

the five year twist of fate (a kipo and the age of wonderbeasts fic)

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by [thirteen_beaches](#)

Summary

" 'THIS IS BENSON!'

And there it was, the start of the problem."

prahm brought with it a lot of things. for troy, it was finally time for him to confess to benson. but, when things don't go as they should, where will the road take them both? and will they get a happy ending?

Notes

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

prologue

The problem started all the way back when Kipo, Wolf, Benson, Dave and Mandu had come to the backup burrow, after their 10-day journey for Kipo's father.

Troy had been hanging out with some of the other school kids, still trying to wrap his head around the whole shift and change in burrow, when Lio had radioed in. Asher had started jumping excitedly, shaking Dahlia's shoulders as they looked around for Kipo, Troy laughing quietly at the excitement of his friend, who was like a sibling they'd never had. But it wasn't like he would've missed it even if he tried, considering the commotion that was caused. He shook his head fondly as he saw Asher and Dahlia yell Kipo's name and run into the crowd, following slowly after them. After all, Kipo was like a sister, and one of his best friends in the burrow, and while his worries hadn't been overt, of course he was concerned about her safety, and her nature to trust everyone and believe everyone had good in them. But as he moved forward to see her, he heard his friends talking animatedly amongst themselves, and he turned around to see people crowding a bit behind him. Narrowing his eyes, Troy pushed past some people, just as he heard a loud thud, and looked down to see a boy with a robot backpack and a snapback, fallen on his back on the floor. Clearly it was he people were crowding curiously around, after all, a surface human was not a normal thing for them. Looking at the boy, Troy felt bad, and leaned down to try and help him up, probably apologise for the naive curiosity of the other burrow kids. But just as he reached out, he heard the music playing from the tape player that had fallen out from the boy's bag, and he stopped, reaching over to pick it up as the song played out, recognition flooding in Troy's mind.

No way, he loved this song! And here was this mysterious boy, who just happens to have an old world emcee's tapes with him, one he recognised too. What were the odds?

And then the boy stood up and looked at him, and Troy was speechless for a whole other reason. Because *wow*.

"Wait, is that Oz the Originator?" Troy asked, gulping nervously, managing to push aside his breathlessness. But that proved even harder when the boy smiled at him, and Troy's head was only playing a chorus of *he's cute, isn't he?*

"How do you know about Oz the Originator?" the boy, asked, smiling excitedly at Troy, clutching the straps of his backpack.

"Our old burrow had a pretty neat music library, but I've only heard this song of his," Troy said, laughing awkwardly, praying that he couldn't see the way he was definitely blushing.

"Well luckily for you, I may have an album or two of his!" Benson said confidently, holding out his hand to Troy. "I'm Benson!"

Troy took a deep breath, smiling shakily as he grabbed the boy, Benson's, hand, shaking it, his heart racing. "I'm Troy."

But that wasn't where the problem started. It may have taken root there, but that's not where it started.

The problem, as it turned out, would start when Troy, holding a metal rod as he pushed Asher and Dahlia behind him to protect them from the flamingos, and he turned to look over at the boy (Benson, he had said his name was), in a moment of blind panic. But just before the flamingo got to them, he heard a loud cry, and he, Asher and Dahlia looked up.

“THIS IS BENSON!”

And there it was, the start of the problem.

As it turned out, Benson jumping into battle for him, a boy he had never met before that day was enough to send Troy crashing and falling hard, and now there was no stopping. He liked Benson. Even if he didn't know everything about him, it was there. And it wasn't going away anytime soon.

But that was Troy, and Benson's side of the story was quite different.

The surface was a difficult place to be, let alone to navigate it alone. And before meeting Dave, Benson had been alone for a few years, wandering the ruins of Las Vistas to fend for himself. Even after meeting Dave, and consequently Kipo, Wolf and Mandu, while he would jump at the opportunity to make friends, anything more than that was not in the picture. It wasn't that Benson didn't want to find love. One day he would. Just, not during a war, when there was so much to lose already. Besides, who even knew whether it would last?

So, when Benson saw Troy for the first time, of course he was speechless. Whatever promise he had made to himself, he couldn't help but observe that Troy was, objectively, very good looking. But honestly, hearing someone else recognise Oz the Originator just made Benson want to be his friend even more. So of course, he would jump in to save him and Kipo's friends from the flamingo. It's what friends would do.

And Benson was more than happy with more friends.

As the time went by, Troy's feelings didn't subside as he thought they would, like small crushes that would fall away with time. In fact, with every tiny occurrence, it grew just a bit more, like a pinprick of colour with every touch, every smile, every laugh.

Like when Benson pushed Troy out of the way between Pierre and Asher and Dahlia, when he and Wolf were trying to train the trio to prepare them for the Timbercats. Troy could just stare up at the other boy, his cheeks heating up as his thoughts were in a jumble, all while Benson just laughed quietly, talking about how one must never come between Pierre and maple syrup, while trying to help Troy up. And when they reached Timbercat village, Troy hugged Benson, against the tiny voice screaming in his mind to just shake his hand and go, and numbly felt like he could hug him forever.

Or like when, months after Scarlemagne's failed coronation, when most humans apart from Kipo and her friends, and Asher, Dahlia, Troy and his dad, had gone with Dr Emilia, just vanishing into thin air, Troy joined Kipo, Benson and Wolf on their recon mission to find

where they were hiding. Troy couldn't breathe the entire way on the dragonfly, acutely aware of the fact that he was sitting behind Benson, itching to wrap his hands around Benson's waist and hold him close. But he couldn't, because he still hadn't been able to tell Benson how he felt, not when the other boy took every opportunity to mention how good friends they were, sinking another hole in Troy's dreams. So he was content living in daydreams and sleepless nights staring up at stars, wishing both on ones that moved and ones that didn't.

But soon it wasn't enough. The closer the prospect of a fight got, the more Troy's brain wouldn't shut up about it, every cell of his body screaming to tell Benson, to just let it out so he could sleep at night. Now, every interaction they had was coloured by his mind, trying to find indications of the other boy felt the same, every empty space suddenly seeming filled with unsaid words. But how could he ever tell him? It wasn't like an opportunity to ask Benson out would just present itself in the middle of them trying to stop Dr Emilia.

Until Kipo put out the idea of Prahm.

Honestly, at this point, it was like the universe was playing a joke on Troy. Of course, just as he had rationalised not telling Benson his feelings, there it came, an opportunity to tell him how he felt that completely swept aside his feeble mental argument. And now he didn't know what to do.

No, that wasn't entirely true. He knew what he *wanted* to do, but Troy didn't know whether he could do it.

But, if he were being completely honest, there was no better time.

He was going to ask Benson to Prahm. In the hopes that maybe, just maybe, Benson saw him as more than just a friend.

After all, what did he have to lose?

chapter one

Chapter Summary

it's the day of prahm. so will troy go through with his plan of asking benson out?

Chapter Notes

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

“Okay guys, it’s Prahm-posal time!” Kipo announced while clapping her hands. All the humans who Kipo had brought from the ship after inviting Emilia and the other humans on the cruise ship looked around at each other, a lot of them cheering and high-fiving. Benson laughed out loud, giving Dave a fistbump as he looked over at Troy, smiling warmly before turning to face Kipo again.

Troy, who caught Benson’s eye, just smiled awkwardly, looking away because of how his cheeks heated up, pulling at his thumb. Ever since the idea of asking Benson to prahm had come into his mind, it just wouldn’t stop ringing through his head, endlessly nagging and pulling at every train of thought he had. It was honestly starting to get frustrating, how he would just be making dolls for the decorations, or painting the float for their apology song/Prahm-posal to the mutes of Las Vistas, and just like that, the thought of Benson’s smile or laugh, or that stupid excitement in his eyes whenever he would go off on a tangent with Troy about music or flapjacks, would make Troy lose track of what he was doing, his mind sent into a whirl.

“You’ve got it bad,” Asher said, raising their eyebrow at Troy, who looked over at them, groaning loudly. “Frankly, it sounds exhausting for you, this whole ‘having a crush on Benson when he just thinks you’re a friend’ thing.”

“Gee, thanks Ash,” Troy said flatly, resting his head against the cold metal float. “Just the vote of confidence I need when I’m planning to ask him to Prahm today.”

“Whoa,” Asher gasped, leaning away, eyes wide. “You’re actually gonna ask him? That’s awesome, Troy!” But when they saw Troy just sigh, their eyes trained to the ground, Asher smiled gently, placing a hand on his shoulder. “Hey,” they said softly. “Whatever happens, it doesn’t matter. What’ll matter is you did it.”

Troy looked up at Asher, smiling quietly as he reached out to give them a fistbump. “Thanks Ash,” he said softly, seeing that everyone was starting to crawl into the float, excitedly chatting about their upcoming performance. “I hope you’re right.” Then, his smile morphed into a smirk, and he bumped his shoulder against Asher’s. “Who knows? Maybe you’ll be brave enough to finally ask Kipo out,” he teased, and Asher groaned loudly, shoving him away as they turned to the float.

“Don’t even start,” they mumbled, and Troy laughed, rolling his eyes. But, deep down, he still felt nervous.

*

“That, was, AWESOME!” Kipo cheered, after everyone crawled out of the float, panting and smiling in exhaustion. All the dancing and singing had really taken it out of everyone, even Doag. But Kipo’s excitement and pure glee still managed to put a smile on everyone’s faces, as it had always done. Kipo had nothing but optimism and good nature with everything she did, her very positivity seeming to infect everyone in the best way.

“But none of them said anything,” Dahlia sighed, looking down in disappointment. “Who knows what they thought,” she muttered, before yelping loudly, clutching her side where Asher had elbowed her sharply.

“I knew it, I was off timing. I’m so sorry it’s my fault,” Doag sighed, spinning in a pirouette. “I knew the dance move I chose as my showcase wasn’t good enough!”

“No no,” Zane chimed in, bursting to the front of the group. “My timing and rhythm was just so perfect it made everyone else seem off time,” he sighed dramatically, somehow blissfully ignoring the glares and the groans of everyone else.

“What matters is that we said what we had to say, and now it’s up to them to decide,” Benson spoke up, and everyone mumbled in agreement, nodding. Troy sucked in a breath, trying to steady his heart while looking at Benson, who was standing a bit in front of him. He pulled at him thumb, going over lines in his head, trying to figure out the perfect thing to say to him.

‘Hey Benson, I really like you, do you wanna go to Prahm?’ No, felt too plain.

‘I made a ‘Prahm’-ise to myself that I’d ask you to be my date for the dance.’ Okay that was a bit too much, maybe he had to dial it back.

‘Hey Benson Mekler, I’ve basically had a crush on you since you decided to jump at a flamingo for a kid you had spoken to once before, and now I can’t stop thinking about how much I like you so if i don’t ask you to even one dance at Prahm, I think I’ll combust.’

He was losing it.

Troy was busy running through lines in his head, bit by bit trying to build up courage within himself to walk up and just say the words to Benson, now that most of the crowd had dissipated. But, before he finally brought up the courage to tap the boy on the shoulder, and ask him, Benson turned to look at Wolf and Kipo who were talking to each other about something or the other.

“So, I’m just gonna be joining you and Wolf, right Kipo?” Benson said, placing his hands on his hips. Troy, who had just started to reach out his hand, stopped short, pulling back quickly, his heart dropping slightly.

“You sure? You don’t wanna ask anyone out?” Kipo asked, raising an eyebrow. She glanced briefly over Benson’s shoulder, having caught sight of Troy, who was now taking a step back,

gulping nervously.

Benson just narrowed his eyes, tilting his head in confusion, before just shrugging. “You know me Kipo,” he said, and Troy knew then what he was about to say, and he just sighed quietly, turning around to walk away. “I’m good with all the friends I have. What else do I need?”

So much for not having anything to lose, Troy’s mind whispered quietly as he stuffed his hands in his pockets, following where he saw Asher and Dahlia vanish. *He was pretty good at lying to himself.*

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“Wolf is gonna be here Kipo,” Benson reassured the pink-haired girl, who was constantly fidgeting, looking around everywhere at any free moment when she wasn’t trying to get the mutes and humans to bond with each other. So far, it was a mixed bag of emotions, but it was definitely better than things had ever been, so there was something.

Kipo, who had been pulling nervously at the corsage that she had made for herself, turned to look up at Benson, frowning. “You saw how she looked when she said what Scarlemagne went to do, and you know she went to go with him,” Kipo said quietly, looking away. “I know she’s doing what she thinks is best for me, to protect me. And after what Mom told us about Dr Emilia, maybe it’s needed,” she muttered, before looking up at the sky. “But, if I can’t believe in what I’m trying to work towards, what’s the point?”

Benson sighed, placing a hand on her shoulder, patting it slightly as they both stood in silence. Eventually, Kipo sniffed, shaking her head as she stood up straight as she flashed a small smile.

“I’m gonna go find Asher,” she said quietly, and Benson smiled, leaning over to give her a hug.

“She’ll be here,” he whispered, and Kipo smiled, taking a deep breath, before walking into the crowd of people dancing and partying.

Benson let himself take it all in for a second, looking at the decorations and letting himself breathe in the vibe, feeling a sense of accomplishment. *They had actually done it*, his mind cheered quietly, as he saw a lot of the mutes and humans actually start to talk, and bond. It was working.

But something in Benson sensed someone standing a bit away, and he looked over his shoulder, his eyes widening.

Troy was standing next to the punch bowl, holding an almost empty glass as he stared out at the dance floor, and Benson narrowed his eyes, trying to discern his expression. He looked almost... wistful.

“Troy!” Benson called out, heading over to the other boy. Troy, who had clearly been lost in his thoughts, looked startled, shaking his head slightly as he turned to look at Benson.

“Oh, Benson! Hey.. uh, hi? Hi, yeah,” Troy stammered out, glancing away nervously in a way that really confused Benson, who just stood next to him, leaning against the table. “So, so uh, how’s the party?”

Benson just laughed, shrugging. “It’s cool, I’ve spoken to so many mutes and humans trying to get them to be friends,” he said, and Troy nodded quickly, letting out a short laugh. “Plus, I’ve been trying to calm Kipo down all day, with Wolf and everything.”

Troy sighed, looking over at Benson. “Yeah, she looks really worried,” he said quietly, and Benson turned to face Troy, resting his elbow on the table.

“You do too,” he said, and Troy straightened up, his face paling. “Not worried but, you don’t look super into the dance,” Benson clarified, narrowing his eyes as he stared at him. “Is everything okay?”

“Yeah yeah, everything’s great,” Troy said quickly, looking away, but Benson just coughed, clearly not buying it. Troy realised this, and he sighed, looking back at Benson with an unreadable expression in his eyes. “Okay, I’m not,” he mumbled, and Benson furrowed his eyebrows, leaning forward.

“So, what’s up? What’s going on?” he asked sincerely, and Troy sighed, staring ahead.

“I wanted to ask you to dance,” he said, in a voice so quiet and so flat, that Benson initially thought that he had just made it up in his head. But when he saw the way Troy had clenched his jaw, he laughed, shaking his head as he waved his hands.

“Dude! Why didn’t you just ask me?” he laughed out, patting Troy on the shoulder. “I wouldn’t have said no! I’ve been dying to dance with friends all night!”

But when Troy just sighed, shaking his head, Benson’s smile melted into a frown. “Not like that Benson,” Troy whispered, looking up at him, his eyes tired.

It took Benson a minute to figure out what Troy meant, but then it hit him. *Oh. It wasn’t just as friends.* Benson sighed, shaking his head, suddenly feeling too awkward, too guilty to look Troy in the eye. “Troy, I’m, I’m so sorry,” he muttered, but before he could say anything else, Troy just let out a mirthless laugh, pushing himself away from the table, stuffing his hands in his red suit pockets.

“It’s okay Benson, I know,” he said, in a voice that sounded exhausted, in a way that just made Benson feel worse. Even though Troy didn’t mean to, he knew that. Troy truly meant it when he was saying it’s okay. Troy walked a bit ahead, before turning around, a sad smile on his face. “I never really was a big fan of dances anyway,” he said quietly, before walking away into the crowd.

And Benson just stood there, staring at the place where Troy had just stood, his brain a mess even before Dr Emilia’s attack.

hope you guys like the story so far!

comments and kudos appreciated!

my twt: @ghostboyfs

rose's twt: @WNDERBEASTS

chapter two

Chapter Summary

it's been a few days since prahm, and since the end of the war. and troy is avoiding benson as much as he can. so asher and dahlia try to talk some sense into him.

Chapter Notes

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

It had been a few days since the final battle against Dr Emilia, since Prahm. Since the day humans and mutes united and put aside their differences to protect and save each other. Since the world as they knew it had definitively changed.

And Troy was still avoiding Benson.

He knew it was stupid, deep down, and he hadn't had any ill intent towards Benson at all. But even so, the idea of talking to Benson, and being around him with the other, pretending like his heart hadn't been broken and left in pieces on the dance floor that night, it was too much. Even for someone like Troy.

Even though Las Vistas had no more war, no more animosity between mutes and humans, the world had only just been turned upside down. So the city, and society itself, was going to take a while to try and build anew. And they would get there soon, hopefully coming together to make the city its own safe zone. However, despite the happiness of the victory, loss ran deep through everyone's hearts, especially Kipo and her friends and family, after Hugo's sacrifice. So all of them, including Asher, Dahlia, Troy and all their parents, were back in Timbercat Village, the one place that felt enough like home to give their tired souls some comfort.

They had been there for the past few days, finally able to rest. It had been a while since Troy remembered having slept without fear. And he knew that if he felt that way, for Kipo, Wolf, Benson, and Kipo's parents, it must've felt like a long sigh of relief, of being able to rest their heads and close their eyes without having to think of the next recon mission, or the next strategy of attack. Like they finally had time to heal.

Bit by bit, they all fell back into routines, just helping out in the village where they could, taking life a day at a time. Sometimes, Troy, Asher and Dahlia would go into the city and see how things were going, even helping some of the mutes and humans in trying to rebuild things from the rubble (responsibly of course). A few times, Wolf would join them, dragging Kipo along as an excuse to get her out of the room, something Asher tried to show no reaction to. Even though Troy and Dahlia could see it clearer than day. But whenever Benson would tag along, suddenly Troy would have some promise or obligation to fulfil with the

other Timbercats, or he would volunteer to stay back to take care of Yumyan, and he would run away from there as fast as he could.

He never saw the way Benson visibly deflated every single time he made his escape.

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“You have got to stop making a fool of yourself.”

Troy groaned, rolling over on the branch to face Asher, who had climbed up beside him. They just stared at him, an amused smile playing on their lips as they gave him a hard shove, pushing him to the side.

“You, Dahlia!” Asher yelled down, cupping their hands over their mouth. “Sandoval’s here, I found them!”

“OH thank god! I’m coming up!” Dahlia yelled back, and Asher laughed, sitting beside Troy on the branch. Eventually, Dahlia also made her way up the tree, grunting and groaning as they pulled themselves up on the branch, glaring at Asher.

“You could’ve helped me,” they grumbled, and Asher just shrugged.

“Yeah but what would be the fun in that,” they mused, much to Dahlia’s fury. But she just rolled her eyes, punching Asher in the shoulder before sitting on the other side of Troy, leaning against his shoulder.

“Not that I don’t love your company guys, but what are you doing here?” Troy asked, raising an eyebrow.

Asher just looked over at him. “To talk some sense into your stupid head.”

Dahlia snickered, covering their mouth with her hand. “Asher put it way more bluntly, but basically yeah.”

Troy just groaned, pinching the bridge of his nose. “If this is about Benson, I am not avoiding him,” he said weakly, anyone could see Troy was lying through his teeth. “I am simply somehow always occupied when he is in the vicinity.”

Asher groaned, rolling their eyes. “Could you have made it any more obvious that you are avoiding him?” they moaned, and Troy sighed, hiding his face in his hands.

“Okay! I’m avoiding him! There!” he finally yelled, immediately going back to hiding his face in his hands. Dahlia sat up straight, wrapping an arm around Troy’s shoulder, squeezing it.

“There, feels better, doesn’t it?” she said, and Troy just looked up, incredibly unamused.

Asher just laughed, shaking their head. “Troy, Troy, Troy,” they said, their voice light and teasing. “If only you knew how to not make things more complicated than they need to be.”

“I’m not complicating anything Ash,” they grumbled, leaning against the trunk of the tree. “I tried to ask him out, I got scared, and then, when I tried at the dance, I got my heartbroken. There’s nothing complicated about me avoiding him,” he said quietly, his voice trailing off into a small, broken whisper.

Dahlia poked Troy’s shoulder, smiling softly. “We’re not saying that,” they said quietly, and Troy looked up to face her. “We’re saying that by avoiding him, you’re making things more complicated for yourself.”

“Think about it this way,” Asher chimed in, their teasing amusement gone now, replaced by sincerity. “Yeah, you got your heartbroken right now, and it sucks.” At that, Troy rolled his eyes, laughing a bit as Asher looked fondly at him. “But, if you keep avoiding Benson, you won’t ever be able to get closure and move on. I mean, you still want to be friends with him right?”

“Of course,” Troy said immediately, sitting up slightly. “Of course i still want to be his friend. I wouldn’t trade that for anything.”

Asher just stared at him, smirking slightly as they raised an eyebrow, before continuing. “So, you have to talk to him, Troy,” they said, leaning in slightly. “Because with the disappearing acts you have been pulling, they think you hate them.”

“What? That’s ridiculous!” Troy yelped, jumping back slightly. His arms instinctively crossed over his chest, as he pulled into himself. “How could Benson even think that?”

“Why don’t you ask him now?” Dahlia piped up, glancing over Troy's shoulder. When he followed her line of gaze behind him, Troy felt a strangled breath catch in his throat.

Benson.

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Benson was confused, more than anything else.

Ever since Prahm, Benson had been seeing less and less of Troy. At first, he had just assumed it was because there was so much happening all at once, and he was just not able to find him in the chaos. But then, gradually he realised that, even though that could’ve been true, it wasn’t the main reason. It was because Troy was purposely avoiding him.

He wasn’t an idiot, he could tell there was a pattern in the way the only times Troy didn’t jump at an opportunity to roam the main street of Las Vistas was when Benson would tag along. He was no stranger to the quick excuses he made before running away. And it hurt him more than he had expected.

Losing people sucked, to put it very bluntly. And Benson was no stranger to that, all his childhood he kept losing people. He lost his family, he lost the Fanatics. He almost lost Kipo, Wolf and mandu multiple times. And now, after the war was done, and he thought he didn’t have to worry about that anymore, he was losing Troy.

He knew deep down why Troy was avoiding him, he numbly thought as he paced around Timbercat Village, kicking pebbles and twigs around as he paced. He had seen the heartbreak in his eyes as he had walked away from him at Prahm.

I never really was a big fan of dances anyway.

Benson squeezed his eyes shut, holding his head in his hands. But no matter what he tried, he couldn't get it out of his mind. The quiet emptiness when Troy walked away was something that he still hadn't managed to completely wrap his head around yet.

As Benson kept pacing around, walking back from where Kipo was sleeping, after having spent the evening with her and Wolf, just trying to distract her from her thoughts, his mind drifted back to Prahm, as it had been doing since it all ended. But more specifically, to the fight.

As soon as the fight broke out, and Dr Emilia had transformed into the Mega Walrus, Benson, Dave and Wolf made sure to get all the mutes and humans away from there, while Kipo transformed and attacked. But all the while, as they tried to usher people to safety, he couldn't stop looking around frantically for Troy. And that moment, he was hit with a crushing fear, the only thing ringing in his head was, *he couldn't lose Troy*.

He hadn't been able to unpack that on that day, after all, so much happened. But now that everything had quietened down, and he finally had a moment to breathe, Benson stared up at the tall tree trunks, the faint twangs of banjo heard in the distance, and he tried to wrack his brains for a reason. A reason why.

It was because he and Troy had ended things awkwardly, Benson's brain rationalised. They had parted on weird terms, and so, to end on that note would not have been great.

Troy was his friend, and he didn't want to lose a friend. That was all.

The answer made sense, of course it did. On rationalising it, that was the answer that made the most logical sense. But a part of Benson still felt unsure, like there was a piece of the puzzle missing, even though he could make out the picture without it. That once piece could hold the key that would change the entire image.

Benson just groaned loudly, pulling at his hair in frustration. Why were things so weird, and so complicated?

Maybe he should just sleep it all off, Benson's mind prodded drowsily, and he started to head back to where his room was, ready to comply, when he heard a loud shout from the branches above him, followed by someone talking.

Troy talking.

And at that moment, Benson didn't know what possessed him, but all of a sudden, he was climbing the tree, making his way up to the branch where he could hear Troy, Asher and Dahlia talking animatedly about something. He ignored his mind pulling him to bed, his heart suddenly set on talking to Troy, on figuring this all out so his sleep would actually be restful.

“So, you have to talk to him, Troy,” he heard Asher say as he made his way to the branch. “Because with the disappearing acts you have been pulling, they think you hate them.”

Benson felt his heart skip a beat at that, struck by just how true that statement was, and he hadn’t even realised it. *Was he really that obvious?*

“What? That’s ridiculous!” he heard Troy exclaim, and Benson gulped nervously, a nervousness that surprised him and caught him off-guard. *Why was he nervous?* “How could Benson even think that?”

At that point, Benson had managed to make it onto the branch, holding onto their elbow as they walked up to the three teens. Dahlia caught his eye, and she looked back at Troy, who had his back to him, smirking.

“Why don’t you ask him now?” she said, and Benson took a deep breath as Troy turned around, gasping on seeing him.

“Can we talk, Troy?” he managed to say, smiling slightly to let him know everything was okay. But that didn’t seem to have much effect, because Troy still looked nervous as ever.

“Yeah, I think we have to,” Troy said quietly, standing up to walk over to Benson, purposely ignoring Asher and Dahlia’s knowing smirks. “But away from these two, they’re insufferable.”

“Lead the way,” Benson said with a small smile, his heart in his throat.

Here went nothing.

Chapter End Notes

hey guys! im sorry its another small chapter but the story will pick up soon i promise! ill try and update as often as i can :DDD

comments/kudos very much appreciated!

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chapter three

Chapter Summary

benson and troy finally talk about what happened that day at prahm.

Chapter Notes

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

“Okay, I know we need to talk about, everything,” Benson huffed out, still hesitating with his words. But he groaned loudly, resting his forehead against the trunk of the tree. “But right now, I'm convinced you want to kill me before we do.”

Troy just looked down at Benson, laughing quietly. He was still acutely aware of the way his heart was racing, not just because of the climbing, and he was trying everything in his power to shut it up, to try and push it away so that whatever he had to say would be easier. But, as hearts usually did, there was no way it would listen.

“How did you catch onto my plan?” is what he settled for, rolling his eyes as he pulled himself up the branches. “Don’t worry, we’re almost there.”

“Good,” Benson groaned, looking up at Troy, who was now peeking down from the canopy cover at him. “Cuz I have done enough climbing for a lifetime.”

Troy just smiled, reaching out his hand for Benson to hold onto as he pulled himself up. However, as soon as both of them were on top of the trees, their forgotten nervousness returned. Troy, who had managed to stay relatively calm the whole climb, felt his heart start to race, recalling the reason he and Benson were talking in the first place. He took a deep breath, gingerly pulling away his hand from Benson’s, cradling it to his chest. Benson stared at his hand as Troy pulled away, feeling weirdly cold, instead tugging at his sleeve to try and keep his hands occupied.

“So,” he said, moving to sit cross-legged on the top of the tree, staring up at the sky. Troy followed suit, drawing out a long sigh. “So,” he echoed, eyes trained above him.

They sat in awkward, weighted silence, both of them wanting to be the one to start talking, yet failing. So, they just stared up at the dark purple night sky, the stars shining like crystals embedded in a cave, like they were holding a flashlight cutting through the darkness for small glimmers. Eventually, Troy sighed, turning his face towards Benson’s, his eyes still trained on the ground.

“I’m sorry,” he said quietly, and Benson started, turning to look at Troy, who was fiddling with his thumbs. “I’m sorry I’ve been avoiding you. Because I have been, and that, wasn’t cool of me.”

“No, no Troy,” Benson cut in, waving his hands. “It’s okay, you don’t have to apologise!”

“No, I do, Benson!” Troy said firmly, squeezing his eyes shut. He pressed his hands together, raising them to the bridge of his nose as he thought. “I made you think like you were in the wrong, for something where you did nothing of the sort!”

“It’s okay, Troy,” Benson said quietly, smiling softly. “I was more concerned about whether you were okay or not.”

“Me? Oh, why wouldn’t I be okay?” Troy answered quickly, laughing awkwardly as he waved his hands. “Me, I’m peachy! I’m fine!”

But Benson’s deadpan expression, betraying his disbelief, was enough to make Troy’s exaggerated smile melt away into a small, apologetic one. “Tough crowd,” he said with a short laugh, shrugging slightly.

“Not tough,” Benson said with a smirk. “Just smart enough to see through your lies.”

“Well then stop,” Troy said flatly, rolling his eyes. But Benson just laughed, shaking his head. But his laughter soon died down, and he turned to nudge Troy in the shoulder, his expression serious.

“Are you okay, Troy?” he asked again, and this time, when Troy turned over and looked into Benson’s eyes, he knew he couldn’t lie. Not again. Even if the truth was awkward, and not what he wanted to hear. Troy just shook his head, looking away as he drew a deep breath.

“I mean, I kinda expected it, being rejected and all,” he said, and Benson felt a weight drop in his heart, and he turned away. “I just, I had to say it at least once, you know? And when I did, I just, felt better. But don’t get me wrong, it still hurt.”

Benson shook his head, feeling his eyes start to fill up. “I’m sorry I couldn’t give you the answer you wanted Troy,” he whispered, taking a deep breath. “I really wish I could, but, given everything that was happening, I-”

“You weren’t thinking about stuff like that,” Troy said with a smile, looking up at Benson. “Don’t apologise for your feelings, Benson. I’m not mad at you,” he laughed out, and Benson felt slightly calmer.

“I could say the exact same to you, Troy,” Benson said, before sitting up, furrowing his eyebrows like he had made a very serious decision. “No, I AM going to say it to you! Don’t apologise for your feelings, Troy!”

Troy laughed out loud, the sound echoing on the tree tops, and Benson joined in, the two of them laughing along as a shooting star passed by behind them, neither of them realising. Troy wheezed, trying to calm himself down, wiping a couple stray tears from his eyes, while Benson sighed, smiling contentedly at the sky.

“When did you know?” Benson asked, and Troy turned to look at him, slightly confused.

“When did I know what?”

“When did you know you liked me?”

At that, Troy straightened up, his smile completely fading as he stared at Benson. “Do, do you, why do you want to know?” he asked, stumbling over his words.

“You don’t have to tell me, it’s okay!” Benson backtracked quickly, feeling a weird ache in his chest. “I was just curious.”

Troy just nodded, turning away as he pulled on a leaf, tearing it up and throwing it. “Ask me again some time later, and maybe I’ll tell you,” he said quietly, a ghost of a smile on his lips.

Benson smirked, holding out his hand for Troy to shake. “Deal.”

They just sat there, staring at the stars up in the sky. It had grown darker as the night progressed, and Benson was feeling more and more exhausted. However, as soon as Troy spoke up, he felt himself bolt awake.

“I’m sorry for making you think we were no longer friends,” Troy said quietly, and Benson just sighed, leaning back down to lie on the top of the tree canopy.

“Like I said Troy, I was just worried if you were okay or not,” Benson started to say, but Troy just scoffed.

“You know, you saying stuff like that isn’t helping this whole thing,” he whispered, the atmosphere suddenly heavy.

“I’m sorry,” Benson whispered, turned away from when he was looking at Troy, staring up at the stars.

“No, no I’m sorry I,” Troy stammered, looking away as he hid his face in his hands. Eventually, he just sighed. “I think,” Troy said, as started to get up. “I just need some time alone.”

“You don’t wanna sit up and watch the sky for a bit?” Benson asked, surprised at the quietness in his voice.

And so was Troy, if his reaction were anything to go by. But he just shook his head, starting to climb back down the tree trunk. He looked up, a small smirk on his face.

“I’ll see you around, Benson,” he said quietly, pausing a bit as if he were debating with himself saying anything else. But then, Troy just shook his head, and disappeared from sight.

“See you,” Benson said weakly, turning back to look at the stars, his heart strangely heavy.

Time. He owed Troy time. So why did this feel so weird?

hey everyone! sorry about the super short chapter, i have been super swamped with work and uni lately, so I haven't had time to do much writing. but hopefully, you still enjoyed the chapter!
comments/kudos really appreciated! :D

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chapter four

Chapter Summary

in an effort to cheer kipo up, troy and her hang out, and conversations ensue.

Chapter Notes

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

ONE YEAR LATER

It had been a year since everything had happened. Prahm, Emilia, Hugo's sacrifice, the end of the war. And Las Vistas was still in the process of getting better. Even though mutes and humans had mostly united, there were decades, maybe even centuries-long conflicts and feelings that had to be worked through. Not to mention, there had been lasting effects of Dave summoning Mega Beavers into the city those 200 years ago, in that it was in ruin and disrepair.

Bit by bit, Las Vistas residents, mutes and humans alike, started to organise themselves, everyone doing their part to clean up and try to repair and rebuild. Maybe even create a society of their own. If nothing else, cleaning and building together would guarantee time spent together, time to understand and grow together.

This also meant it had been around a year since Troy and Benson's conversation that night, on the canopy of Timbercat Village, where Troy asked for time. Since then, it had been awkward at first. It was awkward for quite a while, to be completely honest. But as days, weeks, months passed on, amidst the cleaning and rebuilding, they found their groove again. It was hard at first, but Troy soon realised he no longer felt that familiar shaking in his knees and shortness of breath when Benson called out his name. His chest no longer felt tight when he thought about the other, and slowly, things started to seemingly get back to normal.

It was a normal enough start to a day. Everyone was preparing to head into the city, to help with clearing things up. However, as soon as Asher walked down to the border of the village, everyone could see they looked worried and concerned.

"Ash, what's up?" Dahlia asked, looking over their shoulder with furrowed eyebrows. "Where's Kipo? She's coming, right?"

But Troy could sense it in the way Asher stood, their shoulders hanging heavy. He felt them shake their head before they even did it, and he looked away, squeezing his eyes shut.

“It’s getting closer to the day, Dahlia,” Asher said quietly, and Benson, who had been standing behind them, sighed.

“Closer to when Prahm was last year,” he said quietly, an air of sombreness falling over them all. “Close to, you know.”

Troy shook his head, sighing quietly. “Is there nothing we can do?” he asked, and Asher just shrugged.

“Well for starters, I told her there was no way she was coming along with us for cleanup today,” Asher said, and everyone nodded, murmuring in agreement. “But, she can’t stay here alone. I’m scared of her starting to go down those, roads, again,” they whispered, and Troy felt a shiver go down his spine.

Everyone remembered how Kipo had been for days after Hugo’s death. Troy had known Kipo since she was a toddler, him being two years older than her, and he had seen her through a lot. He had seen her angry, he had seen her cry, he had seen her scared. But never, in their entire time in the burrow, had Troy seen Kipo completely shut everyone out like that. Kipo wasn’t the kind of person to want to stay away from people, it was the complete opposite. She loved being around people, learning their stories, creating connections. So to see her not even want to talk to her parents, or to Wolf, was rough. And she had only just started smiling without looking too guilty about it.

“I’ll stay with her,” Troy piped up, and Benson looked up, clearly surprised.

“Wait, really?” he asked, raising an eyebrow. “Shouldn’t we call Wolf, or something?” he asked, shrugging slightly.

But Asher just shook their head, looking over at Benson. “Wolf’s already headed into the city. Plus, you and Wolf were with her the day it, happened. That won’t do her much good.”

“Kipo’s like a little sister to me, I’d do anything to help her,” Troy spoke up, looking at Benson. “Plus, it’s been a while since we hung out so, why not?”

Benson just nodded, smiling gently. “Well, you’re a lot of fun to hang out with, so there’s no problem there,” he said, shrugging. And Troy just laughed, nodding once, ignoring the way his heart flipped.

Asher smiled at Troy, placing a hand on his shoulder. “You and Kipo have fun, okay?”

A relieved smile spread across Troy’s face as he placed a hand over theirs. “You too, Ash,” he said, smiling at everyone.

Even though it lingered on Benson for just half a second longer.

*

"Kipo?"

Kipo looked away from the opening in the room that faced Timbercat Village, and flashed a small smile at Troy who was standing in the doorway.

"Hey Troy," she said quietly, her voice hoarse. "Aren't you heading out with the others today?"

But Troy just shook his head, leaning against the doorframe. "Nope," he replied, popping the 'p'. "I'm here, to get you out of the village to live a little."

Kipo just raised an eyebrow, a blank look in her eyes. "What?"

"You heard me."

She turned around, confused. "Troy, you don't have to, I'm fine," Kipo started saying but Troy just sighed, shaking his head.

"No, you're not, Kipo," he said quietly, and she went quiet, looking up at him. "Look I know, this time of year is hard," he said, and Kipo sighed, looking away as she crossed her arms over her chest. "And I cannot even imagine how it must feel. But, you can't just sit in your room and let the world keep going by as you just stare! That's not you, Kipo. It never has been," Troy pleaded, letting out a quiet laugh.

"I feel guilty Troy," Kipo said quietly, catching him off guard. "I know I shouldn't but, I just feel so alone right now. And I know," she whispered, laughing sadly as a tear slipped down her cheek. "I know Hugo would've told me I was being ridiculous but, I can't help it."

Troy sighed, walking over to where Kipo was and placed a comforting hand on her shoulder. "You're not alone Kipo," he said softly, and she looked up at him with a small smile. "You've got all of us, right there with you, through everything. And we're always gonna be there for you."

She smiled, letting out a short laugh as she reached forward to hug Troy tightly. "And likewise," Kipo said quietly.

Troy smiled, squeezing her shoulders before pulling away, his soft smile morphing into a playful smirk. "Now, what's say you and I cause some trouble today?"

Kipo rolled her eyes, giggling as she linked arms with Troy and gesturing forward. "I thought you'd never ask," she said playfully.

"So I was thinking, first let's go to the main square of Las Vistas," Troy started, and Kipo nodded, laughing along with him. "And then, we could always play some pranks on the Timbercats. Maybe even get something from Cappucino's..."

*

"I have to say," Kipo said as she scooped out the last bit of ice cream from the bottom of her cup onto her spoon. "I really needed this."

Troy smiled, licking his spoon clean before tossing it into the empty cup. “See? I’m always right.”

“Oh, right, right,” Kipo said, staring at him teasingly. “You’re always right, is it?”

“Of course I am,” he said, nodding seriously. “I mean, who’s the one who is 2 years older?”

“Oh my god, are you always gonna hold that over me?” Kipo groaned, leaning back. “Every single time, that’s your trump card isn’t it?”

Troy just laughed, throwing up his hands in surrender. “Hey I’m just the messenger!” he wheezed, narrowly dodging Kipo’s shove. Kipo sputtered, sending the two into hysterics, laughing louder than they had for a while.

Kipo gasped, wiping away a tear for her eye as she smiled at Troy, still giggling slightly. “Thank you Troy,” she said sincerely, her laughter melting away into genuine warmth. “I really needed this. I needed to just live life.”

Troy just smiled, bumping shoulders with her. “It’s been a while since we hung out anyway,” he said softly. “Couldn’t miss hanging with one of my favourite people.”

“You mean, other than Benson?” Kipo teased, raising an eyebrow.

At that, Troy’s smile fell, and he rolled his eyes, shoving Kipo’s shoulder. “Ha ha, whatever lets go stargazing on the canopy,” he said, walking away.

“Trooooooy! I’m sorry I had to!” Kipo laughed, out, chasing after Troy, jumping onto his back in the process.

It took awhile for the both of them to get up from the ground, and even more time to stop laughing. But neither of them cared.

*

“I miss this,” Kipo sighed, staring up at the sky. Troy just nodded along, eyes glued on the stars above. The sky didn’t look so different from that night, one year ago, when he and Benson had talked right where he and Kipo were now lying down. When things changed yet again. But for the better.

Sort of.

“Okay Troy, seriously,” Kipo spoke up again, turning over onto her side to face Troy, who did the same to face her. “How are things with Benson? All I remember is you guys talking, and then, it was awkward. For a while.”

“Yeah, that was a weird time,” Troy said with a sigh. “But, it got better! In fact, I have never been better around him,” he said, smiling in satisfaction.

“Really?” Kipo asked, raising an eyebrow curiously. “It’s okay if things are still awkward, and if you still have feelings lingering around.”

“But I don’t!” Troy interjected, eyes wide. “I told you Kipo, things have never been better,” he shrugged. “I don’t even have feelings for him anymore!”

Okay, where did that come from? He wasn’t so sure about that, just that he wasn’t as nervous around Benson and didn’t feel like running away anymore.

“You, don’t?” Kipo asked, leaning away in surprise. “Whoa,” she whispered.

“Yeah in fact, I don’t like him that way anymore, like no more feelings, stone cold!” Troy said quickly, before realising what he said. “Wait, wait not stone cold, I mean like, no feelings. Wait, not no feelings! Ugh, I just mean he’s just a friend,” he mumbled out by the end, curling into himself.

Kipo, who had witnessed all of this with a blank, suspicious gaze, just nodded her head slowly, a sly smile upon her lips. “Oh-kay,” she whispered, letting out a short giggle. “I believe you.”

“Well, you should!”

“I do!”

Troy took a deep breath, looking away as he tried to collect himself, Kipo giggling softly. But then, he turned to look at her with narrowed eyes.

“I mean, you laughing at me is kinda hypocritical, considering you and Asher,” he said, and Kipo’s eyes flew wide open.

“Asher? Who mentioned Asher? Where did Asher come up?” Kipo started rambling, laughing nervously. “Asher’s just a pal, a buddy with pretty brown eyes and a lot of jokes and nice hair and stuff. Just a pal.”

Troy just squinted, nodding slowly. “Right,” he whispered. “Just a pal.”

“Shut up,” Kipo grumbled, punching Troy’s shoulder. He just laughed, turning over onto his back to stare up at the sky, letting out a sigh. Kipo stared at him, eyebrows furrowed.

“Seriously Troy,” she said quietly. “It’s okay to not have moved on. You know that, right?”

But he just sighed, eyes focused ahead. “Well, I have moved on Kipo. Don’t worry,” he said quietly, and Kipo just pursed her lips, turning to face the sky.

“If you say so,” she whispered, before smiling softly. “Thanks for today, Troy. I needed it.”

“Don’t mention it, Kipo,” he replied, gulping. “You’re like a little sister to me, I’m just glad I was able to help.”

The two of them lay there, stargazing for hours, losing track of time. But all the while, Troy couldn’t stop thinking to themselves about how much they had played up not feeling anything for Benson anymore.

How sure was he that he was right?

Chapter End Notes

hey everyone! sorry updates are so slow, I'm swamped with work, plus studies. and I'm binging spn all at once too so lol
sorry this chapter is short, and isn't very good, but hopefully you liked it!!
comments/kudos super appreciated!!

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chapter five

Chapter Summary

on the other side of town, benson, dave, dahlia and asher help clean up the city. and benson comes to some realisations that may change everything.

Chapter Notes

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

As Troy's figure retreated into Timbercat Village, looking for Kipo, Benson looked away, letting out a long sigh. To be honest, he wasn't even sure why his chest felt so tight, like every moment was treading a livewire between two truths. He didn't close his eyes, knowing that he would be thinking about the way Troy's eyes had lingered on him for just a moment longer than the others.

But that was nothing! Troy had clearly moved on! And besides, why would Benson have to care about what Troy did or did not feel? They were just friends.

Just

Friends

As he was lost in thought, Dave and Dahlia had walked up to him, and Dave smacked his shin.

"Earth to Benson!" he yelled, and Dahlia laughed loudly, doubling over as Benson yelped loudly, launching into the air in surprise. "Dude, if you don't get a move on, you may become one of the trees here."

"That didn't even make sense, Dave," Benson groaned, rolling his eyes as Dave laughed, climbing onto his shoulder.

"Well but you have to agree, he's right," Dahlia chimed in with a cheeky smile. "You'll burrow a hole in the ground if you keep staring."

"Oh can you concentrate that energy to the rubble then, Benson? Something tells me I'm not built for all that hard work," Dave said with a smirk, wiggling his eyebrows.

Benson just groaned, shaking his head. "I hate the both of you, so much," he whispered, much to Dave and Dahlia's glee.

"Wait why do we hate Dahlia?" Asher piped up, walking over as they crossed their arms over their chest, eyebrows raised. "I mean, I completely support the sentiment, but what's the

reason this time?”

“Jerk,” Dahlia grumbled, with no hint of malice, as she punched Asher in the shoulder.

Asher just laughed, pushing Dahlia. “Nerd,” they wheezed, jumping out of Dahlia’s way, narrowly avoiding another punch. Benson and Dave watched this, both of them turning to share a look, laughing along with the siblings.

“Come on you two!” Benson eventually called out, rolling his eyes. “If we don’t go now, we’re never gonna get any work done!”

Dahlia and Asher, who were currently holding each others hands, pushing the other like they were wrestling, turned to look over at Benson. Asher groaned, letting go of Dahlia’s hands as they doubled over to catch their breath, heaving. Dahlia just laughed, panting slightly as she wiped the sweat off her face with the back of her palm.

“I mean, I’m ready to go, but I get why Asher doesn’t want to move,” she said, quirking her eyebrows. “Their girlfriend isn’t there after all!”

“Dahlia shut up!” Asher yelled, eyes wide in panic as they launched at their sister, thankfully held back by Benson. “I’m gonna kill you!” they squirmed, as Dahlia laughed loudly, running away to stand beside Dave, who was also chuckling along.

“Ooh Dahlia, that was a good one!” he cheered, and gave her a fistbump, smirking. Benson just squinted, looking between Dahlia’s satisfied smile and Asher’s horrified expression, before it finally clicked.

“Wait a minute, you have a crush on Kipo!” Benson gasped loudly.

Asher whipped their head around, slapping their palm over Benson’s mouth. “Shhh!! Tell the whole Timbercat Village, would you?”

“Asher, you really have nothing to worry about!” Dave announced, smiling up at Asher as he lifted his hand. “Other than feelings. That stuff, you bury deep, deep, deep down. So they never come out.”

The group fell silent, as Dahlia, Asher and Benson turned to glare at Dave, Benson just shaking his head with an incredulous expression.

“If there was ever a time for me to say that you shouldn’t listen to like 80% of what Dave says,” Benson finally spoke up. “That time is definitely now.”

Dave just huffed, crossing his hands. “Now that? That’s just cold, Benson,” he said mournfully, and Benson just rolled his eyes, starting to walk out of the village, Dahlia and Asher along with him as Dave followed. “I mean I am shocked, at how low you stooped there. That really, really hurt.”

“Okay Dave,” Benson sighed as they kept walking, holding out a can of Explosion Berry Cola. “Take this as a token of my apology.”

On seeing the can, Dave instantly lit up, before trying to stifle his smile, playing it cool as he took the can. “Yeah well, I guess I can forgive you now,” he muttered, and Benson just laughed, Asher and Dahlia joining him as they made their way to the main city.

*

“Ugh, I know this is for the best for everyone, but is it the best for my knees?” Asher groaned, sinking to the ground against the pile of rubble the group were clearing up.

“I have to agree with them, I’m an old man guys, I don’t know how much my back can take,” Dave proclaimed loudly as he dropped the stick he had been wielding.

Benson just turned over to him, narrowing his eyes. “Dave, you’re in your adult form right now,” he said, and Dave just scoffed, rolling his eyes.

“I think you forget that I’m older than you, Benson!” Dave yelled, and Benson just rolled his eyes, laughing quietly as he walked away to the next portion that had to be cleared. Dahlia, who had just finished breaking up a big pile of rock, looked up and smiled at him amicably.

“Need a hand?” he asked, and she smiled, gesturing forward at the smaller rock pieces that she and Benson started to move to the sides.

The system, as it was, would be that the rubble would mostly be moved to the sides of the main roads, being broken into smaller pieces if too big. Then, these would be used for rebuilding the nearby shops and buildings over the years, as society grew. It was a simple enough plan, just one step at a time as Las Vistas continued to heal.

Dahlia and Benson worked side by side together for a while, both exchanging pleasantries and laughs every now and then. But, most of the time, they just kept looking over at Asher and Dave getting into trouble from where they stood.

Eventually, Dahlia looked up at Benson, smiling softly. “So,” she said, and Benson looked up after tossing aside a piece of rubble. “You and Troy seem cool now.”

At that, Benson’s eyes went wide, and he coughed slightly, a fleeting image of Troy’s eyes lingering on him before he left to find Kipo passing before his eyes. “Yeah,” he said quietly, looking back at the ground. “Yeah I’m glad we’re friends.”

Dahlia narrowed her eyes, a curious smile playing on her lips. “I mean yeah, you guys have always been friends,” she said with an air of ‘obviously’ in her words. “But, I’m just saying. The past couple months, you guys were pretty distant.”

“Oh,” he whispered, glancing up at Dahlia, who reached up to tuck her hair behind her ear as she leaned against the pile of rubble. “Yeah, yeah I guess you could say that. I told him I’d give him space after he, you know,” he mumbled, laughing awkwardly as he pulled at his hoodie. “And well, I guess he’s better now.”

“Yeah he is,” Dahlia said with a bright smile. “He’s really good.” She looked away as she took a hammer to the pile of rock in front of her, Benson wincing with every blow she

landed. "I remember how broken up he was a few days after Prahm, and after your guys' conversation too."

"Wait, he was upset?" Benson cut in, raising an eyebrow, feeling his breath hitch in his throat. "Shit," he muttered.

"Benson," Dahlia said softly, a gentle smile on her face. "Don't worry about it. Troy wouldn't want you to anyway," she said plainly, before turning back to the rock. "Besides, he's all better now. So, everything's solved."

It didn't feel like that to him, Benson mused to himself ruefully. "I guess so," he said quietly, pushing the rock Dahlia had broken away. "All for the best," he muttered, caught off guard at how wistful his words sounded.

Dahlia furrowed her eyebrows, staring at Benson with an unreadable expression as he worked, before letting out a short laugh. "You know it's funny," she spoke up, and Benson huffed, indicating he was listening. "I always thought you would actually end up together, way before Prahm actually."

WHAT?!

Benson felt himself jolt up, with such immense speed he almost fell over into the pile of bricks. But thankfully, he was able to catch himself in time, flailing his arms wildly as he tried to regain balance. Dahlia's eyes widened in panic as she reached forward, trying to grab hold of Benson's arms to steady him. But there was no need, as Benson eventually righted himself.

"I, uh," he muttered, taking quick breaths. "No, no I'm just, he's just a friend. Just a friend," he said quickly, coughing slightly as a way to diffuse the tension and the weird choke in his throat.

Dahlia nodded slowly, a small smile on her face as she nodded. "Yeah I know," she said gently, smiling genuinely. "I guess I was wrong about something like that for once."

"Wait, for once?" he asked, looking up at Dahlia, gulping nervously.

She just giggled softly, tossing over the final piece of rubble as she started to move back to where Asher and Dave were now playing a heated game of rock-paper-scissors. "Nothing, just, back in the burrow I always had a knack of guessing who would end up together, or who liked each other. I'd never really been wrong. Until now, at least," she said with a smirk, before turning away.

As she walked away, Benson felt his brain start to fall down a spiral he had been pushing away all this time.

Was it possible? Was Dahlia onto something there?

No, no she couldn't be. Benson didn't like Troy as anything more than a friend, that's all!

But what if she wasn't wrong? After all, Benson has been feeling pretty weird around Troy the past couple weeks at least. And, he had found himself trying to catch his eyes more. Not to mention, that weird feeling in his stomach that had been there ever since Prahm, when Troy immediately took charge of making sure everyone got to safety in their old burrow.

No no no. All that was friendly. Friends. Just friends.

How could he have feelings for the person he had just let down and rejected?

Benson just let out a shaky sigh, shaking his head as Dave's calls pulled him out of his thoughts, and he walked over to the group. But he was suspiciously quiet on the way back to Timbercat Village, everything suddenly louder than he remembered.

*

As he went to sleep that night (without having seen Troy at all, his brain sleepily noted), Benson tossed and turned in bed, staring out the window at the silver line of moonlight cutting through the canopy. As he stared at the light, he sighed quietly, musing to himself in an effort to sleep.

What if there were feelings? They wouldn't last long anyway. Troy was his friend, his friend he had rejected. Any feelings Benson thought he had would disappear the next day when he hung out with him.

They had to. Right?

Chapter End Notes

HEY EVERYONE!

im so sorry there wasn't an update last week, i was busy with other things. and im also so sorry this chapter isn't long enough to warrant the break i took, but hopefully you like it all the same! finals week is coming up soon, so updates may get irregular, but don't worry, I'll try!

comments/kudos super appreciated!

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chapter six

Chapter Summary

a year and a half later, it's troy's birthday. and it's up to benson to distract him for the day. but instead, he discovers some things along the way that he may not have wanted.

Chapter Notes

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

ONE AND A HALF YEARS LATER

Benson had a small problem.

Since that time he, Dave, Dahlia and Asher had gone to the city a year ago, his mind hadn't stopped racing, hadn't stopped finding tiny moments to obsess over, tiny skips in heartbeats that lead to spirals of overthinking. Every so often, he would forget those tiny moments of weakness, but they came rushing back with a simple glance in Troy's direction as he walked by with Molly in Timbercat Village, with the sound of his laugh from the main square of the now-rebuilt town square of Las Vistas, with a simple nod from across the room on the day Benson finally moved into one of the small apartment-style lofts that had been built over the past year and a half, along with Dave. And all of it had culminated into a single string of words that looped in Benson's brain on this day.

Maybe, *just maybe*, there was a chance Benson didn't want Troy to just be a friend.

And it was about to ruin his life.

"This is bad, this is really bad," Benson was whispering to himself as he paced about his small apartment, pulling at his jacket. "How could I do this? I said no to him! How can I now li-, ugh!" he grumbled, flopping onto his bed, tempted to scream into his pillow. Instead, he just glanced over to the side of his room, onto the table where there sat a small box wrapped in scrap colour paper, as if it were taunting him.

"Shut up," he moaned, hiding his face in the pillow again. Benson knew he eventually had to get up and pull himself together, knowing the chaos that was going to follow the whole day. The last thing he needed to do was to overthink something that was so obviously just a tiny crush born out of separation and lack of being around Troy. It was just him missing hanging out with his friend, his bro, that was making him think this.

As if on cue, to interrupt his inner tirade, there was a loud knock on Benson's door, muffled excitement and glee coming from the other side, instantly putting a brighter smile on his face.

“Took you long enough to let us in,” Wolf said with a smirk, rolling their eyes as they walked into Benson’s apartment. Dahlia, carrying a bucket of decorations she had spent the week making, and Asher and Kipo, talking animatedly about something, followed after them, filing into Benson’s apartment and instantly making everything more alive. A minute or so later, Dave came back to the apartment, holding some more of Dahlia’s decorations. Benson, who was just shaking his head as the group gathered around his small-ish table, closed the door after all of them.

“So are we guys ready for Troy’s birthday?” Kipo asked excitedly, clapping her hands together. Asher, who was standing a bit away from her, smiled softly, raising their eyebrows.

“You sure me and Dahlia can’t prank him?” they asked slyly, and Kipo rolled her eyes, her cheeks tinged pink.

“Don’t you dare, you know prank wars never end,” she warned, but Wolf, who was sitting on the chair next to Kipo, legs on the table, shrugged.

“I don’t know Kipo, that sounds like it could make things more interesting,” they said. “But, okay okay, we do have a lot of work to do before it’s time for the party. Benson, did you finish the cake?” they asked, turning over to look at Benson, who had just pocketed the wrapped box from the table quietly.

“All done and in the fridge!” he declared, and the whole group erupted into a loud cheer as he laughed. “I’m so glad me and Amy figured out how to get it running properly. It’s been a lifesaver living here with Dave, who is always eating.”

“Okay, all this is fun and good but we have a problem,” Dahlia spoke up, and everyone turned to look at her in curiosity. “We need someone to distract Troy and hang out with him all day until like, sundown, so that we can get the surprise party ready.”

All day? Alone with Troy? Given his recent spiral, it would probably be best for Benson to just keep his distance and help out with the party prep. Kipo, Asher or Dahlia could hold down this portion, maybe even Wolf. Even Dave. He should just sort his emotions out-

“I’ll do it,” Benson said, raising his hand, his voice surprisingly calm and jovial.

What?!

“Really?” Kipo said, tilting her head in confusion. “You wanna do it Benson?”

“I mean who would be better,” Wolf smirked, narrowing their eyes at Benson.

Dahlia, however, instantly perked up and smiled excitedly. “Okay, awesome! Thank you so much Benson!” she said excitedly, running over to give him a big hug, before turning to the rest of the group. “Okay, so we have until sundown to get this party up and running in the backyard of this place, so let’s go people!” she cheered, everyone laughing excitedly, as they all began to open the boxes of decorations.

Asher smiled as they walked up to Benson, patting him on the shoulder. "Troy's in his house right now," they said quietly, smiling gently. "Just keep him busy till it's all done and then we've got your back."

Benson just nodded numbly, flashing a quick smile at an utterly perplexed Dave, before walking out of his apartment door.

*

With every step Benson took down the streets of Las Vistas, he was trying to make sense of what had just happened, and what he was doing now. He felt his heart in his throat, a nervousness Benson was not used to seeping into his muscles, every step a reminder of the butterflies in his stomach. And it was driving him crazy.

A tiny crush, was it? Because Benson was starting to question that too.

But as he passed by mutes hauling up signs for shops and stores, and humans painting rooftops, balancing on ladders, Benson tried to rationalise with his own conflicting mind. *It had been a while since Troy and Benson had hung out, just the two of them. He just missed hanging out with his friend, someone who was very important to him as a friend. So maybe, this day was actually something good. If he hung out with Troy, just the two of them, these feelings would leave Benson alone and he would be able to sleep easy again. Because he would know that it was just friendship all along.*

As these thoughts circled through Benson's head, putting the skip back in his step, he had made his way down the main street, turning into the cluster housing where Troy stayed along with Roberto, living across from the Berdacs. Benson plastered a smile onto his face, trying to seem as natural as possible so as to not cause any suspicion, ignoring the dead weight of the wrapped nbow in his pocket as he knocked on Troy's door.

"Benson?" Troy exclaimed, raising an eyebrow in confusion when he saw the boy at his front door, smiling excitedly. "What're you doing here?"

"What? Can't a dude wish his friend 'Happy 18th' in this place?" Benson laughed, shaking his head as he leaned forward to give a quick one-armed hug to Troy, pushing away the whispered impulse to lean closer. But Troy, thankfully, just laughed in confusion, as he pulled away, an incredulous smile playing on his lips.

"Well yes he can, do you know when my friend's coming for that?" he teased, earning a rolled-eye punch to the shoulder from Benson. "No but seriously dude, you caught me by surprise, that's all. I really appreciate it."

Benson smiled, trying not to stay focused on Troy's smile as he wrapped an arm around his shoulder, walking to the front door. "Well, now that we got the pleasantries out of the way, we have a whole day to get through," he started, and Troy narrowed his eyes in suspicion.

"Now what are you doing?" he asked slowly, and Benson just sighed, giving Troy a deadpanned stare.

“That’s for me to know, and you to find out,” he said with a short laugh. “Trust me, it’s gonna be worth it,” he said, and Troy smiled, shaking his head in resigned disbelief.

And Benson felt the recently-familiar tug in his heart that had come with sleepless nights, and he did everything to push it down. Not now. Not ever.

*

“Thank god this time at Brunchington Beach, there’s no having to sneak around in weird costume versions of ourselves,” Benson laughed, and Troy shook his head, nose scrunched up.

“Some of the things you guys did back then still confuse me,” Troy said in a tone of amusement. “Like, it doesn’t sound real at all.”

“Well, it didn’t feel real either, if it helps at all,” Benson joked, and Troy laughed, covering his mouth with his hand.

“Benson, what are we really doing over here?” Troy asked, raising an eyebrow with a sly smirk. Benson, who had been drinking water, balked at the question, coughing slightly, choking on the water slightly. He looked away, wheezing slightly as he avoided Troy’s eye. *Fuck fuck fuck Dahlia would kill him if he messed this up.*

“Like I said dude, uh. Can’t a guy just hang out with his buddy?” he said awkwardly, trying to reach forward to punchh Troy’s shoulder playfully. But one look at the other boy’s unimpressed expression told Benson that he couldn’t have been less convincing if he tried. But, it wasn’t like he could just say, *Hey we are actually having a surprise party for you with all the mutes and the humans you know, and this is just me distracting you* . So, Benson said the next true thing.

“Actually,” Benson spoke up, just as their brunch came to the table, and Troy looked up, eyebrows quirked in curiosity. “It’s stupid Troy, but I missed you. We don’t hang out anymore, and when we do it’s with the others. And, I don’t know, I just, I miss my friend,” he said quickly, his voice dropping to a whisper, as he absentmindedly tapped the table.

Troy just sat there, slightly agape at what Benson had said, before laughing quietly, shaking his head. “Dude,” he said quietly, and Benson looked up, seeing a sheepish smile on Troy’s face. “I had no idea that was how you felt. I’ve just been so busy with stuff that I haven’t had any time, and I know you’ve been ultra busy too. But I’ve missed you too,” he said, eyes crinkling at the corners in a way that made Benson aware of the uneasiness in his stomach, like it was trying to tell him something.

They finished their brunch, the moment of seriousness lost in jokes and stories, laughter taking up their minds as the time went by. And eventually, when it was time, and close enough to sundown that Benson felt brave enough to suggest venturing away, the both of them left Brunchington Beach after talking to Cappuccino, thanking her for yet another incredible meal.

As they started walking away, heading towards the city, Benson felt few moments where Troy's hands brushed against his, sending electric shocks down his arm with every moment.

"I'm really, really glad we're friends, Troy," Benson piped up, and Troy just turned to look at him with a confused smile, laughing quietly. But his eyes held an unreadable expression. And Benson kept his eyes ahead, joking around with Troy as he walked back, ignoring the storm that was walking behind him.

*

"Okay Benson, why are you making me cover my eyes?" Troy asked, slightly annoyed at the inconvenience. "Like I know you and Dave are not the tidiest people but, it can't be that bad right?"

"Shut up, Sandoval," Benson groaned, and Troy just laughed as Benson led him behind the building, turning into the alleyway to get to the backyard of the complex. "Okay, and you can open your eyes in 3, 2, 1!"

And as Troy opened his eyes, a loud cry of 'SURPRISE!' erupted from the sizable crowd of humans and mutes that had collected in the now-decorated yard. And even Benson had to admit, they had managed to do good even in just a few hours. The gray concrete and the wild green vines that curled on the fence had been transformed into a soft, calm garden, with fairy lights entwining their tendrils. Paper streamers hung from the fence and the wall of the building, different colours creating a rainbow dash of colour much needed for a party. There was a makeshift DJ booth, with music playing from record players found in the debris of the Old World, and the ground was littered with confetti, a discoball hanging through a seemingly complicated tied set up. It was perfect.

"Guys!" Troy said excitedly, as Asher and Dahlia ran ahead, not waiting to wrap him in the tightest embrace, practically lifting Troy off the ground. "You did this for me?"

"Uh, of course we did!" Asher said with a laugh, ruffling Troy's hair. "Birthdays topside are just more fun now, so why pass up on making it awesome?" they said, and Troy smiled, shoving them playfully.

"Everyone's here!" Kipo said excitedly, stepping forward to hug Troy tight. "Happy birthday Troy," she said softly, and Troy hugged her back tightly, spinning Kipo around slightly as he laughed.

"You really are the best sister I never had, huh?" he laughed. Wolf also walked up to Troy, giving him a high five and a fist bump, and one by one the rest of the partygoers started to walk up, every single one greeting Troy with unimaginable excitement.

At this point, Benson was just beaming at the scene, Troy's laughter and smile infectious as he stood to the corner, watching him. But as he stood there, putting his hands in his pocket, he felt the tiny rectangular box in his pocket, a weight he had almost forgotten about.

"Hey Troy," Benson said quietly, walking up to him as the crowd around him dissipated slightly. Troy, who looked flushed with laughter and excitement, flashed a giddy smile at

Benson, who held out the tiny wrapped box, hand shaking slightly. “Before I forget.”

Troy raised an eyebrow in curiosity, taking the box and immediately ripping up the package. As soon as he opened the box, he let out a loud gasp, tears brimming in his eyes, as he pulled out a deck of cards, with painted details on the faces. It was clearly a rare pair, and Troy looked up at Benson in numb shock.

“So uh, I was out roaming and I found that in a store. And I remembered you liked close up magic, so I thought, you know,” Benson muttered, scratching the back of his neck nervously. He didn’t mention how when he saw the deck, the first thing he had thought of was Troy’s smile. How when he had picked it up, he could only think about how Troy would love to have something like it. How that was one of the moments that made him doubt whether he was trying to lie to himself by saying it was only a small crush.

Before Benson could ramble on any further, Troy let out a short watery laugh, rushing forward to pull Benson into a hug, tucking his head in the crook of Benson’s neck. “Thank you,” he whispered, like a quiet line of support, with pure, sincere gratitude.

And as Benson returned the hug, pulling Troy closer, his heart racing, he knew.

He was completely, and totally, fucked.

Chapter End Notes

HELLO HELLO HELLO

so sorry the updates are kinda slow i have a lot of assignments right now but i relly wanna try and keep up!

also, benson is starting to have Realisations. wonder how that goes :D

comments/kudos super appreciated!!

my twt: @ghostboyfs

rose's twt: @WNDERBEASTS

my tumblr: thirteen-beaxhes

chapter seven

Chapter Summary

in the aftermath of troy's party, benson is having a hard time coming to terms with his realisation. and things are about to get more complicated.

Chapter Notes

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

In the weeks after Troy's birthday, Benson needed a lot of time to think, more so than usual. Wolf had been the first to notice the random stretches of time where Benson would just disappear for an hour or so, before shuffling back, an apologetic smile plastered on his face. For the most part, they didn't make a big deal about it. After all, even though it had been almost 3 years since the world had changed, some things didn't really ever leave. And Wolf herself had many, *many* things that they had to still work through. As time went on, Kipo and Asher finally started to get it together, finally going on a date that had been a long-time coming. But Benson still zoned out regularly, his eyes catching on Troy's face, before snapping away, staring at a patch of concrete as if he were trying to cover his trail. And it confused Wolf, and even Dahlia, Kipo and Asher to no end. But none of them knew what to say, and it didn't seem like Troy had noticed. He wasn't around just as much to notice, after all.

"Does anyone even know where Troy is these days?" Dave asked, as he, Benson, Wolf and Dahlia were hanging around on the outskirts of town, having scaled a small hillock with a view of the sunset. Kipo and Asher were on another date, their newfound relationship growing slowly but surely.

"Honestly, it's like we as a friend group are shrinking the older we get," Wolf groaned, sinking against the hillside she was leaning against.

"Come on Wolf, don't say that!" Dahlia whined, lightly shoving them in the shoulder. "I mean, the only real missing person here is Troy, cuz Asher and Kipo are finally getting their crap together, so." As Dahlia said that, everyone in the group laughed, and Wolf rolled her eyes endearingly, putting the flask of hot chocolate to their lips as the setting sun started to paint the ground orange.

All the while, Benson was just staring out at the horizon, eyes fixed on nothing in particular. Wolf noticed this and sighed, waving their hand in front of his face to snap him out of his trance. "Dude, you've been really quiet these past few weeks," Wolf said, and Benson shook his head slightly, turning to face the others from the small ledge he was sitting on below them. "What's up with you?"

“Nothing!” Benson replied quickly, his voice almost a squeak. “I am perfectly fine!” But the unimpressed faces around him betrayed his unconvincing performance, so he just sighed. “Sorry just, thinking, you know?”

“You’ve been doing that a weird amount lately, dude,” Dave said, raising an eyebrow as he hopped down to where Benson sat. “What are you hiding, Mekler?” he asked in a low voice, narrowing his eyes.

“Nothing, Dave! Leave me alone,” Benson scoffed, rolling his eyes as he shoved Dave away, and everyone laughed, the tension melting away. Wolf’s suspicion wasn’t gone, but it was significantly lowered, at least for the moment as the sun sank below the horizon, the surroundings splashed golden.

“Well I’m beat,” Dahlia said with a long sigh, stretching her back as she stood up. “I think I’m going to head back now.”

“Yeah, I’m going to go check on my corgi,” Wolf said with a gleam in her eyes. “Dave, didn’t you say you were coming along?” they asked, and Dave sat up, smirking.

“Oh definitely, I wanna see the murderous fluffball,” he said with a laugh, and Wolf rolled her eyes, getting up.

“Well, Benson you wanna come with, then?” Dahlia said, but Benson just shook his head, getting up.

“I’m gonna head off, I need to go meet someone now anyway,” he said, shoving his hands in his pockets and walking away, shouting a quick ‘Bye’ behind him as he climbed down.

“He’s acting weird to you guys too, right?” Dahlia said quietly as Benson walked away, and Dave and Wolf nodded.

“He’s been this way since Troy’s birthday,” Wolf quipped, and Dave just shrugged.

“Maybe something happened, who knows. He’ll tell us when he feels ready to,” he said, looking up at Wolf with a beaming smile. “Now, what about that corgi?”

*

He was acting weird.

Benson just sighed, shaking his head as he pulled at his hoodie while walking down the main street. In all honesty, he knew that his friends were starting to get suspicious, starting to notice the way he had been disappearing in trains of his thoughts. But he couldn’t help it, there was so much happening, so many things were circling through his head, things he hadn’t been able to shake off since his realisation at Troy’s party.

As he was lost in thought, Benson suddenly looked up, realising with mild panic that his feet had unexpectedly led him to the street where Troy stayed, his apartment just ahead of him. At first, he started to back away, to turn around and just head home, and let his overthinking run into the night. But at that moment, Benson felt a burst of courage from some unexpected

place in him, and he squared his shoulders, walking ahead to the gate. *Troy was his friend, and Benson just wanted to see how his friend was doing, see if he was okay*, he reasoned with himself, as if he were psyching himself out. But as he walked up to the gate, he caught movement in his peripheral vision. And as he turned, he froze, his eyes staring ahead.

Troy was laughing, walking to his home from the other side, and with him was someone else, around his age, gesturing something out to Troy. And everything they said and did seemed to send Troy into bigger peels of laughter than before, ending with him doubled over, clutching his stomach. Benson stood frozen to the spot, his stomach twisting, like someone was squeezing it, and he felt his breath get shallower. The other person, with black hair, almost spikey, and a black t-shirt with white detailing, skipped ahead, turning to face Troy with a smile that anyone could see was goofy and sappy. And they both talked for a while, Troy reaching out to grab their shoulder, and Benson had every urge in him to run away. But one small, petty voice whispered in his ear, tempting him to stay, to watch, and to walk up to Troy afterwards, maybe even walk up right then. It was stupid, he knew that, and he felt something burning in his chest, something ugly that Benson wasn't used to.

As it turned out, however, he didn't need to make his presence known with any fanfare, because as he was absorbed in thought, Troy's eyes flitted over to where he was standing, doing a double take.

"Benson?" he called out, and Benson froze, every thought in his brain screeching to a halt as he barely registered Troy's face morphing into a smile as he raised his hand in a wave. As he raised his hand, the person with him turned around, eyebrow raised and *oh crap, they were good-looking*, Benson numbly registered, as he weakly raised a hand. His heartbeat echoed in his ear as he stared ahead, Troy exchanging words with his 'friend', even hugging them, before they headed off the other way, turning to wave at Troy once. As soon as they had left, Benson finally felt himself regain control of his limbs, forcing himself to walk up to Troy, who was smiling at him brightly, hair windswept over a flushed face. And it took everything in Benson to not melt on the spot.

"Hey dude, what's up?" Troy laughed, walking forward a bit to meet Benson in the middle. "I thought you, Dahlia, Wolf and Dave were hanging out!"

"Uh yeah, yeah we uh, I'm just coming back," Benson muttered, coughing slightly as he scratched the back of his neck. "Wolf, wanted to uh, check on her corgi and Dave went with her. Whatever," he said, looking over his shoulder, trying to calm his heart. *Shut up shut up, his crush was SMALL it had to be, he couldn't do this now, not after all those years*. "Hey uh, who's, who was that?" he asked, trying as hard he could to sound nonchalant.

But he knew something else was up, with the way Troy tensed up, how eyes wide as he looked away from Benson, his shoes suddenly seeming more interesting. "N-no one, he's no one!" Troy mumbled out, and Benson narrowed his eyes, staring at Troy. He leaned down, tilting his head to try and catch Troy's eye, hidden behind his hair flopping onto his forehead.

"Troy, you're one of the worst liars I've ever met," Benson said with a small smile once he caught Troy's eye, the other staring back at him with abject nervousness. "It's just me, you know. I'm your friend!" *But he wanted to be more, so, so badly.*

Troy glanced up, before taking a deep breath, flashing a small smile. “That’s Adam,” he said quietly, scratching the inside of his thumb. “We met when I went to go get coffee one morning, and I accidentally ran into him on the way back. And he was really sweet about me practically bulldozing into him, so we just stayed in touch. And we’ve been, you know, hanging out.”

Benson smiled politely, nodding along to Troy’s words, but his mind had latched onto the words ‘sweet’, ‘stayed in touch’, ‘hanging out’, playing them in a loop as what he saw of them talking played before his eyes. And it was driving him crazy, because, that didn’t mean anything. *What was he saying to himself? Troy could have other friends!! Of course he could, it would be weird if he didn’t, given how charming and charismatic he was. How he managed to make people laugh, and comfortable, how he could always tell what someone was feeling, how when he hugged someone it felt like nothing else-*

There he was, going off track again.

“Benson?” Troy asked nervously, reaching out to tap his shoulder, before immediately retreating his hand, choosing to pull at his sleeve. “You’re weirdly quiet, dude.”

Benson shook his head, looking back up at Troy, an expectant look in his eyes that twisted the knife in his heart. “No, yeah dude sorry just, got lost a bit,” he said with a short laugh, before looking at Troy. “So are, are you two like, dating?” he asked slowly, feeling his heart lodged in his throat with every word.

Troy looked startled at the question, looking away briefly, before just shrugging, not meeting Benson’s eye. “N-No,” he whispered, and Benson almost let out an involuntary sigh of relief, before he continued. “But, we’re talking, I think? I guess that’s what you call it,” Troy said quietly, shoving his hands in the pockets of his hoodie. “So, yeah.”

That hit Benson hard, and he felt his mind reel with the information. *Talking. So, he had been right, they weren’t **just** friends. Even if they weren’t dating, Troy was ‘talking’ to Adam. And Benson had lost his chance. For good. He was an idiot for thinking he had one, anyway. After everything, how could he have still believed? It wasn’t Troy’s fault he was an idiot for falling too late.*

“Wow, talking huh?” Benson said, stumbling over his words in a way he hoped was not noticeable. But everything Troy had said hitting him, and all Benson could hear in his head was *you were too late*. “That’s, that’s awesome Troy. He, uh, he does seem pretty cool.”

“Yeah! We actually have a lot in common,” Troy said with a smile, finally looking up at Benson, almost sheepishly. “We both really like astronomy and stuff, plus he’s really good at card games.” Troy shrugged, before reaching out to lightly punch Benson’s shoulder. “But, hey! How have you been Benson? We haven’t hung out in a while! Do you wanna head over to Cappucino’s to get dinner or something? Or I’ve heard there’s a pizza place down the road-”

“Uh no, Troy, I’m good,” Benson said, backing away, stuffing his hands into the pockets of his jeans. “I’m exhausted, and I think I’m just gonna call it a day.”

“Oh?” Troy asked, confused. “You sure? Is there something you came for? I swear I returned all your jackets, and your caps too.”

“No, no you don’t have anything of mine,” Benson muttered. *Liar*, his heart whispered traitorously. “Just came to say hey,” he said, taking more steps back, turning to head where his home was. “And I hope you’re okay, Troy. Bye.”

Before Troy could say anything else, reach out to grab his elbow and cause his resolve to crumble completely, Benson turned around, hugging himself as he walked briskly down the street heading home. He didn’t even feel the tears on his cheeks, his focus on the uneven concrete blocks under his feet with every step he ran.

Troy watched Benson leave, feeling his heart twist at the retreating sight. *If he was over Benson, and moving on like he thought he was, why did that hurt?*

Chapter End Notes

hey everyone!! im so sorry there haven't been updates lately, ive had exams and also no inspo

chapter eight

Chapter Summary

frustrated by troy and benson constantly avoiding each other, the gang takes matters into their own hands.

Chapter Notes

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

If one word had to be used to describe how everyone in the gang was feeling, it would be ‘frustrated’.

Wolf, Dave and Dahlia were already suspicious of the way Benson had been growing increasingly quiet, almost as if he were crawling into himself in the weeks after Benson’s birthday. And while that had been confusing, and even upsetting, it was something the three, and even Kipo and Asher thought would fade away after a while. And eventually, Troy would also emerge from wherever he was, and they would all go back to being the chaotic gang they were, causing trouble where they could. But instead, now they were dealing with two people who spent all their efforts avoiding each other, and no one knew why.

“Hey Benson!” Kipo said excitedly, walking out of the bakery, Asher holding onto her elbow as they carried a paper bag with cookies. Benson, who had been walking on the other side of the road, headphones plugged in, looked up with a small smile that didn’t really reach his eyes, still waving back to Kipo.

“Sup Kipo,” he said happily, giving her a hug as Asher held out their hand for a high-five. “Your dates are getting earlier and earlier in the day, aren’t they?” he teased, and Kipo giggled softly, her cheeks pink as she snuck a glance at Asher.

“We’re actually just picking up the snacks for everyone,” Asher said, smiling brightly as they laced their fingers with Kipo’s. “The only date we’re having is the date cake Mom is forcing Dahlia to help her with cuz Dave has been begging. You coming?”

“Wait, everyone’s gonna be there?” Benson asked slowly, raising an eyebrow. And Asher knew what Benson was really asking, but Kipo, with all her kindness and excitement, forgot briefly the situation that had been brewing.

“Of course everyone’s gonna be there!” she said excitedly. “We’re going to meet Wolf in the Valley of Megadogs because I think we all want to meet her Corgi, Dave and Jamack are going to meet us there a bit later, apparently there is something super important they ‘cannot put aside’, whatever that means,” she laughed softly. “Oh! And Troy is coming too! It’s been a while since we’ve even hung out with him, and he’s bringing a friend too! I think his name is Adam?”

Kipo paused to think for a bit, but in that time, Benson had already started backing away, an apologetic smile on his face as he put on his headphones again. “Ah, sorry Kipo, I can’t make it,” he said as he backed away. “I have some, work to do. I really wish I could make it, sorry!”

Asher simply sighed, wrapping their arm around Kipo’s shoulder, nuzzling their head in the crook of her neck. “You had to mention Troy, didn’t you,” they said quietly, their voice not accusing in the slightest, but just tired. “You think the reason they’re fighting is cuz of that Adam guy?” they asked, looking up to catch Kipo’s eye. But instead, Asher saw Kipo staring after Benson, eyes narrowed in deep thought, her brow furrowed. “Keeps? You good?”

“Something’s up here,” Kipo said quietly, crossing her hands, which proved slightly complicated, given that Asher was holding one of her hands. “Benson has been acting weird for a while now and so is Troy, and neither of them are telling us anything! Who doesn’t tell their friends if something is bothering them?” she said, growing annoyed, and Asher stood up straight, looking at Kipo intently.

“So, what are you saying, Keeps?”

“I’m saying that I’m done with these secrets!” Kipo declared, waving her hands around. “So, Benson is going to come to hang out this evening, because me, Wolf and Dave are gonna go talk to him! And you and Dahlia are gonna talk to Troy, and maybe get Adam to help you both, and we’re going to make them tell us what’s wrong!” she said firmly, a smirk on her face as she hit her fist against her hand. Asher laughed, shaking their head as they stared at Kipo, eyes shining.

“You got it, Princess,” they whispered, leaning over to press a soft kiss to Kipo’s cheek. “Your wish is my command.”

*

“You don’t hang out with your friends much anymore.”

Troy winced, looking up to face Adam, who was lounging on the beanbag across from Troy’s bed, reading. They had taken to doing that, just sitting in Troy’s room, hanging out, ever since they figured out ‘talking’ was just going to stay that way, talking.

“Well that’s harsh,” Troy said, narrowing his eyes. Adam sighed, closing his book as he looked up at Troy.

“Is it wrong though?” he asked, shrugging, and Troy looked away, feeling the back of his neck heat up. “I mean I get when we first started hanging out, and we were testing the waters and shit,” Adam continued, drawing out a quiet giggle from the other boy. “But, it’s been weeks and weeks, and today is the first time I’m even properly meeting them. Plus, I’ve seen the way your dad talks about meeting Wolf and Kipo on the streets, and them asking about you, so what’s up with all of that?”

Troy just stared at Adam laying out all the facts, mouth slightly open. “Uh, yeah,” he muttered, caught completely off guard. “Yeah that uh, you’re right I have been kind of,

yeah.”

Adam just raised an eyebrow in amusement, crossing the room to sit beside Troy on the bed. As he did, the two of them heard voices come from the main room, only to have Asher and Dahlia burst into the room.

“I know you guys are kissing right now!” Dahlia yelled, jumping in, accidentally smacking Asher in the face. Asher cried out, glaring at their sister in anger, as Adam and Troy slowly looked at each other, before looking back at the twins.

“Gee, I wish you’d told me that Adam, I would’ve put down the Rubik’s Cube,” Troy said dryly, and Adam laughed out loud. Dahlia just groaned, dragging the beanbag to Troy’s bedside as Asher flopped stomach first onto the bed. “What brings you guys to my house? I thought we were meeting at the Megadog Valley later.”

“This is an intervention,” Asher said, rolling over to face Troy. “And even though we don’t really know Adam, he is joining us in this.”

“Hell yeah I am!” Adam cheered, clearly just happy to be there. “I have no idea what about, but if it’s about not hanging out enough, I’m already doing it.”

Dahlia raised her eyebrows, a smile growing on her face. “Oh I already like him,” she said, as Asher laughed. All the while, Troy just gave the three of them a deadpanned stare, clearly unimpressed by what was happening.

“Are you guys done?” Troy mumbled, rolling his eyes fondly. “Also, I hang out!! Why is everyone saying they think I’m pulling away?” he asked indignantly. Asher’s smile faded as they stared up at Troy, narrowing their eyes slightly.

“Okay, you and all of us here, along with Kipo, Wolf and Dave, even Mandu, know that that’s a lie,” they said quietly, reaching out to lightly shove Troy’s shoulder. “But it’s more than that, something in particular is bothering you, and you’re just not telling us.”

Dahlia also reached out to grab Troy’s hand, squeezing it. “And when have we not talked to each other when that happens?” she said softly, and Troy felt a lump form in his throat, one he desperately tried to choke down. “So stop being an idiot.”

Troy took a deep breath, looking at them. “I don’t know,” he said slowly, shrugging. “It’s about Benson.”

“Called it,” Asher mumbled, and Dahlia hit them in the arm, shushing them loudly, something that made Adam laugh out loud. Troy just sighed, rolling his eyes before continuing.

“Ever since my birthday, and we hung out that whole day, he was acting kinda distant,” Troy continued, gesturing with his hands. “And, I mean, I noticed, but also I had just met Adam so it wasn’t bothering me as much as it normally would have. Until, one day, after me and Adam walked back home, I saw him standing across the road as if he were waiting, with this weird look on his face.”

“What was he there for?” Dahlia asked, leaning forward curiously, but Troy just sighed, sinking into his bed.

“That’s the thing,” he said tiredly. “I have no idea. I walked up to him and he asked who Adam was, and I told him how we met,” Troy said, looking over at Adam, who was nodding along all this while. “And, back then at least, how we were ‘talking’. After that, he just started acting all shifty and walked away. And I haven’t really spoken to him since, no clue why he’s avoiding me either.”

“Wait, that’s what happened?” Adam piped up, letting out a short laugh. “Things are starting to make sense now.”

Troy scoffed, flicking Adam in the forehead. “Then pray tell, share your wisdom,” he groaned. “Cuz I’m nothing but confused, and I don’t know what it is I’ve done to make him avoid me this way.”

“He isn’t avoiding you, Troy, you have to realise that,” Dahlia said, shaking her head in disbelief. Troy just stared back at her, however his mind was starting to turn the words over, examining them.

What could that mean? Of course Benson was avoiding him! It couldn’t be anything else.

Granted, him doing it right after Troy told him he was ‘talking’ to Adam was weird, but not in any other way. Maybe Benson just missed hanging out as friends.

Do friends feel that way?

Could Benson...

“Troy,” Asher said quietly, leaning in slightly. “Don’t you know the reason?”

And at that moment, Troy had a feeling, a feeling he had been running from the past almost 3 years. A feeling his friends were implying was clear in Benson’s actions, the same Benson who he had left behind on Prahm, left on the treetops of Timbercat Village. And it terrified him, because he was done with those feelings. Done with their implications. So he ran.

“No,” he whispered, the lie scratching against his teeth. “I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

*

“Kipo? Wolf?” Benson asked in surprise, as he opened his apartment door, and Dave stood up off his chair to join the others as they walked in. “What’s up? I thought you guys had plans.”

“We did,” Kipo said, and Benson was surprised to see she wasn’t giving him her signature soft smile.

“Now we have other plans,” Wolf completed for Kipo, crossing their arms as she stared at Benson, who gulped nervously. *Why did it feel like he was about to get yelled at?*

“What’s going on here?” Benson asked slowly.

“Oh well buddy, I’m glad you asked!” Dave announced as he jumped up onto Kipo’s shoulder. “This is, what the kids like to call, an intervention.”

“An intervention? What? What’s going on?” Benson sputtered out in confusion, glancing across at everyone. Kipo just sighed, sitting on Benson’s bed, as Wolf leaned against the doorway. Benson, looking at them from the chair he didn’t remember sinking onto, mind reeling.

“You’ve been acting weird,” Wolf spoke up, looking at Benson steadily. “And you barely come around to hang out anymore. And whenever we ask you to join us, you mostly say no, especially if someone says Troy is going to be there. Obviously, something is going on, and Kipo is way too curious for her own good, plus I’m just tired, and Dave is,” they stopped, just turning to look at Dave, lounging on the couch. “Well, he’s Dave. So, you’re going to spill, now. Because friends don’t keep stuff to themselves.”

Everyone stared in silence as Wolf stopped talking, quiet surprise filling the room. Kipo smiled at her brightly, eyes shining with tears. “Wolf, that was amazing,” she whispered, choking up slightly. “I could hug you right now!” she cheered, jumping up to engulf her little sister in a big hug.

“I would join them but Kipo gives some monster hugs,” Dave muttered, leaning close to Benson, eyes trained forward. But Benson didn’t respond, still lost in thought after Wolf’s words.

“You’re right Wolf,” he muttered finally, after Wolf and Kipo pulled away. “I’m sorry, I’ve been acting weird these past couple weeks and I just pulled away, not even talking to you guys about it.” He sighed, scratching the back of his neck sheepishly. “Honestly, I don’t, I don’t even know what’s going on with me and Troy, and I just didn’t wanna bother you guys with something I didn’t even understand.”

“Benson,” Kipo said gently, walking over to wrap him in a warm hug. “That’s nonsense! You’re never bothering us!”

“You’re important to us Benson, duh we won’t be bothered to help you,” Wolf said very matter-of-factly, lightly smacking his head.

“Honestly, out of all of us, I’m the bother, so you’re good buddy,” Dave said, rolling his eyes. But everyone could tell that he was being genuine.

They all took a moment to just be together, and Benson felt his heart get overwhelmed with warmth and love. At that moment, he mentally berated himself for pushing himself away, because he missed his family. He missed them all so much, that a simple hug and a few words from all of them had him feeling that way. He decided that, no matter how scary, he was just going to tell them everything. Spill the messiness in his mind out so that they could see it, and maybe help him make sense of it all.

"I saw Troy and Adam hang out a couple weeks ago," he said quietly, and his three friends leaned in, wearing matching expressions of curiosity. "This was after that time you, me, Dave and Dahlia hung out to watch the sunset," he clarified, looking up at Wolf. "And, I don't know it felt so, weird. Like, Troy looked super happy with Adam, and I don't know!! I'm a bad friend for feeling weird about that, I know that!"

"You're not a bad friend, Benson," Kipo said quickly, cutting him off as she shook her head. "That's not at all true."

"But I don't think you're being honest here, Benson," Wolf said, leaning closer. The way she said it made Benson look up, almost nervous. "I mean, if that was the case, wouldn't you talking to Troy have made things better? And we wouldn't be here right now."

"Whoa, Wolf makes a point," Dave said quizzically, raising an eyebrow. "Is something else going on, Benson?" Dave asked, surprisingly soft and almost comforting.

Benson felt his breath catch in his throat as he looked away, pulling at his thumb. "N- Nothing, why would something else be going on?" he muttered. But he heard Kipo sigh, placing a hand on his shoulder.

"You're a worse liar than me sometimes, Benson," she said with a quiet laugh, and Benson sighed, flashing a weak smile. "Is this about that time Troy had a crush on you?"

God, if only it were that simple, Benson thought ruefully, as he just shrugged. "I don't think that's a thing anymore," he said morosely. "Cuz he and Adam are 'talking'," he sighed, adding air-quotes on the last word.

"Wait, really?" Dave cut in. "Wow, now that was a plot twist even I didn't expect."

"You like him," Wolf said quietly, eyes wide in realisation. At that, everyone snapped into attention, Kipo and Dave staring at Benson, who was now looking back at them, indiscernible guilt in his eyes. "That's why you're avoiding him."

After a long silence, one where you could almost hear a pin drop, Benson just nodded slowly, almost hiding his face. "It's so stupid," he said quietly, almost whispering. "Just as he moves on, I start liking him. Because how could I not? Even if it isn't a huge crush-" *liar...* "- what a situation to be in, huh?" he scoffed, shaking his head. Kipo immediately ducked forward, wrapping her arms around Benson's shoulders, pulling him for a hug. Eventually, Dave and Wolf also joined in, hugging Benson, and for a moment, he felt at peace.

"Oh Benson," Kipo said gently. "You could've told us, we would've understood!"

"I know, I know, I just didn't know how to even phrase it," he said. Like, 'Hey, the guy who used to like me and just about moved on? Yeah, I think i like him now.' It would've sounded ridiculous. Besides, how would I even approach him anymore?"

"I won't lie, it's a tricky situation," Wolf said, playfully punching Benson's shoulder. "But, do you really want to lose Troy as a friend, over this? Because if you keep avoiding him,

that's gonna end up happening." She sighed, shoving their hands in their pockets. "Because Troy doesn't know why you're avoiding him, so he thinks he messed up in some way."

"I don't know Wolf, what am I supposed to even say?"

"I don't know Troy, I can't tell you that," she said with a sigh. "But do you want to lose him as a friend?"

Benson looked up, taking a deep breath as he looked at Kipo, Wolf and Dave, making a decision. He could let himself get hurt, but Troy was one of his best friends, it was a no-brainer.

"Is Troy coming to Megadog Valley?"

Chapter End Notes

HI IM SO SORRY THERE WAS SUCH A LONG BREAK BETWEEN UPDATES
i wasn't doing too well mentally so inspo was a bitch to handle, but here is a long chapter to make up for it!! it was originally gonna be longer, but i cut it up for that sweet sweet *angst*.

hopefully I'll have the next chapter done sooner, plus some one shots to celebrate one year of kipo!! so hope you guys like this!

kudos/comments super appreciated!!

my twt: @silentmvies

rose's twt: @liamscartero

my tumblr: thirteen-beaxhes

chapter nine

Chapter Summary

benson and troy have a much-needed conversation at a group hangout. will things go right? or will there be more misunderstandings?

Chapter Notes

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

“I really don’t think he’s going to come guys,” Benson sighed, stuffing his hands in his pocket as he, Wolf, Kipo and Dave walked down to Megadog Valley. “Especially if he thinks there’s the slightest possibility I’m coming.”

“Well, good think Asher and Dahlia think he is deeply convinced you are avoiding him for no reason that he just assumed *you* wouldn’t show,” Wolf scoffed, turning over to smirk in satisfaction at Benson, who simply rolled his eyes and kept walking. Kipo was walking a bit ahead, a skip in her step, always peering across the street as they approached the horizon.

“Kipo, you do know you can’t see Asher from this distance right?” Dave teased, tugging her pant leg. Kipo just sighed, an amused smile on her face.

“Yeah I know,” she said softly, before stopping short, eyes alight with an idea. “But the Mega Jaguar can!” she cheered.

“Kipo WAIT-” Benson yelled, but before any of them could say anything, there was a huge dust cloud, an energy wave sending Benson, Wolf and Dave flying back, as the large pink Mega Jaguar stood before them, in her three-tailed, six-limbed glory. However, despite her intimidating form, anyone who looked in their eyes knew it was Kipo, the playful excitement noticeable in the way she peered in the distance, almost prancing forward. It was only a minute later when there was another gust of wind and dust, and there stood Kipo, human once again, eyes fixed on a point in the distance.

“I saw them!” she exclaimed excitedly, pointing ahead. “They’re with Dahlia, and Adam and Troy are also with them, let’s go!”

As soon as Benson heard Troy’s name, he shot up, eyes wide. “T-Troy?” he stammered, gulping nervously. “He, he’s there?”

Wolf let out a short laugh, clapping his shoulder. “You’re doing this today, music boy,” they said with an encouraging smile. “No running now.”

Meanwhile, Dave was staring up at Kipo with a raised eyebrow. “You’re really in love with Asher, aren’t you?” he teased, and Kipo sputtered, her face heating up as she shoved Dave

away.

“Shut up, Dave!” she yelled, running ahead as Dave chased her, still teasing her.

Wolf just rolled her eyes at the two, before turning to face Benson. She held out her hand for him to take, and then began walking to the valley, every step making Benson’s heart beat faster. No turning back.

*

“Did you get the cookies?” Asher asked, pacing back and forth as they stared out at the field.

Dahlia just sighed, picking up the paper bag that Kipo had entrusted Asher with after they split ways. “And the flapjacks are in the box Roberto gave us, the soda is in the carton Adam so graciously lifted with your help-” “Hey, I was strong enough!” “- and I’m sure they’re on their way with the date cake, and will be here anytime soon.”

“Yeah yeah I know, sorry I’m just,” Asher mumbled. “I know it’s a group hangout but I still want it to be perfect, you know?”

“Whipped,” Troy mumbled, earning a punch in the shoulder from Asher, while Adam laughed out loud, hunching over.

“Asher, you’re literally dating Kipo, you have nothing to worry about!” Dahlia laughed, wrapping an arm around Asher’s shoulders. “Besides, Kipo looks at you like you’re the universe when you’re drooling onto my shoulder halfway through a The-Otters’ play, so she clearly loves you.”

“You don’t know that!” they whisper-yelled, just as everyone felt a large shockwave go through the ground. Troy looked up as he coughed through the dust, eyes narrowing before immediately bursting into laughter.

“Well, looks like your girlfriend is just as eager to get to us as you are waiting for her,” he teased, nodding at the clear silhouette of the Mega Jaguar. Asher looked up, eyes going wide, before a lovestruck smile settled on their face. Troy watched their expression, something twisting in his chest.

Is that how he used to look at Benson?

Is that how Benson now looked at.... No. He couldn’t do that. He couldn’t think stuff like that when it wasn’t even true.

Troy just shook his head, looking away, only to find Adam staring at him, a curious expression in his eyes.

“What happened? Is something on my face?” he asked, rubbing his cheeks self consciously, but Adam just narrowed his eyes.

“You know,” he said quietly. “You know the reason, don’t you?” he continued, ignoring Troy’s confused expression.

At that, Troy's confusion melted away, replaced by barely concealed panic. He reached up, playing with his hair nervously as he tried his best to avoid meeting Adam's eye. "W-What? I don't know what you're saying," he laughed shakily, trying desperately to sound believable. But, if Adam's deadpanned stare was anything to go by, he was clearly not convincing anyone. But before he could say anything back, he heard Asher cheer loudly.

"Kipo!!" they shouted loudly, running over to hug their girlfriend, even spinning her around. Dahlia ran up to Wolf, giving them a fist bump while laughing about something. Even Dave had walked up to Adam and had started a conversation, even though Troy was pretty sure they had never met before. He simply sighed, stuffing his hands in his trouser pockets, content to simply enjoy the general company because there was no one there to talk to, because *he* wouldn't have shown up.

"Hey Troy."

Well shit.

*

Benson immediately regretted his decision to come, confronted with Troy's shocked face staring back at him. *Wow, he really had messed up by pulling away without an explanation.* It was taking everything in him to not walk away with a weathered excuse already on his tongue. But before he could escape, Benson caught Wolf's eye, and she was staring at him, holding an encouraging thumbs up, and he knew he had no choice. He had to do this now, or else he never would.

"Benson?" Troy finally squeaked out, glancing around, probably trying to catch Asher or Dahlia's eye. "I, uh, I didn't think you were going to come," he finally settled for, scratching the back of his neck.

Benson shrugged, attempting to look nonchalant. "Well, couldn't miss a group picnic now, could I?" he said with a forced laugh. He looked over Troy's shoulder, his smile fading slightly. "Plus, it was about time I met Adam," he said, nodding in his direction, where Adam was now in an excited debate with Kipo about some topic he couldn't make out.

"Oh yeah, I keep forgetting you didn't actually meet him that evening," Troy said quietly, trying desperately to dance around the topic. *Not now not now not now he didn't know what to say to Benson.*

But luck didn't seem to be on Troy's side, as Benson turned to look at him, staring at him nervously.

"Actually, I was, hoping we could talk," he said quietly, and Troy was seriously resisting the urge to run up to Kipo and ask her to transform into the Mega Jaguar and throw him across the horizon. "About everything."

"Do we have to? Now?" Troy asked before he could stop and think, but it was the truth. He honestly had just planned on hanging out with his friends with no worries and no thinking

about what his feelings towards Benson even were. But regret flooded him as soon as he saw Benson's expression fall slightly, nervously pushing his hair back.

"Troy if we don't talk now, I don't think we ever will," Benson said quietly.

And, hate it as he did, Troy had to agree. How many weeks had they gone without many words spoken, with as much avoidance as humanly possible, for a reason Benson had seemingly decided overnight and hadn't communicated to him. If they didn't talk now, when Benson had finally come out to where he was, who knew if they would?

"Okay," Troy sighed, walking over closer to the side of the hill, Benson following him. He knew everyone was watching them intently, clearly invested, possibly even the ones behind this whole thing. But Troy really wanted to be able to have this conversation without any comments from the others.

"Okay, let's talk," he said quietly, clapping his hands as he leaned against a rock. Benson leaned against the hill in front of him, fidgeting with his hands, eyes trained to the ground.

"I'm sorry," Benson started, looking up and catching Troy's eye, staring at him apologetically. "For everything. For acting weird all those weeks ago and probably confusing the hell out of you, and for avoiding you ever since then, without even an explanation."

"Yeah, what was that all about?" Troy said, eyebrows furrowed. He crossed his arms across his chest, leaning back slightly. "I mean that day, it was like you were there for something, and then just like that you were gone. And I don't hear from you for days, and I find out through the others that you're avoiding me, yes, but mostly avoiding them too. And it made no sense why, and that scared the hell out of us. Out of me."

Benson nodded slowly, looking away. "I really am sorry, Troy. For all of that. It was stupid, I wasn't thinking," he said, his voice catching on the last word.

"But what was the reason, Benson?" he pressed, finally letting the hard stare fall into one that was softer, sadder. "If it's something, anything I did..."

"No, no! Troy, that's not it at all!" Benson said quickly, jumping forward, as if to stop Troy. But as his fingers brushed against the back of Troy's palm, he pulled back immediately, as if an electric charge had gone through his body at the contact. "You did nothing at all! It's my fault, because of my stupid overthinking brain."

"Wait wait wait, overthinking?" Troy cut in, waving his hands wildly as if he were trying to dispel the confusion. *Overthinking? Why would Benson mention overthinking?* "What was there to overthink about that weird night?"

Benson looked away, the scratching of the inside of his palm only increasing. "I, I don't know! I saw you with Adam and you looked super happy, and then you said you were 'talking', and I don't know what happened! I just, you know..." Benson trailed off. He kept his eyes lowered, like he had said too much and was now too scared to deal with the consequences.

All the while, Troy sat there, eyes growing wider with every word Benson said, unable to even process the meaning. *Benson was overthinking because he and Adam were 'talking'? Was Benson... no no NO he couldn't think that. But what if he was?*

Finally, he managed to croak out. "You- you were jealous of Adam?"

And, Troy expected anything else, anything. Denial, laughter, general dismissal. But what he didn't expect was silence, as Benson seemed to shrink further into himself. Troy just sat there in disbelief. *No way. There was no way.* But then, all of a sudden it seemed to hit him.

*Benson probably thought Troy was replacing him as a best friend because he didn't know Troy had moved on. Because Troy had most **definitely** moved on from Benson Mekler thank you very much.*

"Benson," Troy said gently, smiling as he placed a hand on his friend's shoulder. "I get it."

"What?" Benson said quickly, eyes wide in what looked like fear. "Y-You do?"

"Yeah," Troy said. "And you have nothing to overthink! Yeah, me and Adam were 'talking', but we're just better as friends. And besides, I would never replace you! I've moved on from that thing I told you years ago, so you have nothing to worry about!"

The words seemed to almost have the opposite of their intended intent, as Benson's expression crumpled, and he looked up at Troy. "Y-You moved on," he said quietly. "So, you, you don't have a crush on me anymore?"

The words coming directly out of Benson's mouth startled Troy, and for a few moments he stammered, coughing slightly. "Well, y-yeah," he muttered, scoffing.

"Huh," Benson muttered, looking away, his shoulders falling. Troy stared at him, trying to catch his eye, but failing.

"So, are we good?" he asked slowly. Benson looked up, a tired smile playing on his lips.

"Yeah, we're good man," he said, accepting a high-five from Troy. "Let's go back to the others, I do want my date cake," he added with a laugh, and Troy smiled, bumping shoulders with Benson as he walked ahead.

But Benson's mind was occupied the entire time. Irony was a cruel trick, after all.

All this time later, the boy who he had rejected had moved on, while he fell for him.

What a mess to be in.

Chapter End Notes

crawls in heyyyyyyyyy bestieeeeeeee sorry im late ahahahahah wild right?

anyway, im genuinely so sorry for the delay in chapters!! uni semester started and my butt is being KICKED right now. but i had to post this chapter eventually, after all... the story is coming to an end soon.

I KNOW I KNOW. ITS LOOKING BAD RIGHT NOW BUT TRUST ME, I HAVE SOMETHING HERE.

but until then, have this chapter :D

kudos/comments appreciated!!!

my twt: @silentmvies

my tumblr: thirteen-beaxhes

rose's twt: @bvckbegins

chapter ten

Chapter Summary

it's been a year since troy and benson talked and things seem to have gone back to normal. but, will dinner at kipo and asher's new apartment bring to light new secrets?

Chapter Notes

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

ONE YEAR LATER

“I cannot believe that we made it here,” Dahlia said with a smile, looking at all her friends as she raised her paper cup. “And that, after all these years, our two dear friends *actually* got their heads out of their asses!”

Dave laughed, jumping up onto the nearby cardboard box tower. “Couldn’t have said it better myself, Dee,” he said, resting his elbow against her. “It was a long journey, a lot of twists and turns, and a lot of moments where we didn’t think we’d make it, and yet we prevailed!”

“God,” Asher sighed, squeezing Kipo’s hand as they rolled their eyes. “You guys are so dramatic for no reason. This is just our moving in party.”

“But it’s a big deal, Asher!” Kipo cheered, turning over excitedly to face her partner. “We’re moving in together! And you’re about to get your tattoo parlor downstairs!”

Asher’s smile softened, their eyes sparkling as they reached up to cup Kipo’s cheek. “And your flower shop too, Keeps. It’s you and me together,” they said softly, leaning forward so their noses brushed. “Okay maybe this is kinda special, they get a free pass.” At that, Kipo squealed excitedly, pulling Asher in for a quick kiss, Asher giggling into it. It had been a few months in the making, but with a lot of help from the Timbercats and the racoons, Asher and Kipo had finally found the perfect apartment, with space for their joint tattoo parlor and flower shop. It was everything they could’ve dreamed of, and they had it together.

“Oi! We’re still here!” Wolf shouted, just as Adam threw a balled-up tissue paper wad in their direction. “This is a group activity.”

“I don’t know, Wolf, they seem happy enough,” Troy said, pushing aside a group of boxes, a mixture of Asher and Kipo’s things, trying to make a place to sit. “Maybe we should take the food and run while we can.”

“Troy!” Kipo gasped, clutching her chest. “How could you?”

“Okay, no one’s taking the food anywhere! I did not make dinner only for people to run away with it!” Benson’s voice rang out from the small kitchenette in the apartment.

“Buddy, you sure you don’t need help there?” Adam called out, and Benson leaned around the corner, flashing a quick smile.

“I got it here, thanks Adam!” he said brightly, before immediately going back to cooking.

Dave tutted quietly, shaking his head. “I told him, he can’t do it alone. I even went into the kitchen to offer my fine culinary services.”

“Oh god,” Troy mumbled, eyes wide in fear. Asher and Kipo just stared at each other in barely contained worry, and Wolf dropped the knife they had been messing around with, looking up with a raised eyebrow.

“Don’t worry guys, I dragged him out before he could cause any explosions,” Dahlia said, a sigh of relief rippling across the room. “Just mentioning Explosion Berry Cola to him gets him distracted.”

“Now, that’s just rude, Dahlia, how could you- wait, did you say Explosion Berry?” Dave piped up, eyes wide as he jumped onto Dahlia’s shoulder. “You have more?”

Dahlia simply turned to the group, a smirk on her face. “Told you,” she said confidently, walking over to one of the many cartons on Kipo and Asher’s floor.

Troy laughed, but his eyes soon drifted over to the kitchen where Benson was. It had been a year since that conversation of theirs, where they talked and worked things out. And they were good again, and their small family had even accepted Adam into their fold with immeasurable ease. Everything was perfect, just the way it used to be.

Except.

Troy couldn’t put a finger on it, not exactly. Things had been good between him and Benson since they talked, and they had practically gone back to how they used to be. But, it was also like Benson had started to be a bit more distant, keeping his space more and more, and it was driving Troy crazy. It wasn’t obvious by any means, to anyone else in their group, Benson and Troy seemed thick as thieves. But he knew, he could tell something was up.

All since that day Troy looked at Benson and told him he didn’t like him anymore.

That should’ve solved everything. He could clear the air that had, for some reason, been left tense for almost 4 years now, and he and Benson could just be friends again. But ever since he said those words, Benson had been acting off. Not to mention, the words Asher had said all that while back haunted him.

“Troy, don’t you know the reason?”

What did they mean? What could that possibly translate to? The only one that made sense.... It wasn’t possible. It couldn’t be. Because Troy had moved on from Benson, and he no longer had a crush.

Then why was it so hard to believe?

Just as Troy was about to get lost in this spiral of thoughts, a loud clattering sound came from the kitchen, causing everyone to jump up, Kipo accidentally summoning her jaguar paws in response.

Benson sheepishly peeked around the corner, a small smile on his face. “Sorry, dropped the salad,” he said quietly, resulting in the room erupting in laughter.

“Hey chef, when’s our dinner?” Wolf called out, rolling their eyes.

Benson just smiled, straightening up. “As soon as someone comes and helps me out with these plates,” he called out.

“And, that’s my cue,” Troy said, smirking as he pushed himself off his makeshift throne of cardboard, heading over to the kitchen. Benson glanced at him, flashing a quick smile before nodding at a bowl.

“Grab those two, and drop the spoons in them,” he instructed, and Troy complied, lifting them up. “Let’s go do this thing,” he said, winking at Troy, before walking away.

Troy just stared dumbly after him, shaking his head wildly before following. *What the hell was going on, and why was his heart racing?*

*

“Oh. My. God. Benson, I don’t know what you did, but this is easily some of the best food I have ever eaten,” Kipo said, her words muffled as she kept scarfing down the cheesy jalapeno poppers.

“How did you make this taste so good?” Dave exclaimed, chugging down the contents of the bowl in front of him.

“Dave, at least I didn’t add any of you ‘special flavouring’,” Benson said, raising an eyebrow.

“No but, Kipo’s right Benson,” Adam said, licking his fingers. “That had to be some of the best food I’ve had on the surface. And I’ve had a lot!”

“Adam, you haven’t eaten that much on the surface,” Troy said, narrowing his eyes. “You were in a burrow until literally two years ago, when Kipo and Wolf came to you guys.”

“Well, I, that’s beside the point!” Adam sputtered, causing Dahlia to snort loudly, sending the group into hysterics.

“Okay, Adam’s hyperbole aside, he is right,” Asher chimed in, holding their plate to Benson. “I think I would eat the plate if it meant getting more of that awesome food.”

“Okay Asher, let’s not get crazy here,” Dahlia giggled, mussing up Asher’s hair, something they didn’t find amusing in the slightest.

“I know you were always the one to cook for us, but even I’m impressed Benson,” Wolf said, a genuine smile on their face as she looked at him.

All the while, Benson just looked around, keeping his eyes down. He loved being cheered for of course, but compliments like this about his food still managed to make him bashful.

“Thanks guys,” he started. “But it’s really nothing, it’s simple stuff-”

“Oh my god Benson, just let us compliment you, ya big goof,” Dahlia said, cutting him off, startling everyone. Benson just stared up at her, before nodding slowly.

Troy just smiled, shaking his head as he looked down. “Seriously Benson,” he said. “You have a gift.”

“Actually,” Benson said quietly, looking at the group across from him as he stood up. “I, uh. I was thinking, since everyone is kind of finding their place in Las Vistas, I was thinking about what I want to do. And, so, I was kind of thinking about starting a restaurant of my own.”

The silence in the room made Benson’s heart drop to his stomach, scared that he had voiced something stupid and he was going to be made fun of. But just as he thought that, everyone started cheering loudly, and Kipo even jumped up to hug him. And of course, Benson picked her up and spun her around as he hugged back.

“Benson that’s an amazing idea!” she said excitedly, eyes sparkling as she looked at him. “You would be so good!”

“I know for a fact me and Kipo would always be there for date night!” Asher added, flashing a smirk at Benson. “And for coffee runs on mine and Adam’s night walks.”

“And, there’s an empty lot near the gym where me and Doug work,” Dahlia piped up, smiling. “And it has an apartment attached to it! It’s perfect for what you want.”

“I think you can actually do this, Benson,” Wolf said, smirking. “It’s meant to be.”

“My best friend, the future Chef of Las Vistas!” Dave cheered, wiping away a tear. “They grow up so fast.”

“Guys, guys!” Benson said, laughing as he felt tears of happiness fill up. “You’re all being so awesome about this, and I love you all so much,” he continued, much to the ‘aww’s of everyone present. “But, opening a restaurant is a big deal! I don’t know if I can do it all alone, so who knows?”

Benson’s face dropped as he said that, and the mood dulled when the realisation hit everyone. Troy couldn’t look away from Benson, the way his shoulders dropped, his head hung low. And so, before he stopped to think, he spoke up.

“I’ll help you Benson, whatever you need.”

As soon as he said that, Benson’s head snapped up, eyes wide. Everyone in the room also turned to stare at him. Troy was trying desperately to ignore the way Asher and Dahlia were

definitely staring at him, and how Adam was just gawking at him. All he was focused on was Benson's unreadable expression.

"I'm, I'm sorry, that was random," Troy started to backpedal, feeling a mixture of embarrassment, regret and sorrow sink in. "I shouldn't have assumed you were asking, and-"

"That," Benson said, his face breaking out into the most radiant and bright smile Troy had ever seen from him. "Would be the best thing ever, Troy. Yes!" he cheered, a stray tear rolling down his cheek as he ran up to him, enveloping him in the biggest hug. "Thank you," Benson whispered in Troy's ear, pulling him closer.

Troy just let out a small laugh, hugging Benson tighter, letting his eyes close. That impulse to say what he did, coupled with the way Benson's face had lit up, it was worth it in Troy's eyes. Not to mention, there he was, hugging Benson, and his heart wasn't even racing! He just felt warm, and safe, and at home. Like Benson fit perfectly into his already complete world.

Oh.

Oh no.

The realisation hit Troy like a tonne of bricks on his chest, and he was lucky that he didn't comically pull away from Benson and get to running. Because in all his talk of having moved on from his crush on Benson, he had done something far worse.

He had moved on from a crush, to falling completely in love with Benson Mekler, without having even realised it. And he had gone ahead and told him to his face, that he didn't feel the same way about him.

And now, he had just volunteered to help him set up and run a restaurant, and no doubt, also move in with him for it. After this earth-shattering realisation too.

Troy Sandoval was completely, and utterly, screwed.

Chapter End Notes

it is with great pleasure that i come to inform you that this fic will soon be coming to an end withing the next chapter or two!! sorry for the slow updates but motivation has been a real kicker but im trying

chapter eleven

Chapter Summary

it's the night before benson's restaurant opening, and there's a lot of unresolved feelings on both boys' ends. will everything finally be sorted out?

Chapter Notes

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

SIX MONTHS LATER

World-shattering, life-altering feeling realisations aside, the world went on as it did, with the group of friends sticking together through thick and thin. Kipo and Asher finally decorated their apartment, Asher was able to start their tattoo parlor, along with a flower shop run by Kipo. The opening was a huge success, and the party lasted till the next morning, with Dave somehow working his guest lecture material from Song and Lio's school into a stand-up comedy bit. There was also that unexplained moment where Adam, Dahlia and Molly Yarnchopper had somehow managed to lose Yumyan in the party, eventually finding him curled up and snoring on a lamppost. Jamack had managed to come to the party too, much to Kipo's excitement, as she ran up to him and jumped into a hug. Lio had managed to rope Roberto into a dance battle that was less dance, and more flailing limbs; but it didn't matter. Because everyone was together, just as they always would be.

At the party, Benson and Troy would always end up in each other's orbits, awkwardly bumping into each other, moments and stares lingering longer than friends' would. And every single was bringing both of them closer and closer to a breaking point of just spilling it all out. And it wasn't just at the party either. As the world kept spinning, and planning for Benson's restaurant really started to kick into high gear, the two of them just got worse.

Troy, ever since he had the unfortunate realisation he was now in love with the person who had rejected him, and then he himself had unknowingly rejected, was more than aware of the feeling of complete belonging he felt whenever he met up with Benson for talking about the restaurant. How hours felt like seconds, all because the person in front of him was everything he ever wanted.

Benson was just having a hard time. After all, was it his fault that Troy was basically helping him try and achieve his dream, all while being the most supportive and helpful person Benson could've asked for? Was it on him that whenever he managed to make Troy smile about something, it would create this feeling of a summer storm in his chest that made him

realise, *opening and owning a restaurant with the person who you rejected, who has now moved on, is the worst idea ever* . Yeah, he was in deep.

Of course, as one would imagine, all their friends could see both sides, clear as day. Kipo saw it whenever she happened to mention Benson when she and Troy would meet to go skating, the way his eyes would light up for a moment before forcibly being tamped down. Dahlia saw it in how Benson would sigh quietly, as he pointed out something Troy had said as he and Dahlia would check out the lot along with the Fitness Raccoons, who would take any avenue of exercise they could get. Wolf saw it in the way Troy would stare dreamily up at the stage at Brunchington Beach, as Benson would DJ for the Umlaut Snakes' performances. Dave couldn't help BUT see it, when they were at the pier for the K-Pop Narwhals performance, how the two stood close together, and anyone with eyes could see they wanted nothing more than to hold each other's hand.

And needless to say, they were all climbing up the walls about it.

But Troy and Benson were way too busy to even notice the group's reactions to them, every spare thought being devoted to getting the restaurant ready for opening. There were dishes to be sampled, menus to be decided, decor to be made and placed. Not to mention, moving into a new apartment at the same time. Even though Cappucino had graciously helped the two of them out, Benson couldn't help but feel like an anxious mess every time he thought about the restaurant opening. *What if people didn't like the food? What if they laughed at him? What if this was all a big mistake?*

But then, Troy would place a hand on Benson's shoulder, or lightly tap his face, smiling warmly at him, and the worry would calm down, even for just a little bit. And if that wasn't the worst part of it all?

Because Benson knew that every time Troy grabbed his shoulder, smiled at him with the kind, soft smile when things were stressful and the work was immense, and their hands brushed when walking side by side, it hurt more. He knew he liked Troy, had feelings for him, had a crush, whatever. What he hadn't anticipated, was the way he felt like, there was nowhere else he would rather be. How simply being around Troy made the work feel less stressful and consuming, and how everything felt *right*. And how, there was only one word he could really use to describe it all.

Love.

Just when Benson thought he wasn't screwed enough, the universe came crashing in to tell him otherwise.

All this while, Troy just didn't know what to do. Most of his time, he spent letting his heart warm at the tiny things Benson did. The way Benson would look at him expectantly as he became his personal dish-taster. How he would ramble and wave the pen around while planning out the layout of the restaurant, excitedly letting all his ideas spill out. How his shoulders would relax from their tension when Troy placed his hand on them, trying to bring him out of his own head. All those moments, Troy's love for Benson was quiet, patient, manageable. But then, the few moments he was alone now, his brain screamed at him. Because here he was, going on the same ride all over again. *Definition of insanity is repeating*

the same mistakes and behaviours, or something. He had fallen asleep during that school lecture.

So they danced around each other, around their feelings, and just plunged themselves into getting Benson's restaurant ready for its opening. And finally, after six months of complete focus, 4 breakdowns, and a lot of pizza, there they were. The night before the opening.

That last day had been filled with panic induced decorating, last minute menu changes, general chaos and screaming, and an incident involving Kipo's Mega Jaguar form and tablecloth that everyone there swore they would never repeat to save her the embarrassment. The whole gang had been there to help out. Or rather, the whole gang, except Dave, who opted to sit on the roof and shout out random orders that made no sense as he snacked on a batch of tester 'potato noodles'.

But eventually, almost everything was done, and all that was left was the final touches. Kipo and Asher were the first to leave, Kipo pulling Benson and Troy into a tight hug, while Asher offered them high-fives and a smirk, saying, "Good luck for tomorrow, punks." Then Dahlia, Adam and Dave set off back home, Dave heading over to theirs for the night for no reason other than they had central cooling. And finally, Wolf, after moving the oven back into place, held up her hand for a fist-bump. "Don't worry guys," they said, smiling. "It's gonna be great."

And just like that, it was back to just Benson and Troy, and now that the work was mostly complete, their messy feelings. Benson glanced over at Troy, who was currently moving a table around, even though it was already perfectly placed. The night air felt weirdly tense, like a wire drawn tight for some reason. Honestly, it was quite unsettling.

It was in that heavy silence, with all the work done, that it finally hit Benson. His restaurant was opening *tomorrow*. People were coming to his restaurant opening *the next morning*. *Everything he could dream of was just a night away, and he couldn't even deal with his emotions! So how on Earth could he ever be prepared?!*

"Whoa there," Troy said, looking up, almost as if he could see the spiral down in Benson's mind. "Benson," he sighed quietly, ducking his head slightly so he could catch Benson's eye. "It's gonna be okay. Your restaurant opening is gonna be amazing, you have nothing to worry about!"

"You mean 'our restaurant' Troy," Benson all but whispered, his voice raspy. "You did this whole thing with me, even though you didn't have to."

Troy just smiled, shrugging slightly as he placed a hand on Benson's shoulder. "Well I couldn't let you do it alone now, could I?" he scoffed, and felt a hit of delight at the way Benson's shoulder shook as he laughed.

"You're impossible Sandoval," he wheezed, rolling his eyes as he looked away, and Troy just smirked.

"Well I am awesome," he kept going, causing Benson to laugh more. "I mean, I helped you, that's how I know this is gonna work out for you!" But as the laughter died down, Troy's

smile grew more sincere, and his hand travelled down to grab Benson's elbow. "Benson, it's gonna go great. You're super hard-working, and you've put everything in this. You have nothing to worry about."

It took everything in Benson to not gasp, or melt in Troy's hands, after what he said. It was like the wire of tension was now charged, and *why did the moonlight make it seem like Troy was looking at Benson like he was the answer to every mystery of the universe?* Instead, he managed out a weak laugh, feeling his throat choke up.

"I don't know what I'd do without you, Troy," he said quietly, his tone betraying more depth behind the jest.

Troy took in a sharp breath, eyes wide, before melting into something soft. "You'd probably crash and burn," he joked, giggling softly as Benson joined in.

They couldn't ignore it now. Something was happening, something that couldn't be danced around in the usual way, not anymore. And both Benson and Troy knew it. Troy was staring at Benson, trying to ignore the way his heart was screaming how right it all felt. And the crazy part was, Benson was staring right back, bit by bit building the courage to *say something*. As the moments mounted, and the air grew electric, Troy felt himself leaning in slowly, inch by inch. And, maybe he was imagining things, but *was Benson doing the same? No, he couldn't, that wasn't possible. What was he doing-*

And just like that, Troy abruptly leaned away, eyes wide, like a deer caught in the headlights. Benson's eyes snapped open, almost looking disappointed, as Troy coughed slightly, eyes looking around wildly.

"I should, I should go and sleep," Troy started to mumble, his eyes trained to the ground. "I'm so sorry, goodnight Benson." As he said that, he dropped his hand from Benson's arm and started to walk away, leaving Benson behind, standing frozen.

There you go, his brain unhelpfully supplied. Congratulations! He was letting the boy he loved walk away from him, yet again! How could he have thought this story would have any other ending? He was just too-

No.

No, there would be a different ending now.

Benson wasn't too late.

A small part of him even whispered, *maybe he was right on time.*

"Troy!" Benson called out, pushing himself up and running up to Troy. He grabbed the other boy by his elbow, all but spinning him around to face him. Troy gasped, startled as he was turned to face Benson.

"Benson, what are you-"

“Can I kiss you?” Benson breathed out, taking a deep breath as his gaze flicked down to Troy’s lips before meeting his eyes.

Troy’s eyes flew wide open, his heart stopping at the question. As he stared back at Benson, he dug the nail of his middle finger into the inside of his thumb, gasping slightly at the sharp pain.

It wasn’t a dream.

As soon as that realisation sank in, that this was *real*, his face broke out into the brightest grin Benson had ever seen. “Yes,” he whispered, the word itself lifting a five-year heavy weight off his chest.

Benson’s face split into a huge smile, an incredulous laugh slipping past his lips, as he bounced on the balls of his feet. He reached out with shaky hands to cup Troy’s face, his hands wrapped around Benson’s waist, as they both leaned in.

And Benson finally kissed Troy, the matching thoughts in their heads being only one word:

Finally.

Chapter End Notes

hey everyone!! WE FINALLY GOT HERE..... WE FINALLY MADE IT!!
just the epilogue left after this, before these boys get their happy ending. so i'll save the sappy note for then :D

KUDOS/COMMENTS APPRECIATED!

my twt: @lesbianamara

rose's twt: @WILDCITY

epilogue

Chapter Summary

the next day.

Chapter Notes

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

THE NEXT DAY

“Are they acting weird or what?”

Kipo looked up from her food at Wolf’s question, turning her head to where everyone was looking. The whole gang, along with a lot of their mute friends in Las Vistas, were all at the opening of Benson’s Restaurant, the ‘Cat-tacular Cafe’. And the opening seemed to be a major success, with nothing but rave reviews for the food, the ambience, and Benson and Troy’s jovial attitude.

Speaking of Benson and Troy....

Yeah, they *were* acting weird. Benson was always gazing at Troy like he hung the stars, but now, Troy was doing the same right back, when Benson could still see him?! And, as Kipo looked closer, they were always brushing past each other, placing hands on shoulders and arms as they passed by.

“Are they, holding hands?” Dahlia stage-whispered, and the whole table whipped their heads around to see them in the window. And yes, Dahlia was right, *they were holding hands?!?!*

“Okay, I’ve seen it all,” Adam said in a deadpanned voice. “I think we have all officially lost our minds. Because there’s no way we could be seeing what we’re actually seeing.”

“I don’t know guys,” Asher just said in a sing-song voice. “Maybe it is really happening...”

“Shush, tempter, you only want to be right!” Dave said loudly, glaring at Asher, who just smirked in return.

“Shh guys! They’re coming here!’ Kipo whispered loudly, and the group immediately jumped apart, looking back down at their plates. Benson and Troy, who were whispering between themselves, laughing quietly about something, walked up to their table, smiling at their friends.

“So,” Benson said excitedly. “What do you think?”

“Benson, if I could marry food, I would marry this,” Kipo spoke up first, much to the emphatic nods of Adam. “This is amazing!!”

“You have a gift, my friend,” Asher said, smiling. “Keep using it.”

“My little Benson is all grown up,” Dave sobbed out, jumping onto Benson’s shoulder. “He’s doing his own thing now!”

“Guys!” Benson said, his eyes glistening with tears. “Stop, you’re going to set me off!”

Troy just smiled, wrapping an arm around Benson’s shoulder, pulling him in for a hug. “Told you it would be great,” he whispered, getting a smile from the boy, ignoring the stares from all their friends.

“Oh!” Benson said, snapping up, as if he had just remembered. “Yeah, me and Troy talked everything out.”

“What?” Dahlia said quietly, everyone at the table looking around with wide eyes.

“Yup,” Troy said, a radiant smile on his face. “So, I guess this is us telling you that, we’re together now?”

“Wow babe,” Benson said, rolling his eyes. “At least have some confidence behind that declaration!”

“Oh haha, leave me alone you goof,” Troy just said, leaning over to press a kiss to Benson’s temple.

However, all this while, the table sat in dead silence. Benson and Troy shared a look, before glancing nervously back, every passing moment making them feel like they had somehow messed up. And then, all of a sudden-

“I cannot believe this!”

“Goddamnit, why now? I was a year off!”

“Screw you Asher, you had to have known something!”

“Pay up, kiddos! I won!”

Benson and Troy watched in confusion as everyone grumbled about, pulling out money from their pockets, all of it being handed to Asher, who sat there triumphantly. It was only after a few minutes of this, that Benson realised.

“Wait, you guys bet on us?”

“Well duh!” Wolf said, rolling her eyes. “What other fun could there be?”

“Wow, I can’t believe we were just a vessel for Asher to earn money,” Troy scoffed, and Asher winked at him.

“Believe it, catboy,” they said, counting the money.

Troy just rolled his eyes, turning to his boyfriend and pulling him in for a kiss, ignoring the catcalls from their friends.

This was what happiness felt like.

And it had only taken them five years to get there.

Chapter End Notes

so here we are. we re finally at the end of the five year twist in fate.

first of all, im so sorry for all the delays, life just kept getting in the way and it kept piling up and up. but i finally made it!!

second of all, i may not rite kipo fics for a while, i'll see how i feel soon. rn, im gonna focus on my other fandom,s but im not done with the kipoverse just yet!!

and thirdly, thank you to everyone who is still reading. it was a bumpy ride, but we finally got to the end, and i really hope you had as much fun reading as i did writing!

SPECIAL THANKS TO ROSE, THIS STORY LITERLLY WOULDNT EXIST
WITHOUT YOU BESTIE <3

okay for the last time, signing off :D

KUDOS/COMMENTS APPRECIATED

my twt: @lesbianamara

rose's twt: @WILDCITY

End Notes

hey everyone! so me and rose were talking and realised that a benroy 4-5 year unrequited love slow burn story with slight canon divergence was just too good to not have it exist, so here it is!! hopefully I'll post it over the next couple weeks, but there's a lot going on already so please bear with me!

this fic will have around 10 chapters + the prologue so, hope you enjoy! kudos/comments super appreciated!!!

my twt: @ghostboyfs

rose's twt: @WNDERBEASTS

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!