

## Momma Toriel Didn't Raise No Pacifist

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# **Momma Toriel Didn't Raise No Pacifist**

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## Summary

Frisk is bent on saving everyone, even if she has to commit genocide to do it.

After tragic events that destroyed her family sixteen years ago, Frisk has had one goal in her life: To free the Underground from its gaming prison walls. With her only brother trapped within its disgusting walls along with her adopted Momma Toriel's kingdom, she will go to any lengths to finally free it all.

But when she comes close, there's more than one who stands in her way. Will she be able to accomplish it with nothing but the joker Sans and his trombone?

## Notes

Frisk T. is the boy and Frisk E. is the girl if it's a little confusing at first. It starts in the past first, steadily moving up.

## **E and T**

### **1018 AD, Outside:**

“It’ll be alright,” Sans insisted to his little brother. They both looked nervously ahead of themselves. “We are monsters. No biggie. We’ll be fine.”

“But everyone’s gone. Everyone’s gone,” Papyrus insisted. “Gone.”

“King Asgore made it. He’ll make sure we all survive okay,” Sans said, trying to bring some kind of ease to his little brother. They were scooted more forward though. Quicker and quicker.

“Is this it, Brother?” Papyrus asked him. “Tell me if it’s it? Are we going to be dust?”

“No, no way,” Sans insisted. He picked up his little brother, noticing the humans were getting more demanding of the speed. Sans was only about 8, and his little brother was 4. And they were all they had of each other now. “We’ll be okay.”

He looked down at the hole uneasily. “We’ll be okay.”

### **1216, Outside:**

“I am the same age as the princess today,” Papyrus said to Sans. “We are both eight. Does she play with skeletons?”

Twelve-year-old Sans shrugged. “I don’t know. Probably best not to mess with royalty though.”

### **1498, Outside:**

“Don’t do this! Really, please?!” The human cried out as fourteen-year-old Sans handed it toward Undyne. “No, please! No!”

“Sorry,” Sans said softly. He meant it. He couldn’t do anything. The child didn’t know how strong it was, and they didn’t have a choice but to send it to King Asgore. If they didn’t, it could take out the rest of the Underground.

### **1598, Outside:**

Sixteen-year-old Sans didn’t want to do it as he saw another human going over the bridge. He just went through this not too long ago, but Papyrus was just ahead. He had to get it to Undyne before his little brother saw what happened.

### **1998, Outside:**

“Sans, be alert!” Papyrus shouted toward him.

Sans was minimally on alert, but he wished he didn't have to be alert at all. He just caught a human nearly three months ago, and he just spotted another one. *You'll be number six.* It wasn't fair. It wasn't right. But once it learned its power, it could wipe them all out. *I was born monster, forced to live down here. You were born human, forced to fall and have this happen. Nothing can be done.*

Just one more time after this. That would be it, just one more time. It was a little girl, pigtails, red hair too with glasses. They were all so young. At this rate, he wouldn't even be twenty-four before he could breathe the sweet smell of fresh air again.

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## **Outside, 2018 . . .**

“So? Is your mom really going to let you go?” Jason asked Frisk T as he made himself comfortable on his sister's bed. “I mean, I can't get my mom to let me go, but your mom has to. She just has to. I mean, your names are Frisk. Just like the character in the game. She's got to let you two go.”

Frisk T. didn't answer Jason back as he played his game. His sister didn't answer him either. Jason was a good friend, but half the time, they really didn't have time to converse with him. Instead, him and his sister usually had their backs facing away from the bed, each on their own computer.

Each of them had two computers in their rooms. Their mother thought that maybe that would help them at least move to spending more time in each other's room and bonding them. It didn't. It just made it easier to work with different accounts on each computer.

Currently, they were in his sister's room but the average person couldn't tell. Their rooms were mostly alike. They each had custom made shelves for their systems: Atari, Sega and it's CD extension, NES, Super NES, all their PS's, Xbox, Gamecube, Dreamcast, all their wiis and any other new systems that had come out. They even had a small compartment below them all for their handhelds. It was paid for by their father.

He also paid for the game display cases that carried their games. People who visited their rooms always mentioned that it looked like they stole display centers full of games from their local game store. They had so many, it was hard to tell the difference.

Not really. Only their best or current games from consoles made it into them. After they beat a game so bad that they 'demolished' it. Bombed their way to every secret, every piece of dialogue, fought every extra boss, then they gave it to their dad. He would approve it for the game display, if it was on console, or take it away forever.

Almost everything in the room was paid for by their father, Ben Nation. The only way to tell that they were even separate rooms was through subtle observation.

Frisk T. had black walls with white carpet, while his sister had blue walls with white carpet. There was a small, more individualized shelving for toys their mother tried to get them into. E's was full of things like dolls and techno toys. It offset her closet that held the fancy dresses that their mother had Frisk E. wear for events.

The fanciness could be seen in Frisk's bedding too. All white, frilly, with a bed skirt of blue. That Jason was currently lying down on with his shoes against the back of her blue base board.

It didn't make Jason his sister's favorite, but she tolerated it for him.

"Hello?" Jason called back out to them. "Earth to the Frisks?"

Frisk T. didn't want to talk about the current subject with Jason, but since they couldn't look at him back, the only way to show they were even listening was to talk back to him. "Mom doesn't care about games. There's no way she'd let E. go either. I mean, maybe me, but it depends I guess on the mood."

"He's right," his sister Frisk E. said, just on the other side of him. She treated it the same way, her eyes on her own computer, following the game. "Mom's going to want to do something else with me, Jason."

He looked at his sister's screen during some of the games downtime. He tapped his fingers beside his keyboard. "I can't believe you are really wasting time doing that today."

Frisk E. tapped her foot once and clenched her computer mouse. "I wanted to see if something different happened with So Sorry when the character was played at the exact date in Undertale." She flicked a glance toward him. "You know I can't do it on my game and dad won't get it on console since I already demolished it."

He opened his mouth to say something but stopped. She had a point. She could probably cheat by messing with the files, but their dad wouldn't approve of that. They weren't supposed to manipulate files, that was a handicap to him. Cheating, showed no finesse. He changed the subject. "How long can you survive in Oxygen Not Included?"

"Long enough," she muttered looking back toward her computer. "Longer than you, T."

The Frisks weren't fraternal twins, but each of them still had the same dark hair color and some similar features. Twins was the word their dad used so much, they didn't know whether their mother was telling the truth that they were born less than a year apart. Their dad wasn't the most honest man, and he was peculiar at times. He even wanted them to share the same first name.

Both named Frisk with the last name Nation, they grew used to calling each other by their middle initials. His sister called him T., and everyone else just called him Frisk or Frisk T. Frisk was originally *his* name, but their dad encouraged them both to share the name. Something about team building they would understand when they would get older.

His sister's real name was Frisco E. Nation. She hated the name though, it reminded her of a grease company, and she usually loved pleasing their parents. So she was Frisk almost all the time, except with their mother.

"E. is just kicking ass and taking names in Undertale today," Jason's voice said, bringing T. back to the real world again.

"Our mom is gonna kick you out if she hears you saying that, Jason," Frisk T. warned him, actually looking away from his game again. "No cussing."

"No cussing," Jason said. "Maybe eleven years old is young to cuss, but your dad has you guys playing games like Silent Hill too. Silent Hill 2, just what you said about it is scary enough without even playing it."

"Don't judge a game," both he and his sister said at once, "just demolish it."

Jason rolled over on the bed.

"Frisk T!" His mom called for him, and not with her sweet mothering voice. She must have found out about his grades. "Get down here! I want to talk to you."

"Shoot." T. saved his game and got up from the computer. "Be back." Hopefully those weren't his last words. It wasn't easy though. His mom wanted him to study, and use his intelligence to become successful, famous, or marry someone successful and famous. His dad wanted him to beat every single game out there that could be thrown at them because he used to be someone back in his past. Not lose it and make the same mistakes he did.

It was impossible to please them both.

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Jason moved closer on the bed toward E's computer. "So, E., are you gonna go?"

"I don't know," Frisk said as she continued her game. She would much rather concentrate on her game than talk to Jason, he was more of her brother's friend. Somehow, they had seemed to pair off at a recess one day. They found out each other played computer games, and even though they were two years apart, Jason still liked to hang out with them. He lived not too far off either, making his presence a regular occurrence.

Frisk was not into him as much as her brother. He bothered them while they were trying to master their games, never at any of the few times they could veg out and do something else. He honestly seemed more like a leech, hanging out with them because of their father's past accomplishments. He also learned tricks and tips to beating his own games, or watched them play and decided whether he wanted to try. She only put up with his presence because he could be labeled as friend for T. Their lives were so chaotic, living between pleasing their mom and dad, that friends were hard to come by.

“But come on. I mean, when it’s your turn to go up there and they ask ‘what’s your name?’, people are going to blow up when you say, ‘Frisk’. I want to go just for that alone.”

“If I do get lucky enough, I’m not saying that,” Frisk said. “Mom would be upset if I used a different name than the one I have in something official.”

“But everyone calls you Frisk,” Jason said. “Everyone, Frisk. Even your teachers call you by that nickname.”

It didn't mean she was going to dishonor her mother right there though. Frisco was her real name, but she didn't enjoy it. It was supposed to be trendy. Frisk's mother was all about trends. She was a social butterfly, and having to be the daughter of such an active social butterfly, Frisk was good at knowing how to act for people too. “It doesn't say that on my birth certificate.”

“Okay, fine.” Jason took his feet off the baseboard and brought them to her bedding. “I’d go just to hear you say your name was *Frisco* then.”

Frisk winced and her fingers curled. "I have to concentrate, Jason. My dad wants me to get good at this."

Frisk was close to her father. Her mother wasn't married to him, but she saw him at least twice a week. For as long as she could remember, she watched him speed-run classic titles. He was the most proud of her when she was demolishing a game. Taking games and knowing them inside and out, completing them. Knowing the dialogue boxes so well that she could just move through them without needing to bother to read them.

“So, are you going to go?” Jason asked one more time. “Please? You should.”

“I don’t know.” Would he get off her back? It wasn't up to her. "My mom likes to go out at night."

“Oh, well my parents could take you. I could ask,” Jason said. “Better yet? Tell her that this whole thing could really get you into the popular group at school. That might help.”

Frisk clicked out of her game and back into the folder games on her computer to start a new one. “I don’t want to be in the popular group.”

“Why not? If you could get a little more popular-”

“I don’t want to fall in with the popular crowd.” She hoped her voice sounded grinding. She didn't even have any real friends, why would she want fake ones that just hung out with a popular crowd?

“Yeah because that’s just something you’ve avoided doing all your life,” Jason said to her. “Really, Frisk. You *could* be popular if you wanted to be. You should be.”

Frisk waved her hand in a dismissive manner and paid attention to her computer again. *Although. To go out and play the beta simulator. The greatest games in 3d.*

The prize for winning. Imagine. She could play the Ocarina of Time, and really feel like she was there. She would be Link. Swinging his sword. The jagged 3d environment of the Nintendo 64 would be transformed into more of a reality. She'd get to feel more. The new system was supposed to represent the feel of the weather too. The tremor of quakes. Trembling in the snow. Feeling ice beneath her feet. Hearing the wind even.

Or maybe she would choose Super Mario Brothers. What would it be like to actually jump on enemies? Did Goombas feel squishy or rubbery? Were turtles all hard? What sensation would they use to represent a player was hit? "They have three titles," she said, not realizing at first she spoke out loud. That was just going to give Jason more umph to keep bothering her.

"If you win, you could play the beta simulator's Undertale," Jason said, almost rolling off the bed. "Frisk being Frisk. Too classic."

Frisk left her computer. When was her brother getting back already? She stepped over and looked out the window. A single kid rode a bike down the street. "It's charm was kind of because it was 2d."

"Yeah, but no more text boxes. You could actually talk to the characters," Jason said. "Aw, man. You'd find out what Papyrus sounds like. I bet it's kind of high pitched. Marv thinks he probably has like a british accent, all royal and crap. You could see how pretty the waterfalls really are too. It's the new addition to it."

Marv. The other friend he spoke about, but never bothered introducing them to. She scratched some dried on dirt off the glass window. It looked like one of her mother's maids left it behind. "Maybe."

"It was a big hit too, and your mom likes trendy." Jason wiggled his eyebrows. "Come on, man, go for it, Frisk. Tell her you could have the chance to play the coolest thing around if you win. Your mom could look up the beta simulator, she'd see it. Right?"

Frisk didn't know about that. "T is right, there's no way she'd say yes."

"But I just said I could ask my parents if they could take you. I mean, who else could go with you?" Jason got off of her bed. "Because you gotta go. You floor video games better than anyone else I know. And Undertale? Man, I bet you hold like a title around here for fastest beating at fighting Sans."

"Jason, turn it down a little?" T. said, walking back in the room. His feet were heavy when they hit the floor. He jostled his keyboard back into place a little rougher and re-positioned his chair.

"Oh, I mean you are excellent too, T.," Jason said, like a polite side note to her brother.

Frisk smirked, looking toward her brother. They were actually about even. They were both taught the same and challenged the same but Jason lingered around enough to know she was a slight edge better. It was fairly excellent.



“Mom got me for not studying harder,” Frisk T. said as he went back to his gaming. He hit his mouse button firmly. “Dangit. Stupid grade. Why even bother asking about the competition now?”

“Well then, ask *him*, T.,” Jason said to him as he went over and stood right beside him, overlooking his computer. “You and E., you should ask your dad about it.”

“He doesn’t want me competing yet,” Frisk T. said, a little distant. His gaze went to the one empty area in the room. “I asked him last year.” Frisk E.’s gaze went over there too.

It wasn’t occupied yet, but it was supposed to be. Their dad would start bringing in trophy cases, for all the winnings they would take on. When he finally allowed them to compete.

“Yet is yet. Maybe last year you were too young? Maybe it just didn’t work out schedule wise?” Jason suggested. “Just ask, man.”

“Asking dad is an E. thing,” T. said, glancing toward E. for a moment. “It is game related. Maybe he can talk to mom about it too?”

Maybe. Frisk never actually asked her dad for anything that wasn’t game related. For her birthdays and Christmas, he gave her games. Whenever they met, they never went out and watched concerts, ate at a restaurant, played outside or walked. They played games. So. Maybe. One day he had to let them compete, right?

“Hey, you could invite him too,” Jason said. “Frisks and Dad, Dad and Frisks. Who will reign supreme? That might work.”

*He could be right.* It could be an actual activity, outside of the house, that they could do together. Father, son, and daughter. An unbeatable team, with a winner take all between them if they were the best players at the competition. Frisk grabbed her cell and dialed her dad’s number. She wasn’t allowed to do anything on her phone except play games, and call her mother or father. *Just do it, Frisk.* He did like competition. Maybe this would work?

“Hello?”

“Hi, dad,” Frisk stroked the corner of her cell with her finger. “I was wondering, there is a big competition in a nearby city for gaming and-”

“I already have the entrance tickets,” her father said. “You’re going to shine, Frisk. I wouldn’t miss watching you for the world.”

Yes! He was ready this year. “We both are going to be great,” Frisk E. smiled at her brother.

“No, just you, Frisk. I’m watching my little girl.”

Why? “But Frisk T.?”

“Mom said no. Something about grades?” Her father said, “she’ll drop him off after the competition.”

Frisk E. made a downward thumb toward Frisk T. making him spin his chair around. “Well, then you and me? You are good at games too, dad. You taught me everything I know.”

“Yeah, but the prize will mean more to you. It will mean the world to you.”

Why did he have to do that? He sounded downright spooky at times. “Okay. I just have to ask mom first.”

“I’m your dad. I need one of you Frisks. I say you’re going.”

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Frisk looked out the window as they moved on the highway, passing cars on the way to her father’s. She heard her mother singing Taylor Swift’s latest song *Ready for It*. Her mom sang it because she didn’t want to risk never knowing the newest song from a singer she liked. When she was younger, she met a singer at one of her events she loved. Howie . . . something. She was embarrassed to learn he’d released another song with his group recently and didn’t know about it. Since then, she kept up with music, never knowing who she might meet.

Frisk heard her mother snap her fingers to the music. “Frisco.” She turned and saw her mother swaying her shoulders to the beat, her cute ponytail shaking back and forth slightly. “I made something for you. It’s a music compilation.”

Oh no. Frisk looked around carefully, like someone was giving her something she shouldn’t have. It was her own mother, but her father felt strongly about her interests. “Dad says the only music worth listening to can be found in the games,” she said. “You know dad won’t like it.”

“Your dad can take a screwdriver and do something with it that you’re too young to know about,” her mother replied. She took out her USB stick from her player and put in another one. “I know the only soundtracks you like to hear, but I think you’ll like this. I made it just for you two. It’s songs from games,” she said. “Best I could find.”

Oh. “Well, that’s different.”

“But not from the games. Based on the games,” her momma said as she hit play on their system. “You can share it with your brother. It’s got Mario and Zelda, and of course Undertale.”

Undertale? Was Jason right? Had it trended so much that people outside of gaming social media actually came to know it? “You know about Undertale, momma?”

Her mother rolled her eyes. “Honey, your dad’s talked about that game ever since you were born. I don’t know about it, but I know it means the world to your dad, which means it must mean something to you. Now, listen.”

Uh? It only came out a couple of years ago. Her mother wasn’t the best at games knowledge. Maybe she was confused?

“Now this song, I really like this song.” She turned the volume up. “It’s not Blank Space, nothing is to me, but it’s . . . nice? Don’t you think?”

“Undertale is well known for the songs inside of the game. No one can make a song as good.” Frisk refused to listen. She heard her mother’s sigh as she turned off the music.

“Frisco. Honey, you and your brother?” She seemed stuck in her words. “I am thinking maybe we should restrict your dad’s visits to once or twice a month instead of every weekend.”

What?! “But, momma!” She loved her father. “He hasn’t done anything wrong.”

“Look, I have talked this out so much. I would let you and Frisk just . . . I’d split custody freely, fifty-fifty. You are his children.” Her mother pushed on her left signal before turning. “He pushes his past on you, and he refuses to see reason.”

“But we like playing games,” Frisk tried to reason with her. She leaned against her side, trying to get closer to her momma. “I’m even doing something different tonight with him.”

“A competition.” Her mother leaned her head back slightly. “I know that in this day and age children need to dress and be who they are, and find their own ways. It’s healthy and it’s what experts recommend.” She turned again, this time forgetting her blinker. “But I swear your father guilts you and Frisk into doing and believing what he wants you to, under the guise of earning his love.”

Frisk crossed her arms. “He’s our dad. You always told him you never had to get married to have rights to us. This isn’t fair.”

“It’s not certain, Frisco. But? As you get older, he gets worse.” Her mother groaned. “Sometimes I think he sees you two more like his ‘second chance’ at his stardom than actually care about you.”

“Mom!” Frisk shouted involuntarily. “To take children away from their dad isn’t healthy either, and neither is saying something like that!” She knew the way her mother thought. “That thinking is regressive, aren’t you progressive?”

“ . . . I’m sorry,” she whispered. “I will talk it out with him more.” She moved the USB of game songs back away and placed her music back in. “But you two need to realize. There’s more to life than gaming, and what your father says is ‘right and wrong’.” She rubbed her mouth slightly, then started to sing back to her song again. It was how she dealt with her mixed feelings. Music.

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Her mother dropped her off at her father’s home. It was always a change. The house she lived in with her mother was always clean, with several maids and even additional robots cleaning on the ground. It was expansive, with a large backyard that their mother tried to get them to play out in. Frisk buckled up her light jacket.

Her father's place had three rooms, and a single upstairs. It was kept decently clean and healthy, with dishes being done and the floor swept, but that was about it. The outside also suffered with no grass, just a small dirt yard.

She walked up to the front door and looked inside. The couch they spent hours on was right in front of the TV, but she didn't hear it on. That was strange. Usually her dad already had the game and set on for her. It would be hours before the competition started, what else would they do? She opened the screen door and walked in. She took off her jacket. "I'm here." The weather was warm for the time of the year, but her father had always wanted her to wear a sweater with a line against the bottom and in the center. It was blue with purple stripes. She actually had several pair. So did her brother.

No matter what game they chose to play, her father always had on a red sweater with two green stripes, and had her wear hers. He treated them almost like uniforms for them. It was just one more odd thing about him that never made sense. "Dad?"

"Frisk." Her father looked like he was already ready to go. He had his sweater on, his pants, and just grabbed his keys from around the corner. "Let's get going."

Wait. They weren't even going to play a single game or even eat? "Mom thought I'd eat with you," Frisk said. "I haven't eaten yet."

"Oh. You can't compete on an empty stomach." Her father held up his finger toward her and headed toward the kitchen, straight to his cupboards. Frisk followed him there, but went over to the fridge. That or the freezer should have something quicker to eat. She opened it.

She stared inside of the fridge. Inside was at least fifty pounds of hamburger meat. Each was in 1-3 pounds of packaging. There was barely any room for anything else in the fridge. The room that was left was on the side of the door. Cheese. Pickles. Frisk proceeded to open the freezer and saw more meat along with buns. Lots of buns.

Her father closed the freezer and fridge on her abruptly. "I've got some noodles you can eat real quick. After that, we should get going."

"What's all the meat for?" Frisk asked, trying to open the fridge again. Her father wouldn't let her. "Why is it none of my business?"

"Storing it for an event," he said, like that should explain it all.

Her father never went to any events though. "What event? A huge party?"

"Just helping a friend with storage." His story just changed. "It doesn't matter." He put the noodles down. "Let's just get some fast food on the way there. We don't want to risk being late. I have to be back in time for your mom to drop off your brother too."

Funny. It was like he wanted her out of the house ASAP.

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As they came to the competition, her father somehow had arranged a great parking spot for them up front. The place was packed, but they had reservations. Frisk chalked it up to her father having some good friends somehow involved in the event. All his friends tended to be into games, just like him. That might be why he wanted to even leave so early.

Frisk stepped out of his little car while she heard her father start to speak.

“Listen. I don’t want you to tell them anything about yourself that’s real when you win the competition. Sometimes they make conversation, but don’t tell them anything real except your name,” he said to her.

“I can’t lie,” Frisk said. Her dad should know that.

“No, I don’t mean before the competition. When you go back to play your special 3d game prize. Don’t tell them much. Don’t be suspicious, but don’t make it easy for them to find you,” he said tucking in his shirt. “Oh, and remember what I said about the game before?”

They talked about it on the way there. When she shook Sans’ hand in the game, her father wanted her to stop it. Really. That was the beginning of the game still. She asked for reasons, but he didn’t give any. Maybe he had something serious to do after this and only wanted her to play for a little while? One segment, half an hour or less.

Except when she asked when she should do it for Ocarina of Time, he slammed his foot down. Undertale was *the* choice. Her only choice. Demanding it.

“Do you remember what I said before about the game?” He asked again.

“Yes,” Frisk muttered, narrowing her eyes at him. “Quit before I get to Sans.”

Her father smacked the hood of the car. “No, Frisk! Don’t take your goggles off when you get to Sans the Skeleton. Wait until you shake his hand. I’ll know if you did right, Frisk. Don’t mess up.”

It was the same thing, wasn’t it? “Of course, dad. Promise. I won’t play too long if I win.”

“If? When, Frisk. This is a small competition,” her father said strolling over to her. He held her affectionately on the side. Showing actual affection. This really was important to him. Her eyes looked up toward him, and all her own selfish cares didn’t matter. She just wanted him to keep looking at her like she was his daughter. Like he cared for her. “Don’t worry about your age, you were trained by one of the best speed-racing and all-around champion titler since I first . . .” He was rambling. “No one will be able to stay up with you.”

Frisk hoped there was someone that could. *I wish T. could have been here.*

“Frisk?”

Hearing her name, she turned around and saw a woman handing her a badge.

“Ben, she’s a beaut.” the person who gave her the badge said. They were addressing her father though. “The hair, brown and short. Natural hair color?”

“Yes, I was lucky there,” he chuckled. “My son is fit for the part too, but grades kept him from this one.”

The strange woman tugged on Frisk’s sweater. What was she doing?

“The sweater is perfect. She is perfect. This will go off perfectly.” The woman shook Frisk’s father’s hand. “Have you worked hard with her, just as hard as the other?”

“Every chance I got. The only thing I didn’t get for her was the name,” her father said. “However, Frisk doesn’t like the name her mother gave her, and everyone calls her Frisk anyhow. Win/win.”

“Great. Don’t worry about it, she’s already up as Frisk. Good luck, Ben.” The woman patted Frisk’s head like she was a little puppy before moving on.

Never in her life had Frisk been belittled so much. *Nothing but a show piece to her.*

“Nevermind her, Frisk,” her father said. “She’s just excited about the competition. I used to be really something myself when I was your age. People want to see if my kids have it too. Are you ready?”

“Sure,” Frisk said. “I’m sure it’s going to be a lot of fun. I wish T. could have competed with me though.”

“It’s more than fun, Frisk,” her father said to her roughly. “You have to win. You’ve been trained all your life for this. I mean, for competitions in video gaming. You need to have the best score, the best time, and the best completion rate. Second place is not acceptable.”

“I know,” Frisk said, not wanting to get on his bad side. “First place is what I should always strive for. I am determined enough to make it.” She heard someone laugh behind her. She turned around and saw another player.

“Look at the get-up. Is that supposed to help your chances?” he chided in her. “Looking like a game character? Go line up next to the Link impersonator. Frisk and Link. Classic.”

Was he commenting on her appearance? Frisk looked down at her sweater. “I always wear this,” Frisk said. “I’m not dressed as anyone.” It was true, the little boy/girl in the game of Undertale did wear a sweater in the same style and colors as her uniform, but that was coincidence.

“Sure, ‘Frisk’.” He made quotations in the air with his fingers. “You’re not cosplaying at all.”

Frisk looked at the name badge on her sweater. “That’s what everyone calls me.” Clearly these two weren’t going to be decent friends at the end of the competition.

“Sure, and you’ve always used the word ‘determination’,” he chuckled once more before walking off. “No one used to even know that word, who are you fooling?”

“I always have,” Frisk said after he started to leave. Determination . . . well, it was . . . “It’s my word.” That sounded selfish, it was just a word. Yet, as long as she could remember, she

used it with T. and nobody else did. Well, except her father. He was the one who taught them. In fact, it was his word. He even liked saying that her middle name was Determi so it would line up with their last name.

Frisk didn't like Frisco, but she was thankful her mom won the battle for her middle name. It was Eternity. Much prettier than what he had wanted.

“Nevermind that boy,” her father said. “He’s nothing compared to my little girl.”

Frisk looked up at him as an involuntary smile spread across her face again. Adoration. Pride. *I'll make you proud. I'll win this and I'll make you so proud of me.*

# Eternity

2018, Outside . . .

“Thomas J. Clinton.”

Frisk watched as someone was starting to check on everyone and their spot. They were checking names down as they passed. “Harold F. Richmeuth. Lillith T. Sport. Frisk. D . . . Nation?”

Frisk looked toward them back. Oh great, he was doing that? “Here.” The person stared at her. “Yes?”

“Frisk Determi Nation?” He looked at her up and down, saying her whole middle name. “I get it, but I need your real name.”

Great. Her father *probably* put her name down like that for bonus points or something. Frisk looked toward him. “Frisco Eternity Nation. Frisk Nation is usually what I’m called.”

“Your last name is Nation?”

“Yes.”

“And your middle name is Determi or Eternity?”

“My official middle name is Eternity, everyone calls me that. My dad likes Determi sometimes.” Frisk looked back at the video game machine. Frisk. Determi, the middle name her dad always wanted her to have. Her saying. Her first and last name. Her sweater. Her hair color. *It has to all be one big coincidence. The game was released two years ago. I’ve been me since I was born. There’s just no way. It has to be one gigantic coincidence.*

Undertale was fun to play. Having the game use her favorite words. The little character wearing her own clothes, and even having her name. It was kind of funny at first, but now it was becoming annoying. Everyone thought she was cosplaying or cheating. No one wanted to look her in the eye.

*It doesn’t matter what anyone thinks or how coincidental it is. I am still me and I have the determination to get this done.* Perhaps her father didn’t put it in the kindest of words, but none of these players looked like they’d be serious competition. Every time Frisk saw her father, it was time to play a game. Her father had her and her brother play a little of everything. From action games of horror to makeup games with dolls. She needed to know the games inside and out. From gentle to hardcore, he wanted her to experience every game. See every action. He wanted her to play them in every way possible, to determine all outcomes and endings, no matter how small or insignificant.



Even when she could barely talk, her father said he had her holding a controller. As a child, she still had to play the games that scared her. Some traumatized her with their intense graphics. Silent Hill as such a young child, not even in school yet, it gave her nightmares. So many things, yet he didn't want her to put anything away. She had to experience everything. The harder, the better. Even her brother? He had to play girly games, twirling games, princess games, and everything else. No matter how it hurt his ego. Didn't matter. Everything.

People were falling out of the competition left and right. Those with the lowest averages were ejected one by one. Frisk kept going. The competition she did have was still behind her all of the way. While she was finishing up her last game, she realized that she couldn't hear any more buttons or sounds around her. Only from her own video game machine.

She heard someone say her name, and as she heard clapping, she stopped. She won already. Frisk received a trophy and heard all kinds of things from the other players. Things from 'how were those scores even possible' to 'she must have cheated, that's not humanly possible'.

But it was possible. In fact, Frisk was a little disappointed that there just wasn't any serious competition. However, she did win a chance to play in a winner's circle. A place where the winners of the general competitions would get together and play again.

However, her father didn't seem to dwell on that as much. "Are you ready for the 3d game of your life, Frisk? Do you know how rare it is to get this opportunity?"

Rare? Every city that held the competition would get a winner who would win a chance to play the beta simulator game. In fact, she could have played the '3d game of her life' last year, but her father didn't allow it yet. Then, her and T. could have been playing together. "I could be up against real winners, dad," Frisk said to him. "That sounds cooler."

"Yes. Exciting I'm sure." He patted her shoulder. "They are going to take you back soon. Listen. Remember what I said."

"I remember," she answered as she was escorted toward the back.

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"So, your name is actually Frisk?" The person walking with her asked as they brought her to the center of a large room. "That's bizarre."

"Yeah, I guess," Frisk said. She didn't lend anymore to that conversation. "So, I get to play more people in three months?"

"Yes, we'll send you details," he said as three more people came over. "You can expect some heavy competition. This isn't any average 3d playing. Better get your skills up. Okay, Betty over there is going to go over risks with you before you start your game. Oh, and your dad is watching you through the window over there on your right." He gestured to it.

Risks? Frisk watched as a woman with the name badge Betty came toward her.

“Congratulations on winning,” she said briefly. “My name is Betty and I want to go over some cautionary notes with you.” The room started to become dimmer. “One day in the next ten years I’m sure some sort of version of this 3d exhibit gameplay will be going out, but *not* in this way. If you feel any stress, or if you forget that you are in fact playing a game, then I want you to hit the button in your right hand.” She gave Frisk a joystick with a large button in her right hand. “It’s there. If you want it in your left hand instead, that’s fine. Just remember that button.” She ticked off her fingers. “Do not just yell for help. That I’m sure would be embarrassing. Do not yank off the goggles. It will interfere on your mind and it could cause damage. If you need to leave the game, just hit the button in your hand. Do you understand?”

“Button in my hand.” Frisk looked toward the button. *Dad specifically said to take off the goggles though.* “This must be an intense setup.”

“Extremely intense. Several gamers forget that they are just playing the game,” she warned her. “Technology has come a great distance from the simple VR games. I don’t think people realize just how far it has come. So remember. Button in your hand. If for some reason you forget and you cry out for help because you forget it is a game, then someone will come and help you.”

“Okay,” the man that escorted Frisk down before strapped her into the middle of the room with wires on her forehead. “If we perceive anything wrong with the system, then we will also shut down the game. Now that you’ve been properly informed, don’t worry. You are perfectly safe. Your mind is safe. No one has been hurt or suffered any long term damage.” He chuckled. “In fact, that is why the competition can get really fierce. Once you’ve had a taste of the reality of a game world, it’s hard not to want more.”

“Yeah,” said a third person in the room that had been working alongside the walls. “Besides, it’s not gonna hurt you any more than your game system at home or whatever. Just a lot of caution ‘cause no one wants to get sued. She’s all set over here.” He left the room.

Frisk took a pair of goggles that the only man left gave her.

“Just remember. Don’t take those off. It probably won’t ‘cause any damage, but it’s best to be safe than sorry,” he warned her. “Oh, and you should hit the button on the side so you have night vision inside the game.”

The woman held out a piece of paper to Frisk. “Your father already signed this for you since you are a minor too.”

Frisk looked at the signature. Yes. That was her dad’s signature. *It’s probably like the guy on the side said. Just in case. Anyone can sue for almost anything, they are just covering themselves.* Her father must have had time to look at it. He wouldn’t just sign anything that was completely experimental. *Besides, several gamers have already played. This is fine.* She signed it and the lady took off.

Over precaution. That’s all it was, over precaution. Now. To find out just how far technology could go.

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## 2018, Inside . . .

Frisk looked around herself. *Whoah*. She had played Virtual Reality before, but this was definitely different. She could tell right away why players could forget they were playing a game. She stared above herself. Purple darkness so thick that she couldn't even see the top of the cave. In fact, the ruins of the stage were extremely dark.

Bleh. She raised her hand. It felt like something slimy. Oozy on the floor.

She hit the button on the side of her goggles. She could see a little better. However, it wasn't really the graphics that were impressing her. *This can't be it. They messed up the game request.*

That couldn't have been Undertale. The cute little purple ruins and walkway smelled of death and rotten eggs. *Did they make Resident Evil into a 3d game beta simulator?* Oh no, she did not want to play that in 3d. She tried to prop herself up on her hands. She was laying on her side? She rolled over on her side. She knew she was resting on top of flowers. She could feel them beneath her, crumpling *You can't feel in a game. They are adding some kind of sensation as I am laying down.* Although, when did she start lying down? She got up and started to head off.

The floor was cold, real cold, and squishy. That ooze. She could even feel it through her shoes. On her skin. It felt like it was dripping off the ceiling. *Resident Evil, someone shoved me in Resident Evil.* She looked back toward where she lied.

The only thing that didn't make sense about it being Resident Evil was the classic yellow flowers she just rolled off of. That was never in that game. Of all the things that she could see, they were the only objects that looked pure and clean, although rumpled from being laid on.

Frisk continued to walk and then watched as something came out of the ground.

A flower. Like everything else, it didn't look half as clean as the ones she had fallen on. It was . . . yellow maybe? With sickening vines that looked thorny. The expression was a dead giveaway, it matched everything in the game. It was her first encounter with Flowey the Flower.

She tried to remember his voice. The one thing everyone at school really wanted to know, was how everyone really sounded. Since there was no words, no one knew. Not in the whole game except one line of dialogue from Flowey further on. Would he sound that same way?

Light actually. Almost airy. It was reminiscent to how he spoke once before. It was the same line she had memorized over and over. Greeting her. Knowing she was new to the Underground. Yada yada.

It felt more than a little weird when the game brought out her soul in front of her. Well, a heart. It wasn't possible to bring out souls after all. Her little red player heart was out there like a stage, along with numbers and a board she knew quite well.

When Flowey tried to strike her, she of course didn't even flinch, knowing Toriel would come. Except, it made the whole ruins shake, and Frisk swore she felt her own heart hurting. She was too young for heartburn, but that's what she imagined it felt like when he hit her.

She was glad when she saw a familiar looking fireball soar at Flowey. It wasn't just a simple off screen shot though. He screamed in agony as his face contorted and he sunk into the ground like he was half made of the oozy substance that covered the disgusting ground.

She moved off of the icky ground and looked toward Toriel. She looked so *real*. She smelled so . . . the whole environment wasn't pleasant, but Toriel actually reeked like mildew on clothes. *Why put that smell in? Why enhance all these smells so bad?* Frisk thought Toriel would smell like lavender or something motherly if they wanted to use smells in the game. Why would they choose that? *She smells like wet dog.* Absolutely raunchy!

Frisk wanted to cover her nose. The game designers really wanted to show off their smells, but it was making it harder to concentrate on the actual game.

"Oh?" The character Toriel said to her. She stepped closer, and Frisk could see all of the matted fur. Toriel wasn't a lovely grey, she was dark grey with 'stuff' stuck all throughout her fur. Yet, she still looked like she was better off than the rest of the ruins. The purple on her outfit though, that was almost completely black. "You must be a human child, you are wearing a striped shirt."

Frisk looked at her shirt then slowly reclined backward as the tall goat bent forward to her. She was three times her size. Why did they make her so big?

Frisk touched her own chin. This was peculiar. Very peculiar. Neither Flowey nor Toriel were speaking her language, but she still understood them. *How in the . . .*

Frisk followed the usual course. The butterscotch pie presented to her. Oh, it smelled so good, finally something nice. She wished she could have eaten it for real. It almost felt like she could. But, she had a job to do.

Continuing on, she was soon in battle with Toriel. Except that when she hit her? It. Hurt. It felt like it hurt. Once Toriel accepted her and let her pass, Frisk still felt like she had sunburns on her body. As she continued down the eerie hallway, she reached a door.

A blast of snow hit her square in the face! *My imagination. Just a game.* She stepped out and felt the snow on her feet. *It feels like snow. This is a game. This isn't snow. My feet aren't getting wet. I-I'm not cold. I'm not freezing. I'm not f-freezing!* Could they turn down the reality a little bit? She really did feel like she was walking through snow and freezing her poor butt off.

She put her light away. The snow in the game seemed to radiate more than enough on its own. What was the temperature in there? It was worse than waiting for a bus and forgetting your jacket.

She saw the large stick in front of her. She passed it, knowing the character Sans would step on it, and then try to greet her. At least the air was smelling better than inside the ruins. She

heard the stick break but didn't bother looking back. She saw the predictable bridge ahead of her.

However, her mind was starting to run away. *That looks really old. That has a thousand splinters in it. How is that still working?* Then she remembered. *It's just a game, Frisk. Walk across it. It can't fall or hurt you. You can't hurt yourself in a game.* Yet, her mind was still screaming that it didn't want to walk across it.

But then, she felt her body stop. Like, stop. Nothing could move. *I can't breathe!* Her breath, it was gone. She couldn't yell. She couldn't scream. Instead, her mind was starting to soar again. Oh yeah. *Sans didn't hurt Frisk because he made a promise to Toriel in the game.* Would he still have any compassion? Would he try to strike her? *Okay, wait. Think. Why am I even worried? It's just a game.* Why? Why was the worry so deep?

Would she be able to convince her mind that she was okay? *I should eject. No, no. Dad wants me to touch Sans' hand, then take the goggles off.* She didn't want to disappoint him for the same reason she chose Undertale in the first place. If she messed this up, he would just have Frisk T. compete instead next time and tell her how she couldn't compare.

He was good at doing that, getting them to compete for his affection. Still, knowing the truth didn't change anything. *Just don't do anything wrong.* Did they do something to her brain? Is that what made the game so real?

"Human." A voice. *Deep.* Was that the character Sans? She always imagined it would be more friendly. Several youtubers had always given him a sound more like he was from Brooklyn or something. She also heard more of a lazy, relaxed deep cartoon like voice being used for him too.

That voice? It was not cartoony. At all and it didn't sound like he was going to give her the chance to do what she needed to.

And her brain was screaming to get out! This was the first scary part in the actual light hearted game, and so far she'd been through nothing but horror. Getting hit and feeling her heart hurt, over and over. So, she took the initiative, forced herself to turn around . . . except she couldn't move. *I forgot! I really can't move?* She struggled against it. She wasn't moving. She couldn't move her body, what were they doing?

It couldn't be legal. The people behind the game she was playing, they had to be doing something to her brain. Gave her something. This wasn't a game. It just couldn't be. She couldn't move her body. She couldn't even feel her body that well, it felt like it fell asleep!

"Turn around."

Finally, Frisk felt herself being turned around. When she looked toward the character, she didn't know what to do. Just like Toriel. There was nothing retro. There were no 'just a few pixels' creating Sans. He was a 3d odorific skeleton. The light from his eyes that she remembered from the game were really just lights in empty sockets. Small, tiny lights. More than that, his blue coat was stained red. *Ketchup or blood? That was never in the game!* His smell was even worse, almost gagging. And his white bones? What white?! He was grey and

spongy, he looked more like a mummy than a Skeleton. *No. Not real.* She needed to settle down. She needed to-

She felt his magic lift from her, and in that second, she saw his bony hand. Grey and slimy and- oh gaw, she would have nightmares on what they did to that poor game!- she did what she was supposed to. She grabbed the bony hand and took off her goggles.

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## **2018, Outside . . .**

The bony hand felt like oozy plastic. Weird. What was weirder was that her eyes were still adjusting after the goggles were off. She still saw the character Sans in front of her. It made sense, it was an intense game, and she exited how her father had wanted to, not as the game people wanted her to.

Sans didn't have any kind of light in his eyes this time. Frisk moved away from the goggles and the whole center of the room, letting go of the bony hand as she realized that sensation and visualization should have disappeared by now.

Her eyes still didn't adjust. He was still there. The rest of the game was gone, but he was still there.

"Frisk. Come on." Frisk heard her father's voice come from the door beside her. He was standing there in front of the funky smelling, mummified looking Sans. He looked straight at it, like he expected it to be there. "Don't do anything to my daughter. You *know* a single human soul could kill 400 of your monster souls in one whack if it wanted to."

What? Why? Why was he speaking to . . . "Dad?"

The character Sans turned his skull toward her dad, like he was looking at him. *It moved. It's still moving outside the game?* The light still wasn't in his eye sockets, but it seemed to 'stare' at her father, like it actually heard him.

"Having said that, I'm not an enemy." Her father approached him steadily closer. "There are no battle encounterings up here, so please relax. No one is here to fight you."

Whether he loosened up or not, Frisk couldn't tell. However, the character did speak. This time, she got a much better impression of his voice. It wasn't an upbeat kind of voice, it was baritone but still held that no nonsense tone to it. In fact, she couldn't quite place what it sounded like. It was new to her, but it did speak just a little slower than a regular person. "Humans aren't exactly friends of monsters."

"Of course not," her father said. "Humans massacred every single monster, and buried the rest of you from ever being found. Until now." Her father held out his hand to the game character. "I am Ben Nation, an ancient descendant of Gaster's elder Brother, Blaster Nation."

*I'm . . . I'm . . . insane? Am I going insane?* “Daaaaad?” Frisk looked around herself.

“No one else is coming, Frisk,” her father answered her, but still didn’t take her eyes off of Sans. “We took care of them, but we need to get out of here quickly.” Her father directed his speech toward Sans again. “We don’t have much time, and they’ll figure it out soon. It comes down to two options. You either come with Frisk and me, or you are about to get hammered by a hundred scared human souls who’ll kill yours before they even understand what they are doing.”

Frisk felt her dad grab her arm and he started to run with her. Behind them, she heard a strange light clanking on the floor as they started to flee.

What was going on?

What did her dad do?

And why the heck was he talking to the character Sans like he was real?

And *how* could he be real?!

*A dream. This is a dream. This is a complete dream. It must be the night before the whole thing. Yeah, that’s it. A dream.* She felt her father shove her into the back of the car. She felt the car start to move. There were voices, trying to speak but she couldn’t make it out . . .

# Life's A Game

## 2018, Outside . . .

Sans watched the human in the backseat faint. He had no idea what crap was going on. He was *just* on his routine job when he met a human. Before he even got a chance to look at it, it grabbed his hand and he was pulled into some weird place.

Really weird. It had only been fifteen years at most since they were thrown down the mountain. The humans were still using spears and swords, and now somehow they had indoor working lights and rugs and moderate living conditions. Just like the cars and magazines and other things found in the dump. More stuff that didn't make sense.

He didn't have time to be split minded and wonder though. Humans were killers, but it did know about Gaster's family line name. Meanwhile, that same human was fleeing fast. If more humans did come, he'd be dead. He might still be dead. It could be one grand hoax, but his chances were better with the one driving.

He looked to the kid that fainted in her seat again. She looked about as clueless as he was about what happened. Sans looked out of the clear windows toward the sky. Whatever was happening, some kind of magic pulled him back to the surface. That's about all he knew.

He didn't have time to judge the human. It was too concerned for its offspring, but it didn't push Sans into a good situation. As they continued in the car, he figured his chance of survival was decent. Not assured, but decent.

Sans reached in his pockets and pulled out an old car magazine. It looked like the cars had changed a lot since the magazines last dropped in the dump. How? Not to mention, they didn't look like they were anywhere near a mountain. The ground felt flat. A little hilly here and there, but nothing like the winding the vehicle should be doing, and the mountain was nowhere in sight.

Sans watched as the human Ben Nation stopped the car and got out. Another human came beside him from another car. It looked like he was joining a secondary crowd. He listened to them talk, to figure out what the hell was going on.

"You got it?"

"Him, and yes."

"I can't believe it. It took so long to get it done. I can't believe it happened in our lifetime! What an honor. Is it as sentient as we believe?"

"Quite. He seemed to understand my language, but it would have changed so much. Yes, I believe his skill level is quite high, but his notice-ability is low."

"It's not low."



“Yes, but he’s lazy enough monsters might figure he’s just inside his house, or hiding from his job.”

*That’s it.* “That’d fit me. I’ve done that before,” Sans said from the back seat. “You know one thing I didn’t do? Talk about someone in front of them like they weren’t even there.” Really. Add rude to the things he didn’t like about humans too.

“I know,” Ben said as he looked toward Sans. “I didn’t know when you would say anything.”

“He speaks perfectly. It is as they once said, ‘Monsters speak all’. They can feel the words.”

They sure could make a deal of such a simple thing. It was just something all monsters could do, no matter whether they ribbited or spoke dialogue. They understood each other. Telepathy probably. Who knew and who cared? Apparently these humans. Sans played with the lever on the door and kicked it open, stepping out. “Okay, so a great monster came out of his *carriage*. Now quit *horsing* around. What’s going on?”

“You’re freed. Um, temporarily,” a female human in the group said, almost bowing to him. “We are going to set out to do what our great ancestors have been trying to accomplish. Save the last of the monsters.”

Great ancestors? Sans tapped the ground with his feet. “Don’t think we’re anywhere near Mount Ebbott, so what kind of magic you dabbling in to do this?”

“It’s not our magic,” Ben said to him. “It is magic that was predicted would come about. It is magic that we are using, but it’s not ours. We don’t have that kind of power.”

“Ah. Ben, is it?” Sans questioned. “*Ben* a long time since I had to talk to humans. Don’t really care to, but here goes. You shouldn’t play with magic that isn’t yours. It will always give you a-”

“Bad time,” everyone there said.

What? “Since when did humans get powerful telepathy?” Sans complained.

“Oh, sorry,” the female human spoke to him again. “We all know the game by heart.”

“What game?” Sans asked. He watched as Ben pulled out his phone and gestured toward a red heart on the screen with the word Undertale. “Undertale? What the hell is that?”

“It’s you. It’s the tale, the journey of you,” Ben said. “Your last journey, along with all its choices and outcomes sealed up into a game.” He put his phone back away. “You were sealed up nearly a thousand years ago, but then humans came down. One human was . . . okay. She became your princess. Then, others came down and you stole their souls. Your king did.”

“History lessons are boring,” Sans said. “I know this stuff like you humans know how to piss monsters off. Very well,” he warned them. “So, can the history. I *know* the humans that fell.”

“What you didn’t know is that the barrier also affected your time. Time only moves when a human entered it, and only a small duration after they were gone.”

Sans wanted to say they were wrong, but it made sense. One day Gaster was there, and then he was gone. Certain monsters were there, and then gone. Everyone's bodies were getting wrecked. The horseback riders suddenly got automobiles and car magazines that were being dumped into the Underground. It was like mankind went psycho and developed their tech overnight. Plus, it was always strange how only a few months passed before the little humans came and perished between each other.

"However, when a sixth child fell, the threat was too great," Ben continued. "The humans that could perform magic pulled their last power together. They placed your spirits and life in a different dimension, but only accessible in a small little square area." Ben pinched his fingers tightly. "Not much bigger than a pin, an area that held the last of the monsters."

Seriously? "Kay. So. What am I doing here?"

"Time. It took time to get all the elements to come together," Ben said. "Not every human wanted you dead. Especially those that held some relation to monsters too. Although they are all gone, their task and duty were passed down, generation to generation. It was only a matter of time before the small little square area was found, along with a way to access it."

"So you took the little bitty square, and turned it into a video game?" Sans asked. "Really?"

"Yes. A video game is--"

"I *know* what a video game is," Sans said, cutting the female human off.

"It took decades before the technology to even access you was developed," the female human continued. "When it came, it wasn't strong enough to break through, but now it is. It is time to free everyone."

"Hm. I don't know, female human, could be kind of tough," Sans said. "The Underground isn't just gonna roll over and forget everything." Especially when they found out just how much time had passed that they were forced to stay in the mountain. "Want us to play nice, better let us get ourselves out."

"My name is not female human." The female human seemed offended as she pointed to the badge she was wearing. "It's Marissa."

"Hey, the dame, babe, bitch, wench, woman, lady, chick, broad took some offense?" Sans noted, using everything he now knew since 'female human' wasn't working. "Female humans used ta not have much rights. Good ta see some progress up here."

"A lot has changed," Ben told him. "A great many centuries have passed."

"Humans are creating access into a dimension we've been trapped in through game play," Sans said. "Sounds like you humans got a bit big for your britches, not just your brains."

"You aren't a very nice monster," a human man said that hadn't spoken up yet.

"Thanks for noticing brave little squirt," Sans said to him. "Could be because my whole kingdom is less than 400 strong and trapped inside a mountain. Another dimension. An

interactive game. Any of those words, they don't make this guy you're talking to real friendly."

"It's understandable," Ben said to Sans. "We don't expect anything in return. This is what we have been working towards. What our father's worked towards, and what our father's father worked towards. If we can free you and correct the wrongs that have happened, that's all we care about."

So, what? Saving the monsters was like a religious thing now with these humans? A ritual that needed to be performed? An honorable task they'd give their lives for? "I'm important. Spiffy."

"It's okay," Ben said. He held a small device toward Sans, making him move back some. The hell was that thing? "Don't worry. This just restored your memories of 'Frisk'. You see, you weren't just trapped into a different dimension. Mankind gave you a chance. It *saved* you. Over and over."

Sans found himself closing his eye lids, but not to sleep. Memories started to awaken within him.

"The game is only mimicked around the world," Ben said to him. "But it is *alive*, on my computer. The computer I have always had my Frisks play on. You did it. You saw it. Even though you were a game to them, you remember them now." He smiled toward Sans as the skeleton felt like falling over. "Frisk is what humans are now."

Sans held his balance as memories rushed to him.

"They were playing a game," Ben said. "The one thing you wished you could understand. You even mentioned that another time, you could have been friends when they destroyed your world. That is why. They *didn't* understand. The girl inside the car, and her brother. They were just playing a game, and I told them what to do."

Sans grabbed at his aching skull. He remembered that. "Little kid. Girl/boy." That's what he saw. Same thing. Same walk. Same dialogue. He'd been living the same day for years? The only difference was when the kid came. Things changed. Good. Bad. But, then it just went back to the same day again.

"You couldn't see them, only the figure of them," Ben said. "They solved your puzzles. Walked through your puzzles. Was nice about your brother's pasta. Didn't care about your brother. Good to the Underground. Destroyer of everything. Before you meet them again, I wanted you to remember them. The human you met, no matter what form it took to you, it was either my daughter or my son."

He remembered that little kid. There was never a smile. Never any eyes. It played countless times with him. He even remembered sensing something different about it. It somehow knew things that were coming ahead of time. Like when to shake his hand, or how to easily solve a puzzle. "Salvation . . . and damnation . . . was from your kids?" Sans asked.

He remembered. They reached the surface. Always felt funny when they reached it. But then, gone. Like nothing happened. “But it never came. We were never freed. In fact.” It killed everyone too. Viciously. Every single one. Including him. Multiple times.

“No. We couldn’t free you from the tiny dimension. We could break into it, but not free it. When the huge 3d version came out as a prize for contests, it held the kind of power we needed to pull things out of it. There was a chance. Your dimension was snuck into the machine. After Frisk found you, she ripped off her goggles while she held your hand,” Ben reminded him. “She will do that with all the powerful monsters.”

“Why?” Sans asked. “Why me first?”

“You are the easiest character to associate with. When a character comes out, they need to have enough trust to get out right away before more humans come.”

“ . . . Kid tried to buy my fried snow.”

“They had been trained in the best tactics before they even saw the title screen to Undertale. They did not access it until the whole world already knew the basic game,” Ben said. “When I wasn’t practicing with them, their mother no doubt had them out there, training to be what she wanted. Acting and playing, it makes Frisk. Both of them.”

Sans shoved his bony hands in his pockets, regarding the humans. He didn’t know any of them, but Frisk. He remembered it now. The kid that couldn’t smile, see, or talk. Couldn’t react. Couldn’t read bad. Couldn’t read good. Could only read how much LOVE it had.

Now he understood why. Why he couldn’t read it right. Why he couldn’t trust or not trust it. Felt uneasy around it. Because it wasn’t a kid, it was just an avatar, a sprite in his world being controlled.

Except, that as proud as ‘daddy’ sounded of them, Sans did pick up something. While Ben was giving Sans some good reasons to what they did, he was also bragging and congratulating himself and his group. He could have said what he needed to say much easier and faster.

Humans. “So. Your son and daughter. You know, Frisk?” Sans asked, knowing he was about to stir Ben up. “They’re the little shits that destroyed my world, but they don’t know Jack Shit about anything, do they?”

“They were raised to be the perfect players to rescue you,” Marissa said for Ben. “To know of their part in the grand plan before they were mature wasn’t a good idea. They could choke when we needed them most.”

Sans scratched his coat jacket, trying to get the ketchup out. “Killed me and my world. Saved me and my world. Thinking it was all a game. Eh. Considering it sounds like they’ve been a pawn in the game all their lives too, guess I can’t completely blame them.” Ben gave him an odd look. “I call it as I see it, Pops.” As he sensed it too.

Ben’s bravado diminished. “Frisk will understand.”

“Uh huh. I remember that little human had a lot of determination. Determination to do bad. To slay everything in sight. Determination to do good, to fight Asriel himself,” Sans said. “A lot. They could do a lot. Guess you’re gonna need it if you’re going to try and free everyone. So, you pick their mom too? Lot of determination to pass on down?”

“We are trying to help,” Ben said toward Sans. His looks were becoming unkind. “Why dwell on something so minor? Frisk is my son and daughter, and you don’t have to worry about them.”

“Great job so far, Pal,” Sans said as he winked at him, knowing he was making him madder. It was worth it. Besides, the other humans there wanted him alive, so nothing could happen if he poked the bear a little. “You conceived your kids solely to play a game character. Spot on, Father of the Year as far as I’m concerned. Hope their mom was at least hot.”

“She was,” the little squirty human said almost miserably.

“Many things concern you,” Ben finally spoke to Sans. “This doesn’t.”

Heh. Looks like the self-congratulations was over. “Ooh. Fine, Pops, what’s next?”

“We wait for the next competition that has Undertale as the game being played,” Ben said. “As soon as Frisk enters it, we will take over again. She will grab one of the strongest, and pull it out at the right time.”

“It doesn’t matter how small or accessible the game is at that time,” Marissa said. “As long as he or she attains the goal of ‘saving’ the highest powered monsters, the Underground will reverse itself back to where it should be. When it does, we’ll be ready at the edge of Mount Ebbott to take you somewhere new.”

“Well, I hate to burst your bubble, Pops,” Sans said to Ben again as he looked over at him. “But, uh, there’s something you’re missing. Getting all the powerful monsters Underground, getting far enough to reach them? To touch them all?”

“Yes?”

“Well. There’s a saying for what you want,” Sans said. “Wish in one hand, shit in another. See which one gets filled first.”

The squirty man laughed but hid it behind a cough.

“It will take time. Months. Years. I don’t know,” Ben said. “Frisk will get it done.”

“So, the most powerful monsters, huh?” Sans asked. “What if *nothing* gets Frisk to them? You’re a real champ, Ben. Let your kids commit genocide, thinking it was just a game. My world, was *just* a game. You. *You* did that.” Sans pointed to him. *Him*. He was the one who stepped over the line. The one in charge. The one who thought they could just play his world like it meant nothing. “If you knew then-”

“Protection,” Marissa said to Sans. “To make sure you knew just how powerful human souls were. We didn’t want anything unforeseen to happen, just in case monsters forgot the power

of humans.”

“Unforeseen?” Sans questioned. “Really? Let a couple clueless idiots commit genocide for a reminder?” Bull. That couldn’t be it. “Don’t you care about your own family, Ben?”

“You are one to talk,” Marissa came back at Sans. “You still let Frisk pass Judgment Hall if it killed your brother, as long as it didn’t kill everyone.”

“Marissa, don’t!” Ben scolded her. “Not here, not now.”

“You think ‘cause you turned *my* life into some frickin’ game, you can pass judgment on me?” Sans could tell that his light guiders probably faded out from her expression. Good. “Monkey see, monkey do? Here’s a clue, human. Monsters aren’t *monkeys*. Don’t try to wrap your tiny little human brain around us. It might blow.”

“Okay, okay.” Ben looked toward Marissa. “You and Gene go. Frisk and I will head home with him. I’ll stay in touch if anything happens before the next competition.”

Sans watched the others get in the other car and drive off. “Great. So what, I’m shacking up with you and the boy/girl demon angel sprite?”

“Frisk. Yes.” Ben opened the car door. “You’ll be safe in my home. I’ve already prepared it for your stay.”

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### **At Ben Nation's House . . .**

When Frisk came to, she found herself in the back of the car. Next to the game character Sans. She stayed quiet, not making a peep. Maybe she was going crazy? Was she still dreaming? When they arrived home, she didn’t get out of the car until her father retrieved her again.

“It’s okay, Frisk. I’ll explain soon,” her father said as he gestured inside. “Hurry up. If anyone asks, Sans is just a friend with a skeleton part in a play. Okay?”

Frisk awkwardly stumbled to the front door. Part in a play her butt. A Broadway professional hit play that could make Sans look real, not some kind of hokey high school or even college play. Hollywood style full-on mummy horror show.

Shoot, Sans wasn’t anything like a regular skeleton. Seeing him, she was glad she never met Papyrus. His bones weren’t like human bones, they were as thick as flesh. Not only that, but in the game he was supposed to be the sprite’s size, but he wasn’t. He was taller by several feet with the same heavy build though. He was like something out of somebody’s nightmare, complete with an ancient ragged coat and a smell worse than roadkill.

That wasn’t his fault. Just like Toriel, they did *actually* live in a sealed mountain. They physically had lived down inside a dark, decrepit old mountain. They weren’t going to be smelling or looking that great.

Frisk almost tripped, but felt her father grab her before she fell. She righted herself back up as he unlocked the door. Frisk went in, trying to figure out a situation that should be impossible to understand.

“He’s real, Hon’,” her father said. “The entire Undertale game is real, and you pulled out Sans from it tonight.”

“Yeah. Thanks for the brief vacay,” Sans said to her. “Been a little while. Ain’t it been. *Frisk.*”

Oh. He knew her name? Okay. Of course he knew her name. She only beat and killed him a thousand times. “Hi.”

“Hi. Pretty good statement for someone who fought me to death.” Sans looked toward Frisk’s father. “So, if you aren’t killing me, you got anything round here to eat?”

“Yes. I have plenty of meat,” Ben said. “For a monster’s appetite, a week’s worth is all I can fit in my fridge.”

Sans headed toward the kitchen. The wetness and decay of the Underground seemed to follow in his dark, wet footsteps. How those slippers even survived was a wonder. Sans checked the fridge but seemed offended. “I eat cooked meat not raw meat. That’s disgusting.” He closed the fridge again. “Even monsters that managed to eat human *still* cooked the meat. Be a little more **humane** to your guest.”

Frisk closed her eyes, wanting to faint again. Sans humor was far from jokey, it was satiric

“It’s easy to cook,” her father said to Sans. “You had stoves?”

“*Have* stoves,” Sans reminded him. He moved over the counters.

“It’s electric. Buttons on the front.”

Frisk watched Sans look at the button and the stove started to glow on and off. He grabbed a spatula nearby.

“There. Now, Frisk?” her father said. “Stay here and be good. I need to get on the phone with your mom. You and Frisk T. are staying the night tonight. In fact, your brother should be upstairs now.” He looked toward Sans a second, then back at her. “Yes, he remembers when you committed genocide in the game. He remembers everything. He won’t hurt you though because your soul is much more powerful. He knows it. I’ll be back.” As her father left the room, Frisk just . . . blinked.

Frisk twitched and her eyes darted toward the counter. *Is dad serious?* She stole a glance at Sans, then looked away again.

“You destroyed my world, Kid.” Sans said to her. “Now? You stuck in the same room with me while I make dinner. Life’s *funny*, isn’t it?”

*I don't have any power out here! What do I do?* Frisk looked toward the counter. There were knives, but what good would that do? Even if he wasn't just bone, she didn't want to hurt anyone. Especially him. He was a good character in the game, but she was expecting him to start throwing things at her soon carving her to bits.

He didn't though. "You crossed a line you weren't supposed to cross." He didn't approach.

*I'm sorry.* However it happened, however it came to be . . . it was Sans the Skeleton. She couldn't say 'your world was just a game.' She couldn't say 'my father told me to play that side to complete it'. *It was a game. I thought it was just a game. Everyone thought it was just a game. Undertale was just a game!*

"I'm a game character," Sans said to her. "My world was just a game, right? Come on, human. *Say something.*"

Did he read her mind? Did he know that was what she was thinking right then? Frisk opened her mouth but couldn't speak.

"Ye. In that case, a burger'd be good," Sans said. "Infrared isn't really my thing though." He waved his hand over it and turned the red into blue.

Frisk moved toward the fridge. At least he didn't want to fight her.

"You got anything else to add to this?" Sans asked. "You know, some flavor to make up for everything you did to the Underground?"

Frisk moved toward the bottom cupboard and grabbed some sloppy joe mix. Easiest thing in the world and she just couldn't think of anything else right then. *Hand it over. Just reach out your hand and hand it over to his . . . grey, sludgy hands. Too real, too real!*

"Don't faint," she heard from behind her. "You're not gonna fight me. I'm not gonna fight you. So don't faint."

"But you're a . . . you're . . ." Frisk made funny sounds with her mouth, but couldn't finish.

"Monster?" Sans said.

"Not. Real."

"Ah. *You're* gonna have to talk to your own daddy on that one. Pops knows what's what. Knows more than me." Sans kept his hand held out for the package she had.

Frisk moved closer but sort of tossed the sloppy joe seasoning into his hands.

"Relax." Sans took the seasoning and put it in the meat. When it was cooked, he looked back to her. "Plate."

Plate. Plate. Too tall. Frisk pointed to the cupboards.

"Ah." Sans used his magic to open the cupboard and floated a plate toward himself. "Buns?"



She pointed to the top of the fridge.

He grabbed the buns the same way, scooped up the food and sat down at the table. "Sure, you decimated my world, killed my brother, killed just about everyone including me, but you also did other things. Which, you don't really get credit for *either*." He took a bite out of his sandwich.

Frisk watched as the teeth that never opened before, opened for the sandwich.

Bite. Sans could really bite.

"Alright, Frisk," her father said as he came in. "You're staying here tonight with your brother. Come with me so I can tell you what's-."

Gladly! Frisk reached out for her father's hand, but she felt a familiar freezing she felt before.

When Sans froze her in the game.

"Your dad knew my world was real, and he *still* had you play the game like it was nothing, Kid. Nice guy he is?" Sans said to her. "I don't know you, Human. I don't know him. I've got no idea about nothing, but before you go, you better know he doesn't have your best interests at heart."

Then, she felt herself able to move again.

Her father continued to hold his hand out to her, finally grabbing hers. "-going on. Let's go."

Didn't he . . . *Sans stopped time*. To say that?

## Cruel Lines

Sans looked at his sandwich. *Human sandwich*. He never had human food before. What would it do to him? The aroma of it was holding his attention. Even as a skeleton, he could sense the aroma and deliciousness of that sandwich. *Why not? Human sandwich it is*.

He took a bite. *Okay. I'm on the surface. Pulled out of a game, somehow. Frisk is gonna go back, grab the most powerful monsters, and we're all gonna be saved. Heh. Likely story*. How did that ridiculous guy really think a couple of kids could accomplish that?

There was just no way it could happen. Sure, the little sprite he remembered, it liked to accomplish the impossible, but that was just a little sprite. A little character. Probably made from a tiny bit of magic they could use to control things from the outside. The Frisk he saw behind the fake sprite didn't look like she was going to be able to accomplish the impossible.

And it was impossible. It wasn't just a power thing, it was just *impossible*.

Then, that guy. Ben. He was ready to leave his kids behind in a land of monsters, for as long as it took. For honor?

*Shouldn't care. Don't care. Won't care*. Except for that promise he made Toriel. *I can't just let it get killed. Nah, wait. It betrayed me. Well, the sprite. Sort of. This is messed up*.

Yeah. It crossed the line. It went too far. He just couldn't . . .

If they had picked any other monster besides him, Ben wouldn't have been successful. The monster would have picked a fight and the human soul would have killed it. Anyone else . . . Eh. *Good food. Human food or not, it's good*. Different. New. Couldn't beat that.

He watched as Ben's murderous/blessing of a kid walked past the kitchen in a hurry to the front door with Ben tagging along behind her. *Looks like Pops told her the new role*. Sans got up from the table and looked out the kitchen door, peeking around the corner to watch the strange kid and it's dad.

"I can't do that," Frisk said to her father as he rounded her and stood in front of the front door, preventing her from leaving. That kid's eyes were nothing like the sprite. While it had always kept its eyes closed, hers couldn't have been more open. The constant relaxed state was gone too, with this girl's legs jellified. "You want me to not just *play* the game, but get *inside* the game with T.? And play it for real?"

Her father kept his body against the door but addressed her question. "It's your duty to save the monsters. The character, Frisk. Your last name. The way you dress. The way the character dresses." He gestured toward the sweater she'd been wearing. "Even the way you speak. Everything I ever taught you was for this moment. It's your destiny to do this with your brother, Frisk."

“I don’t know how to survive to get them.” Frisk moved from him over to the back of the dilapidated looking couch. “I’m sorry. Okay, I’m sorry. You’ve kept me in the dark all these years, dad. I can’t -I just- it’s dangerous.”

“You have a human soul. You are more dangerous to them then they are to you,” Ben said to her. “Remember that from the game? What they are like in the game. The experiences they had before the character Frisk showed up? That was them. That was their knowledge. That is their world.”

“But.” Frisk paused. Sans looked back toward his burger on the table, but ultimately went back to watching the humans work it out. “But you want me to basically go in there and try to defeat monsters to pull them out!”

“You owe it to the monsters,” Ben said.

Ooohh . . . *I knew it.* That’s why Ben Nation made them do it. So when the time came, he could use the guilt against them.

“You knew though and you . . . but I didn’t . . . but it wasn’t . . .” The girl stammered. It didn’t like he was going to miss much so he moved to the fridge, getting some relish. He closed the fridge again, adding the relish to his hamburger.

“It was necessary,” Ben’s voice came from the other room again. Sans took another bite but brought the sandwich over this time to the side of the kitchen door to eat while he peaked out. “It’s necessary to take care of that too. The guilt will eat you alive, Frisk. Killing Undyne. Trying to kill Monster Kid. Killing Toriel. Papyrus. Everyone.”

“It was a game, I thought it was a game.” The mumble could barely be made out from the girl. Meanwhile, the relish wasn’t half bad.

“They are real, and only you can get them out,” Ben said to her. “*You* need to go down there with T. This is what you’ve been training for.”

“This?” Frisk braced herself against the couch, her hands holding to it tightly. “I was a gamer. I trained to win games. Complete *games*.”

“The ultimate game. This is your destiny, Frisk, to beat the ultimate game,” Ben said to her. “How many times did you play that game Undertale? Master it? Learn every single secret. Talk to every single character. Visit the man who spoke in hands? Who mastered all the classic games out there, from Bubble Boy to Mario? Who was the first to beat those first coming out games before anyone’s even heard about them? Got early access before anyone else ever could. No one is more qualified than my Frisks.”

Sans brought himself completely back into the kitchen, but he kept eavesdropping as he went to dress up his second burger.

“I can’t do this easily,” he heard Frisk say to her father.

“Yes. It will take several rounds. A monster isn’t just going to let you grab them, but once you are fully ingrained, you will keep starting over from the beginning. You’ll remember, but otherwise, you’ll get as many tries as you need to. That’s the power of your human soul. It will never quit until you are ready to. With your determination, you’ll never quit.”

“Asriel?” Frisk asked. “Can I get him as Flowey?”

“No. All the way to the end for him.”

*Douche of the year award goes to . . . Sans grabbed his second hamburger now and moved over toward the door again. Ben Nation. Take a bend, Ben. Really bend over.*

“And if I die? I get hurt?” Frisk folded her hands one into the other, pressing them down on the back of the couch. The edge of the couch was already started to unravel and she wasn't helping it. “I was hit, by Toriel. Even afterwards, it hurt. I just got smacked a little too, but it . . .”

“Yes, you can be hurt. It is real for you. The queen may have even been holding back on you, so it wouldn’t hurt as much. And, I’m sorry, yes, you’ll feel pain, but that’s why you were chosen to be *my* daughter. I was one of the world’s best gamers, and I know that my kids won’t let a little bit of pain stop them.”

“Death might be kind of hard to avoid.”

“When you die, you start back over at the beginning.”

“Not a save point?”

“Are there save points in our world, Frisk? Don’t be stupid. You’ll start back at the Ruins.”

“Over and over, until all the powerful ones are out?”

“Yes.”

“This . . . this isn’t . . .”

*It betrayed me. It came closer. I was letting it pass, but it pushed the envelope.* But, as Sans looked at his empty platter on the table. *How much like a game was it?* He finished the rest of his burger and snuck out of the kitchen while Ben was coaxing his daughter to enter the Underground again.

Ah. He found Frisk 2. Around the same age, same kind of hair, and even the same frickin' sweater. Sans watched from the doorway. He was playing some pixel game. Room was just the same as the girl almost. Devoid of any kind of personality.

“There was nothing any different in Undertale today,” he said, not noticing Sans’ presence yet. That was easy. “So Sorry or not.”

Undertale? *That . . . is what they saw?* That was in no way close to his world. That was cute. Fun. Pixely. His world was fucked up beyond belief. He came closer and watched as the other

Frisk hit something else on his computer. A tab.

Sans read it down the line. Undertale. Oxygen Not Included. Don't Starve. Little Nightmares. He leaned against the top of the chair.

Humans. Didn't they have any sixth sense at all? His mind went back to how often he was able to watch the weird sprite without it knowing. The kid was more interested in tabs than the game that was his home. "You gonna play that any? I kind of want to see more of it."

Frisk looked above himself and saw Sans. "Okay? I see my sister won some prize dragging along a zombie for home?"

Zombie?

Frisk held his hand straight up to Sans. "Name's Frisk. How's it going?"

Interesting. There was the boldness he was used to. Sans gripped the human's hand. "Good. I want to see Undertale."

"That game?" Frisk shrugged. "Alright." Frisk loaded it up. "Give it a couple of minutes, you can't do anything at the start. So, was there any competition at all or did she just mop the floor of everyone?"

Sans didn't answer at first. Home. Was. A game. As the beginning went away, he started to watch him play. Everything was just game. Dialogue boxes. "Seen enough."

"Okay?" Frisk closed the game again. "So, who exactly are you?"

"Me? Ah. Let's just say, your dad knows." Sans moved away from it.

His world. Reduced into pixels, played like it was nothing. He actually swayed a little in the hallway. Sans was good at adapting to changes, but this was heavy. His world was entered and displayed as a video game. He was living the same day over and over again. The kid that saved the day and murdered his entire kind was supposed to be a pair of young kids that thought they were playing a game.

Up the other side, he saw the female Frisk kid again. She stroked her ear.

Sans didn't do anything. He had a feeling none of the humans were going to kill him, but he didn't know what else they expected of him up there. He couldn't just go out in the world and start living.

And he wouldn't. Even if that was the surface and freedom, he couldn't do that alone.

"Uh?" The female Frisk wanted something. "I'm."

What? What did it want? He just waited. It was slowly getting over its fear of monsters, and he had nowhere else to go.

“You being here is my fault, and I’m sorry,” she finally managed to say. “No one even knew anything.”

“Yeah. I saw what you saw,” Sans admitted. Still. “You still crossed a line. Pixelated or not.” She took a step backward. Funny. She was the one who could kill him, not the other way around.

“I know. I’m still sorry.” She tried to meet his eye sockets but couldn’t hold the gaze for long enough.

Huh. Well? At least it seemed to have sympathy. He tried to catch when she looked at him. It was tough. She had a lot of guilt eating her up inside. It was high, real high. Higher than the feeling of being scared now.

“I.” Still slow on talking. “Did you want a shower?”

Sans tilted his head. *Fresh water.* He nodded while he thought of how nice that would be. He never needed many of those. He was a skeleton, and before he was shoved down into that bitter abyss of darkness, he stayed reasonably clean.

He watched her enter another room. She turned some switches and he watched clean water coming out. She pulled out a cloth and placed it on a counter.

“Here.” She backed away and left the room.

Sans moved closer to the running water. He placed his bony hand in it. The sensation made him close his eye lids. Not only was it water, but it was relatively warm and comfortable. He could feel the sludge of the Underground starting to come off of his bones. *Zombie. Boy called me a zombie.*

He watched all the sludge of the Underground fall from his hand, and slowly the white color of his bone, that he hadn’t seen in years, was starting to surface.

When his hand was all white, he squeezed it. He felt none of the caked on muddy sludge that had inhabited it for who knows how long anymore. Clean water was a gift. The best anyone could get was Waterfall, but the Underground wasn’t allowed to bathe in it. What little water they did use for survival had to come from there. There were only a couple spots Underground where someone could bathe, and those were so bad after all of it, that it was impossible to call it clean water.

He moved his whole self into the little tub and hit himself with water. He had no idea just how much sludge had really accumulated over him all that time. He moved his arms through it, and even left his coat on so it could get a decent cleaning. He moved his skull up and down in it.

Every inch. He cleaned every inch of his skeleton off. The only thing filthy now was the bottom of the tub and his feet that was in the tub. He stepped out. Half that tub was now covered in, well, muddy sludge. What used to be on him. He took the cloth she laid out and used it on his feet.

As he threw that rancid thing away after cleaning his feet, he caught a glimpse of himself in a mirror. He moved closer to it. *Hey there, Sans.* He looked like his old self, who he used to be before mankind just pitched him over. He touched the mirror. A reflection he thought he'd never see.

When was the last time he saw such a clean reflection? From the area they left, the improvement of the cars, all of the amenities in the human's house, and now bathing with water that was even comfortable.

Monsters deserved to live up there too. Monsters deserved it so much more. He moved from the bathroom and saw the female Frisk standing in the hallway. She had a coat next to her and a pair of slippers. The coat was slightly lighter, but the slippers still looked pink.

She took several steps forward. "Here. Dad said these are for you." She placed them on the floor and backed away.

Sans scooted forward and took them.

"Um? Do you feel better?" she asked him.

"Ya mean casting hundreds of years of gunk that got on me being imprisoned in a mountain?" Sans asked. "Relatively."

"What do you want?" she asked him quickly. "I. I owe *you*, not my dad."

Ah. There was some logical thinking finally. He took off his soaked slippers. As soon as he did, the magic that managed to keep them together let them disintegrate to the ground.

Warm and fuzzy new slippers. Felt like at least fifteen years since he had a cozy pair, but it had probably been centuries.

"Are you sure you wouldn't rather have shoes?" she asked him.

"Nah." Sans dropped the furry slippers on the floor and stepped in them. "These cushion bone better." She still wasn't looking at him quite direct. He couldn't blame her.

He was having a hard time figuring out how to react to anything either. "What I want, huh?"

There. That got her to refocus.

"I want us to all to get what we *should* have had on more than one occasion, and then I want humanity to leave us the hell alone." She nodded toward him.

"I'll try to do the first then," she said more in a hushed whisper. Then, she moved away.

Sans looked at the coat. It was cushiony. Like his coat used to be. *Such a small guy when I was first thrown in. Hell I was . . .* the little Frisks age. He had used his magic to stretch his coat, shorts and slippers as much as possible as he aged. It was all he had of the surface anymore. As soon as he took off his coat, the same thing would happen. Such small, fragile things would never have survived without his magic.

Making up his mind, he shrugged his old coat off. It dissipated like embers before it even hit the ground. He slid the new one on. Once he found something for his shorts, he'd be all surfaced out in new wear.

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Sans went back down to the fridge to get some catsup. Two burgers wasn't nearly enough to deal with all the shit. He watched as the boy Frisk started to run toward him in the kitchen.

"Sans?!"

Sans held the bottle of catsup, flipped the lid off with his finger and downed it before answering. "What?" He looked toward the trash and tossed it away.

Frisk T. just stared. "Aw, this could only happen to me."

At least this Frisk wasn't fainting on him. "Not really in the talking mood right now."

"Holy Moly." Frisk looked back toward his sister and his dad. "And were supposed to what?"

"Go into the game again," his father said, "and just yank out the most powerful."

"Dang dad, that would include Asriel. That would, I mean, we would have to do *everything*," Frisk T. said.

"Yeeeeaaaah, a little different there now, isn't it?" Sans the Skeleton said toward him. "Moving out from behind a computer and puttin' your real soul into the game. That'll be fun. You enjoy that, human."

"Aw, lay off." Frisk didn't care for Sans' bullshit right now. "Not right now, I'm havin' a small crisis here."

"Yeah? What, you got a bone to pick with me?" Sans asked him. "So how many times did *you* cross that line, huh?"

Frisk just shook his head. "Tell ya what. Why don't you fight yourself and see how you feel? I'll even boot up my sister's game account for you."

"What? No!" His sister warned him.

"You know what?" Sans moved away from searching for catsup. "I'll do that."

---

No music. Small black figure on a screen. Sans scooted the sprite forward on the computer. He watched the little representation of him come out and words in a dialogue box displayed themselves. The words he said. The warnings he gave.

The words he said. The warning words. Some of the most important words he ever said about anything. The most important moment, the moment he practically knew that he was going to die.



Wrapped up in pixels and dialogue boxes.

Wrapped up.

His life.

Soon his death.

In a game.

“See?” Frisk T. gestured toward the screen. “That’s it. That’s how powerful we were. People in front of a computer.” He looked back toward his dad. “Screen verses real life. Big difference.” E. wasn’t looking him in the eyes at all. “There’s a difference, D., we can’t really-“

What?!! Frisk T. just stared at what was once his computer. It blew up. “Talk about overkill. You roasted the game room computer.”

Sans stood up from the chair. He didn’t say anything. He looked at his bony hand and made it into a fist.

“Frisk, get out of there,” his father demanded. “Now!”

Frisk couldn’t move though. He was frozen.

Frisk E. moved over toward the other side of her brother and spread her arms out over him. “Sorry. Please. Mercy.”

“Stop,” Frisk’s father warned Sans. “You can’t win and you know it. Don’t lay a single *finger* on his soul.”

“Wasn’t. Gonna.” Sans didn’t let go of him though. “My life. My. Life. No one had that *right*.”

“There’s nothing anyone can say,” Frisk E. said to him. “No one can. I can’t even put into words how you must feel seeing such a hard time in . . . a dialogue box. Sorry.”

Sans didn’t move.

“Sorry,” she said again. “Sorry.” It was her only move. It was the only thing she could say.

Being the only thing left to hold off the human from losing the Underground. His words. His warning. His worst moments . . . all reduced to text on a video game.

“You have to, Frisk T.,” his father insisted. “The monsters have always been trapped. It’s time to let them come back.”

“Sure, because that would turn out really well?” Frisk T. scoffed. “Oh come on. Every monster down there always wanted to fight except Sans. We let them out, we are dead.

Especially if they react even half as bad as Sans just did about his life being a game.” He held his hands up. “I’m all for being equal, but I kind of want to live too.”

“T?” His sister looked toward him. “Dad already has all that figured out. He’s been doing this for awhile. Will you just . . . help me?”

“I don’t know,” T answered. “I mean, to die? To keep coming back after we die until we grab a strong monster? That’s not gonna be like a tiny sunburn you know.” He looked back toward Sans. “I’m sorry. I thought if you could see that things were just different from this side, that it would be easier.”

Sans understood, but it wasn’t nowhere near *easy*. “My life’s a game,” he said. “I’m a thousand years old, but only about fifteen years or so passed Underground.” He shook his skull. “I don’t know what to think.”

“Oh. Yeah. Everything piled up quick on you,” Frisk T. noted. “Sorry.”

“Catsup. Plenty of it,” Sans said as he started to leave the room.

“Wait.” Frisk looked back at his dad. “What’s going to happen to him?”

“I’m going to enslave all humans,” Sans said, trying to lighten the mood and get the focus off him, “to listen to my comedy for the rest of eternity.”

Frisk T. watched him leave. “Well? Sans still seems like himself. I guess, if the monsters deep down are all the same as they were from the game-“

“They are,” his father insisted. “Everything is the same. Your access was just . . . limited. However, it’s all the same. The personalities. Everything.”

“I don’t know.” Frisk T. went downstairs toward Sans. He knew E. would probably ignore him because of the whole game, but he wouldn’t let it go that way. Especially if he had to hang around. He went into the kitchen, toward the lower cupboards and grabbed an unopen bottle of catsup. He went toward the fridge and handed it to Sans. “I want to help, but at the same time, dying over and over doesn’t sound like a fun time.”

“Thanks.” Sans took the bottle, popped it open and downed it like before. Yeah. That was a decent part of the Frisk he remembered. “You the one who tried to buy my fried snow?”

“Hey, we are completionists, gotta try everything,” the boy Frisk said. “Heck, I even got your prank call.”

“Did. Everything.” Didn’t quite feel like it though.

“Well? The way it works,” Frisk T. said, trying to be real careful, “you can only choose one way without messing up your game. If you do the bad way, then you can never really do the good way. So, my game’s pacifist.”

Yeah. Huh. So, this one never stepped over the line? *Or he just didn’t play me, so he ain’t got no guilt.* He easily looked into that Frisk, he wore his heart on his sleeve and didn’t divert his

attention away. Good-hearted. Casual guy. Seemed okay. His sister though?

She was the one of the pair that kept fighting him without end. It was her account on that computer that led him to the sprite stepping up on the sprite of Sans. She was the one who kept tormenting his world. Yet? *It looked like just a game*. But, forgiveness for that was hard, and she still wouldn't give him a straight look to get a good judging.

For now, from the attitudes and what he'd known, he'd have to assume one thing. Boy Frisk was the one who tried to help the Underground before. The one him and Papyrus had joked with. The one who ate the spaghetti.

And the girl was the one who played to kill. To murder everything around her. To not let a single monster live if she could help it. That kept pushing the edge. Except. She still didn't quite feel . . .

"How long would this take?" Frisk T. asked his dad as he and his sister entered the room. "I mean?" He breathed long and hard. "Every strong monster. How many strong monsters are there? How many times would we have to play?"

"To play to get them out, you must be in the 3d Beta simulator," his dad said. "So far, there are eight planned per year." He gestured to Frisk E. "The winner of competitions will also get more shots. I need to get you into that circuit too. Frisk will hit six rounds that way, if she survives through it all."

"So, fourteen per year. How many monsters would we have to get?" Frisk asked. He looked toward Sans. "How many really powerful monsters are down there, Sans?"

Sans stroked his bony chin and then held out his fingers. "How strong is strong?"

"You should go for the strongest," Frisk's dad insisted. "The monsters you've encountered, the monsters you think would probably be strong, and move down from there."

"Ummm?" Frisk T. looked over toward Sans. "How . . . bad do you all *really* want to be on the surface?"

More than he would ever know. However, this Frisk hadn't done anything to him, and . . . and Sans didn't trust magic with humans who had no idea what they were doing with it. Call it tech if they want, anything that opened up his world completely to pull them out was some kind of magic. "Hey, it's all your decision."

Frisk T. looked toward his sister. "You're already involved, Frisk. So. I mean. Maybe it won't be too bad?"

Frisk E. gulped and looked toward her father. "Starting at the next competition?" she asked.

Hmm. Scared, definitely scared, but she had some guts. She also didn't hide her actual emotion well. Once he got a good chance to get her, he could look into her clearly. "Uh. Who?"

"Try the queen," her father said.

What? “Nah, nah, my bro,” Sans said, ignoring her now. No way. Tori was great, but he didn’t want his brother separated from him. “He’ll be worried about me already.”

“I don’t know.” Frisk’s father looked toward her. “Have you played the pacifist side at all, honey?”

“Yes,” she said. “Just not the ending.”

So. She was both. Boy Frisk was pacifist, but she was pacifist *and* genocide?

Well. Well, well, well. He should be switching to beer soon.

Yeah, he should feel bad snooping, but that girl Frisk did kill him countless times, so not really. Daddy was talking to his Frisks right now, so Sans decided to head on off away from the game room, to check out Miss Genocide and Pacifist’s room.

Sans couldn’t tell at first it was a girl’s room. Gaming posters were on the walls along with codes and it looked like notes on stuff. When he went in, he saw consoles lining the ground. He went over towards the computer and saw the big red heart that said Undertale. Again. Of course she had her own computer in her own room for the same thing. Obsession. Then again, look at what their dad was like.

*Home.* He steeled himself. He had to face it. Had to do it.

He grabbed the mouse and clicked it. Instead of continuing, he chose reset. He wasn’t going to go straight to a version of the worst day of his life again. He heard some music and then watched a simple scene he saw with the boy Frisk. When it was over, he was controlling a simple sprite that looked like the kid he remembered.

Tiny. Couldn’t tell whether the character he was controlling was a boy or a girl. Left, right, up, down. Sans remembered that Ben had put the tiny dimension inside of the other computer and he probably hadn’t placed it inside Frisk’s again. Still, he was careful.

But . . . this was it? This simple up, down, left, right on this computer is all it had been? *What’s that? Oh. The flower.* Pixel. Really low class. *Anyone could be a murderer. Anyone could be a savior.* Press of a button.

“There you are, Sans the Skeleton.” Frisk’s dad peered in on him. “I am going to have to speak to you briefly.”

“What, agree to make the monsters trust you for my continued freedom-O or kill me-O?” Sans asked. “I got good hearing. Haven’t you heard? Skeleton’s got the best *ear formation* around. It’s bar *none*.”

A strained chuckle. Ben didn’t care for it, just being polite. Humans had a horrible sense of humor after all. That one would have lit up Grillby’s. “Will you?”

Will he? “Listen, Benny Ben,” Sans began. “I was on patrol, maybe half sleeping, no out on . . . well, I was doing something and then I was here. Met the kid I murdered more than once

and murdered me. Also met the kid that liked to have fun with us and tried to do good. So, right now? I don't know."

Ben looked at the screen. "You are trying again?"

"Reset. Your technology sucks, dude. Been a thousand years but that ain't even close to shit."

"It wasn't supposed to be. Part of the allure of the game. Well?"

"Allure?" Whatever. "I'll see. I need to rest on it."

"Fine. I can show you to the room I have for you. Sans? Sans the Skeleton? Hello? You slept almost the entire time in the car. You can't just . . . well, nevermind then."

## Shattered Glass

“I knew you’d screw something up, Ben!”

Sans opened an eye socket lid. He stretched and heard more sounds through the walls where he'd gone to sleep.

“Knock it off. My daughter never would’ve believed it was just for the monsters. When she starts putting stuff together, that’s it. I could dupe Frisk T., but not Frisk E.”

The voice of Ben, talking about his kid. No doubt it was having a tantrum. Who wouldn’t? Not really Sans’ business though. None of it was. In fact, they better figure out what they were doing because he didn’t want to be on the surface as a reward for helping. Not by himself. Trapped with some humans. He’d rather be out on duty watching the snow with Papyrus.

That Frisk was number seven. Six souls. Six kids. He didn’t want to do it anymore, but Frisk had visited his world countless times.

And he remembered *every time*. Everything good. Everything cruel. Every task. He had no idea if the person behind the computer was good or bad, he only knew what the sprite did. She made contact, but not long enough. Not good enough.

“Remember what you put them through! You have to do this for them!”

Oh yeah, Ben’s voice broke through his thoughts. Ben was playing the blame game again. Well, it took a lot of coaxing to get someone to agree to die constantly to help something that was trying to kill them. Sans stretched again, pulled himself off the chair and trotted out of the room. He went outside, and caught Frisk T. following too.

“It doesn’t matter,” Frisk said as she looked away from her father. “You’re desires? I don’t care about them, and I won’t do this for you. If I do it for anyone, it’d be for *them*, but you’re not getting anything from me.”

“Then you’ll do it?” Marissa asked her.

“Do what?” Frisk T. asked as he approached. “What’s really going on?”

“Magic. They want to free the monsters for magic, T,” his sister said.

Sans watched them. There. Now that made much more sense. Humans were greedy, there had to be more than ‘it must be done’. Looked like after a thousand years, the little contact with monsters had almost completely worn off. No magic-magic. “Figures,” Sans answered. A little bit of magic rubbing off against them wasn’t worth shit to freeing his home. Hell, it just naturally happened. It was just a bit anyhow. It took several humans gathered together to pull it together to really use it for anything meaningful.

Sans had a good nap on it, and knowing the real reason they were hiding? Well, it wasn't that bad. Fine. "I'll help."

Ben and Marissa seemed surprised at him as they let Frisk E. go.

"But, to let you know?" Sans added. "Magic isn't something to dabble with, Benny Ben, when you don't know it. Even the magic already being used to open up my world through that game to retrieve us. There's risk involved."

Ben nodded. "Understood."

Yeah. He did. He wasn't the one risking anything. Still. *Being up here, again, with Papyrus. And look how far everything's come? Hell, humankind passed us. Only makes sense.*

Then Sans watched lights head up the road quite fast. A car landed right beside the house. Nice car. A woman got out and marched right out to them.

"Ben Nation!" The woman called out to him. She took off the shades that she'd been wearing and was gesturing to him with it. "What are you doing, letting some woman have her hands on *my* daughter?!"

"Shit," Ben uttered. "Samantha-"

"Don't Samantha me." Ooh, that woman was maaaaad. Good thing Sans didn't know her. "Frisco, baby, come with me." She moved Frisk E. closer alongside her. "Damn woman got her hands on my child." She looked toward Ben. "We'll just see when you see the kids again."

"Whoah, whoah, whoah." Ben tried to get in front of her. "It wasn't like that Samantha."

"Oh yeah?" Samantha pointed toward Marissa. "Give me the reason she was holding my daughter, or go over and slap that woman for holding onto your daughter like that."

"That's mom," Frisk T. groaned.

"Frisk, come on, you too," his mother insisted. She touched Frisk E.'s hair. "Oh my sweet Frisco, are you okay?"

*Protective.* Sans watched the mother of the Frisks.

"I'm fine, absolutely," Frisk E. said. "It's okay."

"I'm waiting, Ben," Samantha said, checking on Frisk E. one more time. Quite certain nothing was wrong, she stood, quite erect.

"It was a misunderstanding." Ben looked toward Marissa. "Frisco was trying to leave, and Marissa stopped her."

"Oh?" Samantha looked toward Frisco. "Why did you want to leave?" She patted her daughter's hands. "It's okay, you can tell me, Sweetheart."

"It's not a big deal, mom," Frisk T. tried to cover.

"Somebody, anybody laying their hands on any of my children is a big deal." Samantha looked back toward her again. "Frisco? Are they telling the truth? Now you know you shouldn't lie to your mother, so please tell me the truth."

Sans watched as Ben actually went and slapped Marissa against the face. Marissa grabbed at it, but didn't say a word back.

"Sorry, Marissa," Ben apologized, "but you shouldn't touch my daughter like that, no matter the case."

Samantha stared at Ben, then Marissa, then back toward her daughter. "Your father just struck that woman for putting her hands on you. Was he right in doing so, was she trying something with you, or are you covering up a lie, Frisco Eternity Nation?"

"It should have been D.," Marissa muttered toward Ben, glaring at him. "Determi. Break the whole thing without the middle name."

"Oh, not that nickname again," Samantha uttered. "Officially, it's Eternity, and that is that."

"At least you got Termi for the boy," Marissa said to Ben.

"Tavern, my son is named Frisk Tavern Nation! Now stop questioning anything with my children," Samantha said, barely keeping herself back. "I don't want to deal with the likes of you."

Determi? That was a funny middle name. It didn't take much time before Sans put it together. Nation. Determi Nation? And Termi Nation? *This git won't even let his kids have a decent middle name without meaning? Thank goodness it got a good mom.* Ben nor Marissa was on his favorite list of people. In fact, he wasn't even on a moderately okay list. If it wasn't for the fact he was going to be getting Papyrus back, he would have blown them off already.

Heh. The Frisk's mom wasn't shy at all. Sans could easily see how Ben and his group chose her to be the mom.

"Anyhow, there is an event with a highly selectable stable of officials I am attending tonight." Samantha looked toward Frisco. "After this fiasco, do you want to come or stay?"

"She can go," Ben answered for her. "Frisk T. should spend the night though."

"..." Samantha didn't answer back right away. She looked over toward Marissa.

"I'm out," Marissa said, holding her hands up.

"I'll never see her again," Ben covered up for her. "Not at the risk of losing seeing my children as often."

Samantha sighed. She held onto her daughter's hand. "Fine, Frisk can stay." She leaned down toward her son and gave him a kiss. "You be a good boy, okay?" She moved her daughter



along with her toward the car.

Sans gave a simple wave as he watched them take off. Heh. Woman didn't even care about his presence. "So? Benny Ben? Your secret weapons to the whole shebang, you don't even really *have* them, do you?"

"Events are spread out," Ben insisted. "I will get them there. The first one is next week, so I better make sure Frisk T. gets his work back up."

Then, Sans watched as Ben got slapped by Marissa. Only fair.

"I had to," Ben said to her. "Samantha is too clever. If she suspects any foul play with her children--"

"They are *your* children. Damn it, you should work harder for some kind of better custody," Marissa scolded him. "Twice a week? How are we going to schedule events when all we get is your two days a week? We need more."

"Hey." Sans looked toward Ben. "D and T. The names Marissa wanted them to have? Determi and Termini with Nation, huh?" Ben looked toward Samantha, then back at him. "Yeah. I thought so. Honestly?" Sans shook his skull at Ben. "Kinda happy about you not getting more. Who knows how messed up those Frisks would have been if you had them every day." He turned around and headed back inside.

"You need more time!" Samantha showed Ben a text that came in. "I suggest you get more time, or we get our asses back there to that room again."

"Damn." Ben looked toward Frisk T. "No one found anything. Don't ask me how, but we can get back. We need to try this."

Sans stopped in the doorway. *Try what?*

"Now, dad?" Frisk T. asked.

"Now."

"But--"

"Now!"

Ah. Sans knew that tempo. Unexpected surprise for Ben apparently. *Looks like his group don't want to wait as long for him. Guessing family threat.* That was okay. If anything happened, at least he wouldn't be stuck above the surface. "Wait for me too."

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### **At the competition's 3d beta simulator . . .**

"Secure?" Ben asked his son Frisk.

Frisk T. just looked at the outfit he had to wear. “This feels too quick. E. just got out Sans. Why do we have to do this?”

“Oh?” Sans kind of shuffled around Frisk T., waving at cameras. “Because your Dad’s group isn’t exactly the patient kind. Probably threatening your mom, or taking you yourself. Humans, greed, potential magic, it all runs fairly the same. Pretty close there, Benny Ben?”

Ben didn’t respond to that. “You need to get the queen to hold your hand, Frisk. She will naturally do that at the beginning, so it shouldn’t be too hard.”

“Hey.” Whoa. “We are supposed to be getting my brother,” Sans complained. Jumping to the queen first? That was stupid. That was a lot of power. Papyrus was the easiest to get, but from what he learned about Ben? He didn’t really care about the danger facing the Frisk. “He shouldn’t go after someone so strong like that.” Honestly, if this dad even cared, the kid shouldn’t be there in the first place. Eight or so. Looking for some kind of parental attention and approval. That kid wasn’t going to make his own smart decisions.

“They want the strongest first that can be handled,” the brave little squirt that worked with Benny before said as he came in. “Sorry, Ben. I gotta be here to make sure it’s done right. All cameras and any access to this room has been sealed off.”

Ben bent down toward his son. “Listen, Frisk, this won’t take long. Get passed the little flower, grab the queen’s hand and it’s over.” He put the goggles over his head. “You’ll be fine. Just stay calm.”

Ben, Brave little squirt, and the female human that he’d annoyed before were leaving the room. Ben looked toward Sans. “You can be down there when she comes. Otherwise, come with us.”

“So ya don’t kill me?” Sans moved toward the kid. *My pelvis it’s not magic.* He hung onto Frisk’s sweater. Eight years old. That was about the age he’d been thrown Underground. Strange. Felt like the same thing was happening again. He couldn’t stop them though, they all knew the risk. Obviously, Ben had been threatened. Sans only had a monster soul, any of them could dust him. All he could do was hang on. “Be fine right here.”

Ben watched him holding onto Frisk. “Everything will be fine. It’s not magic.”

“Sure, Pops.” Freaking magic, it had to be. Technology itself couldn’t break into another dimension. “Still be right here. Preferred place of this skeleton,” Sans said.

Ben shrugged. “If it makes you feel better. Marissa, start the game in one minute.”

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*Okay, E. You could have told me how messed up it was down here!* Frisk looked around himself. He stood up and tried to look around. It was so dark, except from the light above the flowers he’d been on. “Okay. Just, get pass the flower and then Toriel.” He took a deep breath and started to walk, but felt squishiness beneath his feet. Not only that, the place stunk. He took his sweater and put it over his nose while he continued. It didn’t help much though, so he started to pinch his nose.

He watched as the familiar flower showed up with it's typical line after he opened his first set of doors. When he watched all the 'friendliness pellets' coming his way though, Frisk yelled. Ow! It was like getting burned on Fourth of July, except in several spots in the body.

"Oh, my child!"

Frisk looked forward and saw a gigantic furry thing coming toward him. It was nasty, foul, and . . . *Toriel*? She touched him.

"Oh, what nasty burns from that nasty creature," she said. "It's okay. My name is Toriel. I am the caretaker of the ruins. I come back here every day to make sure no human fell. Come with me."

Frisk tried to be brave as he held her hand. *Goggles, goggles, remove goggles*. It just felt so real though, that it didn't feel like there were any on him. He closed his eyes as they walked through the ruins, then ignored his instincts that he was really there.

He yanked off the goggles.

### **On the Game Room Floor.**

"Uh?" Toriel looked around herself. She was no longer in her ruins. "What magic is this?"

"What? What happened to Frisk?!"

Toriel watched as a human approached her. A grown up human.

"My name is Marissa." She looked toward the man. "The queen is here," Marissa said, "but not your son, Ben. Sans the Skeleton is also gone. He was right, somehow, there *is* magic attached to the beta simulator."

"Hm?" Toriel looked toward the humans. "You are the ones who belong with the child that I just found?"

"Yes. We were here to . . ." The man didn't seem like himself.

"We are here to free you from the confines of the mountain," the woman said, "however, the child that brought you here did not make it back." She looked toward the man. "Why was your daughter successful?"

"I don't know!" he yelled at her. "Oh no. Frisk."

Toriel watched as the man quickly took off.

"Wait, you can't just leave her here like that!" Marissa moved toward the queen. "Majesty?" She bowed quickly. "If you value your life, you need to come with us before humans come and hurt your soul."

Toriel did not know what to do, but the humans could have killed her a long time ago. She held the human's hand as they dashed out of the strange facility she was in. The walls, the decoration, the deep and dark rich rugs beneath her feet. She reached a car.

"Come on, Queen Toriel!" the woman insisted.

Toriel saw a strange item in front of her, and suddenly she remembered Frisk. "The little human saved us countless times. It also accidentally killed me. It also viciously murdered me." She held her breath.

"Yes, that's them. Frisk."

Toriel listened to the whole bitter truth. It had been a thousand years in the mountain, even though time felt like it had only been about fifteen or so. She learned about the boy that had not come back with her, that was supposed to touch the most powerful monsters. She looked toward Ben, the father.

He was concerned. Greatly concerned. And yet? "Was it worth it for magic, human? To lose your child?"

"Shut up." He was quick to answer.

"Ben," Marissa complained. "You can't tell the queen of monsters just to shut up."

"I have to concentrate! Okay. So. It worked for my little girl, why didn't it work for my little boy?" Ben questioned. "How do I pull him out? With his sister? No, she doesn't have any magic to pull them out."

"Even if she did, for some reason, it didn't work this time," Marissa reminded him. "No guarantees, Ben."

"I can't just let Frisk stay in there!" Ben shouted at her. "But? I can't put my daughter through there without knowing *why* it didn't work."

"Magic imbalance." Toriel already knew. "I am much too strong for such a little boy to use magic upon."

"They demanded it," Ben said, "and I have to get to my little Frisk, now."

"Ben?" Marissa questioned. "Are you okay? We did get the queen. We will figure this out."

"Where's Gene?" Ben asked her outright. "Huh? He said he *had* to be there to make sure everything went off like it was supposed to. Damn." He touched the side of his head.

"Samantha is at some kind of large official event. My little girl Frisk will be there."

Toriel crossed her arms. While she felt sorry for the human that he lost his child, she could not bring herself to show empathy. He named his children the same thing, to keep up a charade of a character for goodness sake. Even if his goal had not been magic, but had really been the selfless act of freeing the monsters?

She could still not agree. No one had the right to run a child's life like that.

"Will you hurry up?" Ben complained as he kept honking at the traffic. "Well, Marissa, look it up! It's gonna be a big thing, Samantha likes big and shiny. At least a couple of mayors are probably gonna be attending. Or actors. Or musicians, or somebody flashy that she likes."

"Or gamers?" Marissa quickly looked away. "Sorry, Ben."

"Just find it! If it's big enough, it's probably right around this city."

### **At Samantha's Event She Is Attending . . .**

"Okay, Frisk. Purse those beautiful lips," her mom insisted as she finished putting on lipstick and kissing a tissue. Frisk pursed her lips. "Pucker." Frisk puckered. "Good girl." Her mom put her lipstick away. "Now, be sweet. Be innocent. Be pure. At the same time, if you see anyone out of the back corner of your eye, pull out a flirty look. That's how momma does it."

"Yes, momma." Frisk was too young for boys, she had no interest in them at only eight. However, her momma said if she trained her how to do it young, she'd feel more confident when she was ready to pursue them, leading to better results.

"And if you see someone you do like, make sure you get yourself firmly in their vision, give them your best flirting look, and then get almost out of their vision before giving them a chance to reach you. The more they have to hunt a little for you, the better your chances of holding their interest. If they don't follow, there's not enough interest to waste another minute on them." Her momma held her hand firmly as they walked along the floor. "As for the mangy mutts and unkempt women you do not want to associate with, use a similar tactic."

Frisk watched her mom glare at Francis, momma's rival. She didn't know why they were rivals, they just were. And rivals were weird too.

"Make sure you talk to them, but make sure they know it's not to be nice. Remember any names that they hate, pretend you forgot and build on from there." Her mom smiled at Francis as she came over toward her. "Hi, Francy," her mother greeted her.

"Hello, Sammy," Francis came back on her. "Lovely time so far?"

"Oh yes, absolutely gorgeous party, your date must be having a lovely time, Francy."

"Well, Sammy, he is, but you must be having a greater ball being around your daughter."

Frisk scooted toward her side more. "She is, Francy, but the man momma wants to see likes me too," she said raising her hand slightly toward her. "He finds children precious, and he's worth three times momma's estate, so she's very happy."

"Three times?" Francis said.

"Yes, Francy. Sometimes having children works in your favor." Frisk's mother looked at her nails. "Some men are just ready to settle down, but don't really want to go through all the hassles of a baby and raising. They want to start in the middle with a good outlook already."

“And some children are just perfect the way they are, Miss Francy,” Frisk said with a low curtsy.

“Yes, and he absolutely adores Frisco!” Her mother giggled at Francis. “One day, we might all be one happy family.” She pushed Francis’ chestbone slightly. “Although, I’m sure you’ll still be invited to the picnics? Oh, how wonderful it would be.”

Francis stopped smiling. “And who is this three times your estate man?”

“Someone momma fell *absolutely* in love with,” Frisk said, backing her momma up. “And who *absolutely* loves good children like me.” Frisk patted her mouth thoughtfully. “Who do you think it is, Miss Francy?”

Francis humphed. “Fine. Sure.” She shrugged. “My ex, huh? Well, never worked out between us.”

“No, I know,” Frisk’s mother said. “Whoever knows why? Frisco, sweetie?” Her mother smiled lovingly. “Let’s go, baby. He’s been waiting to see you again. You know how much he loves you.”

“Fine!” Francis lost her cool. “Good day, Sammy!”

“Good day, Francy.” Frisk’s mother waved as Francis left the room. “See that? The enemy left the room. That is called ‘Complete Conquer’, Frisco. A rare site, but wonderful when it happens. Come on, let’s go get something to drink. Uh?”

Frisk looked at who was at the punchbowl. *Uh oh*. It wasn’t momma’s rival, but not the best to be seen with right now. She watched her mother move around the punchbowl, making sure he didn’t see her.

“Hi, it’s Samantha,” she said to someone brand new. “I’m sorry, I forget your name?”

“Momma, I’m thirsty,” Frisk said, playing her part.

“Oh. It’s Donald Rainer.” The stranger shook her hand. “I don’t remember meeting you before?”

“Oh, dear. How rude of me, it’s been so long. Wow. I don’t even quite remember where we met,” she said. “I’m so sorry. Forget I said anything.”

“Momma, can I have some punch?” Frisk interrupted again.

“Oh no, really, it’s my fault. Uh?” He scratched his head. “Was it at a party?”

“I won’t spill the punch from the bowl this time,” Frisk interrupted once again.

“Probably was. You know, I was probably alone, and now I’ve got my little girl here.” She wiggled her fingers at Frisk. “So that just confuses it all up. Sorry. Why don’t I reintroduce myself? Samantha Louis Curie. And you are?”

“Momma?” Frisk moved her arm. “Mom? Punch?”

“You spilled the bowl last time, Frisk,” her mother insisted.

“Please, mamma?”

“Why don’t I get you both some punch?” he asked. “I’ll be right back.”

Frisk’s mamma smiled. “Good job. What do you think, Frisk?”

A little light on the pick up, so he wasn’t too interested in mamma. However, some interest. Not a real kid goer, more interested in mom. She had to get pretty insistent and use the spill the punch excuse to get anywhere. Frisk was getting punch though, and with the guy in front of the punch bowl, they did accomplish their goal of getting something to drink without worrying about intermingling with him. “Five out of ten?”

“Momma can do better?” she asked.

“Yeah, but, I’ll take the punch,” Frisk said.

“Just a second. Mamma drinks first, Frisco.” Her mother took the punch offered when he came back and took a sip. “Oh, thank you so much. Very kind of you. Here you are, Frisco.”

Frisk took her punch and smiled at the man. “Thank you, Sir.” Like she thought, not real interested in her. Mamma wouldn’t flirt too much, instead she would build a connection with him as a friend that would enable her to call on him in the future for something useful. Once she found out what he did.

Before she took a sip though, her glass bursted. The whole party started to scream and run in a chaotic order. Frisk looked next to her at her mom.

Her strike didn’t hit her punch glass.

“Friiiiiisk!”

Her dad? Frisk was still stunned as she watched him come for her. He picked her up and tried to head out, but fire was still being blasted at them. She watched as he got hit in his arm. Then the whole thing got wild as she saw fireballs being launched everywhere.

“Marissa, car, car!” Frisk’s father yelled as he ran toward the car again. Frisk watched as the queen of the monsters emerged from the flames. Frisk cried out as she felt pain in her leg, deep pain! She dropped to the ground too, then lost consciousness, just remembering her father’s heavy body on top of her.

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Toriel ran and grabbed the child, shaking the human man. His eyes remained open, and the child had fainted from the situation and loss of blood. She quickly took off to the car and left

with Marissa. Toriel stroked the little girl's hair back and forth while her other hands were trying to heal her leg wound as much as she could.

"Is she gonna live?" Marissa's voice was hoarse. "Well?!"

"Yes. It is but a fleshwound," Toriel answered back. "You have rivals that do not want the monsters freed as well, *don't* you?"

"No? Well, not for at least a century," Marissa said. "I don't think. I don't know. I can't think. You sure Ben was dead?"

"He was dead," Toriel said. "Her poor mother died of a bullet wound to the head too."

"This wasn't worth it." She heard the human start to cry. "Ben's gone. He's gone. It wasn't worth it!" She banged the steering wheel.

Toriel did not answer the grieving human. When dealing with magic, one must take their own risks in life with it. The little girl still did not wake up. As she looked at her though, she realized she was getting her dress all dirty. Just from herself. Her foul, putrid self.

"I'll get you to where the monsters were supposed to be safe," Marissa said. "There's plenty of land, no humans around for miles and miles. There are four hundred houses there, laid out in square lands. Our group was well-funded, we took good care of everything over several generations. You have all the technology any other human has in them, including electric and water. It's all hooked up too because that's where we had our most secret of meetings too and . . ." She sniffled. "Ben. *Why?*"

"Most humans do not want us out," Toriel told her plainly. She looked back at the young girl. "Who will take care of this child now?"

"I don't know, some orphanage. Who cares." Marissa banged the wheel again. "I mean, they were only for this anyhow. It's the *only* reason he had to ever touch that Samantha woman and have those dumb kids."

"He died trying to save his daughter."

"No, he died trying to get the little freak to get out the other little freak, so that we could figure out what went wrong and retry again!"

"Perhaps. Perhaps not." Toriel understood her mourning, but did not like the sound of what would happen to the little girl in her arms. "I will raise her."

"It killed you in the game."

"In a game. It did not know what it was doing. I cannot pass such a cruel judgment onto a child thinking they were only playing around."

"Whatever, I don't care," Marissa said. "Enemy is trying to kill it, so just watch out."



“I know how to watch myself. And humans.” Toriel looked down toward the little girl. Her dirt and grime was rubbing up on the poor human child, but it would be nothing compared to the tragedy she now endured. Her mother and father were killed. Her brother was trapped Underground. Her whole family was destroyed.

“Can we get him out?” Marissa finally spoke again. “Ben’s boy. Ben would have wanted us to get him out.”

“I am sure that one day everyone will get out,” Toriel said. “One day. And I have a deep feeling . . .” she looked down at the child’s face in her arms. “It will once again be Frisk who saves the day.”

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# Turning Into the Frisk

## Inside the Underground:

He was still there. Toriel wasn't. *Huh?* "T-Toriel?" He moved around lightly. "Toriel? Caretaker of the ruins? Hello? H-Hello?!" Frisk felt around him. Looked around him.

Nothing. He didn't see anything. He didn't feel anything.

"Ooh, isn't that interesting."

Flowey? Frisk looked behind him. He started to run, but the ground was too sludgy and he stumbled. Flowey just chuckled at him as he started to scoot backwards in a crawl. He felt his soul come out toward the encounter again though.

"You can't escape this time," Flowey's face contorted into something vicious looking. Jagged mouth. And his laugh was weird, echoey and half-sounded like a scream.

"What do I do? What do I do?" He felt Flowey hit him again. Frisk yelled! He tried to run away. Dodge. Anything he could, but Flowey was about to do the same thing again. "Nothing is like what dad said, nothing is like what dad said!" Frisk covered his head. *Please let me come back. Please let me come back. I don't want to die.*

"Ha! Take-Ow!"

Frisk looked ahead of him where Flowey seemed to disappear from. The battle instantly went over like when Toriel interrupted. "T-Toriel?"

"Nah, Kid."

Sans? Frisk looked over at the corner. In the darkness, he managed to make out a familiar shape. He watched as blue flames seemed to rise in Sans hand.

"Flashlight?" Sans joked.

"What did I do wrong?" Frisk asked him.

"Nothing, Kid." Sans strolled over to him. "You *should* have started with Papyrus is all. Believe it or not, whoever was in charge of that big old 3d game is using magic. Otherwise, I couldn't be dragged back in here with you."

"Oh. Weird." Frisk stood up and dusted himself off. "Where'd Toriel go?"

"Welp? That goes back to that whole 'should have started with Papyrus' thing I said earlier." Sans moved closer. "You needed to work your way up the chain. See, when ya move from one place to another."

Frisk looked around. He was next to a fire.

“You need to have enough magic to move *everybody*,” Sans finished. “And Kid? Your dad made you try to scoop Toriel on your first turn. You know how powerful the queen can be?”

Frisk scratched his head. “So, I have to get someone weaker.”

“Uh. No.” Sans tapped his slippers lightly. “It’s a one time deal per monster. The magic took Tori. She is now in your world, but you aren’t getting back. You already took the goggles off and you didn’t return. Right?”

Frisk felt all around himself again. “Well? Then? How do I-?”

“You don’t,” Sans said outright. “I warned your dad there were risks messing with magic someone doesn’t understand.”

Frisk looked around again. “But. But.”

“I’m sure that little group is gonna try something at some point,” Sans said. He trotted along through the house and down the stairs. “For now, this is home, Kid.”

“Uh?!” Frisk stopped. “But, I can’t stay here! I don’t belong here! And, and they’re killing humans for souls!” What was he supposed to do? “Do I stay here?” Then what would he eat? How much food was there?

Sans looked back toward him. *Gut feeling knew this would be bad.* Just like before, everyone would be after that kid. Only this time, he wasn’t an invincible kid that could do anything. He was just a regular little human.

Funny. He really did look exactly like the sprite he met so many times before, but his eyes were open and his emotions were readable. Real readable. They were screaming the same thing Sans’ did when he first fell.

His dad was bound to try something. Probably to bring the little girl Frisk in. In the meantime, the boy just needed to lay low. No one knew about him yet. Except that idea might not work. The human was already seriously trembling. Temperature shifts. Diseases. Viruses. Lack of food. Lack of certain nutrition. You didn’t even need to fight a human to kill it.

A regular human would find it hard to survive. But a kid? A tiny little . . . *others never got a chance. They didn’t have somebody on the other side that could retrieve them, their fate was sealed.* It came down, definitely scared, for them. Well, scratch that. It came down because daddy clearly had someone breathing down his neck, enough to risk his son. Still. Just a kid.

“You’re smart, Sans. Do you think I should stay here?” Frisk asked. “Will it be warm enough up there?”

“With a fire.” But heat? He doubted there was a ton of food.

“Sans? Will my human soul, if I die, will it bring me back to the beginning again? Like dad said?” Frisk asked.

“Honestly?” Sans looked back at the stairs. “Maybe, but that’s only if you die by monster. A soul returning after the body freezes to death, gets overheated to death, or starves to death is always a factor. Viruses. Health issues. Gotta have a healthy body to move a soul.”

“ . . . is that how the others died?”

He just had to ask. “I don’t know,” Sans said. “Knowing Asgore, probably.” How else would they die for good and not come back?

“How long do I have to survive?” Frisk asked.

“Look, Kid. I don’t have good answers,” Sans said. “My answers are ‘I don’t know, probably and maybe’ for just about everything, including on if you are going to die or not.” He grabbed at his skull. *Just another kid. He’s just one more kid.* That he’d had countless good days with. *Just the sprite, just what he chose the sprite to do.* He tried to back up. He should be thanking his lucky stars he didn’t just take him to Undyne. I mean, he played his life like a game. As a game. Pacifist or not.

The kid curled up on the stairs. “Sorry, Sir. I’ll do my best.”

Sir? Sans stepped forward again and saw through his eyes. *Ah. When he got scared of his dad, he’d call him Sir.* Not respect. Fear or fright, hidden behind a respectful word. A way for his dad to walk away and let him deal with whatever he had to come to terms with.

Sans turned, wanting to do just that. *Keep walking. Keep walking.* It was human. It had no chance down there already. *Keep going.* Oxygen was weak, no one really needed much of it. That would probably kill it first. *Keep walking.* Weather was way too cold, it’d have to live on the other side, not Snowdin, and that wasn’t an option. *Don’t turn back. You never turned back for another one. It survives on or off by its own self.*

The hygiene might get it first. Lack of clean water for it’s body, as well as the food. *Get one of a million viruses or diseases. That’s how all the others probably went.* No different. No different. “I’ll see if I can’t round you up a burger, Kid.” Couldn’t! There was a major difference this time. This one wasn’t stuck in an endless battle of death, he had family out there that would be trying to claw their way to a solution. And selfish motives or not, it was because of his family that Sans got the single chance to touch clean water.

Touch a clean house. Feel clean clothes. He couldn’t help but think of that as he stuffed his hands in his coat. *Played my life like a game.* Not the kid’s fault. He didn’t know. He was never even the one of the two that played Genocide anyhow. Never hurt him. *That’s just chance.*

One burger. He’ll get it one burger. *Not like tomorrow ever . . . wait.* Humans kept time ticking down there, right? So, technically, tomorrow would come. *Well? Fine, if it does, and I remember it, then one burger per day. More than fair.* But this human also lost whatever magic the machine had given it to come down and fetch a monster too. So, maybe time wouldn’t keep moving. And the kid would blend in somehow with the rest of the ‘game’.

The kid would be the real sprite, come to life.

Frisk.

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## **Present Day Underground. . .**

### **Inside the Mountain:**

It was like out of a nightmare, but Sans knew it would happen. Frisk was leaving, out into the cold wilderness. He barely left and he was already starting to shiver badly. He watched it move past the large stick he always cracked beforehand, and across the bridge. *Okay. It'll be fine. He'll be fine. Just, relax. His fam might still come back. Never know.*

When it came to the lamps, Frisk remembered his option when he saw Papyrus coming. Missed him completely by being behind a lamp.

“Sans!” Papyrus didn’t miss him though. “Are you patrolling your side well?”

“Doing fine. Doing good. Lots of snow, like always, it’s all just always snow like always,” Sans said.

Papyrus groaned. “I hope there wasn’t a joke in there.”

“Oh come on, Papyrus, you know I’m more transparent about that kind of thing,” Sans joked as he watched a ghost cross across the bridge. “Snow what I mean?”

“Aah!” Papyrus yelled. “Too early, Sans!”

“Never too early for a good joke.”

“Just keep your eye sockets open,” Papyrus insisted as he finally walked away.

Sans watched as Frisk came out from behind the lamp.

“Your brother is gigantic,” Frisk said as he strolled over to Sans. “Humans don’t even get that tall.” Frisk looked up toward Sans. “I should have known, look how tall you are. And Toriel, she was massive.” He curled up in his sweater more before heading on his way.

“You know what time it is?” Sans warned Frisk.

“Yeah, puzzle time,” Frisk said. “At least it’ll help keep me warm.”

It wasn’t a joke. “You’re going to die today, you know that?” Sans told him. “You’ll find out whether you come back or not today.”

Frisk nodded but continued on his way.

Sans did his usual, introducing Papyrus to Frisk. The eight year old accepted his fate. There was no way around it.

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Sans watched the kid, once again, take it on. *Shouldn't be here. It needs food.* Frisk was just an average boy. Papyrus didn't notice anything wrong at all about the human coming and going back. It looked like the trip up top had made him a little more immune to the magic glaze over monsters had with the resets. Still? It was clear nothing had been wiped away from before.

"This human seems to be taking all day," Papyrus said. "Oh well. You've nowhere else to be except a knock-knock door I suppose."

Still remembered his knock-knock buddy. Sans just watched Frisk try to keep taking on Doggo. *Things should have been different. His dang ol' dad.* Did he even still care? It was hard to tell. Frisk still had a chance of getting out if Ben could figure something out. What they'd do, he didn't know. Old magic in video games wasn't exactly his bag. *At least Tori's out there. Getting some sun now. Probably getting a shower.* Sure enough, she needed and deserved some. They all deserved a shower and more.

Right now though, that was just a dream again. A pipe dream he didn't have much faith in. And as long as Frisk was there trying hard not to die? It'd be a constant reminder not of the kid's determination. But fate.

Fate. That they would always be forever Underground.

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Frisk stared at the flowers. He was scrunched up against them again. *Come get me. Please come get me. Please.* Frisk wanted to stay in the Ruins, and wait for a few more days. It'd be safe. But, he lost his way. Queen Toriel had taken it. Not on purpose, but it didn't matter. What gave him the power to leave was gone. So how did he know for sure how many days he had? What if he was only lasting a few days, and then repeating? What if he kept trying for a couple months, and repeating? What if he was only getting a single day. *Dad. Frisk E. Where are you? Please?* He'd admit forever that his sister was the best at video games. Heck, after everything he went through, he wouldn't even want to ever touch another video game! He'd refuse, until his father just gave his mom full rights to him. No more. Video games. Ever again.

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"Take one. Here, take one real quick." Sans tried to get the kid to take one. He was hurting. It was getting harder to get through it all. Grillby's was such an easy thing, he visited it all the time. "Here."

Frisk finally took the burger. He sat up and munched on it. He took another bite and swallowed it. "Which is worse, Sans? Being scared I would die, or constantly dying?" He took another bite before he spoke again, but tears were starting to gather up in his eyes. "It's a good burger."

"Yeah. Helps take pain away. Tries to." Sans patted the kids back. "Take it easy. We'll be out tomorrow. Keep the burger." He couldn't help it. He just . . . felt for him. He was hoping that the little bit of good, the tiny bit of good he had felt in Ben, figured out a way to save his son.

But he didn't have good feelings about that anymore now then he did yesterday.

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# Ready

## Outside: Present Day

“I hope you like it, it’s a new recipe,” Toriel said as she dug into her snail and mashed potatoes.

“It looks delicious,” Frisk said as she sat down to eat her dinner. “I like the seasoning.”

“Attack 16, from the right.”

Frisk yanked out a yellow knife and hit her target without even bothering to look or stop eating. “Is that paprika?”

“Quite, 22, 56, left ceiling and is it good?” Toriel asked.

Frisk nodded as she took out another knife and hit a yellow spot on the ceiling. “Excellent. It tastes great.”

“Good, good.” Toriel looked down toward her food. For sixteen years she had lived alone and isolated from everyone, just like Underground, except for one soul. Frisk. She took Frisk in as her daughter sixteen years ago, with the intention of doing what needed to be done, without putting Frisk in danger.

Time moved when a human went Underground, but for how long was unclear. She wanted her daughter to be ready for anything. While she wanted to set the monsters free, she was not going to put her child at risk. And unlike humans, she understood magic. “14, 11, bottom row and 11, 14, top row.” Toriel watched as Frisk stopped eating long enough to hit two perfect targets with the right colored knives.

She had taught Frisk how to be as great as a fighter as she herself. Even though Frisk did not have magic, she had a human soul, and Toriel showed her how to use it and her weapons to her advantage.

She had several calibers of knives, with different intensities, and homemade by Toriel herself. She also had a secret weapon, her guitar, that to the untrained eye seemed just to be an instrument. Even if she were told to unarm, she would be able to keep that powerful weapon without anyone ever knowing. Armed with the knowledge of attack, defense, and magic of all the monsters, as well as for a copy of the game Undertale? Toriel taught her daughter the best way to get through the monsters.

Dust them, fast. While it looked like death, the magic would actually touch them, not dust them, but transform them to the surface while Frisk would gain the EXP needed to move on to save stronger monsters. Not only that, but the strongest monsters would not come out to meet her until they felt threatened.

Her daughter would look like a terminator, but she would be the savior of Underground.



“I have a surprise for you.” Toriel moved away from the table and went toward her counter. Bending down she yanked out a large cake that she had cleaned out the cupboard for. She brought it over to Frisk. “Happy Birthday, Frisk!”

“Oh, Momma Toriel.” Frisk laughed and moved closer to it, sneaking a taste. “That’s delicious. Butterscotch cream is my favorite.” She watched as Toriel sat it down. “It’s so big,” she said, “we’ll never eat it all.”

“No. We may need help.” Toriel sighed as she looked at her cake. “Happy Twenty fourth, Frisk. It’s a big year for you.” She lifted her eyes to meet her daughter’s. “You’re ready.”

Frisk just stared at her, stunned. She’d been waiting to hear those words for years. Ever since that day. One single day in her life. When the difference between game, fantasy and her life blurred for her daughter forever.

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“Are you okay, Honey?” Her Momma Toriel asked her. “Frisk?”

“Finally,” she breathed. “I’ve been ready, Momma Toriel.” She’d been ready for so long. “I’m sorry, I just got lost for a second.” She tried to stop her eyes from getting watery. “Dad wasn’t the best dad ever for us. He just needed a Frisk.” She grabbed her silverware tightly, almost like it was a weapon. “Why couldn’t . . .?”

“He treated you and your brother as games, and I am so sorry,” Momma Toriel told her. “For all my days, I’ll never understand humans and their greed. He came to his senses, in the end. He knew what was important.”

“It’s hard to even say whether he loved me or not,” Frisk answered her. “Except for that final time. He loved enough to try.” She cleared her throat. “Is it time for the ACT?”

“Try three days,” Toriel asked her. “Use your charming skills, and get him down for three days. I know you can do it in three.”

“Ask for a week first,” Frisk said, “because he’ll want to haggle me down.”

Toriel nodded. “That’s my girl.”

Frisk stood up. “I can do this.” She’d been waiting for it. It was the day she’d waited on for sixteen years. Ever since that fateful day her father took her to her first competition. When they arrived, he showed Frisk off to his gaming friends. They remarked how much she looked just like the ‘Frisk’ of the game. Someone even teased her when she said she was determined to win. People commented on the way she dressed. Even the name.

She was a foolish child back then. Such a foolish little girl. She moved toward her bedroom and looked at her dresses. “Show it off. Make him work though.” Ooh. Red? No, that would only work if she messed up. The game was set. She would win.

But the amount of time it took to win, was an important deciding factor. “Dark blue. Sequin. Strapped.” There it had been. She pulled it off the hanger. As Momma Toriel stuck her head

in, she showed it to her. “This one?”

She nodded. “Frisk.” She was silent a moment. “I’m glad you’re ready for this. No matter what. You are my good girl.”

It was nice to hear those words. Frisk looked at the dress. “I’ll try to remember that.”

“That’s not an area to put you mind at. Don’t talk to anyone about your true goal. Any delaying. Any detour from what they should see in the game, and its over.”

“I will do this. I won’t mess up.”

“Are you sure?” Momma Toriel said. “I know you very well my child. I remember how you felt about Sans in the game. When you pulled him out.”

“I was a child back then, Momma Toriel,” Frisk said. “I’ve changed. The situation changed. I won’t mess up, I promise.” She held her dress up again. “I will do what it takes to win.”

---

Frisk took a shower, slipped the dress on, and then moved toward the jewelry on her nightstand. Momma Toriel was wonderful. All she ever wanted was to be a good mother to her, but she wasn’t always her momma. Frisk spent most of her life with Toriel, and took to her, calling her Momma Toriel. Toriel insisted upon it, it was a monster traditional thing. It was how they distinguished and honored a second mother, without forgetting the important of the first.

Momma. Was a word reserved for only one.

Her biological mother. The one who raised her when she was a child. “The stars could never burn as bright as her.” The ACTing skill Frisk had came from her. She was a belle of the ball, the one who lit up the room when people passed. Any trendy event, no matter how exclusive, and her momma was there with her.

She opened up her jewelry collection gazing at it. Everything had a purpose. Everything had an occasion. Oh, her mother was far from perfect, but she loved her daughter so much. She could be elegant or rude, crass or sweet. No matter the occasion. Even at her young age, she tried to learn from her.

She always got what she wanted. She could get people to eat right out of her hand if she wanted. When she set her eyes on something, she used her determination and ACTing to get it. It wasn’t always something she needed, or even should have. But that was momma.

Frisk picked up the only battered looking necklace. She never wore it, but she kept it. As she grew older, she became more rebellious on what she wanted. And when she found out the necklace she wore that night she was killed had fallen off, she retrieved it.

She grasped it tightly in her hand, remembering that moment. She’d been there at the fancy club, watching the glass in her hand shatter while her mother went down on a single bullet.

Her father did the only thing he ever did to show he loved her. He grabbed her, risking his life to save her, and falling not long after her mother. Toriel saved her that day, bringing her to safety.

But while they were lost, there were still so many more to fight for. Especially her brother.

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In the modern age, it didn't matter where you were, internet access was everywhere. It was how they did most of their shopping, as well as how Frisk made money.

Working on the beta simulator. Although now it had an actual name, the AISim. With the ability to not only play games, but create actual changes inside the game on the fly, depending on how the characters acted differently from the game. The man in charge was one of the few people in the world who still had magic, because he actually had monster in his blood.

Of course, he didn't admit to it, but there was no way anything could have ever worked without it. The AISim was no longer used as a cute prize for competition wins either.

They had AISim theatres now. Instead of playing a film, people could play a game. However, the price of the ticket to play it was so expensive, it was the price of a two hour film every fifteen minutes and it also took reservations. To play a decent game, only the richer humans really enjoyed the entertainment. It remained high because there were only fifty units and he made less than ten per year.

However, Frisk knew him. She got to know him a long time ago. Donald Rainier. And he didn't think she was just an annoying girl who wanted punch anymore. Knowing his deep secret, as well as remembering a thing or two about her momma's acting, she and Toriel had access to it more often than the average person since he lent out special coupons. Frisk had practiced with it several times, even with Undertale.

However, it wasn't the real dimension of it. The pinhead tiny entrance gateway. Toriel had kept it in a small ring box, and kept it on the tip of a ring, to ensure her kingdom stayed safe. That ring, would go on Frisk's finger, tonight.

"Hey, Donald?" Frisk said on the phone as her mother Toriel stayed out of range. "It's Frisk. What are you doing tonight? Hm. That sounds a little boring. How about me instead?" She chuckled. "I mean, not me, me, but why not come over? I'd like to have a little talk? Over maybe something to eat? What? Candles, Donald? Well, I don't see why a simple dinner would need candles, but I could dig them out. Great. I'll see you soon." She hit end on her phone after the conversation.

"On schedule?" Toriel asked.

"Asked for candlelight dinner. Flirty manner but nothing affirmative for him. Coy but tempting," Frisk said to her. "Head off to bed early if you want."

"Don't go further than you have to," Toriel gave her a final warning. "If anything happens, you'll need more time, and you can't show your cards." Her mother strolled over to her purse

and picked it up. She moved over toward Frisk and opened it, bringing out the tiny frog. The test run a year ago. The only recipient of the Underground that received freedom.

The little frog lightly jumped. A sign it believed in her too.

The test run. It had been important. The reason her father got caught in what he had done is he had disturbed the game. The feed. The graphics. It was all still seen, and still known. The only way to help the monsters, was by killing them.

Which is what appeared on the computer screen. However, she killed with the same weapons of magic she used to grab hold of Sans. It wasn't death. Not even dust, but the game couldn't sense that. It just calculated the character missing.

Still, the test run had been risky. To appear as a killer instead of a helping hand, but it worked. No one was the wiser, and the frog had been deposited into the real world, in a nearby place to her mother, her magic carrying it onward.

"I won't fail you, Momma Toriel. I promise."

"I know you won't," her mother said, leaning down on her paws. They were nice and soft, a cheery white along with her beautiful smile. "Attack 16, Defense 1, Magic Power 5, chance of family nearby is high, and they got new shoes. Five solutions."

Frisk only took a little bit of time to think about it. "Two require yellow knives. Ask them if they care to see their wife again. It's a safer option than children since it's harder to have them, they might not have any. If that doesn't work go with the shoes. Tell them they are nice so their feeling of safety increases and the need to fight weakens a little. Keep telling them about their shoes until they start to back off, then take them out with the yellow. Use a regular knife to cut their shoes, making them feel bad and improving the chances to get a flee if I have no time to deal with them. If something unforeseen happens like another enemy tries to enter, then switch to the pink knife instead to end it extremely quickly. Unforeseen is not an option."

She held her fork out for a little longer. "They sound on the lower end like it would be in the cold or the ruins. I would guess the temperature knife, it would take them out assuredly, but it would be wasteful to use that kind of power on them." Her mother was still staring at her. "If for some reason, I need them to stay after I start to fight, I hit them with something soft, then I have to hit them with the healing knife immediately afterward, but it would be a last resort. Anyone knowing my true intentions puts everyone and everything at risk."

"You see?" Her mother cut the first slice of cake and put it on a plate with a fork. "You are ready. Ready to dish out whatever a monster calls for." She tossed the plate to Frisk. Frisk pulled out her temperature knife and quickly caught it in its grasp, balancing it. "I am going to give your temperature knife one more boost before your date. Just in case he takes you somewhere to access it tonight," her mother Toriel said watching the gravity being a little lower on it than it usually had been. "Test your temperature."

"Yes, Momma Toriel." Frisk pulled out her hot knife. She kept her hand up very high on it and slowly moved it down until she felt warmth. "Even still."

“Good. After cake, I am going to fix your temperature and healing knife, so lie them out. I already checked your guitar. I know it's working perfectly. In the meantime?” Toriel smiled. “You know what to do.”

Frisk nodded as she got up and headed out.

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*Go to bed early, Momma Toriel.* Toriel lied in bed. She knew Frisk would do fine, but she was still anxious. For so many years they worked on correcting everything, and it was finally their chance. The only chance they could get. Frisk being out there all the way with her had limited her daughter to the modern world more. Although she stayed connected, she did not allow herself to do things like date or have fun with any friends. She was in fact friendless, with only acquaintances of those she worked with, and her.

Toriel turned in her bed. The night should not be a bother, but it was thinking of anything else that could happen with her daughter's supreme ACTing. She knew she had taught Frisk well, and she would free the Underground if it was possible in any way, but . . . Rainier.

He was not a bad fellow. He was certainly older, but Toriel had no room to complain there considering how old she'd been. He was not someone that held Frisk's heart though. It held no one. And as much as she hated what Asgore had chosen to do with the other children . . . she would have hated it even more if she never knew love. She hated Asgore, yet loved him. It was too hard to live with that feeling, so she left.

Although Frisk didn't want to admit it, there was more than Donald Rainier standing in her way too. She knew the deep regret that had happened with Sans the Skeleton. Frisk had told her of that, and she could feel how much Frisk did not want to take the approach they had to. Yet? She was staying determined, staying to the duty. She would do it. But when it came to when he walked toward her again? *No one can know, Frisk, but will he pick it up? Will you keep the path going?* Or would her heart mess it up?

The Underground would simply reset again if she messed up, but the more she did, the longer it would take and there was no time. *My child, you've grown up so big.* She could feel tears starting to well up in her eyes as she heard the sound of the door. *I hope that after this is over, we can all live peaceful lives. For you have not felt peace in your heart since that night I first held you.*

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“Anyhow, enough about that,” Frisk said during her friend date with Donald. She had stayed very well attuned to him all night, while allowing only a little conversation on her side. “I have a favor to ask, Don?”

Donald's appearance peaked, his eyebrow raised at the simple word she used for him. “I'm all ears.”

“You're always something. Not always just ears,” Frisk remarked. “You know, my dad was a gamer. A completionist.”

“Well known, I remember.”

“I suppose a part of me longs for those kinds of days again,” Frisk said. “Nothing like the gaming circuit, but completing games.”

“What’s stopping you?”

“I want to complete a game hardly anyone has before, on a SIM device.” Frisk got straight to the point. “I want to complete the genocide path of Undertale.”

“In an Ai SIM?” Hm. He took a bite of the steak Frisk had prepared for him. “I never played that. It’s faster than the usual, isn’t it?”

“No. There is a precise amount of leveling up that must be done in each section,” Frisk warned him. “It might take as much as a week, in a 3d environment.”

“Oh.” He was supremely interested. “You see a guy in a hot car and you want to take it for a spin?”

Frisk rolled her eyes. “Honestly. You *think* I am doing all this just for a game? I feel like it would be a tribute, not to mention fun again, but if you think your technology is so cool I can’t just save the money over a year to accomplish it, then fine.”

“Then?” Confusal.

Perfect. “Just forget it if you don’t get it.” She glanced away, with a side glance back, then away.

“Oh.” There. “Oh!” He patted his lips. “I suppose if you wanted something real nice, I could even set you up with a simple extra model in here for a couple of days?”

Three. She needed three, but she couldn’t rush it. She had him. With her looks, her offcast glances. While the game was truly everything, to him? It was supposed to seem like an excuse to work closely with him. It was a very good sign he could get somewhere with her.

She had kept him at arms’ length ever since she was 16, when she met him at older events that honored her father. She started the subtle flirting when she was illegally too young for him, but tempting. Her fire only rose, but her flirtations were much less common. She treated him much more like a friend, or sometimes as an associate. She would even sometimes draw strange parallels, reminding him of how young she had been when they first met when he tried to come on too strong.

But now? He was getting his first chance. Even this ‘date’, she never confirmed it to be more than anything but a meal between friends. She kept that temptation, that fire burning, so she could light it when it was ready.

It was smoking. “Two’s not much time. I mean. I *know* you are a busy man, but I was thinking that we could get it fixed up and . . .” she paused. “Well. What are you doing for a week?”

“Oh, Frisk.” His eyes definitely held the temptation. “I *wish* I could stay away for a week.” He rubbed his lips. “How about three days? After that, it gets rather tough. We’d have to put more days on hold. But, I would be open for more days? Later?”

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It took a full twenty four hours to hook up his machine. It wasn’t a simple task. While mainly the crew worked to install it into her house, she laughed, joked, flirted and gave her all to be a fun ‘friend and something more’ to Donald. That whole day she had even seemed to officially change his addressal to Don.

“It’s almost ready,” he said. “Frisk? Why don’t we grab one more bite to eat before it’s ready?”

“Oh no, are you kidding?” She touched his nose playfully and winked. “I’m on a strict schedule of so much time. I mean. I did do this so I could play it. Remember?”

“Yes. All for the game.” He still pressed his arm on the other side of her. “I’ve never known someone personally to actually complete the AI SIM Genocide mission of Undertale. It would take so long.” He looked at her up and down. “After you do that, we should talk about what it felt like?”

“It’s going to be a pure adrenaline rush I’m sure. And? I promise, I’ll have your rental back very soon.”

“Three days is fine. I’ll come back and see it’s taken down appropriately then too, whether or not you finish,” he said.

“Oh, I’ll finish,” Frisk said firmly. “I’m a completionist.”

“Well, if you don’t? We’ll try and make more time again for your game later.” He took his arm away. “Have fun, Frisk.”

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“He set up that woman who did the talkshows up and let her rent one for like two weeks from him,” her mother Toriel sighed as she looked at it. “Newest model too.”

“I’m just a crush, Momma Toriel,” Frisk reminded her as she came closer. “I won’t complain. Besides, he was using it too, and they were recording it for television to show their newest game created for its use.”

“Mm.” Toriel stroked the side of the machine. “Honestly? I wonder what it would be like to slide down rainbows and bounce on marshmallows. They both looked like it had been fun. Oh, humans.” She looked toward Frisk. “Take the last of the monster magic and turn it into a game. At least Donald Rainier is playful for the last of monster blood up here.” She stared at Frisk a few more seconds. “You ate. You rested. Are you ready for this?”

Frisk nodded. She gestured toward her knife belt across the inside of her vest, and grabbed her guitar from behind her. Not only a nice weapon, but a great device to make music too.

When it got heavy to handle. And it would. After all.

She would be killing everything in her path, to assure all the big names came out to play.



# Genocidal Human and Her Guitar

## Outside: AI SIM Machine Room

Donald simply chuckled as Frisk showed him the guitar in the middle of the game room. "Really?"

"I made a teeny adjustment for it," Frisk said. "I didn't mess with the game itself much. I know what I'm doing, Donald."

"You want the character Frisk to carry a guitar? You are a unique woman, I will give you that." He winked. "Standard basic rules, right?"

"To entice more audiences, sometimes dialogue is different, but the same events will still occur. It is not a brand new game," Frisk said. "Of course I know that." She shouldered him playfully. "I'm not going to forget that and sue you, Don."

"Never can be too careful," Donald said. "All footage will of course be documented." He laid his hand beside her on a small TV panel.

What the heck? She might as well try. It would be so much easier on her if she could get him to let up on it. "Is that really necessary?" She asked. She touched his shirt. "I'm not going to have a seizure or anything from using your equipment. If anything happens, the emergency sound would ring."

"Frisk. I really want you safe," he said. "I know that you can take care of yourself, especially around equipment that's for all ages. But, this setup has already been modified slightly." He gestured to her guitar. "I wouldn't feel comfortable not having it on. What if something subtle happened and you couldn't catch it, but the game did?" He gestured toward the head gear. "Did you know, last year alone-

"At least a hundred people are saved by going to the doctor, because your gaming system they were playing sensed something wrong," Frisk said. "Medical science has been trying to get you to sell your game secrets to them. It would have been a leap up in your type of clientele. One side, gaming, one side, life saving."

"But why?" Donald shook his head. "The doctors could do nothing more than playing a game of mine on the system could do. They would just charge customers up the wazoo for it, instead of letting them have fun playing a game. It's reasonably priced, and there's no reason to worry about anything before it goes out of control."

"Yeah, but you'd make more money for it," Frisk said. She patted his shirt. "Of course, that's not Donald Rainier, is it?"

"It's a game. It's for fun. The medical benefit was an unknown bonus, but I'm not changing anything." He touched the small TV panel again. "Which means there's no way I'm letting

you just play without it. The game finds things, but it also causes problems to show themselves too," he warned her. "I'm not risking that for you, Frisk."

It was worth a try. *At least it shows how good the monster in him is.* Frisk looked toward the panel. The wording would be different, it was something added to the program, but all the events. Everything had to line up. The only place that it would scramble and get weird, is when she finally met her brother again. He wasn't supposed to be in there, it wouldn't know whether to track him as a random sprite, a boss, or a fighter. Not on the outside.

"You didn't . . . program anything that was an unfair advantage to you?" Donald asked.

"A few weapons, but I kept the game fair," Frisk said. "Less health items. Just a new, different way to play." He looked like he wanted to check over everything one more time. "It's a small thing, Donald. I've helped to program and modify how many of your companies games?"

Donald nodded, then patted her shoulder. "I'm sorry. For some reason, I just thought you'd be giving yourself an unfair advantage. A little childish in my thinking, you wanted all of this to challenge yourself in the first place."

Frisk shrugged lightly. "We all have a little bit of child in us I guess. See you tomorrow? I'd like to explore the ruins a little bit tonight before bed. That okay?"

"Well, three days. Sure, add the rest of today on," Donald insisted. "Have fun, Frisk. That's what it's all about. I will see you tomorrow."

After she was sure he was gone, Frisk dove into the game. It was time.

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### **Inside: Underground: Ruins, Toriel's Previous Home**

*I'm so tired of this. What if this is all there is?* Frisk looked around himself. Living day to day for eternity in the Underground, or just stay there and probably die? He knew he couldn't now, but what if he was on a repeat, and he went through that same dread. That same pain every day.

Then he heard the sound of a whimsun. It was pleading, begging about something. *No one's inside the Ruins. Could it be?* Please, oh please! Let it be his sister! He ran out of Toriel's former home and deeper into the ruins. He saw someone. It was a woman wielding a yellow knife. He saw no opponent for her. She crept closer, but kept her eyes closed. A part of him felt like he should be scared as she walked, her eyes barely opening enough to see in his direction, but there was a different meaning to her walk. Something was different.

Before he could say anything, she put her finger close to her lips, signaling him to be quiet. "Note: Everything looks functional in Undertale. Some corruption of Gaster has been brought in the front, but other than that, all is well." She didn't say anything more, but she cracked a small smile toward him.

Oh! Undertale the game. *She was sent in by dad! But who is she?* He never remembered his dad mentioning anyone else he wanted in the games. Did his group have some kind of rescuer? *No, it's more than that. No. I know that I know her.* He clicked around desperately in his brain, looking for that same look. That same attitude. That same . . . then an image came to his mind. He knew who she'd been. " . . . E?" His sister.

She held her finger up to her lips, silencing him again. "I keep hearing a voice in the background," she said. "Besides that, the game is secure. It feels good to be back in it after all this time. I can't wait to see how far I get." Her eyes opened for just a moment, before closing them again. "I feel like this time playing genocide, I'm actually doing everyone a favor. I feel so at home, it feels like they could all come with me. Eventually."

"Wait." He got it. "It is you, Frisk." Not only that? She knew how to get him out! "When can I get out?"

"Eventually," Frisk said again. "There seems to be a slight echo in the game."

Ah! Frisk wanted to burst and go over to hug his sister. So much time must have passed! *Look at her. She's all grown up.* The Underground really had been stuck again. He'd been living the same day, over and over, just like Sans once did in the game. Somehow, Frisk knew a way for him to get out, but it involved the genocide path. *She is talking though like someone can hear her.* They must be able to still track what she was saying and doing in the game.

Fine. Frisk nodded. He didn't know his sister's plan, but she was the last one to want to wipe out anyone. She was the one who wanted to go back in and save everyone. Appearances had to be deceiving. She was somehow doing what he couldn't. He looked at her yellow knife she put away and watched her walk past. As she did so, she grabbed his hand, gently squeezing, but putting everything she could say into it.

She missed him. She loved him. She was there for him, and they were getting out. As she left, Frisk followed behind her. "Can they hear me too?" Frisk asked. Frisk didn't reply. For now, until he could figure out more, he would follow her. The answers would probably come, but if he acted like a noob and pushed too hard, he could jeopardize what his sister was wanting to accomplish.

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### **Underground, Back of the Ruins Door.**

He was there! He was there and safe, and hadn't aged a day. It was like looking into a very old mirror. He should have been in his twenties, like her, but time had stopped for him too. Since he gave away the magic to get out of the game, it treated him like everyone else. He had no power to keep the time moving. While it would be awkward to have him back at such a young age, it was more than worth it to get him back alive. She would get him out. She would rescue all of the monsters. She would do everything, ending the game of Undertale forever. No matter what it took.

Including dealing with an old skeleton in her closet. She had deep regrets over what happened. How he made her feel. She didn't want to be responsible for any more pain of

losing loved ones, but she had to play the game. Fully. *Childish feelings over hurt that I never intended nor could intend.* She would remember her Momma Toriel's words. Nothing had been her fault before. Nothing would be her fault now. No matter how those poor froggits, whimsuns, and any other creature in the ruins acted seeing her, fearing her, and knowing their death. Right now? They were being gathered in the secure location. Momma Toriel was greeting them with promises of showers, and extra delicious food they hadn't had in years. Their pain was now over.

Momma Toriel warned her that for her that night she shouldn't go too far. She did only have three days but she needed extra sleep to keep on her toes. So, she looked back toward her brother and winked right before she left.

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### **Outside: AI SIM Gaming Machine**

When Frisk came out of the game, she went back home and wasn't surprised, but still delighted to see everyone who had once been afraid of her. They were hopping and flying around Momma Toriel. The froggits were especially trying to talk to her, but she couldn't quite understand them. It was clear they were no longer afraid and thankful though. Those expressions. That result. *This is what I need to remember.* Because the journey would only become harder from there on out.

"Get some rest," Momma Toriel insisted as she wrapped Frisk up in a hug. "You've already done so much good and your three days haven't even started yet. You can do this, Frisk. Keep it up." She squeezed her tight. "You are such a wonderful daughter, Frisk. We can win this."

So far, so good. "I just covered the Ruins," Frisk said, "and I have a lot more to go. You're right though, I should get some sleep. Tomorrow will be a rougher one." An all day project. "I will do my best to get through it." Murdering everyone in her path. Making sure she backtracked and murder again, just like she did before. Would she get far enough that she would have to viciously cut down Papyrus though? He was the first, very hard monster who would speak and try to talk reason to her.

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### **Inside: Underground, Just Outside the Ruins**

Sans rested against the little keep out area Papyrus had made to keep humans out. The day was just about to end, but he saw Frisk actually coming toward him. The boy was barely as clothed yesterday and running, excited about something. Hopefully that meant someone was coming after him. He watched the boy stop in front of him. "Brave, Kid. Papyrus isn't anywhere near here. You're lucky." Still. "Whatcha want?"

"My sister is back," Frisk said, "but remember how entrance into the world is really just a game? She can't speak to me directly. She can't act any differently. She got away with a little with me, acting like I was corruption because I wasn't programmed in the game."

Did the human have to use those words for the Underground? Sans tried to take it easy. "Okay." He wasn't going to say anything else until the kid explained better.

"That's it," Frisk said, "but she killed everything back in the Ruins. She's got new weapons."

" . . ." Sure. That was going to help the situation. Mass genocide.

"She can't speak, and I'm sorry about referring to the game," Frisk said to him. "But it is, and she's playing it like it. You can't speak to her for some reason. She won't break character. But, I know she's not out to hurt anyone. I know I just said she killed everything in the Ruins, but there's got to be a reason for it. So, try not to say anything different than you would say to the Frisk sprite?"

Ah.

"She's way older too," Frisk admitted, rubbing his hands together and trying to breathe in them to warm them back up. "She's like in her twenties. So, time did stop." He breathed back in his hands.

Sans pointed behind Frisk. "Got the update. Get back before you die."

"So, what are you going to do?" Frisk asked.

"Gonna deal with the Frisk. Nothing new." Sans wasn't going to think about it.

"Will you act like your old self for her?" Frisk asked. "Sans, she wouldn't even talk to me directly. This is way important. Please?"

"So, what?" Sans asked, starting to get a little tired of it. "You want me to just recite the same old crap I said before while she murders everyone in Snowdin, including Papyrus?" Really? "My world's a game to her. Apparently, that hasn't *changed*." Sister or not.

"Something is wrong though, Sans. Really. Can you like do your little . . . judgment thing on her?" Frisk gestured between them. "Trust me, please? I promise, there's something more to this than we get."

"Got the update," he repeated. "Get back to the Ruins before you die, Kid." He wasn't going to add anything else to that. He watched Frisk go away. He himself started heading away, but not toward home. If Frisk was on the rampage, good or bad, it meant he was about to lose a lot of friends again. Especially his number one friend.

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## Sans' and Papyrus' House

"Hey. Here ya go."

Papyrus looked toward Sans at the front door and what he was carrying. "Oh, another action figure?!" He went over and took it. "I know the perfect spot for it! Thank you, Sans."

"No problem." Really no problem. He should have been using the money for the bills, but hey, time's been stopped for who knew how long again? On and off, on and off. The mail box could get a little more stuffed. Who needed heat anyhow? They were skeletons. Let 'em turn it off. He watched his brother carry his action figure upstairs. "Afterwards, I'll read ya a story

before we go to bed. Okay?" He heard Papyrus shout about his favorite one. Yeah, yeah. He'd do whatever made Papyrus happy right now, 'cause if Frisk was right and his sister was killing everything again, he'd be losing Papyrus. Probably tomorrow.

He'd get a look at her, just like the boy wanted, but it wasn't going to change anything. Vindictive or innocence, she was out to kill, and he couldn't stop her. Never could. He'd hope she'd change her mind and stop herself, or he'd eventually go too. Go out the way he wanted, not just living with whatever damage she caused along the way. But he wasn't going to stop her. No one could. She was unstoppable. She died, she would just start over again, like the boy.

Except she was clearly on a different kind of mission. She was gaining the power to keep going, she wasn't like her brother. It was tough to see when she was younger, there were a lot of things getting in the way. Her shame and guilt. Her thinking it was just a game. Her naive young age. A lot of years passed though. People change. Sometimes good, sometimes bad.

For all Sans knew, maybe she was holding the Underground responsible for what happened to her little brother and she was making it pay. Maybe she had to kill the entire Underground in order to rescue him. There was no way to be sure. Not until she showed herself to him. Even then, it's not like his innate ability was going to give him any real details like the little Frisk was hoping for. *Big Frisk, little Frisk*. Probably bad Frisk, good Frisk. He couldn't say either way right now. All he knew? Was that his brother wanted a story, so he'd be good and give him a story.

You know. Before losing him and Snowdin tomorrow.

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### **Outside: Toriel's Home**

"Can you say something like, once more into the breach?" Frisk joked with her Momma Toriel as she finished her cake. Even after all the happy chirps and greetings with all the small monsters from the Ruins she saved, she could still feel the impenetrable pit in her stomach. Today, she would be meeting Sans. She didn't know if he would be the exact same or not. If he would remember or not. If he didn't, it would be better. She could go with the simple script, not really spending any time with him at all. Things would be easier. If not? *No, no. Not that direction, not healthy.* "I'm going to murder Snowdrake, Icecap, Gyftrots and so many more. I may have to even murder Papyrus today. If I'm lucky." She let out a half choked laugh. "If I'm lucky."

"I know that psychologically this is terrible on you, Frisk." Her mother gave her a hug. Frisk felt her warm, soft fur around her and hugged her back. "If it wasn't needed. If there was another way to break this for good, then I would do it. In a heartbeat, I would do it for you. I don't want you to go through this-"

"I'm lucky to even get this chance," Frisk finished for her. That's probably not what her mother would have said, but it was going to be the ending of that sentence to her. "It's hard, but I'm lucky I even got this chance. I've been waiting for this." She let go of her mother. "I'll be back Momma Toriel, I promise. By the end of the day, I will do my best to bring back as

many monsters as possible." She placed her guitar back on her. "I didn't strum at all yesterday, I had no time. I have a little time today."

"Once most of the monsters are out of the way, you will have time," her mother told her. "Just go out, and do what's necessary. You can do it. All these monsters around here, are absolutely thrilled you killed them in the game. Now, they can live again." She gave her one more hug. "Go out there, Frisk, and I will be sure to have many more showers lined up for everyone."

"If you are here and there's a knock on my door, just ignore it until I get back," Frisk warned her. "Lock all the doors, make sure all the curtains are closed. He'll know I'm playing the game, so hopefully if he does intrude, it's just toward the gaming area. I don't think he will."

"Not for three days," Toriel said, "He probably won't show up. Nothing worth showing up for, is there? So, you do well! I know you can do it. It takes a longer time to traverse without being an impenetrable sprite, but I'm glad you made it out of the Ruins last night."

"Well, there was no boss fight," Frisk reminded her. "Don't interact, just get through it," she told herself one more time.

"He won't know exactly, Hon." Her mother still read her mind.

"Who?" Frisk tried to play dumb. "Oh, Sans the Skeleton? That's fine, I'm fine with it."

"Sure." Her mother didn't believe her. "He's not going to be completely against you or for you. He won't know what to make of you. So watch your step, but don't be afraid. He won't try and fight you. We know how it goes. And if he remembers? Then he knows you'd just keep coming back anyhow."

"I better get going." Frisk wanted to get out of the conversation. The Underground was not a pleasant place filled with bright colors. It was disgusting, riddled with smells, and monsters that hadn't bathed in thousands of years. It was deplorable, hard to breathe in, and she needed to just get through it.

"Now, hang on." Her mother gave her one more look over, and healed her one more time. She was anxious in that environment, Frisk's body would not be able to take it without picking up some kind of disease. It was something Frisk couldn't doubt her on. She could find herself face up in a ditch dead because of something she caught. "Take a break if you feel strange, sick, too hot, too cold, or if you just need a break." She patted her shoulders one more time. "I know it's a terrible time for you, but I want you to remember that others are having a terrific time because of you." She laughed. "I am off to make more cake, and prepare more homes for showering. Soon, we'll have homes more situated. They do have to go on the farther end though, so they aren't discovered by Donald Rainier."

"I know," Frisk said. "I can remember that." She would remember that. It was all worth it. "Bake some excellent food, get the towels ready, and have fun." With that, she started to head out toward the gaming station.

"Yeah, I was afraid of that." For some reason, the game wouldn't keep her progress through stars. Her father once said it couldn't do that, and he was right. At least she would get to see her brother Frisk again. It felt so different, seeing him so small. He was supposed to be the same age as her.

He waved at her, like he'd just been waiting. Good, it looked like he remembered. He was more than glad to see her.

If only she could talk to him directly. Tell him everything he needed to know. Not only about the monsters, but everything else too. How their parents were both gone, and how they went. How she survived and went on. She wanted to share so much with him, but it was risky. Saying she was hearing things from some kind of modified Gaster experience was one thing. Talking about their parents was another.

And as great as Donald Rainier was, there was no way of knowing how he would take the fact someone knew his heritage. He might destroy all of his games and disappear altogether if he knew someone made that connection. Or, maybe he was even putting his own magic into it unknowingly? Frisk could program, people could build, but every system was only handled and prepared for functioning and powering after Donald went through and approved it. There was just too much riding on it to risk it. At least, so far.

She pulled out her guitar. It would be empty for a little while. All the creatures she defeated yesterday were home, and anyone left over (if there was any left over) would never come out. So, as a little tribute for them, she played Stairway to Heaven on her guitar at the beginning of the journey. She could hear her brother in the distance, humming it lightly too. After the first leg of her journey, doing all the little puzzles to get across, she started to play another song. This song was from her Momma Toriel.

Fallen Down. It was a song that her mother hummed to her.

///"Are you okay?" Toriel asked her as she placed her hand on Frisk's knee, trying to heal her.

At the time, Frisk had no idea who she'd really been. She was a character from the game, and in need of a bath so badly. Her rampant smell was repugnant, but Frisk didn't reject her for that. She wasn't being real conversational, her mind was on everything that had happened. *Everyone is gone*. Her mother was murdered, shot at that unforgettable party. Her father had been shot saving her. Toriel took her away, and when she woke up she found out about her brother Frisk's fate too. *T is gone*.

Her whole family. She'd been so out of it, when she felt the touch of Toriel on her again, her fur had been cleaned and white. She'd left for a bath, and had come back. Frisk rubbed her eyes. The tears would never stop.

"This wasn't supposed to happen. They were just pushing a little harder. He was just such an idiot. He had the most important pawns, but he couldn't get them away." The woman that her mother made her father slap was speaking over in a corner. "Tragic, but, we've been trying to accomplish this for so long." She swallowed. "We won't let it down." She turned to Toriel. "What you see is yours. This place is paid for by the group. I've shared what happened. They have the most sincerest of condolences."



"Why bother saying this to me?" Toriel asked. "It is the poor girl Frisk here who is hurting."

"Yeah." Still, the lady didn't sound so happy. "There's more than enough room for all of you, whenever you do return. The group won't force anything else, seeing what happened. We'll probably wait longer to do anything. If you want to do something yourself, that's up to you."

Frisk barely lifted her tear-stained eyes to the woman. She had no warmth.

"I'm not taking it," the woman said again. "If you want it, you take it, otherwise I'll drop her off somewhere. Find her a different home."

"She is not an 'it'," Toriel said back to her. "She is an innocent little girl, whom you and your group have mentally abused without even her knowledge. And yes, I will take her. And yes, I will eventually get the others out, but not for a long time."

Frisk felt Toriel's soft fur on her head as she hummed to her lightly. The other woman left without a word. Her mother, father, and brother were all gone. The only human in that room had been cold and distant to her. Yet, the monster. The monster before her who owed her absolutely nothing, had been kind to her. Had saved her life. Frisk looked down at herself. She had cleaned her up too, getting her into some fresh clothes. "Thank you."

"It's okay. No need to say anything until you are ready." Toriel simply hummed her song. Soft and smooth. She was more than just the character she remembered from the game. "I know what it's like to lose family, Frisk. I lost my children. You know that from entering into my world before." Frisk nodded lightly. "My husband, I could no longer see the monster I had once married either. He was gone to me as well. So, you don't need to ask. You don't need to think about your future at this time. You can simply grieve, knowing that I will take care of your needs from now on."

With that, Frisk started to cry even harder. Her little chokes were giving way. Toriel brought her into her arms, and moved to a rocking chair, rocking her back and forth as Frisk grieved for everything. Her old life was gone as she had known it. The father she had once treasured to have the love of, had been shot and killed. Her mother had died, the glass shattering around them. Nothing would ever be the same again. Yet, through all this, at least she had someone who cared.///

"I can do this, Momma Toriel." As she played the song, she heard her brother humming in the distance again. His way of letting her know he understood her actions, and he was there for her. Strangely, the game Undertale's 'soundtrack' had included her song. They gave the game all the life, all the connection it could. The songs from the game were all monster songs. Important monster songs of the past, holding the connection even tighter to the outside.

And the songs also had a power of their own. Not a magical force to be reckoned with, but since it kept the world's tied together, it helped to fuel her journey. Any remnants of magic that had been there, would come to her, slowly. Strum by strum from the ancient songs. She would have never known it if it hadn't been for Momma Toriel. She fully taught her every song, on guitar. A simple guitar.

Gone were the days of needing to master games to feel any love. Her new mother had shown her another new way to express herself, and gave her a guitar. She taught her, little by little, about playing the instrument. If Frisk messed it up, she wasn't lauded or told she wasn't good enough. She wasn't criticized, just taught a part over again, until she finally got it. And the praise was natural, nothing over the top. Nothing that said 'you have to do this, or I won't love you.' Nothing like her father.

While she was learning that, Toriel had also taught her about fighting and made her weapons as she grew older. The newest games, Frisk wouldn't have even known about, if it wasn't for the Rainier connection she had to keep. Which, was okay. The connection to games, it was still inside of her. A part of her life. But now, just a part. There was so much more to life out there than beating a game.

As she finished the song *Fallen Down*, she moved into the next ancient song, *Ruins*. It was said that they all originally had words when they were first conceived. They were conceived above ground, so much longer before the ending of the monsters on the surface. Toriel nor Asgore never let on about the songs, but somewhere in the Underground, they were always playing. Lending hope. Lending power. The words were long gone, but their melody lived on in whatever format it could be heard. From a simple saxophone, to the pitter patter of rain. It was the only blessed thing in the cursed, dark, and disgusting habitat of the Underground.

She stopped playing though when she reached the purple doors again. She looked backward, seeing her brother Frisk again, giving her a thumbs up. At least he was smart enough not to go out too far. Even with the guitar holding and gathering power, there was no saying for sure that there wasn't something infectious that would kill her without it's protection. And even it's protection was not enough to satisfy her Momma Toriel.

Besides, one day the momentum she had gathered Underground, would be released. But not that day. She opened the door into the snow. She spied the cameras, knowing they were right there. Probably due to Alphys. She started to walk along the way.

Frisk waited to see if she'd hear it. It would show whether time stopped for Sans too, whether he remember what happened on the surface. Step by step, she waited for it. Nothing. *Damn it*. That meant he knew.

\*Crack\*

Oh good. Frisk felt relief flood into her. It was so much better if he didn't know what was happening. She kept going, not looking back at all. She made sure to try to keep her eyes closed as much as possible. Her expression emotionless. Just like the sprite had been. It was her best chance to get him to follow into the same act he had always played.

When she neared the bridge, she felt herself freeze. She expected it. She heard the sound of his voice, asking her to turn around. *He didn't say the friend bit*. So far, everything was the same except the friend bit. She turned around.

And met eye sockets of solid black. *Shit!*



# Thank You For Murdering Me!

## Inside: Outside Snowdin Town

Sans didn't waste any time. He wasn't going to just play around, he knew what her original plan had been because of her little brother's warning. Sure, he couldn't change it, but he wanted to know what had been going on. As he caught her expression, he saw all the EXP she had gathered so far. It was powerful. She was already pretty powerful. It wasn't going to take long to take everyone in Snowdin out again. He sensed some kind of fear too, but there was something else.

While he wasn't going to be on cue, nor would he ever want to be that predictable word for word for her 'game', he wasn't stepping out of line too much because she had already done something different the Frisk sprite had never done. He had stayed near the Ruins, spying alongside of her. Watching her. Her brother tagged along, but so did he.

And the songs she played. Those were monster songs, genuine ancient monster songs. One of the only things monsters still possessed that made their world livable. She was playing them on a guitar. There was only one reason for that. She knew someone who knew the ancient songs to teach her them, note by note, perfectly. She had known Toriel well enough to learn them. It scored a point in her favor.

Yet, the Ruins were completely empty. Nothing was spared. Even now, she was filled with so much EXP, it was hard to see anything in her. "Sans the Skeleton," he said. She didn't answer, just stayed silent with her eyes almost closed. Time had definitely moved, Frisk was right. His sister looked almost as old as him now. From eight to twenties or so. Time, just being more ripped away. "Go through ahead. My brother made the way too wide to stop anyone."

She went through with him, almost side by side. Then he muttered. "You know Toriel." It wasn't a question. She nodded slightly, so slightly he almost didn't see it. She was trying to remain as stoic and emotionless as possible, it was obvious. "You'd think knowing her would make you take a slightly less genocidal role down here. Ever think of not killing anyone?"

Oh yeah, she lost her composure slightly as they arrived close to the conveniently shaped lamps. "Momma Toriel never raised no pacifist."

At first, Sans wanted to say something to that. She was being cruel because he wasn't playing by her gaming rules. However, the front part seemed odd. Why did she say 'Momma Toriel'? There was so much more to it than he knew, and he hoped it was good. Yet? Why would something good be murdering everything? What excuse? "Quick. Behind the lamp." Of course, she didn't bite. "Fine. Don't."

"Sans! Did you refind the human from yesterday!" Papyrus shouted as he came over.

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*Damn.* Frisk kept it together, but she remembered another reason she'd been scared of Sans as a child. Thousands of years Underground left the skeletons muddy and disgusting,

resembling themselves more as zombies. Papyrus? He was no exception. Sans didn't smell like a rose, nor were his bones pure white, but someone could still tell that he'd actually been a skeleton monster, not the living undead.

When she was smaller and met Sans, he'd been tall to her the first time. Now, they were about the same size, but Papyrus' size? He was staggering! He was almost twice as tall as her. In the game when they made Sans much shorter than Papyrus, it was no joke. It wasn't because Sans was short. No, it was because Papyrus was tall. *Keep it together, Frisk. You are still just beginning.*

"Not yet. Found this though," Sans said gesturing to Frisk.

"Well? That's something." Papyrus walked off.

"Guess that's settled."

Frisk walked away, knowing she still had a long way to go.

"Hey," Sans called out to her. "My brother'd really like to see a human again, so, you know? It'd really help me out if you kept pretending to be one."

Good. He played his part. He messed up slightly, but Donald wouldn't catch too much. So far, he hadn't even used her name. Was Sans being perfect? Of course not, but he wasn't ruining anything. Her mother was right, Sans wouldn't trust her, but he wouldn't go completely against her either. He was playing on the edge, trying to figure out what had been going on. *If I could tell you, I would. Your little mess-ups can be blamed on goofs. I can't mess up. I can't call out. I can't warn. I have to do this. I have to play everything this way. I'm sorry.* Frisk didn't say anything out loud, simply left on her way to start her spree.

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Snowdrake. He wasn't far. *I'll make this quick, little bird. Less anxiety.* All he wanted to do was be good like his dad at comedy. He told an annoying joke, but Frisk didn't play around. She took out her temperature knife in her left hand on her turn. He told another corny joke. She took out her yellow knife.

Although, she didn't want to think about how much time had already been taken up. In the game, it felt like everything progressed by faster. Being out on the actual terrain of snow, she didn't feel like a creature that could walk through it like it was nothing. Like it was the ruins. It was ice cold, zapping some of her strength. She was already walking slower. She should at least have been to the dog couple by now, and she was barely in her first encounter, with sixteen more to go.

She listened to the next lame joke, and then rubbed her temperature with her yellow knife. The yellow knife iced up, and then it started to burn below the ice, becoming hot red. Frisk struck in a single slash, and he was gone. She continued on her way. *Damn it!* More slow down. In the game, it was cool when she played as a child. It built character depth and meaning. Now? It was a pain in her side.

Sans and Papyrus were up ahead. Papyrus was asking about a new human Sans must have mentioned.

"So, Sans!" Papyrus said. "When's this next human showing up? I want to look my Sunday best . . . or at least my Tuesday pretty-good."

Comedy routine. *No time for this.* Frisk watched them do their odd comedy routine until Sans pointed her out to Papyrus. And of course, he thought Sans was telling him to look at a rock. Frisk felt like checking her watch. *Come on.*

"What's that in front of the rock?" Sans asked Papyrus.

"Oh my god! I have no idea what that is," Papyrus admitted. "Hm. It looks slightly like the human from yesterday. Except, it's very big. Well, no matter! Prepare yourself for high jinks! Low Jinks! Danger! Puzzles Capers and Japers!"

*Just get on with it already!* She did not have time for this dialogue. As Papyrus finished his rant he ran off.

Finally, Sans said his next line. Yet, it felt a lot more strained. " . . . and you don't even bat an eye, huh?" He left.

That stung a little. It was what he was supposed to say, and Frisk needed to get through it. Yet. *This is the last time to him with his brother. He doesn't understand. He doesn't even know for sure what's going to happen.* No, she couldn't break character! *I could play a little? This isn't the straight game, I said I modified it some.* But if she did, how much longer would that be? And she still had a lot of monsters to deal with besides the comedy duo. *No, I can't. I mean, if I do that, it's going to hurt even worse. If I break character, Sans will only be more stunned when I do what I have to. He already knows it's coming. Just get through it all.*

She moved away, not bothering to look at the sentry station. She fought ice-cap and could feel her yellow giving out. It was her lowest powered knife. She should have let her mother fix it yesterday. Wasting blue now. At least she didn't have to use her temperature knife again. Next, she ran into Doggo. After that. *Not again.*

"Oh ho! The human arrives!" Papyrus shouted toward her. "In order to stop you, my brother and I have created some puzzles! I think you will find this one-"

Frisk made her decision, then and there. Even if it was their last day to spend together, she just couldn't do it. She needed to get it over with, and not break character. She went right through the puzzle while Papyrus said a few words.

"It would make my brother happy." His voice was firm. Hard. "If you played along?" The grinding of his teeth, she could hear it.

No. She couldn't steer from what she needed to do. She turned and left him. She moved off to commit more genocide. *No, freeing them!* It was so hard to remember. Watching them, just walking right into the ambush. Over and over. Then? *Oh no.*

The dog couple. The sweet dog couple. Frisk couldn't kill them both at the same time. One of them would have to feel the pain of losing the other. *He'll be depressed. She'll be enraged.* She took out the female first and as fast as she could, closed her heart and took out the male dog. *They are together on the other side.* It just. It was so hard not getting to see it. Snowdin felt so much harder than the Ruins.

She rubbed her face, trying to clear it. There was so much more to do. And? The puzzle comedians were up ahead again. She barely even listened to Papyrus as she immediately went through the puzzle. She didn't answer him about whether she liked puzzles or japes more. She just walked past them, and dealt with the ice puzzle. She couldn't ignore it. Then, she continued to kill-*No, save, save!* - more monsters. She moved past Sans again, not saying anything.

Then. *The little poofball, Greater Dog.* Frisk took him out as well. *Cake on the other side. Plenty of applause. Plenty of thanks. It's all waiting when I get out of here. Just remember. Remember. Remember.* What she wouldn't give to be able to pull out her guitar and simply play. Play to remember better times. But, there was no time yet for that. Not yet.

First, the gauntlet. Luckily, she didn't have to mess with that. She just waited for Sans and Papyrus to have their brotherly bond moment, talking about puzzles and traps and how Undyne would like it better. She left it all, without a word. She checked out the shop, making sure no one was there. Everything was according to how it should be.

Except, of course, the little guy. The only character her character really got to know because he traveled with her. A lot more foul than his original presence, and his clothes a lot more torn asunder, he was still a bright and cheery little guy. He made Frisk feel so much better. Monster Kid.

"Yo! Everyone ran away and hid somewhere," he said. "Man, adults can be so dumb sometimes," he chuckled. "Don't they know we've got Undyne to protect us?"

Oh. For a moment, Frisk was feeling good. Then she remembered. *He'll be stuck here.* He'd watch Undyne die, by her hands. He would be stuck there until the Underground was returned back to where it belonged. He'd be stuck watching the Underground just suffer. *Strength, Frisk. It's just beginning.* She knew it was getting late. She was over her time limit. Her mother was going to start getting so worried about her. But? *Just a little more. I don't want to go through this all again. I can't get any sleep, knowing I didn't reach where I needed to. I'm taking Papyrus out!*

She passed Monster Kid, and made her way to Papyrus.

He told her to halt in the fog. "I, The Great Papyrus, have some things to say!"

Of course he did. *Pink or blue? I shouldn't waste pink. No, he also surrenders. Blue.*

"First," he continued, "you're a freaking weirdo. Not only do you not like puzzles, but the way you shamble about from place to place."

*Well, damn it, you try doing what I have to do!* She wasn't feeling any mercy with those words. Yes, they were the words he should use, but they still hurt. Would she be walking upright and in a good mood? No. She barely managed to scrape enough energy and memories to keep moving on, knowing she was doing the right thing, while it felt so much like the wrong thing.

"It feels . . . like your life is going down a dangerous path," he added. "However, I, Papyrus, see great potential within you!"

*It's going down a path. It's been going down a hard path for many years.* Frisk kept her thoughts to herself. She had that speech memorized, but when he actually said it, the sound of his words? Cut. They cut.

"Everyone can be a great person if they try! And me, I hardly have to try at all! Nyeh heh heh heh heh heh!"

*That is sort of funny.* Frisk didn't break character but she smiled on the inside. Only he could be smug, and not leave the impression of being a jerk. Especially with his laugh. But, she couldn't break character. She moved forward more.

Papyrus complained in the fog again. He told her she was in need of guidance, and he'd be her friend and tutor. Such a good guy. *Extra long shower, warm water with soap, waiting for him.* Even the repulsive look he gave no longer bothered her. It didn't matter, his true self was shining through his dialogue. She moved closer to him again. This was it.

"Are you offering a hug of acceptance?" Papyrus asked. "Wowie! My lessons are already working! I, Papyrus, welcome you with open arms!" He bend down and held his arms out to her. He was sparing her.

Of course. *It'll be okay. This is good. I'm sending him to the surface. Good food. Water. A new home.* Frisk did her best to keep it together as she held out her blue knife and slashed it. It only took one time, his body fell to dust. Yet, his head kept talking to her. Saying he still believed in her. No, all of him had to go. *There he goes.*

Frisk moved to the other side. She saw Monster Kid waiting, but she didn't want to talk. The star. She just wanted to get to the star. Her intended destination. *One day over. Two days left.* But as she was about to leave, she felt something clasp onto her.

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## **Outside: Gaming Room**

Frisk stared at Sans. *No, oh he didn't!* He grabbed onto her as she left. "You are supposed to stay there."

Sans didn't seem to be listening to her as he opened the door and looked around. He was already marching away.

Frisk grabbed her cell phone, not kept very far. "Momma Toriel?" she said. "Sans caught a ride on me. He's walking away."



"What?! I'll be right out!"

Good. Frisk watched as her mother came yelling out at Sans. Oh, she sounded mad. Mad enough to get him to turn around. She ran out toward him.

"Sans, go over and get back in the game!" Toriel demanded. "We will not be able to save the Underground if you don't do it! It'll be another thousand years of endless darkness because you decided to grab onto Frisk!"

"Where's Papyrus?" Sans asked. "What's going on?" He gestured to Frisk. "Ain't in no game anymore, *now* I want answers. My brother somehow better be *alive* here."

"Of course he's alive. Everyone is alive, and don't point at my daughter like that." Toriel pushed his arm down that he'd been using to gesture to Frisk. "Thanks to Frisk, everyone is coming out of the Underground." She groaned. "Hurry up, inside, Sans. Main house. You too, Frisk."

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### **Outside: Main Room For Newcomers**

Sans waited inside. Toriel started to recount what happened. Her being taken and riding to get Frisk, but he spied his brother behind her.

"That was so wonderful!" Papyrus exclaimed as he brushed the top of his skull. "I wish it could be longer, but I can see there is quite a line still." He bent down to Snowdrake. "Thank you for letting me go in front of you." He turned and saw Sans. "You are here too! How wonderful that Frisk murdered you as well!"

Huh? "How? Papyrus?"

"He is not here to stay," Toriel said to Papyrus. "Not yet. He had a bigger role to play, and we must keep up the charade until all the strongest monsters have been taken out by Frisk." She looked toward Sans. "Which of course means the monsters that don't come out, need to. Which means Frisk had to play genocide. You were on the surface, you should have put something together."

"Oh. Sorry," Sans said sarcastically. "Don't really think 'hey, getting lifted to the surface' when you see all the monsters dying around you." He looked back to Papyrus. "You okay?"

"Fine. A little attachment back to my head, but otherwise very good. And look, I am clean! I feel better than I have in- FRISK!" Papyrus suddenly changed direction as he saw the older Frisk girl who just killed him. He grabbed her, picked her up and wrapped her in a deep hug. "Thank you for murdering me!"

Frisk choked, with her voice a little high. "Welcome?"

"Papyrus, no!" Toriel tried to yank him away. "My daughter is but human, she is very weak! Be gentle to her!"

Daughter. Hmm. "Momma Toriel never raised no pacifist," Sans repeated as he looked toward Tori. "That makes sense now. Being kind never would have got the stronger pieces to come out, huh?" Hm. "What about Flowey?"

"Say goodnight to your brother, Sans," Toriel said. "You'll see him soon. Hopefully very soon."

"I am past my limit, Momma Toriel, I'm very sorry," Frisk apologized to her. "I had to stay longer."

"I was worried sick about you, Sweetheart!" Toriel scolded her. "I understand our time limit, but still. You promised to be out at a decent time. It's midnight. You aren't going to be nearly in as good condition to handle tomorrow. There is no way you can take on Undyne."

"I can't handle Undyne, Mettaton, Asgore and Flowey all in one day, Momma Toriel," Frisk reminded her.

"Time limit?" Sans questioned. "So you got the game for just so long."

"Yes. Two more days. She needs to take out the strongest monsters. At the same time, she is being monitored," Toriel revealed. "So she can't just up and tell anyone, anything. So? Now will you return? You know your brother is safe. Everyone she has touched over on the other side is safe."

"Touching them with a weapon, saves them. One go." That explained the new weapons. She needed to make sure she landed a blowing kill in one hit, to make sure the illusion of it all didn't break. "I want to know more."

"You need to go home," Toriel warned him.

"Wrong," Sans said. "I? I never meet her again until Judgment Hall. She never sees me," he reminded her. "I didn't, you know, feel like hanging out with something I think killed Papyrus. I'll go back for Judgment Hall." Nothing else though. Why bother? He had Papyrus back. They had the surface together. The whole Underground was actually coming up, to feel the freedom it's always longed for. Why would he want to go back to that bitter loneliness?

Toriel sighed. "Fine. Stay. You would probably mess things up anyhow since you couldn't understand what was going on." Toriel nodded to Frisk. "But you? Off to bed with you, right away. I have your supper ready, go eat some, and then off to bed." Frisk nodded at her. "And brush your teeth as well!"

"Yes, Momma Toriel," Frisk moaned lightly.

"And then you are getting up a decent time for a breakfast before you go back in!" Toriel said to her again.

"Yes, Momma Toriel," Frisk moaned again.

"And no taking this long tomorrow!" Toriel sighed and looked back at Sans. "Oh well. There is a line for the shower. Not very long. There are plenty of homes. We are starting in the back

of the property holdings first. There are reasons for it."

"Reasons?" Sans asked.

"Yes. The creator of the machine that connects to our world, comes up and sees Frisk up front. That is not an area to be caught in," Toriel warned him. "Of course, I understand your actions. You were worried. It looks like . . . but it's not. You can't see any dust on her hands. There is none. She is going in to save, not kill."

"Yeah. Getting it now." Sans looked back the way Frisk left. "So, you adopted the human?"

"Yes. If you would have listened before you ran off," Toriel scolded lightly. "Her mother and father died. Her brother was trapped in the Underground. I raised her as my own, teaching her how to survive what she would take on one day." She smiled. "I'm so proud of her so far. She has been through so much, and she's so close."

Ouch. "So, the dad that turned his kids into the characters, he's dead, huh? And that powerful little mom of hers." Hm. "Should have named her something different if you're her momma now."

"I'm not her momma," Toriel corrected him. "I am Momma Toriel. Her 'momma' is dead."

"Yeah. Sorry. I never dealt with that monster loss adoption crap. Stuff," Sans corrected himself. It was only right Frisk called her original mother momma, and her secondary by her first name with momma. It was a monster thing. Toriel raised her the monster way. Good. Maybe it gave her more sense.

"Sans, you need to get in on this cake!" He heard from Papyrus over in the other corner.

Ooh, cake. He noticed Toriel's look on him though. "What?"

"Can you . . . if you aren't supposed to meet her again, is there a way to help her get through genocide?" Toriel asked. "She only has two more days."

Ooh. "Ouch."

Toriel seemed to be looking off in the distance, before she looked back toward him. "Go ahead and get some cake. Have some time with your brother. Go out and enjoy the stars."

"Can we get any extra time?" Sans asked. He'd go and do all of that, but he wanted to know details. As many details as possible. Someone was trying to save the Underground, with the former queen's help. That wasn't a shot in the dark, that was a *real* chance. Except for one thing. "He only came out when things were good."

"Oh. Asriel," Toriel whispered. "We had to choose something that would get everyone. Flower form is something. It has to work."

Hm. "I don't really think I can do anything to get her through it faster."

"Her biggest trip up is guilt," Toriel revealed. "She sees exactly what everyone else does. She hears the same thing. While she knows what's happening on this side, being surrounded in that kind of environment? Where everyone thinks she is killing monsters mercilessly? It weighs her down. She should have been in and out by at least nine. She's dragged on for three extra hours. It's practically day two." Toriel was biting on the claws on her paws.

"I will help!" Papyrus came over with a slice of cake, eating it with enthusiasm. "I imagine it is quite tough, and if she is actually saving the Underground, then I, Papyrus, will gladly be of assistance."

"Yeah." She got caught on the wrong end of the game as a kid, but she was doing the right thing. "No idea what we can do to help," Sans admitted. He saw the nerves in Toriel. "We'll help if we can. Don't get so nervous about it, Tori. We'll make it."

"Oh. Thank you." Toriel moved her paws from her face. "Please, enjoy yourself."

"Yeah, one second." Sans noticed it though. "You kind of dodged the 'why didn't you change her name' question?"

"Sans. Do you have to bother her about everything?" Papyrus scolded him.

"She keeps Frisk. It reminds her of her family," Toriel answered Sans. "She said one day when she gets her brother back, she may consider changing names."

"Yeah 'cause Frisk and Frisk is gonna get annoying," Sans answered. "The boy gonna live with you too?"

"When her brother comes? Probably," Toriel said. "They will want to spend time together I am sure."

Yeah. Family. It was important. Hard to believe the little squirt had already aged so much. "She really grew up," Sans noted. "She was just a kid, now she's practically my age. Kind of weird," he admitted. Sans saw a slice of cake pop up in front of him from Papyrus. "Hey, thanks." Aw. Real food. Surface life. A start for monster kind again. Finally.

And now that he knew where Papyrus had been safely? He could check out the stars with him too.

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## **Outside The Main Area. . .**

"Look at it, Sans!" Papyrus pointed at different stars. "Those look like a face. Ooh, that's a tea kettle. That looks like my old battle costume." He gestured to his new clothes. "It's nice to have fresh clothes though. And to be bony white again. I had no idea how grungey I had been." He looked back up. "That one looks like a car."

"Heh. That one looks like a new start," Sans said, gesturing to the whole sky. "Never thought I'd see it again."

"Again?" Papyrus asked. "You've seen it before?" Sans nodded. "Oh. I just got the barest of explanations. That I wasn't dead, I was on the surface, a human girl named Frisk saved me, and I got shoved into a shower." He shrugged. "Most everyone looks like they get shoved in right away, but the bigger, the faster I suppose. I was . . . a little ripe. No idea how bad, until . . ."

"Been there." Sans patted his back. "No problem. Got into the same situation some time ago. That little human back there? He's her brother. They used to be the same age. Turns out, we've had some nasty dimensional magic on us. We don't even really age unless a human comes down. Doesn't count for him though."

"Don't age?" Papyrus asked. "Oh. That's why humans are so advanced now?"

"Yeah. By a long time." Sans stared at the sky as he explained the basics of how entrance worked into their world, as well as the game mechanics the girl Frisk had to follow. " . . . and so Boy Frisk sounds like he's stuck, but Girl Frisk will eventually get them out."

"At a large cost," Papyrus said toward Sans. "I heard the former queen. She is doing this all for someone else. Her mother. The Underground. Her brother. She's trained for years at it, putting her whole soul into it!" He pounded his chest. "What an amazing human. And now, she keeps going into the deep, dark abyss. Hoping she can keep it mentally together, and break everyone out in time before it's too late."

He looked at his skeletal hand, admiring the bone structure disconnected from all the muck and grime.

"Ah, she kills them too quick to hear begs of mercy," Sans said. He noticed Papyrus' look toward him.

"She is doing so much and no one can help her," Papyrus insisted. "I must find a way. I cannot just enjoy the surface life knowing someone else is suffering for us." He rubbed his bony chin. "I want to know more about the games. If it takes such little magic, why hasn't the former Queen Toriel done anything? It would be nice if we could get the Brilliant Doctor Alphys up here."

Nah. She wasn't as big a thing as they all thought. "She'll be last." Sans looked down toward the ground. "New soil feels pretty good."

"I will help her. I must help her. Especially after calling her a weirdo and an idiot," Papyrus said. "My goodness, I really need to thank her properly! I need to whip up a batch of my most special spaghetti. Oh, but. She needs breakfast tomorrow. No matter. I'll find something, some way to help. I, Papyrus, make that promise beneath these stars!"

"Uh huh."

"No matter what it takes, I will make sure Frisk makes it through happy and healthy!"

"Uh huh."

"Even if I somehow must sacrifice myself for her, I guarantee she will be safe!"

"Uh huh. Huh?" Sans chuckled. Ah, his brother sometimes. Good thing that didn't need to happen. But, he did agree. He was too rough on the human as a kid. It was hard to comprehend that it was a game, and that tension between them probably didn't make her situation any better. *She saved Papyrus. She's saving the Underground. I kind of hitchhiked on her, scaring the crap out of her and almost ruining everything. Yeah, okay. Guess I kind of owe her a little.* "Let's go talk to Tori."

---

Frisk turned in her sleep almost all night. By morning, it didn't feel like she got as much as she should have. She would need coffee and breakfast to get through the Underground. She slowly opened her eyes, and saw four pairs of skeleton eye sockets staring at her. "Ah?!" Her voice was shrill and involuntary as she moved backward in her bed. She looked toward her door. Still locked. *Sans and Papyrus snuck in.* "What are you doing here in my room?"

"Your Momma Toriel is making pancakes," Sans said casually. All the venom, surprise and questions was out of his voice.

"They smell very good," Papyrus insisted. "We were sent in to get you."

The door. They were supposed to use the door. "Thanks."

"No, no, it is us that should be thanking you." Papyrus extended his hand and shook hers repeatedly, making her body move up and down on the bed. He had quite a grip.

"Ooh. Maybe we should've . . . knocked." Sans looked back toward the door. Sans seemed to have realized his faux pas, but Papyrus still hadn't.

"The shower, the hospitality, everything up on the surface has been quite amazing." Papyrus shook her hand. "You have a very lovely home, human. Frisk? Princess? What exactly are you called?"

Not princess. "Frisk is fine." Sans was tugging on Papyrus.

"Uh, bro. Let's um. Go. Let's go." He was starting to yank him away. "We told her. Let's get out of here."

Frisk watched her door almost slam open, with her mother standing there, staring down the Skeletons. "I need to get dressed. I'll be right out."

"Good." Tori pointed out the door to the Skeletons. "I will see your guests out."

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"Okay, easy," Sans complained. "We were just saying thanks."

"Yes. What was the big deal?" Papyrus asked. "You asked us to get her after all."

"Through the door, the door." Toriel looked to Sans. "She isn't a child anymore, she is not like her brother, she's-"

"A woman," Sans said before she finished.

"I was going to say a *human*," Toriel said, not apparently liking his choice in words. "Like some monsters are a little bashful of themselves, humans are too. Do not go around here without opening doors, and no teleporting into rooms. That kind of thing is a no-no. Do I make myself clear?"

"I didn't mean to make the human feel bad." Now Papyrus looked like he felt bad. "I am sorry."

"Kinda out of the loop on humans," Sans said. Although, damn. "No reason she should be ashamed. I'm no body compared to her body. It's banging to the beat of a different drum."

Papyrus shouldered him. "Joke time is not now, Sans."

They all turned and saw Frisk emerge from her door. There was no blue outfit this time. She was wearing a casual red dress. She looked really well in red. Better in red than blue. A simple, summer dress. Spaghetti strappy things. She moved past them to her mother and gave her a hug for the morning. "Good morning, Momma Toriel. Breakfast, huh? Which house?"

"A separate breakfast," Toriel told her. "This house. I have given ingredients to three other households to eat breakfast. We are getting bigger." She took Frisk's hand and moved her toward the table where there were four plates laid out. "Here you go, Honey. You can sit on the other side of me."

Frisk never sat on the left, but her mother sat herself right down. Papyrus and Sans sat on the other side.

"When you meet Monster Kid today, it will be nearly impossible to skip anything," her mother said. "However, Sans and Papyrus want to help you get around certain things when they can."

"That's impossible," Frisk reminded her. "The data is being recorded."

"But he knows you made modifications," Toriel said. "So what if you did meet Sans again, and he accidentally teleported you a little further than intended?" She dished up Frisk's pancake onto her plate. "It would make sense, Donald Rainier knows you want to solve it in three days."

True. "It could save some time." Frisk couldn't go too far with it though. And. Just, Sans wasn't exactly her bosom buddy. At all. She started to eat her pancake.

"I can come back once," Papyrus said, "for encouragement. There is a glitch in the game where I can find myself when I should already be dead on the other side of Undyne. If I get into that area, and stay out of trouble from then on, I could be fine. But? I couldn't do much."

"But I'm still alive and well over there," Sans reminded Frisk. "The game might expect a glimpse or too, Girl Frisk. Plus, Tori told us you did add the fact you made modifications. We could work with that. Don't quite know where yet. Too lazy to figure it out."

"Since you never actually meet Alphys according to the former queen, it only makes sense we should be able to involve her," Papyrus added. "That should be able to give us a little more leeway somehow too." Then, he said something Frisk wasn't prepared for. "Dress warmly. Not too warm, but something thicker than your jammies. They were way too thin."

Frisk spit out her pancake.

"Less talking all the way around for us, Pap," Sans added.

Frisk started to eat her pancake again. She reached for the syrup and dribbled it on. It still didn't sit well that the SkeleBros wanted to help out. She did things on her own, she didn't need backup. But it was obvious her mother was concerned. And, she still had so much to accomplish.

"This surface food is doing weird stuff again," Papyrus said to her mother. "Where's the bathroom again?"

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# Rush to the Finish

## Outside: Frisk's Home

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Frisk moved back toward her room to take off her dress and put on some shorts and a striped shirt. To look like the sprite again. She stared at her clothes on the hanger, then toward the corner. Then back to the hangar. *It shouldn't get to me. I've got this.* It just felt strange knowing she was taking Sans back into that mess.

She wouldn't have minded the help. Any help at all was a good thing, but Sans'? He was either helping because he wanted Papyrus to feel better, or because he wanted her mother to feel better. He wasn't there for her. He didn't even know her, and all she knew about him was what she knew from the games and her first experience. That first experience meeting him in person, it wasn't something she wanted to savor.

She got dressed and headed away. At least he wouldn't be really trailing her, just helping her when she needed it, which wasn't that day anyway. She would have Monster Kid tagging along. If they did anything, it would be before Monster Kid. *They did want to talk to Alphys though.* Fine. Either way, at least she didn't need to see him long.

"Frisk?" She heard her mother knocking on the door. "Are you ready?"

"Almost," Frisk replied as she straightened her sleeves. *Almost ready to go slayer again.* She came out of the room, gave her mother a hug and went out. Luckily, Sans had stayed this time. At least hopefully.

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Pancakes were good. Sans went in for seconds. He loved Grillbys but this was something new, something different. He wasn't very good at making different things. He tried once and it just didn't work out. But these? Dang, these were good.

"Sans?" Papyrus whispered to him. "Are you going with Frisk today?"

"She'll be fine on her own," he said. "Nah, I'm Monster Kidding you."

Toriel laughed at his joke. "Aw, I missed that sense of humor." She cleaned everyone's dishes. "Have what you want of that, Sans."

"Permission?" She might regret that.

"Sans?" Papyrus whispered again. "Two days."

"Yeah," Sans said. "What about it?"

"We really need to come up with a plan. We can't just hope she makes it. Every monster deserves to be on the surface."

"Plans are good. Good luck with that." Sans went back to his pancakes. Lovely, yummy, fluffy, fresh, no magic needed, real ingredients, pancakes. Mmm.

"Not good luck with that!" Papyrus scolded him. "You must help too. When you get back, I will have invested this 'game' and what we can break to get her through it faster."

"The whole kingdom's on the line." Ooh. Syrup was just above him? How did he miss that? He poured that over the pancakes. The viscosity was less than ketchup, and it was sugary and sticky. "For best results, involving Sans in important matters is not recommended. Write-up quote straight from Undyne."

"Goodness sake," Toriel muttered in the corner. "Sans, are you going to help?"

"I'm getting there, but you said I could have what I wanted," Sans reminded Toriel. "Words are biting back? With syrup. And fluffiness." He chuckled. "I'll get there."

Toriel shrugged. "Are you done yet?"

"There's still one more out there." Sans pointed to the plate.

"Oh. How did Grillby ever satisfy your appetite?" Papyrus complained. "Has Frisk gone yet? I'd like to talk to her before she leaves for good."

Frisk walked into the house. "I forgot my guitar." Her mother took off to her room to grab it.

"You shouldn't feel bad about what you are doing," Papyrus said to her. "There is no need to feel you are impure or not innocent. That is just the illusion to do what is right. I am very proud of you!"

Frisk seemed confused as her mother handed her the guitar. "What's he talking about?"

"Encouragement." Sans turned around in his chair, the pancakes all gone in front of his plate except one. "I'm coming with today."

"It's not really your concern," Frisk said. "It needs to be played a certain way."

"We will help you find the way to play it faster," Papyrus said, trying to encourage again, but Frisk just nodded and left. "It's not fair. Being dead has made things harder for me to lend any assistance."

Sans yawned. "Alright, I'll start following today." He got up. "Good pancakes. I'll be back." He started to head out the door. He doubted Frisk was gone yet, that was a lot of equipment and it was probably more than just a little start button. But, every second counted. This was one thing he couldn't afford to be late on.

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"Okay." Frisk checked everything over once more. If the game crashed and took her out, she'd have to start all over. That would be terrible.

"Let's go."

Frisk jumped, hearing Sans' voice behind her. "Um."

"Not Um. Sans," he joked. "Relax. I'm not here to kill you. You're not here to kill me." He repeated what he said almost the first time they met. "Help. I'm helping. Let's go."

"I don't really need help today," Frisk said. "I'll have Monster Kid."

"Not all the time," Sans said, almost knowingly. Probably knowingly. "Let's go, Girl Frisk."

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### **Inside:Underground: Ruins**

When Frisk arrived, she was in the Ruins again.

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### **Inside: Underground: Waterfall**

"Uh?" Frisk looked around. *Damn, he's so fast.* She was next to the booth, very close to where she left. Now she didn't have to traverse empty ground. Good. That did save time, but it wasn't really just time crossing against places with no more enemies that was the problem. It was the enemies. She didn't see Sans anywhere around though. *Maybe he left to go talk to Alphys?* Weren't him and Papyrus talking about that? Either way, this was perfect. A real modern game would have her pop up right there too, instead of at the beginning.

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### **Inside: Underground: Waterfall**

Sans watched from a distance as Frisk solved the simple puzzles at the beginning. She kept herself level. He watched the encounters, and her moving back and forth with them. She often took them out fast, but he could still see some monsters shaking. Fright. *Tori's right. That's what gets her.*

"Shoot, shoot, shoot!" Frisk checked her life. "I didn't want to have to." He watched her walk backwards into Snowdin. Dead quiet. No one around. She went into the shop. Sans peaked in. He saw Frisk look at a note. "Please don't hurt my family." She put the note back down. "Just get it over, Frisk." She looked around. There was nothing to pay for, everything was free, in order for her not to hurt the seller's family.

Tension. Sans felt it too. She didn't want to take anything, but she already knew she had to. She had modified it so she could take strong weapons, but when she was up against more than one enemy at a time, they could also hit her. It wasn't too bad, but that kind of lucky only lasted so long before she knew she needed some extra help. She left out of the shop again and made her way back out.

Aarons'. Woshua's. Moldsmals. They all eventually fell until no one confronted Frisk anymore. Sans could see the problem. She started strong, but emotionally, she got weaker. Her pace was slowing down.

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## **Inside: Underground: Gerson's Shop at Waterfall.**

"At least I gave them time to get out," Gerson said to her straight on.

Frisk tried not to take it to heart. He was doing what he could to help others. She tried to see if she could at least sell something.

"I wouldn't buy your chintzy garbage at knife point."

Hm. Much the same. *Darn*. Fine. She'd buy a little bit. She felt bad enough having to take something earlier, but she should have taken more. She didn't have time to go back again. Frisk gave him money for a couple of supplies and headed out. Waterfall was a beautiful place, but it was so creepy too. It was less beautiful waters and more swamp like green areas. Moving through the waterfall earlier wasn't fun, and the less she had to go in the water, the better.

Then, she heard something in the distance. Undyne again? Monster Kid? No, that wasn't right. As she made her way through the bubbles of Waterfalls maze, she got closer and did hear it. It was milder, not in the style she was used to, but the instrument being used was different. Yet, she recognized it. Frisk pulled herself up straighter and pulled out her guitar. There was no one else who would come to fight her, and she needed to remember.

Sans was trying to help. Not just with teleporting. Frisk started to play the ancient monster song 'Hopes and Dreams' on her guitar. It was important to keep up with it. Not only for energy, but emotional support as well. To keep herself remembering who she really had been. Not the monster everyone was running away from. Not the killer that places closed down for. Not the human killing everyone Gerson assumed she had been.

With the guitar and the trombone together, Frisk lost her emotionless face and smiled for half a second. She shouldn't do that. She didn't modify that. It would be rare that Donald Rainier would catch it though, and she couldn't help it. It wasn't just the thought of getting out of there later to help her. There was someone in the Underground, showing their support for her. Who understood her. Now.

Then, she spotted the source. As she thought, Sans was playing just a slight distance away on a bench. He couldn't get near her, and she couldn't get too near to him. She wasn't supposed to meet him again in the game. But? *Thanks*. She pressed onward, feeling a little more energy and a bit more power behind her, and she would need that.

She'd be trying to kill a kid, and end up killing Undyne by the end of that day. But? Something happened to make that script get compromised yet again.

"Did you see Sans just a few feet away from you, playing the same thing as you?"

Her tag-a-long. *Oh no*. He was starting to speak. She got through those parts with him quick, but he remembered the game just as much as Sans and her mother did now.

"Are you going to take him out, Chara? Like you are taking everyone else out?" That voice was unavoidable. Frisk turned and looked at Flowey. She turned away again. The sprite never

spoke, there was no reason she had to explain herself to him. "To savor later? I thought I'd seen everything! This is interesting, so interesting!" And then, he was gone, popped right back into the ground.

Little goof. Flowey had strange parts in different game plays. She could get away with that. Right?

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Junkyard. Mad Dummy into Glad Dummy. The rain on the statue. More Monster Kid. Frisk kept it together as best she could. It felt a little easier now that she had someone tagging along beside her, not treating her like a genocidal freak. But, the moment had come.

"Undyne had told me to stay away from you," Monster Kid said to her, now staring at her the same way so many others had. "She said you hurt a lot of people. Bu, yo, that's not true, right?!"

Frisk turned to the side as Monster Kid asked why she wouldn't answer him. *Pink. Hit her with Pink.* In the game, Undyne came back after losing her determination and saving Monster Kid. She didn't want that. She needed her to go down.

"A . . . and what's with the weird expression?" Monster Kid asked.

Frisk turned around. Yeah. Full fledged fear in the little monster's eyes. He had turned away from her, and then faced her. Threatening her. A frail little monster was threatening her. Gathering up his courage to face her.

An encounter. Frisk held her pink knife. She only got one charge out of it. *The hit points should look like enough.* If Undyne was too strong, if the green line in the encounter didn't disappear in the menu . . . *Paranoia. Just do it.* She struck out to hit Monster Kid, but of course hit Undyne.

It was over. Frisk closed her eyes. It was over. She moved forward more, seeing a save star. It was always the safest place to exit. She tried to see where Sans had gone. He would want to come back with her. Then again, she couldn't just have him beside her when exiting. If he did that, it would have to look like some kind of glitch. *He just has to be ready.* She touched the star.

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## **Outside: Gaming Room**

Frisk wasn't surprised to see Sans had caught on her at the last moment. She took off her guitar and started to begin the process of shutting down. Behind her, she could hear Sans played a couple of notes on his trombone. She looked over her shoulder at him.

"Papyrus will be happy I got my trombone back." Sans looked toward the door. "So how long's it take to shut this whole thing-"

Frisk felt herself getting shoved out of the way by Sans as a spear pierced through the gaming door! Sans held her to the side.

"Human, what have you done to me?!"

Frisk heard her mother yelling at Undyne, trying to calm her down. Undyne showed up inside of the gaming room, briefly looking around and holding up another spear. "Move, Sans!"

"No." Sans didn't flinch with her. "Knock it off."

"She tried to kill Monster Kid!" Undyne yelled. "She killed Papyrus too. You know it. Why are you defending her? Wait, are you dead too? Am I dead?"

Frisk heard Sans trying to reason with her, but her heart was pounding in her chest. She had no power outside of the game, if she died, she died for real.

"I'm not dead, I'm here!" Papyrus' voice sounded from behind Undyne, making her turn around. "Please don't hurt the human. Look around you, Undyne. You aren't dead, and neither am I. We are free. On the surface!"

Undyne looked back toward Sans. She looked back to Papyrus. She stepped back outside and looked around. "Not some land beyond being dusted?" Undyne asked.

"No," Papyrus insisted. "The human wasn't bad, it was good. It freed us! It will eventually free all of the Underground."

"What's going on?!"

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### **Outside: Sans and Papyrus' Proclaimed Spot**

Sans waited outside the shower. It took time to get Undyne to calm down enough to explain the truth accurately. After believing Frisk was a terrible human killing and trying to kill everyone she ever loved or knew, it took a bit longer to get her to settle down. When they did explain good enough, they took her to a shower. She of course was just as grody as they had been.

For now, Toriel banned Undyne from even saying 'thanks' to her daughter. She babied her way too much. Not that she didn't have reason. Frisk put a lot on the line. Maybe Toriel's babying helped even out everything else that sucked in Frisk's life?

Undyne came out with a new outfit. There were lots of those, Toriel had been prepared. Although, Sans decided to take his brother's advice and make her shirt cool by adding something to it. It didn't meet his brother's idea of 'cool' though.

Undyne gestured to her shirt. "Fish Queen, Sans?"

"I don't get his sense of humor." Papyrus shook his skull. "If you ask me, he *royally* screwed up." Then, Papyrus' bones reverberated as he heard Sans classic trombone again. "Why did you grab that?"

"I'd miss it." Sans held his trombone. "Playing the ancient songs down there makes Girl Frisk feel better, so she moves faster." He looked back toward Undyne's shirt. "You gotta be there

to get the joke." Sans looked out the window. "You'll get your own place soon. An Aaron is still deciding which place fits him better."

"I. I think I need to see the human," Undyne admitted.

"You're banned," Sans reminded her.

"Still gonna." Undyne looked out the window with him. It felt nice to enjoy the stars, real stars. Not just glittery things pasted at the top of the cave. "The human is saving monsters, but she's hunting them to save them. For her brother, and for us. In one more day?"

"Doing what we can," Sans said.

"I want to talk to the human woman, Frisk. I'm not going to kill her."

"I bet I can talk to Toriel," Papyrus said. "I think it would be good for you to become friends with the human! Any extra help from you is helpful."

Sans sounded his trombone again.

Papyrus glanced toward Sans. What was that for? "Why did Undyne helping Frisk result in you blasting that?"

"Because," Sans said. "Undyne helping Frisk after their experience together just makes things-"

"Don't say it!"

"*Fishy*." Sans blew on his trombone again.

"Ooh!" Papyrus stomped his foot. "Come, Undyne, I will take you to Toriel."

"She'll tell you everything that's going on too. Toriel will. *Too. Toriel.*"

"Sometimes, Sans, you just have such baaaad days!" Papyrus sailed out of the house with Undyne moving behind him.

"Heh." Of course he was. He was on the surface. Papyrus was safe. Everything was coming together. Even if Frisk couldn't make her deadline, the monsters on the surface were still freed. "If she keeps her pace, we can do it though," he said out loud. A couple of Froggits outside looked over to him, like they were expecting him to blow his trombone again. "What? All I said was . . ." Wait. Oh. "Did you guys get your showers yet? Seems like you got dirty minds still."

He watched as both of them hopped further away.

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**Outside: Frisk's Home . . .**

Eat and straight to bed was the motto for Frisk. She ate and washed up. She was even now in a pair of long blue pajamas. Something a little less revealing in case two skeletons made their presence known in her room again. Well, no one had visited her room, but Papyrus brought Undyne to Frisk, wanting them to talk. Momma Toriel wasn't happy about it at the time. She stayed for at least fifteen minutes while Frisk gave Undyne the news over again, and Undyne sort of . . . apologized.

Frisk looked away. "There's nothing to apologize for. There is no way to know I'm not some vindictive creature killing everyone."

"No dust," Undyne mentioned to Frisk. She gestured toward her hands. "It didn't make sense, but neither did you in the Underground in the first place." Undyne had a bite of Frisk's food too. "Papyrus said you've got to do the rest in one day."

"That's right," Frisk said. "One more day."

"Have you thought of asking for more days? You've got a long way to go still to cross to the barrier."

"I thank you for stopping by and letting me know, that you understand," Frisk said. "I am glad you won't hunt me down. I really should get to bed."

Undyne picked up the spear she had laid beside her. "Papyrus can't stand to let people hurt. Sans probably doesn't care as much. He's not really the active type, but his brother cares, and he cares for his brother." She clinked her spear on the ground. "So your screwed anyway. If I'm the mediator though, I can do something you can't."

Really? "What?"

"I can make them back off of you if they get too wild." She clinked her spear again. "Least I can do."

"That would be wonderful," Frisk admitted. "They came into my room this morning without even knocking on the door."

"Or using it. I know, they are boneheads," Undyne said. "They at least try." She paused. "Papyrus tries. Sans lingers. Are you getting Alphys tomorrow?"

Frisk paused and told her. "The genocidal route never involved even seeing her once. In order to free her, I have to solve everything." It was the same manner in how she needed to free her brother.

"Then make it count," Undyne countered. "We'll all make it count, but if you can't make it, you still need to find a way to get extra days."

". . . I am borrowing it as a friend. To go longer, I think I'd have to go farther," Frisk said. "I don't want to go farther. I would be faking attraction to him." She shook her head.

"Ah. One of those *situations*," Undyne said. "Yikes. I hate those. I once had to deal with Papyrus trying to date me, he was confused between the difference. Don't recommend that



again. Not that it was bad, just . . . it was weird and nothing sparked."

"Special spaghetti," Frisk laughed quietly. "He did that once when I was being good through the Underground."

" . . . he's not . . . Papyrus is great," Undyne said quickly. "Top notch. He's smart. He's funny. He's just way too kind and gullible. So, I get it." She sounded sincere. "More days would equal more hurt. As little choice as we have Underground, I can understand *that* better than you think."

Frisk fidgeted slightly. "I don't allow myself to think about it. I am going to beat it." There was only one way she wouldn't beat it tomorrow.

"Something wrong?" Undyne asked her. "You look iffy."

"There's . . . something," Frisk said softly. "There's only one thing. It was what someone told me a long time ago. That I couldn't beat a certain monster in the shape he was in. But, there's no way the other approach could have worked either. I needed to touch the monster, or hit the monster with Momma Toriel's magic." No. "It's nothing. It'll be fine. Mother swears it'll be fine. I should really get to bed. I have to spend as much time as possible with the machine. Rainier comes to get it between 3 and 5."

"If I were you, I would kill him. Keep his technology, but get rid of him."

"That's not an option," Frisk told her. "For several reasons. One, he only puts in enough magic and power to suffice his machines. They don't last forever. Two, my mother has delved into the machines more than once, and she can't figure out how much magic or where to place it to make it go. She said it probably takes a special monster. We are quite certain his own magic is bonded to his own creation. It would be like someone else, trying to throw your spears, without being another one of your kind."

"Heh." Undyne kept her spears near her. "That'd never be an option."

"Besides. He's not that bad of a person," Frisk admitted. "I'd be the one tricking him into believing I like him. It's all a ruse just to get what I want. Besides. He is the very last descendant of monster magic. After all this time, up here, to hurt him in any way? It would just seem wrong."

"Yet, he *has* monster in him." Her mother appeared in the doorway. "Bed, Frisk."

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## Outside: Sans and Papyrus' House . . .

"This is all we got so far?" Sans asked, looking over everything Papyrus could add. It all seemed to boil down to only one thing. "Get her through it as fast as possible. Guess that's it. Every minute counts, and I know what happens in the game like the back of my bony hand."

Each of them worked into the night, trying to think of everything they could to follow the genocide path, but speed it up. Alphys lab was long and drawn out. She didn't need to deal with the tricks, but she'd still have to cross it, along with dealing with muffet, and several of the big boys that would finally come out. This was the time the residents were being evacuated and Frisk would fight the harder monsters. They would be giving their lives to the cause.

Sea Tea would help her move. Sans would constantly put out little cups of water along the way. Her being human would make her susceptible to slowing down with the heat. "I'll take all my G and buy as much as I can for her. Not like I'm going back down to stay down."

"Take mine too," Undyne insisted. "I have more. Tell her not to bother with Burgerpants, he'll just waste her time."

"She probably knows that," Sans answered. "She probably has my moves memorized in the game. I'll keep it the same. I'll fall asleep much faster on her."

"You can't pull punches though," Undyne warned him. "She has been trying hard to keep this playing exactly like the game. The owner of the system, for all we know, he might know everything by heart. Be careful. Don't kill her, but . . ."

"Right." Fight her though. Not something he wanted to do now. "After that, it's easy. She'll kill the flower Flowey and King Asgore. Then, it's all over." The Underground would be restored to it's original place in Mount Ebbot. "Hey, does anyone know where Mount Ebbot is from here?"

"She'll need to come out by 2:30ish to call the Rainier guy," Papyrus said.

"Yeah. Hopefully he doesn't come *pour* over here anytime soon."

"Afterwards, she can go back in for a certain amount of time, once she has a clear idea of where he's at," Undyne said. "Sans, you can teleport her straight to where the last shining star had been." She muttered. "Random shining stars on the ground no one understood. Just chalked it up to leftover condensed magic."

"Well, Snowdin was where excess magic settled," Papyrus reminded her. "It's just the way of things. How were we to know it's purpose? How were we to know anything?"

"Either way, last day tomorrow," Sans said. "I better get what rest I can. It's gonna be a big day."

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### **Inside: Underground: Hotlands**

Frisk entered into hotlands quickly. Today was mostly fighting and moving across farther distances. The same events needed to occur, but she needed to move faster than usual. She could explain that to make sure she solved it, she boosted her speed on the last day. Donald Rainier would buy that since he knew she really wanted to solve the game. She ran through the mazes as quick as she could. She still had to deal with the steam pipes, but everything

else was turned off. When she reached Mettaton's, she took Undyne's advice and left Burgerpants alone. She didn't need his stuff.

Because Sans was using the boxes for her. He had deposited several things to help her survive. She no longer had to worry about saving up, running out, or having to steal. Each time she went to a box, it was packed. While she felt odd yesterday having him there on her side, that was fading. Sans was wanting her to make it as well as everyone else. She wasn't alone. As she ran too, she could hear the sounds of his trombone playing the old ancient melodies. It was a constant sound in the background. Sometimes distant, and sometimes very close. Never close enough for him to appear in the data as being the source of the sound, but close enough that she could usually hear him.

Today she had to make it. She made it through the lab only taking out Tsunderplane and Undyne's Royal Guards. She could feel herself slowing down as she took out Muffet so quick. No response except a flower left behind where she'd once been. *She's fine. She'll be happy, she's free.* Free. Frisk moved quickly again until she was stopped slightly by the last defenses: Whimsalot, Final Froggit, Knight Knight, Madjick and Astigmatism. There were a lot of monsters going down today. Her blue knife mixed with temperature took them all out in one hit.

Mettaton was Mettaton Neo. Giving her a heroic speech, he gave it his all, but she was able to take him out with blue too. He was gone, quick. There was no time to just hang around, she had the hardest part of her journey now.

Which wasn't Sans, it was walking but getting disturbed by Flowey's speech. The walk with his speech interrupted her intensely and there was no way around it. She tried walking, but it still happened the same. She tried running extra fast, and it still couldn't bypass one sentence with him. His speech kept stopping her nearly twenty minutes.

Then, she finally made it to Sans. This shouldn't be too hard. If he just stayed still. She went in, and saw him appearing in the front in shadow. He gave his speech, word for word, but he said it like a kid forced to do math. Moans and groans included. He just had to say the dialogue, but it didn't matter how he said it. Which made it a lot easier too. He kept his attacks deliberately slower for her, and he went to sleep pretty quick, within the first five minutes.

Frisk took him out, but felt a little bad. She wouldn't have him in the background with his trombone anyhow. *It's almost over.* Almost over. She moved as quick as she could, met up with Asgore, took him down, and watched Flowey take him out which hopefully didn't count, she already got rid of his exp. Flowey just wanted to be helpful so she wouldn't kill him.

and then she killed him.

It was over. It was finally over.

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# The Cost of Continuing

## Outside

Frisk stepped out of the gaming machine. Her mother was there. So were the others. There was an emptiness in her stomach. "Well?"

"Flowey the Flower is out," Toriel said softly. "You brought out many monsters. You did a great job, Frisk. You did what you could."

No. *Frisk*. "My brother?"

"We sensed absolutely no shift in magic. Asgore didn't make it out either," Papyrus admitted. "The king is very strong, and Flowey had to take out his soul separately. He was retrapped. I am very sorry."

"Oh. Alphys." Undyne looked toward the ground.

"Probably like your dad once said too."

Great. Of course Sans would remember. "If I did, I couldn't deceive the game. I couldn't touch in pacifist that easy, I couldn't do it in time, and I still needed the last defenders to come out."

"Hey, hey." Sans held his hands up. "Don't gotta get defensive. You did the best you could, Girl Frisk."

But she didn't fight Flowey the way he had been intended. She mowed him down into nothing without even an encounter. And Asgore? Papyrus was right, no matter how strong she hit, Flowey took out his soul separately. *Frisk*. A sound of a car coming had to put everything on hold though. *I can't leave it this way. I can't leave him in there. I can't leave the Underground in that kind of terrified state.* Frisk went back to the gaming machine, turning it off. *I rescued some, but not all. And not.* Her brother, T. Frisk T.

"Flowey absorbed all the souls Underground." Sans voice came from behind her. "I think you have to take out everyone in order to save Boy Frisk."

"I'm not Girl Frisk and he isn't Boy Frisk," Frisk finally corrected him. "It was T and E. He was Frisk T. I was Frisk E. I used to have so much more determination back then."

"You still are pretty Frisky."

Hm? Frisk looked toward him. *A pun or . . . a compliment?*

Sans seemed to have picked up the confusion. He played his trombone, but it was a little late. And a little flat. "Wrong entrance screws things up."

"Wrong exits do too." Frisk couldn't help herself. She had so fully believed it would work. There was no more time. "Frisk T. is just gone."

"You'll get him, Frisky. You've got too much determination inside to ever give up," Sans joked. "I better bail. The rains about to pour."

Frisk heard the knock on the gaming door. *Asgore is in there. Alphys. Monster Kid. So many monsters, still trapped, along with my brother.* She answered the door, seeing Donald Rainier. "Hey, Don."

"Hey. Oh? You don't look so good." Donald stepped into the gaming room. "Are you okay, Frisk?"

"I'm fine," she lied. "I would really appreciate it if-"

"You could play longer?" He finished the phrase for her. He went over to the corner, and ejected the data. "Did you finish? Get the experience you wanted?"

"Yes. No." Frisk didn't know what to say anymore. "Genocide wasn't what I expected."

"You want to play the pacifist side?"

"It wouldn't make much difference either," she said honestly. There was no turning back for that. The only thing that would set them free was mass murder, taking out every single monster. And that wouldn't happen in a day. Especially considering they would definitely be hiding away from her.

"Flowey the Flower wasn't enough to restore the Underground back to Mount Ebbot, was he?"

" . . . what did you say?"

"I hoped it'd worked," Donald said. "I gave two years for it."

Frisk blinked, her eyebrows slightly risen. "You knew?"

"I didn't want to disrupt your process."

"But you could have said something!"

"I couldn't rush you. You and your mother would know when you were ready. After that, by the time I knew you were coming around?" Donald winked. "I was hoping perhaps I could manage a date too."

What a stinker. Frisk rubbed her face. All that anxiety. "Then will you stop playing around now, and help me out?" She gestured to the machine. "I have to take out all of the monsters in order to rescue my brother."

"I did help you out," Donald repeated. "If you missed it, I said I'd given two years for it. My . . . gift, let's say, is limited. The first machines I created had full force behind them. It's why

your brother ended up in there in the first place. However, too much made me very sick. I learned the rules quick. For regular AI SIM games, especially at the length that needs to be there for a player, it's all just an illusion of fun. When my machine, however, jacks into the Underground's transdimensional connection? It takes a lot more energy, Frisk."

"How much more?" Frisk asked.

"A lot more." He smiled at her. "Just three days in there, and the half? I'm sure I've burned about two years off."

Uh? "Oh." He was putting his life force into the machine somehow? "The other machines. How much does it take off?"

"Illusions with the environments? Hardly anything. I can live with that though, and it's great, so don't feel bad about that." He chuckled. "Really. I live well. I have fun. I enjoy every day I have. Only one thing's been missing. If you had saved the Underground, I think I could have done without it." He became strangely silent. "Having the whole kingdom here, that understood the real me too. Being around them. Having another chance-"

"I have a decent amount-"

"-to increase my kind," Donald finished. "Someone to love that I didn't have to hide who I'd really been."

Oh. Frisk flapped down her ear and rubbed against it. "To free all the monsters. I need to get my brother," she said, "and free the rest. I can't just leave everyone in there, huddling and afraid, believing that they'll never have their loved ones back. Believing seeing the surface was just a myth, and that they could still-"

"It'll kill me." He said it outright. "Each day probably costs me around six months, Frisk." He held out his fingers. "You have to find where they went, and be prepared for anything. They would be against you, and you wouldn't be able to convince them everything is okay that easy. They'll think your nuts that killing them is saving them."

Frisk became silent. She didn't know how to take what he'd been saying. *I can't judge how long it would take. Each day is six months of this life, to charge this machine?*

"Thing is, it would be weird too," Donald admitted. "I'm more human than monster. So, getting with a full monster, it would have felt odd too. I mean? I just wanted someone who *understood* me."

Frisk stared at him. *He's not. He wouldn't.*

"I just wanted someone who understood monsters. Especially being raised by the queen herself?"

He dropped it.

"I've never even been able to get a date with you that you didn't give me a friend shoulder on." Frisk looked toward the machine. "I just think, that it would be fair, if by giving a little

life, I get a little in return," he said. "And if giving a lot?"

Frisk didn't even know how to respond. Here she felt bad about using him, and the whole time, he was using her.

"That sounds bad," Donald said slowly. "Okay, look?" He held his finger up. "I am throwing years away on my life, for the chance at saving the Monster Kingdom, and your brother. They get freed. You get your family. I'm wasting away, and for what?" He tried to approach her closer. "Frisk."

"Frisk Eternity Dreemur," Frisk corrected him sharply.

" . . . how long will it take you? How many years of my life would you shave off for this?" Donald sighed. "The Underground's fixed anyhow, it's not going anywhere."

Frisk curled her fingers inward and outward. Every day longer down there, with her power of being down there, her brother was starving. Time was moving.

"Then if I start losing five or more years . . . I don't want to die alone. This? It could potentially end me. I'm doing it for the chance the monsters could be back up here, but-"

"But that's not enough for you." A corner. "I have to talk to my mother."

He touched her cheek tenderly. "Part of me wants it all done in just a couple of days and I can just savor a nice date with you, while another wants to take me to the brink of death to finally have you. But, for now? For the whole two years I've already lost?"

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### **Newer Home Area . . .**

"Don't crowd, don't crowd," Undyne said as she tried to keep the new monsters in line. The houses were being assigned quicker. Some monsters wanted to live with each other, while others wanted to stay separate. There had been a lot of re-organizing, but plenty of room. For now, they were sharing a quick shower to get most of the grunge off. After most of it got off, then they went to their new homes to enjoy their own showers.

While she was doing that though, Undyne caught Frisk walking past the place. She looked terrible. Not worried, but downright angry. *Pissed. What happened?* "Keep it up, stay in line, and then you can go to your own homes." Undyne left the property to check up on the human. She didn't like that look.

Undyne came closer, making her presence known to Frisk. "What's wrong?"

Frisk wiped her lips. "Men suck."

"Most humans do in general," Undyne added.

"Men most of all." She had rubbed her lips again.

Ooh, that human was far from cheery. "He wouldn't allow more time?"

"Oh, he'll let me have time." Frisk was digging her foot into the ground. "I want to save everyone, but . . ."

"Hmmm." Undyne came next to her, sticking her spear into the ground. "He's greedy, asking for something in return that you can't give him."

"Wrong."

"That you can give him?" This conversation didn't sound well. "You want me to spear him?" Frisk didn't reply. Which meant she was at least unconsciously thinking about it. Which, since this human hadn't hurt a soul and wanted another human to die? Not to mention, she had wiped her lips like she tasted something terrible. "He wants a relationship." Frisk jabbed her heel even deeper into the ground. That was it. The scumbag wasn't going to let Frisk have more time, without Frisk offering herself in exchange. "Can we offer something else in return?"

"I didn't even say anything." Frisk looked at the ground.

"What does he want exactly?" Undyne already figured it out, Frisk didn't have to say anything.

"His life force, he said it ran the machine," Frisk said. "It's not like the others, it was made to handle the true Underground it would connect to. He says he lost two years of his life already over the past four days."

Oh yeah. "That's a thing. A rare thing." So, he was putting his life on the line like others had before him to free the Underground, except he wanted a side prize too. "What's the deal?"

"Faster I get through it, better off I am," Frisk revealed. "First go round was free, second was a kiss, third a date, then another date until he loses five years. At that point, marriage and . . ." Frisk rubbed her shoulders. "Little Frisks."

Oh? Oh! "Men are scum!" Exactly as Frisk said.

"But if I want my brother . . . I want the Underground freed, I want Momma Toriel happy again, and I just want all of that?" Frisk looked toward the sky. "So many haven't seen the sun in so long." Frisk glanced back toward her. "What would you choose, Undyne?"

"As the proud woman I am?" Undyne looked upward too. "I would search for any other method that held potential. If I found none, I would do my best to get every monster as fast as possible. If I didn't manage that, I'd do what was necessary to save my kingdom." She growled. "Then when everyone was safe, I'd kill him in his sleep, shot right up his most sensitive area with my spear."

"I can't actually bear to kill anyone," Frisk said.

"I could do it for you," Undyne offered. "If things went that far. When all was said and done. Whichever fashion you want." Frisk tried not to smile. "Honestly, pretty sure more than one



monster would jump in if they found out about it. Extortion is terrible, but using it to save the Kingdom?" Undyne looked away. "He would make a nice spear ornament."

"Don't tell Momma Toriel?" Frisk asked her. "Don't tell anyone? I don't really know what to do here yet."

"I need to tell two," Undyne said, "or you are going to be up the wazoo with two annoying skeletons trying to put together the 'puzzle' when they sense something wrong. Trust me on this. They won't leave you alone until they know what's going on, whether it's their business or not. Then by the time you are frustrated enough to tell them, all of Grillbys knows the whole . . ." Frisk got the hint. "Yeah. I've had experience."

"Sans and Papyrus?"

"Who else?"

"Uh?" Awkward.

"Look, they won't get the details," Undyne added. "Just, trust me. They've got uses, and we need one of their uses right now."

"Fine. As long as they promise not to tell anyone else, and you keep the details to yourself."

"Already planned on all that being part of the deal." Guys didn't always get relationship things, and those two Skeletons? Meh. Less they knew, the better.

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### **Sans and Papyrus' House . . .**

"It's different, yet I like it. It's smaller, but I still like it. Beautiful view of the morning. Does need more touch, of course." Papyrus adjusted one of the house's paintings. "Too bad we can't bring things from home here. Or anyone else."

"Hey, we got each other though." Sans took a seat on their couch. They would definitely get their own style up there soon. Everyone's house was pretty identical, but it was *their* house now. They'd liven it up. Sans grabbed a few darts from the table next to him. "Want to play darts again?"

"I'm orange!" Papyrus grabbed the orange set. He threw his first dart.

Sans threw his. "Bulls eye. Did you see that, The Great Papyrus?"

"You can't use magic. That makes the game unfun," Papyrus complained. He threw his next dart. It didn't stick.

"Loads of fun without it." Sans was good though. He concentrated on his target before shooting it. When it hit it's target, he heard a knock on the door.

"Feel free to enter!" Papyrus greeted whoever was at the door.

Undyne came in, and moved toward them, out of the way of the targets. "Hey."

"Hello, Undyne." Papyrus took his turn again. "Ooh! Not quite a sticker to the board." He looked back toward her.

Sans held his last dart. They needed to get more of them, or some better games. He lined up his target and-

"The guy who owns the machine is only gonna let us save the kingdom if Frisk does something unspeakable."

-and off it went, completely off board, sticking to the other wall. Well. "That didn't count. I was distracted."

"What?" Papyrus asked "What do you mean unspeakable?"

"Apparently this monster is tying his life force to the machine," Undyne said. "He has to keep putting power into it, reducing his life. Instead of being like a noble monster who'd put his life on the line for his kingdom? He's got goals that make me want to kill him for her."

"Well? That's? That's? That's?" Papyrus was searching for the word. "Not good at all. Is he threatening her life? Is he asking for her to hurt someone?"

"It's personal. Like PMS."

"PM-? Forget I said anything!" Papyrus shuddered. "Less imagery please, Undyne. You don't *always* have to be the quintessential of brashness."

Undyne went over to the board and picked up the darts. "Frisk needs to get through the Underground as fast as possible. Any bright ideas?"

"I know the human fairly well." Sans took his darts from Undyne. "Let's see? I fought her sprite. I became friends with her sprite." He smacked the target for 20 points. "I knew her as a kid for one night." He smacked the target for 20. "I've watched her as an adult for two days Underground. We eat pancakes together." He smacked the target for 40. "Yep, were real buddies over here."

"Sans, don't tease." Papyrus grabbed his own darts from Undyne and just looked at them. "Know her or not, the situation sounds terrible. There must be something we can do?"

"Wasn't teasing." He wasn't. He might not have been able to speak and get to know her, but her actions spoke a lot louder. The way she walked. The way she tried to do what was right, even though it was wrong. Most of all? She knew how to handle that guitar. He had no idea what it did, but she could handle it real well. When he was in the background, and she was free to play with him? Fantastic rhythm.

It was awkward at first, from some mixed-up kid and a situation he couldn't trust or really wrap his skull around that well. To just days later and . . . confident woman, making herself

into a terrible creature killer to save the Underground. Facing him again, after all that shame, and doing the right thing. She grew up, and it didn't take him long to figure that out.

Even if he didn't see it emotionally right away, he sure as hell saw it physically when they went to wake her up.

"He holds all the power because of that machine." Undyne took Papyrus' darts and threw them all at the board, landing each one close to the center. "I told her after the fact I'd kill him for her. She didn't want that. Well, part of her did, but not the part that was going to allow it." She looked back toward him. "No telling anyone else either. That was the deal to even squeal to you."

"Tell what?" Papyrus asked. "You haven't really told us anything but 'unspeakable'."

"Look. I know you'll make her life hell when you suspect something, and you two are pretty brilliant. If you can figure out how to get that machine running, at least longer without his life force, she'll be better off. Trust me."

She went to fetch the darts, but Sans was already there, taking his out. "So let me get this straight." Sans returned right away to where he'd been, taking his turn. "Human goes down, murders to save everyone." Bulls eye. "Puts it all on the line to finish that grueling task in three days." Bulls eye. "And clearly a guy who knew she wouldn't get the happy ever after, is way more concerned about something 'unspeakable'?" Bulls eye. "Papyrus, let's go check out this machine."

---

## **Gaming Machine**

"It's advanced, but we've dealt with more advanced." Papyrus looked around the top. "Screwdriver?"

Sans already had one to give him, plus his own. He took the lid off of the side panel. It wasn't easy to get into, he doubted Tori would have ever attempted getting into it this much. There was a deep red magic flowing through it. "Burning marrow red. It was running by his life force, he didn't lie." Although a monster didn't know if someone was going to come dust them at anytime, it was usually safe to say the span of their life was judged by a special magic force of life, separate from their own magic. Similar to blood in humans and other species, except they could donate it to add to their side. Came in useful when fighting for one's life especially.

It wasn't something that a monster could just get back though. When it was gone, it was gone. The leftover was simply swirling around through the system, waiting to be used for it's last trip. "An hour. Two hours, max."

"Can we mix it?" Papyrus asked. "Can we add our regular magic to it, and see how much longer that gives us?"

Not enough time to save the Underground, but Papyrus was starting to think. "Starting and stopping's going to take the most power. We need to know the absorption level." Plus, Frisk

was going to need to get some food to her brother. With time moving, the fragile kid would be in trouble.

"That mean human. Demanding something unspeakable from Frisk to save the Kingdom," Papyrus complained. "But she needs to save her brother, and we need to save the rest of everyone. It's just not fair. We need to make it fair."

"I think we did." Sans gestured to the panel. "I'm going to get Frisk to go in with me one more time, to go check on Iced Tea."

"Iced Tea?"

"Sounds better than Frisk T. And Frisk with a y is better than Frisk with an E."

" Frisk E. Frisky? It sounds the same, Sans."

"I know, but that's what makes it funny." They would get them back together too. "When we get back, let's take a look. I bet the majority of the juice will be gone. After that, we'll add some of ours, go back, and check it out again."

"Eureeka!" Papyrus shouted. "Brilliant idea. We can keep using Rainier's own life force, and just keep invigorating the machine. No monster perishes at all, including him, so he can't use it against Frisk."

"Yeppers yeppy yep." Sans looked at it. "Hopefully. I mean, I don't think it'll go forever. Let's see what happens. Ima gonna sneak off and get her."

---

### **Inside: Underground . . .**

"So, you can talk to me now?" Frisk T. asked his sister as he ate a Grillby's burger. "Well. It's something."

"I will eventually get you out," Frisk said to him. "Sans bought stacks of Grillby burgers for you."

"Yeah, and I piled on some more stuff too from boxes I had filled," Sans added. "You'll be fine, Iced Tea. Just don't leave much further than here. World just gets gnarlier from here."

T. blinked. "Iced Tea?"

"Sounds better than Frisk T.," Sans said. "Call it personal preference. Not real fond of just T and E. Should have your own name."

"But Frisk is *my* name!" T. complained to him. "Her names Frisco."

"Don't." Not that. "Sans calls me Frisk with a Y at the end."

"Still sounds the same," T. complained to her. Still, he looked over to his stack of Grillby's. "Are you gonna be okay, Sis? What is it Mister Rainier is wanting from you?"

She wouldn't answer that. "Things will be okay. You'll get back to the surface, no matter what. Concentrate on that."

"But? You're saying that you have to go out and basically murder anyone that's left?" T. asked. "Brain-wise, that's too hard on them. It's already been terrible, E. And you? You have to stay down here and do this with no reprieve. You can't go back either too often? And? Only Sans is going to be here for you?"

"Hey? Thanks for the vote of confidence," Sans said. "Makes me feel so important."

"Sorry," T. apologized. "It's just that . . ."

"I'll be okay. I'm way more concerned about you," Frisk E. said. "Everything will be okay."

"I know. I'm Frisk. I'm still me. I can get through this." He said the same kind of mantra their father used to say to them all the time. "Thanks for the food. Stay safe."

"Oh, and here." Sans gave him a stack of magazines. "Not the best. Usually just cars. Can't help what falls where down here. Next time, I'll try and set you up with some anime. I . . . can't just go out and fetch some for you at your age. Not my specialty."

"Yeah, I get it." T. gathered the magazines. "Thanks, Sans. You can't stay longer though?" He looked back toward his sister.

"The longer I stay, the more time moves, and . . . and I'd rather you enjoy the most time outside," E. told him. "We'll be here tomorrow, but I can't come back and visit you constantly. I'm on a sort of time limit."

"Because Rainier is asking for too much, if you take too long?" T. said pretty much all she said. "Okay. Sorry the guy's being a doofus. I hope it all gets worked out soon. I miss home. I miss mom. I miss dad. I miss you."

She moved in closer to him. ". . . there's just me, T."

"What do you mean just you?" T. asked. "Where's mom and dad?"

"T." Frisk E. pulled him into a hug.

"Your sister lost them, same time she lost you. Your dad had someone against his group that was responsible for both of them," Sans said. "Sorry, Pal."

"Toriel raised me," Frisk E. admitted. T. was quiet as she hugged him. "When you come back, she will raise you too."

"You should go now," T. said. Frisk E. understood. He needed time to cope with the news. He could come back to the world, but it would never be the same way they left it.

---

**Outside: Night Time . . .**

"Undyne?" Toriel knocked on her door. "Have you seen Frisk?"

Dangit. Those Bone Heads still had her? They had better have come up with something. She answered her door. "I think she was with the guys again. I think they're out around here looking at stars." That didn't please Toriel any better. "Do I need to go find them?" A simple nod. "I'll drop her off when I find her." Toriel turned away. Geez, if she believed Frisk was hanging out with the Skeleton weirdos, why was she getting all antsy?

Undyne left her home. *Civilization is making me lazy.* A nice thought. She didn't have to patrol as hard. She was still watching for everyone, but it wasn't really needed. She tried to keep order, but she didn't have to wear her heavy armor anymore. In fact, she had more of her own clothes now. Even some shoes.

She knew exactly where they'd be. The gaming machine. Undyne knocked. "Your overly mothering mother is getting upset." Frisk opened the door for her. "You'd think saving the Underground would get you a little more independence."

"She's just worried," Frisk answered, letting her in and closing the door.

Considering what Rainier was trying, Toriel did have some reason to worry. Undyne moved toward the boys. "Figure anything out?"

"Life force wise, we'll need more," Sans admitted, "but we can make it last. If we can get it recharging at least every three hours, it'll stay functioning."

That was good news. Why'd Frisk look upset? "Hey? What?" Undyne asked her.

"Life force drives most of the power for here to there. We can supplement between," Papyrus said. "It's just that . . ."

"When me and Frisk go over, we're pretty much staying over as much as possible." Sans started to unscrew the next panel lid. "Which means Frisk's Momma Toriel is gonna haveta know." He glanced to Frisk. "We need to stay down until this gets done. Only come up as a last resort."

Yeah, Frisk couldn't hide that. "Well, maybe you can act like your manipulating him for extra time?" Undyne suggested. "Be like 'Momma Toriel, the Underground's more important than little ol' me coming back and forth. Please understand this is for the best!' or something."

"Hey?" Sans stuck his head out of the panel. "Don't recommend going into a career with voice impersonations."

"I wasn't striving for it!" Undyne complained. "You think you're better, you try."

"Aw, I can't." She could hear Sans tweaking some parts. "Frisky's voice is too energetic. That's why she's Frisky with a Y. 'Cause I'm too lazy to remember the difference without something like that." Undyne rolled her eyes. Yeah, she could see that. But it was a better name than the name her father gave them as characters. "It's also way too smooth. Kind of

girly, but not really. Commanding, but gentle. Sultry hot griddle on ice. Got it! That was a tricky screw."

*Sultry hot griddle on ice?* Undyne looked toward Frisk. She didn't seem to put anything big into it. Probably not, it was hard to tell when he was being serious and when he was goofing. Sans wasn't goofing though. He didn't goof when he was actually working on something important to himself.

"Papyrus, you doing all right? 'Cause I've got all the left screws out and I think it's right. Or is it left?"

Nevermind. He probably was kidding. "Stop joking around, this is important," Undyne warned him. "You're trying to put magic into a machine that won't accept your magic. Straighten up."

"Yeah, yeah."

She looked toward Frisk and whispered, "can't stay serious for two seconds." Frisk shimmied a little with that statement. Maybe she had actually seen a more serious side to him. Considering how they met, she probably did. Sans as serious? That was a blow to the mind. Undyne scratched her back. "Your mother is going to want you. She's been looking around for you."

"Better not lead her on more of a goose chase," Sans said from under the panel again. "You might quack her up. All right, it's right, got all the -" The sound of falling metal was heard a moment. "There we go. Just gotta shove it in there."

Papyrus came over from finishing his work too. "All the innards are exposed. Wasn't genuinely needed, but to prevent overheating, it was a good idea. Especially if you'll be down there for days."

"I know. For days." Frisk's voice sounded strange. "I better go see my mother. Thanks for letting me know, Undyne."

"She's out of it," Undyne said as she watched Frisk leave.

"She needs to stay down in a world where everyone thinks she's committing mass genocide, and she hasn't had any practice." Sans told Undyne. "She doesn't know what they'll say or do. She can't rely on her gaming experience for it. My presence isn't gonna help either, monsters will just think I flipped my lid 'cause I lost Papyrus or something." He cleaned off his bony hands with a rag. Now that it was an option to stay clean, most used every chance they could to keep the grime off. "Even then, we can't stay down forever. The human will get ill."

Papyrus started to clean his own hands. "It shouldn't be that bad. At least, not for me. I get to stay up here." He looked toward Sans. "You can have a shower and great food whenever you can come back."

Yeah. "I'm sorry, Sans," Undyne said, completely forgetting about that. It couldn't be easy ricocheting back and forth, but now he would be staying days down there. As long as

possible until Frisk was done or absolutely had to come back up.

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### **Outside: Frisk's Home . . .**

"Momma Toriel?"

" . . . and down there for days, not hours?" Her mother was having a terrible time accepting it. "All because Rainier wants you as something more? I knew it, oh I knew it! I knew if we gained his favor enough to let you try the machine, he'd eventually want more. It wasn't in my mind. More and more and more!"

"Momma Toriel." Frisk hugged her, trying to settle her down. "At least it's an opportunity. Sans and Papyrus have really been helping how they could." She was surprised they helped so much. It was their Underground residents they were trying to save though. It was less about her, and more about making sure she continued. At least, that's what she figured. Her situation had been a puzzle, and they liked puzzles. "Without the Skeletons, this wouldn't have gone so good."

"Yes. Thank goodness for that." Toriel let go and rubbed her eyes. "You think I would be better at this. I've known you would be going through so much from such a young age. I . . . I tend to baby you too much. You just. You lost everything. I knew what that was like."

Frisk knew that. "In a world as cold as this, I'd never dream of complaining that my mother cared too much." Frisk buried herself into her mother's soft fur. She was acting a lot stronger than she felt.

"At least Sans will be there with you. You may not understand him yet, but he's a very good monster. More than just jokes. He'll help keep you safe. Oh, Frisk!" She strengthened the hug one more time. "You shouldn't have to go through this."

"I should have had endless power!"

Frisk heard Flowey's voice outside.

"I don't wanna live with Froggits! It's not fair! I never saw this coming, how did I never see this coming?!"

Frisk smiled. Life would be full of new experiences for him from now on.

It would be full of new experiences for everyone.

Good. And Bad.





# Let's Go Kill Some Monsters

## Outside: AI SIM Gaming Machine

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"Just . . ." Frisk held her guitar steady on her back. It was late, but she didn't want her mother knowing what she would be doing. "Papyrus."

"I don't like it. I don't like it. I. Don't. Like it." Papyrus stood by the control panel. "Then again. I mean."

"There's no reason anymore," Frisk said to Papyrus. "My brother has some food, and if things get bad, I can get him more. We aren't on a time deadline. There's no reason I have to drag him back over." She wouldn't do it. Sans could stay there with his brother. She knew he was going with her for her mother, or to try and help the Underground, but it wasn't worth it.

"What about your weapons?" Papyrus asked. "They won't last forever. You'll need to come back, and when you do? Well. Your mother's not going to be happy with you." He stuck his bony finger in the air. "There is no way around it! You are going to need monster power recharging your weapons, and I can't do that and run the machine."

"I know." Frisk had to agree with him. "I'm prepared."

"Do you even *remember* the game?"

Oh, great. Frisk turned around and saw Sans, waiting by the door.

"I know. It was a game. So, let's put it in a higher perspective?" He eased himself into the doorway. "You killed anything and everything in your way, you killed Papyrus after him showing you mercy, you almost killed Monster Kid, and the whole Underground is now hiding far away from you. Who exactly do you think you'd talk sense into? The rock?" He shrugged. "Maybe the rock, but about the only power it has is to move a few inches back and forth."

"If you come, they'll turn on you," Frisk said to him. "You've already helped more than enough. I've got this."

"Yep, yep." Undyne showed herself by the door. "We can get murder done right."

Sans just sort of stared at Undyne, before looking back toward Frisk. "You killed her. You bringing her back is just gonna make it look like you can bring back monsters from the dead to do your bidding. Screw that, you'll tear their sanity to shreds."

"I won't be showing myself," Undyne said to him. "She is still technically 'on her own'. I will just be interfering to help her brother and her keep up with food, quick shelter, and adding

magic to her weaponry."

"Undyne is captain of the Royal Guards," Papyrus said to Sans. "She can hide herself. You can stay and enjoy the luxuries of the surface with me." He glanced toward Frisk. "I suppose."

Sans scratched his left shoulder bone. "Thoughtful. Awesome." He slumped to the left. "Totally cool. Let's all go to sleep and let Frisk go then. Undyne can do the job. She's good at keeping others safe. Except, uh?"

"Except?" Undyne questioned.

"You really trust that everything is going to stay hunky dory up here? If something happens, then all we got is more clueless sentries and maybe some of the royal guards. You trust guarding the surface to Doggo?"

" . . . "

"It's been years. I was raised here," Frisk corrected Sans. "It's always been safe." She sighed slightly. "I'm not trying to make you feel worthless, Sans. I just don't want you to keep risking everything only to make someone else happy. Aren't you tired of that yet?"

"Heh. So you do have that gaming memory." Sans pretty much admitted it.

"I'm fine. The promise you made was over some time ago," Frisk said. "Enjoy life with your brother, and one way or another, I will bring over the rest."

"That's why you want to take Undyne." Sans called her out. "Because *she's* the one that knows the full details of what happens if you use too much power of ol' Rainandpour's." He looked right back toward Undyne. "That's why you're doing it too."

"And what if I do want to go with her?" Undyne asked. "Nothing wrong with that."

"Nuh. You're either getting more than friendly with Frisky, or you are just wanting to get back to Alphys." Sans shrugged. "Maybe both."

"Sans!" Papyrus scolded him. "Be civil. That's not nice."

"You read my letter!" Undyne accused him. She looked toward Papyrus. He shrugged.

"Most don't even make it under the door. Caught one blowing in the wind," Sans said. "So what is it?"

Frisk didn't know how to respond. Did he just outwardly have to say anything on his mind? She was giving him a 'stay out of the dark, disgusting abyss' free card, why was he acting like that?

"So what of it?" Sans looked at Frisk again. His eye sockets were solid black a moment, then he closed them, and they fixed themselves. "Nevermind, not my business."

"Nothing's your business!" Undyne went closer to Frisk. "Forget him. He's not always right in the skull. Let's go."

Frisk was about to agree, when Sans said something once again.

"Talk to a fish for a second?" Sans took a step back, using his bony finger to call Undyne over to the corner.

Undyne followed. She had no idea what Sans was trying to get at, or why he wanted to go so bad. "What is it?"

"Joke, Undyne. Give me a joke," Sans insisted. "Give me something that'll make me happy."

Undyne just looked at him. "Why do you want me to tell you a joke? You and Papyrus are the ones who do the jokes and japes."

"Welp?" Sans shuffled a little closer. "You are going to a world that's scared of Frisk, believing she is going to kill any monster that she can get her hands on. Frisk has got some psychological issues with that. You can help, but not be seen. So how are you going to make her feel better?" Undyne didn't answer. "The goal is to not take too long, but when she gets bogged down with the reality of what she's doing, she unconsciously slows down and starts to mess up."

Oh. Undyne could be helpful, but for the whole . . . making her feel better part. That might be hard. She was no professional in that field, Papyrus and Sans were the comedians of the Underground. Hm. *We need to move fast, stay down there, and stay safe.* If Frisk's mind couldn't handle the carnage that everyone thought she created? Then. "Sorry, Sans."

"Don't worry. Probably a few days. It's no biggie, but we shouldn't jab this situation up any worse," Sans said.

Undyne nodded and went back to Frisk. "Sans had some good points, Frisk. I can't go." She gestured to Sans. "He'll come." She watched Frisk's expression. "Trust me. His points are valid. Without him, it'll take longer. I'm out." She nodded to Frisk. "You'll be fine. Just, keep it up. The truth isn't what you see around you."

Frisk watched Undyne leave and Sans approach closer.

"Yay, I win," Sans joked. "I win the whole disgusting Underground abyss hell. Yippee. Let's hit the road already. Or, you know? Maybe a little more rest and an extra set of pancakes would be a better way to go?" He questioned Frisk. "Considering this'll be it for pancakes for awhile? And that we *might* not have enough juice to get back afterwards?"

"Would it take too much?"

"On the brink."

Frisk nodded. There wasn't much choice left. Sans was pretty determined to go, and if he thought there wasn't enough juice. *I have no choice but to call Rainier.*

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## Outside: Morning

Toriel held out a bookbag for Frisk to hold. "A little extra help. Extra food. Some extra daggers. Blank, but if you get into real trouble, Sans could charge these too." She placed it on Frisk's shoulder. "That will help."

Frisk almost toppled over by the weight. It was evened out as Toriel helped her get her guitar on her back.

"We'll topple all that when we get there," Sans said. Frisk felt the extra weight almost flow off her back as Sans held it. "For now, I can tackle this before Frisk topples."

Frisk adjusted her guitar again. Sans also had his trombone but apparently weight wasn't much to him. She felt Toriel adjust her guitar strap. "It's not that bad, Momma Toriel. Really. I'll be back before you know it." She felt her mother wrap her arms around her one more time. "I'll be okay."

"It's all just illusion, Frisk," Toriel said. "Remember that. No matter how anyone looks at you, fights you, or their dying words. All of it." She let go and dusted Frisk's sleeve off. "I don't know why I bother. You're going down into a terribly disgusting abyss. You can't keep the filth off." Still, she stroked Frisk's shirt one more time. "If you see an opening to try and explain to a monster to make it easier about what you are doing, take it?"

Frisk doubted she would ever get that chance. "If I see it."

"Be careful," Toriel warned her. "Don't take too long and don't let anything get to you." She looked toward Sans. "If she starts to lose it, try and tell a joke."

"I got it under control," Sans insisted. "Don't worry. Let's head out already. Come on, Frisk."

"After this is all over, then it is over for good." Toriel gave her one quick hug. "You have grown so much, Frisk. Everyone grows up so much to me, but with you, it's like time just moved so incredibly fast. You've gone from a confused little girl to a brave strong woman. I'm proud of you, and everything you do."

Frisk adjusted her guitar strap lightly. *Not everything I will do.*

"Frisk. It will be okay. Keep it together. Sans should be able to help find where the monsters would have gone." She smiled and held her hands out to hold hers. "Look at you. A mother couldn't be prouder."

Frisk smiled slightly. "Momma Toriel, I have to go." She couldn't delay her anymore. Frisk T. was still out there. Everyone still needed help.

"I know. I will have plenty of food ready for when you come back. All the time. The best I can," Toriel insisted.

"Can't beat that," Sans said. "Heck, I'm going for the food you already packed alone." He chuckled and jostled the backpack on him.

"Okay. I know." Toriel nodded toward her daughter. "Good luck, My . . . my lovely Frisk."

Frisk knew that Toriel was never good with goodbyes. One more nod, and Frisk moved away, toward the gaming station. Where she knew he was waiting.

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"Go ahead and say your goodbyes to Papyrus," Frisk insisted to Sans as she saw Rainier ahead. She had called him last night to meet her up there. "I'll be there in a second." She headed upward toward Rainier. "Mister Rainier."

"Frisk?" He asked. "It's Donald. You were even starting to call me Don, remember?" He opened the gaming door and gestured inside. "I preferred that."

"Fine, Donald." Frisk moved inside.

"Don," he insisted as he went inside and shut the door. "I know this all seems like it was set up for you. Let me assure you, me giving my very life force isn't something I like to do. Every time we do this, it could increase the chances of . . ." He stopped and approached Frisk. "Don't . . . you understand? I could have anyone, Frisk. I admit? I have had many."

Of course. He had wealth and fame. He probably didn't even have to pay for women. "They are probably better at anything else than me."

"Sexually, I imagine so," Donald said as he pulled her closer. "But, it's not *that*. I can't share who I really am deep inside. Even if I can't change, I hide so much. With you? I can stop hiding. I can have someone who understands me." He held her hand in his grip. "That's worth everything in the world to me." He kissed her hand. "I could make you happy. For as long as I am here, I know I could make you happy."

Frisk's happiness wasn't in him or his money. "The only way to make me happy is to just let me use your machine without owing you anything."

"Don."

"Don," Frisk added toward the end. "But that's not gonna happen, is it?"

"No. Even if someone wanted to make me give up my life force, it's impossible. Only the monsters themselves can release it." He kissed her wrist. "It won't be a bad life. You could even use our fortune to give the monsters even more property and room. We, together, could use the magic and create a barrier to keep humans away from them."

"Are you saying seal myself off from my own mother?" That was crude. "She is my mother, and she has been helping the cause just as long as I have."

"She will be safe with the others. Free to roam around within their own confines, and we could go on with our lives on the outside of it all. She'd want that for you I'm sure. You've always lived so far away, way up here," Donald reminded her. "She would want what's best for you."

"Funny," Frisk grunted. "You aren't at the top of the list of things Momma Toriel wants for me." Yet, she couldn't pull away. "You aren't getting much."

"Just another kiss?" he asked. "A small kiss, like last time. That's all. After that, I'll fix it up. I promise."

Of course he would. He wouldn't mess up so early, he wanted more. Frisk kissed him. His breath was a tie between bourbon and someone who needed to brush their teeth three days ago. In the middle of it though, the door hit Rainier on his back, ending the kiss.

Frisk looked at the one who interrupted. *Sans?*

"Hey there. I'm back." Sans shut the door behind him and held his hand out to Rainier. "Sans the Skeleton. So you the human that's got a bit of monster in ya, huh?"

"Uh." Rainier shook his hand softly, while Sans shook it regularly. "Sorry. I am, but I've never actually met one."

"Met another one," Sans corrected him. "Any amount of monster, makes ya a monster." He patted his back. "Real good of you to help us save the kingdom by using your life force. Know it's tough, been there myself a time or two. No one really understands or appreciates it. We do it for our kingdom. For our kind. I mean, if we didn't? Monsters would be wiped out forever."

Rainier didn't speak up right away. "What are you doing here?"

"Going with Frisk," Sans insisted. "She needs somebody to watch her back. Oh yeah, and you don't need to overfill it up. We're monsters, we've got some force too. Papyrus, my bro? You met him? Best guy ever," Sans stopped to say. "Welp, he's gonna be here fueling it with his magic energy while we're gone. So, we'll only need most of the life force as we go. Ain't that right, Frisky?"

"Yes," Frisk confirmed. "They can help the amount be smaller."

"Right, so you probably won't die," Sans said to Rainier, patting him on the back again, this time a little harder. "Well, we need to get going, so you better get going. Don't wanna get cold feet about this whole thing." He chuckled. "Cold feet? I'm from Snowdin?" He shoved his arm playfully. "Get it?"

"Yes, I get it." Rainier tried to fake a laugh. "Okay."

"Don't worry, we carved out all the guts inside," Sans said as he pulled Rainier down into the open control panel. "Just letting it breathe. We'll be down there awhile. Yessiree, with direct access, you'll be sure to live. No problem, Pal." He pulled him back up. "My bro should be coming any second. Undyne might come too, to see us off. You want to meet them?"

"No." Rainier moved toward the door. He nodded to Frisk. "Sounds good so far. Good luck."

"Whoah, whoah, wait?" Sans laughed as he grabbed Rainier's hand. "You're a funny guy, huh? Or absent minded. I am too. I got no mind, it's absent, I've just got a skull." He brought

him back to the control panel. "The life force, dude, come on. Just a bit. Maybe two or three months, not nearly a whole year or nothin'."

"Right." Rainier put out his hand. Nothing happened at first. "Um? I'm not used to everyone around. Usually, I do this alone?"

Sans made two tisks behind his teeth. "Oh, I get it. Yeah . . . not quite on the . . . yeah." He moved upward. "Can't quite get that magic up like you used to?" He held his hands out. "No worries, your impotence is safe with me."

"Impotence?!"

"You can't do magic easily. Hey, it's okay. Happens to everybody." Sans shrugged. "I mean, I think that's the closest human word I got for you? I know you can get there, Champ. You've done it so far. Keep trying." He held his hand out to Frisk. "Come on, let's give him a little bit of time alone. Less stress, better success."

Something about that made Frisk feel . . . like Sans was actually protecting her. *That's impossible. He doesn't know. Undyne swore she didn't give him details.* Even if he didn't though, he knew Rainier was doing something. Maybe that was why he did that?

"I can do this in front of others too," Rainier insisted. "Just not used to other monsters watching me."

"Sure you can, Pal. Sure you can." That's the last thing Sans said before he closed the door. He looked ahead. "Ah, there's Papyrus."

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### **Inside: Underground . . .**

"We know that Alphys went backward with the monsters 'cause in the game you were able to go to the lab without any tricks." Sans didn't waste any time as soon as they showed up. He teleported them to the back of the lab. "I bet we can find stragglers to start with. Let's go kill some monsters." He began to walk, hearing Frisk follow from behind. He wasn't going to be playing 'that guy in the distance' for much longer. If monsters hated him for siding with her, then they hated him for siding with her.

Sans didn't know the exact facts that would be 'unspeakable' like Undyne said, but he was a smart guy. Frisky was pretty. She was compassionate and understood monsters being raised by Toriel, something Rainier clearly wanted. He was loaded with money and fame, but he couldn't share his true self with anyone. So, tastewise? Yeah, that's probably how she got the game machine in the first place. She hit his buttons just right.

Undyne. She only had a few pet peeves. Monsters who didn't like to fight. Humans, which was probably starting to change since meeting Frisky. Monsters who didn't fight fair, and monsters who took advantage of others.



Lastly, Toriel was watchful over her daughter, and while the Underground had Frisk, it seemed there was something else behind that extra mothering. Like she knew ol' Rainier might try something one day.

Even meeting the guy himself. Shy around other monsters. Clearly didn't take any credit for helping out the cause with his own life force, which meant he was taking out the fee in another way.

Sans pretty much got it. Sure, it wasn't earthshaking or life-staking. Some wouldn't even consider it that big of a deal. But. It wasn't just foul play, it was shitty. Guy was getting Frisky as his girlfriend, then steady girlfriend, and then probably more as he went down the line. If Frisky wanted to save the Underground, she wasn't getting a choice.

And just to confirm that, he caught them kissing. Frisk, swinging twenty something, and that guy was at least in his forties if not fifties. If not that age in real life, then by the look of how much life force he gave away. Frisk had her eyes shut tight so he couldn't judge her, but as shut tight as they were and the intense expression behind it? Not enjoyable.

It was crap. It was weak. Who got a girlfriend that way? Not that Sans ever bothered with that kind of thing. Him and Papyrus were more loners, and there weren't many in the Underground that peaked much interest. Probably why Undyne didn't bother to even say 'Frisk has to be his girlfriend'. Nope, wouldn't even go with that one. 'Cause 'unspeakable' wasn't a word she'd throw around for girlfriend.

It was more than just a girlfriend thing. He wanted a wife and/or he wanted Frisky's innocence. Either way, it was no way to treat another person. Especially someone who was a hero. Because that's what she'd been, whether she saw it that way or not. A lot of monsters he'd talked to up there talked about her courage and determination the same way.

But Sans wasn't gonna keep this silence between them. "So, Frisk? I got a joke for you."

He heard a slight sigh. "I don't need a joke at the moment. Are you sure you can spare it?" she asked.

"What, like I got a limited number of jokes?" He teased. "Come on. One joke."

"Okay," Frisky agreed.

Sans walked a few more feet before he finally said it. "What's the difference between whore and hero?"

"That's a terrible joke," Frisky answered back.

"You'd know. It's a terrible situation," Sans said. "Truth is? Only a W. Hero is still in whore, it's just confused and scrambled in the words." Oh yeah, she stopped. "But it's still *in* there." He stopped along with her. "Undyne didn't say nothin', but it's not hard to figure out. Especially the way you cringed when he kissed you." He started to walk again. "I'm not gonna get all daddy scoldin' or pure of mind on ya. You are who you are, and you're gonna do what you have to, to get things done. Life of a hero isn't always glorious I guess."

Frisk remained quiet behind him, but continued to follow.

"Not sayin' it's good, and not sayin' it's bad," Sans said. "Don't even have to talk about it or get all defensive or nothing. I just know you're in the Underground, and you get miserable enough down here in your head, Frisky. Don't want the fact your keeping secrets from me to be another thing on your mind. Keep your head on your shoulders, and there's a high possibility we can get through it quick."

She didn't say anything. At first. "I didn't want anyone knowing. I don't need to be called a hero, but I don't . . . I just want to get everyone out."

That was all she had to say. That was fine. Nobody would want to be the center of attention for that. "Still not a single straggler," Sans said, changing the subject. Now that it was out of the way, it was time to concentrate. Sans wasn't a part of the Royal Guard, he was just a sentry, and he had no idea where the monsters would be. All they could do was walk until they finally found one. "Hang back a bit behind me instead, Frisky. I'll lead. Maybe one will see me and approach." Then he could find out where they all went.

Frisky did as he said, staying several feet back from his slow ass. Sans just shuffled away, slow. Everyone should know by now that Papyrus was taken out by the human easily by showing mercy. He wouldn't be at his regular jaunt. Which was still slow ass, but not as slow. About ten minutes or so, he finally saw it.

Not much, a little rabbit with a snowcap on, but it was good enough. "Sans, you shouldn't be out here. It's dangerous. Come follow me."

Sans just held his palm out. "I'm okay."

"But?" The rabbit got closer. "But Sans, the human will come. Please come follow me?"

"Maybe later," Sans muttered.

The rabbit crossed his arms. "I know it hurts. I heard what happened to Papyrus. Everyone lost someone."

"Just?" Sans paused a moment. "Maybe later. Just tell me which way to go. If I want to go. Later."

The rabbit groaned but pointed straight forward. "The ruins. There's a secret past the ruins that takes us the other way. It's not real big. It's not the best. I'm out scavenging for food right now."

"What's the method to get in it?" Sans asked. "Pretty sure a bored human that runs out of things to kill will go backwards."

"Oh, that's why it works," the rabbit said. "It's the broken lever you aren't supposed to touch in the ruins. If you lift it with monster magic, it'll activate. With none, it won't. That human with it's terrible soul doesn't have monster magic. It'll never get in."

"Wow. That was really worth it," Sans said. "Hey? Come on back here a second." Now that he knew what he needed, it was time to get the rabbit to the surface. "Stay right there."

"Why? Ah!" The rabbit tried jumping back, but Sans kept him still as he was dragged into an encounter. "No, no, no, no fight!"

"Take him out, Frisky," Sans said. Frisky had her daggers, but she was still moving slowly to the strike. "Guy really needs a bath. I think he was a white rabbit, and he's downright gray." There. That made her move a little faster.

An ear piercing yell and a cursing against Sans, and it was done. Sans had no monster in front of him. "Good job. Let's go kill some more monsters."

"Sans," Frisky said, "could . . . you not speak that way?"

"Only if you tell me a joke," Sans commanded "A good joke. Then I'll take us straight to the ruins."

Frisky adjusted the strap on her guitar again. He'd never heard her tell a joke before. Who knew how she'd be? "How do make the letter G disappear? No, wait." She paused. "How do you make the word one . . . disappear. I did that backwards."

*Put a G in front of it. Turns into gone.* " . . . hey, you save lives? That's something."

"I never said I was a good comedian," Frisky reminded him as she walked almost side by side.

"Try again," Sans insisted. "Come on, you had a Momma Toriel. You can't tell me she didn't tell jokes."

"Even if I use her jokes, I'm horrible at the delivery," Frisk admitted. "No one ever smiles at them."

"I will," Sans remarked. He pointed to his face. "I smile every day. Every morning. Every night. When my brother was killed. When I'm eating a burger. Whenever."

"Because you're a skeleton and you can't do anything else," Frisk said.

"Well, sharp at least. Can't crack a joke right, but you are saving the Underground so I can deal with that," Sans teased her.

"I can't crack a joke right, but I can crack a yoke wrong," Frisk tried again.

"Either way, they both end up scrambled." Hm. Sans put his hand out in a wavy manner. "Not quite medium. Not too bad, but you missed an ending delivery. I added it on."

"That's usually what Momma Toriel does," Frisk admitted. She gave him an odd look before staring straight ahead again.

What was that? "Yo, what was that look?"

"Hm?"

"You gave me a look, Frisky. Explain it," Sans said. "I'm a curious type. If you don't, I'll find a way to find out, and it won't be fun. Ask Undyne."

Frisk scratched her nose. "It's nothing big. It's just that . . . you scared me as a child."

"You were committing genocide in my world," Sans said to her. "I mean? Well, I guess you still are, but it's different. I didn't get it." He shrugged. "Even when I did. Memories hit kinda hard. Figured you were the bad one and your brother was the good one. I guess I shouldn't have drawn that line." He moved a little closer. "Did I scare you that bad, little Pop Tart?"

"Pop Tart?" Frisky asked.

"Yeah. I ate one up here a few times. They are hard to like at first. Crunchy, cold and dry on the outside. Worth eating though 'cause it's cherry and yummy on the inside. That's what you're like," Sans said.

She stopped again, this time with a hand on her hip. "Excuse me?"

"Keep all that personality built up inside. One of the reasons your delivery sucks on your jokes."

"I am not crunchy, cold and dry!" Frisk said. "I'm just not going to be real warm when I'm stuck in these situations."

"Still not warm on the surface either," Sans said. "I've only seen your cherry filling one way." Hm? That look again. "What?" Now she looked away. "Now what?" What was that? *Missing something in the translation*. He didn't know her language, he just sensed it between them. He could say it, he could spell it, but there were differences in being raised to know and sensing it out. Most times it worked fine, but there was something in the word that she didn't like. He could feel it. "I'm not saying you are dry and cold, I'm saying you should share some of your yumminess inside, Chum."

Frisk took a long, deep breath. "I get it. But. Right now." Frisk pulled her guitar off her back and lightly started to play. "This isn't just an average day in my life. This is the culmination of all of my years being put to the test. All my training, all my lessons, and everything that I can give to be what I need to be. These are the most important days of all of my life. Giving Momma Toriel back her kingdom, and giving my brother back his life outside of the Underground. If I mess it up, there's no one to blame but me."

Ah. "There's that cherry filling I sensed." Sans saw her reaction again. "You don't like the word cherry but you like the word yummy. How come?"

Frisk rolled her eyes. "It's. Euphemism. Bothering me, that's all."

Hm. That might explain the language breakdown. "What's it a euphemism for?"

"It's not important."

"Clearly it is," Sans said. There was only one thing that bothered her down there. It could only be one of two things. "It a word for killing someone?" Nope, her expression didn't agree with that. That left only one. "It a word dealing with Old Rainandpour?" Ah, there was a notable cringe.

"No and yes, and I don't want to talk about it," Frisky insisted. "Let's just find the hiding monsters. Can you please teleport us yet?"

"Haven't had a good joke out of you yet."

"We are wasting time."

"You get all stuck in your own head," Sans said. "It's more than just the joke, Frisky. If I take you out there to murder monsters in some kind of mass attack, you have to be ready for it in your head. You're right. You got the skills. You learned the lessons. But if you can't pull yourself out enough to relax and tell a good joke, then me doing that isn't helpful either, Pop Tart."

"I do what needs to be done."

"Somehow, I don't think that's your Momma Toriel talking," Sans warned her. "Sounds more like the influence of a long passed on dad." She was quiet for a bit as they continued to walk. There was a reason, after all, Toriel kept wanting him to watch over her. "Change of subject, Pop Tart. What's the guitar for? Not just relaxation, is it?"

Frisk looked at the guitar as she started to play a simple melody again. "Partly that. Partly protection. I mostly have it if I run into an enemy I can't take out. Not that it matters anymore," she admitted. "Rainier knows. He always knew."

"Great. Play something besides an old ancient song," Sans insisted. "You know anything else?"

"I do." Frisky smiled. Hey, he got her to smile. "Momma Toriel made sure that I got away from games. I learned how to play many types of music on this. She got me interested in books and art . . ."

Ah. *That's not a bad smile.* If only she did that more often. "Just 'cause the world sucks don't mean you should stop smiling. Just smile at the bullshit and move on," he told her. "Life's too short for anything else. Play me something different. Something that means something to you."

Frisky seemed to be thinking. "Not the latest thing. But, it means something to me." Then.

Sans just watched her fingers dance on the strings, back and forth. Seeing her fingers up close dance across the guitar, up and down, creating a mixture of sounds he hadn't heard in a long time. The ancient songs were important down below, if anyone played, it was usually related to them. But, that? It may not be the latest thing, but Sans could see from the way Frisky's whole body relaxed, she enjoyed it. She was getting closer. Towards the end of the song, he asked. "Joke."

"Why didn't the student fail his studies in Melodies?" Frisk played a few more notes. "He made the d only in the middle. That's about the best you are getting from me, I don't make jokes, seriously."

Sans could see that. "D in the word Melodies. That joke fell worse than my job ethic," Sans said. Still, he chuckled. "You are no comedian. You aren't even an assistant comedian. You couldn't even give water to the comedian on stage."

"I could too handle giving water to a comedian," Frisky protested. "I'm not clumsy, and if I accidentally said something, a good comedian should have the skill to cover it up and make the accident funny." Frisky put her guitar back up.

"Not gonna argue with that one," Sans said. "You could give water to an expert comedian on stage. You could give water to me. Congratulations. You're the most unfunny thing I ever met, but you play real well."

"You can't change who you are deep inside," Frisky acknowledged. "I suck at jokes but I kick ass in fighting. One of those two skills were necessary to get this done." She pulled out a dagger and started to flip it around her finger. "It's not flipping burgers, but it's a living."

Damn, that dagger didn't have a hole in it. She was using the natural balance of gravity given off by Tori's magic on it, spinning it just right. "Impressive. Your Momma Toriel taught you well."

"Like I said before." Frisky put her dagger back away. "Momma Toriel didn't raise me to be pacifist. She did try to raise me on jokes, but she gave up on that quickly. I didn't have the talent for corny joke telling."

"Nope. You done got your original momma's talent." Sans noticed what was coming ahead. Already leaving Waterfall.

"You only saw her one time," Frisk reminded him.

"I can tell a lot from one time," Sans reminded her back. "Your momma was a wilder one, probably not the perfect one for the mantle of mom, but she cared. She showed it, in her own ways. Hell, getting your dad to slap another woman? She had balls, even if she wasn't the human type to have them."

"My mom had balls? Is there anything too shameful for you to say, Sans?"

"Don't think so. Still like to know what cherry means though." Ah, he saw her tighten again.

"There's nothing wrong with cherry, it's just a flavor. The euphemism for it is taking away innocence," Frisk finally answered. "I don't want to hear it anymore now."

"Kay." He got his answer now. Marriage wasn't even a part of the questions anymore. "Rainandpour wants sex with you."

"Sans!" She stopped. Instantly, and actually backed up some.

"Same thing. Wrong word." Sans noticed her distance. "Worse word. It's what you thought. Think of a nicer word then. I pick it up from you, Frisky." Ah. "Oh yeah. Relationship. There we go." And she was walking very fast away from him. "I don't have the experience of the language. It's what I pick up." Damn. He tried to jaunt, shuffle a little faster. She sure could move. "Don't like that one? Marriage. Well, I don't think that fits the situation." Oh shit, does it? Did she have to marry that guy if she took too long?

She whipped around quickly, her eyes and posture absolutely rigid and furious. "Stop reading my mind! Nothing is your business!" She turned back around, walking away. "I have no idea why mother thought you were the best to choose." She stumbled slightly in the snow. "Undyne would have carried me straight to the ruins and I would be fighting. Instead of trying to crack a perfect joke, singing a song and hanging out. I need to get this done, as quickly as possible. If you aren't going to help, then just stay back!"

Ooh, damn. *I just get options from the words she thinks.* Ouch. They had already gotten to Snowdin, and as mad as she was that she was 'wasting time', he still didn't think she was ready for the ruins yet.

He teleported in front of her. "Hello." Frisk didn't say anything to him. "Bastard, Jerk, Pervert, Hentai, Misogynist, Idiot, Moron, Asshole, those are all the words flowing from you right now." He needed her to understand. "Which one am I supposed to use? 'Cause I don't know."

Frisk eyed him.

"I don't. If I was that good, Underground, I could have picked up exactly what was going on with you."

She didn't answer him back.

"I'm not trying to hurt you, Pal. I use the words I see the strongest used first. It's what we all do, whenever monsters speak. The first is usually the right one, 99% of the time. You humans are some of the worst though, lots of different words for the same meanings."

"I am not thinking of the response you are supposed to use for me," Frisk said.

"But you are, in a way. All your knowledge of your communication flows freely between us when you expand yourself to use language." He tried to make her understand. "To not sound like a textbook dictionary, we also work with the most intense words up front too. Not every monster can handle all the subtleties of the human language, so they stick with their usual croaks and whatnot. The smartest can and do though." Come on, didn't she get it yet? "I *replaced* the textbook definition hitting me from you with the word you intensely had in your mind, to sound more normal to you."

Okay. She looked like she was starting to get it. "That's how your language works?" She started to walk side by side again. "That's different. Momma Toriel never broke it down real well."

"Of course not, you communicated fine. Why would she? Look. Magic. Telekinesis. Telepathy. Whatever word you want to use for it," he said. "Works in everything too." He took off his trombone. "Break out your guitar and play that upbeat song again."

Frisky brought her guitar off her back and started it again. This time, Sans joined in with his trombone. Frisky was great about knowing the facts about monsters. She was raised by one, but some subtleties couldn't be taught, they had to be experienced.

This would prove once and for all how monsters *really* worked to her. He already knew Toriel taught her more than one instrument. She had known the basics of the trombone. Taking the knowledge of what she knew on the guitar, and the weak practice she had with the trombone, he mixed his own experienced knowledge of his own on the trombone, and was able to play with her flawlessly.

She looked back, amazed afterward. "You're good."

Hey, a compliment. "Thanks, Frisky." Then, he started to play something else different. He didn't have all of it, but afterwards there were a few notes going through her head. He played them, and paused. She started to play again, and now he could see it all lied out in front of him again. The tune was definitely different from the first. She must have a huge assortment of music knowledge up in her head. He couldn't break into it though, not without bringing it to the surface. Just like the language.

Damn, did he want to though.

"Why didn't the chocolate taste good?"

Ah, the next attempt. Determined one she still had been. Sans had his trombone ready to play a flat note when she didn't make it.

"Because it was made of chalk and it was too late to take it out."

*Welp, not bad. Forced delivery. Punny. Better delivery and she might have nailed it, but that's the best I'm gonna get.* Jokes wasn't how to get her to relax anyhow, or to see anything inside of her. He understood that now. And? "You get in trouble, then slow down, and talk to me. I don't care if you are in the middle of a battle. You're not alone this time, Frisky."

She nodded and then he heard something come from her. Low and soft. "Thank you."

Boy. That look. That sweet, subtle voice. She definitely wasn't scared anymore, and he was pretty glad about that. "Your welcome, Frisky." He knocked her arm gently. "Looks like your breaking out, Pop Tart. Just in time too. Let's take a shortcut to the start of the Ruins."

But, that wasn't going to happen, once he saw her beaming smile . . . and a cough.





# Yay, Let's Go Slaughter Some Innocents Today

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## Inside:

"I'm fine." Frisk didn't understand why Sans was getting that bent out of shape. A light cough, that was it.

"Home." It was the only thing he kept saying.

"I've been down here plenty of times. I have to be down here for as long as possible," Frisk told him. "I-"

"Been lucky. Luck's running out, we need to get home so Toriel can look at you." He wasn't backing down. "The Underground is a plague full of the nastiest things around. Catch one and it can kill a human dead. Only reason you're probably not dead is because you've got the energy from your guitar, but it's not going to last."

"T is here," she reminded him.

"He's got food up the wazoo. He's at least protected in an environment Toriel tried to keep cleaner," Sans remarked. "He's fine. You are not. Surface. Now."

*I don't want to.* Wasted energy. It was Rainier's life force. They would need more to get back. "One, I only saved one monster."

"Live to fight another day. We're going back. That's that."

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## Outside: Gaming Machine

When Frisk reached home again and opened the door, it didn't take long for her mom to come by. With Frisk down for longer amounts of time, she knew her mother would be even more worried. "Had to come back." A little bit of blood leaked out of her mouth. Her mother grabbed her faster than she could comprehend, probably half with magic, and took Frisk like she had the strength of a newborn. "Momma Toriel, I'm okay."

"Versions of that statement are different," Sans said just a short bit from behind her.

Frisk felt herself being put into a chair and immediately her mother set to work healing her.

"Bad idea, bad idea, bad idea," her mother muttered constantly while she was healing Frisk. She could tell she was trying to hold back tears as well.

"I'm okay," Frisk insisted, but her mother wouldn't hear of it. "Momma Toriel. Mother. Please, I'm okay."

"She is now," Sans agreed. "She's good, Tori. Probably just a little bit of a plaguey disease. No biggie. Guitar's good protection." Her mom didn't answer him. "Tori?" She was still healing Frisk. "She's good. The human's good. You're causing damage now."

"She isn't just any human," Momma Toriel told him off, a little too harshly. "She's more than a human. She's *my* daughter." She got up from the healing. "We're fine. Go see Papyrus, Sans."

Frisk watched Sans walking backwards to go out the door, like he was rewinding himself. He closed the door.

"It's all happening." Her mother fetched some gauze and a bandage. "I healed you a little overboard."

Frisk knew that. She watched her mother wrap her leg with a wound bandage and some gauze. It happened. It happened when she was a child and got hurt, the emotions of her mother mixed with the healing, pushing too much power into it. She hadn't done that since Frisk was a child. "Momma Toriel."

"Rainier holds the cards, he always has. You've always had to play everything just right. You have to play in the Underground just right." Her mother was sinking as she rubbed her eyes. "Frisk. I'm a terrible mother."

What? "No, you're not."

"There's not a mom alive that would train and teach their child to end up in these situations." Toriel turned her back to fetch more gauze, which was overkill. "I'm worse than your father."

This was no time for a blaming game. "I would have done it anyhow," Frisk reminded her. She stood up. A little wound wasn't going to stop her. She walked toward her mother. "It had my brother, as well as your kingdom. Even before you had the feelings of my mother? We both knew what we wanted. It was mutual." Before she considered Toriel her mother. While she still called her Toriel. "I was so young, but I was so sure of what I wanted. You aren't making me do this. You just gave me the guidance to do this."

"I'm. Torn." Her mother came to her, stroking her hair tenderly. "I'm halfway. I'm halfway ready to let you keep doing what you have to. And I'm halfway . . ."

Frisk watched flames fall behind her mother's eyes. A dangerous flame. *She can't*. "I need his life force, and you know what you're thinking is wrong."

"Right and wrong. Wrong and right." She gritted her teeth. "Children, Asgore had no business killing. But I don't think-"

"Don't," Frisk warned her, hugging her quickly. "Momma Toriel. No. Don't sink like that." She wasn't worth an entire kingdom. She wasn't worth T, forever trapped in there. Never. "I have to get my brother out. We can't give up." Then there was a knock on the door, and Undyne walked in.

She placed her spear gently on the ground, but standing up in her hand. "Queen Toriel." She bowed to her. "I heard from Sans he thought you might need some help."

"I might," her mother said. "Ooh!" She looked toward Frisk expectantly. "Could we tell him that you would flat outright marry him if he gives us what we need?"

Frisk stared at her mom. "Then when everyone is free, murder him?"

"Normally against my code," Undyne said as she approached Toriel. "However, I could make an exception. Would you like me to shine up my spear for the occasion?"

"Undyne, you aren't helping." Donald Rainier was not being fair. Right now, he was lower than scum. But? "He's still human."

"Yeah, but I can hit a pretty far distance," Undyne insisted. "No problem."

"Are they light enough for a long enough distance?" Frisk's mother asked.

"Momma Toriel!" Frisk warned her.

"I know. I know, I know." Her mother looked toward Undyne. "Killing is wrong. What he is doing is much worse-"

"He's putting his life force into it, Mother-"

"Then let him be honorable and end it there! Why does he think he deserves you?" She held up her paws. "He is much too old. He is a bore, nothing exciting to you. His plans are terrible. His life dreams are incredibly droll for a monster, and honestly? I don't like him. You deserve so much better."

Frisk couldn't back down. "I might have to get more power now. Sans told him not to put in much."

"Rest, Frisk," her mother insisted. "Another day."

"Another day everyone is scared. Another day my brother hopefully lives without catching anything," Frisk said softly. "Maybe I should give him my guitar. Just in case. It would ward off anything that might get to him."

"Your brother does not know how to play the ancient songs on it. There is nothing for him to do with it," her mother said.

"I can get my second guitar. Start over. It's not like I need it anymore," Frisk reminded her. "I'll still charge it, and he can have the protection my other one has now. It's real stable."

Her mother smiled at her. "You are so caring, Frisk. Okay. If it will let you relax, take it to your brother next time you go down."

"Which is hopefully now." Frisk started to head to the door. She heard a small mutter from her mother. Before she headed out the door, she heard something else she wasn't supposed to

hear.

"If Rainier touches my daughter at any time, after it's all over, kill him."

"Absolutely, Majesty."

Frisk closed the door behind her. *Rainier is even corrupting my own mother now. Damn him.* She headed for the gaming machine again and saw Sans. "Checkup said fine."

"Really?" Sans looked at her leg with Papyrus. "I like the new look. I hear wound covers are all the rage."

"Frisk, that's not good," Papyrus said, bending down to look at the gauze. "How bad did it all go?"

"Momma Toriel just gets a little wrapped up in healing sometimes," Frisk said. "She caused that. I'm fine. We can go."

"Naw. We can't," Sans added. "Need a good four months of his life force to keep it going more than a turn, even with Papyrus' help."

"And I have really been helping," Papyrus insisted. "It's quite tedious, but I know it's an important duty."

"We got enough to get back, but not enough to come back," Sans said, tapping the top of the panel.

Great. *Same day favor.* "Then. I guess I'll be back." She walked off slowly, toward her home to reach her cell.

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### **Outside: Sans and Papyrus' Home**

"A game of darts?" Papyrus asked. Sans didn't hear him at first. He was busy looking out the window. "Sans?"

"What kind of monster chooses to do what he's doing," Sans said. "It's wrong. Way too humaney for my taste. Can't believe he's still monster."

Um? "What are you talking about?" Papyrus asked. "Did someone take your food when you weren't looking again? Everyone's hungry, not everything is quite worked out yet. Sans?" But just like that, his brother was gone.

Bother. Where did he take off to?

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### **Outside: Closer to Frisk's place . . .**

*There he is.* Sans didn't get in the way. He couldn't do anything in the situation to help. He couldn't even do anything afterward. Monsters getting out of that torturous place was on the line, as well as her brother. And afterward? Well, Undyne had that covered, or Tori. After the fire he saw in her eyes, it was hard to see how anything would go for sure.

Rainier showed up in a suit. He didn't do that last time. Sans watched as Frisky's door opened. She came out in a half dress. It covered her legs, but it had a split. Sequined. It also had a low front, even drawing his attention away from her usual pretty eyes to her front. *Damn!* She could be a bad ass whipping monsters butts Underground, and still pull off that hot of a dress?

"I'm here to help you," Rainier said, his gaze sailing down across Frisk's body before floating back up. "You're here to help me?"

"Date. Only," Frisky insisted. "Momma Toriel, I'll be out." She closed the door. "My mother is staying with me now. She's worried about me." She stopped to glare at him. "She also wants to kill you with her bare hands but she'll probably leave it to Undyne. Spears are better weapons to pierce from a long distance. *Just* to let you know."

"I get closer to my limit every day," Rainier said. "Do you have any idea how old I am?" He gestured to himself. "Loss of my life force, it has aged me so much on the outside. It shows how much time I have left." He took Frisk's hand. "Let's go. I will have you back within two hours. Then, you can do what needs to be done again."

They started to walk away.

"Oh, hang on." Rainier pulled something out of his pocket. "Something I had made for you." He moved behind her. "Stay still." Frisky stayed still as he put a necklace around her neck. "Custom designed, with rights included. The rights were almost the priciest part of it all."

Frisky looked down at the necklace. " . . . it's nice."

"It's more than nice. I know you recognize that." He took her hand. "You will warm up to me over time. Until then? I think the necklace fits. A princess on a princess."

Frisky held the charm tightly in her hand. "My mother may have been queen, but I don't live a princess filled life. And? I certainly don't need rescued like the peach you roped around my neck." Sans could tell she wanted to break it off. Whatever it had been. "Let's get out of here and get this over with."

"Yes, but remember?" Rainier said from her side.

"I know. Act like I want to be on a date," Frisky said.

"Yes, and I know you are very good at acting," Rainier said as he brought her to his car. "We'll have a good time, as long as you act right."

Sans watched the car. Twitchy. *Ignore it. Don't ignore it. Ignore it. Don't ignore it.* He couldn't help. Frisky had it under control. *I hardly get involved in things if it's not super*

*important. I did Tori a favor. I helped Papyrus. That was enough, right? I mean?* Yet. He took a step back. The car was starting. *Aw, fuck it.*

He teleported to the top of the car. The least he could do was make sure Rainier's idea of a good time turned into a bad time.

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### **Inside the Car, an hour later.**

*If momma could see me now.* Frisk had exactly what she wanted for her, right there. With one word, she could get the wealth and fame her momma always wanted for her. Would she have wanted it still for her, knowing Frisk didn't want to be there? *If Momma Toriel could see me too.* Reduced down to a sweet, sexy, and sultry version of a man's dream. Wearing what he wanted. Including a stupid Mario necklace of Princess Peach. She was no Princess Peach. She didn't have or need a Mario, she was the one saving a kingdom! Wearing it irked her harder than anything else. It wasn't a funny joke.

"Driver?" Rainier pushed his car's intercom. "Are we still not at the restaurant?" The sound sizzled inside of it, slightly hurting his ear. "Ow." He winced and turned it off. "Should have been there by now. Pardon, Frisk. This was the nicest I have that was durable enough to make it to your property tonight."

Who cared what the car looked like? "You have one hour left. You wanted two," Frisk said.

"Right." Rainier looked out the window. "My driver seems to have taken several wrong turns?" He watched as the car stopped.

Frisk got out and looked around. There was nowhere to eat around there. No movie theatre. Not even a park to walk around. Rainier followed suit, also getting out.

"Okay, this makes no sense." He moved to the front and knocked on the car door. "Hello? Why are we here? We aren't supposed to be here?" He knocked again. "Hello?"

Frisk looked around again. It was completely suburban, just regular houses people lived in. *Why am I here?* Then. She couldn't believe it. She stared at the road signs. *Someone's been catching up on old cartoons besides Papyrus. Ready for a joke anywhere, aren't you?* "Your driver must be some kind of comedian."

"Why?" Rainier asked.

Frisk pointed at the sign. "From our position. We took a right on Albuquerque. We probably should have gone left." *That wiley smartass.* And just in case she didn't catch the reference? They were also next to Coyote Road. *Pure genius.* She smiled. It was the first time she did all night.

Rainier groaned. "Drivers. That joke wasn't worth his job." He moved to the other side. "The door is open, Frisk? Did you see anyone leave?"

"Not a single human soul." *Just one comedic monster soul probably.* She still couldn't believe he tagged along, but it had to be him. *I guess, he was a little worried about me.* Frisk could take care of her self. She proved that multiple times. But. She still felt something strange pull at her. A warmth. Kind of sweet. "Oh, Rainier? There seems to be a local pizza eatery at the end of the street. How about there?"

"Not much choice." Rainier closed the door as he got out his cell. "We will start walking to it. I need to call for a backup driver to get us out of-"

Frisk looked back and watched Rainier slip. She saw what he slipped on and smiled. "You okay?"

"What in the world did I slip on?" Rainier grabbed his butt, trying to soothe it as he looked at the ground. "A band concert ticket."

*A band named Snake Oil.* Sans was good at using resources around him when he'd hardly been on the surface that long. Impressive. She helped him up, trying to look like a dutiful girlfriend for the literally two people walking down the sidewalk. "Here, Honey. Give me your hand? Are you okay? That looks like a terrible boo boo."

"Um?" Her choice of words had confused him. Of course they did. Sweet talk mimicked that of comforting a pet. Her momma taught her that all those years ago. Men . . . were hurt pets. "I'm fine."

Of course, she was supposed to dial it back to a five, but she cranked it to a ten. Hey, it had been a long while since momma's lessons? Who could blame her?

"Okay. We'll get a bandage on it when we get home, Sweetie." Frisk turned and started to walk. "Stay near me so you stay safe. I don't want you to fall again and hurt your itty bitty butt." Frisk waved at the people that had been walking by. That was probably about the extent she could get away with messing with him. He was prepared for it too.

"Of course I can, Sugar." Rainier held onto her hand. "I love staying next to you. You know? I remember your mother. She was quite sweet back then when I met her too."

"I don't want to talk about that time," Frisk said. He knew she wouldn't want to relive that night. "Remember I went up to your waist and was wanting punch next to her? Could you pick a more awkward time to talk about that than with me on a date?"

"I know that was a hard night," Rainier apologized. "I just mean that part of her charm has stayed with you. Although, she was a little more subtle, your caring just now matched her so well."

*You can't get on my good side. You met her once.* "I need some pizza already." As they walked, Rainier stroked her hand tenderly, which she just ignored. Then when they reached the sign? "It's closed."

"Shoot." Rainier looked at his watch. "It closed ten minutes ago." He looked back over toward the car down the end of the block. "Well, this didn't turn out so well, but it's okay." He



smiled at Frisk. "We can simply talk, have some champagne, and spend some time in the car for our date while we wait for my backup driver. He isn't far, he'll be here in ten minutes."

"I don't know if I trust your drivers after that joke," Frisk told him. "I should stay sober, just in case I need to drive."

"Nonsense. That was a new driver. He probably got tired of his job." Rainier took her hand in his again and started to walk back. "I called on my most professional driver. He would never leave us stranded. Come. I know you must like champagne. Your mother did."

"I am bigger into punch," Frisk said. Alcohol and Rainier didn't mix. "Straight punch."

"I don't have punch. You'll like something I have," Rainier insisted. As they reached the car, Frisk tucked herself back in as he closed her side door, rubbing against her accidentally. "Here." He reached over to the side of his limousine and lifted the cover off of a small area that looked like it was perfect for the stem glasses of champagne. Only, they weren't there. "Oh?" He closed it. "Well. That's a problem."

*Not anymore.* "Water is fine with me," Frisk said. "Dear Don."

"Well, I still have the water glasses, so we can just use those." He reached for the two water glasses at the end of the stem placing champagne spots. "Here you go, Frisk."

"Thanks, Don." Frisk held her glass. Hopefully since Sans had gotten rid of the champagne glasses he also got rid of.

"There's nothing here?"

The alcohol too. "That's a shame, Don. I'm sorry our date isn't turning out well." She held her glass. "You have a small amount of water?"

"Yes, yes." Disgruntled, but he poured them both water. "Next time, I assure this will not happen, Frisk. This isn't showing you the time I wanted to at all." He clinked water glasses with her.

"Don't worry about it, Donny Boy. Everything will be just awesome next time." Gag. Frisk drank her water. As far as first dates went, this one was going well for her. "Home's a long distance away. I can't hang out too long."

"I know," he muttered softly. "Frisk." He set his water down and wrapped his arm around her shoulder. "I know you are rebelling against the very idea of being with me because of my age." He pulled out his phone and pulled up some data from the user page. "This area in the phone, it can't be tampered with, without risking punishment by law enforcement. So, you know it's not fake." He held it out to her. "That's the reason back then I probably didn't fall so head over heels with her yet."

Frisk looked at the dates. She blinked. He was only eight years older than her?

"I was fascinated with her, but I was fascinated with many women. I just found my spot in the world when I met her. At seventeen," he said. "My appearance truly is just because of my

loss of life force. I risked it all for what I wanted. A good life." He touched Frisk's chin and held it delicately. "And a good woman that can understand me."

"I'm no one special," she said. And it wasn't the age she found unattractive. It was the manner in which he was trying to get her.

"But you are. Don't you see? It's not your mother's influence, and it's not that your the princess of the monsters." He held her chin and stole a light kiss. "It's that you understand monsters. You're the only human who ever could. I? I don't think I could handle being with a real monster. I've never grown up around them. And human women? Tell me, Frisk? How would you feel about me adding something extra to my pizza that humans wouldn't consider food?"

"Momma Toriel likes snails on many things," Frisk said. "I'm not so into it, but I can stand it if she's proud of a dish."

"I love cockroaches, they are crunchy."

Frisk didn't answer at first. "Everyone does their own thing. I won't be eating pizza with you at that moment, but I don't care. Top your food however you want."

"You see? That's why. All my oddities, I don't have to worry about them with you." He pulled her into his arms. "You are the only human in the world who could ever say that."

Frisk just stayed still. "This date is over in half an hour. It takes longer to get home."

"No problem, I'm sure my driver is back by now." He let Frisk go. "I'll, um, give a little extra for the time." He held the intercom. "Are you ready?"

"Quite, Sir. I will have us to our destination in forty five minutes."

"Great." He held Frisk's hand. "I told you about my age, and you are still so distant. You should think about it before casting judgment upon me though."

Frisk glanced toward him. What was he talking about?

"You *used* me. Whether or not you want to admit it, you portrayed feelings toward me just to use me to provide you with a machine," he said. "If I hadn't known about the monsters, then how would you have gained more time? There would be no other way but to fake even stronger feelings. The difference between what I am doing, and what you were doing isn't so different."

"I was saving a kingdom, and a brother I love so dearly," Frisk disagreed. "You are forcing a relationship. There is a big discrepancy between those two."

"Discrepancy or not. You know in the end, it's still the same thing. I just made it easier to take the path you still would have walked down."

*Bastard.*

"I just . . . this is a sorry way to live," he said softly. "Alone. I don't want to be alone." He looked at his hands. "Old or young. Short life or long life. No one wants to be alone. I could give you everything. Even the wedding of a century, if you just . . ."

Frisk looked out the window. "Is the driver going to leave yet?"

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### **Outside: Back Home . . .**

Frisk got out of the car door and walked to her door. Rainier tagged along behind her. He waited at her front door. Of course. A goodbye kiss. "Great time. Best time drinking water in a limousine. Thanks." Half sarcastic, half sweet she hoped?

"Best time drinking water in a limousine for me too," Rainier insisted. "I will see you again soon. Goodnight, Frisk." He approached Frisk for the last kiss of the evening.

"Hey, it's Rainandpour!"

But that was cut short as Sans slid between them, shaking his hand again. "Hey, you're all smart and stuff, right? Come this way." Sans started to yank him from Frisk's door. "So? We're trying to solve this problem with our water. Ya see most of us are downright fifty percent mud after living down there so we're having troubles keeping the . . ."

His voice faded away. *Thanks*. Subtle things, but it was nice. She really didn't want to have to go through a kiss again. She went inside and closed her door. Her mother was right behind it in her chair. Clearly worried. "I'm home."

"He's fifteen minutes late dropping you off," she noticed. "He shouldn't get away with that. Next time, I am sending Undyne to watch over you from the shadows."

"He'll add in a little more for the time," Frisk said. "Sans hauled him off to show him some kind of water thing?"

"An excuse. I asked him to do that," her mother said. She followed Frisk to her room.

"Did you ask him to follow me too?"

"Follow you? No, he did that on his own. He only followed partway, to make sure Rainier didn't get you even more stressed. Stress affects you in the Underground, Frisk. He wanted to help I suppose."

"Right." He did know that, and he did. That was the perfect time to give her a comedic break. "I'll be ready, bright and early. I need to bring two guitars. One for T, and one I'll start to take."

"Play some songs beforehand. It protects you long enough for you to get to me."

"I know, Momma Toriel." Frisk looked at her hands.

"Are you okay?" Her mother asked. "Did Rainier do something? You don't look good, especially at what should have been, as he said, a simple first date."

"Yeah. It's just . . ." Frisk sat on her bed. "I manipulated him to get him to use the machine. He's manipulating me to get a relationship. He . . ."

"It's not the same thing," her mother said, sitting on her bed too. "Your actions are noble. His are selfish and greedy."

"He's putting his life force into it," Frisk said. "He's only eight years older than me. He lives life how he wants to. I don't . . . I don't know what to say about it, about me, or about him."

"I do." Her mother took both her hands into her gentle paws. "When one of a pair cannot see past what the other does, then that is the end of the relationship. Whether friendly, or not. He crossed that line when he started this blackmail with you. Your intentions are honorable, his are not."

"Would you still say that if I wasn't your daughter, mother?" Frisk asked her. "Even if he doesn't care about the kingdom, he's giving his very life to be with me. Where would that place him?"

Her mother thought for a moment. "Well, Hon'? Let's see. First of all, he isn't putting his life on the line for a woman he loves. He is putting his life on the line to *get* the woman he loves. Although noble on the outside, the fact it's not a persuasive way to reach his goal, it is forceful, leaves him in the wrong. A monster does not force another to love them. I would never have approved of such a joining."

"Oh." Frisk watched her move from the bed. "Would Asgore have?"

Her mother's movements were stiff. Asgore wasn't something she liked to talk about. "Asgore might have seen it a different way," she admitted. "Still, even he would not have agreed. Rainier is using the basis of saving the Underground as collateral to attain you. That is not justifiable, no matter what else he says."

Frisk watched her mother leave the room.

"No decent man would entrap anyone like that. Not one," her mother said before closing the door.

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### **Outside: Gaming Machine**

"You sure you gotta go?" Sans asked. "Rainandpour, you comin' back soon again?"

"Not for a little while I think," Ol' Rainandpour said to him. "It's Rainier by the way."

"Aw, I keep forgetting. Your name sounds Rainy no matter what ya say," Sans said. "Hey, Papyrus? We really shouldn't let him go without having him sample some of your pasta."

"I really need to go." Rainier got back to his car. "I don't know how to help with the water problem. I don't fund any of this. Frisk's group isn't mine, we just have similar goals I believe."

"Darn. Well, okay. See you later, Rainandpour." Sans waved as the limousine took off. "Bye and good riddance." He looked back at Papyrus. "Really, no pasta yet?"

"No pasta. Not enough heat to attempt it, or time today either," Papyrus said. "I need to get some sleep before another big day tomorrow. I am getting better at getting a circadian rhythm on the surface now. You should come get some rest too."

"Yeah. I will." Sans headed toward his bed. It was still cold. They were leaving most of the power for monsters who needed to be warmer. Frisk would have to get in touch with her group soon if they were going to keep living comfortably.

"Sans?" Papyrus called to him from his bedroom door. "Where did you go before? You up and left on me."

"Just. Watching that human," Sans admitted. "I don't want him to pull something. Frisk is close."

"I don't either, but clearly this human is grown and can take good care of herself," Papyrus pointed out. "Sans? I got funny jibbery vibies coming from you when you came out with the human. And most of the time with Rainier, I felt a counter attacking sort of vibery thing."

"She's cool. He's a dick." Summed it up well. "Night, Papyrus."

"You're not starting to like the human, are you?"

Uh? "Kay? Maybe you missed it. To me, we met like a few days ago at most. She was this tiny little kiddo, standing yeah high." He put his hand down to his waist. "Half scared of me too. Only a few days ago."

"Yes, but you only knew her that way for less than a day," Papyrus pointed out. "Meanwhile, now, she has grown to be what I consider to be . . . quite cool."

"Yeah. Guess so."

"I mean, she can really beat up bad guys. From talking to Queen Toriel, I got the scoop on all of her training. It's insane! She has had sufficient hero training."

"Yeah," Sans admitted. "Watched her flip a dagger around her fingers. Without any kind of hole or anything."

"She knows the gravity, the balance, the weapons, the study of everything," Papyrus said. "Not to mention, she has a guitar and you've spoke more than once about how good she sounds with it with you. Is there anything she can't do?"

"Tell a joke," Sans chuckled. "She can't tell jokes, she is terrible."

"Oh, Sans." Papyrus groaned. "Leave that to be what matters to you most of all. I still think she is a very worthwhile human to befriend. Goodnight, Brother."

"Yeah. Night." Sans watched him walk off as he climbed into his own bed. "Can't tell a joke to save her life." He lied down on the bed, but heard something faint up ahead. Frisk was on her guitar again. *But damn, does her soul shine.*

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### **Outside: Rainer's Limousine**

Rainier got on the phone. Frisk hadn't done anything wrong, but he knew someone must have interfered on the date. He didn't think anyone would interfere in something so trivial already in the pursuit of freedom for the monsters. But? He didn't want it to happen again. "Jason? It's Donald Rainier. I have something I'd like to discuss with you."

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### **Outside: The Next Morning . . .**

Frisk wanted to go earlier, but her mother warned her not to. She would still be tired, and end up sleeping Underground anyhow if she left. Sans was also tired since he followed her last night. Now, the machine was filled again. Frisk was healthy. She knew where she needed to go, and they were going to be right there when they first came into the ruins.

She readied herself with two guitars. Before she left, she wanted to arm her brother with one.

"Well, I got the backpack, so I guess no worries." Sans came into the game machine, already ready to go. "Almost done. Get some rest? Not dying anymore?"

In more than one way. "I'm fine," Frisk insisted. "Thanks, Sans. For taking over the car."

"Papyrus was watching something Tori had called best episodes of some kind of cartoons. That joke kept reappearing, I couldn't help myself," he chuckled. "Almost wanted to leave a picture of a screw and a ball connected to the antennae. Barely resisted."

"Well. Thanks," she said again. "Rainier is . . . stressful and strange."

"Putting it mildly, yeah," Sans said. "Less stress. Yay, let's go slaughter some innocents today."

Not again. Sans and his weird humor. So hard to describe.

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### **Inside: Underground**

First stop was Frisk's brother, T. She explained briefly about her guitar and how keeping it would help keep him more protected. Why she hadn't thought of that before, she didn't know. Probably too much stress in front of her. Her guitar wasn't going to completely annihilate the threat, but it lessened it, or at least the effects. She played a song while she was there like her

mother asked her to do, to make sure the new one had some Underground magic flowing through it too. While she did that, Sans joined in again.

Did he also know the power he was placing in his trombone with his songs? Or did he only know they helped relieve stress and granted more protection?

After that brief visit, she moved onward. She wouldn't waste any extra time. Sans took her straight back to the beginning again. She moved toward the lever that didn't work. "Your turn?"

"You betcha Frisky." He grabbed the lever and yanked it. "Hm. Nothin'."

Wait. How could that be? "Why would that monster lie to you?" Frisk asked.

"I don't think he did." Sans flipped the lever back down. "Alphys keeps cameras all over the Underground. She's the one in charge of emergencies. If she saw me being the one helping you before, she might have changed the way it could open. It happened yesterday. Plenty of time."

"Damn it!" No. Frisk put her hand to the wall. Now what? "How do we get in?"

"Figure out what Alphys did. Knowing her, a combination." Sans flipped it up, then down quick, then up slower. "Something weird like that. Not real complicated. Usually a four to five combo of an action I bet."

More time to waste. *No, I won't give up. I have to make this.* Frisk moved the lever along with the words she said. "Down slow, up slow, Down slow, up fast." Nothing. "Down slow, up slow, down fast, up fast." Nothing. "Down slow, up fast, down fast, up fast." Nothing. "Down slow . . ."

Three hours later . . .

Frisk tried to keep it up. *Down fast, up slow, down fast, up slow, down fast.*

"This isn't working. We need to try something else," Sans said as he lied on the ground. "This huntin' for the right combo isn't working. Alphys took out all the stops. We're going to have to find a different way to crack this code."

*Not unless it's down here.* "You think the answer is down in her secret lab?" Frisk asked.

"Nah. I think if it's anywhere, it's up on the surface again," Sans said. "Maybe Undyne knows it. She was the closest to Alphys."

*No!* "I can keep trying. I'm fine." Frisk continued. "I defeated all the puzzles here before."

"Those puzzles were supposed to delay humans," Sans reminded her. "This puzzle is keeping the monsters alive. Alphys isn't going to make it easy. I thought maybe she thought I flipped my lid. That would mean I wouldn't try so hard to figure out that combo, but she didn't take it easy. I bet it's at least a ten combo of something. There might even be pauses in the middle somewhere to make it more uncommon."

*Not up, I can't go up.*

"Once we get in, you should be able to really start doing some damage," Sans said. "But."

Another date. What would he want for that date? He wasn't going to be letting a 'driver' be a problem, and he wasn't going to take it so easy on her. *Maybe I can reason with him. He's emotional about being alone. Maybe if I just listen, he'll stop pushing.* Maybe in a perfect world. Or maybe he'll want her on that next date. *Stop, Frisk. This isn't healthy. Not after one date, and it was barely a date. He'd get his date.*

"I swear I'll figure it out." Sans voice entered her thoughts. She turned around to see him.

"We gotta break that code, and we don't even know how long it's counting these actions. We have to go up, and get the answers from Undyne about what she thinks. If she doesn't know, I will crack the code *myself* but this testing over and over isn't cutting it. It's wasting time. It's killing Rainier, and it's bringing you closer to him with each of his last breaths."

He had a way with words.

"Proper date, it's what he wants," Sans said. "Guy doesn't just want to get with ya, he wants you permanently. He's a greedy human, but I can see the monster in him too."

"Really? You read him?"

"Like a book."

"Is there a way out of this deal with him?"

"Nope, he's confident he'll die and he's taking anything he can of you with him. And since you can't take possessions when your dead? Well. You get the hint."

" . . . a proper date."

"Since I messed up the last one, yeah. Gave you more time," Sans said. "After that, he's already down, what? Two years nine months . . . another six months . . . three years three months and you haven't saved more than one monster yet."

"That isn't too awful bad," Frisk said trying to make herself feel better.

"Yeah, if you don't count how much of his life he already didn't waste with these game creations," Sans pointed out. "And you know what? I'm not helping am I?" He took a step back. "I'll shut up now. We need to go to the surface. Get a date. Try and get another six months of his life at least. It might give us two trips with the bit of life force we still have in the machine." He held his finger up. "A single date."

After that, things would get harder. "I want to stay down. Permanently after that," Frisk insisted. "Once we don't need the surface's help."

"If you catch something-"



"Then it's on me to save the day before I die," Frisk said. "I don't want to go out the other way. Not unless I absolutely have to."

" . . . kay. It's your life," Sans said. "What if you die and you didn't save your brother though? You got another human capable of this, or are you just gonna leave him in here?"

" . . ."

"Yep. Death ain't always easy. Let's get back up, get the combo, and we're done."

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### **Inside: Underground: A distance on the other side.**

Alphys stayed behind her computer, watching. Every time the human or Sans tried a combination, she countered it. It was hard work. They'd been going at it for three hours. She was it though, she was the defense against them herself. Without Papyrus, the sentry Sans had just gone nuts. He was actually helping the human now.

She left nothing to chance, she left everything hooked up on the other side to be sure to observe. She couldn't hear what they said, but she could see the human and Sans wanted in to finish off the rest of them. It would never happen. Too many were gone now. Including. *Undyne. Please give me your strength to help keep them out of here.*

It wasn't the nicest part of the mountain. There was a reason they chose the other side to build upon and not the other. It was only a backup. It did offer some extra space, but it was just endless normal weather. No snow and no lava. Only the residents of Waterfall would be comfortable there. To everyone else, they would either be too cold or too hot. Yet, there was no choice.

And they would build again. And sooner or later, that human would die out there, some miserable death because there was no food. Even the little food and supplies it had were now gone, taken away. It would starve. For good.

She just had to wait them out. And Sans? *I hope the insanity dulled your wits, Sans.* He was the only one who could break through, if he figured out what she'd been doing.

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# Bleeding It Dry

## Outside: AI SIMS MACHINE

*Good news. Give me some good news.* Frisk watched Sans from the distance with Undyne. Hoping somehow she was close enough to know what Alphys would choose.

"Back again."

Frisk heard her mother come over beside her. "They are hiding behind a combination. I couldn't figure it out." *Two days. Two measly days.* "Sans told me a joke Underground."

"Oh, that's nice," her mother remarked. "What was it?"

"What's the difference between a Whore and a Hero? He said it was only the W."

" . . . Frisk."

"The hero was still in whore, just all mixed up." Frisk closed her eyes. "He's going to win. I've only saved one monster in the last two days. Maybe I should just get it over with so I can save my brother and the Underground without any more disturbances. I want it done. I want them out. I'm not delaying this any longer, it's so stupid." And it was her fault they were being delayed. For another date. For another round. For another game.

"Frisk-"

"I know he could die at any point. He can't come to the surface like me," Frisk yelled. She stared at her mother. " . . . or maybe he can?"

"No, Frisk," her mother warned her. "I know that look. We've been through this. If you replace him, there is no guarantee that his natural human magic conjured with the machine will be intact enough to finish your job."

"Then. Then I'm just holding on for no reason." She watched Sans walk up to her. Waiting.

"So." Sans wasn't saying anything. "Undyne doesn't know Alphys code any better than Papyrus. She says if the whole Underground is on the line though, it's going to either be extremely complicated, or she might actually have some kind of program changing it on the fly. But, what I think? I think there isn't a program. You hit the Underground hard and fast. I think she's the one changing on the fly and improvising along the way."

"Herself? How do we beat that?" Frisk asked him.

" . . ." Sans shrugged. "Might be able to override it with some serious excess energy, but I don't know where to find that down there, Frisk."

Excess. "I have excess." *Shit. T.* "I had excess. My guitar." Oh no. Now she had to waste more time playing her second stupid guitar to build up energy?

"Sans, you've played your trombone several times down there?" Mother to the rescue. "Does it have enough energy?"

"Bit of protection I guess?" Sans guessed. "I'm a monster, I don't really need to use it for that? What kind of energy is it supposed to have?"

Clueless. Even Sans was clueless to it. *He couldn't have gathered that much more than me. Did my other guitar even have enough power? How am I going to cut it down there!* "I need power. How much power do I need?"

Sans wasn't being real giving on info again. "Can't say exactly, not my specialty area. I'd say Alphys is going to have a lot of protection herself against her own tech being manipulated by regular magic. I don't know. Tori, can you do anything at all here?"

"My power doesn't work like that," Frisk's mother said.

"Really?" Sans asked. Her mother nodded. "Oh. Well, I fucked up then. I think I better go."

"I think you need to. I have to have a word with Frisk."

Frisk didn't need a word. She threw open the door and marched into the house. Inside, Undyne was already sitting on a chair. Waiting.

"I was hoping it didn't come down to this," Undyne said. "Sans told me about the impossible combination."

"Tell me you can do something?" Frisk asked.

"If I wasn't dead? I could get Alphys to open up," Undyne replied. "But, I'm dead to her, Frisk. She'd see me and it would take her into a mental breakdown. I can't hurt Alphys like that." She stood up. "A monster can only hold so much power. I want Alphys freed, and I know you want your brother freed. I know what your mother is going to think too. During the days, I've been getting to know her a lot. You don't."

Hm? Frisk moved closer. "What?"

"You got two choices. I'm. Sorry." Undyne bowed to her. "It's Rainier, or it's your Momma Toriel. One will die to give you the power to move on."

"What?"

"She can't do anything for you. The guilt inside of her because of that is gut wrenchingly deep." Undyne squeezed her own hand. "Life force won't match to the machine, but you could take it down and use it as an extra whopping strength. As a last resort."

" . . . "

"I know from spending most of my life watching over monsters, that nothing is ever cut and dry," Undyne said. "Well, except that humans are terrible vermin that needed to die. But, even you broke the rule there. Even if you could stand letting your brother face his demise in that

rancid pit I had to call home?" Quiet. Soft. "Queen Toriel would never let her kingdom go without a fight. It would be better to die trying to free the kingdom than leave it in there to fester for eternity. It can't go much longer as it is now. That leaves two options."

Frisk gave one slight nod.

"There is no quitting. It's Rainier all the way, or it's your Momma Toriel starting to sacrifice something she shouldn't be. And she won't-

"Draw it out," Frisk said rapidly. "I know, she won't do that. If she does something, she does it once." She'd give her entire life force. There was no mathematical formula that would say how much it would take, and she wasn't going to risk Frisk having to come back again just for more. "She won't die for it, or for me." She looked back at Undyne steadily. "Wait until it's over. I know I can't override Momma Toriel's command to you." Still. Frisk headed to her room.

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### **Outside: Sans and Papyrus' House**

Sans sighed from across the table. *Damn.*

"Sans, you look extremely troubled," Papyrus said as he banged on the old television set to watch a show. "What is it?"

"Tori and her daughter," Sans admitted. "Only life force is gonna break Alphys tech. I've read Tori, I know she wants to give what she can, and she doesn't want to risk Frisk having to come up anymore. All to save her daughter her own pain."

"Oh dear."

"I've read Frisk, and I know how much she doesn't want to hurt anyone, let alone her second momma." Sans reached his arms across the table. "She lost her first. She won't risk her second. Sure could go for a classic Grillby right about now."

"It's. Terrible." Papyrus gave up on the TV. "Nothing else to be done."

"I could do it," Sans admitted. "I could give my life force."

"Sans!"

"I did it before. Several occasions." Whenever he lost Papyrus. It's where his extra strength to keep battling came from.

"But then I'd lose you!" Papyrus whined. "No, no, no! Why are you risking so much individually?! You are simply a sentry, you never even *wanted* to go out for Royal Guard, I? I don't understand! The only thing you used to want to fight for would be a Grillby burger." Sans laughed. "The Underground is not a Grillby burger and neither is Frisk. Is she?"

Huh?

"I mean? Oh, that's it." Papyrus pointed at Sans. "You like her like a Grillby burger. You like the human!"

"Yeah. I . . . don't know."

"If you like her, then you should watch her carefully, especially under stress. She is the kind that gets into trouble after all."

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### **Outside: Car**

Frisk stared at the person driving the car for Rainier. This time, she had to come to him for the date. She wasn't going to keep playing games though. A kingdom was on the line. Her brother was on the line. He was willing to give his very life, Sans said it. He expected to. So. She would end this game. *I'm not a frivolous child, running to and from the floor anymore. I know what is right, even if it feels wicked.* "Are we close."

"Getting there. Calm down, Frisk." Jason glanced back at her. "Never changed, did you? Still an impatient one that's gotta demolish a game. Can't you just relax and enjoy the journey?"

Jason. One of Rainier's favorite men. Most dependable. Most reliable. "So, you're finally worthy of driving around Rainier's car for him? You must be so proud. All those years working for him."

"I worked just as hard as you," Jason replied. "Although, never got to see where you moved to. Just know that your brother disappeared one day, your mom and dad were gone, and even you? Up until I found you working for Rainier's company. Not even a word to me when I introduced myself, Frisk."

"Hm. The past is filled with bad memories. I don't want to go through it right now."

"So, you moved way out here though? Not a soul out here," Jason said. "Couldn't be easy living by yourself. On so much property too. Were you raised by some kind of hermit?"

*As sweet as ever.* "No," Frisk said. "I was raised by someone wonderful. She taught me a lot more about life. She gave me a real life."

"Yeah, but I got called in to drive you directly to Rainier for a date," Jason teased her. "Pretty sure."

" . . . pretty sure what?"

"Pretty sure. Like mother, like daughter. You know? Well. You know how it is."

That was the last words he said before Frisk stopped conversing altogether.

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### **Outside: At a Private Booth In A Nice Restaurant.**

"Frisk." Rainier came toward her. All the food was laid out this time, along with a bottle of wine. "Please come in."

Frisk sat down next to him, shrugging her coat off. "I need more life force. I think that my mother is going to give me hers to fight Underground. I need it to break into the security of the Underground." She wouldn't mince words.

"You're just out and saying it now?" Rainier scooted a plate toward her. "Does this mean-

"Whatever it takes. Stay at the gaming machine. Help when you need to," Frisk insisted. "After all that-" Frisk stopped talking. She heard a sound. She reached into the high sock under the skirt of her dress and pulled out her emergency dagger. Never leave home without it. She moved away from Rainier. "Someone's out there."

"Frisk?" She heard Rainier stand up, but then a cough. Frisk turned around and saw Jason with his own knife against Rainier's throat.

"Thanks, Frisk. Good hearing by the way. Queen Toriel raised you well." Jason slowly sliced into Rainier's throat slightly. "Down. Dagger. I know your good as shit with that because of your Momma Toriel."

Frisk looked to her sides. She could hear others around her. She was surrounded. Yet? *If I lose him, I lose everything.* She moved slightly. They'd pay for underestimating her. She ducked down, grabbed the other two daggers out of her coat, and dodged out of the way. She kept her ears open. She heard the scurry and let the dagger go.

She heard the sound of someone falling. No time.

"Frisk, don't!" Jason warned her. "If I kill him, all your chances go out the window. Look? We aren't here to hurt your little monster friends. We just need King Asgore. It's all we've ever needed."

*Why?* Frisk heard another scurry behind her. She hit her target right before it reached her. She scrambled to the man and retrieved her dagger. She bit her lip in a cringe. *You made me do it.* Frisk had reached the point where she accepted the good with the bad. As Sans would have said.

Just because she hadn't done anything bad, didn't mean she never could. For Frisk. For Rainier. For her life. For everything. She slowly moved along the floor.

"Look." Jason cut into Rainier's neck deeper. "Come on, he's hurting."

Something funny in his voice though. He didn't think she'd actually use her skill and kill to get them out of it. He didn't think he was risking his life. *We all risk it all.* She held the dagger closely.

"Frisk? Look, this is no joke. You've actually killed people now, and you're about to add more!" Jason sneered at Rainier. "Come on. Say something to her. If you actually care, then say something to her."

Rainier's blood ran from his throat. He reached his arm out to Jason and held him. "Stupid. Human."

*No!* Frisk pulled herself out, missing a bullet someone shot while she tried to get Rainier. She pulled Jason away from Rainier's throat, but didn't miss the second bullet aimed for her.

"Frisk!"

Frisk held Jason down. "Get out, Rainier!" She was struck on her leg, but it was only a flesh wound. They had no idea the amount of training she had with her Momma Toriel. She held her dagger next to Jason's throat. "Call them off or you die you Son of a bitch."

"Okay, stop!" Jason called out to his team.

"What do you want King Asgore for?" Frisk demanded, keeping her dagger close to his neck too. When he didn't answer right away, she added, "I've got magic in this. Think of it like a bee sting. It'll kill you but it'll be painful on your soul all the way down."

"There's only one thing monsters are good for. Don't you get it? My family and I, we didn't work for their magic like your dad. We were fighting the cause! They were casualties to get . . . King Asgore."

*The enemy.* "I always knew you were a shitty friend growing up," Frisk warned him. "It was you, wasn't it?"

"Your mom and dad?" Jason asked. "No. I just gave the information to my parents. I was too young at that age."

"But you told them. Soooo adamant to get us to go!" She held her dagger closer to his throat, wanting to cut deeper like he had Rainier. "If you kill my second family, I will not just kill you. I will hit you with the power of a woman holding more magic than a monster could *ever* comprehend. Your soul will sting after death itself."

Frisk watched as a bullet went straight into his head. She turned and saw Rainier.

Rainier put his gun away and came to her side. Bleeding. "One more go. I'll give it all that I can." He held out his hand to her. "I'm sorry. I just wanted someone who understood who I was beneath at the end."

"Normally, we don't get things working that way, but okay."

Sans! *Oh thank goodness.* Frisk rushed to him. "We need to teleport-"

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### **Outside: Frisk's AI Gaming Machine**

"Hold your hand up there." Sans held his hand steady. "Good boy. Keep it there. That's what you should have done since the beginning. Got the power to save, use it. Don't use it to get a

girl." He looked toward Frisk who was standing, but hurt. He didn't want to leave her side right now so he opened up the door. "Tori! Your daughters hurt!"

Tori came, scolding Frisk for leaving in the first place, muttering how lucky she was Sans followed as they went to her house. Meanwhile, Sans was trying to hold Rainier steady. "Okay, dude. You already know you're almost dead, right? You got any last words? Just don't say kiss Frisk or I'll kick your ass."

"Will you take good care of her for me?"

"Sure."

"Don't be like that. Not at the end. Anyone who didn't have feelings for her wouldn't have said they'd kick my ass for wanting to kiss a girl at the end of my life. You messed up our first date, didn't you?"

"First farce more like it." Sans didn't do anything. He was already dying. "You messed up big time. Life force drains fast next to death, that's why most monsters don't get a chance to use it much." One shot. They got one more shot. "Enough for three rounds but we *have* to break security. No second shot." He grabbed Rainier's hand. "Give me the rest."

"You can't use life force of another monster, it'll kill you soon."

"Frisky's human, she can't take it. We gotta break through the security all at once. Give it."

---

Frisk headed straight back to the gaming machine after her mother healed her, much to her mother's chagrin. When she opened it, Rainier laid dead on the floor. *Oh no*. Not only that, Sans seemed . . . different. A strange glow to his eye. *Wait. Did he . . . ?* Frisk jumped over Rainier's body and moved toward Sans. "Tell me you didn't?!"

"No time. It was dying off. We gotta get everyone out."

*Idiot*. "Don't die and I'll be back to save you."

---

Frisk had came back with just one thing, her guitar, but Sans teleporting of Rainier so close to his death left more than a little extra life force. She laid his hand on it, but his eye was still on overload. She went and fetched his trombone, laying his hand on it too.

"Whoah." Sans closed his eye sockets and shook his head. "I feel better. Not incredibly powerful, knowing I'm about to die soon. What did you do?"

"Storage," Frisk said. "Limited storage, it's unstable. I don't even have much power stored in it. We have to move fast." She glanced back at her mother over by the door. "There's no choice."

"Sans? Please tell me you have any healing abilities?" her mother asked him.

"Uuhh . . . heh. Un petit peu?" He joked. "Little bit. Like, little, little bit."



"Supplies. Go get them," her mother commanded him. When he left, she looked back at Frisk. "Be careful. Be careful of so many things."

"I know. I'll do my best." Frisk knew what her mother was worried about. This was it. The power inside their instruments once used would burst, and that was it. The only protection left would be what little power Sans could stir. Sans was helpful, but she didn't know about his power.

"Sans has a great power of love. I'm sure you remember that," her mother reminded her before giving her a hug. "He isn't working off his life force, like you saw in Genocide. But, he should have enough."

"For those he loves," Frisk muttered. "We'll have to get going quick. I'll either break them all free and I'll see you at the end of the mountain. Or?" She stared at her mother. "I love you." A hug. The tightest hug as she felt her mother comfort her like she did when she was a child, even humming a sweet tune.

One shot. A nightmare ending or a new beginning. There was nothing in between for her anymore. "What about Sans, Momma Toriel?" Frisk asked softly. "If I die, he can't return. He'll be stuck down there forever again. Maybe I should go alone."

"And have no one there to heal you? He knows the consequences. If he had a problem, he would say it. It's Sans. He says things," her mother reminded her. "Always be prepared with him. He doesn't always say or do what he should at the exact right moment. His personality is sometimes . . . iffy?"

Frisk had been down with him more than once. *Maybe at the edge of death, I can bring him back.* She just couldn't bear leaving him down there again in that cesspool of the Underground.

"Goodbyes short and quick," Sans said. "Told Papyrus we had one shot and said bye. He's coming quick. Let's go, Frisk. Unstable energy don't leave long gappy times for hugs."

"Take care." Her mother gave her one more long glance before leaving out of the gaming machine.

"One more round. We go up or we go down," Sans said. "Ready?"

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# The Guitar and Trombone

Underground . . .

*Oh, they're back again?* While they were gone, Alphys made more adjustments. "Never, never, never. You're never getting in here." She adjusted her dials. This was still just the first puzzle to crack, and they would eventually give up before they even reached puzzle two. Or puzzle three.

Or puzzle twenty. Losing Undyne, Alphys couldn't relax. The entire Underground was on her shoulders. She rested, she ate quick, and she worked. Continuing to work. She watched Sans and the human taking their instruments off their backs. What were they doing now?

The human held her guitar out, and kept her hand up high.

Sans kept his trombone out, positioning his fingers.

What are they-

Sans blew in his trombone, a high pitched tone she'd never heard before. When he did that, the human struck her guitar on a single chord as loud as she could. With their sound together, they somehow were making the ruins in the camera start to shake. *What?!* She tried to get a hold of her system but the human was starting to hit a note high again, while Sans continued to blow.

No. No! She could see the ruins around her start to shake. Clouds of dust and rubble were entering into her vision. Collapsing, all collapsing. *It wins. It still wins!* Alphys started to run. The only thing she could do was warn everyone. Their last moments. "The human is breaking through!"

Everyone was moving out of the way, heading out of the way as fast as possible.

"Don't fight the human if you can, it's death! Try and avoid the human!"

Monsters were tunneling into the ground or hiding into the trees.

The homicidal human found a way in. "Avoid Sans too, he helped her in! They've paired up, he's gone insane!"

They were starting to dive into any water sources they could find. Doing what little they could to save their lives.

Over. It was over. It was over. All over. Humans were finally going to take them out. *I don't want to believe it, I don't want to believe it, why? Why?! What did we ever do?* Yes, Monsters were scared and challenged the human, but that didn't explain why it was viciously killing them. "Unnnndyyyne!"

She let her down. She let them all down.

---

It was working. The life force of Rainier was working. Down, crumbling, it was all breaking. They kept playing with all they could. Frisk's guitar broke first though from the instability. It was broken, from the inside out, glowing a neon green on and off before blowing up. Sans could feel his own trombone giving way.

All those years with it, Underground. All those times he used it to help out his punchlines or others. Adding that something special more to his schtick. He let go of it as the wall in front of them finally broke free. The brick exploded all around them.

Time to go.

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When they moved outward, they went through several rooms. "Watch it." Sans pointed out the spikes under the rubble. Alphys was prepared with several puzzles. He continued to trudge on with Frisk. This area hadn't been inhabited very long, it was just the wild. Besides Alphys tech, it was bare.

Frisk readied her daggers. She had two of them side by side, closing her eyes. Sans watched as she suddenly smacked two monsters that had been on the opposite trees of them. "No encounter technology on this side."

"No time." Sans went toward a puddle near them, seeing something flick. Every single one. He reached his hand inside the puddle, pulling out a baby fish monster. He heard the wails of it's parents and grabbed another one. The mom. The father was howling at him. *Soon enough.* "They're hiding in some of the puddles too."

He heard one of the monsters shout 'betrayer' at him. Oof. *Remember like Frisk. It's not what it looks like, and we can't play explainers, they won't understand.* "Frisk." He tossed the two little fish in the air, and reached for the dad as Frisk smacked each of them with her lowest dagger. Sans heard the screams of all the nearby monsters, running for their lives, leaving their hiding spots.

Frisk pulled out multiple daggers, stabbing each one as she could in one shot. She shot a tree next to them, at a monster that tried to sneak up on her. Sans checked the trees again and found a wailing wife. He tossed her in the air to Frisk, letting her take the shot at it.

Damn. Sans pulled off the bag and looked in. He had to refill these extras. There was no more Toriel to help. His power wasn't nearly as strong. He held two in his hands, doing what he could. Just enough to take out the little monsters right now. "Frisk." He handed her one of them, and struck another monster getting brave enough to come closer.

When the area was cleared, they continued on. Sans poured magic into daggers two at a time. The monsters were going to get stronger as they kept going. The weaker monsters wouldn't travel as far or as fast.

As they kept staggering their way through the wilderness of the uncivilized Underground, it wasn't easy. Frisk would hit them as she saw them, but she wasn't looking so good. *No guitar for protection.* He needed to put his power into the daggers, but he had to help Frisk too. "Sit down, Frisk." He stopped.

"So many more still." Her voice was sounding different. "It's all or nothing."

"Dying makes it nothing. Down." Sans helped her sit down. He placed his hands over hers. "How are you feeling?"

"Like I have a small cold," she admitted. "But you can't worry about me. You're overextending yourself on the daggers. Even Momma Toriel, she could only do so many."

"I got it. Don't worry about me." He rubbed his hands over hers more. "Hell, you've got a whole kingdom, your brother, and your health to worry about. Not me. Sans is a big boy, no worries."

"Liar." She hung onto his hands. "We need a break. How many more do you think?"

"Fifty maybe." He found himself starting to lay against her lap. Crap. "Damn."

"Momma Toriel was queen, you're just my little joker. Don't push yourself." Frisk held him closer. "I can't bear. I can't lose anyone else."

"Oh. Well, why don't you empower me with some kissing?" He joked. "Eh? Wait. Um. I didn't."

His weakening power was making him a little whacky. "Don't worry about it."

"Yeah, no. That came out wrong. I was supposed to ask for a date first before kissing."

Okay? *He's delirious, right? Wasting too much power?* The cold symptoms had lessened, thanks to Sans. "It's okay, I'm feeling better."

"That's good. I'm not." Honest. "I didn't mean to scare you as a kid, Frisky. I couldn't help what I had been. How much of this decay . . ."

"It's okay. I know, Sans. It wasn't easy to hear your world was a game. The world can be extremely cruel sometimes. We just do what we can to survive in it." She patted his wet skull. She needed something to get the sweat off. She ripped at the side of her shirt, dunked it into a puddle nearby and placed it on his skull. This side of the Underground was so different. "Is this what it was like before?"

"Think so. Just, not unified." His voice sounded tired. "You are out of daggers again. I gotta make you one. I can't let you get struck. Teleport isn't an option right now." He propped himself up more. "Give me one."

"No." He was taking a break. "It's not worth you."

"It's all or nothing," Sans reminded her. "Give me a dagger. If you get struck, you'll be dragged to the beginning. I can't get you again. I don't want you going through the sludge with no protection."

"It's a give and take. All or nothing. If I get struck, then I'll be on my own and you'll recover." She patted his head again.

"Nope." Sans groaned. "Just one more go. We've gotta do this."

Frisk watched as his hands were starting to radiate a red color. *What is that? No!* "No, are you insane?! You are not wasting your life force! You can't reclaim it, Sans!"

"All or nothing."

"Stop it!"

"Just me. This one thing. I can refill everything, you can take out the rest, and it'll be over. You'll be safe. Frisky. You'll have your brother. Happy ending. The view of your boobs from here makes this a nice place to die."

Oh, his weird humor, at the worst times.

"Frog, a frog. You're a princess, right? Maybe if you give me a little kiss, magic'll happen. Crap! Why didn't I use that line when I wasn't dying? Oh yeah. Freakin' dying takes the edge off rejection. Nothin' to lose."

Okay. "Stop your life force and I'll try. I'll just smack them however I can. Sans. Please." *Stop wasting life, please.* Of all monsters. Not him. She bent down towards him. *He has no lips. Duh, Frisk.*

"Promises, promises? Gotta keep them promises. Except I ain't got lips," Sans said. "Do something though? You really . . . heh, just for your little joker?" He shook his head. "Nah, I'd never do that to you, Frisk. Wouldn't make me any better than Rainandpour."

Frisk watched him, remembering what her mother said. *No decent man would entrap anyone like that.* No, a man clearly would. But a monster. She curled him up closer to herself.

"I'm becoming a stuffed teddy over here," Sans said. "Good to be me." He didn't say anything else though as Frisk kissed his teeth. " . . . you wanted to do that?"

Frisk stared at him, patting his skull. "The first thing I've . . . *wanted* to do."

"Can't wait for the next steps." Sans pulled himself up higher. "Okay. Gotta survive now, I've got a potential girlfriend."

Why? Frisk chuckled and held him tighter. *My joker.* She watched him stand up.

He was still glowing a little red around her. "Probably lost a few years off my life. But?" He reached down to her. "Worth it. Gonna spend the rest with you, right? No takesy backsys."

Frisk felt herself beaming as she felt the strength coming off of him. Life force was so strong. He whirled her into his arms and gave her multiple daggers.

"Your Momma Toriel told me what you could do," he said. "Limited time and power. Show me what you can do and I'll keep them coming."

*Gladly.* Frisk held three daggers in each hand. She tracked each of the little monsters up ahead. They were getting closer when they saw the opportunity. It wouldn't come back. She threw the first two daggers to the left, one from the right hand to the left side on a tree, and one more into a hole. She moved up further, hitting anything that she could find. No encounter rules, just slaughtering the monsters.

The grieving, the sadness, and the bigger the monsters, the more they fought. Frisk held her ground, with Sans power backing her up, keeping them from hitting her by weighing them down. Then, the last one.

Alphys trembled as she kept her hands out toward them. She was trembling and looking away, trying to be brave.

"Almost over," Sans said to her. "Pain's almost over."

"Right." Frisk nodded to Sans. "Time to empty the Underground forever."

She shot at Alphys.

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Frisk felt herself lose her balance. She almost fell, but could feel Sans' magic catch her. The terrain felt different. The dark abyss of the Underground was still all around them, but behind them was a beaming light. It was far away, but so viciously bright at the top.

They were back at Mount Ebbot.

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## Epilogue

"I can really have it?" Frisk T. looked at his sister's guitar. "I don't know how to play the guitar. I don't know anything except games."

"Then it's time to learn." Frisky looked toward him. "You've miss a lot T, but I know you'll be okay."

"Yeah." Frisk T. touched one of the young pictures his sister had out on display. "This is home."

"Nope. Guess for you, but a lot of us don't trust random humans," Sans said out of the corner. Frisk T. watched him come over. "We're just asking for trouble this way. It'll be home for a bit, but once we get our bearings, we're making new homes."

"The future isn't really known," Frisk E said. "There is a future. That's all we know."

"And then once we get our bearings we'll come back and kidnap girlfriends so we don't lose them."

"Sans," Frisk E. said. That's it, that's all she said. What was that? Did she not like his girlfriend or something? He moved around Toriel's place a lot, but he opened the door to look around. Lots of monsters were arguing about housing and water and food now. "San's might be right. It doesn't look like this will last long. He should get his girlfriend and split."

"You heard him." E. made a startled sound as Sans said that and lifted her up. "Where should we split too?"

What? *What?!* No way, nuh uh. He was missing something. He watched Toriel come back in. "Miss Toriel?" He went toward her. Man, she was so big. He'd never get over how much bigger she had been. "What's going on there?"

"Nothing, Child." Toriel moved over toward Sans, who instantly put down his sister E. "Sans. Don't grab her like that."

"She's coming with," Sans said. "We aren't staying, but I'm not losing my girlfriend. She'll find someone better if I'm not here to guilt her into remembering everything I did with her."

Holy heck, it was true? "E? Did you? Did you and Sans?"

"Not yet," Sans said. "I still need to con her into a first date."

"It's complicated," E. said. "I know everything looks strange. It's not the same anymore." She tried to move down from Sans. "TV has changed. Games have changed. Media. Celebrities you once watched grew older, some retired. Life went on without you." She went over and hugged him. "And your slightly younger sister is old enough to be your mom. I'm sorry about it all."



T. hugged her back. He really didn't know what to do. One minute, he was surviving Underground, and the next he was being brought into a world where he played Rip van Winkle for more than fifteen years. No mom. No dad. No home. A new person who would take care of him. His sister going apparently with Sans. "I don't want a mom. I don't want you old like this, either. Nothing's fair."

"I did not start as mother to Frisk," Toriel told him. "She simply called me Toriel for the longest time, until it merged until Aunt, and then finally Momma Toriel. And many monsters are going through the dreadful reality of how much time was lost. It may be better to stay here with us, so we can all find the correct track in life."

T. looked toward E. "What about you? Are you going to leave with Sans and Papyrus?"

"No," she insisted. "I wouldn't leave you."

"Yeah you will," Sans said against her. "If you don't, we'll just take a shortcut and come get ya. Tingles all over saying even Tori isn't going to stay here."

"He's right," Toriel said. "All the monsters are back, but Rainier has been killed. Things will change and I don't know whether it will be good or bad. Staying together and getting some kind of protection away from the humans is the best idea. It's time for us all to find safe, new homes."

"A new beginning for everyone," T. said. Maybe that was for the best. Maybe living with monsters wouldn't be so bad. He saw someone looking in the window. "Is that Asgore?" He looked at Frisk who was making a cutting motion against her neck while Toriel went and closed the curtains. Oh yeah. The murdered six children souls from the game and their tense relationship. That apparently wasn't fake. While Asgore hadn't originally made it out, like Frisk T. he'd been stuck waiting to escape. His power had gone, but he'd been twisted and stuck in the game since Flowey did extra in the game. And. Momma Toriel wasn't any more happier about it.

Papyrus kicked the door open more. "I bring food!" He came into the room. "Which was tough, our makeshift commissary is getting overrun even more now that- Sans!"

Sans was eating one of the Grillby burgers Papyrus brought. "Owed it. Helped save the world." He tossed one to E. and to T. "Frisks get next Dibs." He looked down at T. "You need to decide on a name. This whole two Frisks is dumb. If you don't, I'll just call you Iced Tea."

Ooooh! "For the last time, *my* name is Frisk!" T. yelled. "She's Frisco Eternity Nation!"

"Actually it's Frisco Eternity Dreemur," E. said. "He's right though. Now that it's all over. I can put the name I carried onward for my father to rest."

"So you shall be Frisco?" Papyrus questioned.

"No way," E. said. "Never, never, never. I loved my mother but that was a horrible name. I'm going to be Frisky, with a y."

"Hey, wait a minute. There's no difference in the sound!" Frisk T. complained. "It's basically the same thing!"

Sans gave E. a high five. "My girl finally got a joke."

Gaw. "Don't matter how much older you get, you still troll me like a sister." Hm. He looked at Papyrus. "Hey, if she marries Sans, we will all be brothers. That'd be wild."

Ha! His sister's face was burning red, it was apparent she hadn't even got that far with him yet. "T!"

"Little human brother. That'd be hilarious." Sans came over to T. "You think you could handle that, Kid?"

T. stared at Sans. Damn, he forgot how big he was up close. Papyrus was twice as massive. Being Underground and seeing them was different. He felt like they were huge cement mixers at his sides there. "Maybe?"

"Yeah, I wouldn't worry, Iced Tea," Sans said as he patted his head. "Marriage and shit takes work, and I hate work." He pointed out at Frisk E. "Only gonna do that if I screw up. Make mini-me's."

"Sans, don't talk like that." Papyrus looked down at T. "I think Iced Tea and us will be just fine."

No! It was catching on? "I'm not Iced Tea!" He stomped his foot. "Look, E. has a bunch of pretty choices. She could be Dreamer Dreemur or Eternity Dreemur. Her middle name is already girly and pretty, but I'm not Iced Tea!"

Papyrus looked back to Sans. "Are you sure he was the one who played Pacifism in the game?"

"Yeah. The Iced Tea just hasn't adjusted to the temperature yet. When it's ready, it'll taste better."

"E!" T. ran right up to his sister and was surprised when she grabbed him and twirled him around in a hug.

"Whatever you want, T.," Frisky said. "It's a new life."

"I can pick whatever name I want?" T. asked. "Really?"

"Anything at all," Frisk insisted."

"Fine." He gave her the smugish look he could come up with and crossed his arms. "Link." Ha! *Look at that face.*

"That's a weird name," Papyrus mentioned. "What's so great about that name?"

"You can't be Link, that's not fair."

"You said anything."

"But you can't!"

"You stole my favorite name, I stole yours. I'm Link Nation."

"Am I missing something?" Papyrus asked Sans. Sans shrugged.

"T!"

"E."

"That's not fair, the Zelda games are my favorite, not yours!"

"I like the name Link. Deal with it, Frisky." He stuck his tongue out at her.

"But? Well, what about our game?" Papyrus looked toward Sans. "Saving the Underground, and the game containing our lives isn't even her favorite?"

"Nah. If it was up to her, she would have played Ocarina of Time," T. squealed on her.

"But that's not-"

T. watched as Sans grabbed and hugged her.

"Now, now. You're Frisky. Let 'em have his name."

"Link isn't even a real name," Frisky complained as she leaned against Sans. "Fine. Take the name."

"Nah. I don't want it. It's not cool enough," T. teased her before running out the door.

"Ugh! My brother." Then, Frisky stopped, staring at the window. She said it softer. "My brother." Oh, how she missed him. No matter what life threw at them, he was staying in hers. For the rest of hers.

"Hey, Sans!" T. looked over the side of the door. "What do you love more, a Grillby burger or my sister?!"

"Ah?" Sans didn't answer that at first. "I don't have to answer that, do I?"

Then, Flowey popped up by the door. "I think I found a new friend." He tilted his flowery head toward Sans. "Which do you love more, sleeping or spending time with Frisky?"

T. laughed. "That's a good one."

"Out, out!" Papyrus went toward the door, trying to shoosh them both out. "This will probably be the only ever chance at happiness for him, stop trying to get him into trouble before they even date!"

Frisky smiled. Childhood. He could still have a great life. "I couldn't have done it without you, Sans."

"That's true." He wrapped his arm around her. "Just remember that whenever I mess up. Oversleep? I helped save the Underground. Forgot a date? Gave years to the Underground. Forget to leave Grillbys between meals? Saved the Underground by dragging Rainier's half-dead corpse fast enough."

"That's good," Frisky warned him.

"Embarrassed you with the wrong joke? I lost my trombone for you. And I loved that thing. Probably as much as you."

Frisky bristled.

"I probably already messed up. Good thing I didn't answer those other questions. Let's remember, I helped save the Underground, taking years off the end of my life, all for you."

*What the hell did I get myself into?*

"Nothing yet. I need at least a date to get there."

"Don't read me," Frisky warned him.

"... I saved the Underground with you." He chuckled. "I'm just kidding with you, Frisky. I love you more than a Grillby burger. And that's saying a lot. You have no idea what that's saying."

Frisk patted his arm and relaxed. It was time to really live life now. Not be so serious.

And it didn't come any more perfect than a new start with Sans.

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