

The world was shattered. The high rock ceilings of the Underground's caverns had split apart, and a pulsating rainbow ooze bled from the fissures. The Underground heaved and shuddered as an earthquake tremored through the rock floor. Caverns caved in, collapsing from the shuddering of the world. A pale figure fled the destruction, sprinting past pools of hue-changing sludge and ducking under crumbling archways. The snow leopard clutched his tail in his hands to keep it from dragging behind. His blue shorts were torn, and his black tank top rode up on his belly as he ran, too concerned with surviving to tug it back down. Up ahead, he spotted a figure against the dark, their back turned to the fleeing Wire. They had a body covered in white fur, and were draped in a lilac robe.

"Hey! Help!" Wire shouted over the sounds of the tremors. "We have to get out of here! I think the world is ending!"

"Yes. Yes it is." The figure turned to face Wire and fixed his eyes on the snow leopard's. The figure's eyes were black, with bright white irises. Wire froze in place as the gaze grabbed him. "This world will end. I'm so happy you could make it to my little going-away party." The gaze stayed fixed as he spoke. The stranger's voice was calm and self-assured. The world ceased to crumble as he spoke, calming at the sound of his voice. Wire tried to move, to look away, but his muscles felt like ice.

"Who are you?" Wire asked, using the only option still available to him. The stranger smiled and shut his eyes, shaking his head with pity.

"How could you not know? You're the guest I've been waiting for the most, with my most anticipated gift!" He opened his eyes and his lips parted, showing off fearsome fangs.

"Are you crazy? The Underground is falling apart! What are you talking about, what gift?" Wire managed to take a step back before the stranger opened his eyes again. He looked familiar to the snow leopard. That robe, that face. He looked like King Asgore, but not quite right. The stranger chuckled.

"Why, the most precious gift of all! *The last soul in the underground.*" Faster than Wire's eyes could register, the stranger rushed forward and grabbed him, lifting Wire off his feet by the collar of his tank top. "You see, ah..." His white irises looked to the floor for a moment before snapping back to stare through his prey. "Wire. Oh, that took a while, you're a reclusive one aren't you? You see Wire, this world, it's *mine*." His face twisted up into a grin that stretched until his cheeks split apart. His eyes grew more intense. His robe fluttered, and he hovered off the ground. "The only thing I need to make sure that I have the power to take it, is the soul of every monster down here, and you ruined that!" He threw Wire away, sending the snow leopard hurdling through the cavern. He soared for several feet before gravity smashed him into the floor, and he bounced and skid across it, leaving a cloud of dirt in his wake. He lay in a heap, gritting his teeth as his skin bruised beneath his fur.

Wire struggled to his feet, and stood hunched over, holding his aching sides. Something sat in the lower left corner of his vision, persisting even as he looked around the caves for a way to escape this madman. It didn't make any sense. [File 1 Saved] it read. He chalked it up to a concussion as it faded. "You're doing this," Wire groaned as the stranger floated over. "Why? Who are you?"

"Because I deserve this!" he roared, loud enough to make Wire's ears ring. "Because of what they did to me, because they all need to know my suffering before I wipe them all out, all of

them!” Two sabres materialized in his hands. He closed the last bit of distance and put the blades to Wire’s throat like a pair of scissors. Wire swallowed hard, and the shift in his throat pushed his neck against the blades, drawing a trickle of blood. “I was your prince, and now I am your king. I am Asriel Dreemurr. And as your king, I demand your soul.” Asriel dug the blades into Wire’s neck, drawing out a whimper along with more blood. “Well?”

“You’ll have to take it from me!” Wire was defiant, but his wavering voice gave away his bluff. Asriel’s face softened, but the intensity of his dark eyes betrayed the gentleness of his smile.

“Oh. I will.”

Wire saw the glint of a sabre as Asriel swung at him. The edge of the blade cut across Wire’s forehead, leaving a few-inches-long gash in his skin. Blood poured down into his eyes, blurring his vision. Wire squeezed his eyes shut and stumbled away, trying to clear his face and his sight. He could hear Asriel chuckling, and he hurried in the opposite direction. His ears flicked, trying to stay attuned to the fading sound of that sadistic laughter. As he started to run, he felt his ankle catch on a soft-furred foot, and he tripped, landing on his face. Something cracked, and blood started to trickle from his nose.

“I don’t want to torture you, but I *will* enjoy it if I have to do it.” Asriel’s voice was unfaltering, and it echoed until it filled the caves. Wire punched the ground and pushed himself to his feet again. His body was already sore, and he lacked the strength to stand up straight. He peered out through squinting eyes as his pale fur was stained red. The blood ran down his muzzle and dripped into his open, panting mouth, tinging his tongue with its iron taste. Asriel floated before him, wearing a smirk. “We *are* only getting started you know. This will be a lot less painful if you just give up. I’ll get your soul either way. All you get to do is decide how much you suffer before then.”

Yeah, well...” Wire spat blood onto the earth. “I’m going to delay your victory as long as I can. I’m going to make sure you remember me!”

“Hah!” Asriel doubled over with laughter, almost crying. “What a laugh! Remember you? What confidence!” The laughter made Wire uncomfortable. The demon goat dabbed at the teary corners of his eyes with the white-trimmed sleeves of his lilac robe. He took a deep breath and recollected himself. “You are an idiot. Don’t you get it? Once I have your soul... *I can make it like you never existed.*”

Wire’s heart skipped a beat, and his eyes grew wide with fear. He turned away from Asriel and started to run. Asriel yawned and lifted an arm, snapping his fingers. Something flashed in the corner of Wire’s vision. [Save 1 Loaded] His next step failed to meet the ground. He felt himself get flung backwards in exactly the way that he had been thrown by Asriel earlier. His body stopped suddenly in midair, and he floated in place, barely able to move at all. He could feel Asriel’s presence, the goat demon hovering close behind him. Asriel pressed his front against Wire’s back, making the battered snow leopard shudder. The fluttering of that silken robe against his back was menacing.

“You can’t run.” Asriel leaned into Wire’s ear. His warm breath washed through Wire’s fur as he hissed into pointed ears. “Nice try though.” He wrapped his arms around Wire’s middle and pressed his hands into the front of Wire’s potbelly. It would have felt like a hug had Wire not been holding back tears of terror from being caught in Asriel’s deadly embrace. “Mmmh. Doesn’t

feel like you ever did much running,” he teased as he squeezed Wire’s middle. Wire whined and shivered in terror. “I can’t imagine what made you think *now* was the time to try and run, in the shape you’re in.” He dug his claws into the soft flesh of Wire’s stomach. Wire bit his lip. Asriel pulled back dragging his claws across the front of that belly all the way over the sides, slicing the skin as he went. Every shallow gash began to trickle blood. Wire sucked a breath in between his teeth, trying to cope with the pain. “Give in to me.” The voice was stern. Demeaning. Demanding.

“Please don’t do this...” Wire whimpered as tears mixed with the blood on his face. He was trying not to sob, but Asriel was too close. Even with both of them fully clothed, he felt violated and exposed. He wanted to run, to find some dark corner and hide, some small nook where he couldn’t be found. But Asriel still had his claws hooked under his flesh, still clutched their bodies close together. It was intimate. It was violating. It was a nightmare.

“You can stop this at any time,” Asriel sang as he twisted his claws under Wire’s flesh, making him yelp in pain at last. “Just lay down and surrender your soul to me. I need it. I want it.”

“I don’t want to die!” Wire screamed and elbowed Asriel in the face. The goat screamed and clutched his snout, releasing Wire and falling to the ground. Wire fell as well as they both ceased to hover, but he was ready. He grabbed a rock from the floor and rushed Asriel, swinging the rock at the demon’s head.

[Save 1 Loaded]

Wire was launched away from his target. He soared a few inches from the ground, but he was getting used to the sensation. He adjusted his body and touched down on the ground with all fours, skidding to an impact-free stop. His fingers and toes burned from the friction, but he was otherwise fine. Across from him, Asriel floated to his feet. His irises were a pair of white-hot flames in the black void of his eyes. Black blood trickled from his nose, standing out against his pure white fur.

Asriel stood, staring at his hand, stunned. His eyes followed the black bloodstain that ran down his palm. His hand began to tremble, his robe fluttered around his body. “You... YOU!” Asriel opened his arms. A rainbow aura pulsated off his body. “I will crush you!” He shrieked, and the cavern lit up brighter than day. Burning white stars formed at the apex of the ceiling and began to fall, crashing into the ground and exploding into smaller stars where they fell. Wire staggered, doing his best to avoid them with his sore and torn body. He managed to keep from being crushed, but the smaller stars were faster and more numerous. He wasn’t agile enough to keep away from them, and his fur and skin were seared on contact with every single one. He whimpered as his skin was scarred with several second degree burns. Patches of his fur had burned off, never to grow back again. The scent of burned fur hung in the air.

Asriel ran out of breath, and as he did, the stars stopped falling. He panted, out of air, but his blazing gaze pierced through Wire, even with the distance between them. He snarled, his cheeks splitting again, stretching his frown past the corners of his mouth. He got to his feet and stalked toward the barely-standing Wire. Steam blasted from his flaring nostrils, and his sabers rematerialized in his hands. “You insolent little monster!” He spun the swords in his hands and lifted them over his head. “You’ll never do that again.” He brought the blades down.

Wire screamed, and then fell to his knees and began to sob.

“Oh. Gross.” The blades had cut into Wire’s shoulder, but had stopped upon meeting his shoulderblades and collarbone. Asriel tugged, but the swords were stuck in the snow leopard’s bleeding flesh. The bone had been scratched, and split a few centimeters before its density had stopped the blades.

Wire’s hands convulsed from the pain. He wished he had passed out, but somehow he was still conscious. His body burned. It ached. It screamed at him. Slashes, gashes, scratches and burns marred his body. He was covered in wet scabs and blood stains, and patches of fur were missing from the burned places. He looked like a ghoul.

Asriel put a foot on Wire’s chest and pushed him down as he pulled on his sabres again, finally removing them from Wire’s body. Wire fell onto his back and blood poured from his open shoulders and pooled around his head. He didn’t get up. Asriel turned up his nose as he looked down at the leopard. “I hate doing things halfway.” He floated himself forward until he hovered over Wire. His feet touched down on either side of Wire’s stomach, and he knelt down, straddling Wire’s chest. He squeezed his knees against the ribcage between them, making it impossible for Wire to take in a full breath. The snow leopard whimpered and sobbed.

The demon plunged his sabres into Wire’s shoulders once more. They stopped as they met bone again, and Wire writhed and screamed at the impact. The blades were jerked out, and plunged in again. Asriel hacked away, using his swords like crude hatchets to cleave off Wire’s arms. Wire recoiled as the bloody steel was driven in and yanked out of his flesh. His bones cracked and separated under the duress of the repeated battering. The deeper they went, the more painful it became. Bone gave way to marrow, and Asriel sawed back and forth to slice through what remained of Wire’s limbs, cutting them like prime steak. Blood began to soak into his robe.

There was a thunk, the sound of steel on rock. Wire’s arms went limp. He passed out. Asriel seemed content at last. He grabbed those detached arms and tossed them away like garbage. He pressed his hands to the bleeding stumps of Wire’s shoulders, and the mangled flesh began to steam as Asriel crudely cauterized the wound. “Now now, can’t have you just up and die. Monster souls are too fragile.” He pulled his hands back, but the fingers of his right hand twitched with anticipation. His rainbow aura returned. “Thankfully, I only need a second.”

He reached for Wire’s heart. His hand phased through that shredded black tank top and dipped under that fur-covered chest. His grin cracked his face, his body trembled with delight. His eyes burned. He could feel the soul he so desired pulsating under his fingers, beating like a heart. He held his breath, and closed his claws around it.

Asriel screamed. He felt like a bolt of lightning had stuck him, burning him to his core, piercing to the amalgamation of souls he now held as his own. He released the soul from his grasp and was launched upwards and away, slamming into the ceiling of the cavern with enough force to embed him in the rock. He stayed there, stunned and stuck, looking down at the armless body below that continued to defy him.

Wire snapped awake and sat up the moment that Asriel was thrown off of him. He blinked, uncertain if he was dead, or still alive. He hesitated before looking to his sides. His arms were gone. He tried to move them out of habit, wanting to touch the seared stumps where they had once been attached. He couldn’t. He didn’t have them. He couldn’t accept it. Something hot and sticky was dripping down his neck, from his hair. He figured it was his own

blood. He couldn't check. He didn't have arms, or hands to check with. A sense of loss filled him. The realization that he would never have his arms again. His heart sank, and he shivered.

He was pulled out of his pity by the sound of crumbling rock, and his ears and head swiveled to face the sound. He could see a familiar white and lilac figure in the stone ceiling above. Wire grimaced as he drew in his legs and used his tail to leverage himself back onto his feet. Without arms to balance with, his movements were unsteady. He longed to hold himself, but sufficed with a moan to try and alleviate his pain. His entire being had been reduced to a throbbing mass of dull pain.

Asriel freed himself from the rock and flipped upright in the air, slowing his fall to a halt and not quite touching the ground. His grace contrasted the red blood that dripped from his sullied robe. "What are you? How are you still resisting me?" He kept his distance as he spoke. "Such determination... I don't understand. You're not a human, so how?"

"Because I don't care if I die anymore." Wire's gaze grew strong. "No matter what you do, I'll never let you have my soul!" He stepped forward. Asriel slid back. "If I live, you lose. If you kill me, you lose! I don't have to defeat you, or survive forever. I don't have to do anything! I don't have to win. I just have to make sure you lose."

Asriel's breathing was heavy. Wire's words had felt like a bludgeon. The snow leopard was right. If he went too easy, he'd never break that determination. Too hard, and the soul would be lost for good. He bit his lower lip until his fangs drew his own blood. He sucked in a deep breath, and exhaled slowly.

[File 2 Saved] Wire's tail twitched as the words popped up in his eyes.

"Good threats, not bad. Big talk for someone so little." Asriel collected himself, his confidence returned. "I should thank you for the reminder, actually. I only had you saved once. But now," he chuckled. "If I kill you now, I can just reload you to how you are now. Alive, armless, bursting with confidence. And I will kill you over, and over, and over, until that confidence shatters just like I'll shatter every bone in your body." He flashed a sadistic grin. "Shall we try it out?"

Wire's confidence faltered. Asriel approached. Wire backed up, until he had flattened himself against a wall, cowering now. A clawed hand wrapped around his throat and lifted his feet from the floor, ramming him back against the wall, strangling him. He kicked his feet against the rock and gasped. His mind screamed, desperate for a pair of arms he could use to pry the hand away from his throat.

[Save 1 Loaded]

Wire sputtered as he felt a powerful force on his body just moments before it pressed him into the wall, as though he'd just been thrown against it. Blood sprayed from his mouth. His head jerked forward, neck kept from snapping only by the hand that strangled it.

"You know, I am curious about something. What happens when you gain a ton of velocity, but are pressed against something like this rock wall?" Asriel sneered.

[Save 1 Loaded]

Wire screamed, feeling like he had been slammed against the rock. The wave of pressure that rocked his body pushed his breath out past Asriel's stranglehold.

[Save 1 Loaded]

"I imagine it's the same as getting thrown against it, over and over. What do you think?"

[Save 1 Loaded]

Wire's ribs were pulverized, his lungs punctured. Most of his organs had popped, or been crushed into a pulp. Blood poured out of his mouth. At some point he'd bitten his own tongue in half.

[Save 1 Loaded]

"Oops! Darn, I think your heart just exploded! No pulse left that I can feel." Asriel dropped the body and snapped his fingers with a giggle.

[Save 2 Loaded]

Wire gasped for air, light returning to his eyes. His body was functioning again, alive again. He remembered everything, though. Every agonizing minute. He had felt the release of death. Asriel had taken even that from him now.

"Ah! You're alive! Great! Die again for me." A sadistic grin tore Asriel's face, and he lifted an arm. Glowing white needles filled the room. He brought his hand down, and the needles launched at Wire, piercing his fleshy body a thousand times over. He convulsed from the impacts as the needles tore through him, shredding him into a bloody pulp loosely attached to a broken skeleton.

[Save 2 Loaded]

Wire sprang to life again, body restored, but that breath he had enjoyed the last time didn't come. Bloodied hands clutched his throat and began to beat his skull against the floor. His lungs burned, his thoughts went hazy. He couldn't breathe, couldn't think. His muscles began to ache. He writhed, desperate for air. Asriel was too strong. Wire was too weak. He passed out, and slipped away again.

[Save 2 Loaded]

Wire opened his eyes, only to have them immediately gouged out by a cackling Asriel. Wire shrieked in panic as he was blinded, but Asriel kept digging his thumbs into Wire's skull. He hooked his thumbs up and under the bony ridge of Wire's brow and pulled with all his might, pulling Wire's skull open. The last thing Wire heard was that frenzied laughter before Asriel personally pulverized the snow leopard's brain into a grey paste.

[Save 2 Loaded]

Wire whimpered, not opening his eyes, hesitant to take a breath. Death never came. He opened his eyes to the sight of Asriel's face, it just an inch from his own, glaring intently at him.

"I think we're done here, don't you?" Asriel cooed. Wire didn't dare say a word, as he sobbed pitifully underneath his killer. "Good." Asriel leaned in and grabbed Wire in a rough embrace. He pressed his muzzle to Wire's, and forced a kiss on the defeated snow leopard. He rammed his hands through Wire's body, and pushed his soul up. It no longer resisted. Wire felt like he could vomit, but the only thing that welled up from his throat was his soul. A pale, icy-white heart, cool to the touch.

Asriel inhaled as he pulled away from that kiss, drawing Wire's soul out of its host and into his own mouth. Wire's eyes went dim, and his body collapsed, turning to dust before it could hit the floor. Asriel stopped hovering and landed in the dust. He ground it under his heel as he savored the taste of that chilled, almost mint-flavored soul on his tongue. Icy mist fell from his jaws with every exhale.

Finally satisfied, he tipped his head back and swallowed. Wire's soul made a small bulge in his throat, before vanishing completely. The whole of reality seemed to ripple around the demon goat as he assimilated the final soul at last. It was a small, ultimately insignificant addition on its own, but now he felt complete. He was everything; every monster soul in the underground beat within him, giving him power and life. "Finally."

He sneered, and spit in the pile of dust at his feet. He could feel tethers, memories, the things that let that nuisance snow leopard exist in the first place. He wouldn't deal with it again. He grinned, sneered, cackled. His claws ached, he reached forward, grabbing at something in the nothing.

But he could feel it. He was drooling with delight. All he had to do was break these tethers. All he had to do was pull, and-

Asriel blinked. His body was pumping with adrenaline, with excitement. He was convulsing with joyous anticipation of something that was to come. He hadn't the faintest idea why. His hands were outstretched as though he had been holding something. He looked around, and found nothing. He quickly calmed down.

"What... am I doing here? I have a world to destroy! I can't believe I'd get so distracted, I must have... teleported here on accident, all these souls. Tricky to get used to." He spoke out loud, half to himself, and half to the souls that beat within him. There was no answer other than his echo. He shrugged. "Oh well! Whatever." He scoffed, took one last look around, and teleported himself out of the dreary and empty cave. He had a world to destroy.