

the fracture

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the fracture

by [kiwinatorwaffles](#)

Summary

As Xisuma leaves the room, he confirms that every ounce of hate he harbors towards his miserable brother is justified. How *dare* Xisuma get injured by something so small, while he's here getting his blood drawn and skin poked at every day. How *dare* Xisuma follow orders like a lapdog without a single question or show of defiance. How *dare* Xisuma act so nonchalant about *any* of this. Even with the professional clothing and job, he's *still* a prisoner in this atrocious facility.

One of these days, something will really happen to Xisuma, and he'll *completely* deserve it.

In which two brothers are pitted against each other too soon to be anything but doomed from the start. One of them learns to see the brightness through the dark, while the other spirals in jealousy and bitterness in forgetting about what they built together and ignoring what could be recovered because of those who hurt him.

(set in bee_4's stuffed bird au)

Notes

this is about a stuffed bird honestly changed me as a writer and i feel like i need to express that through a fic inspired by this work to really show what it means to me.

and credit to second in my tags for the first sentence of that summary up there! i read that and i was like oh. Oh. now i Have to do something about this dont i. ive been brainrotting over the brothers for too long not to. just as a disclaimer, i took a Lot of creative liberties with the interpretation of these two, xisuma in specific so uh, apologies in advance if it's far from what you've imagined.

also no way dude! first ever mcyt fic ive written that's intentionally dark in vibes and not comedic? no way! i'm a little bit rusty not gonna lie, but this was a great experience.

with that being said! obvious! huge! spoilers! for second's fic! please please *please* read that first if you don't want to be spoiled by my fic!

the chapter titles are from "goodnight chicago" by rainbow kitten surprise :D

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

- Inspired by [this is about a stuffed bird](#) by [Bee_4](#)

i killed a man there in spite

Chapter Summary

in which subject 350 shows love for his brother once, and it ruins his life.

Chapter Notes

CONTENT WARNINGS:

- mentions of needles (not described) and experimentation
- blood

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

In the beginning, it was simple— nobody would have expected what would come of the situation.

There's a soft glow from rows of fluorescent lights on the ceiling, paired with the hushed chittering of individuals in uniform lab coats all gathered around the glass partition. Inside the chamber, two young figures lie motionless on a metal table, wires attached to various parts of their bodies like the roots of a tree.

His eye opens for the first time.

The machine beside him begins beeping, signifying his coming to. To his left, he hears another set of beeping and when he slowly turns his head to see the source, he finds a figure also lying on the table next to him, blinking awake as well.

"Subjects 350 and 825 have woken up," one of the lab-coat wearing people announces, muffled by a protective mask. "Commence the intelligence check."

One of the scientists pushes the intercom button, lowering towards the speaker. "*Can you hear me?*"

"...Yes," he responds slowly, now sitting up from the hard, metal table underneath him. Now that the fog starts to clear from his mind, he looks around the room to see that there is hardly anything in here at all, other than the table and the machine measuring their heart rates. No windows, no furniture, no colors. Like a cell, of sorts.

"Where are we?" the one sitting next to him asks, turning up to face the window of scientists standing apart from them. "... *Who* are we?"

"*You are Subject 825, and the one next to you is Subject 350,*" the scientist at the intercom answers monotonously. "*Prototypes of our new project.*"

Project. He turns to face Subject 825 the same time as the other turns to him, both locking eyes. Upon actually looking at 825 up close, he notices that there is a beating heart in shades of sickly red and gray on his left side. For some reason, his mind tells him that humans are supposed to have

two eyes.

“You have something on your face,” he says, pointing to 825.

“...Do I?” 825 frowns, the eyebrow on his right side wrinkling in confusion. “I mean... I think you have something on yours as well.”

They both reach up and touch the left side of their own faces in unison, and he winces at the sting when his fingers make contact with the heart. He can tell 825 feels the same as well, based on the identical reaction when 825 touches his own face. Okay. Maybe they should *not* do that.

“Intelligence checks are successful; the subjects present signs of mentality,” the intercom voice cuts in, interrupting their brief moment together. *“Phase one of the experiment has been deemed successful. The subjects are ready for learning.”*

And for the first couple of weeks, everything stayed simple.

The two are bound to their room while they are given books to read. Most of the books provided to them are dictionaries or encyclopedias with an exception of a few novels, but they learn the alphabet, basic number systems, and even how to read and write. However, given that he finds himself struggling with the aforementioned lessons, 825 often helped him by acting as a teacher.

“How do you add stuff so fast?” he asks, squinting at the lines on the page. The numbers always swim around in his vision, and he’s never able to quickly pinpoint the equations like 825 does. “It always takes me so long...”

“Oh, I just imagine all the values like lines in my head!” 825 answers, cheerfully picking up his pencil and drawing out a few sticks. “Eight plus two would turn into eight lines plus two lines, then you can count up all the lines and get an answer of ten lines.”

825 always has ways of figuring things out, something that he finds a growing admiration for in the time they spend together.

“350, look at this,” 825 motions over, pointing at a page in the book on his lap.

He shuffles his way over to 825, reading out loud the dialogue tag that 825 points to. *“I need to go find my bro...ther,”* he recites slowly. “So? What about it?”

“When we were reading through the dictionary last week, it defined the word ‘brother’ as a male in relation to other sons and daughters of his parents,” 825 explains. “But the thing is, the character whom she calls her ‘brother’ is not related to her at all.”

“That’s weird. She must be getting things mixed up.”

“But there’s something else— the entire group of protagonists calls each other *family*, despite not having the same parents. I thought the dictionary said a family was a household unit consisting of two spouses and children...”

“Well, then maybe it means that their group is so close to each other in relations they are almost *like* a family,” he says while shrugging. “That dictionary is pretty old, after all.”

Blinking at him, 825’s face lights up in surprise at his unexpected analysis. “I... didn’t think of that.” 825 laughs, glancing back at the book. “A non-traditional family of people who are close to

each other..." 825 falls silent, rubbing the novel's pages between his fingers, until he finally speaks up again. "...Does this make *us* brothers?"

Brothers. *Brothers*. Are they close enough to be considered a family? Well, he and 850 are the only ones who really spend time with each other at all. The whitecoats passing through their rooms and providing their supplies hardly talk to them at all, only delivering orders or notifying them of when it's time to turn the lights off for bedtime. He doesn't feel a connection to any of the scientists, but he *does* feel a pull between himself and 850, so just *maybe*...

"I think so," he answers after a moment of thinking. "Yes... I think we're brothers."

The smile that spreads on 825's face— *his brother's* face— upon hearing the response shines brighter than any of the lights in the room. For once, the room doesn't feel so dull.

It's only after the two get acquainted with each other that change arrives.

After a week of being confined in their room, they wake up one morning to a scientist standing at their door, clipboard in hand.

"Come with me," the scientist orders, stepping out in a motion for the two to follow.

Although he's a little confused as to the reason why they are being taken, he can't help but to feel a bit excited to see something different for once. His brother, on the other hand, does not hide his enthusiasm at all, as he's practically vibrating in his spot.

"Oh goodness me, what could this be about?" 825 gasps, hands clasped over his chest. "We've never gone outside before!"

"You fool, how will you see outside if you don't move?" he rolls his eye playfully, grabbing his brother's hand and pulling 825 along. Despite being the supposed "smarter" one of the two, he finds that 825 can be awfully airheaded at times— not that it's a bad thing of course, but it's just quite silly to him.

And the two trot along after the scientist, walking down a maze of corridors while holding each other's hands so as to not get separated. After what seems like ages of navigating, they finally make it to a room with large metal doors, in which the scientist opens for them to enter. Inside, it's completely empty with the same blank walls, the only things populating the room being a singular, long object— a baseball bat, as he recognizes from the images in books they've read.

"Stand near the back there," the whitecoat orders, pointing to a side of the room. The two follow the orders, moving to the specified location.

Then, the doors shut, and an announcement over the intercoms arrives shortly after. "*Welcome, Subjects 825 and 350 to your first combat test trial. We will begin in thirty seconds. You may act however you see fit during this trial.*"

Combat? He glances over worriedly to his brother, who also tenses up upon hearing the voice. "What are they making us do?"

Suddenly, a metal patch in the roof opens up, revealing a metal instrument that drops down from the opening and to eye level from the two, about three meters across from them on the other side of the room. It's shaped a lot like an artillery weapon from the books they've read— with chambers and barrels all lined up against each other. It doesn't fire. *Yet*.

But thirty seconds pass by awfully fast.

Once the timer counts down, there's a dreadful *click* that sounds from the weapon, and within an instant, the first round of shots are fired. As if traveling at light speeds, white pellets spray out from the openings, flying towards the two with no area to escape. Instinctively, he puts his arm over his face, at least shielding some from the inevitable impact.

Several of the pellets hit his body, but to his surprise, they are not anything similar to the traditional bullets he had expected at first. The pellets are more like condensed balls of cloth, so they were rather soft— but they still *hurt* when flying at such speeds.

Next to him, he hears a cry from his brother.

When he turns over, 825 is kneeling on the floor, hands cupped over the heart on his eye. It looks like 825 didn't think to shield his face first, but seeing his brother in so much distress ignites a new feeling within his own chest.

As the pellets still fire rapidly towards them, he crouches low, grabs the baseball bat in front of him, and slowly crawls over to 825, finally making it in front of his brother to block off the shots.

“Stay behind me,” he orders sternly, determined to keep 825 safe. Whatever pain he felt from the pellets have now numbed against his resolve, anyway— there was a word for this... *protect*, was it? “Just follow my movements and don't leave my back.”

825 nods silently, sucking in a deep breath as he positions himself to start moving. The two begin their slow approach towards the attacker, and once they are close enough to the artillery, he raises the bat over his head and brings it down with all the force his arms can allow, sending a *CLANG* echoing across the room.

The gun sputters and a few pellets fall uselessly to the ground instead of shooting out, which indicates a success on his end. Gripping the bat harder and clenching his teeth, he winds up the bat once more and swings it into the weapon's side with a growl, this time completely causing the gun to dent and turn from its course. After a third whack, it crashes from its support from the roof, completely out of commission. Despite that, he does not stop slamming the broken metal pieces with a grip so tight his fingernails dig into his skin, yelling with every single strike delivered to the damaged weapon.

He only stops when the bat breaks in half, the splintered wood pieces flying out upon the final impact.

And as the bat fractures, so does his burning concentration, where he snaps back into realization of what he's done. He stares down at the dented metal pieces under his feet and at the busted bat in his hands, then to 825, who previously was hunched over in terror, but now stares back in awe.

“Woah...” his brother says, stepping up to him. “You took it down, just like that— that's amazing!”

But before he can say anything else, the intercom crackles, “*Trial complete,*” reminding them of the original purpose. “*Subject 350, please follow your escort out the room.*”

“Wait, is 825 not coming along—?” he says in a frantic realization, locking eyes with his brother, who is just as confused as he is.

“Subject 825 will be taken elsewhere,” the escort, a tall form wearing some sort of a protective mask, informs sternly. “Just come with me.”

The two brothers give each other one final glance before he reluctantly shuffles out after the escort, leaving 825 behind, watching with worry.

(What he remembers next is a blur. Maybe it was the room of heavy gases they led him into, or his protested shrieks when he realized what they were going to do, or maybe it was the smell of metal accompanied with blots of neon red. What he does remember, however, is what sticks with him from now on and forever: “*You will be the weapon, Subject 350,*” they told him. “*So you’ll need to be made suitable for the job.*”)

Apparently, they’ve now given a real name to his brother.

Xisuma, that’s what they call him. They’ve deemed the title Subject 825 as obsolete, renewing his identity with a fancy lab coat and some actual, nice clothes. Him, on the other hand? *Weapon. Prototype. An experiment.*

Every day is the same. He’s yanked from his room in the morning, injected with too many chemicals to name or count, then sent off to a training course where. If he’s lucky, they’ll teach him how to fire a rifle, focus his strength into one output, or even plain fighting theory. On unlucky days, however, he’d get thrown around like a ragdoll with seemingly no end to the torment. After being tossed to the point where every part of his body aches, the *stupid* scientists scribble a few notes, then send him right back to the modification lab.

And he’s always *alone*. Alone in the training chambers, alone in the break rooms, alone in their bedroom while *Xisuma* is out socializing and mixing chemicals. They always tell him he doesn’t need others. That he’s built to be independent and solve issues on his own. That he’s a supersoldier, and being the strongest is all he needs. At some point, he even comes to believe it himself.

The two spend much less time together now with him being carted off at ungodly times in the morning for his training and *Xisuma* being kept in the lab all day, having only night time to themselves. Even then, whenever *Xisuma* tries to start a conversation about something arbitrary, he finds himself neglecting to respond. At first, he tries telling himself that he’s just tired, but he quickly realizes that is only a small factor in the snowballing faults.

“They showed me pictures of the stars,” *Xisuma* says one night, before it’s time for lights out. “They’re so beautiful... it’s crazy to think their light travels so far all the way to earth.”

Of course, *Xisuma* was the one seeing outside while he’s trapped in that cell. *Of course.*

“You know, you’re probably seeing the light of a dead star right?” he scoffs, itching to end the conversation right there, hopefully being mean enough to turn *Xisuma* away. “It probably exploded centuries before.”

“Why are you always so pessimistic? Jeez!” *Xisuma* laughs instead of becoming discouraged. *Fool.* “It’s like you’re the evil clone, or something!”

“It’s the only thing I remember from that astronomy book we read together. Plus, explosions are fun.”

They do this every night. Xisuma will talk a bit about his day and poke him to talk about his, but he makes sure to cut off the talk as soon as he can. Xisuma does not stop trying, and in return, he does not stop being curt.

One day, during training, he sees a group of people pass by the window, with Xisuma among the bunch. Leading them. Smiling. *Laughing*. He decides it's finally time to give a piece of his mind.

"Why does he get to do this stuff while I'm stuck here being your lab rat?" he asks, crossing his arms defiantly and glaring up to the scientist monitoring his behavior in the observation room.

"Quiet, 350," the scientist orders, stoic eyes returning the stare. "It is not your place to speak. Now, hit this frame before we make you."

He looks over to the rubber frame stationed in front of him, most likely something for intaking how much power he can pack into a punch. He can make *easy* work of that if he tried and just get it over with, but something in his gut tells him to misbehave *just* a little.

Instead of hitting the frame, he begins to stretch his arms out with poses he's seen in the posters plastered on the gym walls.

"What are you doing? *Get started*." the scientist says, voice twinging with agitation. *Success*.

"I'm just doing these warm-up things that I always see you guys do," he returns with a smirk curling up his face. "What's so wrong with this?"

"You don't need that. You were built to always be ready."

"But it's just fun to—"

The supervisor cuts him off. "There's no need for these useless rituals. You are not human. You are not like the others. *Don't do things that waste time*."

Turning his head down so that the scientist can't see his expression, he grits his teeth and exhales indignantly. *Right*. How can he forget that? He's not *like* the humans, because he *isn't*. He can't even pretend to be like them, unlike Xisuma. What's the point?

Without another protest, he swiftly delivers a blow to the frame. His punch power scores nearly two times higher than yesterday, but he can't seem to feel anything but crushing defeat.

It's a weird day when he sees Xisuma collapse to the ground for seemingly no reason.

During a training course test, his supervisor had to leave for a brief moment to attend to a short matter, leaving the small window perfectly unobstructed. Because there isn't much to do when you're trapped like a hamster in a cage, he looks out to try and see what little view there is for him.

In another room just ahead of him, he sees Xisuma from the back talking to a suited-up figure. Now, what is his stupid brother saying today? He watches for a minute, and after seeing nothing of interest, he turns away.

Just seconds later, he hears a loud *CRASH* coming from the same direction and when he looks back to the scene, he sees Xisuma lying flat on the ground, though most of his face is obscured by the wall. Did he trip? It sounds completely plausible for Xisuma, even if he was just standing in place moments prior. His brother is an idiot, after all. Maybe sometime today, he can even make fun of

Xisuma for it.

To his fortune, this opportunity comes right up when he goes on break for noon.

As he sits on the drab concrete seat in the training room, he feels something cool touch against his shoulder, which turns out to be a bottle of water held in his brother's hands.

"Hey there!" Xisuma greets with that moronic, *cheerful* face, holding the water out (presumably for him to take). "How are you doing this morning?"

"What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be with all those important science people?" he shoots back roughly, keeping up the image of irritability. "Also, it's not the morning, you fool."

Xisuma blinks, slightly taken aback. "I just thought you'd maybe need some water."

He keeps going. "We're built to withstand thirst. Or maybe *I* am. It's not like you were ever short of a drink around here at any given time."

"Well..." He can see Xisuma's expression shift around, trying to find words for a response. "You were chosen for this role because you're stronger than me. That's what you're special for."

He scoffs, grabbing the water fiercely from Xisuma's hand. "Yeah. *Special*. Whatever."

"I'm just saying, you *are* stronger than me in many ways," Xisuma continues, unphased while taking a seat beside him. "They make me study your reports, you know? I've seen you fight... I can't imagine doing the same if I were in that situation."

"That's a stupid thing to say," he comments mockingly. "Are you just going to lie down and take it? What would you do if you were attacked?"

Pausing for a second, Xisuma lowers his voice. "You know, actually... I would just like to *run* the most out of anything. But honestly speaking— I would probably stay in place."

"What? You'd choose staying and taking the hit over a chance of escaping?" he sneers, imagining Xisuma running with flailing arms. "Gosh, I didn't know you were cowardly *and* pathetic."

"Well, maybe the consequences of running are worse than staying in place," Xisuma responds with a light laugh, deflecting the tense mood. "You'll never know."

"How can you even laugh in this situation? You *disgust* me."

"Sometimes, the only thing left when darkness is all around is to create a little light."

"There you go with your philosophical nonsense again. Leave me out of this."

Xisuma proceeds to go on more stupid things about happiness and what true joy is, in which he can only watch his brother's pitiful face. Something about how there's always a hint of a smile no matter the situation, something about how Xisuma's eyes are always curved up and friendly despite living in this hellhole, something about how there's always a hint of tiredness in the way Xisuma speaks despite the efforts to mask it— it's *all* repulsive to him. And the veins on Xisuma's face are more prominent today, which makes him uglier than ever.

"*Xisuma!*" a voice calls from the back, thankfully ending this extensive conversation. (There's a twinge of anger in his chest when he hears the name being called. Xisuma got a name. He didn't.)

He finds Xisuma tensing up upon hearing the shout too, briskly standing up from the seat. "I'm

coming right over!” When Xisuma turns around to exit, he notices a bandage stained with neon red on the back of his brother’s neck.

“What's that for?”

“Oh I... fell.” There’s a layer of nervousness and uncertainty in Xisuma’s voice when he provides the explanation, but he can’t find himself caring enough to unpack it. “I was being quite the derp, hah! But it’ll heal in no time; don’t worry.”

“I thought so... *idiot.*”

As Xisuma leaves the room, he confirms that every ounce of hate he harbors towards his miserable brother is justified. How *dare* Xisuma get injured by something so small, while he’s here getting his blood drawn and skin poked at every day. How *dare* Xisuma follow orders like a lapdog without a single question or show of defiance. How *dare* Xisuma act so nonchalant about *any* of this. Even with the professional clothing and job, he’s *still* a prisoner in this atrocious facility.

One of these days, something will really happen to Xisuma, and he’ll *completely* deserve it.

After the lights go off one night, he finally decides that it’s worth starting a conversation.

“You think we could ever get out of here someday?”

He can feel the uncomfortable space between him and Xisuma, as silence lies between the two for a moment before Xisuma makes his response. “Well... we would be stopped quickly, I’d expect.”

“I could just kill everyone. I could just leave after they’re all dead.”

“*Stop talking so loudly!* Have you forgotten about the cameras?” Xisuma hisses, motioning to the metal box positioned in the corner of their room. Keeping his voice low, he adds on, “Besides... even if you do succeed, where would you go after this? Who would be willing to take in Concorp lab experiments? What will you do if they send reinforcements after you?”

That’s a good point, but he’s not going to admit it. Instead, he stays silent, slowly turning Xisuma’s words around in his head.

“This plan... you’d have to really think if you want something to go anywhere.” Xisuma sighs. “*Please* don’t endanger yourself. Now, let’s sleep before they find it suspicious that we’re still up.”

A week later, he escapes the facility with the help of his psychologist. There was no plan. All of it was completely spontaneous, and he’s surprised he’s made it this far at all.

He doesn't have a plan for what comes after yet, but he does know he wants to burn Concorp to the ground. Go around and find whoever they have stationed around and kill them, then return to finish the job.

(His brother won’t be excluded from the group. He hesitates to admit that the determination to destroy Concorp stems from the resolve to eliminate the one who was always placed above him, but he’ll burn that bridge once he gets there.)

haha hey its not over. i just had to split the chapter because it got a little awkward so.
head on down to part 2 (paintown)

when he died, i took his place

Chapter Summary

in which xisuma does everything to protect his brother even when it's not reciprocated, and learns that maybe he can't change anything after all.

Chapter Notes

CONTENT/TRIGGER WARNINGS:

- brief mention of vomit
- depictions of abuse
- mentions of violence
- implied/referenced death

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

Being rewarded with a high position can be a powerful motivator, but it's quite easy to kill if all goes wrong.

On his first day outside his room, Xisuma is informed of his new job after his brother leaves the room with an escort.

“You will no longer use the title Subject 825,” they tell him as he's led into the lab and handed a set of work clothes. “Your name is now *Xisuma*.”

The lab coat is a bit big for his still small body, but Xisuma happily rolls up his sleeves and listens to the officials as they detail what will happen from here on out. They tell Xisuma that he'll now be working under the production unit for the new project and that he'll now be training with lab work as his official job. He'll get to play with *chemicals*. Those colorful liquids! How exciting!

For the first few days, working alongside the scientists and learning everything he needs to assist is quite fun. The very assurance that he's a valuable asset in the project brings him a burning passion towards helping with this noteworthy task. If he gets to participate in something larger than just himself and help his coworkers towards an important goal, that would bring him immense amounts of joy!

You're essential, they tell him all the time. *We need you*.

He's not sure what he's done right or what they see in him to deserve this, but he knows that he has to make them proud with his greatest effort. They gave him a job, and he's going to do it to the best of his ability.

With that being said, he only realizes the horrifying issue when he's tasked to organize test reports on his brother.

“These are the reports we have compiled on Subject 350 over the past few days,” an official informs Xisuma, handing him a USB port. “For your first assignment using the computer, we need you to summarize the data in the spreadsheets and group the effects together.”

Experiments. That word concerns Xisuma, especially when he’s hardly talked to his brother as of recently. Whenever he comes back to the room at night, his brother is always fast asleep, and he’s gone again in the morning.

Taking a deep breath, Xisuma sits down on a cushioned swivel chair, turning on the computer and plugging the USB into the port. Maybe it won’t be so bad. Maybe it’ll just be simple tests... like word games! Or a reflex test! Yes, there’s a possibility that whatever he was thinking was not true at all, so all that’s left to do is to find out, right?

Xisuma clicks on the spreadsheets, seeing the columns titled *Before injection* and *After injection*. Seeing this, it dawns on him that he has *no* idea what’s been happening to his brother at all, and frankly... he’s a little bit scared to find out. There’s a high possibility that maybe... Well...

The USB he was handed doesn’t include any recordings, but some sort of a morbid curiosity overtakes him. If he searches a little, maybe he can find a video file *somewhere*. And he does, easily. It’s not too hard of a search, actually; he just goes into the hard drive’s files to pull out the recordings made on the day of his brother’s test.

And boy, that is a *mistake*.

Instantly, Xisuma is greeted with audio of his brother screaming in protest as the camera focuses on the heart eye. A needle pushes into the scaly side of his face, sending a pulsing red flashing through the affected area. Staring in horror, Xisuma remembers how the pain was *excruciating* when the heart was hit by even a silly cloth pellet, so how much worse would it feel with a—

Xisuma’s stomach squeezes in as he feels something lodge in his throat, to which he hurriedly covers his mouth and takes repeated quick, shallow breaths. Oh, *gods*. Oh, he had expected deep down for something awful to take place, but there is nothing that could have prepared him for what’s in just this *one* video.

In the recording, his brother goes quiet, screams replaced with repeated sharp inhales (presumably to deal with the pain of the injection).

“*Test Subject 350’s strength,*” a voice orders from off camera, and his brother is removed from the view of the shot. The clip ends there.

Sitting in silence, Xisuma slowly reaches up to touch his own face’s scaly side, feeling the sensitive flakes brush against his skin. If *this* is what they’re doing to his brother... What are they planning to use this information for? For what are they going to such extremes?

Quietly, he closes out the video and deletes the window of that file, making sure to not keep any evidence of his intrusion visible. He still has a job to do, after all, though now he’s not sure how much he actually wants to do it. But upon deciding he doesn’t like the thought of facing a punishment this early on, he sucks in a deep breath and starts organizing the spreadsheets.

As it turns out, Concorp is constructing mutagen missiles. Missiles filled with the same substance that ultimately created him and his brother and what made them become this way.

His brother no longer talks to him like he used to before they were separated into different divisions, and that only adds to his growing concern. There’s enough happening to his brother to

completely change a person from before, so Xisuma thinks that it's a proper time to speak up.

“What's the purpose of the missiles?” Xisuma asks his supervisor one day before his work. “Why do we need to build them?”

“Don't question it,” is the only response he gets. “You are made for this job.”

Xisuma inhales, irritated. Of *course* it won't be this easy. There's no reason for anybody to tell him any details of a secret project they're working on, but that doesn't mean he shouldn't at least *try*, at least for his brother's sake.

“I just want the reason so I can know what I'm working for,” Xisuma explains, attempting to maybe add *some* rationality into his argument. “But I imagine the mutagen would be painful— I mean, based on Subject 350's—”

Suddenly, he feels a jarring shock spark from his abdomen and agonizing currents streaking through his entire body. His limbs turn into jelly, causing him to crash backwards onto the floor, even hitting the back of his neck against the sharp edge of a table in the process. Like knives stabbing into him, the sparks continue to course through his veins as he lies on the ground, paralyzed and feeling the rapid pulse of the heart on his face.

“I said to not ask any questions,” his supervisor repeats, holding an item— a *taser gun* in hand. “Treat this as a warning. Next time, the consequences will be worse.”

Being tased felt awful in every regard possible, but eventually, Xisuma stops fearing it.

The thought of being shocked again for not completing his duty plagues him for a good year, but he realizes that a taser can never match up to whatever his brother is going through on a daily basis. Besides, no matter what they do to him, it won't matter. As long as he can even slow down the completion of the project even by a minute, it will be enough for him, no matter what might happen to him.

Upon this epiphany, he slowly begins defying more and more— starting with completing his tasks slow enough to impede the rest of the production, and even going as far as to purposely break or contaminate important parts. He does all of this in secret, of course, as it would not be ideal to be caught breaking rules. After all, he needs to be trusted to continue sabotaging what they have.

However, a day comes where Xisuma can't find a way to refuse something subtly.

“We need you to handle this liquid and pour it into these chambers,” a scientist in a hazmat suit explains. “Work with it carefully.”

Xisuma looks at the jar of thick liquid, wrinkling his nose at the smell that omits from it. *Licorice*, he recognizes, from the candies that the vending machine dispenses. Gingerly, he puts on his gloves and picks up the jar, but makes sure to purposely spill some of it out as he pours into a small metal cylinder.

“Oh, silly me!” he says nonchalantly, putting on his best acting voice and goofy smile. “This jar was heavier than I thought!”

“We can give you a smaller portion to work with at once if needed. Just *be careful*.”

“What will happen if I don't?” Xisuma asks, feeling a twinge of sass rise up in his chest. He places the jar down, leaning back against his chair. “What if I just refuse?”

The hazmat-suit wearing scientist pulls out that all-too-familiar taser gun from their pocket, holding it up threateningly. “You know what will happen.”

“You won’t,” Xisuma says, brimming with confidence. *That’s right.* He’s too important to be discarded at this point, and he doesn’t care about getting hurt anymore. “You need me for this project with my immunity to chemicals; you wouldn’t hurt me right now. And even if you do, I’ll still keep refusing.”

The scientist lowers the gun. *That’s right, you fool.*

“Well, if you don’t care about yourself, that’s a shame,” they say in a hushed, menacing voice. “But what if we do something to your dear brother back there?”

Xisuma freezes, and the knowing smirk on his face promptly shifts into a horrific realization. *His brother.* Oh, no. Oh, no no no no *no—*

“We can always build a new weapon, after all. *Your brother* is replaceable, but I expect you wouldn’t want that to happen, right?”

He opens his mouth to return with something, *anything* at all, but no words fall from his lips.

Making a *hmp* noise, the scientist nods condescendingly. “Thought so. Now, *get back to work.*”

There’s really nothing he can do against that at this moment. *Oh gosh... I’m so sorry,* he apologizes in his mind, even though nobody can hear.

Xisuma shakily picks up the metal tube and slowly dumps the liquid in without another word.

It takes Xisuma quite a while to realize that his brother is gone.

Through all the years of his job, he kept obedience towards the higher ups, carefully working on his tasks so as to not endanger his brother. Each day, through the course of his entire life from then on, Xisuma breathes a sigh of relief every night when he sees his brother still safe and alive in their room.

However, nowadays with the project so close to completion, he has had less chances to see his brother at all. He often spends time overnight working, so the fact that he hasn’t crossed his brother in days is normal to him. Xisuma actually finds out about his brother's absence one day during lunch break.

“Have they found Subject 350 yet?” one of the scientists asks in the seat across from him. “It’s been a week since his escape, right?”

“Not yet, I’ve heard,” the other responds. “They’ve neglected to put a tracker on him, so it’s hard to really track where he’s gone. Who knows when he’ll turn up again.”

On the same day, Xisuma stops working.

They threaten the taser gun multiple times, but at this point, he can even tell they know it’s not going to work. Xisuma simply sits before a row of chemicals, legs crossed over each other in defiance and staring down each and every one of the scientists before him.

“You can’t make me anymore. Your only control over me was him, but he’s safe now. What are you going to do about that? Hit me? *Kill me?*”

“Do you really care so little for your own wellbeing?” one of the asks harshly, gripping the stun gun.

Xisuma laughs, and it’s filled with a genuine triumph. “What does it look like? You can’t do anything to either of us that matters anymore. Sorry everyone, but my involvement with this project ends today.”

There is no way they will ever find his brother. It’s been a week and they’re still searching, so he’s probably too far off to be tracked. And regardless of what they do, Xisuma knows they’ll probably end up disposing of him if he refuses to work. But like he says, it *doesn’t matter*. His brother is safe, and his real job is over.

It's been two weeks since his brother has escaped the facility and a week after the apocalypse happened.

Xisuma sits under the camera room’s desk, clutching his broken arm with a gun in his lap. The gun is out of bullets, having been long used up.

He’s waiting for his brother to return.

The dull pain on his swollen arm has been continuously bothering him for a while, but it’s pretty easy to distract from the hurting whenever he hears pounding on the walls or unwillingly remembers the neon-stained bodies he’s moved to the corner of the room in an attempt to remove them from his sight.

As if the universe read his mind, a loud banging noise sounds from the barricaded door and continues for a good few seconds before it quiets down. After the attack, he can see splits in the wooden stakes keeping the door closed. They won’t hold out for long.

When the banging arrives again after half an hour, Xisuma knows he can’t stay here anymore. There’s no knowing if the next attack will bring him to his timely end, so it’s best to start thinking *now*.

...Maybe he should try and go outside. Try to escape. There’s still a possibility that he can get out, if he’s careful enough. Maybe... he can find his brother on his own.

His brother had always been the stronger one, so there’s no doubt that he has survived. From the start, he was the one to stand up, even if Xisuma can tell that his brother developed an obvious hatred for him after that. Still, he continued to stay strong even while living under abusive conditions, and Xisuma has unending respect for that. If anyone were to succeed in the apocalypse, it would be him.

Crawling out from under the desk, Xisuma drags himself up, wincing at the sharp jab in his leg. He hears footsteps stomping around the room again, which probably isn’t a good sign. It’s *definitely* not a good sign.

Though his mind itches to get out of here as soon as possible, Xisuma’s heart(s) holds him back for one last task he has to complete before he leaves. There’s no knowing how his brother will react if they do meet, so he should prepare for that. Sitting on the shredded swivel chair quietly, Xisuma pulls out a dirty piece of paper from the pile of scraps on the desk and begins writing a letter.

The writing is admittedly, quite awful. He’s never written anything outside of lab reports, plus the aspect of an invisible timer claws at his ability to create anything even remotely elegant. However, he still tries his best to properly apologize in the letter. *For what, though?* There’s a lot to say sorry

about, none of which will change anything now. But he writes them anyway.

He wants to tell his brother he's sorry for being such a coward in that first trial. Maybe that would have changed things. He writes that he's sorry for keeping the knowledge of the video clips to himself, that he's sorry for not standing up directly to authority, that he's sorry for not asking about the important things in their night convos, that he's sorry for always talking about himself, and that he's sorry that he still let this apocalypse happen despite everything he did to stop it.

Xisuma signs off his name with one final sorry that he was not a good enough brother, and slips the note into his coat pocket.

There's no guarantee that his brother will ever read this note. The chances of his brother even returning for him at all at this point are near zero, but he still finds a haunting comfort in having a letter confessing all his regrets tucked safely in his lab coat pocket rather than having nothing at all. His brother had always said he was a soft idiot, and maybe this is more proof of it than anything else.

Maybe this is just an assurance for himself. Something to make himself feel better for everything that he did and didn't do, so he can at least imagine he's done what he can to apologize. Acceptance first comes to the self, after all.

With the letter taken care of, Xisuma now turns to the only other exit in the room— the air system. He begins to crawl inside, but before leaving, he looks back at the somehow still-working screen of camera feeds.

Xisuma pauses, then goes back for a second and turns all the cameras away from the halls before heading back. The eyes that have been on him all his life can finally be closed as he pulls off the craziest stunt he's ever planned.

As he crawls through the metal tunnel, he repeats to himself that he is going to make it out. At least, that's his plan— and not all plans end up successful (as clearly seen from Concorp's world-ending mess-up), but it's better to die trying than holed up like the coward that his brother always saw him for. Xisuma thinks to his brother's face every time he insulted him, which so often was a nasty scowl. But he still remembers from years and years prior, where there was a time that they got along. That they both laughed, that they talked not like rivals or enemies, but like actual *brothers*.

Dropping from the metal exit, Xisuma lands on the neon-stained floors, gun grasped in his good hand. From a distance, he hears heavy footsteps and low growling, provoking him to tighten the grip on his gun uselessly. But he thinks, that if he ever was approached with that *thing*, he will at least have a blunt object to whack it with... That's better than nothing, right?

Taking one final look at the halls behind him, Xisuma takes a deep breath and adjusts his lab coat collar. He uses up the last of his bandage roll to bind his broken arm at least a little longer, just for this final stretch. *Yes*. He can do this. His brother did it in a similar situation, so he can definitely at least try, right?

He decides he is going to see his brother again, one last time.

Then, with a resolve firmer than steel and a choice finally of his own, Xisuma breaks into a run.

(Just as he anticipated, the note would never be found. It still stays protected in his pocket, seemingly the only undamaged part of him, and will be protected forever as he is lowered into the

grave by the hands he had wished so dearly to hold again.)

Chapter End Notes

[artwork that sparked the idea for this fic!](#)
[art of this chapter!](#)

End Notes

thanks for reading! im gonna go lie down and get some Sleep now

a few easter eggs that i included:

- 825 is a reference to xisuma's first video, which was published on august 25th.
- 350 is a reference to evil x's first appearance, which is xisuma's hermitcraft episode 350

fun fact i listened to goodbye chicago for 4 hours on loop while taking notes for this fic haha. then i listened to it for 3 more while writing it. i am Okay /lie

it might also be obvious but this entire thing is just like. based entirely off my headcanons and snippets of worldbuilding we're given in the original fic. again, i am Okay /lie

anyway if you wanna yell at me i have a tumblr under the same @ so have fun

Works inspired by this [one](#) [promise i'm trying](#) by [autistic evil xisuma](#)

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