

**to make things right.**

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# to make things right.

by [peachyelixer](#)

## Summary

L'Manberg was gone. Tommy had nothing left. He lost his relationship with Technoblade. Wilbur was dead, Phil viewed him as a traitor. Tubbo and him were strained, to say the least.

And he's tired. God, he's so tired, and all he wants to do is rest, finally be free of all the burdens he carried constantly.

The weight of the world is a lot to put on a 16-year-olds shoulders.

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Or : Technoblade stumbles upon Tommy in the Nether, ready to take his last life within the lava. He manages to save him, and swears to make things right with his family. He would protect his baby brother - he was going to fix this.

## Notes

TW : suicide, suicide attempt, dark thoughts, manipulation, abuse, etc. Basically everything relevant to the Dream SMP plot.

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

## **burned boy, broken boy ; why do you fall?**

Staring into the bubbling, popping lava miles below him, feet barely edging the cliff, Tommy realizes how ironic his situation is. He was back at the edge of the lava pool. Somehow, he knew he would always end up here, eventually. Like a constant tug in his chest that just kept pulling, pulling, pulling, until the straw came that broke the camels back and led Tommy to this very moment.

L'Manburg was gone. The once towering, proud nation had been reduced to nothing but a crater, a hole in the ground where his home used to be. Tommy himself had watched as Dream, Techno and Phil - a set of names that made him almost nauseous to group together - nuked the area with TNT and stood back to watch their creation unfold.

It was gone. Everything he had worked for was gone.

His last memories of Wilbur - god, Wilbur - were gone. The van, the L'ManTree, all reduced to nothing but a pile of ash in a pit. Tommy felt like that, when he thought about it - a pile of ash in a pit. Smoldering, smoldering, and then gone with the wind.

The lava pops below him. A set of feet approach from behind. Tommy makes no effort to move. It would be futile, anyways ; he had left all of his belongings in a series of chests marked for Tubbo. He had nothing to defend himself with even if he wanted to.

"What're you doing out here, Theseus." The voice prods, as monotone as ever, and Tommy has to physically hold back his need to laugh.

"Techno." He greets shortly. He makes no other sound, no move to face the other, and for a few moments, silence envelopes them. Tommy has no clue what the other is thinking, but he's sure it isn't much. "Good riddance", probably. "Finally".

"You didn't answer my question." comes out instead. All Tommy can do is hum in response. He wishes he were alone, but he's learned well enough at this point that whatever being watching over him is determined to make things difficult. Kick him when he's down, pour salt in the wound, and watch him writhe.

There's nothing more ironic than standing over a pit of lava, with the brother you betrayed but hours ago standing behind you.

"I'm sorry." Pushes past Tommy's lips, surprising even himself, the words seeming to take form and pass on their own. Once the dam had broken, however, he found himself continuing. "You're my brother. I've always loved you. I've never seen you as a weapon, as something to use. But I never showed it. And I was stupid. And I fucked up. And I'm sorry."

The teenager wishes he could turn around, wishes he could see the look on the others face. Not like it would tell him much, anyways. He's probably as stone-cold as ever, just as emotionless as when he was tearing Tommy's home apart block by block.

But he can't look at Techno, can't bring himself, so he lets his eyes remain where they are. Trained on the popping bubbles below.

"Why are you saying this all now." The words barely come out as a question, more of a statement.

"It's funny." Tommy chooses to mumble instead. He shifts, and he swears he hears Techno lurch, but stops once he realizes Tommy is just moving to sit down. Legs dangling over the cliff, the heat rising to burn his soles, he stares into the lava as if it could speak to him. Reach for him, hold him, bring him far, far away from here. "You said it, and you were right. History repeats itself. And here I am, staring at the same lava pool. Here I am, right back where I started." He laughs, and it sounds broken even to him. "I mean, what's the point? Me and you both know that there's no right answer. When I was standing there, in the fucking community house, looking between you and Tubbo, something occurred to me.

No answer I could've chosen would've been right. If I had chosen Tubbo, you would hate me. You do hate me. If I chose you, I would've watched my home go up in flames. I would've-" his hand balled into a fist, pressed against the hardened netherrack below him. "I would've lost the last memory I ever had of my brother. And all of that happened, too." He laughs again, but this time, it's mixed with a sob, tears running down his face that he didn't even notice were there at first. "None of it matters. Not the disk, not what Dream did to me, none of it. Because I will ALWAYS end up back here. You heard Dream - I'm 'just too fun'. He will always come back for me. I will always be his plaything. I will never be free. No matter what I do, no matter what choice I make, nothing will ever change. History repeats itself, and I will always be caught in the riptide. Unless I do something about it."

"Tommy-"

"Do you know what Dream did to me in exile, Techno?"

The question sits heavy in the already suffocating air. For the first time, Tommy tilts his head back, and makes dead eye contact with Techno. The older of the two, to his surprise, does seem to be slightly distressed - at least, as far as Techno goes. He's gripping the sword by his side, one foot out, as if ready to break into a dead sprint. When they connect eyes, he sees something that almost looks like...guilt. He shakes it off.

"We...We never got around to that conversation." Techno says slowly, as if walking on eggshells, terrified any wrong move would send his only remaining brother tumbling off the edge of a cliff.

"He abused me." Tommy said, point blank, maintaining dead eye contact with the other. "I didn't realize it at the time. Every day, he would have me throw my things into a hole, and make me watch as he burned them. Anything I had that I loved he would kill or destroy. My cow, my tools, everything. Everyday he reminded me that the reason nobody visited - Tubbo, Phil, YOU - nobody, was because everybody fucking hated me. I'm too annoying. They don't like me. They were ecstatic to get rid of me. I hosted a beach party and Dream promised to pass out the invites. He didn't. Nobody showed, and Dream went, 'See? i told you nobody gives a shit.' He hit me whenever he was mad. On the last day, the one I ran away, he strangled me. He wouldn't let me eat. I starved the entire time I was there."

Tommy maintains eye contact with Techno as he spits out the next words. "And you sided with him."

Techno feels like he's been punched in the gut. The voices in his head - the guilty ones - yell that he should've noticed this. Sure, they had never formally talked about it, but the warning signs were there. Tommy would flinch whenever Techno raised his voice, would immediately apologize over the smallest things, would always assume Techno was mad at him over everything. That was so unlike Tommy. Techno KNEW it was unlike Tommy, but he was so caught up in his own fantasy of anarchy that he had barely spent any time to notice. To inspect. To /care/.

He feels like a shit brother.

"I need you to understand." Tommys voice brings him back, "that I don't...I don't hate you. I never hated you. You're my brother. You're my friend. Siding with Tubbo...it wasn't about screwing over you, or screwing over Phil. It was...I was terrified, Techno. Standing there, with everyone hating me, everyone I had considered friends...I broke." he laughed. "I've been broken for a long fucking time, I guess. And I'm sorry you ever got dragged into it."

Finally - fucking finally - Techno finds his voice. Even he is shocked at how shaky it comes out when he goes, "We don't have to be on bad terms, Tommy. I don't hate you either."

At this point, Tommy had fixated his gaze back on the lava, legs swinging back and forth, back and forth. "How long will that last?" He asks slowly. "Don't you get it, Techno? You said it yourself. History repeats itself. We'll get along for a month, two if we're lucky, and then something will drive us apart. Dad hates me - he sees me as a traitor. I'm sure you do too, you just don't want to feel guilty over what's about to happen."

Slowly, Tommy rises to his feet, and Techno feels his heart stop. Tommy turns, slowly, feet on the very edge and back to the lava, facing Techno.

The piglin considers himself a strong man, far stronger than others, but he almost cries when he sees how broken his baby brothers eyes are. He's always so sassy, always so full of life - too busy insulting people and laughing obnoxiously to be sad or burdened.

Somewhere along the line, that version of his brother had died, giving birth to a traumatized, war-torn teen, never given the chance of healing.

"Don't blame yourself." Tommy says slowly. He raises one hand to the side of his head, and presses two fingers to his temple before quickly moving them out in a saluting motion.

"You know what Wilbur said." He smiles, and Techno finds himself moving before he can even really register it.

"It was never meant to be."

Tommy was plummeting backwards, body careening closer and closer to the lavas welcoming warmth.

Technoblade, before he can even think about it, heaves himself off the side of the cliff, following his brother in hot pursuit. Hands fumble desperately in his bag, fingers clasping around the thin neck of a bottle.

His hands grab Tommy and bring him close. With the desperation of a thousand men, he throws down the potion, and watches as it explodes in a burst of red around them.

They both hit the lava, with Technos body wrapped around Tommys, determined to finally, finally protect his brother. He had failed him for so long, but he wouldn't anymore. He refused to be an only child.

His hands found Tommys hair, and he pulls his head against his chest, and holds on for dear life.

He would protect his baby brother. He would.

# scorched boy, scorned boy ; why do you sleep?

## Chapter Notes

TW for suicide references, slight gore descriptions (not graphic at all), & manipulation. you know the drill

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

When Techno heaves Tommys body over the side of the bubbling lava pool, the first thing he checks is whether or not his little brother is breathing.

He is, but Techno feels like he himself isn't. Not after all that stress he just went through.

The second thing he took in was Tommy's general state, which he frowned lightly at. The fire-resistance potion had worked, but it wasn't a cure all. When the older brother took a step back to fully examine the situation, he noticed the burns littering Tommy's body. Some were more severe than others, but since Tommy was entirely unconscious - Techno figures he had passed out sometime during the fall, probably from a combination of reasons - he couldn't ask his brother what hurt the most.

Surprisingly, Techno feels very little pain in his own body. Being a pig hybrid, among other things, meant having abnormally tough skin, saving him from the same burns that had burdened his brother.

Honestly, it just made him feel more guilty. He didn't deserve to be okay, while Tommy only gets more hurt.

The voices have never been this loud. His mind is screaming, screeching, the voices chanting, pounding for blood. Specifically, Dreams blood.

Kill him. Kill him. He hurt Tommy. You hurt Tommy. Tommy hurt you. Tommy is a child. Tommy is hurt. Dream hurt Tommy. Dream. Dream. Kill. Blood.

Techno grasps his hands over his ears desperately and lets out a low cry, his attempt at drowning out the incessant chatter. To any passerby, he would look crazy, but his only company at the moment was the occasional groaning Piglin and his unconscious baby brother.

Tommy. Tommy. Get Tommy home. Take care of Tommy first. Dream later. Tommy first.

Without much thought, brain unable to process a...considerable amount of what had just happened, Techno leans down. Hooking one arm underneath Tommys knobby knees, and another under his shoulders, he heaves with a low huff, and picks up Tommy with ease.

He's thin. If he were awake, he would be thrashing, probably yelling some assortment of "Bitch!" and "I am not a child, dickhead!"

But he isn't awake. He is very much unconscious, and very much broken.

Technoblade begins his trek home in silence. It gives him time to think.

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Somewhere, deep in the Arctic, a storm raged on. Anything once visible during the day was now covered in a fine layer of snow, creating a vast landscape of only white. For miles, that's all there was - snow, and snow, and snow, and a white rabbit, and snow.

And then, when one looked hard enough, they would find a cabin. Positioned out in the middle of nowhere, so desolate that it must have been purposeful, a dad waits anxiously for his son to return home.

Phil didn't consider himself a worrier - "yeah, sure big man", tommy's voice echoed in his head - but when the clock struck two hours past technoblade's supposed return, he couldn't deny that he was certainly on edge. Normally, he wouldn't stress too much - his son was one of the strongest on the server, and he could easily handle anything the forces threw his way.

But Phil knew Techno had been upset recently, ever since Tommy left. Ever since Tommy, well....Tommy betrayed them.

The word left a bitter taste in Phil's mouth. He remembered how he stormed home with Techno and immediately began to tear down the "traitors tower", brick by brick, insulting him the whole way.

Insulting his son. One of the two sons he had left. His sixteen year old son, who had been used, manipulated, and terrified.

Phil thinks, distantly, that it's no wonder he had already lost one of his three sons. He wasn't very good at this. He didn't MEAN to play favorite with Techno - really, he didn't. It's just...him and Techno got along.

You left your son to die in the rubble of a country you destroyed, a voice chimed in the back of his head. You practically screamed at him, through your actions, that you couldn't care less about him. You don't deserve to be a father.

"Phil? You okay?" said deceased son piped up from behind him, and Phil sighed, relaxing his grip on the stove pot. He doesn't quite remember when he started holding it that tightly, but it was beginning to hurt his hands now.

He turned to Wilbur and gave a small, forced smile, one the other saw right through. It was strange, seeing the son he knew he stabbed standing in front of him, flesh, blood, and totally not see through.

Honestly, he was still shocked the ritual had worked. It wasn't without risk, or burden - man, it had been hard to do. And Wilbur hadn't quite gotten his footing back yet, either. He was



stumbly, not used to walking as opposed to floating. It was almost like during his time as a ghost, he had forgotten to be a human.

“Just worried about Techno.” Phil responded softly, tilting his head to glance out the window. Still nothing, although he wasn’t sure he would even be able to spot them through that hellish storm. “He was supposed to be home a couple of hours ago.”

Wilbur hummed, avoiding the others eyes in favor of picking at an old scab on his knee. He seemed transfixed on touching himself, on feeling solid flesh as opposed to cold air. When he was Ghostbur, he could press a hand to his arm and go right through to the other side. Now, a layer of blood, flesh, and bone stopped him dead in his tracks. He was still getting used to it.

“I’m sure he’s fine.” He says softly. “You know Techno. He’s nothing if not self-sufficient.” Wilbur hums and flops himself back on the couch, tearing his eyes over the ceiling. “I should probably go, soon, though.”

Phil frowned in his direction. “Wilbur, I know you mean well, but I really don’t think visiting Tommy is a good idea, not after all that happened and especially not with you still getting used to-“

“He’s my little brother. ‘All that happened’ doesn’t distract from the fact that he’s my sixteen year old baby brother, and I betrayed him. I fucked him up, shoved him into a war, and then manipulated him when my mental state got bad. I made him watch while I died and then the ghost me stood by and watched as he was abused by Dream.”

“That wasn’t your fault. You quite literally weren’t capable of processing what was happening.”

“Doesn’t matter.” Wilbur insisted with a harsh shake of the head. “I know you and Techno are happy out here without him, but I can’t sit by, not knowing where my brother is. What if he’s back with Dream? What if he’s hurt, or worse? Nobodies seen shit of him since the sixth. As soon as I’m better, I’ve gotta find him, Phil. I cant let him...I can’t let him be alone again.”

Phil sighs, and it very quickly occurs to him that he has no chance of winning this argument. Once Wilbur had put his mind to something, there was no budging him - that was what had gotten them into this whole mess in the first place.

Phil agreed, though, deep down. He’s mad at Tommy, mad at him for betraying them, but he can’t stop replaying how terrified his son looked when L’Manberg was going down. Tommy was a child - a literal child who had been put through war, pressures, moral dilemmas, family death, abuse, and much, much more.

The more Phil thinks about it, the more he regrets his decisions. He loves Techno, but he’s starting to think that maybe burning down L’Manberg was the wrong move. Or, at the very least, they should’ve made sure Tommy, Tubbo, Ranboo, and the others were all clear when they did it.

Phil can't imagine seeing your brother and your country die back to back. Even more, he can't imagine your very own father being the one who initiated both separate events.

Yeah, Phil thinks. I'm a shitty dad.

A sudden banging outside brings both Phil and Wilbur out of their slightly awkward silence. Phil's head shoots towards the door - he had been too wrapped up in his own thoughts, and wasn't checking the window for any signs of Techno. What if it wasn't Techno? Who would come looking for them now, anyways?

He doesn't have to wonder for long, because, as he stands there, staring, the door bursts open. Technoblade trudges into the house - with the gremlin child himself wrapped up in his arms, swaddled inside the fighters' red cape.

Chaos ensues.

"Tommy?!" both Wilbur and Phil cry in unison, shooting forward to get a better look at their son and brother. Techno shoos them, and it's then that Phil takes in Techno's appearance. He looks stressed - the most stressed Phil has seen him looking in quite a long time. His hair is tussled like he was running, but he's holding Tommy in such a close, protective way, that it almost throws Phil off.

"I need you to clear off the couch." Technoblade turns to Wilbur, who immediately begins to move. "Phil, get me some rags, some cool water - not cold, just cool - and some burn ointment."

Phil swallows hard, and nods. Everyone gets to work.

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The next couple of hours are spent in relative silence. The trio shuffle around each other, each trying to do their part to make sure the youngest of the four is getting the help he needs. Questions burn at the tip of Phil's tongue, and he's sure Wilbur feels the same, but both of them make sure to stay quiet. Their worries can wait.

The first thing Phil notices when he gets a real, good look at Tommy is the burns that mar his skin. As Techno's cape is peeled away, revealing more of Tommy's body, he notices how bad some of the injuries really are. None are fatal unless they get infected, though, so Phil gets to work ensuring that doesn't happen. He may not be as good as Techno at fighting, but both of them have a good deal of medical knowledge, and Phil uses that to start wrapping some of Tommy's more severe burns.

The second thing Phil notices is how unchanged Tommy seems. It's been a couple of weeks since the burning of LManberg, and Phil had reasoned that, in that time, Tommy had done some much needed recovery. Put on some weight, fixed those under eye bags with some sleep - the basic elements of self care.

Whatever had happened in those few weeks, however, hadn't included any level of healing. Tommy was looking as thin as ever, just as bad as when he had fled from Dream. He was

pale, and frail, and the bags under his eyes showed that, no, he still wasn't sleeping normally.

What had happened? Phil wasn't sure anyone here knew the answer to that.

The first thing they did was clean out the worst of Tommys burns and wounds with a cool, wet rag. Techno then applied the burn cream to the skin, and continued to do the same with the wounds he considered not as severe.

Phil helped wrap, cover, and bandage. Wilbur stood to the side, watching in a tense silence, and making himself useful whenever either of the others needed something that wasn't within immediate arms reach.

It was tense, and it was quiet, but something about it almost felt familiar - all of them working together. All of them together, not for the specific purpose of murdering each other or burning down a country.

Finally, once he had finished his tasks, Techno sat back in his seat, weight settling deep into his shoulders. "We gotta find a way to get him to eat," he mutters lowly, the first words spoken since he had entered the house. "He's probably gonna be out for a day or two, but he's gotta eat something."

"Techno..." Wilbur talks slowly, quietly. "What happened?"

"Eh..." Techno rubbed at his eyes stubbornly. "Can we...can we just...get some food into him first? Then I'll tell you everything. Promise. I just wanna make sure he's got some nutrients. Gremlin's skin and bones."

Turns out, the process of getting food into Tommy wasn't as hard as any of them feared it would. Just a half an hour passed before the three were sitting around the table, discussing the events of the day. Mere feet away from them, Tommy slept, curled up with basically every single blanket in the house and then some. Techno had even let him keep his prized cape, although he would never admit to that if asked.

"I'm lucky I was able to do anything at all," Techno said lowly, eyes drifting back over to his baby brothers still form. "If I had been a little slower, or hadn't had that potion, or--"

Phil put out a hand, silently stopping his son in his tracks. "But you were there, and you did do something. Dwelling on the possibilities won't help anything. For now, we need to focus on helping him heal."

Wilbur was quiet, chewing away on his bottom lip as he stared absentmindedly down at the table. "I knew he was bad, but I didn't know he was that bad. I should've been with him more. During exile."

"Dream was manipulating Ghostbur just as much as he was manipulating Tommy."

Techno speaks slowly, and there's a level of rage in his tone that Phil hadn't heard for a long, long time. His son got mad, and he got emotional - but he was ever so talented at hiding all of

that beneath a neutral face and bored tone. But now, in front of his family, his eyebrows were furrowed and his fingers clenched into fists.

“I think we may have messed up. Tommy made mistakes, yeah, but, well, he’s a kid. And we’re all adults, and we let him down. I was so focused on planning the fall of LManberg that I never really noticed how much Dream had hurt him, the kind of torment he had gone through in exile. Dad, I-“ he swallows, and makes eye contact with Philza “you should’ve been here sooner. You’re his dad, and I know he felt your absence. He felt how both of us were so quick to call him a traitor without thinking about the trauma and emotional suffering he was going through. And Wilbur went crazy and died and led to all of this.”

“What’s your point?”

“My point is that all of us messed up. Every single one of us. Me, you, Wilbur, and Tommy. But the three of us only view Tommy as a child when it’s convenient for us, when we’re using it to downplay his opinions or how-“ he laughs, and if Phil were crazy, he would almost call it affectionate - “how annoying he is. But he’s a kid, he always is. He was a kid in the wars he’s fought, he was a kid in exile, he’s a kid on that couch. We gotta...we keep forgettin that. We gotta stop forgettin that.”

“Woah.” Wilbur muttered, and Technoblade looked up to make dead eye contact with his once-dead brother. “Did it take me dying for you to become less emotionally constipated? Because that was a very not-Techno speech.”

Techno bristled and looked away. “Fine.” he laughs out, “Next time something big happens I’ll go ‘Oh well, time to find another family member’.”

The entire table laughed at that one, and for once, Phil felt as though maybe, maybe his family would be okay. Wilbur was alive, Techno seemed to be coping better than he ever had, and Tommy-

Well. Tommy was hurting. But with them, he would hopefully have time to heal.

A soft whimper from the couch roused them all from their laughter, and Techno was the first to rise from his seat, chair falling to the ground with how fast he moved. He was by his brothers side in an instant, checking all over, trying to find where the pain is coming from.

Tommys face contorted in pain as he leaned away from Techno’s touch, harsh breaths leaving parted lips and head shaking violently. Slowly, Technoblade leaned back, keeping a hand hovered over Tommys body, with no real idea as to what to do.

“He’s just having a nightmare.” He mumbled. “I can- I can get some sleeping potions, I guess. Put him into a deeper sleep.”

Behind him, leaning down to get a better look at his bed-ridden son, Phil frowned. “Is that a good idea? I’m not sure it’s healthy to pump him full of magic.”

“I don’t know either, but he’s not getting any good sleep when he’s like this, and he needs rest to heal.”

“I know.” Wilbur piped up behind them, and Techno and Phil watched in confused silence as Wilbur moved forward, pushing both of them out of the way. He looked down at Tommy for two quick moments before moving to scoop him up, bridal style.

“Woah, woah!” Techno cried, hands shooting out to stop the other. “Careful! His burns are still healing and he’s probably really frag-“

“Relax, old man.” Grinning and looking from one brother to the other, Wilbur turned and settled his own body down into the couch where Tommy was resting. He adjusted the body on his lap until Tommy was comfortable, eyes closed and head laying against the Wilbur’s shoulder. He was entirely wrapped up in his brothers arms, still swaddled in Techno’s cape on top of that. The sight would be cute, if he werent still decorated in wounds and battle scars.

But Techno can’t deny the slight warmth in his chest as he watched the creases in between Tommys brow smooth out. He physically relaxed, his shoulders deflating and breath evening as he snuggled closer to Wilburs warmth in his sleep.

“God, if he were awake right now.” Phil murmured affectionately, stepping forward to brush some hair out of his sons eyes. “He’d be up in arms, yellin.”

“Let go, bitch! I’m a big man!” Techno imitated in a low, monotone voice, and the other two laughed, despite it all.

Phil was quick to join Wilbur on the couch, laying to the left of them and pulling Tommys legs onto his lap. The boy was lanky, having recently hit a growth spurt, and he easily stretched across the two. Techno tried to focus on the pure familial energy of the scene in front of him, and not how, despite Tommys recent growth, he had never gotten the food to accommodate for it - his legs were skin and bones and his face was hollow and-

“Techno.” Wilbur interrupted, prompting the other with a slight pat on the couch next to him. The cushions were just big enough to fit all four of them if they really smushed themselves into place.

“Eh...” rubbing the back of his neck, Techno looked off to the left, wracking his brain for possible excuses. “I’m not sure i’m the cuddling type, guys...”

“Oh, come on.” Phil waved his hand towards the other, dismissing his reluctance. “You don’t have to touch us if you don’t want to, but are you really gonna sleep upstairs when all of us are down here? Besides, I thought you wanted to keep an eye on Tommy.”

Techno looked from Wilbur, to his dad, to his little brother, before letting out a groan of defeat and practically flopping down onto the sofa. Tommy shifted uncomfortably at the commotion while the rest of his family chuckled at his display, Wilbur reaching over to pat the others arm dramatically.

“For a self-proclaimed ‘emotionless-killing machine’, you sure are a drama queen.”

“Please.” Techno muttered. “You think this is bad? Wait until Timmy wakes up. You’ll need a couple of migraine pills to get through the day.”

“Trust me, I know. Try living in a cave with the kid. For months on end.”

“I don’t know how you did that.”

“No wonder I went insane.”

“Boys, please.” Phil interrupted, and Techno swears he was thrust back to when they were twelve, sitting around the couch in their old family home, too awake to go to bed quite yet. Like usual, Tommy had passed out by nine pm - it may shock some, but the amount of energy he used during the day put him right out when nighttime rolled around - but Wilbur and Techno tended to rile each other up. Well, it was more Wilbur talking endlessly about some random animal, and Techno listening in silence as he fiddled with something in his hands, but it was their families definition of chaos.

Oh, how that had changed. Now chaos meant wars, tarnish, and jumping into a lava pit to save your baby brother from killing himself.

Techno reached out a hand slowly, and placed it ever-so-hesitantly on Tommys head. It was no secret that he wasn’t great with touch, or emotions, or, well...much of anything that wasn’t fighting.

But he was trying his best, and doing what he could. Earlier, when he worked tirelessly to make sure all of Tommys wounds were properly addressed and covered, despite the ache and pull in his own tired limbs - that was how he knew to show love. When he planned in his head what food he would make Tommy to bring his body weight back up, what he would do to help the other gain some core muscle mass after he had lost practically all of it overnight - that was Techno’s love. That was Techno’s affection.

Now, sitting there, in the dark, with the rest of his family having long fell asleep next to him, he ran his fingers through his baby brothers dirty hair in an act of affection he was oh so unfamiliar with. But he knew, deep down, that he wanted to master this. He wanted to show love to Tommy in ways he knew the brash, traumatized teenager could understand. So he sat there, illuminated by the moonlight filtering in through the blinds, and gently carded his fingers through the boys hair. When he did eventually fall asleep, he was sure to stay vigilant, ready to pounce at any enemy who threatened his family.

And Tommy, even in his unconscious, tender state, felt safe.

## Chapter End Notes

i hope you guys are enjoying so far!!

I honestly didn’t have much of a plan for this fic but the recent streams are giving me some fun ideas so perhaps it’ll be a little longer than expected? no promises tho i suck lol

Sorry there's very little (actually none at all) conscious tommy in this chapter perhaps that'll change soon >:)

thanks for reading!

# loved boy, treasured boy ; why do you cry?

## Chapter Summary

Tommy wakes up. Him and Wilbur reunite (there's a lot of tears)

## Chapter Notes

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

When Tommy wakes up, it's to absolute silence, and if he were crazy, he would almost say he was entirely successful in his plummet into that lava.

It quickly, however, becomes apparent to him that this wasn't the case. What originally sounded like silence was just quiet noises. In the far distance, he can hear wind roaring, and the nearby shuffling of quiet feet, and some voices talking in a place not too far from him.

Speaking of which, where was he, anyways?

Attempting to sit up immediately proves to be a bad idea. His body aches everywhere, and the sudden cold air doesn't help. Whatever warm blanket had been covering him falls as he sits up straight, immediately exposing his wounds to raw environment. He lets out low hisses in between his teeth as he shifts and grunts, determined to at least sit up on his own.

Peeling one eye open, he glances down in curiosity at what had been covering him, anyways.

Oh. That's Techno's cape. He looks around, peering at his surroundings.

Oh. That's Techno's room. This is Techno's house.

If he could scream, he probably would. Life only continues to prove his hypothesis that shit just keeps on begrudgingly, annoyingly repeating itself, down to the pretty little details. Wasn't it just two weeks ago he had woken up every morning in this exact same position? Sure, in the basement of Techno's house instead of the second floor, and sure, without his coat as a blanket, but still.

He's still processing what the fuck he should do when the door creaks open. In walks Techno, balancing a plate of unknown food in one hand and a glass of what looks like water in the other.

"Oh. Theseus. You're awake." To any onlooker, Techno would look entirely unaffected, bearing the same neutral, bored expression he always wore. But Tommy knew Techno well after spending weeks hidden away in his cabin. He noticed the slight raise of eyebrows, the way he started walking towards Tommy's bed slightly quicker than before. Well, Techno's bed.



The plate of food - eggs and bacon that looked way too good to be cooked by Techno - and the glass of water were placed on the bedside table as Techno set himself down next to Tommy. It was almost uncomfortably domestic, like Tommy was a sick child, down with a fever, and Techno was a mother, doting him back to health.

Ew, Tommy thinks.

Techno stares at him with a blank expression, and Tommy shifts under the gaze. He knows Techno is probably just thinking, processing, but it's hard to not feel uncomfortable with your half pig brother staring directly at you with absolutely zero emotion.

"You've been out for a couple of days." Techno started slowly, reaching over to hand Tommy the glass of water. The boy took it, and both of them ignored how shaky his hands were as he lifted it to his lips and took a few greedy sips. "You probably shouldn't have sat up. Are you in a lot of pain?"

Tommy gulped down the entirety of the glass of water before answering, swiping at his mouth like a gremlin. "Nah, not really." He ached all over. His bones were tired and his skin felt stretched and raw. There were bad burns on his shoulders, back, and legs that were begging for attention.

Techno nodded, and Tommy wonders if he's lost some of his lying prowess, because he swears Techno sees right through him.

"I can take a look at anything that's bothering you. Get some potions on it, try to help the pain a little."

"I don't need potions, bitch!" Tommy tries to make his voice lighthearted, tries more than anything to just sound like himself. Dream may have taken everything from him, down to his very core, his health, his stability, but he didn't want Dream to take who he was, too. He didn't want Dream to erase his personality with his actions. He needed control over at least that.

His voice sounds forced even to him, and he's sure Techno can see through it too.

"Hmm." Techno hums in a low response. Hands slowly reach out, and, despite himself, Tommy flinches back slightly. What if Techno saw that he was lying and was going to hit him? What if he got thrown out for causing trouble? What if-

Techno paused his hands midair, and stared at Tommy with an expression the younger wasn't used to. He looked like a person approaching a scared animal, holding out his hand slowly, gently, giving the animal time to adapt. Time to process.

Once Tommy had relaxed slightly, Techno continued to reach forward, although much slower now. He gently grabs his own red cape off of the bed, and slings it back over Tommy's shoulders, pulling it close to the boy's frail body. "You looked cold." He muttered. "You can keep this. For now, I mean."

Tommy's eyes widened, and for a few moments, he has nothing to say. The warmth of the cape nearly burns him, and he finds himself gripping it between tight fists. He doesn't get it. He doesn't understand.

"Why are you being so nice to me?" He asks, voice low in a tone that doesn't fit his brash, loud personality. "Don't you hate me? Didn't I betray you? Didn't I use you? I don't understand."

Techno's first response is a loud sigh, and a slight terror settles itself into Tommy's bones. He said the wrong thing, and Techno is going to agree, and throw Tommy out, and he'll have nowhere to go because he has no fucking idea where Tubbo ended up and his old home is a crater in the earth now and-

"I'm not mad at you." Techno says instead. "That's a big conversation we can have later, okay? When you're more healed. But I'm not mad at you. At all. And I want you here, Tommy. Despite everything, I want you here, because I know you're safe here. And I want you to be safe. I, um-" "I love you" sits heavy on Techno's tongue. He screams at himself to say it, just fucking say it, you almost lost your brother to a pit of fucking fire and you still can't tell him you love him-

"Ah." Tommy mumbles, fingers curling uncomfortably around the empty glass of water in his hands. He's avoiding Techno's gaze, but his shoulders are slumped upwards slightly, and it looks as if whatever Techno had said, it was settling deep into Tommy's mind. "I...I see."

Techno sits up a little straighter in his place on the bed. "I think I fucked up with you, Tommy. I was so bent on destroying L'Manburg that I never really stopped to truly look at you. I never asked what Dream did, or what you went through. I never helped you heal, and all of that lead to...well...where we are now." He tilts his head slightly as he looks at the other. "How much do you remember? About...me finding you. In the nether."

"Eh." Tommy shrugged, while making a grabbing motion towards the untouched plate that laid on the other side of Techno. The older brother was quick to hand it to him, and watched in unmeasurable relief as Tommy scarfed down all three pieces of bacon and then began on the eggs.

"Honestly not much. I remember falling. I remember our, uh, our talk. But after that it goes blank."

Techno hummed, giving the other a slow nod as he processed the information. "Well...you're welcome to stay here for now. And please swallow your food before you talk, that was disgusting."

"Can I see Phil?" Tommy ignores him blatantly, but it isn't that that catches Techno off guard about his words. It isn't like Tommy to ask for things, instead of directly demanding them, but his voice is earnest, and it almost throws Techno off. "Like, does he want to see me?"

"Of course he wants to-" Ah. The last time Tommy had seen Phil, he had been destroying his home and cursing him out for being a traitor. Tommy thought Phil hated him ; no longer

wanted anything to do with his son. “Yes, Tommy. Phil wants to see you. I’ll bring him up, and-“

A sudden realization hits Techno hard, and he stares at Tommy blankly for a couple of seconds, earning a very confused look on the others face.

Tommy didn’t know Wilbur was alive. He hadn’t seen him yet.

“Hello? Big Man? Blade? Helllooo?” Tommy waved his hand in front of the others face, and Techno snapped out of it, shaking his head quickly.

“I’ll be right back.” He says, moving out of the bed awkwardly, and going to stand. “Keep eating. We can get more if you want more.”

He leaves before Tommy can ask what the hell that was all about, and the boy was left all alone. For a few moments, he contemplates running - he really isn’t that injured, and the window is right there, unlocked.

What if Techno is just waiting to kill you? What if he’s bringing Phil up here right now so they can both take your final life?

Why would they bother to do that? Why would he bother to save you, or give you his cape, or his food, if he just planned on killing you?

Make it hurt. Make it hurt like you hurt him. Make it hurt so you know how badly you fucked up when you betrayed him.

Tommy shrinks into himself. For now, he just eats his eggs, a little too weak and a little too traumatized to act on any plans.

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A few minutes later, Techno, Phil and Wilbur all stood outside Tommys room. The leader of the group rested his hand upon the door knob, regarding the others for the go-ahead to open it.

Wilbur was, for lack of a better word, nervous. What if Tommy didn’t want to see him again? To be fair, he had been the catalyst for...just about everything that happened to Tommy. He started the war with Dream. He decided to have an election. He went crazy and placed all the weight of keeping him sane on a teenagers shoulders. He died in front of Tommy and left him completely alone, to fight for himself. His ghost form watched as Tommy was abused and manipulated at the hands of Dream, and he could do fuck all about it.

Yeah. He was nervous to see his baby brother. But, as badly as he wanted to, as badly as his body screamed to, he absolutely refused to run away. Tommy needed him, now more than ever - his fucking baby brother had tried to kill himself and he felt like they were just glossing over that - and he wouldn’t be a terrible brother all over again.

He nodded at Techno. The older opened the door.

Tommy's head shot up, and at first, the only one he saw was Phil. He smiled slightly, although awkwardly, and raised a hand in greeting. "ow do, Phil? Sorry about crashing in your house, and eating your food, and-"

He made eye contact with Wilbur. His family watched as his face changed with his realization ; eyes widening, mouth falling open slightly and eyebrows shooting up.

In front of him was, well...Wilbur. Corporeal, touchable Wilbur. Not a ghost, a husk of who his brother used to be, a sad remaking that seemed to sometimes exist just to spite him.

No. This was Wilbur. Real, actual Wilbur.

He had gotten out of bed before he realized it, mind not paying an ounce of attention to how his wounds pulled or how his body ached. At the same time, Wilbur was pushing Techno and Phil aside, moving towards his baby brother.

They met in the middle of the room, crashed against each other, and Wilbur held Tommy so tightly in his arms it almost hurt. He practically shielded his body around the other, hand finding his hair and running through it. Tommy, meanwhile, buried himself against his brothers chest, NOT crying, thank you very much. His hands found themselves balled up in the others shirt, and he used it to somehow pull Wilbur closer.

He felt like a child again. Any other time, he would throw a fit, screaming and swearing and thrashing that he was a 'massive man' and 'massive men don't do hugs'.

But for right now, it was okay.

"Oh, Toms..." Wilbur's voice cracked as he spoke, and he just kept carding his fingers through the others hair, his other hand holding Tommy close. "I'm so sorry, bubs. I'm so sorry for leaving you." He practically cradled the other, trying to pour all of the love that Tommy had missed out on into that one hug.

He supposed he had time, now. He sure as hell wasn't going anywhere, and he was determined to make sure Tommy didn't, either. Regardless, he kept holding him tight, kept running his fingers through that greasy unwashed mop of hair, and kept muttering reassurances to his baby brother. If he could hold him any tighter, he could.

"How?" Tommy croaked out from his place buried against Wilbur's shoulder. "How are you...? How are you here?"

"I brought him back." Phil piped up softly from next to Techno, the two standing and watching the reunion unfold. The father didn't necessarily want to interrupt the moment - goodness, he hadn't seen his children like this in what felt like ages - but he was slightly worried Tommy would agitate his burns with all that moving, and he didn't need more peeling and aching.

Slowly, Wilbur moved away from Tommy, although making sure to keep a solid hand on him at all times. Tommy was busy studying the others face, his real features - his light, light

freckles, his eyes and nose, his mouth - all things that always looked slightly wrong on Ghostbur. Like someone had tried to do a recreation without a reference photo.

“Tommy...” Wilbur started, looking the other up and down. Tommy still had Techno’s cape thrown around his shoulder, with fat tears dribbling down his face. Wilbur reached out to wipe them, but was quickly waved and smacked away as Tommy rushed to cover and fix his own face.

“Ah, fuck - sorry.” He rushes out, and Wilbur frowns. Problem number one that hadn’t left Tommy from his time in exile - the Tommy that Wilbur knew NEVER apologized, especially not for stupid or simple stuff like crying.

But they would work on that later.

“Uh, I hate to interrupt this totally heartfelt moment that I have no idea how to process.” Technoblade piped up behind them, taking a few steps forward at Tommy continued to furiously wipe away at his tears. “But I really don’t feel like wiping up any of Tommy’s bloody wounds again, so...” he points at Tommy, “You. On the bed, please.”

“Who died and made you the all holy ruler around here...” Tommy grumbled as he climbed to his feet, with a good amount of help from Wilbur. Normally, the older would poke fun, prod at his brother where he knew it would annoy him ; but he didn’t want to risk driving Tommy away right now. He was more than comfortable just being around his brother for the first time since his death, actually able to fucking DO something, finally, and he didn’t want to risk making a dumbass comment that resulted in Tommy closing back up again.

Once Tommy was situated in bed, Techno began a light checkup. He ignored any sarcastic snaps or rolling eyes he got from Tommy, opting instead to focus on his burns and bruises.

“I’m fine, you know. Not a single scratch. But a flesh wound. Nothing can hurt a big man like me.”

“Mmhmm.” Techno only gave him a soft hum of acknowledgement in return, peeling back one of Tommy’s bandages and giving his arm an awkward pat when the younger boy winced in pain. He tried to make the cleaning and redressing process quick, nodding as Phil excused himself to go make Tommy a bit more to eat. Wilbur chose to stick around, sitting on the bed next to Tommy and making small talk in hopes of distracting his brother from the prodding and poking at his injuries.

“All done.” Techno took a step back and admired his work. Tommy was covered in bandages, but none of them were soaking through with blood immediately, which Techno considered a win. He had a large bandage over his shoulder and a few tinier ones on his legs, arms, and back. The most noticeable was a small one, covering the bridge of his nose.

He reached out to ruffle Tommy’s hair, ignoring the way his brother slapped and swatted at his hand. “Okay. You should get some more sleep.”

With a dramatic groan and outstretched arms, Tommy threw himself back onto the bed. “But I’m not tiiiiirredd!!!! I’ve been in bed for, like, two days now! Don’t you think that’s enough?”

“You’re still annoying me, so, no. Not enough yet. Get some sleep. Phil will bring up some more food in a bit.” Techno turns to leave, but hesitates for just a moment, hand resting on the frame of the door.

Say something to him. Reassure him. Comfort him. Technosoft. Say something.

“Uh..” coughing into his hand and refusing to meet his brothers eyes, Techno clears his throat. “I’m...very happy that you’re alive. Don’t know what I would’ve done if we lost you.”

Tell him you love him. You fucking idiot, do it. Do it.

“...I’m bad at showing it, but I care about you. And your recovery. So..try not to be a pain in the ass.” He winces at the end, scared he said the wrong thing, scared the joke wouldn’t get across, not with his monotone voice and he wasn’t even facing Tommy and-

The boy behind him barks out a wheezy laugh that is so incredibly Tommy that it almost hurts. Techno finally looks over to see the other, still sitting next to Wilbur, bent down over slightly from how hard he had laughed.

“Absolutely NO promises, bitch boy! Actually, I think i’ll try to be as annoying as possible. Should I sing? I can sing. Or should I talk about women? Hey Techno, whose-“

“Nope. Goodbye.” Without a glance back, Techno walked out the door, shutting it dramatically behind him. Besides, he couldn’t look back.

If he did, Tommy would’ve seen the small smile on his face.

“You terrorized him, you know. You’re a menace.” Wilbur, although also grinning at the display, shook his head towards Tommy disapprovingly. The boy just shrugged, reaching his arms up in a dramatic stretch and yawn, wincing slightly as he moved his wounded shoulder.

“Maybe the Blade was right. Some sleep sounds good.” He hummed, kicking Wilbur lightly with his feet to tell him to move. The older rises from the bed, but makes no effort to leave the room. A slightly awkward silence settles over them as Tommy makes his way under the covers, pulling them up and over his body and head.

“You can go, like...do shit, you know. You don’t have to stare at me like I’m gonna disappear.”

“What if I want to stare at you?”

“Okay, well, first of all, creepy.”

Wilbur grins as Tommy peaks his head out from under the covers, peering up at him with wide eyes. The light still isn’t fully there, but he doesn’t flinch away when Wilbur runs a hand through his hair, which the older considers a win.

“Get some sleep, bubs. We’ll get some food in you in a bit. When you feel better, me and you can go explore the area around here, yeah? You’ve seen it, but Ghostbur never really got a full tour.”

Tommy hummed from underneath the blanket. “I hate it when you call me that.” He mumbles, already half asleep. Wilbur rolls his eyes. This kid’s ability to pass out seemingly on command will never fail to amaze.

“Sure you do.” He mumbles, giving the blanket one last pet. “Goodnight, Toms.”

Instead of leaving, he makes himself comfortable on the floor. Cross legged, with a numb butt, watching the form of his little brother rise and fall slowly with his even breathing.

He would go downstairs in a few minutes. He just...wanted this. Just for a bit.

Just for a while.

## Chapter End Notes

this chapter was originally supposed to be a lot longer but it occurred to me that would be like ~10k words so i just decided to make the reunion scene longer teehee

Thank u guys sm for all the support on the fic! Comments mean THE WORLD to me and kudos are fantastic too!

How we feelin abt the nuke test tomorrow boys 😊

# healing boy, tarnished boy ; why do you ride?

## Chapter Summary

bonding moments happen. a familiar face shows up.

## Chapter Notes

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

Weeks passed.

The air around the house, thank god for Techno, began to get lighter. It wasn't like Tommy healed overnight - actually, far from it. But he was beginning to trust again, and that was all the family could really ask for.

What hurt Techno the most was how Tommy hid things. The family wasn't stupid - they could see him physically trying not to flinch away when one of them lifted a hand a little too quickly. God forbid a creeper exploded, or else a foggy look would go into Tommy's eyes before he quickly rushed to pretend it wasn't there. He still asked for permission to do things, and misinterpreted joking for anger. When he was given food, he became almost instinctual - leaning over it to make sure nobody took it, flinching when somebody reached over to fill his water.

But Techno just wished he wouldn't HIDE it. Tommy would slap on a smile and laugh and pretend like nothing was affecting him, because that's all he knew how to do. Deep down, Techno worried Tommy wasn't properly processing things, and that would only lead to more issues in the future. All Techno wanted was for his brother to heal - to be able to thrive with a healthier state of mind.

Techno just wanted his brother to be okay.

Thankfully, there were improvements, past the smiles that didn't quite reach his eyes and the forced laughter. Tommy seemed to be getting more comfortable around them, little by little. Phil and Wilbur reminded him practically every single day that they wanted him here, and that he wasn't going to be kicked out. At first, he seemed to take their words with a grain of salt. Techno even found a box of items under his bed, food and materials stashed away in case he needed to make a run for it.

If he cried for his brother's pain, nobody needed to know that.

But, slowly, Tommy seemed to be settling into the fact that the others around him really, genuinely cared. All three of them made a conscious and genuine effort to include him in things, even the most random or mundane of activities. He would often complain, and groan, and drag his feet, before agreeing to come. He almost always seemed happier when they



arrived home afterwards. Techno wonders if he just needed some human interaction, outside of Dream and his manipulation.

Techno was improving, if marginally. He still couldn't quite bring himself to say some things - "I love you" was continuing to be a struggle and he just couldn't find out why - but he was getting better with casual touch. His favorite was ruffling up Tommy's hair. It was quick, and easy, and annoyed the teen - all of Techno's favorite things.

He showed that he loved Tommy in his own way. He would check to be sure the other ate, that he showered, that he got sunlight that day. He would make his brother lay down when he could tell Tommy was tired - the first few days, he refused to sleep without getting express permission first, and it made Techno's stomach turn. Had Tommy been that bad when he had first started staying with Techno?

The worst part was, Techno couldn't remember. He had been so focused on his attack on L'Manburg that he never took the time to truly address his brother's trauma. He wasn't stupid, he knew something had happened ; but he made no real effort to help besides the basic minimum of not further hurting Tommy.

He had to push that guilt away for now. All he could do was focus on getting it right this time around.

Today, Techno had invited Tommy out on a horse ride. He needed some red dye for a project he was working on around the house, and didn't quite feel like being alone. Tommy agreed, on the condition he got to ride Carl.

"You've gotta be assertive." Techno rolled his eyes as he watched the absolute train wreck unfold in front of him. Carl bucked and threw his head up as Tommy desperately grappled at the reigns, trying to bring the horse back under control. Carl always was a drama queen, to the point where Techno wondered if he liked causing problems for the fun of it.

He snorts to himself as he looks at Tommy. Sounds like someone else he knew.

"I just don't understand it!!" Tommy groans dramatically as he gives another rather harsh yank at the ropes. "I'm a big man! I'm assertive! Just my presence should have you listening to me, bitch!" He leaned closer to Carl's face, recoiling when the horse snapped his head to the left in an attempt to bite down on Tommy's nose. "He tried to bite me!! This little bitch! Can I call your horse a pussy, Techno? Cause he's sure acting like one!"

"You're being too aggressive." Techno said calmly, pulling his own, docile horse into a trot next to Tommy and reaching out to adjust his hold on the reigns. He sees Tommy freeze out of the corner of his eyes, and stops his movements, watching until Tommy has visibly settled down before continuing to touch the other. He uses his fingers to pry open Tommy's clenched fists, forcing him to hold the reigns a little looser.

"You're sending mixed signals. Be assertive AND less assertive? You're annoying me."

"The feeling is incredibly mutual." Techno hums as he guides his horse forward. "Show that you're the boss, and he can't drag you, but don't be mean. Hold the reigns tight, and guide

him in the direction you want to go, but don't yank."

Slowly, Tommy moves the reins forward, urging Carl to move to the left to join where Techno is standing. Miraculously, the horse does it with little fight, moving forward in a steady trot. Tommy whoops, throwing one hand up into the air. "Hell yeah, bitch! I own this horse!! Did you see that, Techno? This horse is my bitch!!"

Despite himself, Techno lets out a low laugh. "You're a natural, Toms. Come on - there's a little rose patch out this way. You can help me pick them."

For a few minutes, they ride in total, blissful silence. It's a rare sight to see around Tommy, but the boy seems lost in thought, gazing out over the vast expanse of trees that surround them. Techno didn't feel like pushing a conversation on the two, so that's how they stayed.

"...It's getting dark out." Tommy murmurs eventually, and Techno glances up at the sky above. His brother was right ; the sun had quickly set during their small travel, and stars were beginning to peak through the clouds. "The stars are pretty out here. There's no lights to hide them."

Techno hums. "Being in a desolate tundra to escape the long arms of a corrupt government DOES have its pros."

There's another silence, but this one feels different from before. When Techno glances over at Tommy, the boy is opening his mouth, and then quickly shutting it as soon as he notices the eyes on him. The older of the two doesn't speak ; he gives Tommy time to think. Time to process. Time to decide.

"I saw stars a lot. In Logsted."

Techno can hear the beating of his heart in his ears. Tommy had opened up a little about his time with Dream and what he went through, but it was never a lot, and it was always said quickly and with a level of finality. Obviously, Techno had learned a whole lot the night he found Tommy - over the lava, ready to...to jump - but the boy hadn't brought up much of anything since.

Right now, however, Tommy was talking as if he WANTED to have the conversation, and Techno was certainly not one to argue.

"Did you....like em?"

God, emotions were not Techno's forte.

"I mean...I slept in a tent, you know? Dream got mad a couple of times, and he would throw shit around, break shit. So the structure of it was weird. It didn't really have a roof. A lot of nights, I would just...y'know. Watch the stars."

Techno almost wants to vomit - he feels bile burning the back of his throat and a heavy shudder go through his bones. For now, though, he just nods silently, swallowing hard before speaking - "Did you...Were you..."

He didn't even know what to ask. All he could focus on was his blinding anger towards the man who had hurt Tommy so deeply, but he didn't want to show that outright - didn't want to risk Tommy thinking that anger was directed towards him. So for now, he just swallows, and holds the reign of his horse tightly, and prays Tommy keeps talking, even if Techno isn't the best with stuff like this.

"It was hell." Tommy's head is still tilted towards the sky, a far-away look settling into his eyes. "It was really cold. He never really gave me a blanket, and took mine away whenever I made one. I tried to hide it from him, a few times, but he would just show up while I was sleeping and find it anyways." He lets out a hollow laugh, and it hits Techno with a sudden realization that there were silent, numb tears dripping down the others face. "It wasn't- It wasn't all bad. Maybe I'm just being dramatic. He wasn't that bad."

"Sounds horrible if you ask me."

"Mm. Yeah. Maybe it was. I don't know." Hands reached up to scrub raw at leaking eyes as Tommy let out a frustrated groan. "I know you guys want me to talk more, but I get so confused. My brain gets muddled and shit. Feels like math. Don't make no sense. But I'm- I'm trying. I promise."

"We know, Tommy." At this point, Techno has pulled his horse up next to Carl. He reached a hand out slowly, waiting for Tommy's reaction before placing his palm of the back of the others neck and giving his back a pat. "We don't- Yeah, of course we want you to talk. But not if it makes you uncomfortable. We just wanna get to a place where you can talk without feeling like that. And, for the record - Dream is an asshole."

An airy wheeze bubbles it's way out of Tommy's throat as he nods, shortly and quickly.. "You said it, Blade."

Techno frowns at the other. "Do you still wanna get these flowers? We can, uh, go home if you...ya know..." Wanna see Wilbur or Phil, his brain filled in. You know, people with actual emotional capabilities who could probably handle this a whole lot better than I can.

"What? No! I wanna pick the fuck outta some flowers!" Scowling as if Techno had personally insulted him, Tommy pushed on with his horse, letting out another whoop of cheer as he maintained control over Carl. From behind him, Techno watched, a small smile on his face.

Dream would never get a hold on Tommy again - over Techno's dead body. He would protect his baby brother if it was the last thing he did.

//

That night, at dinner, Wilbur made an offhanded comment about Tommy's hair. Reaching out and tugging at the back of Tommy's neck, now completely covered in his blond locks, he mutters "Jeez, Tommy. You're growing a mullet."

In response, the younger growled like an animal and batted Wilbur's hand away. "Fuck off! It's the new style. That ladies love it. I would know. I have so many girlfriends."

“I can cut it after dinner, if you want.” Phil peeps up from his position across from the table.

Mouth full of food and about to shovel in another forkful, Tommy shrugs. “I don’t really care. Up to you.”

If he notices Phil’s frown, he doesn’t say so. He wishes his son would demand things again, yell until someone gives him what he wants. He seems to be simply going with the currents, agreeing with the crowd. It was so unlike Tommy.

For now, though, Phil takes what he can get. Waiting until everyone was done with their meal and then quietly asking Techno if he can handle the dishes for tonight, he excuses himself up to his room. Digging around in a drawer, he produces a rather old pair of haircutting scissors. Acquired through trading with the nearby village, Phil had always used them to cut and trim Techno’s hair when it was becoming too long for even the blood god to handle. They were worn down, now, but it was about all they had in the house, and Phil figured they would make do.

Climbing back down the stairs, he interrupted whatever conversation (more like Tommy talking, and Wilbur listening) his sons were having to ask Tommy to come to the living room. He grabbed one of the chairs from the kitchen, and, placing it in front of their sofa chair, signaled for Tommy to take a seat. The boy did it without much of a fight, although he did grumble lowly about “being interrupted during my very important dialogue”.

Wilbur made his way into the room as Phil made himself comfortable on the chair. “Are you comfortable? Feeling okay?” He leaned over to ask Tommy.

The young boy bristled slightly at the question, still not used to how gentle the family was being around him. “Why wouldn’t I be? You’re cutting my hair, big man, not performing open heart surgery.”

Phil’s soft laugh tickles the back of his neck. “Just asking. I’m not gonna take much off - just enough so it’s not bothering you.” Tommy doesn’t respond, and Phil takes that as his silent go-ahead.

For a couple of minutes, total peace envelopes the room. The only sounds are the soft cutting of the scissors through Tommy’s locks and the running water in the kitchen as Techno scrubs away at the families dishes. It was quiet, and peaceful, and domestic. Phil does wish Tommy would talk more, but he understands the others reservations, and doesn’t push conversation when it doesn’t flow.

In the far distance, a creeper blows up, and Tommy flinches at the sound. Quickly withdrawing the blades from Tommy’s neck, not wanting to risk cutting the other, Phil placed a calming hand on Tommy’s shoulder.

“It’s nothing, Toms. It’s far away.” He says gently. Tommy nods, although his eyes still seem to be fixated on some unknown point off in the distance. Wilbur, whose been giving Phil a slightly worried glance, climbs to his feet and crosses the room. From its place leaning against the TV stand, Wilbur produces his guitar - the same one he had when he was alive.

“Tommy,” he grins. “Wanna sing with me?”

The younger of the two snorts, pulling himself away from that point on the horizon to look at his brother with doubt. “Wilbur, you have said to me, and I quote, ‘Dear god, please stop singing, it hurts’.”

“Yeah, well, forget that.” Wilbur settles himself in front of Tommy’s chair, cross legged and grinning like an idiot. He strums a few cords on the instrument before looking up at Tommy expectantly.

Tommy just blinks at him. “What, you want me to start? I know I’m a natural born leader, as everyone tells me, I’m fantastic, but I think you gotta take the reigns on this one.”

“Hm.” Wilbur, rather dramatically, tilts his head back, and shouts for the man in the kitchen. “Techno! What do you want us to play?”

“Whatever’s the least loud. And the least annoying. Play that one, please.”

“You’re no fun.”

“It is technically my house, you know. Not even technically, you guys have just overtaken it like rats. I have no control anymore.”

Snip, snip. Phil’s three boys begin to bicker, going back and forth with childish insults and, on Tommy’s end, horribly mispronounced words. The entire time, Phil trims Tommy’s hair, and allows a small smile on his face. When Wilbur does finally get around to playing - he ends up picking a song he and Tommy used to sing often as children - Tommy does, indeed, sound horrible. Techno almost has to excuse himself to escape the sound.

Phil, meanwhile, is grinning like an idiot. These are his boys, and they’re happy, even if Tommy is still deep in the throes of recovery. His boy often pretended he was okay, but in this moment, Phil could tell the light, shaking laughter and stupid smile on his face were anything but fake.

Sitting there, singing like idiots with his brother, Tommy was happy. And Phil gave him a tight hug from behind, and prayed that his family could stay this way.

//

That hope is dashed the next day, when a soft knock comes to the door.

To say the entire family freezes in their steps would not be an understatement. Techno was the closest to the door, standing by the fridge to organize the food the family had hunted a few days prior. Feet away from him sat Wilbur and Tommy, the younger of the two scribbling something on a piece of paper to try and illustrate some elusive point to Wilbur. The older watched with minimal interest, but laughed whenever Tommy said something particularly funny or stupid and kept ruffling his hair purely to annoy him.

Then, there was a knock at the door, and everyone froze.

Tommy's reaction was immediate. His hand gripped the pen he was holding so tightly his knuckles turned a bright white. He turned towards Wilbur, slowly, as if any fast movement would doom them all, and Wilbur has never seen Tommy so terrified. He wonders, for a moment, if this is what Techno saw before Tommy tried to hurl himself into lava. Regardless, he acts on his first instinct, and pulls Tommy into a tight, close hold, protectiveness raging through him.

Slowly, lowly, Technoblade began to give instructions. "Wilbur." He hisses out in a whisper. "Take Tommy and go downstairs. Grab an invisibility potion on the way down. If you hear anyone enter the house, anyone at all, splash both of you with it."

Tommy was absolutely clinging to Wilbur, hands grabbing fistfuls of his shirt's fabric as his brain ran a hundred miles an hour. He didn't realize he was truly panicking until his own voice reached his ears - "It's Dream he's back he's gonna kill me he's gonna take my last life it's Dream it's Dream it's-"

"Toms. Tommy. Bubs, you're okay. You're fine. We won't let anything happen to you, not ever." With a gentle hand, Wilbur guided Tommy out of the seat and began leading him towards the basement. As much as he wanted to get the absolute fuck out of there as quickly as possible, it was hard to ask a panicking, traumatized teenager to run. He held Tommy close, continuing to whisper reassurances to him in a desperate attempt to calm him.

Techno watches as they disappear, and his heart aches for his baby brother. He knows Wilbur is smart, though, and he's become more adapted to being human again through these past few weeks. Tommy was in good hands ; Wilbur could - and would - protect him.

There's banging and thudding footsteps as Phil basically throws himself downstairs. Just minutes ago he been taking a nap, claiming his "Old man bones need a midday break". Now he seems as awake as ever, staring at Techno with wide eyes and a million questions.

Techno looked at his father, then at the door. With a deep breath and a resounding nod, almost as if to promise himself it was the right decision, he reaches out, turns the knob, and opens the door.

Well, that wasn't what he was expecting.

"Tubbo?" he asks dumbly, and even he can hear the surprise in his own voice.

The boy in front of him looks - well, for lack of a better word, absolutely horrible. His clothes are torn and the bags under his eyes are as defined as ever. The bitter cold of the tundra has hit him hard, leaving him shivering and gripping his thin jacket close to his body. Worry lines crease his face, and he looks up at Techno with furrowed brows and a hard set mouth. He looks like he was trying to pretend not to be scared, and Techno doesn't exactly know what to say.

"Do you know where Tommy is?" Is the first thing out of Tubbo's mouth, and his frustration seems to grow when all Techno can do is stare at him.

"What?"

“I- listen.” The boy rubbed his hands together furiously, looking up at Techno with pleading eyes. “I know we’re like, enemies, I guess. Tommy’s been missing for three weeks now and I’ve been looking everywhere for him. Literally everywhere. I don’t know what to do anymore. I don’t know where to go. I know he isn’t here - I know that - but it’s the only place I haven’t checked and I-“

“Woah there, kiddo.” Behind Techno, Phil stepped forward, usually much better at handling these kinds of situations than any of his children ever were. The father reaches out, placing a gentle hand on Tubbo’s shoulder and guiding him into the warmth of Techno’s cabin. Him and his son share a quick look, and a million questions are exchanged between them - Do they tell Tubbo that Tommy is here? Is Tubbo still affiliated with L’Manburg, even with its land torn to shreds?

To be honest, Techno has no idea what to do.

“Sit here, son.” Phil says gently, leading Tubbo over to the sofa and then pushing him down onto the cushions. The boy basically collapses, and Techno wonders how long he’s been out in the world, searching for his lost friend.

“Listen, I- I’m not trying to pick a fight with you. I just - I don’t know if Tommy’s even alive and I - and I -“

“Deep breaths, kid.” Kneeling down onto one knee, Phil reaches out and rests what he hopes is a comforting hand on Tubbo’s shoulder. Tubbo doesn’t flinch - not like Tommy does - so Phil continues.

“We- well, mate. It’s not...Tommy’s not dead. I can tell you that with one hundred percent certainty.”

The light in Tubbo’s eyes explodes as he physically sits up in his seat, searching Phil’s face for any sign of a lie as a slow smile spreads across his cheeks. “Have you seen him? Do you know where he is?”

“We-“

There’s a series of banging from the floor below them. Techno can hear, with his superior piglin senses, Wilbur and Tommy arguing distantly. The voices grow closer, and closer, before suddenly, the hatch in the corner of the room pops open. A blond tuft of hair peeks through, then Tommy is clambering to his feet, Wilbur not far behind and still yelling at his brother.

Tommy and Tubbo connect eyes. For a second, nobody moves.

Then, like a tidal wave, the two boys are crashing into each other, Tubbo’s arms wrapped around Tommy like the other would disappear if he didn’t hold on tightly enough. Tommy is apologizing softly, and all Tubbo can do is repeat the others name in a soft, desperate tone. Fat tears bubble down both of their faces as they just stand there, holding one another for dear life.

“I’m sorry, I-“

“Tommy, holy shit. You’re okay. I’ve been- I’ve been looking everywhere for you. I was so fucking worried. What happened?”

Techno and Phil shared a look before immediately shifting their gaze to Wilbur, who gave them a lame shrug. “He almost bit me to get up here once he realized it was Tubbo at the door.” He whispered to them. “Not much I could’ve done.”

Exasperated and not entirely sure what to even do anymore, Techno groaned lowly, pinching his nose between two fingers. “Okay.” He murmured, stepping forward to separate the two boys so they could actually sit down and perhaps the family could get some answers from Tubbo.

To, admittedly, Techno’s surprise, the second he stepped close, Tubbo practically growled. He went from holding Tommy tightly to stepping in front of him, shielding his friend with arms out and stance low. He looked ready to tear Techno limb from limb if it came down to it.

Tubbo was a small kid and one of the friendliest on the server - next to Ranboo - but right now he looked like an animal protecting its pack-mate.

“Tommy.” Tubbo starts, “Do you want to be here?”

“I- what?” Tommy sputters slightly, looking at the other with confusion and raised eyebrows.

“Are you here against your will?” Tubbo glares at the rest of his friends family. “We’re leaving, I’ll fucking- you can’t stop us, we-“

“Tubbo.” From behind him, Tommy’s hand rested gently on Tubbo’s left shoulder. “I want to be here. It’s...it’s complicated. We can..sit down, yeah? And we’ll tell each other. About whatever happened. After L’Manburg.”

Tubbo seemed conflicted, eyes darting between his best friend and the men he was currently considering his enemies. Slowly, though, and with a tug on the arm from Tommy, he relented, taking a couple of steps back and allowing himself to turn his back on Wilbur, Techno and Phil.

The three adults all exchanged looks. God, this was going to be complicated, wasn’t it?

A short twenty minutes later, Tommy and Tubbo found themselves sitting on the couch, each with a plate of food in their hands - made quickly by Phil - and deep into each other’s stories. They spoke softly, like two children whispering at a sleepover, and Techno almost rolls his eyes at the sight.

But, honestly, he was also sort of relieved. He noticed immediately that Tommy’s posture seemed to relax the second Tubbo had arrived, carrying a sort of stress with him his family hadn’t even been able to see. He doesn’t know if Tommy will tell Tubbo the complete truth ; and, to be honest, that’s up to the kid. Right now, he seems comfortable, and that’s all his family could really want.



“You comfortable with Tubbo staying overnight?” Wilbur asked him under his breath, both of them seated at the counter not far from where Tubbo and Tommy were talking. Wilbur, too, had been watching - noticed the way Tubbo’s hand hadn’t left Tommy’s since they arrived. Noticed the way the two boys immediately seemed glued to each other, as if separation would spell out their demise. He wasn’t sure how to feel about it, but Tommy seemed happy.

Techno, in response, hummed, glancing up at the window and noting the expanding darkness that had settled over the tundra. “Well, I can’t send him home now. Guess I don’t really have a choice.”

“I think Tommy would be against it, anyways.” Phil adds, also keeping his voice low. The three begin to chatter about simple things - the bees, Carl, much of anything.

Across the room from them, Tommy finishes telling Tubbo how he got to Techno’s cabin for the second time in a month. He doesn’t go into specifics - he tells his friend “Techno saved me from an...accident I had.”

Tubbo doesn’t seem to completely believe him. Maybe it’s because Tommy’s voice wavers when he says it. But neither have the energy to unpack that tonight, and he’s, admittedly, relieved. He just wants to hear Tubbo’s side the story, to know how on earth he had gotten to Techno’s cabin.

Tubbo left the rubble of L’Manburg to make a small town out in the snowy hills called Snowchester.

At first, he took no real worry with Tommy’s disappearance. He figured the other needed time to cope, after all that had happened, and just needed a couple of days to himself.

After six consecutive days with no messages and no appearance, Tubbo changed his mind, and went out looking. He got more worried with every person he ran into that had absolutely no idea of Tommy’s location. A lot of people seemed totally indifferent on the matter, and that only further fueled Tubbo’s search. Puffy and Sam, the two that seemed genuinely shaken by Tommy’s disappearance, immediately offered to help look. Tubbo mumbled that, before they fell asleep tonight, he needed to message them both and tell them that Tommy was okay.

He asked why Tommy never responded to his messages. The other told him that, during his accident - plummeting towards the lava, fast, fast, last life draining - he had lost practically all of his belongings. The only thing he had managed to save was the compass, because it wasn’t with him at the time - it was wrapped up in a small cloth, sitting on the cliff. It was intended to be the last remaining item left from his existence.

Of course, he leaves out those details. Tubbo seems too tired to pry.

The two quickly find themselves tired from all the commotion and emotional uncoverings. The resign to leaning against each other, Tommy’s head rested upon Tubbo’s as they continue to talk quietly.

As the night drags on, their conversations taper off. Before long, both boys are fast asleep, and Phil has draped the houses warmest blanket over their forms to keep them warm. He

would consider waking them up later to move them to a real bed, but, for now, they looked comfortable.

The adults in the kitchen continue to talk, softly. The conversation changes to Tommy, to his recovery. To his healing. Things seem calm.

In the snowy tundra, yards away from the house, as the family inside heals, a man watches quietly from the shadows. In his left hand is tightly gripped an enchanted, glowing book, practically bursting at the seams with its magic and its secrets.

In his right hand, a mask. Strapped across his back, a netherite sword, newly polished and sharpened.

A grin spreads across his face.

“Soon.” He murmurs, before stalking back into the shadows of the frigid night.

## Chapter End Notes

what a sweet chapter i cant wait for the next chapter to be the exact same with absolutely nothing bad at all happening no sirree no incoming angst here :)

tubbo has been added to the group! two chapters in a row now with emotional hug-based reunion scenes. what can i say, your honor. i'm a weak man.

sorry this chapter took a bit longer than the past ones! i start school on monday so sadly, updates will probably be a bit longer in between, but i'll try hard to get them up after a maximum of like. five days. ish.

as always, thank you for reading! kudos + comments r greatly appreciated and lowkey keep me inspired to keep writing lol that shit fuels me.

# helpful boy, scared boy ; why do you scream?

## Chapter Summary

Things are peaceful - until they're not.

## Chapter Notes

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

Another week of peace passes, and Techno is stupid enough to believe it will continue.

Tubbo doesn't move in with them, but he sure visits often. Turns out his little town of Snowchester isn't too far from Techno's house, so Phil sets up a way for Tubbo to travel between the two houses without too much exposure to the tundra. It ends with a minecart, some red stone, and a couple of crashes.

Tommy only continues to get better. Moments like the one shared on the horses between Techno and Tommy become more common. Phil and Wilbur seem to have a relative picture of exile, now - although neither quite understand it like Techno does ; with painstaking detail. The man wishes he could tell them, hopes it would help his family to take better care of Tommy - but ultimately, he knows it isn't his story to tell, and he waits for when Tommy is ready.

Techno still isn't able to say "I love you", but he's been doing other things instead. Amidst random, strong surges of emotions, he had pulled Tommy to his chest more than once, and simply held him there for a few moments. When his baby brother fell asleep on top of him, he would kiss his head and move to make the other more comfortable. Techno isn't sure what switched - maybe he just remembered the look in Tommy's eyes, and it hit him how badly he needed his whole family together. Regardless, Techno makes improvement with touch everyday.

His family feels guilty. Wilbur was there, technically, but his ghost forms defected memory leaves him unable to remember a good chunk of what he witnessed happen to Tommy. He explained it to Techno once ; "I can remember the sadness. I remember being so, so hurt for my brother, but Ghostbur was physically unable to show hurt, so he used the blue. I remember...bits of pieces of what happened. But I remember the sadness. I remember the sadness."

Phil beats himself up for being a poor father. He knows he did wrong ; he played favorites, left his youngest in favor of his oldest. When Tommy needed his family most, his father wasn't there. Perhaps Phil spent months denying that it was really that bad, because it was easier to turn his head than admit that he had done wrong.

And then Techno had walked through the door with Tommy in his arms, and something inside of him had snapped.

Regardless to what caused it, Phil was working hard to be a father now. Not just a father, either, but a Dad. He spent time with Tommy constantly, encouraging him to open up and to be honest with his words and actions. He made sure the boy felt listened to, felt safe. When Tommy jolted away at night from a nightmare, Phil was always there, ready to hold and comfort.

More than anything, Phil was holding the family together. More than once Technoblade had, in a fit of fiery anger, demanded they go after Dream. Phil was the one who, despite also wanting to see that bastard hurt, gently talked them down from whatever plans were brewing in their heads.

“What Tommy doesn’t need right now is for us to storm off on some revenge mission.” His voice was low, gentle as he held a steady hand on Techno’s shoulder. “I know you’re mad - I want to keep Dream from ever hurting Tommy again, more than anything. But I just don’t think nows the time.”

Begrudgingly, Techno had agreed. Wilbur was just hellbent on spending as much time as possible with his baby brother, recovering what he could of their previously cracked relationship.

Things were far, far from perfect. Tommy still flinched. He still asked permission to eat, on the bad days. But his family was loving him so ferociously, so honestly, that he genuinely thought he may be okay.

The entire family did. Oh, what fools they were.

It was about five PM, roughly eight days after Tubbo’s first arrival. The boy had visited practically every day since to see Tommy - in fact, his friend had only left a half an hour ago to beat the dark that settled over the tundra early.

Tommy, meanwhile, was seated on the couch, video game in hand as his feet swung up and down over his head. Across from him, Phil was making dinner, humming along to whatever OST soundtrack was playing on Tommy’s device. Wilbur and Techno were, sadly, not present, Wilbur in the garden to get some food for Friend and Techno huddled away in his room to sharpen his weapons.

“Hey Toms?” Phil’s voice broke through the peaceful silence, and Tommy’s head peaked up over the sofas arms to look at him. Phil smiled at the sight, despite himself.

“Can you do me a favor?”

That elicits a loud groan from the teen as he throws his head back onto the feathery cushions. “Whaaattt?” he drawls out, sounding more four years old than sixteen. Phil happily ignores it.

“Out by Carl’s pen, there’s a chest filled with apples and carrots. I want you to go grab some of the carrots for me - I need them for tonight’s recipe.”

You've been on that couch all day, Phil thinks. It'll be good for you to get at least a little bit of fresh air, to stretch those legs of yours.

With an air of dramatics, Tommy drags himself up and off the couch. His gaming console falls onto the cushions with a low thump as he walked over to the door, begrudgingly pulling on the boots Techno had made for him. He loves them, even if he didn't say it - they were warm, and Tommy knew they probably took up quite a few resources to make. He glances back at his father from over his shoulder.

"Why do I have to do this?" He asks, and Phil knows he's just being a pain for the sake of being a pain, so he answers calmly.

"I can't leave the stew or it'll burn. Besides, I want you to spend a little bit of time with Carl. I know he must be lonely out there, since you boys haven't gone out in a couple of days. Give him some apples, a few pets. It'll do both of you some good."

That only receives a louder, drawn out groan from Tommy, before he yanks the door open and steps out into the cold of the tundra. Around his shoulders is a woolen coat, pulled close as the wind rages past his ears. It isn't dark outside, not quite yet, but the sun had certainly begun to set - it would probably be pitch black out by about six.

Tommy stomps his way down the cobblestone stairs and feels himself lighten up considerably as he connects eyes with Carl. The horse regards him with a neigh, and, once Tommy was closer, gently pushes his nose against the others shoulder and hair as a greeting. The boy laughed out a wheeze and reached up, petting the top of Carl's head in response.

"Hey, bud." he mumbles. Him and Carl had forged a sort of bond over the past week or two. Tommy had taken him out riding a few times since that fiasco with Techno, and each time he noticed considerable improvement. They were learning to work around each other, and - dare he say it - even form a sort of friendship.

This is why it surprised Tommy when, not but seconds after he had leaned down to open the chest positioned in Carl's pen, the horse began to practically scream. He neighed loudly and bucked his front legs up, causing for Tommy's head to shoot in his direction.

"Woah, boy! Chill out! What's wrong--"

As Tommy approached the other slowly, Carl shot his head to the side, towards the boys outstretched hand. Tommy recoils, expecting to be bit - or worse, kicked - but it becomes quickly apparent that neither of those things are happening. Instead, Carl actually pushes Tommy behind him, standing with his wide, muscular form as a shield in front of the boy. Effectively, Carl was protecting Tommy, from what he still had yet to know.

"Carl, I don't--" Tommy freezes. In front of him, there's low crunching in the snow, the sound of approaching footsteps.

"That's one smart horse you've got there."

Tommy's world stopped in his tracks.

Whatever breath he was taking clogged itself in his throat. The hand that had been reaching up to calm Carl immediately found itself gripping the others mane - something he might feel a little bad for, if the ringing in his ears wasn't so loud. His heart stops, his breathing resumes faster than ever, and Tommy swears he may be having a stroke. Or a heart attack. Whichever felt worse.

He can't find the strength in himself to speak, but Dream doesn't seem to care much. "You know, it took me a while to find you. I didn't think Techno would take you back in again - not after everything. For a blood god, he's a bit of a pushover."

Carl snarls, a sound Tommy has never heard him make before. It's like the horse is inviting Dream to get any closer, to try anything. Even under the mask, Tommy knows Dream is smiling.

"I've missed you, Tommy. I thought you died. But we both know it's not your time."

Tommy is fighting the urge to vomit. Scream, his mind pleads with him. Scream for anyone - Techno, Wilbur, Phil, fuck, anyone!!

But Tommy is in the dead middle of a panic attack, and no matter how desperately he begs his body, he can't yell. He can't even make a sound.

Dream takes a single, dangerous step forward, and Carl seems to take it as his invitation to move. With one sharp twitch of the head, he bit down hard on Dreams hand, and Tommy swears he looks proud when the man cries out in pain.

"What the f-!" Dream bites his tongue to keep himself from making any more noise than necessarily, all while desperately gripping his now injured hand. Drops of blood hit the pearl white snow below them from the wound. He looks at Tommy, and he can tell any joking nature Dream had was gone.

He always had a sensitive switch.

"I'm not dealing with this shit." He snarls, using his elbow to roughly shove Carl's head to the side. The horse neighs, throwing up its legs as Dreams arm clamps down on Tommy's shoulder.

Scream. Please, fuck, scream.

Tommy - for whatever reason, and from whatever power, strength he was gifted in that moment - screams. He doesn't know why, or what finally snaps him out of his trance, but he opens his mouth, and he screams at the absolute top of his lungs, begging and praying someone from his family hears him. His voice breaks and tears cloud his vision and he's so, so fucking scared-

Dream throws an ender pearl as far as he physically can. Gripping his arm down on Tommy, he smiles at the boy.

"I misssd you, Tommy. My only friend."

With the blink of an eye, and a howling horse left behind, Tommy and Dream disappeared into the distance.

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“Where the fuck is my son, Techno!”

Techno doesn't remember a time where the stress thrumming through his veins had been quite this intense. He feels like tugging his hair, like screaming, like breaking something - but right now, all he was doing was pacing, fingers fidgeting with themselves.

He can barely keep track of what was happening. One second, they were all sitting around the house, in their own little peaceful worlds.

Then, a scream, and a bang as Phil threw open the door, and thudding as his sons joined him, and-

And no Tommy.

“I don't understand.” Wilbur croaked out from the corner, eyes glued to the ground. “I-I was outside. I heard him scream, and I went to check, and he was just...gone.”

“There's blood on the snow.” Phil's voice broke as he spoke. “What happened to my son, Techno?”

“I don't know.” The Blood God considers himself a strong warrior, but right now, there's tears brimming at the corners of his eyes. He had taken his eyes off of Tommy for two minutes - two minutes! - and now the boy was gone. Disappeared into thin air, the only clues to his absence being the piercing scream that had echoed through the house and chilled everybody's bones.

Tommy was gone. Techno had promised, time and time again, to protect him, to keep him from harm - and now Tommy was gone. Techno knew he had failed, and he was fighting the need to lean over and empty his stomach onto the ground.

But he shakes his head. He's going to make sure that, whatever happened to Tommy, he got to the boy as quickly as possible. He couldn't take the time to panic, even if his bones are shaking and guilt is flooding his mind.

He had to focus on Tommy. On getting his baby brother safe.

Mourn later. Panic later. Save now.

“Okay. Okay.” Bringing his hands up, Techno let out a slow, deep exhale, allowing his shoulders to relax with the movement. “Okay. Here's what we're gonna do. We're gonna go outside, and, and - we're - we're gonna-“

There's a knock at the door, and all three of the men in the room freeze. Techno's eyes immediately shoots to Phil's - he may be the “leader” of the group, but he will always look to his father.

Phil, however, looks equally as confused as Techno. Well, actually, he looks like he hadn't even processed the knock at the door, too busy panicking over his son.

Hands shaking, eyes wide, Techno wonders what it's like to lose a child.

He gets up slowly, and shuffles his way over to the door.

Creaking it open, he guffaws slightly at a strikingly unfamiliar face.

Sam stares back at him dumbly. "Uhh.." He peers over Techno's shoulder, eyebrows shooting up at the sight of Phil. "Is it a bad time...?"

Techno almost slams the door on his face. He isn't sure quite why - he likes Sam, has nothing against the dude - but now is NOT the time for casual visitors. Hell, he didn't even know how Sam knew where his house was, but that was way too much thinking for his panic-muddled brain.

Instead, he says "Yes", and stares at the other blankly. Under his glare, Sam clears his throat awkwardly.

"Sorry, I just - Tubbo told me where you lived. I had urgent news I needed to deliver to you, and I couldn't reach Tommy's communicator to tell him myself."

"Is it about Tommy?" Phil demands, pushing Techno out of the way so he's standing fully in front of Sam. The visitor seems to jump slightly at the ferocity of the family, watching as Wilbur too joins the trio in front of him. Three pairs of eyes stare him down, and he shrinks back slightly.

"Yeah, it is." clearing his throat, the creeper hybrid nods fast. "I've - I've been working with Dream. He contacted me a few weeks back, wanted me to build something for him. It was a prison, although I wasn't told that before I started construction. Pay was good, I didn't think much of it. For a while, I had no idea what the purpose was. But I- I found a book of Dream's recently, and in it was some plans I had never been told about. Dream is- the prison- it's meant for Tommy. I wanted to warn you guys directly. I think Tommy is in danger, and-"

"Where is this prison?" Techno doesn't mean for it to come out as harsh as it does - realistically, he's incredibly thankful towards Sam and the help he's providing. He's flooded with emotions, and Techno HATES emotions. His brother is missing, and they had no clue where he was, but now they do, maybe? And he's with his abuser, probably, and-

Techno hates this. He hates it for so many reasons.

"Is Tommy okay?" Sam inquires, and from next to him, Wilbur shakes his head.

"No. He's gone. That's why we need to know where the prison is."

A harsh breath is sucked in between Sam's teeth. For a few seconds, the man just stands there, staring at the family in front of them, before gently pushing past them.



“Okay, well. I can tell you the cords, but you need more information than that to access the prison. It’s complicated - there’s traps and false entrances - it’s meant to be inescapable. Do you have a pen and paper? I’ll sketch a map of all the places Dream and Tommy may be, and-“

“Why are you helping us?”

The question, prompted by Techno, seems to catch Sam off guard. He looks at the other as if it’s the stupidest thing anyone could’ve said in that moment.

“Tommy’s a kid. Of course I’m helping you.”

Phil, Wilbur, and Techno all share a look between them. The oldest brother knows immediately that all of them are in agreement - they’re doing this. The faster they get it done, the better, so, while Techno and Phil listen to Sam’s battle plan, Wilbur ushers off to go collect the needed armor, weapons and materials.

Techno is still panicking, but his goal is now clear in his mind as he watches Sam’s pen scribble across the page.

Get Tommy. Make sure he’s safe. Kill Dream.

Rescue Tommy. Make sure Tommy’s safe.

Save his baby brother. Keep his promises.

Keep his promises.

//

Halfway across the map, Tommy wakes up with a startled gasp and a hand hovering over his chest. Temple aching and bones creaking, for a moment, not a single part of him can remember how he got here or what lead up to this moment.

Carl. Dream. Ender pearl.

When they landed, Tommy had fought, hard. Thrashing and kicking and biting. Promptly, with a hard punch to the temple, Dream had knocked him out and eradicated the problem.

Now, as his surroundings begin to sharpen back into focus, Tommy realizes he has no idea where HERE is. He’s on the back of a horse, thrown haphazardly like a sack as whoever’s driving - Dream, he assumes - sits comfortably in front of him. The environment is totally unfamiliar to him, but, when he peaks up his head, he sees a large, looming building in the distance, made up entirely of nethered materials and obsidian.

He swallows, hard. In front of him, Dream just keeps driving.

Tommy thinks to his dad - to Techno, to Wilbur. He thinks about he was right when he was falling - everything does just repeat itself. Despite Techno’s promises, despite the fact he had been doing better, he was right back where he started ; powerless and in the hands of Dream.

They ride closer to the prison, and Tommy feels tears drip down his face.

He wishes he were home.

## Chapter End Notes

i rly said 5 days minimum and it's seven days later teehee whoops

This chapter rly stumped me and honestly I don't like it that much lol. The fic before this point was basically entirely mapped out, and while I still know what's going to happen, I don't have a like listed out organized sequence of events anymore and that shit left me CONFUSED

i also started school so i've been distracted w that too!

i'm still not ENTIRELY sure how long this fic is gonna be? absolutely at least 2-3 more chapters, maybe more, we'll see.

Thanks for reading! Kudos and comments very much appreciated!

# **kidnapped boy, bleeding boy ; why do you beg?**

## Chapter Summary

Techno, Phil and Wilbur ride out to save their brother.

## Chapter Notes

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

The night is dead quiet. Silence settles around them like a thick blanket, suffocating, with the only sound in the miles of forest being the low trotting of a horses gait. It's been about an hour of travel, now - an hour of silence.

An hour of heavy silence.

Techno leads at the front. Phil and Wilbur follow closely behind, although none of them believe the real fight will begin until they reach the prison. Strapped across their horses pouches and backs are weapons - swords, bows, axes, potions, anything and everything that could aid in the coming battle.

It's been two hours and forty five minutes since Tommy was taken. Less than three hours since Techno had heard Tommy's scream, bolted out of bed, and immediately found himself too late. He doesn't know what they would've done if Sam hadn't shown up when he did- Dream had pearled, leaving no footprints, no trace of a direction. No clues. No hints.

Without Sam, the family would've been lost in finding their little brother, their son.

But, thankfully, Sam did arrive, and as far as Techno was concerned, that man was practically a Saint. Not only did he lay out the entirety of the prison for Techno, explaining the ins and outs, traps and curves ; he also left immediately to go round up others to join in the fight.

"Puffy will definitely join me." He reassured as he was leaving, throwing his crossbow over his shoulder and heaving up his swords. "About the others, well...I'll see who I can get. We'll meet you at the prison as soon as we can. Try not to get into too much danger before help arrives."

Phil hugs him. Sam, although a little awkward, pats his arm and whispers the same soft reassurances Wilbur has been telling him for the past two hours, forty five minutes.

But now, they're getting close. As soon as Sam had left to gather the others for a fight, Techno, Wilbur and Phil had gotten to work. Techno sharpened weapons, Wilbur brewed potions, and Phil recovered and mended all netherite armor, including a pair for Tommy, for once they rescue him.

They WOULD rescue him. The family knew they would save their little brother or go down trying - it wasn't even a question on anyone's mind.

Now, riding towards the looming building in front of him - bigger than any he's ever seen, and more terrifying too - Techno thinks to Tommy. To his stubbornness, to his recovery. To the Tommy they were finally starting to see shine through, little by little.

Not but two days ago, Tommy had fallen asleep on him. Techno had been laying on the couch, book in hand, and Tommy had, entirely wordlessly, crawled on top of him. Utterly confused and a bit uncomfortable, Techno peered down - but it wasn't any use. Tommy was avoiding his eyes like the plague, an embarrassed redness on his cheeks as he stared at the ground, the ceiling, the wall ; anywhere but Techno.

He looked shaken up. Techno chops it up to a nightmare, and, using one hand to hold his book, entangled the other into the thick blonde mess of Tommy's hair. Stroking his thumb up and down the others temple in what he hopes is a calming motion, he continues to read, and tries to move as little as possible.

Within five minutes, Tommy was asleep. Breathing softly on top of him, eyes closed, cheek smushed against the others chest and facing towards the warmth of the fire. He looked...like a kid. When Tommy's awake, he's brash, aggressive and defensive and constantly rebuilding those walls around himself he's convinced he needs. But right now, he looked like a child, a child shaped by war and turmoil and trauma, a child sleeping with his shoulders tensed and ready to move.

A kid, a sixteen year old, fast asleep on his big brother, gripping the others shirt for dear life.

Techno continues to run his fingers over the others scalp and hair. The other looks like a child ; a child Techno ultimately let down. A child Techno wasn't able to protect ; a teenager disappointed by his older brother more than once.

It terrifies Techno to think that whatever progress they had made in the past two weeks may have been entirely erased in two hours, forty five minutes. Tommy was getting better - he was opening up, he was falling asleep on Techno, he was looking Phil in the eyes. But a kid can only handle so much, and Techno absolutely dreads to think of what impact being grabbed by Dream AGAIN will do to that kids psyche.

Techno thinks to what Tommy had said to him, moments before throwing himself into lava. That feels like a lifetime away now, but realistically, it was less than a month ago.

"You said it, and you were right. History repeats itself." Tommy had said with the lava licking at his ankles. "You heard Dream - I'm 'just too fun'. He will always come back for me. I will always be his plaything. I will never be free."

Techno had, by letting Tommy down, by not protecting him, proved his brother right. When he had dragged his body out of the lava, he had made one promise ; to keep Dream from ever touching Tommy again.

And he failed, and he proved Tommy right, and even once he gets Tommy back, Techno has no idea how he's going to come back from that. How he's going to fix that broken part of Tommy - prove him wrong all over again. It feels like the universe was absolutely bent on beating that kid down over and over again, and Techno, despite his apparent strength, despite his training, wasn't strong enough to stop it.

It terrifies him, although he hates to admit that. Right now, he knows he needs to push that guilt aside ; focus on riding, focus on pushing forward. Focus on his father and twin behind him, and the passion within all three of them to rescue their family member.

The prison is close now, looming over them in all of its terrifying glory. Pulling himself out of whatever pool of guilt he was stewing in, Techno raised a hand, silently signaling for the two behind him to stop.

"We should ditch our horses here." Phil murmurs behind him. "Go in on foot from here. Grab your weapons, and keep your eyes out."

Techno snorts. No one could ever guess where he got his warrior-like attitude from.

The twins do as they're told, jumping off their horses and onto the soft grassy land below. Techno grabs his best sword, arrows, and bow, slinging the ladder over his shoulder and sheathing the sword accordingly. Wilbur grabs similar items, but makes sure to include a couple of potions in his satchel.

The three exchange a look, and a sharp nod, before making their way into the building, crouched low to the ground.

The main entrance was simple - a large, tall room with an expanding nether portal in the middle. From the way Sam had described, this Nether portal doesn't immediately travel to the prison - but they still had to be careful. They had no idea where Dream and Tommy were ; hell, it was pure hope that Dream had gone right to the prison with Tommy. If they had gone elsewhere first, or Dream had stashed Tommy somewhere, their plan would be for naught and the family would have no idea where to look.

For now, though, Techno leads the pack as they step into the cracking purple portal in front of them. With loud whooshing and a strange feeling in the stomach, they materialized in an entirely separate room, surrounded by the faintest of nether sounds.

Look left, look right. With jerks of the head, Techno determines Dream - and, more importantly, Tommy - are not in this room. "One more portal." He communicates to his family, stepping right back into the portal they had just come from.

This time, however, when he appears on the other side, it's to a sickening sight and an entirely new environment.

The area is a reception room of sorts. A wooden table with several books and contracts lays at the center point, with several levers positioned behind it. It reeks of Sam's construction work, with designs on the floor and the lights illuminating the whole room.

In front of the reception desk stood Dream, towering and clenching his fists and, Techno thinks, oh, oh so punchable. His trademark mask is gone, and the Blood God barely takes barely any notice of his features, despite this being the first time he's ever seen them.

At his feet is Tommy ; on his knees, looking up at the other with nothing but terror and fear. A welt the size of a baseball is steadily forming on the front of his forehead, accompanying the bright purple hue on his cheek. More than anything, he was shaking, fingertips trembling against the cold floor below him. He looks small, impossibly so ; and Dream knows it.

"I'm sorry-" Tommy chokes out, still entirely oblivious to the presence of his family, entirely distracted by the monster in front of him. "I didn't mean to, I didn't - I -"

"You never listen." Dream snarls down at him, back straight and glare cold. "I tell you so many goddamn times, Im so patient, and you never listen. You fight me, you try to fucking bite me -"

"I didn't-!"

A loud slap echoes through the room.

Tommy jerks to the side, head down, ears ringing, fingers forming fists against the netherrack flooring. Dream, still standing tall, proud, smirks in approval and shakes his hand, bright red from the hit. There's a hand-shaped mark forming over the boys left cheek.

"Don't interrupt me." He hissed. Mouth open, eyes sickeningly soft, he looks like he's about to go into another manipulative rampage - but he's cut off by the telltale sound of a bow stretching, of an arrow being loaded.

Techno stands, armed and ready to land one right between Dream's eyes. He doesn't think he's felt this angry in a long, long time ; hearing this man slap his baby brother across the face, watching it happen - something within him had snapped. He burned bright inside, chest rising and falling dramatically, and all he wanted to do was end the man that dared put his hands on Tommy.

Dream, on the other hands, just greeted Techno with a low grin. "I guess I should've assumed you would've shown up eventually. I did think it would've taken a little longer, though."

"Let him go." Techno's sharp tone offered no room for argument. "Let him go or I'll kill you."

"Oh..." Dream, in a fluid motion, grabs Tommy by his hair and yanks him into a kneeling position in front of him. A netherite sword is pressed to Tommy's throat, and a low laugh leaves Dream's. "But you wouldnt dare come closer, would you?"

Techno's foot stops midair. Seconds ago, ready to march over and kill Dream, now left hesitating as he watches the fear fill his baby brothers eyes. A small trail of blood leaks down Tommys neck from the blade pressing into it, and Techno wants to roar, to scream, to kill.

“Put him down”, he spits the words like venom. Next to him, Phil is practically vibrating with rage, and Techno can only imagine what it’s like to watch this as a father.

Dream, in response, only smiles. Grip white around the sword and fingers flexing with power, he looks just about as scared as a lion staring down a mouse. Thrown across his shoulder was a satchel, which, while keeping the knife to Tommys throat, he slowly began to reach into.

His hands produced a glowing, enchanted leather book. Techno could practically feel its power from here ; he considered himself well trained in the magic arts, with potions and enchantments and such, but this was nothing he recognized. The color was off, a different color than any other glow he’d ever seen, and the power felt darker - stronger. Techno didn’t like it, and he especially didn’t like that Dream was holding it, along with his baby brother, hostage.

“When Schlatt died...” Dream says slowly, painfully, gripping the book by its spine. “He left me one very, very valuable piece of magic before he went. The only damn reason I have any control over this server is because of this book. The only reason-“ he jabbed a finger in Wilburs direction - “he’s even ALIVE is because of this book!! I need you to understand, boys. I hold the power of God in my hand. Nothing you can do, no fight you can win. This book - its more powerful than you could EVER be, Techno. This book reverses death, and it’s all mine.”

Techno takes a sharp breath in through his front teeth. Can he shoot? His arrow is still loaded, pointed at Dreams head - but no. There’s too much of a risk that Dream would kill Tommy before the arrow hit, and if it wasn’t fatal, that would be even worse. No, they needed a distraction, a-...

A book that brings people back to life. Techno feels like his head is spinning. This is all too much.

“You see - I’ve already won this battle because I don’t CARE how it ends. Go ahead. Kill me. George or Sapnap will bring me back out of grief, because this book-“ he waves the thing like a damn trophy - “is indestructible. It’s magic protects it from harm. Hell, even if Tommy dies, I’ll just bring him right back. Even death can’t release you from this.”

Techno feels like he was watching in slow motion as Dream shoved Tommy, hard, sending the boy tumbling to the ground. Then, all within the same millisecond, the man pulls out his netherite sword...and stabs it directly into Tommys side.

Above the boys scream of anguish, both from an injured teen and his family, a sick smile spreads across Dreams face. “It doesn’t matter to me at all what happens to Tommy.” He laughs. Desperately, Tommy tries to reach for his wound - but Dream, too fast for a broken boy, steps on his hand. There’s a sickening crunch as he presses his heel into the fingers, and all Tommy can do is scream, tears gushing from his eyes and blood gushing from his side.

“I don’t care at all what happens to Tommy...” Dream smiles “Because in the end, I’ve already won.”

Behind Techno, Wilbur leans over and vomits. Nobody dares look at their father, for fear all of them may break.

Tommy lays on the floor, bleeding profusely out of his side, hand crushed, and a boot pressed against his back to keep him down. Dream, his captor, his abuser, stands above him, and smiles like he's caught the biggest game around.

Techno doesn't know what to do. With that book, Dream has ultimate power. One move, and he could kill Tommy, and it wouldn't even matter to him.

But if he killed Tommy, Techno's brain reasoned, he would have nothing keeping him safe from the families wrath. He would lose his "pawn", the only thing keeping Techno from giving him a swift and painful stab through the center.

But they couldn't let Tommy die, even if it was to take down Dream. Techno wouldn't allow it. Besides, was what Dream said true? Would he just be brought back if they did kill him? What if they hid the book, what if they put it somewhere nobody could ever find, what if-

Behind them, the portal pops to life, and Techno swears he could cry.

Without ever taking his eyes off Dream, he hears the steps of an army of people enter the room. He wonders distantly if Sam had been able to round up the whole server - he doubts it, but it's a nice thought. Techno can't help but revel in how, even if just for a split second, Dream's eyes widened in panic.

"Sam?" He asks, and Techno darts his eyes to the side to see the creeper-hybrid now standing next to him, bow also loaded and aimed. "What- You're working for-"

"For what's right." Sam interjected. "You've got a kid below you, Dream. You're sick. And we're all sick of you."

Phil fires off the first shot. It lodges itself into Dream's shoulder, shock slowing down his reflexes and leaving him unable to react in time. He stumbles back, cries in pain, and looks at the group in front of him with shock.

Almost immediately, all hell breaks loose.

Technoblade's attention is immediately on Dream as he lunges forward. The villain twists, tries to get away, tries to turn on his heel and run - but he's no match for a brother with a vengeance. Regardless of his escape attempt, Techno tackles Dream to the ground, taking slightly satisfaction in the way the others skull bounces off the hard ground.

Behind him, there's more shuffling, and Techno is distantly aware of a civil war happening in the background. Sam and Puffy join his side in seconds, gently pushing Techno off of Dream. If it were anyone else, he would probably take their heads off - but he watches with a sort of sick calmness as they raise Dream, loopy from the knock to the head, and force him to stand in front of Techno.



The Blood God glances over his shoulder. Phil and Wilbur are on the ground, grasping the bloodied form of his brother to their chests. Phil is holding his son, running fingers through his hair as Wilbur presses desperate hands against the wound to stop the bleeding. In the distance, someone yells for a healing potion, and there's more stumbling as many rush off to go find one.

In front of Techno, the figure of his baby brothers abuser is being held up by two friends, looking absolutely pathetic. There's an arrow sticking out of his shoulder from Phil, the end having snapped off when Techno tackled him, which must've hurt like a bitch.

Good.

His eyes are lidded and there's still a manic, dark grin on his face. The enchanted book, gripped powerfully in his hands just seconds ago, is laying halfway across the room, entirely forgotten by the battle raging on around it.

Sam's voice brought Techno back to the current moment. "It's up to you, Techno. We can kill him. We can take all three of his lives - we can do whatever you want."

Techno looks back at his brother. Bloodied, face twisted in agony, fingers gripping at Philzas shirt as a healing potion is poured onto his wound and simmered into his flesh.

Techno takes a deep breath in. A deep breath out. The voices are deafening, rendering it difficult to think a coherent thought, never mind make a decision.

"Take two of his lives. Lock him up in the prison - in the same cell Tommy was going to be in. When Tommy feels better, he can decide what he wants to happen to Dream, if he wants to. For now, just keep him the hell away from my brother."

Sam nods, and Techno could fucking kiss him. Instead, he turns right around, and practically runs to his family.

Landing on his knees in front of the trio, his hand immediately finds Tommys forehead, brushing back the locks of sweaty hair and inspecting him. He's dirty, probably from being dragged around and manhandled, and his eyes are lidded, the effects of the potion leaving him only half conscious. Phil is clutching him like a baby, whispering soft reassurances to his half asleep son, and Techno can only imagine the absolute hell Tommy would raise if he were awake at being cradled like that.

"How's he doing?" He asks Wilbur, who looks just as distraught as Phi does.

"The potion seems to be working, but there's gonna be a nasty scar. Thank god you brought that, Techno. His fingers are..." he trails off, picking up one of his brothers lanky hands like they were fine china. The fingers are bent awkwardly in all sorts of places, dirt on his knuckles resembling the shape of Dreams boots. Techno feels rage boil in his heart all over again.

"The potion seems to be ignoring these in favor of the bigger problem, and I don't think it's safe to pump him full of magic right now. We may have to bandage these and heal them

naturally, along with the rest of whatever the potions can't fix from that wound."

"Dream..." Phil chokes out, interrupting their talk and also effectively speaking for the first time since he started holding Tommy. "What are they doing with Dream?"

"They're bringing him down to two canon lives, and then throwing him in prison." Techno reassures gently. He places one hand on his dad's back and the other on the back of his brother's head as he speaks. "Once Tommys healed, we can all figure out what to do together. Until then, he's far away."

"He's gonna..." visibly tightening his hold on his baby boy, Phil lets out a low, choked sob. "He's been through so much. Why can't he just heal? Why did this have to happen?"

"We gotta-" Wilbur swallows hard. "We gotta focus on the future, Dad. Tommys...he's gonna have a hard time."

'He will always come back for me. I will never be free.'

"We need to focus on showing Tommy that this time can be different. That we...that we're here, and we're going to-"

"We've just gotta change history." Techno picks up when his brother trails off. "Tommy's biggest fear, when he was at that pit of lava, was that history just keeps repeating itself - that he would never be free of Dreams hold. It's going to be hard to convince him that's not true after all this. So we need to change the future - change history - change whatever we need to change to show him that life can be good, even after- this. All this."

Wilbur, from next to Tommy, lets out a low, pitiful laugh while running his fingers through Tommy's hair. "Man, having Tommy around has made you a massive sap."

"The voices told me to say, like, half of that."

"He's made the voices saps, then."

"The voices demand blood, Wilbur. They are the opposite of saps."

"Boys..." Phil raised one hand, keeping the other steadily on Tommy, who was now fully asleep. He looks uncomfortable, and thinking about it too hard reignites the flame of anger in Techno's chest. "Let's just...go home. I want Tommy to wake up in his own house."

Techno and Wilbur exchange a look, a nod with Phil, and then rise to their feet. Helping their dad up, and ensuring that their baby brother is as comfortable as he could possibly be, pressed tight against Phil and looking much smaller than a 6'3 sixteen year old.

Together, they all walk to the horses. Phil gets on first, then is handed Tommy, who lays against his chest with his head lopped to the side.

The voices in Techno's head are torn. Half want blood, vicious images of Dreams' body, torn apart by his anger flash through his mind - but the other half just wants his family. The other

half is Techno's protective side - so all of him, he has to admit - just wanting to do what he can to have a shred of fucking normalcy in this whirlwind of a life they've been given.

He knows, in his heart of hearts, that Dream will never touch Tommy again. He can't really explain why, as even the voices are quiet on the matter - he just knows.

Together, the family heads home to start the healing process all over again.

## Chapter End Notes

haha new chapter pog

sorry for the absolutely atrocious wait on this i'm the worst. i'm not 100% satisfied with this chapter, i feel like the pacing is a bit fast, BUT it's been a week and a half since i updated so fuck it

I hope the plot line of this makes like? relative sense LOL if there's any confusion to where they were and stuff i can def try to clarify in the comments :)

Not entirely sure how many chapters left but definitely at least one, maybe two? idk i'm just vibing

Thanks for reading! Kudos + comments appreciated!

# **silent boy, sleepy boy ; why do you sing?**

## Chapter Summary

the family begins the long road of healing tommy all over again.

## Chapter Notes

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

It was a week until Tommy woke up again. After that, he didn't speak for a month.

When the family had arrived home, Phil took haste to get his son tucked into bed, swaddled up in blankets and everything warm. Between the extent of his injuries and the natural drowsiness properties of the healing potions, they knew it would probably be a good amount of time until he awoke again.

So, painfully, they waited.

There was never a moment where Tommy was alone in his room. Phil, Techno, and Wilbur all took turns sitting at his bedside and keeping guard. None of them knew how Tommy would react to waking up, and they weren't too keen on leaving him alone for the process.

And, as much as Techno trusted Sam and his guarding abilities at the prison, Dream was still alive. That in itself was enough to put Techno on edge, enough to warrant a little extra security around his family.

The air in this house was thick while Tommy was asleep. Techno almost wonders if "in a coma" was the better way to put it, although none of them dared voice that out loud. It was day three, and he still hadn't awoken. Techno overheard Wilbur and Phil talking softly - as if afraid Tommy would hear - about what could've happened in between Tommy getting abducted and his rescue. Two hours, forty five minutes.

It was nothing good, that's for sure. Techno would never forget the haunted look in Tommys eyes as he sat bellow Dream, at his feet like a dog, begging for forgiveness for the crime of living.

Technos voices yearn for blood. They yearn to slash, cut, torture the man who caused all of this. They wanted to eradicate the problem at its source - to ensure Dream would never touch Tommy again in the only way Techno knew how - violence.

But still, he waits. He promised himself he would wait until Tommy woke up, and give him the ultimate decision of what happened to Dream. With each passing day, it felt like the wait was becoming longer and longer, with no end in sight.

More than once, Techno walks in on Wilbur laying down with Tommy. The boys eyes screwed shut, gripping his brothers shirt in his fists, Wilbur lay wide awake. His eyes surveyed the area, while fingers ran over Tommys back and patted gently.

Ultimately, Techno didn't disturb them. He knew this was Wilbur's way of dealing with his guilt - dealing with the knowledge that, in the times when Tommy needed him most, he wasn't there. Not in any way that counted.

And oh goodness, did Techno know his fair share about guilt. So, he let the two be, let Wilbur have his fits of protective rage. He didn't know what was and wasn't healthy anymore, and he didn't feel like intruding regardless.

Phil - as much as it pained Techno - could only be described as a parent in mourning. He moved around as if Tommy were dead, even when cleaning the very room his son was slumbering in. He did that often, clean that room - even if nobody was actively messing it. During normal times, when Tommy was awake, that room looked like a tornado went through it every day of the week - so Techno guesses it's just a habit of routine. Ultimately, dusting the same, clean shelf seven days a week isn't the worst way to cope, he decides.

Techno knows that guilt settles over all three of them like a thick fog. They blame themselves for Tommys capture, for his pain, for his fear. Ever since Logstedshire, the family has been particularly protective over the youngest - but even that didn't matter, in the end. Dream got Tommy all over again, and Techno feared all the progress they had made - all the hard work getting Tommy to open up, to see the joys of life - had been dashed with two hours, forty five minutes full of trauma.

When Tommy woke up, Techno's fears were rapidly confirmed.

Eight days after the incident with Dream, with Phil next to his bed, Tommy woke up.

Techno and Wilbur, in the living room, talking lowly, were unaware of the development at first. Rather quickly, however, they became aware of Phil talking to someone, and they practically trampled each other in their attempts to run to Tommys bedroom door.

Techno would never admit this, however. As far as he's concerned, he rose calmly, and walked in an orderly manner, no matter what Wilbur said.

When the two arrived at the door, they went dead quiet, pressed their ears close, and listened.

"Come on, bubs. Can you tell me what day it is? It's Thursday. Just say it's Thursday for me."

Dead silence met the air. After a few moments, Phil kept talking.

"...Okay. That's okay. I understand, bud - no pressure. You must be hungry, yeah? Do you want some food?"

Silence.

“Okay, I can get you some food. I’ll be back in just a f- woah! Hey, hey- dont worry, Kiddo. I’ll have Techno or Wilbur stay with you while I’m making food, okay? You don’t have to worry about that.”

Silence, followed by the slow echo of steps. The door creaked open, and Phil nearly jumped at the sight of his remaining two sons standing directly in front of him.

“Good timing.” He hummed after a moment, taking care to close the door behind him before speaking. “I need one of you to go in there and stay with him. Both, if you want. He needs some food in his system, but when I tried to leave, he grabbed my sleeve. Iron grip, that kid - fucking menace.”

“What did he say?” Wilbur inquired, almost like a child. Techno wishes the circumstances were that sweet.

“Not much.” Phil bit his lip, eyes gazing off to the side for a moment. “I’m sure he’s just hungry. He’ll talk once he’s eaten.”

Tommy, in fact, did not talk after he ate. A day passed with no words, then two, then three. The boy got out of bed, walked around, joined them in family activities - but never spoke a word.

As much as they tried to hide it from their brother, it was destroying their families morale, their optimism. Techno knew almost immediately that all of their precious progress had been dashed by Tommys abduction, but he didn’t expect it to be this bad. It seems as though Tommy had entirely shut down - he was there in body, in motion, but devoid of spirit.

He would do anything to hear Tommy laugh, because the house now felt so empty without him. It was strange to think there was a time when Techno lived alone - because now, the silence was nothing but suffocating.

He had grown used to his family - used to living the way they did back when he was ten. Tommy and Wilbur would fight, Techno would train or read or whittle away at weapons, and Phil would cook meals, break up fights, and patch up wounds.

It had almost been...warm. A life with a family, a life free of violence - until Dream came, and took that from them.

Now, Tommy isn’t speaking, and there’s nothing any of them can do about it.

More than once, Techno walks by Tommy’s room to hear Phil or Wilbur begging him to speak. Exactly ten days since Tommys disappearance, and eleven days since they had heard so much of a peep out of their younger brother, Wilbur sat at the edge of the bed, silent tears running down his face as he begged his baby brother to talk.

“Come on, bubs.” He said softly, running his hands through the boys hair. Next to him, Tommy stares at the wall - he seems aware of his surroundings, yet entirely uninterested in them, flinching when noises occurred by never truly engaging with much at all. Occasionally, he would venture out of his room to get food from the fridge, and then immediately go right

back. All of his windows were locked tight, and, six hours after he had woken up, Techno had walked in to see him trying to nail a piece of spare wood from Techno's log pile across the glass.

But here, with Wilbur sobbing next to him, all he could do was stare at a wall. His hand clapped Wilburs, and occasionally he would give it a squeeze, but otherwise, he said nothing.

Techno thinks what haunts him most about all this was how not-Tommy Tommy looked. The boy was loud by nature ; violent and rowdy, begging for fights and crying out in indignation when they inevitably found him. He kicked up a fuss whenever possible, and Techno never imagined he would find himself missing the constant morning arguments or the afternoon bickers.

But Tommy quiet was hauntingly wrong. He wasn't sleeping, to make things worse - among his silence, his eye bags were also sinking against his skin, and his pale face was accentuated. Techno wonders if Tommy would be eating if he didn't have a family there to force him to take care of himself. He's not sure he WANTS to know the answer.

---

One day, in a sort of desperate attempt to lighten the mood, Techno dragged in an old, rusty jukebox from the cellar. Tommy peaked up, glancing up from the book Techno had given him to read - but, just like always, he said nothing.

"Wanna listen to something?" Techno asked, letting out a short groan as he popped his back left and right. Lugging that thing up the stairs wasn't something he was exactly ecstatic to do - never mind bringing it BACK downstairs after this was over.

Still, the short nod Tommy have made the trip worth it. And besides, Techno knew his brother would like this surprise.

After everything had happened, and Tommy was returned back home to heal, Phil had slipped away one day to deal with the carnage. In the midst of all the chaos, some other members of the SMP had found a large, obsidian room - probably meant to be a sort of "final boss room" in Dreams plan, before he had to rework it.

In that room, Phil found and brought home two very, very important items of Tommys belonging. Reaching into his bag, thrown around his shoulder, Techno produced one of those very items, and slipped it into the jukebox.

The soft, low notes of Mellohi filled the room.

Tommys head shoots up to make eye contact with Techno. Eyes wide, mouth open slightly, he seems to be asking a question, and Techno, despite himself, smiles.

"Yeah," he murmurs in response to the look. "It's the real one. I have Cat, too. We can listen to that one after."

It takes a couple of moments for Tommy to process the words - the fact that his precious disks were back. Once he does, he's sliding out of bed, something Techno hasn't seen him do in a week for anything other than food. Silently - of course, silently - Tommy sits on the ground, cross legged directly next to the jukebox.

Softly, he begins to hum. His voice is terrible, like it always has been, but it's Tommy, and he's humming. It's the closest thing to speaking he'd done in eleven days.

And Techno definitely, definitely didn't cry - not even a single watery eye.

The Blood God sits across from the other on the floor, and that's where they stay, neither wanting to be the first to move. They alternated between Cat and Mellohi, simply enjoying the moment.

Maybe - just maybe - with a lot of love, and some elbow grease - Tommy would be okay.

---

Things seemed to be better in the following days, if not marginally. Tommy would react a little more to sounds, would venture out of his room more to join his family in basic activities - a fraction of what used to be his normal, but, regardless, it was a start. He still refused to go outside - but no one could say they blamed him, so none of the family pushed the issue. Not yet, anyways.

Struck by inspiration from how Tommy reacted to the discs, Techno busied himself with making the other a journal. He used leather from his cow farm and paper from his very own sugarcane to craft it, hoping Tommy would appreciate the homemade aspect of it.

When he had it to the other, Tommys eyes widened marginally. He looked up at Techno in slight questioning, who handed him a pen.

"I know you're not big on talking right now." Techno nods towards the leather bound book. "So I thought you could use this. You can do whatever you want with it - use it to communicate with us, write your thoughts, make a diary - I mean, you could use it as a sketchbook if you wanted. I just thought you would appreciate it."

Tommy looked from Techno, to the book, then back to Techno. Flipping open the pages and uncapping the pen, he scribbled something in his notoriously illegible hand writing. Holding it up high to show it to his brother, he smiled a Tommy smile - the most Tommy smile Techno had seen in almost two weeks, now.

"Thank you." The writing said.

Techno reached out, fluffing up the others hair affectionately, and murmuring out a soft "No problem, bubs."

---

Tommy had nightmares.



It became common occurrence for Techno to jolt awake in the wee hours of the night, roused by the whimpering - or sometimes crying, screaming - of his baby brother in the next room over. He would clobber out of bed, grab his spare blankets, and make his way to the scene of the crime.

Sometimes, another family member got to Tommy before Techno did. He would find Wilbur or Phil, kneeled next to Tommy, rubbing circles on his back and coaxing him awake.

Tonight, however, as he entered Tommys room, he found himself alone. With a soft sigh - full accustomed to the routine by now - he made his way towards Tommys bed.

He started by throwing his extra blankets over Tommys shoulders, tucking them close around his torso and ensuring they covered his lanky legs. He settles to his knees, hears the cracks of his tired joints against the floorboards. Behind him, the door creaks open - he would've jumped if he didn't immediately recognize the footsteps as Wilburs.

"Ah." The voice of his older brother yawned from behind him. "I came to be with him, but I see you've got it covered."

Regardless, Wilbur walked over to Techno, and kneeled down next to him. Together, they spoke softly, Technos hand in Tommys hair, and Wilburs hand on Tommys shoulder. The boy, once shivering and crying silently, began to calm at the sound of his families soft voices.

Eventually, he was still in his sleep, chest rising and falling at an entirely normal rate. He wasn't aware of the kiss pressed to his forehead by Wil, or the short pat on his arm from Techno - but he was fully aware of the warmth that bloomed through his chest, even in sleep.

Wilbur and Techno left the room as quietly as they could. Parting ways with a soft "Good night", they each returned to their rooms in an attempt to get a bit more sleep before waking up for the day.

That night, Techno had a nightmare of his own. He watched Dream, standing over Tommy, beating him to death. He raised the boy, slammed him back into the obsidian below - again, and again, and again. The cracks of Tommys skull echo through the room. Blood seeped into the ground and on Techno's shoes. He can feel his baby brothers life force draining in front of him. It felt so real.

He woke up heaving. That morning, when he went into Tommy's room to give him his breakfast, he gave his baby brother a hug.

"I love you." He whispers lowly. He expected that, when he said it, it would be hard, or in a dramatic moment - but honestly, it was just relieving. Like ripping off a bandaid, or finishing a project you've been putting off for too long.

"I love you." He whispered it again, just for good measure. "We've let you down. He'll never touch you again. Over my dead body."

Silently, fingers reach up and grasp the back of Techno's cape. The older feels himself pulled close, and all he can do is hold Tommy like a lifeline - like, if he can just hold tightly enough,

he could keep the boy from falling apart, keep all of his pieces together, and keep him safe.

“I love you too.” Tommy whispers, and despite himself, Techno cries.

## Chapter End Notes

sooo this chapter wasn't supposed to be up until this weekend BUT with today's stream i figured we all needed this. so sorry if it's a bit short ; i cut out some of the ideas, but they'll be in next chapter, which should be longer!

anyways i'm in deep deep pain. i'm very tiny, and my emotional support dreamsmp character just died, so you can imagine the amount of stress i am under.

# **strong boy, healing boy ; why do you visit?**

## Chapter Summary

Tommy visits Dream in prison. Things wrap themselves up.

## Chapter Notes

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

Things got better after that. They weren't fantastic - the house was still hauntingly quiet sometimes - but it got better. Marginally.

Maybe Techno was convincing himself.

He wondered, in the back of his head, if Tommy would ever speak as much as he used to. To be fair, he hadn't been quite as loud as his childhood self for a long time - a fact that shocked many. When they heard Tommy, blaring and boisterous and demanding your attention, it was nearly impossible to believe he could've EVER been louder than he was now.

But war had changed him. Little by little, he had been getting quieter - a change that went over most people's heads, since they never knew Tommy at his loudest. With the passing of Wilbur, and then exile, the destruction of LManburg, and more, Tommy had become naturally quieter over time. More submissive - more traumatized.

Perhaps the encounter with Dream was just the straw that broke the camels back.

But, to Techno's relief, Tommy WAS talking, even if it wasn't as much as before.

He would use words when he couldn't use gestures or inference. When Phil asked him if he wanted pancakes for breakfast, he would nod silently, and that would be the end of the conversation. If someone asked where Techno was - he would point outside. If someone asked if he wanted pancakes OR waffles, or if someone asked WHAT Techno was doing, he would respond "pancakes", or "taking care of the bees", respectfully.

It wasn't perfect, but it was better. He was around the family more, as well ; wasn't keeping to himself as much. Wasn't locked in his room.

He was still scared of going outside alone, even if he didn't like to show it. He wouldn't wonder beyond the doors threshold unless he was accompanied by someone - if he was alone, he would put it off, or make an excuse as to why he couldn't go. "It's too cold out", he would say, or "It's getting dark out, mobs will come soon". The latter was said at 1PM.

Phil, Wilbur and Techno all noticed, but silently agreed not to comment. Not until it became a real issue, anyways.

A week and a half since Tommy started talking, Tubbo visited again for the first time. The boys best friend had been itching to see him since the whole fiasco with Dream, but Phil worried it would be a little too much for Tommy, and asked Tubbo to wait until the other was had - at least slightly - recovered from the ordeal.

Tommy was doing better now, though, so Tubbo made the trip over in the minecart the family had set up for him. The boys greeted each other with a hug and a laugh, and immediately scurried up to Tommys room to be together in private.

Techno practically melted into his seat when he heard Tommy, one floor above him, laughing - truly, really laughing. Not the compressed giggle, or the low harsh breath - but the obnoxious, wheezing Tommy laugh that was so unique to his brother that it had hurt not to hear.

Tommy laughed with Tubbo. Techno was relieved. He wasn't sure when he started caring so much about Tommys laughter, but he did know he was relieved.

Even then, Techno knows things can't stay perfect forever. He won't let Dream touch Tommy ever again - he swears that to himself every night - but that doesn't mean the man wasn't still alive, locked in prison, awaiting his final verdict.

Techno waited until 3 weeks after Tommy had started talking again, a whole two months after the abduction, to approach him about it.

Knuckles reached up and raptured lightly at the teens decorated door. For a few moments, there was nothing but silence, and then a loud "Come in, bitch!"

Rolling his eyes, Techno peels the door open and takes a glance inside. Tommy isn't at his bed, like normal, instead sitting at his desk with a book scrawled out in front of him. Almost immediately, Techno recognizes it as the journal him and Wilbur gave Tommy during his stretch of silence. He was glad his brother was using it - even if he didn't realize it, it was probably helping him.

"Hey, Theseus." Techno cleared his throat in his unique, awkward fashion, before pushing the door open fully and taking a step inside the room. The floor groaned lightly under the weight as he walked over, sitting himself on the edge of Tommys bed. "Can we talk for a second?"

Tommy, who had been watching him over his shoulder until then, shifts his body to give him his full attention. Eyebrow raised, he inquires "Am I in trouble or something? Because whatever it is, I didnt do it."

"No, you're not-" Techno let's out a low breath. He's already tenser than he'd like to be for this interaction.

He's not annoyed at Tommy, more just the situation as a whole. He's mad that his little brother has to do this ; that encountering Dream one last time was unavoidable. Tommy doesn't know the annoyance isn't directed at him, though, so Techno makes an effort not to show any level of agitation in his voice or form.

“You’re not in trouble. I just- I needed to ask you something, and I didn’t know when the right time would be. But I guess - I don’t know. No better time than the present.”

Tommy blinks at him. “Oookay, Big Man.” he drawls out, turning his back on his older brother just long enough to close his journal and set down his pen. Immediately, he’s facing Techno again. “What is it?”

“Dreams in prison.” Techno doesn’t really know how to start, so he just does. “I mentioned it to you before, but I figured we would talk about it more in-depth when you were feeling better. Me, Wilbur, Phil - we took him down to one life, had him thrown in prison after. Figured that, once you were feeling better, you could decide what happens to him.”

Silence. Techno has never been a talkative guy, but for some reason, he keeps going.

“Tommy, I mean it when I say this - you say the word and he’s dead. You tell me you don’t want to ever see him again and I’ll make sure he never touches you again, yeah? I mean, regardless, he’ll never step near you again as long as I or Phil or Wilbur are alive, but you know what I mean. You want him dead, he’s dead. You-“

“Techno.”

A deep breath. “...Yes, Theseus?”

“I want to visit him.”

“You want- what?” Techno leans back slightly, bed creaking underneath his weight. Man, he’s gotta get this kid better furniture. “You don’t have to do that, you know-“

“Yeah, but I want to.” Tommy hums, and he’s calm - Techno hates it. He wants Tommy to yell, to swear, to be himself. “I don’t- before I make a decision, I need to see him one last time. I don’t know how to describe why I need to do it, I just know I do. I don’t know why. I just know. I need to see Dream one last time - if I don’t, I’ll regret it.”

They maintain eye contact for a few moments, and all Techno can see in Tommy is a kid. His jokes are lacking, his voice is softer - he’s molding himself into an adult, and Techno hates it. He’s just a kid.

But this isn’t serious, he reminds himself. He’s acting like he’s sending Tommy off to die or something - he just wants to visit Dream. In prison. You know, two months after he almost murdered Tommy.

But Tommy, while a child, isn’t stupid. Techno knows he needs to trust his brother ; to trust that he knows what he’s doing.

Techno - Tommy - they’ve just gotta do this. They have to do it, so it can be done.

“...Yeah, okay. Okay, Toms. We’ll visit Dream. Together, okay? We’ll visit him together.”

---

It's four days later, and Techno wishes he were doing just about anything else.

He could be sparring with Phil, or making - okay, burning - dinner with Wilbur, or doing quite literally ANYTHING else with Tommy. But no - he's here, riding on Steve, Tommy behind him, on their way to a looming, massive prison. The prison holding the very man who raged terror on their family not two months ago.

"You sure about this?" Its the fourth time Techno's asked Tommy that in the past half an hour. Tommy huffs, obviously annoyed, but Techno can't find it in himself to feel bad.

"I already told you, Big Man. I'm good."

"Just wanted to make sure you haven't changed your mind."

"Seems to me like YOU don't want to be here. You don't have to be, y'know."

This time, Techno is the one to let out a breath, grip on Steve's reigns tightening fractionally. "I don't know Sam that well. I'm not sure I trust him, and I sure as hell don't understand Dream. So, yeah, no. I'm coming."

"Whatever floats your boat, Blade."

Silence falls over them, and Techno takes the travel time to think. This route reminds him of that night, riding horses with his brother and father, entirely unsure if his brother was still alive or not. This time is different, of course - Tommy is directly behind him, gripping his shirt - but he can't shake the reminder of two months ago from his brain.

Tommy's nervous, too - Techno can tell. He doesn't show it, never really does, but his fingers keep gripping and adjusting their hold on Techno's shirt. There are periods of time where he's talking endlessly, making useless comments and useless remarks, followed by long spans of saying nothing at all. If Techno cranes his neck, he can see the hand Tommy isn't using to hold onto his cape is buried in Steve's fur, twisting it between fingers and then smoothing it out again.

It wasn't like Techno could fault Tommy for being nervous. Hell, he was nervous, and he was known as the Blood God for goodness sake. This wasn't even his fight, arguably, it was Tommy's - but Techno was pretty sick of sitting on the sideline and letting his younger brother fight all his battles alone.

Regardless, he was nervous. It wasn't like he thought they were going into a battle - he was there to make sure that DIDN'T happen - but that doesn't mean he could control what Dream said to Tommy. What if he got in the kid's head, said something to set him off? What if he fucked with the kid's head? What if-

"Techno. I can hear you thinking."

Techno scoffs. "At least I have thoughts in my head, gremlin child."

"Shut up!" Tommy leans back, a scowl on his face. "I have tons of thoughts in my head! For example, right now, I'm thinking about women."

“That’s nice.”

“Man, you are just so supportive. Has anyone ever told you that? I tell you things, and you just - you’re so interested.”

“I try my best.”

In the distance, the prison looms above them. Tommy tenses from his position on Steve’s back, and Techno leans back fractionally. Perhaps, he reasons, being physically closer to Tommy may calm his nerves slightly. If not a lot, at least marginally. Maybe he did it for himself, too - who knows.

“We’re close now.” Techno hums. “We’ll be quick - an hour at the absolute most - so we can just tie Steve up out here.”

Once Steve has been tethered to the nearest fence, and Tommy has given him a few more discrete goodbye pets, both brothers turn to face the looming building. Nothing was stopping them, now - nothing left to procrastinate with.

Techno places what he hopes is a gentle hand on Tommy’s shoulder - he still isn’t good with this sort of thing, but he’s improving - and together, they walk into the towering entrance.

---

It doesn’t take long for Sam to meet them. He’s standing in the main room, at the very desk that Tommy had almost been killed in front of. The second they had stepped through the portal and into the room, Tommy’s shoulder had tensed hard below Techno’s hold. The older of the two can’t say he blames him - he certainly doesn’t want to stick around any longer than they have to, either.

“Tommy! Techno!” Sam seemed oblivious to the air of the room, although Techno didn’t know him well enough to decipher his emotions on such things. He’s smiling - he’s got a mask on, but it’s evident in the way his eyes crinkle.

He seems sympathetic when he looks at Tommy. He puts his arms down and stands far enough away from them, with his posture open and inviting. Techno isn’t the best with handling others, but that doesn’t mean he’s stupid - he can tell the warden is trying to stay neutral. Trying to stay gentle.

Trying not to chase away the boy whose face keeps grimacing when he thinks no one is looking.

“I’m gonna ask you guys to sign these contracts. Don’t worry - they’re nothing...too bad.” Yeah, Techno would be the judge of that. “Then, I’ll have you guys deposit your items in the lockers. You’ll get them back when you’re leaving. The process to get in is pretty hefty, so you’re not going to want all that stuff on you.”

Techno’s eyes narrow. “I’m not going in there without any sort of weapon.”

Sam doesn't seem deterred by the air of finality Techno attempts to establish. "Sorry, man. It's the rules. I can't have you killing Dream while he's locked up here."

Tommy, besides Techno, tenses slightly. The older of the two brothers reaches out, resting what he hoped was a reassuring hand on the other's shoulder. "I'm not bringing Tommy in there without any form of protection. It doesn't have to be a weapon, but you've gotta give us something."

Sam let out an audible sigh. "Is that an ask, or a demand?"

"Guess."

Sam taps his foot twice, impatiently, before shaking his head. "Here's what we can do. I can give Techno a potion that reverses mining fatigue - it'll allow you to punch Dream, if you need to. It's ONLY for emergencies - I'm talkin' he charges you guys or something. If there's any funny business I deem unwarranted, you'll both be stuck in there, with Dream, for a minimum of seven days, until I can figure the situation out. Understood?"

Tommy is practically shaking underneath Techno's hand now. The other runs his thumbs over Tommy's back, giving intermittent squeezes, and refusing to let go.

"I understand." He nods, and the two are led into the locker rooms.

---

Watching the lava fall is nothing short of terrifying.

Techno stands directly behind Tommy, hand still rooted on his shoulder. He holds a potion in his other - the counter effects of the mining fatigue. Sam told him not to drink it until he gets the go-ahead, so he just holds it for now. Staring into the lava as, slowly but surely, it falls.

And by golly, it's slow.

Tommy's been talkative this entire time - Sam, Techno gives him credit, has been handling it surprisingly well. Right now, the boy is going off about moths and dogs, hands waving wildly in the air as he expounds a story of god-knows-what.

"You know what I mean, Techno?"

"Mhm."

Tommy's lower lip juts out in a way that almost painfully shows his age. "You weren't listening at all, you asshole."

"I was." Techno's tone makes no actual effort to defend himself. "You were talking about...moths."

"Aaaand?"

"And....wings?"



Tommy huffs, and turns back to the lava. Techno glances over at Sam, who gives him a pitying shrug of the shoulders, but no other form of communication.

Sam takes his job as warden a little too seriously, in Techno's opinion, but he likes the man regardless. He seems to be gentle with Tommy in a way that a lot of the adults on this server find themselves incapable of - usually, Techno included. He didn't talk down to the teen, but he wasn't rough or aggressive either ; he listened, and formed his response based on what he knew Tommy would react positively to.

Techno admired it. He didn't have those skills, not usually, and he admired it.

"The lava will be down soon." Sam's voice interrupts his thoughts. "Techno, drink that potion now. It's effects only last ten minutes, so if you're absolutely hellbent on not being in there without any form of defense, I would suggest leaving before it runs out."

Oh, thank god. An excuse to not have this be any longer than it needs to be. Techno's shoulders sag in slight relief as he lifts the potion to his mouth, removes the cork with his teeth, and chugs the content.

Tommy watches him with raised eyebrows. "No need to be such a dick about it." He grunts. "Lookin' all macho and shit. You have pink hair. It doesn't work."

"I'll have you know people are absolutely terrified of me and my pink hair."

"Sure, 'Tech. Keep tellin yourself that. I'm pretty sure they were more afraid of Ghostbur than they were of you."

In front of them, the lava clears. The path in front of them is now completely unblocked, and leads to a single, obsidian cell.

Tommys feet shift uncomfortably. Techno squeezes his shoulder.

"Yell if you need anything." Sam says, and the two are stepping on to the platform.

When Dream sees Tommy, his eyes absolutely light up. It almost makes Techno sick to his stomach - but he's resolved himself not to talk during this, not unless he felt absolutely necessary. He would stand in the corner, clenching and unclenching his fist where a weapon should be, and that would be enough. If Dream doubted what Techno could accomplish with just his fists and a little bit of protective fury, he could learn the hard way.

"Tommy!!!" Dream throws his arms open, as if expecting a hug. Tommy, in turn, takes a large, pointed step backwards. Dream frowns, but Techno feels a bloom of pride.

"I'm so glad you finally visited." Underneath his mask, Dream grinned. "It took you a while, but that's ok." He spared a quick glance in Techno's direction - "although, I'm not entirely sure why he's here."

Techno opened his mouth, but Tommy was quick to answer for him. "Backup." was all he said. The silence that followed afterwards was thick.

Dream, never one for reading tense air in a room, clapped his hands together. "I'm so excited to see you Tommy. I have so much to show you! I have books, and a pen to write with ; I have a clock, and a sink--"

"What do you think should happen to you, Dream?"

Almost immediately, the figure in front of Tommy and Techno straightened. For a moment, he didn't turn to look at them - it was bordering on scary, the way he stared at the wall, hands folded in front of him. Techno can't imagine what it must've been like for a child to live with that temper.

"Hm?" He asked, and Tommy wasn't shy in repeating he question.

"You're down to one life. I get to decide what happens to you - whether you live or die. What do you think should happen to you?"

Dream was facing Tommy, now. The smile seemed etched deeper into the mask than it was last time Techno saw him. To the side, his head tilted.

"Tommy." He said gently, slowly, allowing the name to hang in the air for a moment before continuing. "I know everyone tells you i'm this horrible guy - the villain in the story. But don't you remember? I'm the ONLY one that cared about you. Nobody visited. Techno--" he jabbed a finger in the pigs direction - "couldn't even be bothered to check in. I tried to save you from that family ; and they killed me for it!"

"You stabbed me." Tommys voice waivers, but it's barely noticeable. "You manipulated me, you kidnapped me, and then you fucking stabbed me. You call that caring?"

Dream takes two heavy steps forward, and Techno doesn't hesitate. In mere moments, he's standing between Tommy and Dream, staring the man head on with a stoic expression. His features are relaxed, but he hopes the white-knuckled fist and the wide stance was enough to let Dream know what he was messing with. For a long, agonizing handful of seconds, they just stare at each other. Sizing each other up. Techno can tell Dream was debating what to do.

Ultimately, the masked man takes a couple of steps back. Techno does the same, but stays close. Tommy, Techno chuckles at, is grinning, although he's trying to hide it. "Human meat shield" he can practically hear him say, the brat.

"I dont want to kill you, Dream." Tommy murmurs. "For a couple of reasons. One - I don't want that shit on my conscious, not after everything you've made me do. Two - I think death is too easy for you. You pretend, but I spent enough time with you in Logsted to know that you're MISERABLE in here. None of your friends have visited - the one that did, Sapnap, you chased away."

Tommy crosses his arms with a small grin. "I think you deserve to be sad in here. I think you deserve to go through the same hell you made me go through."

And that was that.

Dream just stares. Techno, deciding that was more than enough emotion for today, turns to Tommy and asks a silent question. Tommy nods in response.

With a hand on Tommys shoulder, Techno leads the other back out towards the moving platform. In silence, they step on. The groaning of metals echoes below as they're transported, slowly, back to Sam.

As the lava falls, and the pair look towards safety, Dream stands in his cell.

He watches. His fists clench by his side.

Techno knows, if he ever had the misfortune of seeing Dream outside of this prison, he would kill him.

For now, he focuses on Tommy. "Good job, Theseus." He says gently, giving the others shoulder a squeeze.

When they get home, Wilbur and Phil will be proud of him, too. They'll both give him noogies, Wilbur a whole hug. Phil will cook dinner, and they'll eat together. Tommy will talk.

But, for now, in the dank prison, Tommy just gives him a bright grin in response.

Techno can't help but ruffle his hair.

## Chapter End Notes

i'm sorry the last chapter of this took so long!!! i could make excuses, but i just suck lol.

i really loved writing this fic and i may, in the future (or tomorrow if i get manic who knows) add onto it in a separate story? I like how this ended, and I'd like to keep it that way. But I also have some ideas i'd like to explore in the same universe; almost in a "spinoff" or "sequel" kinda way. not sure, i'd have to see how to format it.

i can practically promise i'll end up writing some more tommy centric angst stuff tho lol. i have some ideas for some Awesamdad fics, some more sbi stuff ; i love tommy angst + found family. i will never have my full fix. so look out for that if ur interested!!

regardless, thank u guys sm for reading this. what pushed me to FINALLY finish this last chapter was knowing there was people that wanted it.

thank you!!! <3

## End Notes

i wanted to write this whole thing b4 publishing it, but today's stream got me feelin a whole lot so. here this is ig.

this is going to be multi-chaptered ; at least 3, but we'll see how I feel and if I get more ideas :)

This is set about a week after the burning of LManberg. It's canon-divergent, but more will be revealed in later chapters.

Thank you everyone for reading!!! I don't have a beta-reader so I may go back and correct any mistakes I find in the future!

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