom of the second page.

2020 ENGLAND TUBE LINE VICTIMS, DEATH IN THE ENGLISH UNDER—

Tommy's eyes stared holes into his monitor, feeling them burn against the bright LED lights. Wilbur *can't be*— Wilbur lied. Wilbur *lied*. The air in his lungs felt trapped. Like this *impossible* realization had personally hit Tommy in the chest with a truck. Wilbur lied. Wilbur was *dead*. Tommy pulled at the thread on his sleeve.

The thread snaps.

And Tommy breaks with it.

It was hot, it was too hot in this *stupid* room. His jacket was suffocating, it was itchy and unpleasant and his arms felt like fucking jelly and he couldn't shrug it off—

His jacket.

His *jacket*.

Tommy reached into his pocket, trembling fingers brushing over the plastic pin. The crown pin. He never put it on his jacket. He never showed Wilbur. He never showed Wilbur because Wilbur wasn't there, because Wilbur left him, because Wilbur was dead and Wilbur was a hypocrite and he was a *liar*—

Tommy needed to get away from his computer, from this desk, from this room. He needed air. He needed *Wilbur*. Tommy didn't make it to his door, he didn't make it out of his chair. Tommy was on the floor inhaling shakily and his chest *ached*, making Tommy sob when he tried to get back up. Tommy muffled the wail that was climbing out of his throat by biting down on his fist.

He wanted Wilbur back, he wanted Wilbur to be *okay*. But Wilbur was *gone* and he was never even there, was he? Because Wilbur is dead. Wilbur Soot killed himself and Tommy is a silly, *silly* little boy who believed he was talking to a dead man.

Wilbur is dead, Wilbur lied, and Wilbur played him for a fool. Like Tommy was just strings on an instrument— rusted, old, strings that could break any second, treated with a delicacy until he got sick of their sound and snapped them.

"I would not lie to you," He had said, and Tommy had believed him.

Tommy hated him, he *hated* him so much. That filthy fucking *hypocrite*, preaching to Tommy about life and staying alive when he wasn't even—

When Wilbur isn't even—

Stop that, Wilbur was real. Wilbur is real. Tommy couldn't have hallucinated a dead man that he had never met. Wilbur is real and Wilbur is gone, he's dead and Tommy isn't and that's not *fair*.

The next sob that crawled out of his throat wracked through his body, Tommy burying his head in his knees. Any thoughts of trying to quiet himself are long gone from his mind. Tommy's eyes were squeezed shut and it was dark and he *hated* the dark but darkness was better than the horror on the computer screen.

Hands pulled Tommy's arms away from his head, dragging his fingers away from where they were tugging at his hair. Tommy was shaking too hard to fight off the grip. The grip itself wasn't tight, but it was insistent and it wouldn't let him *go*.

There was a voice. They were saying his name. It wasn't Manifold and it wasn't *Wilbur*, it couldn't be Wilbur because Wilbur was—

Tommy's face was wet, and his chest burned and the wooden floor was so uncomfortable and Tommy was surely one snot bubble away from throwing up and they wouldn't stop *touching him*. Tommy forced his eyes open, blinking away the tears that were blurring his vision.

Sam. *Sam*. Sam was here, Sam was shushing him. Tommy had woken Sam up. Sam had university and a job and a *life* and Tommy woke up Sam with his stupid fucking *nonsense*.

When Tommy choked out an apology, all that came out was a pathetic-sounding whine.

"Toms— Tommy, Tommy. Baby— it's alright." Sam soothed, letting go of his wrists after guiding them away from his head.

He's alright— he's *alright?! How can it be alright? How could Sam say that? Sam didn't understand. How could it be alright with what Tommy had just lost?*

"Breathe, with me, okay?" Sam said gently. "In for three. Out for three. You can do this."

Tommy shook his head. "I— I *can't*," Tommy choked.

"Yes, you can," Sam assured. "You got this, okay? You can do this, Tommy. Breathe in, one..." Tommy breathed in, forcing down the next sob. "Two, three." Sam nodded. "And out. One... Two... Three... You're doing good, okay?" Sam was spouting bullshit. Tommy *wasn't* doing good, Tommy was a sobbing mess on the floor. "In again, ready? One... two..."

They continued like that for a while. It could've been ten minutes, it could have been an hour. Sam was counting Tommy up and down, patiently restarting when it was broken with a stuttered sob from Tommy. Tommy didn't deserve this patience. He didn't deserve to sit with Sam's arms wrapped around him, letting Tom sob silently into his chest. He didn't deserve Sam carding fingers through his hair, whispering sweet nothings into his ear. He didn't deserve any of this, Tommy was being *difficult*.

"Tommy," Sam said softly. "Can I take you to the couch? We can stay here if you'd like." Tommy nodded a response. "Here or couch, Toms?"

“Couch,” Tommy said hoarsely, his voice barely above a whisper.

Sam helped him up. His hands never leave Tommy’s arms, catching him when he almost stumbled from the numbness in his legs. Sam sat him down on the couch, while he went to flip on a light switch. Of course, the lights were off, he thought numbly. It was the middle of the night.

Normally, Tommy would have walked home from the station. He would’ve kicked his shoes off at the door, and hung up his jacket. He would’ve gone into his room and changed into his nightclothes. Tommy would have laid down, checking discord, maybe responding to Tubbo or Ranboo if they had sent him anything. Tommy would have scrolled through tik-tok or Twitter even until he had dozed off. He would’ve thought about Wilbur, and dwelled over whatever task he had given him for the week. But this routine was broken, it was shattered and everything was so *wrong*.

Sam carefully placed a mug in front of Tommy, steam rising up from its place on the coffee table.

Sam sat next to Tommy, after wrapping the soft throw blanket around Tommy. He sat down, not close enough to crowd Tommy— which he was grateful for. He felt like a *baby*, being coddled. He felt like he was seven again, and climbing into Sam’s bed after a particularly bad nightmare.

“Do you wanna talk about it?”

Tommy bit at his lip, trying to keep it from wobbling. He needed to ground himself before he had another episode. He didn’t want to put Sam through the trouble of having to calm him down again.

Tommy shook his head, his vocal cords feeling tight. “That’s okay,” Sam said.

He didn’t want to talk about Wilbur, he didn’t want to *think* about Wilbur. Maybe, maybe if all those nights ago Tommy had just jumped before getting on, or if he tried something else. Maybe a bridge, or a busy street, but he *didn’t* and he got on and he *lived* and—

This wasn’t fair— this wasn’t *fair*. Wilbur died. Wilbur died and Tommy didn’t. Tommy had Wilbur to stop him, who did Wilbur have? Did Wilbur hesitate? Did Wilbur get on the train first? Did he think about what he was doing, about the permanence of his decision? Did Wilbur die, regretful of his decision, or at peace with his choice?

Had anyone approached him, like Wilbur approached Tommy, and told him not to? Did they ask him why? Did they tell him to stay? Why didn’t anyone stop Wilbur? Why— *why* did Tommy get this, and Wilbur didn’t?! Why did Tommy live— to have someone guide him away— and Wilbur had no one?

Tommy didn’t realize he had started crying again until Sam’s arms were around him and pulling him into a hug. Sam’s hugs were always nice, Tommy thought distantly. Sam had strong arms, and Sam held him securely but not squeezing. Unlike Wilbur, who had hugged Tommy tightly, like he was afraid to let go.

Tommy sobbed quietly into his brother's arms, trying to enjoy Sam's comfort; and all he could think about was Wilbur. How he wished he soaked up Wilbur's hug. Wishing that he walked slower to Jack's store, wishing that he enjoyed Wilbur's more— soaked up every monologue and ramble and story that Wilbur told.

"I... I'm *sorry*." Tommy breathed out.

"You're okay," Sam shook his head, carding fingers through Tommy's hair. "It's okay, you did nothing wrong, Tommy."

"I... I'm— I woke you up. You.. you have you need to..." Tommy spluttered

Sam frowned. "You were having a panic attack. That's— you're more important than that, okay?"

Tommy didn't say anything, staring at Sam, doubtfully.

Sam looks heartbroken, and Tommy almost hates him for it. *Stop looking at me, stop staring at me like that, stop—*

"You are."

Tommy sobbed, burying his head back into the crook of Sam's neck. It was silent, and not as nearly as delirious as his attack from outside earlier. It felt *good* to hear Sam say that. To hear someone tell Tommy that he was *important* who wasn't a fucking *ghost*. Because that's what Wilbur was, innit? Because Wilbur was dead, and Wilbur is gone but Wilbur *was* there.

And Sam was here now, and Tommy didn't realize just how much he had *mourned* for Sam's hugs.

Tommy was seven, and he was learning how to ride a bike when he fell. The pavement left harsh scrapes on his legs. Sam was fifteen, and his hair wasn't green yet because their parents refused to let him do such a thing to his head. Sam had run out, scooping Tommy off the drive. Tommy had cried to him then in a similar fashion to he was now. He spent the next hour bandaging Tommy's cuts and showing Tommy his card tricks to cheer him up.

Sam lost interest in magic and tricks a year later, giving Tommy those cards.

Tommy was fourteen, and Sam was twenty-one. Sam had gotten the opportunity to study abroad in the states, and he had taken it— not without repeatedly asking Tommy if he was *sure* he was okay with going. Their dad encouraged Sam, telling him he shouldn't miss such an opportunity. His mother was wary, afraid of whatever danger Sam might get into when he wasn't home. But Tommy— Tommy was *emotional*. Tommy had insisted he was *okay* until Tommy was standing outside the airport, hands dug into Sam's shirt. His dad had to pull him away so Sam wouldn't be late for his flight.

Tommy was going to turn sixteen in two weeks, and he had just woken up in the hospital after being out for five days. Sam had gotten a ticket from the states as soon as possible.

Tommy woke up and his parents were *gone* but Sam was there. Sam was grieving too and he held Tommy as securely as he was doing now.

Tommy closed his eyes, head tucked under Sam's. If Tommy closed his eyes tightly enough, he could imagine the circumstances were different. Sam had never left, and Tommy was still in the house they grew up in and he could hear his mother laughing in the kitchen and his father scolding their dog. Maybe Tommy had never met Wilbur, or maybe Wilbur was still alive— maybe he could have been a part of Sam's friend group. Tommy thinks he would've gotten along with Ranboo's cousin and his friends.

But none of that was true, and none of that will ever happen; but Tommy drifted to sleep pretending it could.

Chapter End Notes

my [twitter](#)

my [discord server](#)

the [playlist](#) for this fic

Thank you to Kai, Cardinal, and Sink for beta-ing this chapter! Also big thank you to Olli, who had helped me A LOT when I was writing through Tommy's panic attack. That was the hardest scene for me to write through.

So, yeah, surpriseeeeeeee. Wilbur's dead, and Tommy didn't take it well. Ah hah.

RIP to the thread, you were the best character. I had that line planned out since chapter one. This chapters a bit different then what I had planned in my outline but stuff changes.

TOAST! Ickyryrus made [fanart](#) of the last scene from chapter six! And [this](#) sketch when I was threatening WYT!Tommy on twitter.

Also, awsambro content dedicated directly to MollyPollyKinz <33

Luctus

Chapter Summary

Wilbur was—

Wilbur was dead.

Tommy knew this.

Tommy knew this, and it didn't stop a awful feeling sob from crawling up his chest to his throat like a spider trying to suffocate him. The spider wrapped its legs around his throat and squeezed. The sob was raw and it hurt.

cw: derealization, suicidal thoughts

Chapter Notes

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

Tommy yawned, tilting his head back as he stretched. The chill nipped at his cheeks, but Tommy couldn't bring himself to head back just yet. It wasn't anywhere near curfew, so Sam wouldn't worry yet. Another hour, maybe, and he'll text Tubbo to let him know he'll be home in time to get on the server with him and Ranboo.

Tommy's hand twitches, and his pencil skids across the paper. He sighed, erasing at it exasperatedly, trying to get around the drawing. The sun would be setting soon, and Tommy was losing his light. Right now, the early dusk painted the sky in soft, pretty shades of oranges and reds.

Tommy was enjoying the light, frankly, so the new shadow blocking him was definitely not appreciated.

Tommy looks up at his eclipse, scowling, "You're blocking my light."

Wilbur Soot grins down at him. "I am the light."

Tommy huffs, he could see his breath as it dissipated into the air. "You're a bitch."

"And you're freezing." Wilbur halfheartedly rolls his eyes, placing a foam cup next to Tommy's sketchbook. "I brought you this."

Tommy furrows his eyebrows, staring at the cup. "I don't drink coffee."

"It's hot chocolate," Wilbur scoffs. "I'm not stupid enough to give you caffeine."

“No, you’re just stupid,” Tommy deadpans. “And you’re eclipsing me. Sit down.” Wilbur obliged, sitting across from Tommy.

Wilbur hums lowly, ignoring Tommy’s sound of protest when he moved the sketchbook to face him.

“You don’t draw.”

Tommy makes a wounded sound. “Who says I don’t?”

“I do. It’s shit.”

Tommy whacks his arm. “Fuck you!”

Wilbur laughs, rubbing at his arm. It was a melodic thing, Wilbur’s laugh. Wilbur always seemed to be creating music when he wasn’t even trying. Tommy thinks he can listen to it for hours.

“Seriously though,” Wilbur says between giggles. “You don’t.”

Tommy however, will *not* tolerate Wilbur insulting his artistic ability. The cow he was currently sketching was *adorable*, in his most humble opinion.

“You’re a complete ass, you know,” Tommy says. “Would it bother you so much to be supportive—”

“Tommy.” Wilbur interrupts, and his voice was serious— which didn’t make sense, why would Wilbur be so defensive over this?”

Tommy scrunches up his face. “Yeah?”

“You don’t draw.”

The setting sun highlights Wilbur’s brown curls into a honey-looking color. It suits him more than the lights of the underground ever did.

It’s a cold reminder that Tommy had never seen Wilbur in the sun. He’s used to seeing Wilbur’s face reflect fluorescent lights of the tube line, and sometimes the moonlight on a clear night, but never the sun.

Tommy stares.

Wilbur Soot stares back at him, and his eyes are the wrong color. They’re too light. Tommy recalls Wilbur’s eyes as a warm chocolate— not hazel.

“You don’t—”

“I’m not doing this.” A broken record and Tommy rips it off its player. Wilbur didn’t talk like that anyway, it’s not accurate, not yet. Just some polishing and his record would be *fine*.

Tommy hates the beach.

If he had to rank it in his top least favorite places, it would absolutely be the first, beating his secondary school by, like, two points. That place was hell, but the beach *felt* like hell and Tommy decided that it was worse

It's hot, and despite Tommy's efforts to cover himself in sun lotion, Tommy can predict the upcoming sunburn he will receive from this outing. Tommy is contemplating studying witchcraft just so he could curse the upcoming generations of Tubbo's family for dragging him out here.

Tommy could hear Tubbo trying to force Ranboo into a life jacket; the arguing was something Tommy had longed to learn to tune out. If not for his laziness and current comfortability, Tommy would have gotten up and forced the ugly orange thing over Ranboo's shoulders.

Sam was off getting ice cream with Ranboo's cousin and his friends, Tommy knows they wouldn't be back for a bit because of the line.

Sand is kicked at Tommy's face, and Tommy struggles to curse his attacker out because of the sand in his mouth. "Fucking— *dickhead!*" Tommy grabbed at a handful of sand and threw it at his pursuer.

Wilbur dodges it easily, an amused grin plastered on his face. "Have you never been taught that you should not sleep on the beach?"

Tommy's cheeks burn. "Has anyone ever taught you that it's fucking rude to throw sand at people?"

Wilbur was smug, and Tommy was resisting punching that stupid look off his face. "I was saving you from dying of dehydration."

"I don't need you to fucking save me."

"Somehow I doubt that," Wilbur hums.

"Fuck off— fuck you." Tommy hissed. "Go bother Tubbo or something," Tommy says, leaning back onto his arms, eyes shutting. If he squeezes them hard enough maybe Wilbur will go away.

"You can not keep doing this."

Tommy groans. "I'm just resting my eyes, you bitch."

"Tommy."

Tommy cracks an eye open, glaring at Wilbur through it. "If it means *so* much to you big dubs, I'll—"

"You know that is not what I am talking about."

Tommy's eyes were wide open now, the glare slipping into a frown. "I have absolutely no idea what you're referring to."

"You do."

Tommy shakes his head, feeling a sense of frustration and anger flare up in his chest. "I really don't."

"You know that is not true,"

Wilbur's expression is blank, and Tommy can't stop the growing fury that was forming on his own.

"Leave me the fuck alone, alright?" Tommy scowls, pulling himself up.

"You are the one that keeps coming here."

"And you are the one that keeps ruining it."

This couldn't have even lasted as long as the first time, but Tommy supposed that this was his fault. It was the middle of October— even the beaches in Brighton aren't pleasant to be at this time of year, the air should be chilly, not blistering. Tommy should be freezing, not boiling.

"Tommy—"

"Fuck you."

Wilbur is strumming, humming along with a tune that Tommy doesn't recognize. It must be one of his songs, at least one he hasn't shared with Tommy yet. It had taken Tommy a good while to convince Wilbur to play in front of him— even longer to get Wilbur to agree to play his own songs.

Tommy pretends to be indulging in a comic book, only half paying attention to the colorful panels. He's tried to read the bold printed words, but they blur together while Tommy focuses on Wilbur.

Wilbur stops, and the euphoria shatters. Tommy looks up, confusion spreading across his face.

"Why did you stop?"

"I think you should play."

Tommy arches an eyebrow. "Isn't that what you're doing right now, big man?"

Wilbur half-heartedly rolls his eyes, leaning forward on his guitar. "I meant that *you* should."

Tommy waves him off. “No, no, that is your thing— that music shit. I can’t come for your brand like that, it’d be rude.”

“Do you not have a keyboard?”

Tommy shrugs. “I’m pretty shit at it.” He *was*, Tommy couldn’t recall the last time he had properly dragged it out of his closet. Tommy wasn’t even completely sure if it would still work— it would sound awful next to Wilbur’s careful playing.

Wilbur grins playfully. “Oh come on now, *Tommy*. Sunshine, do a duet with me!”

In any other circumstance, Tommy would have melted at the nickname; he was determined not to right now. He was not willing to budge to Wilbur’s insistence. “Absolutely not.”

“Well, now I am not going to play.” Tommy hated him, that absolute *man child*.

“You’re acting like a child!” Tommy blanched.

“And you *are* a child.”

Tommy groaned, dragging his fingers through his hair. “Just keep playing would you?”

“No.” Being difficult was Wilbur’s *default*, Tommy knew he liked to argue— but this was just *annoying*.

“Why the fuck not?” Tommy demanded.

“Because I want *you* to,” Wilbur rebuts.

“Well, we don’t always get what we want, Wilbur.”

Wilbur scoffs. “You are definitely not the one to be lecturing me on that.”

Tommy’s eyes narrow. “The shit does that mean, Wilbur?”

“You know.”

The room chilled. The temperature dropped, twinning with Tommy’s mood. “Stop.”

“Not until you do.”

“I’ll restart again.”

“You know that is not a good idea.”

“... Yeah,” Tommy admits. “I know.”

Tommy is tired, he is so *tired*. He just wants Wilbur and—

“You never played me music before,” Tommy says, feeling his throat tighten. “You never got to.”

“I would have.” *I know.*

“And you don’t call me sunshine.”

“I do not.”

“You’re dead.”

“I am.”

“And this is not real.”

“I am sorry.”

“No, you’re not,” Tommy says, feeling defeated. “You’re not even him.”

Consciousness fell upon Tommy like snow; gentle, slow, and *cold*. He was so cold. Tommy shivered, and the now-awake part of his brain pulled the scratchy throw blanket closer around him, clutching it tightly.

His neck hurt, but he knew the body he was leaning against was Sam’s, so Tommy didn’t dare move. Sam wasn’t snoring, so Tommy knew that his brother was awake. The memory of last night washed over Tommy like a shameful waterfall.

What was he going to say to Sam? What could he possibly come up with that would make sense? That Wilbur was—

Wilbur was—

Wilbur was dead.

Tommy knew this.

Tommy knew this, and it didn’t stop an awful feeling sob from crawling up his chest to his throat like a spider trying to suffocate him. The spider wrapped its legs around his throat and squeezed. The sob was raw and it *hurt*.

“I— I’m *sorry*,” Tommy choked, because he knew Sam was awake and he’s dealing with Tommy breaking down *again* as soon as he woke up and Sam had *school* he shouldn’t be here—

“You’re okay,” Sam assured. “It’s okay.”

Tommy shook his head. It’s not. It’s *not*. “He’s *dead*.”

“Who? Who is, Tommy?”

His friend. His mentor. His will. His drive. His *brother*.

And Tommy sobbed harder because he *couldn't* answer with that. He couldn't tell Sam. He wouldn't tell Sam. Shame filled him because *Sam* was his brother and perhaps he should have gone to him first before tailing it for the tube line. He felt shame because Wilbur was filling in a spot that didn't *need* filling.

The answer sat on Tommy's tongue like hot ash. It was a foul taste, and Tommy couldn't bring himself to spit it out.

Sam seemed to get the message because he didn't ask again.

"Do you think you can eat something?" Sam whispered into his ear, and Tommy tensed.

"Should— shouldn't you get to class?" Tommy croaked, sitting up. He rubbed at his eyes with the sleeve of his jacket, the overwhelming sadness about Wilbur transforming into a rising panic for Sam.

His eyes wandered to the digital clock that sat on top of their kitchen countertop. Ten-eighteen blinked back at him. *Shit, shit, shit.*

"You need to go." Tommy's heart pounds, blood flooding to his ears. Sam's first-class started an *hour* ago. "You need to catch the fucking bus— shit! You need to—"

Sam guided him back to sitting on the couch. He did it gently, not at all in the rushing manner he should be in.

"I already emailed my professors, okay?" Sam said. "I wasn't going to leave you like this."

"Oh," is all Tommy said, all he could say. He imagined himself waking up without Sam there. Opening his eyes to an empty apartment, like he'd done countless times before.

Sam kissed his forehead, brushing his hair to the side. "I'm making pancakes."

"You're a shit cook." Tommy sniffed, wiping his face with his sleeve. He should change his clothes,

"I'm the absolute best cook," Sam argued.

"That's just incorrect." Tommy snipped, trying to sound humorous. The tone was not really there, half-hearted at best. It was an attempt.

Sam smiled. "You don't want pancakes then?"

"No, no," Tommy was quick to say. "Please proceed on ahead. I beg you! Try not to set off our fire alarm."

Sam scoffed. "Our fire alarm doesn't even work."

Tommy recalled Sam burning pasta, and disagreed profusely. He didn't trust Sam to be within ten feet of an open fire, let alone a stove, but

Tommy wouldn't argue if he was already going out of his way.

Tommy peeled himself from the couch when Sam left him for the kitchen. It took him a few seconds to will himself to push open the door. His monitor had gone to sleep by itself, chair swerved in the wrong direction, and his bed was still made from the day before.

The crown pin lay discarded on Tommy's desk, face down. Tommy reached for it, hand grazing over the back.

It should be on his jacket, he should have put it on when he left *Jack Of All Trades* while walking back with Wilbur, he should have been able to show it to—

He didn't. He couldn't.

Tommy tore his hand away like it was a hot iron.

"Tommy?" Sam called, pulling Tommy's gaze away from the pin.

"Be out in a second!" His mouth was dry, and the reply was forced— Tommy distracted himself with the task of changing his clothes before the creeping breakdown could overtake him, exchanging his jacket for some hoodie he had stolen from Tubbo months ago.

The pancakes were as burnt as Tommy predicted they would be, and Tommy had to coat them in butter and syrup to even begin to get a decent taste.

"About last night—"

Tommy stabbed his pancakes with his fork. "I don't want to talk about it."

"That's okay," Sam assures, and Tommy's growing glare fades before he can direct it at Sam. "I'm here when— or if— you are, alright?"

Tommy nods, pulling his stare back to the ruined pancakes. "I know."

He knows, he *does*. He knows now that if he talks to Sam he'll listen and Tommy *wants* to.

Tommy's mouth is glued shut, and he lets Sam fall into a story about a project that Ponk was working on. Sam leads the conversation, with small acknowledgments from Tommy that he was indeed listening.

Sam deserves to know.

This would've been a conversation he'd have with Wilbur. He would've gone to Wilbur with his dilemma, and Wilbur would have noticed something was wrong and drag the answer out of him— and Tommy would tell him and Wilbur would go into some long rant that ends with Wilbur saying; "*He's not going to be angry with you if you tell him you were planning on killing yourself.*"

Wilbur would be right, of course, because Sam wouldn't be angry. He'd be *worried*.

Tommy pushes that imaginary conversation with Wilbur out of his head because Wilbur wasn't here to help him through this.

Tommy doesn't tell Sam that morning at breakfast, and he doesn't tell Sam later in the day when they're watching some shitty sci-fi movie and Tommy is dozing off. He doesn't tell Sam when he orders pizza for dinner, or before Tommy gives him a half-hearted excuse about being tired and going to his room.

The crown pin is still on Tommy's desk.

Tommy doesn't touch it.

Tommy doesn't sleep, either.

He *tries*, to give himself credit. He tosses and turns and flips his pillows and adjusts his blankets but he can't keep his *eyes closed*. It's tiring and *frustrating* but when his eyes are closed for too long he sees Wilbur.

He doesn't want to dream about Wilbur—the disappointment of waking up and being reminded of the truth was too vicious of a cycle for Tommy to put himself through.

Tommy had forgotten about his phone, in the haze of the day. Checking it, or even *looking* for it hadn't really crossed his mind until he was laying in bed, rubbing harshly at his eyes to keep himself awake.

His phone had fallen underneath his desk, in his panic. Tommy gets up to grab for it, clicking the black screen back to life.

50+ new messages from Tubbo :D

15 missed calls from Tubbo :D

32 new messages from Ranboob

12 missed calls from Ranboob

Tommy immediately clicked his phone off.

The moment Tubbo or Ranboo see his status go green on Discord there will be another influx of calls and messages that Tommy wouldn't be able to pretend he didn't see. So Tommy's not going to open the app, or his phone for that matter, at all.

There's a guilt that tugs at Tommy for ignoring them; guilt that wasn't there last time. He didn't *mean* to ignore them— does it count as ignoring if he didn't do it on purpose?

He was certainly ignoring them *now*.

Tommy scowled. He'll give them some half-assed excuse about Sam not paying the internet bill tomorrow— this was a problem for morning Tommy to deal with.

Morning Tommy did *not* deal with it.

Morning came, and Tommy was so *tired* — Sam had knocked on his door around nine, bribing Tommy out of bed with breakfast. Sam had opted for bacon instead of pancakes after the failure that was the morning before. Sam stayed home again today, and Tommy feels a tug of guilt for wishing that he didn't.

A part of him *wants* Sam to be there, to comfort him and watch him and assure that Tommy was *okay*. It feels nice and Tommy doesn't want to let it go.

The other part of him wants to shut himself off in his room and never leave. To soak in his little corner of misery. The guilt is burning Tommy out of his skin and the grief is scratching him raw. Forgetting about the world in a dark room sounds *nice*.

Sam doesn't let Tommy wallow though. He gives Tommy space, but he makes sure Tommy drinks and drags him out to eat. He lets Tommy pick a shitty Disney movie and lets Tommy leave when being close to him becomes too much.

Jack Manifold's phone number is still scribbled onto his hand, and Tommy barely remembers to put it into his phone before he goes to take a shower. He doesn't think he'll use it, if he can't bring himself to talk to Tubbo or Ranboo there's no way he's just going to contact Jack Manifold after *that*.

If Tommy was embarrassed and felt bad about *Sam* doting over him, Tommy doesn't think he'll ever be able to show his face at *Jack Of All Trades* ever again.

Which is... disappointing, Tommy realizes.

Tommy wants to go back. He wants to chat with Jack and pick out some stupid plastic pin and show Wilbur and he *can't*—

Wilbur is dead.

But Wilbur doesn't have to be *gone*.

Wilbur is dead, but Wilbur was still *there*. The conversations Tommy had with Wilbur were real. Wilbur had shown up and Wilbur had *left* but he was *real*.

Tommy is exhausted.

Tommy shouldn't be diving into thoughts about Wilbur when he's exhausted.

On Friday, Sam has to go back to work. Both him and Tommy are excused from their classes for the week, but if Sam's paycheck is any thinner they won't be able to pay rent next week. Tommy has to convince him that "*I'll be fine.*" and "*Yes, Sam, I'll pick up when you call.*"

And Sam does. Sam calls him every hour, playing down his tiredness so that Sam doesn't rush home in a frenzy.

Yes, Sam, Tommy had eaten lunch, and *yes Sam,* Tommy was drinking water and *yes Sam—*

Someone was at the apartment door.

Tommy tossed over in his bed, glaring at the door. He prayed that whoever was there would just conclude that no one was home. It was either the building owner or someone looking to sell something, and Tommy didn't feel like dealing with the building owner when Sam wasn't home nor did Tommy have the money to buy whatever junk they were peddling.

Tommy hears the front door creak open.

Oh hell no, Tommy thinks immediately. Someone was coming into Tommy's flat, someone that wasn't Sam because Sam had called him fifteen minutes ago and Sam was *definitely* not on his way home when he talked to Tommy.

Tommy sits upright and has to catch himself before he goes back down because *ow—* his head *hurt*, but someone was breaking into his apartment and Tommy wasn't going to let some asshole rob Sam blind.

Tommy had nothing in his room to defend his apartment with.

Tommy could throw himself at the robber, maybe. Tackle them. Scream at them. If he curses at them enough maybe they'll find him unpleasant enough to run the other direction.

Tommy swings open his door.

Tubbo glares at him from across his living room.

"You *asshole!*" Tubbo says it like an accusation, striding towards Tommy, and Tommy has to grip the doorway to steady himself so he doesn't stumble back into his room.

Tommy blanches. "I— wha— *me?!*" He gestures wildly. "What are you doing *here?!*"

"You haven't answered your phone since Tuesday!" Tommy's head spins as Tubbo pulls him from the doorway. "You— you haven't been at your school. Just— gone! Completely cold turkey! You never do that! We thought you were dead! Or in the hospital! Or Sam sold you to the fucking mob or something!"

"*We* did not think that," Ranboo quickly corrects. Tommy blinks because *Ranboo's* in his flat too; to Ranboo's credit, he looks a bit more apologetic to the breaking in of Tommy's *home* than Tubbo does. "We were worried though!"

"So you broke in?!"

“*Tubbo* broke in— I just didn’t stop him!”

“You— you’re an accomplice!”

“I’m— I’m not an accomplice if I didn’t do anything!” Ranboo defends, the apologetic look slipping into something more amused.

“Eyewitness,” Tommy says. “Stand-by. It is your civic duty to report *illegal activity*.” Tommy huffs, but Tubbo doesn’t loosen his grip on his arm when he forces Tommy to sit down.

Tubbo is still glaring at him. Tommy struggles to keep eye contact. “Sorry,” Tommy apologizes, and the adrenaline spike from the possibility of being robbed is fading and the exhaustion is *back*.

Tubbo has every right to be angry. Tommy *knew* that going silent after his activity in the past few weeks, especially after *that* conversation, that they would notice his absence. Going quiet for a few days would have been easier before—

Before—

Tommy didn’t have them that first night when he met Wilbur. At least, it didn’t *feel* like he had them then.

He has them *now*.

They’re here. Tubbo and Ranboo are *here*. Tommy ignored them for several days and they still came.

“Are you mad at us?” Tubbo asks. “Or— or me? Him?” He turns his glare to Ranboo. “Did you do something?”

Ranboo’s eyes are blown wide. “I— did I do something?!”

Tommy rubs at his temple. “Neither of you did anything! I just—” Tommy’s head hurts. He needs a Tylenol, not a *break-in*. “It’s not you guys. I promise. There’s just— something wrong with me, right now.”

Tubbo likes to fix things. Broken phones, laptops, *people, Tommy*. So, Tubbo hears this and asks; “Is there— can I help? Is there something we can do?”

Stay. Be here. “Can you stay?”

“Well we *did* just get here,” Ranboo says.

“And it *would* be rather rude for us to just *go*,” Tubbo adds.

“Totally,” Ranboo agrees. “Just downright impolite.”

And Tommy laughs, and it hurts but it's *genuine*. "You guys are awful." Tommy sniffs. "I won't press charges for breaking in if you order me a pizza."

It takes five minutes to reassure Ranboo that *no*, Tommy was *not* going to press charges—and *no*, Ranboo, Tommy, and Tubbo were not going to snitch to his cousin. They stay until after Sam comes home,

Sam has to kick them out after an hour because it's getting *late* and Tubbo's dad has already called twice.

The weekend is distracting— between Sam, Tubbo, and Ranboo, Tommy's mind is *occupied*. They manage to drag him outside on Sunday. The park is trivial, but it's *something* considering Tommy had hardly left his room in the past week.

On Monday, Tubbo and Ranboo both have classes, but they try to text him through it in a routine similar to Sam.

And then it's Tuesday. A week has passed, and Tommy's back in his room, under his covers. He tells Tubbo and Ranboo that he's catching up on sleep, so they don't show up at his apartment again when he doesn't respond. He picks up when Sam calls, trying to keep them short. Tommy doesn't feel like talking— Tommy doesn't feel like *anything*.

It's a cycle of staring at his ceiling, and then blasting loud music through his PC, and then burying his head into his pillow squeezing his eyes shut because he wants to sleep but he *can't*.

It's Tuesday, and Tommy doesn't know what he's going to do.

He wants to go tonight. *He does*. He wants to see Wilbur. He wants answers. He wants to be proven wrong. He wants Wilbur to be *there*.

Schrodinger's paradox. Tommy shows up, and Wilbur's not there— Tommy doesn't go, and he never will know if Wilbur came or not.

When Sam comes home, Tommy pretends to be asleep, and guilt tugs at Tommy for ignoring him. Sam is a grace, a reprieve, a distraction from a decision that he needs to make *soon*.

It's Tuesday, and Tommy has an hour before he has to leave. The crown pin sits in his hand, and Tommy resists the urge to chuck the piece of plastic across the room. He *hates* that Wilbur wasn't with him to see it and it's *stupid* that Tommy wishes he was—

Tommy puts it on his jacket.

He can show Wilbur tonight.

It's Tuesday, and he's on the platform. There's a middle-aged woman with him on the platform. She doesn't pay much attention to Tommy, she's deep into a phone call and Tommy is starting to feel pity for the poor recipient on the other end because Tommys been here for fifteen minutes and she is giving *him* a headache.

The train roars from down the tunnel, and Tommy lets himself step back when it groans to a stop in front of him.

He's quick to get away from the woman, taking his pace in the back. She sits down in the front, and Tommy's grateful that the couple occupying the seats in front of her have to deal with the bantering and not *him*.

The doors close, and Tommy's choice is sealed.

Tommy mourns the torn thread because he has been switching back and forth between scratching his hand raw and tugging at his sleeve as a replacement. The back of his hand has long gone red with irritation, and it makes Tommy grimace when he looks down at it.

The train moves, and it's too late to get off now.

The next stop is Wilbur's.

There's no stopping the train before then— Tommy doesn't even know how he would *begin* to try to derail it. He doesn't have the knowledge or the manpower to stop this train from reaching its next stop.

The wait is agonizing, and the anticipation is hell. The lights hurt his eyes, and he bounces his leg because Tommy is about to burst out of his skin. He could run a mile but there is *nowhere to run to*. Tommy's stuck. Tommy is *stuck* and *he* made that decision to be.

He doesn't know what he'll do if Wilbur isn't there.

He doesn't know what he'll do if Wilbur *is*.

What would Tommy say? What *could* he say?

Tommy thinks he'll show him the crown pin, first. Wilbur had left before he could see it. Where it goes from there depends on how Wilbur acts— maybe he'll be apologetic, and Tommy won't have to demand answers.

Maybe Wilbur will carry on, as usual, completely disregarding the events of last Tuesday. He'll be nonchalant, and Tommy will be *angry*.

Tommy has done this so many times now that he is familiar with the feeling of the train slowing down. The rattling of the tracks was less intensifying, the roaring fading into a loud hum.

Tommy closed his eyes.

Tommy felt the train stop. Listening to the doors click open, people shuffling in and out. *Please come. Please. Please be him*. He wonders if the chattering woman he had gotten on board with was still there.

Tommy stays like that, with his eyes closed. His breath is shallow, and he has less than a minute

Please, Tommy begs. Please.

One . Tommy is tapping the count on his leg.

Two.

Three. *Let me see him*, Tommy pleads.

Four.

Five. The doors click close. It's seconds later when they're moving again.

His hand balls into a fist. Tommy's not religious; he doesn't think he'd be here if he was. Call it distaste, or boredom even— after years of attending the eight-am morning service with his parents and Sam in an itchy collared shirt Tommy was disinterested.

The last time Tommy was in a church was at his parents' funeral. The last time he prayed was when they were being buried.

He considers doing it now. He doesn't know what to pray for— himself, for Wilbur?

Say something, Tommy pleads. *Anything. Call me stupid. Tell me I'm making an ugly face. Be here.*

Tommy opens his eyes.

Tommy is alone.

Wilbur's not there, not standing over him, not sitting next to or across. There's no Wilbur, with a smug smile and a teasing comment. *There's no Wilbur.*

The hammer falls, and the poorly glued cracks are shattered.

Wilbur's not here.

Wilbur is gone, Tommy realizes— and this time it sticks . Wilbur is *gone*.

"As long as you need me, we can keep doing this," Wilbur had said to him, all those nights ago. A promise, an oath, the word of a dead man. Tommy didn't know what he meant at the time.

Tommy didn't even get to say *goodbye*. It's not fair, that Wilbur just decided that Tommy was ready— that Tommy didn't *need* him. He does. *I do!* Tommy wants to scream at him, to tell him to stay, to at least let him say goodbye, to say thank you.

At the next stop, Tommy threw himself out of his seat and out the doors. He shoved past a man, disregarding the man's grumbles about his rudeness.

He has to do this now, he thinks. He can't see Jack, he can't sit on the train and think about his choice for another four stops. Tommy does this *now* or he doesn't do this at all.

There was a fifteen-minute wait for the next train.

A bitter laugh escapes him when he looks around and realizes he's *alone*. No older women and ruby purses, no couples, no drunk college students— no Wilbur.

Just Tommy.

A melting pot of emotions stirs around in his head. Hysteria, desperation, anger; fear.

The matrix display says he has eight minutes left.

“Come on,” Tommy says to no one. *To Wilbur*. “Please.”

Call his bluff. Stop him. Pull him away. *Just be here*.

Tommy has five minutes.

He didn't leave a note, this time. There was no goodbye to Tubbo or Ranboo. There was no goodbye, no more final *I love you*, to Sam. No apology. No explanation.

Tommy stares at the yellow line. He feels nostalgic. He feels sick.

He has two minutes.

He's crying now, but that doesn't matter. Tommy's cried a lot in the past week, in front of people and alone. He can't find himself to be shameful of it now.

Make fun of me for crying, he pleads. *Tell me to stop*.

He can hear the train.

Tommy's on top of the yellow line now. He's dangerously close to the edge now. He can see the smudged appearance of faraway lights if he looks down the tunnel.

The train is close. He has thirty seconds, at most, really.

He wants Wilbur to be here, to pull him away, to talk him out of it. He wants Wilbur to call him an idiotic, moronic child for even *thinking* of doing this; for throwing away everything they worked through, for throwing away every moment he ever had with Wilbur just to get a goodbye.

The lights of the train are bright.

And Tommy—

Tommy—

It misses him by inches because Tommy's throwing himself back on the safe side of the yellow line. Tommy's gasping, between tears and adrenaline he can't *breathe*.

He can't do this.

Tommy doesn't want to die.

He *really* doesn't.

Tommy— Tommy has a *future*. He was getting somewhere. He was going down a career path that he *liked*, he finally had Tubbo and Ranboo; he finally had *Sam*. Tommy was getting somewhere— he was getting *better*.

Wilbur wanted him to live.

Tommy wants to live.

It's an unfamiliar thought, and it nearly breaks Tommy into hysterics. He wants to live.

Damn, Wilbur Soot.

Tommy backs away from the yellow line, from the immobile train— he can't— he *can't* get back on— Tommy wants to *live*. He decided to live and can't—

Tommy shakily sits down on a bench, not moving until the train pulls away. No one had gotten off. Tommy is alone, and he doesn't *have* to be.

Tommy doesn't have to be alone.

Wilbur's gone, but Tommy's not *alone*.

Tommy's hands are still shaking when he presses on Sam's contact. It takes a few rings because Sam was asleep when he left and Tommy *know* he shouldn't be waking him up but Sam had *promised* that if he needed anything that he would—

"Tommy?" It's Sam's sleepy, freshly woken voice that grounds him.

"*Sam,*" A pathetic-sounding noise comes from his throat.

"Tommy?" Sam asks again, and he sounds more awake, more alert. "Tommy, where are you?"

Of course, Sam would realize that Tommy wasn't home immediately. Calling him, instead of going across the hall, gave it away. The background noise would point even more so to the that *Tommy wasn't home*.

"Sam— I'm— I—"

"Deep breaths, remember?" Sam reminded, exaggerating deep breaths so Tommy can hear them through the phone. They spent minutes going through breathing exercises, calming Tommy down to the point where he could talk coherently.

"Can you tell me where you are, Tommy?"

Tommy squints at the matrix display, reading out the name of the station he was at for Sam.

“Train station?” Sam asks, Tommy can hear him shuffling around.

Realizing that Sam could not hear his nod, he replies; “Yeah—I—can you—?”

“I’m already on my way, stay on the phone, okay?”

“Okay.”

Sam doesn’t force small talk or make Tommy explain why he was out in the middle of the night. He probably will, when he gets there. For now, he sends assurances and makes sure Tommy’s still there. Tommy doesn’t think he would be able to handle small talk right now, anyway. Answering questions about school, or his friends, isn’t the grounding he needs or wants.

It takes two train cycles for Sam to get there. A half an hour of near silence, and in and out connection because of them both being underground— train doors click open, and Sam is *here*.

Tommy is throwing himself into his brother’s arms before he can say anything.

“Hey kid,” Sam says, rubbing at Tommy’s back.

“You’re here,” Tommy cries, and he almost wishes he had just done this originally. Just gone to Sam, that first night— because Sam cared, and Sam would’ve shown up then as he did now.

But Tommy didn’t, Tommy boarded the train and he met Wilbur and despite the *pain*, he can’t regret meeting Wilbur.

“Let’s get you home, okay?”

“Alright,” Tommy says because honestly, that’s all he wants to do. He wants to do now; no going to *Jack of All Trades*, or waiting for someone that moved on— Tommy just wants to go home with his brother.

They take the next train back. They sit in the front, far away from his and Wilbur’s usual spot — because that’s *his* and *Wilbur’s* spot, not Sam’s. Wilbur is not Sam, and Sam is not Wilbur.

He’ll tell Sam, tomorrow. Not about Wilbur, not the full story, at least. Tommy couldn’t even explain that, he can’t ever fully understand it either. Tommy has to keep himself from falling asleep on Sam’s shoulder. He knows he’s safe, and that Sam could hold his own against any possible mugger, so drifting is *okay*.

He chose to stay alive, even though Wilbur wasn’t there to convince him. *He* chose to ask Sam to come, for his help, despite his doubts. Tommy made those decisions himself. No bets, no egging on, no hypotheticals, no Wilbur, just Tommy.

Wilbur is somewhere else, not here, not with Tommy, but he knows that Wilbur is *proud*.

Chapter End Notes

thank you to both foolofatook and fr0g for beta reading this chapter!

my [twitter](#)

my [discord](#)

fanart by [hivemindscape](#)

fanart by [ickyvirus](#)

fanart by [liodraws](#)

[_Wilted_Roses13](#) made an [audio book](#) of chapter one :D

Thoughts:

First of all, I would like to apologize for this taking two months. I had a lot of conflicting-- most of them negative-- opinions on this chapter. I felt like expectations were high for this to be good, and although I don't think it's my best or could have been my best it's still mine.

This chapter ended up being different from my original outline. There was no dream sequence, or Tubbo and Ranboo, even. By the time I got to chapter eight I had different ideas for how I wanted it to go. Almost took out the dream sequence but didn't, because I LOVED the trippiness of it and man am I going to miss writing this Wilbur character.

The scene at the end, with Tommy staring at the yellow line and contemplating jumping could have ended two ways; he calls Sam, or he doesn't. Both were significant to Tommy, and in character for him. Tommy choosing to ask for help, or Tommy choosing that he was able to do it on his own. It's something that I debated for a while. After talking about it with Rachael I decided it would mean more to Tommy to finally call Sam.

Thank you guys SO MUCH for 40k hits on this. It blows my mind that there are so many people who have read my sad little train fic.

see you in chapter nine :D

Returning the Color Blue

Chapter Summary

If there was one thing Wilbur was wrong about, it was the color blue. It was everywhere. The sky had been painfully clear, painting the sky in its rightful light blue shade. Blue was in Tommy's eyes when he looked in the mirror. Blue was in the fake, plastic flowers on Ms. Molly's balcony across from Tommy's bedroom window. Blue was everywhere and Tommy couldn't escape it.

content warning: mentioned and talking about plans of suicide

Chapter Notes

edit 7/3/22:

As I'm writing this, few days ago, it was revealed that Technoblade had passed away last month (June 2022).

This chapter was written months ago, and this fic was planned a year ago; but there is a scene in this chapter that depicts Technoblade as dead. If you wish to skip over this, skip the lines "A twin stone" to "it's Ranboo", and "Tommy glanced at the headstone" to "Tommy looked back to Wilbur"

Please do not leave comments about this coincidence. I am currently debating whether or not to edit this part of the fic out at all and have not made up my mind yet because of how fresh the news is right now. Please be respectful.

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

Wilbur is proud.

Wilbur is proud.

That's what Tommy told himself when he got home with Sam that night, sitting down on the couch. Wilbur is proud.

Wilbur is proud, and that's why Tommy tells Sam this;

"I wanted to kill myself," Tommy finally admitted. It's blunt, and to the point, because if he didn't admit this now he wouldn't in the morning. It was now, or Tommy never talked about this again.

His head is resting on Sam's shoulder, and he can feel his brother stiffen. "Tommy—"

"I said *wanted* to, dumbass. Weeks ago," Tommy sniffed. "I don't want to *anymore*. I haven't — I don't— I want to *live*." Tommy said aloud, and it feels permanent. This feels permanent, Sam's arm wrapped around him. Sam isn't going anywhere, and neither is Tommy.

Sam squeezed his shoulder. "I love you,"

"I know," Tommy said. "I know that now, not *then* but I do now, I love you too,"

"I *love* you kid," Sam said. "I'm— I'm glad you told me."

Tommy breathed in. "I'm sorry I worried you,"

"Don't apologize, Tommy," Sam said firmly, and Tommy could've laughed because he *swore* that sounded like Wilbur. "I'm always going to worry— that's like, my job. I'm never going to stop." *Worrying or loving you*, he doesn't say out loud, but Tommy knew that's what he meant.

Tommy closed his eyes. "I'm tired," He's exhausted. Maybe he'll regret telling Sam in the morning, but he can't bring himself to feel regretful now, he feels anything but. "Can we talk more about this tomorrow?"

Sam nodded. "That's— that's okay. We can, when you want to, okay?"

Tommy sank closer to Sam. "Okay,"

In the aftermath of Wilbur's departure, it took a week for Tommy to contact Jack, Tommy had left the man hanging in open air with no answers. It had taken Tommy another four days to message him; he spent those four days *thinking* of an excuse, thinking of an explanation.

His stomach hurts, when he tells Jack that Wilbur was his friend, and had saved his life. It's a half-truth, because Wilbur *did*, but Tommy paints a picture of the man doing it *before* his death.

Jack didn't push for information further than that, and Tommy was eternally grateful that he didn't have to bring out a lie about tripping out on some medication from his non-existent psychiatrist.

Tommy visited Jack more— Tommy couldn't bring himself to go to the tube station just yet, so he often took the bus or had asked Ranboo to drive him after classes— which ended with *both* Tubbo and Ranboo meeting Tommy's favorite shopkeeper.

Tommy couldn't bring himself to joke about gatekeeping when Ranboo's face lights up at some of the antique items in *Jack Of All Trades*. Tubbo ends up pulling him out when he jokes about buying out the store.

October fades into November, and Tommy continues visiting Jack of his own accord. More than once a week— not on Tuesdays, never Tuesdays.

Going out late, on Tuesday— getting on the train, visiting Jack, was part of an old routine. An episodic period that Tommy had punched through the wall to get away from.

A month, since that first Tuesday, since his first meeting with Wilbur, and Tommy doesn't realize it until he's writing down the date on an assignment for class.

He doesn't spiral, *he doesn't*. It's been a month and Tommy is *okay*, Tommy is alive and *Wilbur isn't Wilbur isn't alive Wilbur's dead he's dead he's gone he's gone he's gone he's gone* —

He goes to Jack's, the next day. Not the one-month mark, because Tommy was exhausted after calming down from a panic attack in the bathroom of his college with Ranboo on the phone trying to calm him down.

Tommy asks Jack where Wilbur was buried, and it takes Jack a few seconds to answer.

“Would— would you like to come with me?” Tommy asked, pocketing his phone once Jack sends him the address.

A part of him hoped Jack would say yes, because Tommy didn't *know* him. He didn't know who Wilbur was before he died and he would never get to know. Jack was his only connection to who Wilbur *was*.

“I... I don't think so.” Tommy's stomach dropped. “I— I've done my mourning, ya know?” Jack said, rubbing his jaw. “Wilbur was... how long did you know him? Before—?”

“Not long,” Tommy admitted. It was a half truth. Tommy didn't know Wilbur before, he did after, and it wasn't long. Wilbur's time in Tommy's life was devastatingly short. “I only knew him for a bit— and it was only us. Kinda like he existed just to me.”

Jack sighed. “I wish I could tell you that being Wilbur's friend was easy, mate, because it wasn't. He wasn't exactly pleasant to be around towards the end, ya know? Wilbur was miserable. I think he didn't want to leave anyone behind so he tried to make everyone *else* miserable and he— he... Well. You know.”

“Yeah,” Tommy said, trying to not sound bitter. He *knows*. He knows because Wilbur jumped and Tommy didn't. “I know.”

“He wasn't always like that,” Jack reminisced. “He ever play you music?”

“No,” Tommy said sadly, thinking back to a dream that he *wished* was real so badly that his bones ached. “Never got too.”

“He was something great,” Jack hummed. “I wish he got the chance to be somethin' greater, yeah? Wish you could've known him longer.”

“Me too,” Tommy agreed. “Thanks for the address, Jack.”

Tommy glanced at the bowl, plucking a guitar-shaped pin out of it. “I'll be taking this, by the way,” Tommy said, reaching for his wallet.

Jack shook his head, waving his hand. “It’s on the house, mate,”

Tommy scoffed. “Oh come on! Who’s going to pay off the broken *A* in your sign?”

“That’s fixed!”

Tommy’s eyebrows shot up, grinning. “So what you’re saying is that your prices will be going down?”

“Get outta here, Tommy,” Jack said, and it was fond instead of angry.

“Alright alright,” Tommy said, tucking his hands into his pockets. “G’night Jack,”

“Night, Tommy,”

JACK OF ALL TRADES illuminated the store’s front, the *A* a slightly off color than the rest of the sign, but it *glowed*, and Tommy smiled.

If there was one thing Wilbur was wrong about, it was the color blue. It was everywhere. The sky had been painfully clear, painting the sky in its rightful light blue shade. Blue was in Tommy’s eyes when he looked in the mirror. Blue was in the fake, plastic flowers on Ms. Molly’s balcony across from Tommy’s bedroom window. Blue was everywhere and Tommy couldn’t escape it.

Blue was the color of the flowers Tommy was holding, sitting in the passenger seat of Ranboo’s car. Hydrangeas, the woman he had bought them from had said. Tommy held them with delicacy, denying Tubbo’s offer to carry them for him. Tommy didn’t hate the color, he didn’t want to hate things he associated with Wilbur. He didn’t want to hate *Wilbur*.

And Tommy didn’t hate Wilbur, he *didn’t*. That wasn’t Tommy trying to convince himself, that was a fact. Tommy did not hate Wilbur.

Missed, loved, *longed*, might be the words. Wilbur had left a chamber in Tommy’s chest and some bittersweet feeling flooded it in his place.

Tommy could’ve come alone— and he debated it, after Jack turned down his offer. He had still not officially told Sam about Wilbur; just a vague summary of a man that had saved Tommy’s life that first night. No details about Wilbur, no in-depth summary. Tommy wasn’t ready for that, and he doesn’t think he ever will be. His conversations with Wilbur, his true friendship with Wilbur, a secret that he carried in his pocket between Tommy, a dead man, and some strangers from the tube line.

Tommy could’ve come alone, finally shut the creaking door and get closure by himself— but he didn’t *have to*, Wilbur taught him that. He wasn’t alone.

He wasn’t alone, so he asked Tubbo and Ranboo. Tommy had spent the day, debating how to approach it. He asked them in person, after classes, because doing it during a Discord call felt impersonal.

“You don’t— don’t have to,” Tommy rubbed at his neck.

“I’ll go with you,” Ranboo said. “You shouldn’t go by yourself.”

“Me too! I’ll go!” Tubbo chirped, and Tommy’s shoulders fell in relief.

“This place is so old,” Ranboo said lightly, as they drove through the entrance. “Do ya think if we look we could find the oldest dead person?”

“This place is *huge*,” Tubbo gestured. “We could never. That’ll take forever.”

“But theoretically—”

“Theoretically,” Tommy cut off. “Do you want to be in a graveyard at midnight?”

“Well I’ve never met a ghoul before,” Ranboo mused.

“Or a zombie!” Tubbo butted in.

“No zombies, no ghouls, no vampires.” Tommy laughed. “You guys can have your freaky dead people sleepover— I will partake in no such thing.”

Going off of Jack’s directions, Ranboo does two loops around the cemetery before the right idea of where to look. Tommy gives them Wilbur’s name, so he’s not the only one scanning for it.

It was Tubbo, that found him first. He called over Tommy and Ranboo, and Tommy’s stomach plummeted.

Here was his proof. His final piece of evidence— no throwaway mention in an article, or a second-hand story from Jack. The final piece of evidence that Wilbur Soot really *did* exist. That the warm, comforting smile that still haunted Tommy wasn’t just something that Tommy made up to cope. Proof that cemented the fact that once, Wilbur was really *here*.

It wasn’t completely lonely; dead, crumpled and dried flowers rested next to the stone. It tells of old mourners, of visitors that have moved on.

As long as Tommy is still alive, he doesn’t think he can ever move on from Wilbur. He doesn’t think he can ever *forget* Wilbur.

A twin stone sat next to Wilbur’s, and the name on it builds a near-hysterical giggle in Tommy’s throat.

Technoblade.

Wilbur really didn’t lie, about his brothers' name or them being neighbors.

Tommy stifled the laugh, turning it into a cough. It would be *disrespectful* to laugh in a cemetery, let alone at the foot of someone’s grave.

It's Ranboo that patted his back. "You good?"

Tommy nodded, hiding his smile with his fist. "Yeah, I'm good."

Tubbo frowned. "What kind of name is Technoblade?"

Tommy choked. "That's what I said!"

"You two are terrible," Ranboo claimed. "We are in a *graveyard*."

Tubbo scoffed. "Everyone here is dead, Ranboo. Logically, their eardrums have rotten away—"

"Along with the rest of them," Tommy added.

Tubbo nodded. "Along with the rest of them, and—"

Ranboo waved his hands. "Okay, *stop* that. No more dead people talk. *Respect* the dead, please."

"*I* for one, *am* being respectful," Tommy argued, placing down the Hydrangeas. "Sorry about them, Will. I would *never* desecrate you so."

Ranboo made a choked noise. "You were literally just talking about dead bodies with Tubbo."

Tommy shook his head. "No, you're gaslighting me. This is a gaslight."

"That's not what this is at all, actually,"

Tommy turned to the headstone. "Do you see the way he treats me, Will? Terrible. Disrespecting me in front of my dear friend— that's not very cool of you, Ranboo."

"It's disgraceful, Ranboo." Tubbo teased.

"I will leave you two here," Ranboo said. "You can *walk* home from the graveyard."

"You haven't even said hello yet, don't be *impolite*," Tommy said, gesturing to the stone.

Ranboo huffed. "Hi, Wilbur."

"Hello, Wilbur," Tubbo greeted lightly. "How come I never met him?"

Tommy buried his hands in his pockets, fumbling with the sleeve of his black coat. The hand-me-down varsity jacket was hung on the coat rack, retired for the rest of fall and the upcoming winter. Tommy misses the pins.

"I only knew him for a little bit— he was my friend, though." *He could have been my brother.* "I think he saved my life, or some lame shit." *He gave me something to live for;* Tommy thinks mournfully, *I wish I could have done the same for him.* "He was a bit of a prick," *He was the most interesting person I've ever met, he made you want to listen to him.*

“But I wish I could have properly thanked him.” And Tommy can’t— not for a while, because Wilbur Soot was dead, and Tommy decided that Tommy won’t be for a long time. Not if he could help it.

Tommy can’t properly thank him— Wilbur had turned him down, that last night. Said he didn’t need to, but god did Tommy *want* too.

Tubbo leaned into him, and Tommy leaned back. Ranboo’s hand curled into Tommy’s, fingers winding into his. Shoulder to shoulder with his friends, and Tommy’s glad he didn’t come alone.

“M’ sorry, Tommy,” Tubbo whispered. “That’s painful.”

“Knowing him wasn’t painful. I think knowing him was one of the easiest things I’ve ever done. I miss him,” Tommy said, and he has to choke it out. “I didn’t know him that long and I miss him,”

“I think...” Ranboo contemplated. “I think that’s okay— even if you think that you didn’t know him too well, he was still important to you. You have the right to grieve.”

You have the right to grieve.

Tommy chewed at his lip. “I— thanks, Ranboo. You are so wise.”

Ranboo beamed. “Anything that helps,”

“Thank you, for— for coming, guys,” Tommy spoke. “Can... can I get a moment alone? Just want to— talk to him, I guess.”

“Course’ boss man,” Tubbo tugged him into a hug. “Call for us if a zombie grabs you!”

“So we can get a head start,” Ranboo nodded.

“You’d leave me?” Tommy asked, faux-ing hurt.

“If a zombie bit you— yes!”

Tommy huffed. “Well, who said I got bit? What if it just has my leg? Would you let ‘em take my leg?”

“I’m not answering that!” Ranboo called, as Tubbo dragged him back towards his car.

Tommy allowed a small smile to creep back onto his face, watching them depart. *He has them, alright.*

Tommy turned back to the headstone, once he was sure they were out of earshot.

“Hey Will,” Tommy said, his voice barely above a whisper. Something that felt like a pebble was lodged in his throat, and he was afraid if he started crying he wouldn’t stop, and it would draw Tubbo and Ranboo back.

“Sorry about those guys, Will,” Tommy said fondly, throwing a small glance over his shoulder. “I’m— I am happy you finally met them, though. That was Tubbo and Ranboo. I wish you could’ve really met them.”

Tommy closed his eyes, and for a moment let himself entertain the idea of Wilbur showing up. Let him talk to Tommy, for one last time.

Tommy knew he wouldn’t. They’ve been through this, Tommy has been through this— waiting for Wilbur, and experiencing the crushing disappointment when Wilbur didn’t come.

Tommy opened his eyes, and Wilbur wasn’t there.

Tommy didn’t feel that crushing disappointment now. Not relief, but contempt, maybe. Tommy breathed out.

“I told Sam,” Tommy stated. “He didn’t yell, or get mad, or anything,” The only thing Sam didn’t take well was Tommy’s joke about Sam sending him to a ward— which he was assured that would not be happening unless Tommy wanted to. “He’s helpin’ me out yeah? Not overbearin’, or shit. We looked into therapists and crap? Did ya’ know how much those costs Wilbur? When you said I should get one? I’m *baffled*, absolutely baffled— it’s ridiculous Will. We can’t afford that.”

Which was *true*, they really couldn’t. Sam had offered to cut some of his own expenses— such as his *gas money*— which Tommy had turned down immediately.

“I’m thinkin’ of asking Jack for a job,” Tommy thought. “Don’t know how much Mister Manifold pays, but it’s something, innit?”

Wilbur didn’t say anything, Tommy didn’t really expect him to; dead men don’t talk. Tommy *missed* talking to him, he missed Wilbur’s smart-ass responses and his questions and his advice.

“You’re a shit audience when you don’t respond,” Tommy tried to joke. “I miss talking to you.” He balled his fists in his coat pocket. “I miss *you*, Will.”

Tommy doesn’t miss the state he was in, when he met Wilbur. The misery, the overwhelming feeling of everything going wrong. He doesn’t miss being that Tommy.

Wilbur never knew him outside of that Tommy, outside of the boy he had saved from sinking.

Tommy mourned, for Wilbur, and for the friendship they never got to have.

Tommy glanced at the headstone of Wilbur’s brother, now over the initial shock. Techno’s was dated eight months prior to Wilbur’s. There was no personalized message on either stone, other than them both sharing a carving of twin crows.

Tommy recalled a story about Wilbur’s father and birds, and he smiled, only slightly.

“Hope you’re not givin’ him too hard of a time,” Tommy directed at Techno. “And sorry I made fun of your name. I think you sounded cool. Wilbur called you a hardass.”

Tommy looked back to Wilbur’s, sighing. “I wish you would’ve let me say bye. That was very abrupt, you know. I loved you— or, I think I did. I think I still do. I know I still do, but that had *hurt*.” Tommy realized, now, that Wilbur had his goodbye. It was indirect, and Tommy didn’t notice it in the moment. If he knew that was Wilbur saying goodbye he would’ve never left that hug, he would’ve never had gone into Jack’s store. If he knew that telling Wilbur that he didn’t want to die anymore would’ve made him leave, Tommy wouldn’t have done it.

Wilbur must’ve known that.

Maybe it pained Wilbur, to say goodbye too, maybe he didn’t want to leave Tommy so soon. Tommy entertains the idea, that Wilbur didn’t tell him he was leaving because it had hurt him too.

“Thank you, Wilbur,” Tommy said, and he kinda hoped that Wilbur would show up to scold him for his words. “I owe you. There’s no way I can ever repay you, but I owe you,” Tommy brushes his fingers against the stone. “My life, my joy, my love— I owe it to you.”

Tommy rubbed at his eyes, they were wet now. He didn’t realize he had started crying.

“I... I’ll see you around Will,” Tommy swallowed. “I hope you like your blue,”

Tommy backed away from the stone, from the hydrangeas, and from Wilbur. Tubbo called for him as he trod back to the car. “You good?”

“Mm-hm,” Tommy hummed. “I feel better, I think.”

“I’m glad,” Tubbo told. “Also glad a zombie didn’t get you.”

Tommy barked out a laugh. “Shut *up* ,”

“Possible zombies don’t get shot gun,” Ranboo teased, unlocking his car.

“I’m not a zombie though!”

“That’s what a zombie would say,” Tubbo chimed, crawling into the back seat.

“*Memememe that’s what a zombie would say*,” Tommy mocked, opening the car door.

“Zombies can’t speak.”

“They can when they’re turning!”

“It depends,” Ranboo interjected.

“What’dy mean it depends?” Tubbo exclaimed. “How could it—”

Tommy decided there, to tune out Ranboo and Tubbo. Arguing about the logistics of zombies and ‘how it depended on the lore’ melted into the back of Tommy’s mind.

Tommy leaned on the car door, looking towards Wilbur’s stone, up the slight hill where it rested. The blue hydrangeas were just a spot from this distance, matching the color of the sky amongst a blank canvas. It was a prettier picture than dirty concrete and yellow lines and fluorescent lights.

Tommy can see why Wilbur enjoyed the color so much.

“Tom— Tommy!” Ranboo snapped him from the fictional painting in front of him.

“Hm?”

“You okay?”

Tommy’s mouth formed an ‘o’, taking his place in the passenger seat. “Yeah big guy, just departing thoughts,” Tommy explained.

“You ready to go?” He asked gently.

Tommy took one last glance of the speck of blue, and the stone, and the sky, and Wilbur. “Yeah, I’m ready.”

Tommy closed the door.

Chapter End Notes

my [twitter](#)

Thank you to [ItsAJayBird](#) for beta-ing this chapter :D

And that's a wrap, for now. You'll notice that this is part of a series, and the second part will be a one-shot about Wilbur, which is debated being turned into a three-shot. I've debated doing oneshots after that for Tommy, but that's up in the air right now, because I wanted to leave some up for interpretation.

Interpretation is important to me, as a writer and a reader. And that's why I won't confirm what exactly Wilbur was, or why he was there, or why he had to leave, I've seen different theories thrown around, and some of them are right! I just won't say which. A ghost, a guardian angel, a spirit that used Tommy to move on; Wasting Your Time is strictly Tommy's perspective, the reader learns information with Tommy. Tommy doesn't learn what Wilbur was, so the reader won't either.

While outlining, the reveal was going to happen earlier, with Tommy noticing that Wilbur was off, Wilbur was going to faintly glow bluer everytime they met, and Tommy

was going to be the one to tell Him that he was dead.

That was scrapped, although that would have been freaky, it wouldn't have been as impactful or emotionally devastating as the reveal in six

This chapter was and wasn't what I expected it to be; Wasting Your Time was always going to end with the scene of Tommy visiting Wilbur's grave with Tubbo and Ranboo. Looking at my outline, I realized the scene with Jack and the guitar pin was supposed to be in chapter eight, and I had left it out because of how derailed the chapter had become from the outline. Both the scenes with Sam and Jack were almost excluded from this chapter nine, I had wanted to open with the color blue monologue part two, but decided that both those scenes were too important to be mentioned and not shown.

I always planned for Techno to be dead, the twin grave next to Wilbur's was always supposed to be there.

I had some people that wanted this to end with Tommy killing himself, and god did Rachael want me to kill him off-- that was never my plan. In the early stages of drafting with Rachael she had suggested a bee duo centric sequel where they're haunted by Techno and Phil, and it end with them not paying attention to Tommy and Tommy going to off himself. That was vetoed, because that wasn't the story that I wanted to tell, you know? (I also ended up keeping Phil alive). imo that would have been dissatisfying, and a fuck you to Wilbur.

I would have written it differently if Tommy was going to die; have the set up be different. As MollyPollyKinz put it, it wouldn't have been framed as a bumpy road to recovery, but someone slipping while climbing a cliff, until they finally crashed.

Tommy didn't die, and he didn't see Wilbur again, and that's why I consider it a bittersweet ending. Tommy lives, and Wilbur doesn't. Tommy will never know the Wilbur that was alive, and Tommy has to accept that.

Crimeboys was doomed to fail, if Wilbur had lived no one would have stopped Tommy, and Tommy would have died.

I came up with Wasting Your Time while on the train on the way back from my cousins, I was listening to Jubilee Line for the joke and thought-- huh, this could make a story. I got home and brainstormed for a bit, and landed on crimeboys as the duo I wanted to do with. It took me a month of outlining and procrastinating for me to get the first chapter out.

I've been writing, for about seven years, and I've never finished a project to the end. Not a fic, not the novel I was working on-- I told Rachael this is going to be the one I finished. WYT has a place in my heart because of that.

Thank you; to Rachael, basically my second half, my angst on angst partner in crime. She helped me plot, and came up with the idea of Tommy buying pins. I've been writing with her for as long as I HAVE been writing and I don't think I could have done WYT without her.

Also a big thanks, to the Murder of Crows discord server and The Writers Block server-- I had not been actively writing for a year, when I got into the DSMP. It was being in spaces like those, with AMAZING and creative writers that had given me inspiration and motivation.

And a thank you to you guys :D some of the commenters I've been able to recognize since September, and it means so much to me that you have stuck with this story throughout the whole time. The fact that so many people have read what I've written will never not be mind-boggling. You clicked on my sad little story and you've gone through this with Tommy, you've cried with Tommy and I love you all, parasocially, or whatever, so much. Thank you

PREQUEL OUT

JUMPSCARE!!!



Hi guys its me [shutupanakin] a whole year later and I'm here to tell you that the first chapter of the [Wilbur prequel](#) is out. :) I'll delete this note in a day or two I'm just really excited to finally have it out.

End Notes

my [twitter](#)

my [discord server](#)

the [playlist](#) for this fic

Please do not comment about typos, or constructive criticism! Please respect this boundary!

Each chapter is tagged with a content warning-- but please note that Wasting Your Time will contain themes of;

- suicidal ideation
- suicidal thoughts and intents
- suicide overall,

This is an AU based off of their Dream SMP characters, a characterization. Tommy exhibits reckless behavior, so it should go without saying that You Should Not go to your local train station in the middle of the night.

Works inspired by this one

[It's Worth It According To Some Blonde Kid On The Tube](#) by [Ima_lesbian09](#)

[You lead me here...to safety..](#) by [Yellow_Fellow](#)

[Train Ride To Nowhere](#) by [orphan_account](#)

[London puts barriers on the tube line \(but Boston has none\)](#) by [Coco_and_coffee \(HotCocoandMarshmallows\)](#)

[angsty teens and wednesdays at the jubilee line](#) by [sunkiss3d](#)

[Alla Prima](#) by [qui_nn](#)

[You Never Waste My Time](#) by [Cyn_Writes](#)

[Running Up That Hill](#) by [simal](#)

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