

1 // "Love You Lots"

“Love you lots.”

“Love you more.”

Releasing themselves from the embrace, Ceroba readied the syringe. As Kanako closed her eyes, Ceroba took a deep breath in. Carefully, she inserted the tip into Kanako's arm, and after hesitating for a moment pushed down the plunger. The EXTRACT went in.

A pause. The air felt heavy. Kanako could feel it coursing through her, making its way to her SOUL. Steadily, Ceroba removed the syringe. Kanako opened her eyes again. Ceroba let out a sigh of relief. The EXTRACT had worked, exactly to plan.

Getting back up, she walked back to the toolbox to store away the now-used syrin—

CRACK.

Kanako clutched her chest. She closed her eyes. She began to collapse.

“NO!!!”

Kanako felt herself fall into someone's arms. Ceroba's...? It was getting really dark, really quickly. Her body felt numb.

“No, no, no, no, no—”

She felt weird, tired, her energy feeling like it was getting sapped away fast. Her chest - her SOUL - it hurt. Badly.

“Why didn't it work?!”

That voice... her mother's... it was starting to fade away. It sounded so far away, echoing in her ears.

“Kanako, wake up!”

Her mouth hung up, Kanako having now lost complete control of her body. She was paralysed.

“Wake up right now!”

That voice was sounding so distant now. Kanako was drifting away.

“Mommy's here, come on! Hey!”

She was so tired. She...

“What...”

“What have I done?”

Kanako slowly opened her eyes. A bright, sterile light was shining directly in her face. She felt sluggish, like she'd been sleeping for a long time.

“O-oh my god. Y-you're awake!”

She'd never heard that voice before. Who... who was talking to her? Kanako tried to look around, but the brightness of the light was obscuring her vision. It was kind of hurting her, to be honest.

“Hey, c-can you hear me alright?”

Kanako did her best to nod, trying to power through how sapped of energy she felt. She had no idea where she was. The bed she was on didn't feel anything like her bed at home.

Home...

“Okay. Okay. That's good.”

She opened her mouth, trying to speak. Trying to move any part of her body felt like a chore, as if she hadn't moved in a long time. But, she was able to croak out a few words.

“...where am i?”

As Kanako spoke, she tried moving her hand to block the light that was now just annoying her.

“A-Ah. We're in the R-Royal Laboratory in H-Hotland. Y-your... uh... mother sent you here, I believe. D-do you remember anything before you w-woke up?”

She tried to think. Her memories were a mess, all of them felt foggy and distorted.

“I... I think I remember my name. K...Kanako...?”

Kanako heard a sigh.

“T-that's good, then.”

As she continued to dive into her own mind, something kept standing out to her. A face, one of an orange fox. That... that mental image felt comforting to her. Was that someone important to her?

After a moment, the light switched off. Kanako's eyes adjusted to the sudden lack of brightness, and she tried to get a hold of her surroundings. She could finally see who was talking to her. A short, yellow lizard-like monster wearing a white lab coat. Something about them felt weirdly familiar to her. The room itself was tinted a very dark green. Besides the

table at the side of her bed, there didn't seem to be much else in the room. It was a little unsettling.

In the lizard's hands was a syringe, which they placed down on the bedside table. Kanako began panicking at the sight of this. She wasn't sure why, but it felt scary. Her breathing quickened, eyes entirely fixated on the syringe as she tried to move her body.

"W-well, your heart rate seems steady for now. Uh... h-hey, are you-?"

"No... no... don't... don't use..."

She managed to muster enough force to throw her arm out, only for it to collapse back onto her.

"H-hey, calm down. You're s-safe now."

"S...syringe..."

The lizard monster looked back at the table, then back to Kanako with a look of sympathy.

"I-it's empty. It shouldn't have caused any harm to y-you."

"P-promise...?"

They offered Kanako a warm smile as a response.

"O...okay..."

Kanako laid back down. She hadn't even realised she was propping herself up with her arms. Her whole body had now started to feel sore from overexertion.

"N-now, it might be a w-while before you can begin to move again. Y-you've been asleep for a long time, so I'd e-expect that your body would be quite sluggish. J-Just take it easy, alright?"

Kanako nodded. She was happy to just rest a while.

"Okay. I'll be in the next room. If you need any help, there's a small b-button to your l-left. It'll signal to m-me and I-I'll come as soon as I c-can, alright?"

"Okay... I think I got it."

Kanako smiled a little. She wasn't quite sure why. At her confirmation, the lizard monster began to pack up their things and leave the room.

As she tried to get settled into her bed, the mental image of the fox came back into her head. That same, comforting warmth washed over her. Maybe they knew something about that?

“Umm... I do have a question”

The monster stopped, and turned around to look at her.

“Y-yes?”

Kanako took a deep breath in.

“I... I remember one thing. An orange fox lady. Every time I think of her, I feel really comfortable and warm. Do you know why?”

In response, they looked down at a clipboard they were holding.

“...R-Remarkable...”

“Huh?”

They looked back up, with a look of shock on their face, as if they’d just forgotten Kanako was in the room.

“O-oh, nothing. That sounds like it would be y-your mother, Kanako.”

“My... mother?”

They nodded their head.

“I r-recall her name being C-Ceroba?”

Ceroba.

“A m-member of the Ketsukanes, y-yes. Very... uh... h-honorable family, they a-are.”

Ceroba Ketsukane...

That sounds so familiar...

Suddenly, the memories came flooding back. The syringe. The EXTRACT. The failed experiment. And... Ceroba. Her mother.

Where was she? Why wasn't she with her?

“Where’s... where’s my mom?”

The monster stopped for a second, and began sweating.

“Uhhhh... your mother’s p-pretty busy right now! I c-can g-go call her r-r-right now since y-you’re o-okay though!”

“Why... wasn’t she here earlier?”

Pushing up their glasses, they began sweating even harder. They started tapping their feet as a result of presumed anxiety.

“S-she... uhh... w-well... it’s kind of... uh...”

A loud crash was heard from down the hall. Kanako flinched in shock.

“U-Uh oh, I’m s-sorry but I h-have to g-go. I’ll... d-don’t f-forget the b-button!”

Before she could respond, they had fled out of the room in search of whatever had just made that noise. Kanako laid her head against the pillow, staring up at the ceiling. It was now hitting her just how exhausted she felt. The bed she was in felt flat. The blanket felt more like a brick than a cloth. At the very least her pillow was soft, although that should’ve been a given rather than a compliment.

As she spaced out, thoughts began racing through her mind.

“Why didn’t it work?”

Her mother’s voice... Ceroba’s... echoed through her mind. The experiment had... failed. She had failed her.

A tear welled up in her eye. It made sense. Injecting her was Kanako’s idea. And... Kanako had failed. She couldn’t handle it, and now she was here. Her mother... she had probably abandoned her.

“It was my fault.”

Now more tears began streaming down her cheeks. Her mother dumped her here because she had failed her. She wasn’t good enough. She was a disappointment, wasn’t she? And now her mother wanted nothing to do with her.

“It was my fault.”

Her tears started to sting. Her chest began hurting again. Like it did that day. As she unravelled into crying, she could feel herself almost begin to... change. Becoming softer, less put together. She was spiralling, collapsing, breaking down as her tears began mixing themselves within her fur. She couldn’t stop crying. She couldn’t.

“It was my fault.”

She had let her down. She had let all of Monsterkind down.

It was her fault.

...

“It was my fault.”

2 // ENTRY NUMBER 13

Alphys sat in her office. The fan above her was spinning idly, trying its best to cool the room down from the unbearable heat. Her clipboard was next to her, with all the data she had gathered from today.

Her desk was a mess. Various sticky notes with illegible writing, a mess of foodstuffs and important documents. Standing amongst the mess was a framed permit. King ASGORE's blessing for Alphys to experiment with the SOULs.

That was an incredibly high honour for her, even for the Royal Scientist. No other scientist in the Underground, to her knowledge, had ever gotten to work with a real Human SOUL. Which made her failure of the experiment feel so much harsher.

Adjusting her glasses, she began shakily typing onto her terminal.

"ENTRY NUMBER 13"

"one of the bodies opened its eye"

...

...Alphys knew it had done more than that. Kanako was fully wide awake and conscious, acting as if nothing had ever happened.

She picked up her teacup and took a sip. Too hot.

Well, saying "nothing had ever happened" was a slight understatement. Kanako had a brief period of memory loss. But it seemed more akin to a coma patient readjusting to being awake rather than any actual amnesia. Was that something? Does that count as a result?

Alphys' phone began ringing. Or had it been ringing this entire time? She'd long since tuned the noise out.

She didn't get it. Nobody else has woken up, or even turned to dust. What was so different about Kanako? Alphys' head fell into her hands. She would have to start making calls soon. Tell the families what's happening. At the very least, Ceroba would get a happy ending out of this failed experiment.

...Maybe that makes up for Chujin. Alphys hoped it would.

She leaned back on her chair, tapping her pen aimlessly against the desk. Ceroba, huh?

...

How exactly did Kanako fall down?

Obviously, in the spirit of the moment, Alphys hadn't thought to ask. Kanako seemed no different to the other fallen down. Besides, Ceroba had seemed grief stricken. It would be incredibly rude to pry into such a matter, especially when it's a mother and her dying

daughter. And Alphys knew that Ceroba didn't exactly hold a favourable opinion of her, given what had happened prior.

Alphys picked the clipboard back up, flipping through her notes for the day. Most of them were centered around Kanako. She began to enter them into a document on her terminal, until something particular caught her eye.

She had noted Kanako acting more like she was waking from a coma. She had no other proper frame of reference to determine if this observation was unique to her, but there was no harm in planning a theory now.

While a regular Monster's SOUL couldn't last at all after dusting, there are some Monster's who can. Most notably, Boss Monsters. Perhaps a combination of Determination into a Monster who carries the Boss gene would inhibit the ability better...?

But that was only valid if Kanako was somehow a Boss Monster. As far as Alphys knew, no other Boss Monsters aside from the King and ex-Queen were currently alive. If she was, it would certainly be known to her. However...

Out of curiosity, Alphys decided to pull up Kanako's medical records. While she was never "given" them, she had access to the database which stored them. And while it wasn't technically legal for her to access them, she could handwave it as necessary for such a breakthrough.

"A-Alright... I-let's see here..."

KANAKO KETSUKANE

Mother: Ceroba Ketsukane

Father: Chujin Ketsukane

Date of Birth: XX-XX-20XX

Sex: E

Magic Type: E

Physiology: Fox

Skin/Fur/Scale Color: Brown

Eye Color: Black

...No. Kanako didn't carry the gene. Of course she didn't. That just meant it had to be a fluke.

Sighing, she stood up and made her way back into the elevator to check on the rest. Before she could enter, however, she heard the sound of something slipping under the door. Cautiously, she walked over to the door.

"W-Who is...?"

She bent down to inspect what it was.

...Oh God.

The front of the letter read "From Snowdin".

She discarded it into the trash. The time she had to get results was very quickly running out.

"I... I really d-didn't want to d-do this, but..."

Talking aloud to herself, Alphys decided to resort to her last option. Her backup plan. Alphys walked back into the elevator, stress now taking over as her nerves racked up.

As she was pacing back and forth, however, she noticed something. A blue feather had stuck itself to the top of the elevator, wedged in-between the hatch. How... long has that been there?

...

...It's not important. What's important is getting this done.