

A Fish and a Bat Fell in Love

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A Fish and a Bat Fell in Love

by [Luneth](#)

Summary

A collection of bits from Eridan and Dirk's relationship as a siren and vampire pair, featuring things like dealing with day-night schedules, interacting with other magical beings, and the occasional kidnapping.

Reveal onto Me

Chapter Summary

In which true/alternate forms are revealed, as is Eridan's other home, and the number of hairs on his head.

Chapter Notes

So we're back! With some little snippets about our two favorite dorks. Enjoy!

Check me out on Lunethwrites on tumblr!

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

“Do you have a true form?” Eridan asked. He was leaning against Dirk’s back as Dirk fiddled with some robotics project he had been working on. He paused now, fingers wrapped in some wires, keeping them in place.

“Like, a second form?”

“Yeah, I mean,” Eridan shrugged, “Kan said she has this other form, one that makes her look less human. Do you have one?”

“I do,” Dirk put the project down, “But it’s not a ‘true form,’ it’s more like an enhanced form for times of stress or fighting.”

“Oh, huh.” Eridan scratched at his cheek. “Sorry, guess I just assumed it would be like my real form.”

“That’s a fair assumption.” Dirk leaned back against him. “I could show you, if you wanted.” Eridan twisted around to look at him, and Dirk moved smoothly with him to turn around as well.

“Is it hard?” Eridan asked. His curiosity was obvious, and Dirk’s mouth twitched upwards.

“No, just drains my energy if I keep it up too long. A quick look shouldn’t be too hard. It’s a little scary though, just warning you.” Eridan snorted and rolled his eyes.

“What, afraid I’ll scream and faint?”

“I’ll catch you if I do.” Dirk ruffled his hair. “My fair damsel.”

“Why Mr. Strider,” Eridan drawled, “I’m tickled.”

“While we’re on the subject,” Dirk shrugged, trying his best to act nonchalant. “If you’re ok with it, could I see your true form sometime?”

“Oh, uh-” Eridan flushed and looked away, “Sure, if you wanna, I mean.”

“Why wouldn’t I?”

“I dunno, you won’t think it’s weird?”

“Nah.”

“Well, in that case I gotta get my pendant back from Rox,” Eridan’s excitement returned to his voice, and actually seemed to grow a bit. “There’s a spot near my house that’s pretty hidden, and we can do it in the mornin when no one’s around.”

“I can’t change very well when the sun’s out,” Dirk commented, “Would sometime at night, work?”

“That’s fine,” Eridan answered quickly, “I can see better in the dark than most humans.”

“Same here.”

“How’s midnight sound?” Dirk asked. Eridan nodded and flashed him a thumbs-up.

“Come to my house around that time, then.”

“Cool.” Dirk flashed him a thumbs-up. Eridan grinned and bumped his forehead into his chest.

“I’ll see you there.”

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“Eridan?” Dirk stepped onto the dock leading off the porch of Eridan’s house. He had knocked, but gotten no answer. The moon was half-full, giving Dirk plenty to see by, but the water below him was still dark as ink.

“Dirk.” He turned around, but no one was there. He frowned and stepped toward the edge of the dock. A panicked voice stopped him. “W-Wait, hang on!” The voice, Eridan’s voice, was coming from the water under the dock.

“I’ll be out in a sec,” Eridan continued. He sounded almost bashful. Dirk smiled and sat down on the dock.

“Alright, do you need a hand?”

“No, I’ve done this before.”

Dirk heard a soft splash, then after a few seconds something burst out of the water. Dirk’s arms snapped up and managed to catch Eridan right as he barreled into him. Dirk’s back hit the dock. He winced, feeling the water soak his clothes and a heavy mass on top of him. He opened his eyes.

An ashen gray face peered back at him, violet eyes wide in surprise.

“Oh shit, sorry!” Eridan yelped and tried to roll off him. “I wasn’t expectin ya to be right there.”

“It’s fine.” Dirk sat up, still holding an arm around Eridan’s waist. He examined his gray complexion, the fins sprouting from his face and the horns on his head. He then let his gaze travel down until he saw Eridan’s skin merge into scales. Dirk took a soft breath in. They glittered silver with a violet sheen, ending in a delicate tail with a clear, silky fin.

“Wow,” Dirk said. Eridan blushed with a hue more violet than red. Dirk blinked and shifted around, taking Eridan’s chin in his hand. “Is your blood violet?”

“Y-Yeah.” Eridan turned away from the hold, and Dirk noticed another fin running down his spine. “You wanna see?” Before Dirk could answer Eridan brought his arm up to his mouth and bit down hard. When he brought his teeth away a thin line of violet rose up on his skin, which he held up to Dirk.

The blood smelled exquisite. It had a salty tang that wasn’t in humans, along with a unique flavor to it. Dirk’s tongue ran along his teeth and he clenched his hands.

“That sure is violet,” He answered neutrally. Eridan snickered.

“You wanna taste?” He held it up closer to Dirk. Dirk hesitated, then gently took Eridan’s wrist. He ran his tongue over the wound. It had a slight tinge of fish, but not too much, and a very rich flavor.

He pulled back, and Eridan offered a shy smile.

“Good?”

“Yeah,” Dirk licked his lips, “Interesting flavor.” The comment made Eridan beam with pride and his tail flicked around a little. Dirk grinned in response.

“Alright.” Dirk got to his feet. “I promised I’d show you my form too.” Eridan nodded eagerly, propping himself up a bit so he could get a good look.

Dirk took a few steps back, then closed his eyes. He reached into himself and found the knot of energy wrapped tight inside of him. With one sharp push he had it break and unravel, streaming outward through his veins.

He felt his muscles ripple and grow. His bones hardened and his skin drew thicker while his teeth and nails extended and sharpened. Lastly, a pair of black leathery wings sprouted and unfurled from his back, spreading outward to cast a large shadow over Eridan and the dock. Dirk took his glasses off, revealing brightly glowing orange eyes.

“...Well?” Dirk asked. Eridan was staring up at him, mouth open.

“Holy shit!” He gasped. “You got more ripped?!”

“...Dude,” Dirk jerked a thumb over his shoulder, “I have wings.” Eridan snorted.

“Yeah, and I’ve got a tail.” Eridan shrugged. “For real, though, you look incredible.”

“Same to you.” Dirk sat down again, folding his wings around himself. “How fast can you swim?” Eridan’s face lit up in pride.

“It’s uh, hang on-” His eyebrows furrowed together as he did some calculations in his head. “I guess it would be like, 30 miles an hour? Or like, 50 kilometers. And I can keep that up for a good couple a hours.”

“Damn,” Dirk answered. “I can fly at around that speed, but only for like half an hour. Unless I recently drank a lot of blood.

“Not bad,” Eridan mused. He hesitated, then reached his hand out with a questioning expression. Dirk twisted around to let him graze his fingers against his wings.

“They feel nice,” Eridan murmured. “Strong.”

“They are.” Dirk reached out as well, and after Eridan nodded, he gently ran his hand down Eridan’s scales. They were perfectly smooth under his touch, and a little cold.

Eridan leaned up against Dirk, purring a little as he nuzzled up against his chest. Dirk wrapped an arm around his waist and rested his head against Eridan’s shoulder. He curved his wings around them both, enveloping them into a little cocoon.

“Hey,” Eridan murmured. “D’you...have to breathe? Do you die if you don’t?”

“Nope,” Dirk answered. Eridan leaned back to look at him.

“Wanna see my home? My underwater one.”

“Sure,” Dirk let his form revert, his wings pulling into his back once more and his muscles and teeth shrinking. Eridan watched with interest, then when he was done he pushed himself back into the water, sliding in with hardly a splash. Dirk tucked his glasses into his pocket before diving in after him. The cold water closed in around him. He waited a few seconds, then opened his eyes. Bright violet irises stared back at him. Dirk waved. Eridan grinned, showing off a row of shark-like teeth, then took his wrist and pulled him downward. Dirk let him tow him along, making out the dark shapes of rocks and fish here and there. The cliff continued on past the surface all the way to the bottom. Eridan led him through a narrow opening.

There was a bit of netting hung up further in. Eridan pulled it away to let them through. The cave opened up into a large cavern. Glowing seaweed hung on the walls, lighting the area, which was adorned with various trinkets, jewelry, and weapons.

Eridan pulled Dirk upwards, toward the surface, and they broke through the water to find themselves in a small underwater cavern.

“Pretty cool, huh?” Eridan spoke with obvious pride. There are a few cracks here and there that keeps the air fresh. The seaweed is a special rare species. I planted it myself.”

“Wow,” Dirk pulled himself up onto the rock floor, “And I just rented a cheap apartment.”

“I couldn’t live in the city,” Eridan muttered, “Even without the threat a stayin a human forever, I’d feel antsy with so much time away from the ocean.”

“Each to their own,” Dirk answered. He crossed his legs and opened his arms up. Eridan grinned and scooted over to curl up in his lap. Dirk ruffled his fingers through his hair shuffling the curls around.

“...Can I count your hair?” Dirk asked. Eridan tilted his head back to shoot him a quizzical look. Dirk was staring at his hair intently as he played with it.

“Vampires have this counting thing,” Dirk explained. Eridan shrugged and made himself comfortable propped up against him.

“I don’t exactly know how you’d do that but knock yerself out.”

Dirk began to carefully knit his fingers through Eridan’s hair, separating the strands a lock at a time from one side to another. Eridan sighed at the gentle touch and let his head loll back against Dirk’s shoulder.

He woke up sometime later, curled up on the blanket he kept at the corner of the cave. Dirk was curled up around him, arms wrapped tight around his shoulders and his face buried into his hair. He was warm, but not overbearingly so like humans were.

Eridan shifted a bit, and Dirk stirred, then sat up.

“One-hundred-thousand, four-thousand, five-hundred sixty-four,” Dirk mumbled. Eridan chuckled.

“Did you really count them all?”

“Yeah. I’m really fast.”

“Huh,” Eridan ruffled a hand through his own hair, “Well, now I know. Can you help me over to the water?”

Dirk looped his arms under Eridan and lifted him right up, making him grab Dirk’s arm in surprise.

“These muscles ain’t just for show, huh?” Eridan muttered.

“Nope.” Dirk set him down by the bank, letting Eridan slip into the water. Eridan sighed through his gills as the water soaked into his skin. He’d been feeling a little dry, falling asleep on land in this form.

He rejoined Dirk a minute later. The other seemed to be spacing out, staring at the wall.

“Dirk?” Dirk blinked, then looked down at him.

“Sorry, yeah?”

“You alright.”

“I’m fine.” Dirk ran a hand down his face. “It’s just been a while since I fed, and using my other form sped up my hunger a bit. I should go-” He paused, then looked up at the ceiling of the cave. “Do you know what time it is?” Dirk asked.

“Uh, hang on.” Eridan pulled himself up, then grabbed his back to pull out his phone. “6:12 am.”

“The sun’s up,” Dirk grunted. Eridan’s eyes went wide before he swore.

“Shit, hang on.” He disappeared until the water again, reappearing a few seconds later.

“Looks pretty clear out,” He reported. “I could uh, grab you a sheet?” Dirk shook his head.

“I’ll just wait it out until nightfall.”

“What? No way!” Eridan heaved himself back up beside him. “You’ll be bored to Hell. How do you usually avoid burnin up?”

“Sunscreen,” Dirk answered, “I have some really strong stuff back home, but-”

“I’ll get it then!” Eridan insisted. He reached out his phone and began to text someone. “I’ll ask Rox to take my pendant. Your brother should be home, right? I’ll have him let me in.”

Dirk scowled. He really didn’t want to impose on Eridan so much like that, but he didn’t really have much of a choice. He’d fry in one minute without his sunscreen. Not to mention he was uncomfortably hungry right now. Probably not enough to be going crazy any time soon, but waiting half a day might put some stress on him.

Then again, he could always stay under the water, catch some fish, keep low for the day.

“Before I go,” Dirk was snapped out of his thoughts as Eridan shoved an arm at him, “Here, you should eat somethin.”

“Eridan,” Dirk shook his head and pushed his arm away, “I am definitely not going to have you going all the way to my apartment **after** giving you some significant blood loss.” Eridan huffed and rolled his eyes.

“I’ve done this before, Dirk, and I can lose more blood than humans can. At least a little to tide ya over.”

“You should always rest after providing blood,” Dirk argued, but Eridan waved him off.

“I’m just gonna be walkin to your apartment. I’ll eat somethin sugary on the way. Don’t worry.” Dirk tried to think of another point to argue, but he recognized the look in Eridan’s eyes. There was a fiery determination that would listen to no reason.

Eridan held his arm out again. Dirk grimaced but shifted around to take it.

“Just a little,” He insisted, “What are you used to?”

“Uh, Kan usually bites here:” Eridan pointed to the large vein on the inside of his elbow. Dirk nodded.

“I’m going to try and tone it down, but you may feel a bit lethargic and tired after. Don’t push yourself, and drink a lot of fluids. If you get a headache, you should definitely stop and rest.” Eridan nodded along. “Ready?”

“Yeah.”

“Ok, relax.” Dirk leaned in, feeling the muscles in Eridan’s arm relax against his hands. He gently sunk his teeth into the skin. It was a bit thicker than a human’s, smoother. He kept the wound small, coaxing the blood out at a patient pace.

The unique tang of the blood flooded into his mouth. He closed his eyes as the taste overwhelmed him and awakened the instinctual drive in the back of his mind.

“*Control.*” He breathed in and forced his shoulders to relax. He took two mouthfuls, then drew back. He ran his tongue over the wound once to clean it, then grabbed one of the handkerchiefs he kept in his pocket. He wrapped it around the wound, glancing over at Eridan as he did so.

Eridan was watching him through half-closed eyes as he worked. His arm was limp in Dirk’s grip. Seeing Dirk looking at him, he smiled faintly to show he was alright.

“How do you feel?” Dirk asked. Eridan blinked, then nodded.

“I’m fine, feel pretty relaxed.”

“That happens. You should lie down-” Dirk started, but Eridan shook his head.

“Later, Rox’ll be here soon.” Eridan grabbed his bag. “Hang tight, I’ll be right back.”

He had slipped into the water before Dirk could answer. The water stilled with his departure, leaving Dirk alone in the cave.

Dirk sighed and leaned back against the wall. When he usually fed off someone, he made sure that someone got a good meal, some sugar in their system, and he would watch over

them for a bit as they rested. He was never going to forgive himself if Eridan fainted because he had pushed himself too hard. Dirk should've been more careful and not let himself fall asleep. It was just...

Something about Eridan just relaxed the Hell out of him. He made him feel so calm and want to curl up and chill without a care in the world. All his pent-up stress and hypervigilance, some of it decades in the making, ebbed away like it had been no more than a bad dream.

It was as nice as it was terrifying. It had been some time since he had someone he felt he could relax entirely around. Part of him, age-old instincts, screamed that it was dangerous, that this was a sign he should distance himself.

These days though, that part of him wasn't so loud. Already, the idea of pushing Eridan away felt more painful than the fear of showing him vulnerability. For better or for worse, Dirk wanted to stay with Eridan. He'd deal with anything else later.

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Dave opened the door in his pajamas. One might think he had been just waking up, as opposed to just heading to bed. He blinked rapidly, then squinted at Eridan behind his shades. In his hurry, Eridan had thrown on a quick sundress and not bothered to shower or fix his hair. He probably looked hideous, but vanity could wait. Right now, he scowled at Dave with an impatient glower.

"...That soon, huh?" Dave remarked. Eridan's eyebrows drew together in confusion, then he shook his head.

"I'm here for sunscreen. Dirk's at my place and he needs it."

"Does he need some condoms too?"

"What?"

Chapter End Notes

Dave: yeah no dude its fine its totally fine its not like i was worried as fuck when he came home ha as if what am i some harried mom worried when her little bat boy didnt come home do i go fluttering my hands around wondering if hes been roasted by the sun or garlicked to death nah course not its fine

Eridan: what

I hope Dirk at least texted him before falling asleep.

Careless

Chapter Summary

In which Eridan messes with some drug lords, Jade and Feferi mess with some magic, and Dirk is one determined boyfriend.

Chapter Notes

This chapter has some mentions of sex trafficking, nothing graphic, just some comments.

Sorry for the delay! Life has been busy. :P

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

Eridan glided along the bottom of the seabed, his fingers trailing over the sand. He was mostly looking for trash, but some actually-interesting trinket would be welcome as well.

This close to the shore though, it was usually trash, so when his fingers hit something hard, he scowled. He dug into the ground, stirring up a cloud of sand. What he found was a small case. There was metal on the lid that wasn't rusted, so it must have been fairly recent. His eyebrows drew together as he tapped at the lock. He brought it up to his mouth and bit down hard. The lock cracked, then snapped off. Eridan spat out the bits of metal and flipped the lid.

His scowl deepened. He had been hoping it would just be fishing tackle or something. Instead, he found several plastic pouches filled with white powder. His lip curled back in distaste. If smugglers or drug lords were going to poison the city, they could at least leave the ocean out of it.

He sighed and tucked the case under his arm. He'd have to figure out what to do with it later.

For now, there was someone who would need a lesson taught to them.

He stowed the case away in his cave, then swam back to wait around the spot he had found it. Eventually, just as evening had mostly fallen, a small boat came sliding over. It made a very purposeful stop right above Eridan and dropped anchor. Something was lowered down. It looked to be a magnet attached to a long cord. Well, that would explain the metal. Eridan snorted and passed it by.

He snuck upwards, following the chain of the anchor to the surface. He peeked out above the water to the sound of voices.

“It was **right here**, Matchsticks, I know this is the right place!”

“You better hope so!” Eridan raised himself a little higher. There were three men in the boat, all with their backs to him as they peered over the side of the boat. “The boss is gonna flay your hide if you lost it!”

“Shaddup! We’ll dive down there ourselves if we gotta!”

“You mean **you’ll** dive down there.” Eridan gripped the rim of the boat and pulled himself upwards. “Who knows what kinda scary shit is in there.”

Eridan grinned as his hand darted out to grab the back of the shirt of the man who was speaking. He was sure to make sure he could feel his sharp nails scrape his skin as he yanked the man, presently screaming, backwards.

He didn’t pull him into the ocean. Drowning them would be more trouble than it was worth. Instead, he sent him crashing against the boat, then snarled at the other two men, flaring his fins out. They screamed and one of them whipped out a gun. Eridan dropped back into the ocean. He heard the muffled sound of rapid gunshots before a few bullets shot into the water. They lost velocity almost immediately and drifted to the ground. Eridan snorted, letting the man empty his gun frantically into the water. He circled around the boat, wondering where to surface next. Before he could decide though, the motor of the boat roared to life and the boat jolted forward. The anchor dragged across the sand before one of them started to pull it upward. On a whim, Eridan swam over and took the anchor in one hand, then went swimming hard in the other direction. He was far stronger than the dinky motor, and he could imagine their screams of panic as the boat lurched to a stop, then started to move backwards against the engine.

After a few seconds he released the chain, letting the boat go. He watched the anchor getting reeled in as the boat zoomed away. Let’s see if that “Boss” will be able to get anyone else out here, now.

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“Does that happen often?” Dirk asked. Eridan shrugged, stirring his drink with his straw.

“Sometimes. Guns, knives, other illegal shit. I usually just turn them in to the police, but this time I decided to give a bit of a scare.” He noticed the lack of amusement on Dirk’s face and frowned. “What?”

“He could have shot you.” Eridan rolled his eyes.

“They were way too shocked and panickin to get a good shot, and I was under the waves before any a them even had their guns up.”

“Do you think they might cause trouble later?” Dirk pressed, “They saw you. They might go looking for you again.

“Pah,” Eridan waved him off, “I’d be surprised if they ever went near the ocean again. And even if I do run into them,” He twirled his finger against his head, “I can knock them all out with only a few words.”

“I suppose,” Dirk shrugged, “Guess I like to stay on the more cautious side.”

“What-” Eridan offered him the cherry off his drink, “You’ve never gotten caught by a human?”

“Sure I have,” Dirk accepted the cherry and popped it into his mouth, “I just don’t leave witnesses.” Eridan snorted.

“With some exceptions, though.”

“Well, yeah,” Dirk leaned back, “With some exce-”

“Heyo!” Dirk jerked as two arms looped around his neck, but forced himself to freeze when he recognized the voice. “How’re my two dorks doin?”

“Hey Rox,” Eridan greeted her, “What’s up?”

“Just passin through and spotted you guys.” Roxy scrubbed her fingers through Dirk’s hair, messing it up thoroughly, before stepping back. Dirk scowled and tried to pat it straight again. He had no idea how she managed to sneak up on him, just like he had no idea how she had done it the last several dozen other times.

“I’m meetin Jake for some gamin,” She informed them, “You two wanna tag alone, or-” She waggled an eyebrow at them, “-did ya have other plans?”

“I actually gotta go soon,” Eridan set some cash down on the table and got up, “Meetin Fef for some stuff.”

“I’ll go,” Dirk said, “Jake promised he had a new technique that would beat me next match. Might as well let the poor bastard down early.” Eridan chuckled and smacked him on the shoulder.

“Take pictures for me.”

“Can do.” Dirk gave him a quick peck on the cheek before they parted ways. Eridan grinned as he headed down the opposite street. He checked his phone and sped up a little. Feferi was expecting him in 12 minutes, and she was not the most patient of people.

He took a shortcut down an alleyway to get out of the crowds. His thoughts shifted to Dirk’s words. He felt almost offended Dirk didn’t think he could take care of himself. Then again, he knew by now just how worrying and overprotective Dirk could be. Truthfully, Eridan was more touched by the genuine care.

He could take care of himself, though. He had killed adversaries that had outnumbered and (at least seemingly) outmatched him, alone. **Did** Dirk think he was weak? Eridan scowled and shook his head. No, he didn't.

Still, maybe next time Eridan would tell him about some of his own achievements. Not bragging, just a few stories.

That was the last thought running through his head before something hard cracked against the back of his skull and the world went dark.

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"I'm tellin ya, he's that thing!"

Eridan cracked one eye open. He was lying on a concrete floor, his arms bound behind his back and his legs tied. His head was throbbing in agony and he felt a little woozy, but he could still make out the voices arguing from somewhere behind him.

"Yer crazy, Fin. This is just some guy you saw walkin down the street, and you saw what you'd been havin nightmares about for the past three days."

"It's him!" Eridan felt strong fingers clamp into his hair before he was yanked upward. He found himself face to face with one of the men from the boat. The man glared at him, looking him up and down.

"Fin, the thing we saw was gray, it had horns, it wasn't human."

"So it's a trick! He shapeshifted or somethin!" The other man didn't seem convinced. Fin went on, "I'm gonna take him to the boss."

"S'your funeral." The other man grunted before turning away to head down a doorway. Fin followed him, dragging Eridan by his hair with him.

Eridan was already planning all the shit he would have these guys doing for him soon, but for now he wanted to see this boss, so he kept his mouth shut, eyes flickering around to see how many people were with them. He was still dizzy, and the back of his head felt sticky. He must have gotten hit hard enough to bleed, then. He'd have to watch out for that.

He could still use his voice. That was enough.

They entered into another room, one that stank of cigarette smoke. A large bald man sat back in one of the chairs. He wore a gaudy green coat and had a peg leg resting on another chair. He sneered down at Eridan, flashing one gold canine tooth at him.

"The Hell is that, Fin?" He looked Eridan up and down. "Ain't hideous, but ya know buyers tend to like 'em a little younger."

“This’s the **guy**, Boss,” Fin hissed, “The guy who fucked up the drug run.”

“What, the ‘sea monster?’” The boss snapped back and slammed his fist down on the table, knocking over a bottle of whisky, “For the last time Fin! First you somehow lose a buncha dolphins and shit, then you lose the drugs and make up some shit about-”

“Dolphins?” Eridan asked. The boss looked down to glare at him.

“Watch your tongue, bitch. Don’t speak unless spoken to.”

“Were you guys involved in that shit-show of a carnival?” Eridan snapped at them, ignoring the warning. The grip on his hair tightened.

“Hey pansy, you watch your mouth around the boss.”

Eridan wasn’t listening anymore. He opened his mouth and sang out several clear notes. Everyone froze. Fin released his hold on his hair, letting Eridan fall down to the floor. He winced a little, then straightened up and kept singing. They were completely in his thrall now. He’d start with the Boss.

A loud crash echoed across the room, and shards of glass scattered over Eridan’s shoulders. He blinked, then slumped forward to hit to floor. Another man stood over him. He took the earbuds out of his ears to give the others a quizzical look.

“What’s with you guys?”

“Gag that thing,” The Boss seethed, glaring down at Eridan’s limp form. “And tell Crowbar we’re moving out.”

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“Eridan has a bit of a unique smell,” Jake explained to Dirk as he knelt over the pavement, “It hasn’t rained, luckily. I think I’m picking it up.” Dirk nodded, arms crossed as he watched Jake work. He was a little worried he was being creepy about all this, asking for Jake to track him, but Eridan hadn’t answered his or Roxy’s calls for the past few days, and he hadn’t been home either. Feferi hadn’t known where he was either, and was also starting to worry.

“Here we go!” Jake’s eyes lit up and he went trotting down the sidewalk. Dirk followed him, hiding his impatience and fear best he could.

Jake led the way down Eridan’s usual route home. Dirk’s eyes flickered around, looking for any signs of Eridan, a trace of his perfume, a dropped earring.

Jake paused, sniffed the air, then turned down an alleyway. He then froze.

“Chap-” His voice had gone faint. Dirk nodded.

“I smell it too.” It was faint, not much, but the scent was unmistakable to both of them.

Blood, Eridan’s blood.

“Shit,” Dirk whispered.

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Feferi and Jade hunched over the table, muttering to themselves. In front of them rested Eridan’s pendant. Dirk leaned against the wall nearby, watching them. They were hoping that they could use the pendant to find Eridan, something about following the connection of his soul.

“Hey,” Roxy slid over to join him, “You alright?”

“I should have been watching him,” Dirk said in response, “I knew someone might be looking for him, I should have stuck around to guard him.”

“Dirk, this ain’t your fault.”

“I could have stopped it, though.”

“Dirk.”

Dirk didn’t answer. Roxy sighed and hugged him around the waist with one arm.

“It’s gonna be alright,” She said softly, “We’re gonna find him. It’s gonna be alright.”

“Ah-ha!” They looked up as Jade raised a gold disc the size of a sand dollar over her head. “Got it!”

“What did you get?” Roxy demanded as they came over to join them. Jade held it out for them to see. A faint violet light floated above its surface, toward the edge. Jade twisted the disc around to demonstrate how the dot moved about the edge of the disc to always stay in the same relative place, like a compass needle.

“Eridan is this way.” Jade tapped the light, then her face fell into a frown. “The light is faint, which means he’s already pretty far away. We aren’t sure how much, but definitely out of the city.”

“I’ll go,” Dirk said, “Using my second form, I should be able to cover ground quick.”

“You can only travel during the night, though,” Roxy pointed out, “We should get a car, and we can take turns driving.”

“It’s the end of the holiday season, though,” Jade mused, “Traffic is going to be awful. He might get by faster flying.”

“We don’t know what will be waiting for us, though,” Roxy muttered, “What if they’re prepared for vamps?”

“I don’t think it’s likely, and even if they are-” Dirk flexed his hands, “-I’ll handle it.”

“I have some talismans that could help you,” Jade started to rummage through his shelves, “And some medicines that will help you keep your form longer. They’re made for werewolves but with some tweaking...”

“Wait, one more thing!” Feferi cut in, “His, His pendant.” Her eyes flickered over to Roxy, who was pulling it over her neck again. “If he stays as a human too long...” Roxy grimaced and clasped the pendant.

“He’s had it off for two weeks already.”

“What if I held it?” Dirk asked, “I’m not human. Would it pause the process?”

“I don’t know,” Feferi pouted in thought, “I don’t know if we should risk it.” She held her hands out. “If you give it to me, he’ll start to turn back.”

“We don’t want to put him in more of a spot by having him turning back at an unexpected moment.”

“But what if we wait too long and he can’t turn back!” Feferi’s voice rose in anxiety. Jade shushed her and patted her on the arm.

“It’ll be fine,” She spoke to her soothingly. Feferi sniveled a little, then shook her head.

“If I’m holding the amulet, he’ll start to shift back, but slowly. Maybe over like, a week or so.”

“A week,” Dirk nodded, “I can find him in a week.”

“...Ok,” Roxy sighed and undid the necklace, “The effects shouldn’t be obvious for the first few days, so hopefully that will be enough.” She placed the pendant in Feferi’s hands, and her fingers curled it.

“The sun will have set in a few hours,” Dirk peaked through the curtains, “I’ll get out then.”

“Bring these!” Jade pushed several charms and a few vials at him, along with the disc. “And keep us in touch!”

“Of course.” Dirk flashed his phone as a promise.

“One more thing.” Roxy peeled back her sleeve. “If you’re going to be pushing yourself, you should drink something before you head out.” Dirk grimaced, but he couldn’t argue. He sighed and dug into his wallet.

“Jade,” He offered her a wad of money, “Can you go to the Chinese store down the street and pick up a medium mapo doufu, pork dumplings, and a root beer, plus anything you and Feferi want.” He glanced at Roxy to make sure she was alright with her preferred order. She just shrugged.

Jade headed out while Roxy sat down at the table. Dirk sat down beside her. She offered her arm, and he took it with a practiced motion. He bit down, and the familiar taste flooded into his mouth. Roxy had joked to him once, that one thing that helped her quit drinking was having a blood-alcohol tester for a friend. He didn’t know if she was serious, but as a habit he always checked the taste. She was clean. She was always clean these days.

He took a moderate amount, then drew back. He grabbed an alcohol swab and a band-aid from his bag and patched her up.

“I’m heading out now.” Dirk got to his feet. “Should be dark enough to cover me.”

“Be careful,” Roxy warned him, “Keep us updated, and call if anything comes up.”

“Roger.” He lifted the window up to reveal the fire escape, then turned around to look at the others.

“I will bring him back,” He told them, “Don’t worry.” He stepped out onto the fire escape and swung himself up to the top. There was no one around. It was a cloudy night, so there were no stars or moon to light the sky. No one would see him.

He called his power out and summoned his wings, stretching them out before leaping off the edge of the building. Two flaps sent him soaring upwards over the buildings. He looked down at the gold disc in his hand. It pointed steadily forward. He grimaced and pumped his wings again to go shooting toward the horizon.

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Eridan felt the pendant change hands. It wasn’t like a normal transformation. Rather, he felt something loosen inside of him, like a knot had just been untied, and the mechanisms would start to fall apart.

They knew. Roxy and the others, they must know he was missing, or at the very least, they were concerned that they couldn’t find him soon enough to hand his pendant over to Feferi.

Or maybe the pendant was stolen, or they were attacked as well. Eridan tried to swallow down his anxiety. He had his own problems to deal with.

They had taken him through a rough truck ride for several hours, then locked him in a dark room with some boxes, this time with a gag. They had also left him with quite a few bruises from his stunt, but nothing too bad. He suspected they were a little afraid of him now, not knowing what he might be capable of.

Well that was fine by him, he'd prove just how dangerous he was. If he was turning back to his true form, his teeth would grow sharper, as would his nails.

But he also wouldn't be able to walk.

That could be a problem.

Well, he'd cross that bridge when he got to it.

He wiggled around a bit in his bindings. They were keeping him alive for now, so someone would probably stop by to bring him food. They'd have to take the gag off to let him eat.

The door clicked open and he looked up. An empty beer can bonked against his head. He growled at the man in the doorway. The man glared back down at him, unimpressed. He had a pair of large headphones on, and Eridan could hear the tasteless music from where he sat.

"Grub time," The man raised a paper bag at him, "ya freak."

Eridan let him step forward. He just had to kick those headphones off. The man knelt down in front of him, then reached into the bag.

He pulled the gag down, and Eridan lunged forward. Quick as lightning the man clamped his hand on his neck and shoved him back. His head bumped against the wall, not hard, but it still shot a wave of agony and dizziness over him. Before he could recover something was shoved into his mouth. He tasted low-quality meat, too much sauce, and bread. He swallowed and gagged. The man shoved a bottle of water into his mouth. Eridan choked on a mouthful before twisting around and kicking him in the chest. The man grunted and fell backwards. Eridan opened his mouth.

The man hurled the water bottle at him, hitting him right in the face, then leapt forward and wrestled the gag back on him. He then got to his feet and kicked Eridan hard in the ribs.

"Freak," He seethed, "Hope you end up gettin sold to a scientist." Eridan growled back at him in return. The man stormed out and slammed the door behind him.

Eridan tried to sit up straighter and got a heavy rush of nausea and vertigo. Ok, definitely try to avoid getting hit in the head again. Not only that, but his ribs were stinging something fierce now. He was pretty sure he felt a thing or two crack when he'd been hit.

His problems began to stack up in his head. His captors knew the dangers of his voice. He had what was probably a really bad concussion right now, if he was hit in the head one more time he might die, and his ribs were in pretty bad shape. He forced a swallow. Even if he did get free, he wasn't sure he could walk out of here. Hell, if he didn't get free soon, he definitely wouldn't be able to use his legs much at all. Kicking that man had already caused a sharp protest of pain. His legs would start to merge together soon. Panic was starting to beat against his chest. He had never had a slow shift back before. What if he couldn't get to a lake in time? What if his captors noticed the changes?

He squeezed his eyes shut. He needed to stay calm. He wasn't fried yet.

He never had been good at staying calm, though. He tried to think of what Roxy would do in this situation, but thinking of her just gave him a sharp ache of loneliness in his chest. He wanted to be back with them. He wanted to be lounging on the rocks, talking with Roxy about wizards and listening to her laughter. He wanted to be curled up against Dirk's firm chest, swapping stories with him about their lives and the enemies they'd fought. He wanted to be exploring the reefs with Feferi, checking up on the health of the sea life and the level of pollution.

He would. He would go back there. His eyes narrowed in determination as he promised this to himself. Somehow, he would.

Chapter End Notes

It's not a Luneth fic unless someone is kidnapped. :D
Don't worry, Dirk's coming.

Saviors and Good Intentions

Chapter Summary

In which a mafia boss makes a misjudgement, some centaurs make a misjudgement, and everything turns out alright in the end.

Chapter Notes

Yes. It's Tuesday. I'm very sorry.

"Everything turning out alright" does not apply for any mafia bosses or underlings in this story.

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

Caliborn, known to his subordinates simply as “the Boss,” scowled down at the piles of bills before him. That failed drug collection had caused a huge gouge in their profits. That’s what he got for assigning a bunch of numbskulls to do a real job. He growled and slammed his hand down on his desk. His thoughts turned to his newest asset. If he really did turn out to be something interesting, they could make a fortune. And even if he was just some fraud, some hypnotist, Caliborn was sure they could find a buyer for someone with a body like that.

The door opened, and in walked Doze and Itchy. Caliborn scowled. They were supposed to be watching the entrance. His scowl deepened when a tall blond man walked in after them.

“Who the Hell is that?!” He snapped at them as the other members looked up from whatever idiot things they were doing to see.

“Nice to meet you,” The man spoke without permission. “I take it you’re the one in charge of this merry gang?” He seemed awfully relaxed in a room full of gang members, most of which had guns visible on some part of their body or another. Caliborn looked him over. His eyes were hidden behind a pair of sharp shades, and his expression was devoid of emotion. He was muscular, standing straight and still, no fidgeting or glancing around from this one.

Caliborn shot Doze and Itchy a glare for an explanation, but they seemed just as confused as to what he was doing there as well. Itchy was actually shaking his head, as if to clear it. Caliborn made a mental note to get them whipped into shape later.

Anyways, Caliborn’s curiosity was piqued. He knew a capable man when he saw one. If he had come looking for a job, Caliborn might actually consider it. He’d need to be broken first,

though, and he looked like the resilient type. Fine with him, Caliborn found those to be the fun ones.

“And you are?” Caliborn leaned in to glare at him up and down. Dirk shrugged.

“That’s not really gonna be important.” Caliborn cocked an eyebrow at him, feeling a bit of annoyance welling up.

Also, his men were getting antsy about something. They kept looking at him, then at the man. What were they concerned about?

No wait, they were looking behind him. What was wrong with those idiots? There was nothing there besides a big mirror, leftover from when this place was a bar.

“Your men seem upset about something,” The man noted, “Maybe you should take a look?” Caliborn scowled at him, then slowly, making a point to seem leisurely, he turned around to look.

All he saw was his own self staring back at him. And there were his men, standing around the room. And there was-

His eyes flickered around, moving from the center of the room, to the walls, to the corners. Slowly, his eyes went wide as his gaze zipped around the reflection of the room.

“You see what they see?” The man’s voice sounded from behind him, but no reflection indicated his location. Caliborn’s eyes bugged out as he glared at the mirror, eyes darting around to the startled faces of his men, searching for the stranger, before he finally whirled back around. The man hadn’t moved from his spot. His hands were still dug nonchalantly into his pockets, even as several of Caliborn’s men pulled guns on him.

“What is this??” Caliborn spat, “Some, Some parlor trick?” The man shrugged.

“Yeah, I’m a real riot at parties.”

A gun went off and the man stumbled a step. A spot of red bloomed up on his shirt. Caliborn’s mouth split into a wide grin.

“Ha! You thought you could just saunter in here and scare us with some cheap tricks?!” He got up, grabbing his own rifle off the table. He commended the man for having the strength to still be standing, and for that he would honor him with killing him himself.

The man straightened up again, and Caliborn paused. There was no trace of pain on his face, no shock. Maybe it was just hard to see on his already deathly pale face.

The man stretched and grunted, then rolled his shoulders back. He patted the wound on his chest, which surprisingly didn’t seem to be bleeding much aside from the initial spurt.

“Pretty nice gun.” He commented, turning to Itchy who had fired the shot. “Got a bit of a trigger finger huh?”

Itchy was the fastest member of the gang, but even he didn't have time to react before a dagger had buried itself neatly between his eyes. Caliborn's eye twitched. He hadn't even seen the man throw it.

The man turned back to face Caliborn, then took off his glasses, revealing a pair of eyes that glowed with an unnatural amber color. They were narrowed in a grim expression, and Caliborn could just barely see it: absolute rage flickering behind the man's face.

"No witnesses," The man said.

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Eridan's head snapped up as the door opened. Dirk stood in the doorway, covered head to toe in smears of blood.

"Hey," He spoke with a firmly casual tone. Eridan stared at him blankly. Dirk glided across the room and knelt down beside him. He ripped the gag off with one sharp nail, then reached around to do the same for the ropes. His arms went around Eridan to get behind him, and Eridan felt the dim warmth of his skin graze him. He couldn't help leaning forward to press his cheek against his chest. Dirk paused, then, after cutting the ropes, he tightened his arms to hold Eridan close against him.

"Hey," He said softly, "You ok?" Eridan mumbled something into the affirmative, though he found he couldn't stop shaking. The feeling of his cheek against his chest was so familiar, so comforting. He felt his shoulders slump on his own accord. Dirk reeked of blood, but he couldn't bring himself to mind. Dirk shifted back to pull him onto his lap.

"It's safe now," Dirk gave him a gentle squeeze, "They're all dead."

"Were they tasty?" Eridan mumbled.

"I only took a quick drink, because I was in a hurry to find you." Dirk's nose wrinkled. "And it was awful. Plus, I don't think they knew what bathing is." Eridan gave a weak snort at that. "C'mon." Dirk slashed the ropes on his ankles with a flick of his wrist. "Let's get out of here."

He began to stand up, but Eridan gave a frantic squeak and his hands jerked out to grab his shirt.

"Wait, I can't-" Eridan hesitated, then dropped his head to look down at the ground. Dirk settled down against and patted his cheek.

"You can't walk," He guessed, "Feferi- We gave your amulet to Feferi. Are you turning back?" Eridan nodded.

"Y, Yeah. I think I can still walk, but I might be a bit clumsy."

“Will it hurt?” Dirk asked. Eridan grimaced.

“Yeah.”

“Then don’t.” Dirk slipped his arms under him and lifted him up. “I got you.”

They walked out into the room. Eridan wrinkled his nose at the smell of blood hanging heavy in the air. The corpses lying around the room did give him some satisfaction, though.

“Were they a lot a trouble?”

“Nah,” Dirk answered as he stepped over one of them, “They had no idea what they were dealing with.” Eridan felt a rush of pride over Dirk, tempered with his own shame and self-consciousness. Why couldn’t **he** have taken care of them as easy as that?

“Sorry,” Eridan mumbled as they headed for the door, “For bein a bother, makin you have to get me.”

“Eridan,” Dirk pressed his forehead against Eridan’s cheek, “This wasn’t your fault.” He paused, “Is your head still bleeding?”

“Don’t think so.” Eridan reached up to rub my head. “Hurts like Hell, though, ‘nd I’m dizzy.”

“You should rest,” Dirk grunted, “Concussions are nasty. I’ll call the others-”

“Are we near the ocean?” Eridan asked, “I wanna, I wanna turn back fully.”

“They brought you inland,” Dirk said, “But there is a river nearby, a big one, that goes all the way back to the city. Would that work?”

“Yeah.” Eridan nodded quickly, and Dirk headed in the direction he could hear the water from.

They arrived at a wide river with a fast current, deep enough that Dirk couldn’t see the bottom. He knelt down and gently lowered Eridan onto the bank.

“Thanks,” Eridan muttered as he wrestled his skirt off, then shifted himself into the water. He vanished under the surface in an instant, then reappeared a second later, back to his true form. He grinned at Dirk, showing off his pointed teeth.

“Feel better?” Dirk asked. Eridan nodded.

“Infinitely.”

Dirk smiled, then looked around. There was a makeshift dock nearby with a few boats tied. Dirk guessed the gang had the place set up as an escape route.

“Well they certainly aren’t going to be missing these now.” Dirk got into one of the boats and began to untie it from the docks. “I think we can ride the river all the way back to the city.”

“Yeah,” Eridan pulled his shirt off, then dumped it with the rest of his clothes into the boat. He then pulled the boat out farther into the water, letting the current take it. Dirk sat back in the boat with Eridan swimming along beside him.

“You sure you’re alright?” Dirk asked.

“Yeah.” Eridan nudged the boat of the the way of some reeds. “Transformin helped a bit, guess I’m still a little tired though. “S’not like I can take a nap, or I’ll drift away from the boat.”

“Here,” Dirk rolled over and grabbed the rope he looped one end around the boat, then tied the other into a kind of harness, which he presented to Eridan.

“Now you can float along with me,” Dirk explained when Eridan gave him a bewildered look. Eridan snorted. “You said you wanted to rest without having to follow the boat.”

“I guess,” Eridan answered and let Dirk loop it over his head, “It’s just...”

“Yeah?” Dirk asked as he tugged on the rope to make sure it would hold.

“This is a weird way to go introducin your kinks, Dirk.”

Dirk paused, released his hold on the rope, then turned to scowl at Eridan. Eridan shrugged.

“Just sayin.”

“That is not remotely what’s going on here and you know it.” Dirk told him sternly. Eridan snorted and splashed a bit of water at him. Dirk finished adjusting the harness as comfortable as he could get it, and was definitely not thinking about Eridan comment at any time during the process.

“Ok,” Dirk sat back, “Good?” Eridan picked at the harness.

“It’ll do.”

“Great.” Dirk lay back against the stern of the boat. “Sweet dreams.” Eridan grumbled something and lay back in the water. He closed his eyes, and fell asleep almost immediately despite the circumstances; an indicator of how tired he really was. Dirk watched him for a while longer to make sure he was alright, then relaxed back against the boat again.

He texted Roxy to let her know that both of them were safe, and that they were travelling down the river back home. Roxy wanted to talk to Eridan, but dropped it when Dirk explained he was sleeping. She only did so with the insistence that he call her once they were feeling a little better. Dirk promised, then double-triple-pinkie promised, before letting his phone fall into his lap.

Most of the river was covered by the forest, with only a few patches of sun shining through here and there, and it was cloudy, so he didn’t have to worry too much. He’d been flying hard the past few nights, and traveling a bit during the day as well. The soft rocking of the boat soothed him as it lazily traveled down the river. He let his eyes flutter closed for a quick nap.

The soft rug of grass was crushed under the weight of a heavy hoof, and a horse's flank brushed through the bushes while a human hand pulled away a branch to provide a few of the river.

"Horuss," The centaur spoke, "Come here." A second centaur joined him. While he also sported the dappled gray coat and the long black hair of the other, he was a little older than the other, and wore his hair in a ponytail as opposed to straight down.

"What is it, Equius? A deer?" Horuss leaned around him to look. Equius shook his head, then pointed at the river.

"What is that?"

"It's..." Horuss frowned in concentration as he shaded his eyes to look. "It's just a boat?"

"Look closer."

"Oh...hm," Horuss's eyebrows drew together in concern as he spotted the rope at the stern of the boat, "Yes that, looks troubling."

"The human has captured a merfolk." Equius shrugged the bow off his shoulder. "I do not believe we can let the situation stand."

Dirk was snapped out of his cat nap by a heavy *thunk* above him. He looked up to see an arrow embedded directly above his head.

Arrows were, at their core, sharpened wooden sticks. Dirk wasn't sure if having a tip of a different material would change that, but he had resolved to never find out.

He sat up just in time to catch the next arrow whizzing toward him. To his surprise, the attackers were a couple of centaurs. Dirk was generally friendly with centaurs. He thought they were cool, and he was pretty sure he had never pissed off a centaur in his life.

Not the time to ask now. The second one had another arrow notched. He rolled out of the boat and into the water to buy himself a few seconds to plan.

Dirk tried to avoid attacking first, asking questions later, but he also had a strict policy of survival.

Another arrow whizzed over him, this time cutting the rope holding Eridan. Dirk grabbed the boat to keep it from floating too far away.

Questions later then.

He slipped under the boat and found the bottom of the river with his feet. With a single hard heave he shoved the boat out of the water to fly right into the centaurs. They reared back and away as it hit the bank, which gave Dirk time to pull himself out of the river to face them on land. The younger of the centaurs decided to forgo his bow and instead charged right at Dirk. Dirk shifted his stance, preparing to leap up onto his torso and get access to his neck.

A strong melody cut into the battle, making all three of them freeze. Dirk, once he was sure the centaurs had stopped attacking, turned around. Eridan was halfway on the bank, holding himself up by his arms as he glared at all of them.

“What the Hell is goin on?!” Eridan seethed.

Dirk and the younger centaur pointed at each other. Eridan’s rage faded into a strong irritation.

“Are you five??”

“Two-hundred twenty-five.” Dirk corrected him. Eridan rolled his eyes, then his eyes flickered to the centaurs.

“An’ what do you two want?”

“Ah...” The older centaur lowered his bow, “Well, um, this is awkward.”

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“Allow us to apologize again,” The younger centaur, Equius, bowed to them for what was by Dirk’s count the ninth time. Eridan sighed and waved him off.

“Yeah, yeah, honest misunderstandin.”

“At least it means we made good time.” Dirk looked around. “If we’re in the centaurs’ territory already.”

“This is technically the border of the centaurs’ and the werecats’ territories,” Horuss piped up, “We were visiting some friends, you see. You should be able to reach Skaia by nightfall though.”

“Thanks,” Dirk rubbed the back of his head, “And uh, sorry about throwing a boat at you. No hard feelings?”

“None at all!” Horuss answered back a little too quickly. Dirk quirked an eyebrow, but said nothing.

“Fair travels,” Equius grunted as they pushed the boat back into the river again, “If you decide to visit again-” He paused, then cleared his throat, “-please do so in a less suggestive manner.” Both Dirk and Eridan hunched their shoulders. Dirk kept his eyes glued to the boat while Eridan muttered something under his breath as they shoved the boat into the water. They took off down the river again, with Eridan holding onto the rim of the boat and swimming along.

“Well we ain’t doin that again,” Eridan sighed. Dirk offered an apologetic shrug.

“I’ll admit, a couple of well-meaning centaurs were not on my list of potential problems.”

“I’m still tired,” Eridan complained, seeming to have gotten over his pride and insisting that he was fine.

“We could rest for the day,” Dirk suggested, “And continue during the night.”

Eridan was quiet for a bit, then he answered, “I have a better idea.” Before Dirk could ask Eridan had heaved himself up out of the water to fall into the boat. Dirk’s arms opened automatically as he landed on him with a faint grunt.

“Ouch,” Eridan muttered, pressing a hand over his ribs. Dirk twisted a bit to look.

“You alright?”

“M’fine.” In his true form, Eridan was about two and a half meters long. The last bit of his tail draped out over the edge of the boat. Dirk wrapped his arms around his waist, gently, on account of his ribs.

“Well if you’re comfortable like this,” Dirk said, “I don’t have any complaints.”

“Good,” Eridan answered before letting his head flop down into Dirk’s chest. Dirk smiled and ruffled his hand through Eridan’s hair.

“...Is it really ok?” Eridan asked after a while, his voice muffled by Dirk’s shirt, “I ain’t too heavy?”

“Nope.”

“You’re comfy.”

“Thanks.”

Eridan purred, it was a soft trilling noise that made Dirk’s chest light up whenever he heard it. Dirk smiled and rested his arms over Eridan’s back.

“Roxy and Feferi were worried sick,” He commented. Eridan murmured something in response. “Roxy looked like she was going to shoot someone. Feferi was thinking of

searching the entire coastline.

“It’s nice to know they care,” Eridan muttered, “But don’t get me wrong. I wish I hadn’t troubled them.”

“I was worried too,” Dirk added. Eridan didn’t answer. “I felt like I should have been with you when you were attacked.”

“It wasn’t your fault, Dirk.”

“I know,” Dirk answered, “At least, part of me knows that. But well,” He hesitated, then went on, “I can’t help but worry, y’know?”

“I know,” Eridan answered softly, “and, it’s sweet a ya.”

“I’m glad you think so because I can only show vulnerable emotion once every one-hundred years, during the new moon.” Eridan snorted.

“I love ya, ya dumbass.”

“Awesome.”

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“Eri!” Roxy skidded down the riverbank to fling her arms around Eridan’s neck. “Holy shit we were terrified! Are you alright? Did they hurt you?”

“M’fine, Rox,” Eridan muttered and patted her on the back. Feferi tackled him next, making him grunt in pain.

“Eep!” Feferi leaned back and brought her hands to her mouth, “What’s wrong??”

“Just a few bruises,” Eridan grunted as he shifted himself up onto the bank. “Have you got my pendant?” Feferi nodded and handed him the pendant. He breathed a sigh of relief as his fingers closed around it, then turned to Roxy. “I’m gonna have to be human to get through town...” He began. Roxy nodded and opened her hand out. Eridan started to hand it to her, then his eyes snapped wide and he snatched it back.

“Wait!” He yelped, drawing a concerned look from all three of them. Roxy leaned back and raised both her hands.

“What? What?”

“Um!” He swiveled around to look at Dirk, who cocked his head to the side. “Can ya-” His mouth moved silently for a bit, then closed as he blushed violet. Dirk quirked an eyebrow.

Feferi and Roxy were giggling behind his back, so he suspected they knew something he didn't.

"Can ya turn around??" He blurted out, then blushed several shades darker and ducked his head. "Sorry I just- Cause, my clothes- I'm gonna have to change..."

"Ah." Dirk nodded and got I'm. "I'm going to, go stand watch then." Eridan nodded thankfully, and Dirk took several steps away to stare out at the forest.

He heard Eridan swear and stumble a bit, presumably changing back, then some shuffling as he grabbed his clothes out of the boat.

"I've seen you shirtless," Dirk felt he had to point it out.

"Well, yeah! But..." Eridan protested, "S'just, different. I wanna-" He paused, then continued on in a softer, higher note, "I'd want a better situation if we're gettin that far."

"Fair enough," Dirk answered, "Shouldn't Roxy and Feferi be looking away?"

"Fef's known me since I was basically a fetus," Eridan grunted, "Also, she was there when I first transformed. And Rox, she's seen it all already. Ok, you can turn around again." Dirk did so, finding Eridan looking down at his rumpled clothes with a grimace.

"Ugh, they're all torn and dirty. I don't wanna go into the city like this."

"You look fine, Eri." Roxy helped him to his feet. He wobbled a bit. Dirk stepped in to grab his shoulder and steady him.

"Can you walk?" He asked. Eridan nodded, face screwed into a tight grimace. Dirk kept a hand on him as they headed back to the city.

"I'm callin a cab," Roxy flicked her phone out, "If anyone asks, we were out partyin." Dirk nodded. It was about 5am, so it wouldn't be a too far-fetched explanation for Eridan's state. He himself had changed out of his bloodstained clothes.

The cab driver hardly glanced at the four before asking for the address. Roxy answered while Dirk wrapped his arm around Eridan's shoulders.

"We'll be home soon," He murmured. Eridan bobbed his head in a weary nod.

They arrived at the beach. Eridan managed a few staggering steps before Dirk gently lifted him up to carry him the rest of the way. Eridan didn't protest. He merely curled up in his hold.

"Ok," Dirk looked around the house as they entered, "Did you refill your medical supplies? I can run to the store-"

"There's still stuff there," Eridan muttered, "Mostly I just need some painkillers, sleep, and..." He paused, during which his stomach growled. "-food." He finished.

“I’ll get some food!” Feferi declared before racing out the door. Roxy went into the kitchen to make some tea. Dirk set Eridan down on the couch, then grabbed the first aid kit from where it’d been left since the incident with Jake.

“Hold still,” Dirk told him as he placed a hand lightly over a bruise on his chest. Eridan winced, but did his best to sit up straight and hold still.

“This is broken.” Dirk turned his attention to Eridan’s head. “You still dizzy?”

“Yeah.” Eridan muttered.

“You’re probably going to be in bed for a while.” Dirk rubbed some alcohol swaps over the cuts, making Eridan yelp in protest. “It stings because it’s killing the germs.”

“Saltwater does that fine, too,” Eridan muttered. Dirk chuckled and patted a bandage over a scratch.

Feferi returned with an armload fish. Dirk didn’t even bother to ask how. Eridan sunk his teeth into the first, chewed and swallowed bones and all, then washed it down with a gulp of tea.

“They were involved in that shit ocean show,” Eridan muttered between eating, “Must’ve been a front or somethin.” Dirk hummed in response. “Do you think there’s more a them?”

“If there is,” Dirk patted him on the knee, “We’ll take care of them.” Eridan answered with a weak smile, then Feferi pushed another fish at him.

Roxy’s phone buzzed. She glanced at the screen then scowled.

“Rose needs my help with a thing,” She started, “It ain’t, It ain’t urgent or anythin. I can stick around if you want, Eri.”

“It’s fine,” Eridan grunted, “I was just gonna head to sleep soon anyways.”

“Be careful, ok?” Roxy shouldered her bag, “Don’t push yourself too much. Get some rest. If you hear the doorbell and think it’s me, I’ll have texted you before ringing it.”

“Yeah, yeah.” Eridan rolled his eyes, and she blew a raspberry at him before letting herself out.

“I should get going, too,” Feferi said with an apologetic look. “I’ve been um, neglecting my duties a bit since you vanished.”

Eridan nodded in understanding. Feferi gave a final wave before sweeping off out the door.

“Duties?” Dirk asked.

“Fef’s heiress to our kingdom,” Eridan explained, “She hasn’t taken the throne yet, but she’s already got some responsibilities.” Dirk quirked an eyebrow at that.

“I didn’t know I had been conversing with royalty.” Eridan shot him a sly grin, one that had Dirk thinking he was missing something. “...What?”

“Did I somehow neglect mentionin I’m also royalty?” Eridan practically sung the question. Dirk blinked.

“...Yes.”

“Is that weird?” Eridan’s smile faltered into an unsure expression. “Like, do you not wanna be with me now?”

“It’s fine,” Dirk answered quickly, and Eridan sagged with relief, “I mean, I should be the one asking if it’s ok. I’m not even merfolk. Are we a scandal or something?”

“Nah,” Eridan shrugged, “I mean, ok, a little, but no one’s gonna dare call me out about it, not when the heiress is ok with it and I’m only a little below her. What’re they gonna-” He paused to crack a large yawn, then finished, “-do?”

“Point taken.” Dirk clapped him on the shoulder. “For now, you should get some rest. I’ll clean up here.”

Eridan mumbled something in response as Dirk helped him get up and walk to the bedroom. He managed to wriggle out of his clothes before crawling under the covers. He was asleep before he could even get his head fully on the pillow. Dirk shifted him around to a better position, then ruffled his hair before returning to the living room to clean up. Once the dishes and medical supplies had been put away, he returned to Eridan’s room to check on him. The other hadn’t moved in his sleep. His chest rose and fell in an even rhythm.

Dirk sat down on the chair nearby and leaned back, crossing his arms. He could, hypothetically, head back home. He had sunscreen, and the sun was still weak.

But he’d rather burn in the sun than leave Eridan right now.

He leaned over to brush a lock of hair out of his face. He was breathing evenly, fast asleep. Good. He needed the sleep. He needed the rest. He needed to feel safe, happy.

Eridan murmured something in his sleep and shifted a bit. Dirk wondered if he was dreaming. Did merfolk dream? Vampires and humans did, so Dirk couldn’t see why not.

Well if he was, Dirk hoped it was a good one.

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“Dirk?”

Dirk snapped awake and saw Eridan turned over on his back, staring up at him.

“Hey,” Dirk yawned and rolled his shoulders, popping some stiff muscles, “Sorry, nodded off for a bit.

“I thought you woulda gone home.” Eridan looked over at the sliver of light peeking through the curtains and frowned. Dirk rubbed the back of his head.

“I was, nervous about leaving you alone while you slept.” Eridan huffed and rolled his eyes, but didn’t seem too annoyed.

“Well, you shouldn’t have to be sleepin in a chair. Here.” He scooted over and pulled the blanket up. When Dirk didn’t move immediately, his eyes flickered to the side as doubt flashed across his face. “I mean, if you wanna, that is.”

“Sure, I mean-” Dirk got up out of the chair, “-That’d be nice, if it’s ok.” Eridan’s face broke into a relieved grin.

“Course it is.”

Dirk sat down on the side of the bed, then settled himself down beside Eridan. Eridan turned over and curled up against him with a pleased purr. Dirk rested his arm around Eridan’s frame and kissed him gently on the forehead.

It wasn’t long before Eridan fell asleep again. Dirk absentmindedly rubbed his thumb against his shoulder.

“*Safe,*” He told himself, “*Safe. We’re safe. He’s safe.*” But he couldn’t make himself relax, couldn’t stop himself from jumping at every noise his sensitive hearing could pick up, couldn’t help checking every so often to make sure Eridan was still breathing.

He sighed into Eridan’s hair and closed his eyes. As long as he was here, nothing would touch Eridan.

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Eridan awoke to a mouthwatering scent wafting through the house. He raised his head and fumbled around for his clock. Finding it, he dragged it over to look: 7 pm. He had slept through the day. He grimaced and started to shift off the bed.

“Don’t get up,” Dirk called from out the door. “Your ribs are cracked.” Eridan scowled.

“How do you know I’m movin?”

“I can hear you.”

“Bullshit,” Eridan whispered under his breath.

“I heard that, too.” Dirk appeared in the doorway, holding a plate of food and a mug of tea. “Here, you’re probably starving.”

He was, and as soon as Dirk set the plate down in his lap he began to scarf it down to embarrassing fervor. The taste was sublime in a way that had nothing to do with hunger. The spices complimented the food without overwhelming it, and the fish was perfectly flaky and soft. “This is good!” He gasped, “I mean, really good.” Dirk’s mouth twitched upwards.

“I may have had a few decades to practice.”

“What about you?” Eridan popped another piece of fish into his mouth. “You hungry?”

“I’m fine.” Dirk sat down on the side of the bed with him. “I should be good for another few days or so.”

“What’s it like?” Eridan asked as he accepted the mug of tea. “Is it like, a cravin? Hunger?”

“Sort of.” Dirk rubbed his chin in thought. Eridan realized the other hadn’t shaved in a while, and a bit of a stubble had developed, giving him a rugged look. “It starts out as a craving, and a hunger that can’t really be sated with food. It starts growing. The smell of blood affects me more. Also, I’ll start to get dizzy and tired if I go without it for too long.” He looked up at Eridan, “I won’t lose control, though. I’ll waste away before I go attacking anyone I don’t want to.”

“I ain’t afraid that you’re gonna hurt me, Dirk.” Eridan offered him a piece of fish. “You just flew miles to save me, and you ain’t even mad over the trouble.”

“Of course not.”

“I love you,” Eridan said, softly. He stared down at the tea in his hands. For once, Dirk didn’t have to ruminate on his actions. He reached over to place one hand over Eridan’s.

“I love you, too,” He murmured, “And I won’t leave you, Eridan. I’ll be there whenever you need me.” Eridan swallowed, then pitched forward to shove his face into Dirk’s chest.

“I love youuu,” He repeated in a soft whine. Dirk smiled and rested his hand over his back.

“I love you, too.”

“Holy shit.”

“Yep.”

“I really do.”

“I love you, too.”

Eridan giggled, and Dirk buried his face into his neck, earning a squeal of surprise.

“Alright, alright,” Dirk drew back as Eridan began to playfully swat him on the head, “I shouldn’t be making you move around too much.” Eridan pouted, so Dirk gave him a quick peck on the cheek. “You wanna watch a movie or something instead?” Eridan grinned at the suggestion.

“Have you seen the Harry Potter movies?”

“Of course.”

“Wanna watch them again?”

“Sure.”

Chapter End Notes

Eridan learned the concept of modesty over his time on the surface world. The first time around, not so much.

The Zahhaks were only trying to help.

That cab driver has probably seen some shit. As long as they get their fare.

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