

((Note: The following sections take place during [chapter 10](#).)

Akuma's eyes fluttered open to the sound of quiet simmering. He sniffed quietly and smelled fish. He rubbed his eyes, groaning quietly and rolling over. It was early morning, but the sun poured into the window, making Akuma hiss and cover his face as the glare hit him immediately. The boy stood up and staggered over to the kitchen area where Chi was finishing some cooking. There sat three plates of seasoned, cooked fish with butter and a slice of lemon. Each dish also had a side of salted green beans. Akuma had figured out a long time ago Chi had a thing for seafood and herbal foods. She put a knife and fork down for each plate as she said, "Morning there. Grab a plate." The boy grabbed one and wandered over to the table, plopping down.

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Kai slunk out of an alleyway, looking around but staying off to the side in the shadows still. They watched people fill the streets and walk to and from. People were settling in fast it seemed. "Just like cockroaches, aren't we?" the blonde, red-eyed human in dark clothes muttered, smirking at the end. The 20-year-old human wasn't really complaining about the whole slaughter in the streets a short while ago. This had given a beefy boost to their collection of bodies; a necromancer's dream. Kai created a ball of black fire, tossing it from hand to hand idly as they continued, "Heh, and the spoils stack back up." The necromancer finally moved from their spot in the shadows. It was followed by heavy squinting from the sunlight and a slight grunt. They raised a hand, blocking the glare as they looked about the streets. Kai had just eaten lunch; soup as always. Such was the meal of a potion master. "Choices... choices..." the necromancer muttered, turning in a circle as they began to walk down the street with hands stuffed in pockets. With a new city came a new slew of targets to steal from. They thought, *'Maybe I'll get a shack here?... Who knows.'* Kai reached the food sector of town and walked close to the side of the street with an apple stand. The necromancer smoothly turned about again as they moved forward, swiping an apple with them and stuffing it into their pocket. Once they were a little more distance away, Kai stopped outside a jewelry shop and stopped to peer in the window. Their eyes analyzed the goods while their hand dipped into their pocket, retrieving the apple and taking a bite. *'Pitiful selection as of yet... ah not too bad for a city just starting. Maybe just a taste tonight...'* A smirk crawled across their lips. The necromancer snapped their fingers idly and a small shadow formed under them. A little dragon about the size of a pygmy crawled out and up onto their shoulder. The dragon was black with red eyes. It almost had a smokey consistency with the strange gaseous substance streaming from its body. "What do you think?" the necromancer asked quietly. The dragon nuzzled the human's face in response. Kai laughed quietly, "That's what I thought." Kai moved towards the opening of the town square. Looking around for entertainment, Kai noticed Akuma, or rather his horns. The necromancer quickly zipped up, leaning down to get a better look. The hybrid was taken back by the sudden action, sneering at this person. "Oh, how curious," Kai muttered, reaching out and touching his horns. Akuma swiveled his head and snapped his fangs at the necromancer's hand. Kai jerked their hand back to their pocket with a chuckle, "And they're real. Curioser. Just what are you? You don't much look like a halfling."

Nick quickly shot up and stepped between the hybrid and the necromancer who recoiled and stepped back. The mage's voice took on an angry tone as he spoke, "Hey what's the big idea?"

Akuma sneered up at the figure and spouted, "That's a hybrid, you freak! Not halfling!"

Kai waved to the side of Nick, ducking down briefly as they did so, just to the point of being at Nick's side. A sly grin crawled across the stranger's lips as they said in an even, yet teasing tone, "Touchy touchy." The shadow dragon on the necromancer's shoulder growled quietly, but Kai shushed it quickly.

Nick scolded the blonde, "You can't just walk up and start feeling people like that."

"Hmph," they huffed. *'Oh, how cute. The whole personal space bubble,'* they thought. "Oh, you mean like this?" Kai asked innocently before striking out their hand and grabbing Nick's hood, jerking it over his head and down over his eyes. Kai jumped away before Nick could immediately lash back.

The mage lashed out blindly at the stranger as Kai twirled on heel and backed off from him. Their hands finding their way back to their pockets. They chuckled as Nick used wind magic to pull his own hood off from covering his face. "Why you little..." he growled as two orbs of blue energy formed at his palms.

Kai flinched slightly at this, bending their knees in preparation to dodge. They thought briefly, *'Oh, another mage. How interesting...'*

But then they cocked an eyebrow when the magic faded from Nick's hands as he straightened up. His look of anger was swapped with that of confusion. He questioned, "What the hell are you?"

The necromancer was taken off guard by the question and stared at him for a moment with a befuddled expression. It was shortly replaced by a explosion of laughter. Kai hunched over, grabbing their gut and catching a breath. Nick narrowed his eyes at them in response. Kai kept their hands in their pockets and moved closer to the mage, "Ah yes, I do look quite feminine, don't I?" They paused, stopping right in front of him and flicking their finger across the underside of his jaw. "Yet, I don't quite seem like a lady. Can't tell, can you? People seem to have this problem a lot," they chuckled, looking Nick in the eyes as a sort of challenge.

Akuma grunted and growled, "I don't see why it matters. I'd take them down anyhow." The hybrid didn't have gentleman standards in fighting.

Kai took a few steps back from Nick with the shadow dragon jumping down from their shoulder. They smirked, "If I don't say, I suppose that means I can wallop you without you being able to do a thing, doesn't it?"

The magic flickered back to life in the palms of the mage's hands. He asked threateningly, "Is that

so?" Kai simply smiled as the orbs' glowing began to increase in intensity. The boy challenged, "Try me." The necromancer's head tilted slightly, eyes flickering to the water in the fountain behind him that began to boil with his anger. Their eyes filled with amusement rather than fear. Akuma scooted away from the water as it bubbled and steamed. It was still hot from the summer air and sitting next to a "sauna" didn't help. Nick clenched his fist around the orbs. They split and crumbled into thousands of little orbs, swirling around his person from head to toe. He spat at the necromancer, "Now why don't you be a good little thing and move along before you get hurt."

Kai stretched their arms out before placing them back behind their head. It was mostly to rub their care-free nature in Nick's face to show a lack of fear. And the fact that they were lax enough to expose their torso to his magic. "Mmm, quite a temper on you, twinkle toes. Go ahead, try me. I won't even block it," the necromancer invited, making a slight wiggle of their arms to show their hands were still laced behind their head.

Kai watched Nick with a simple smile as he stared them down for a full minute. The boy eventually said, "I don't throw the first blow, not my style. If you're looking for a beating, you can make the first move."

Kai smirked noticeably and taunted, "Oh my, oh me, wittle mage is afraid to hit someone even when their defenses are lowered. Need to go back to your mommy? Or perhaps your little hybrid needs to protect you now?"

While Nick took a deep breath and calmed himself, Akuma bared his teeth at the stranger. Oh how he wanted to lunge, but something indeed was not right. He sniffed quietly again, what the hell was that smell? The hybrid narrowed his eyes at the taunting individual. "Smells like..." he muttered. "Death," he added a moment after, loud enough for his friend to hear, but not Kai.

The mage mumbled under his breath, "Yeah, I know Akuma. Something seems off; this weirdo is way too cocky."

Kai turned around, hunching over and grabbing their knees. The necromancer stuck their butt out, wiggling it at the mage. "Nyeah nyeah, little boy is too scared to come get it~" they sang with a grin, looking over their shoulder at Nick.

But the mage didn't fall for this trick as he stated calmly, "No." Then he explained why, "You're too cocky to not have something up your sleeve, so get on with it already I'm not falling for it."

Akuma looked the person over as they let out another laugh at Nick's further delay. Where had he smelt that scent before? A long time ago at a graveyard. He looked over their appearance. They were black headphones on their head, a black thick collar with a buckle around their neck, and a black sleeved shirt with monochrome stripes at the very top and bare shoulder. The same shirt had a black trim lined with holes on the v-neckline and there were white strings crossed in an X-shape at the trim above their chest.

They also wore slim black pants and black shoes and their fingernails were painted black. The person looked very dark in Akuma's opinion. He muttered, "Necromancer..." The hybrid pointed at Kai accusingly, "You're a necromancer!"

Kai paused in wiggling their bottom, turning and straightening up. They sniggered and grinned at Akuma, "Guilty as charged. Oops, that slipped out." The necromancer's hands slipped into their back pockets, "No wonder you're too afraid to take the first shot. Regular mages are soooo bleak. They're afraid to get their feet wet in anything... unusual." Kai lowered their head slightly, staring Nick down again. True as it was, necromancers were uncommon anymore. They laughed and said, "I mean, I offer a shot at me while my hands are behind my back and you're STILL scared." They made an ego shot below the belt by adding, "But it's to be expected of the weaker mages." Nick narrowed his eyes again. The necromancer fidgeted in place impatiently. Nick was so determined not to attack. *'What does it take to get this pipsqueak to-'* their thoughts were interrupted as the mage made a sudden movement. Without warning, a bolt of lightning cracked down through the heavens above Kai. As a bolt of lightning crashed down, a shadow burst from the ground and expanded. It took the blunt of the lightning strike and crashed into the ground. A mangled dragon corpse rolled onto the ground, the shadows bleeding away from it and leaving it smoldering from the strike. Kai looked at it before shifting their eyes to an innocent look toward Nick. They raised a finger to their lips, "Oh oops, did I say I wouldn't block that? I forgot to mention someone else would. He... thanks you for your cruelty." The corpse twitched. Kai raised their hands and mused, "Don't worry, I doubt it cares. It's already dead from last night. A nifty trophy, don't you think?" The crippled corpse stood up, responding to Kai's fingers like a puppet. The small shadow dragon from before coiled up around the necromancer. They grinned and asked, "Tell me, do you know how to kill something that's already dead?" Then they sent the corpse swiftly at Nick. It spewed out a breath of acid. Akuma yelped and jumped out of the way, moving off to the side. This was downright creepy. "Oh let's just make things fun," Kai added, throwing up their hands again. A dark cloud rose suddenly from the ground, encasing the area like a smoke screen. The mage waved a hand in front of his face, his movements remained smooth and calm. Using magic, he drew moisture out of the air and formed it into a sheet of ice following along his hand, forming a shield between him and the acid attack. His fingers twitched as the shield then broke into pieces and went flying towards the animated corpse. Kai could feel the joints of the corpse get wedged. "Tsk," they wiggled their fingers. They thought, *'Gonna have to melt those.'* Kai dug into the pouch on their hip, retrieving a vial.

"Easy," the mage stated as he dashed around the zombie and straight into the thick cloud before him. "You kill the brain behind it." With that, he summoned a strong updraft to carry away the smokescreen and clear his view, more ice spikes being drawn out of the air around him as he did so.

The necromancer paused before huffing in amusement, "Hmph." Kai threw the vial at the corpse and then a burst of flames erupted over the ice it touched. The bones of the corpse clicked and groaned under the heat until the fire died down. Kai looked back over at Nick and said, "Well that wasn't very smart~ you just put my other toy back into play." After they snapped their fingers, the dragon around their shoulder shrieked and a shadow moved across the ground under Nick. It shot up in a flurry of wispy vines to bind his legs. The mage stumbled and looked down at the shadow. Then he raised his hands up

slightly and raised a stone shell around his legs, stabilizing himself so the vines could only serve as a bind. He also did the same to his opponent. "Ah?" Kai wobbled as stone encased their legs. They felt like they would fall, but the stone was sturdy enough to prevent that. Glancing over, the necromancer saw the same had happened to the corpse. Next, he focused his attention high into the sky and began to weave water droplets into the framework for clouds, as well as cooling the air around them enough to create a chain reaction. The rapid formation of thick storm clouds began as water droplets begin to cling to the framework of Nick's spell. Shaking his head, he smiled to himself, looking pleased with his handiwork. Turning his attention back to Kai and the zombie, he launched his ice spikes at the necromancer. A quiet sigh escaped them and they outstretched a hand, clenching it into a fist. The corpse melted into the shadows, disappearing and taking the stone with it. Kai wiggled in the stone, but found it too tight to squirm out of. "Well then," they muttered, looking at the opponent with a smirk. They slowly moved their hand to their pouch and said, "Seems we're at an impasse..." The vines held on tighter. The dragon wrapped around Kai, sprouting a pair of wings and holding them over its master's head. The necromancer reached into their pouch and retrieved a handful of throwing needles coated in a temporary paralysis poison. They swiftly jerked their hand, chucking them at Nick's arms.

Nick agreed, "So it seems." Raising a hand, the boy easily deflected the needles by raising a slab of stone out of the ground in-between him and the necromancer. He kept the slab up even after the attack had been deflected and began to channel another spell.

The stone began to flow out of the ground at Kai's feet, creeping up the necromancer's legs and solidifying as it moved up, slowly but surely encasing Kai in stone. *'Uh, I'm gonna have to say no to that,'* they thought, waving their hand. An earth dragon rose from the shadows, its flesh missing in most areas. It stomped a claw to the ground as Kai thrust out a hand. The shadow dragon on their shoulder flew out at Nick, flying above his head and snapping its jaws at him. The mage ducked while his fingers twitched. The earth dragon meanwhile broke the stone holding Kai. Up above, lightning flashed and thunder cracked as the magic fed storm above began to brew and snowball in size at an alarming rate. The necromancer extended a hand towards the corpse and a green flow of light came from it to their palm. Kai sighed quietly, looking rejuvenated. The corpse collapsed and melted back to the shadows. Kai clapped their hands and touched the ground, emitting the same green light. A slew of shadow figures rose from the ground, fumbling towards the mage. Four separate glowing spheres formed around Nick, circling him a few times before exploding into a great burst of light. In the place of each orb was a different elemental, one for each element: earth, water, fire and air. The earth elemental took its place between its caster and the shadow figures, blocking their path. The fire elemental burnt the binding vines around him to a crisp and the water elemental covered Nick in lightly glowing water, healing his wounds and rejuvenating him. The air elemental made the storm go to full power. The clouds swelled and a strong gust picked up. Kai grabbed their head, keeping their hair from their face as the wind blew at them. They chuckled and thought, *'So he seems adept in all elements. Well at least that makes this more fun. Would be boring if it was some little mage?'*

With a crack of thunder, it began to pour and everything fell dark as the storm blocked out the sun. Nick said, "In the dark, there are no shadows. Now there is only the fury of the storm!" And with that, he

clenched his fist making lightning hail down upon the necromancer with deadly accuracy as he did so.

The shadow dragon blocked the attack of the lightning as Kai told him, "That trick doesn't work anymore, twinkle toes. Cute though." Their hands found their way back to their pockets as the shadow monsters disappeared without enough light to be very strong in. The shadow dragon remained perched on the necromancer's shoulder, showing it was indeed a live dragon. With the dragon perched, Kai ran forward at Nick with needles in hand freshly grabbed from their pouch. They moved close to him in attempt to cut him with the paralysis needles.

Nick didn't even attempt to move, instead he just watched as the hulking earth elemental stepped into Kai's path, swinging a massive fist at them. The fire elemental let loose a beam of fire from its hands in the necromancer's direction. The air and water elementals simply stayed stationed at their caster's side. The mage called out, "You won't think it so cute when you're a smoldering pile of ash."

Kai rolled to the side elegantly to avoid the elementals' attacks. They swiveled around, looking at Nick and winked, "Mmm, no, the effort is quite cute. Don't think you can catch me that easy." Kai zipped forward, rolling between the legs of the earth elemental and stood up. The elemental would provide a temporary shield against any more fire attacks. Kai rushed forward, jumping at Nick in an attempt to take him down to the ground. The needles were still in the necromancer's hand, ready to strike in an available opening. They taunted, "Can't hit or crisp me if I'm on top of you. Or they might hit you too~" The mage tried to get out of their way in time, but he wasn't fast enough and got tackled to the ground by the necromancer. Kai laughed as he had taken down to the ground easily. *'All that fuss and he can't even dodge,'* they thought, smirking down at their opponent. The necromancer held onto Nick tightly as he started to kick and buckle, trying to get out from under them, but to no avail. "Oh please, it's going to take more than a little shaking to-" Kai paused in the midst of their speech.

A small yelp emitted from their throat as Nick suddenly wrapped his hands around their neck, trying to choke the necromancer out. The mage said, "Oh I'll crisp you alright, just you wait." As the storm raged on, even the elementals in such close proximity, became obscured from view.

A brief wave of panic washed over the necromancer before they remembered the needles. "Big mistake," they choked out, swiftly cutting the needles across Nick's hands. Akuma meanwhile had pulled his hood over his head to avoid the inevitable rain. He seemed to be mildly entertained at this point, looking on rather than joining in. Getting between two mages didn't seem like the safest idea anyhow.

The mage's muscles started to go lax. He panics for a moment before shifting over and slamming his palm against the back of Kai's hand, causing them to drop the needles which clattered harmlessly over Nick's stomach. He opened his mouth wide and latched his teeth onto their arm. The necromancer made a small gasp of surprise at the sudden surge of pain at the pressure on their wrist. "Oh no, can't move my fingers, big whoop," Nick said, not sounding worried at all. As the storm waged out of control, lightning began to strike rampart around the area, several bolts coming close to hitting Akuma. The hybrid noticed the lightning striking near and started to back away from the area. He knew the storm

was large enough to encase the area, but he felt he should take shelter out of nervous nature. He wondered if Nick indeed even wanted help. It seemed to go against the entire fight to help since it was about Nick's ego and defending his magical abilities on his own. He wasn't in any immediate danger anyway, right?

The situation suddenly grew worse as pain shot up Kai's wrist when Nick bit down. The necromancer yelled out again, not seeming to be embarrassed about vocalizing pain. "Oh, two can play that game!" they yelled, leaning down and sinking their teeth into their foe's neck. Kai adjusted their pressure to Nick's, not quite breaking skin, but it was enough to make the mage cry out in pain. They recoiled as he arched his back in response. They held on anyway, using their free hand to grasp Nick's robe. However hard it was to move by now in drenched clothing, the robe had to at least do a severe movement hinder should Kai need to retreat. Meanwhile around the two humans, the tempest continued to rage on, picking up intensity as the two tumbled around on the ground. Kai released the bite subconsciously from relief to sigh as the mage released his jaw and stopped biting the necromancer. The brief moment of peace was replaced by a sharp pain in their arm. Kai's mouth took a downward slope for a moment as they recalled dropping the needles onto Nick. He had used them to stab at their shoulder. The necromancer could feel the sensitivity leaving their arm, save for movement of wrist and fingers. Kai sat still for a moment before laughing softly, "Not bad, twinkle toes." They rolled off Nick, hitting the pavement next to him with a splash. The mage slowly pushed himself up as his drenched robes weighed him down. Kai grimaced at the rain not pattering on their face. The necromancer's shadow dragon appeared again, sheltering them from the rain with its wings. "However..." Kai muttered, digging into their pocket again and retrieving a small vial with their free hand. They uncorked it and took a sip before corking it again and putting it away. Within moments, Kai was able to move their arm again. "Didn't think I went around without an antidote to my own poison, did you?"

The mage sighed and said, "It was worth a try."

Another soft chuckle was emitted. Kai rolled onto their side, propping their head up with a hand. They asked, "What was the point of the rain again? You planning to hypothermiate yourself?"

Nick chuckled and jested, "Storms make for epic battle atmosphere." He looked down slightly as the storm buffeted his face and the winds tugged at his robes.

The necromancer looked up at their shadow dragon with a smile, petting the part of the dragon hanging on the ground. Kai sat up and stretched, looking at the mage with a sly expression. "Epic, huh? Well, how does your epic feel? You're sopping wet and I have an umbrella," they noted, pointing to the shadow dragon above.

Nick looked back at them and kicked a puddle, splashing some water in their direction, "Just because you have an umbrella now doesn't change the fact that you're just as wet as I am."

The necromancer wasn't fazed by the splash as they said, "And soaked I am. There's my bath for the day. Heh." The dragon shrank down and again sat on Kai's shoulder as they flicked their limbs in attempt to shake some water off.

Rubbing his neck at the place where Kai had bitten him, he asked, "So who won that?"

"Don't mean to burst your bubble... but ah." Kai nudged his leg with their foot and looked up at him. They smirked and continued, "I wasn't much trying. I haven't even tried to eat your soul. And here you are trying to strike me with lightning. So testy." Akuma remained off to the side, hiding away from the rain under an awning. He preferred to stay completely dry in this fiasco.

Nick nonchalantly said, "If I thought my life was in any danger, I would have used arcane magic. Compared to arcane magic, elemental magic is child's play."

Kai snorted in laughter and stood up to declare, "Bah, arcane my butt. Necromancy is the cool stuff." Sighing, the mage looked up at the sky where the rain battered his face. The rain stopped pouring suddenly as Nick clenched his hand, turning it into a light drizzle. Kai grabbed the front of Nick's shirt, "I'd spar you again. You're fun and easy to provoke. I'll even give you another one of those." They grinned, briefly reaching up and touching the bite mark on his neck. Kai stepped away from the mage, making a loud wet pat to his arm before turning and starting to walk off. They added, "That poison is temporary. Feeling should come back within the minute." Akuma slinked back onto the scene after it stopped raining. He stood a few feet off from Nick and silently watched the necromancer walk away.

Once the necromancer was out of sight, the mage turned to the hybrid, who looked back at him with a flat expression. He rubbed the mark on his neck and admitted, "I don't know whether I should be aroused or disgusted by that."

Akuma's brow sloped downward and he sneered slightly. "Tch," he huffed quietly. Akuma didn't have regard for restraint against females in combat; if Kai was even a female. It wouldn't have mattered. He would have torn them up all the same.

The hybrid's thought was interrupted as the mage's voice went heavy with sarcasm as he said, "Thanks for all the help back there, so glad you were enjoying yourself from under that little awning while I was tumbling around with zombies in the rain." Water dripped from his hair and robes, creating a liquid that pooled at his feet.

Akuma growled quietly at the scolding. He wanted to say he wasn't going to get maimed for anyone, but Nick had a habit of helping him in tight situations. It made him felt almost guilty, which made him even more angry. "Whatever," he snapped, looking away.

Up above the thunder rumbled. Akuma bared his fangs back at the mage who frowned at him. Nick then turned to leave, walking slowly as he said, "Speaking of rain, it looks like it could start again at any



moment. I think I'm going to go home and dry off, you're welcome to join me if you wish." He turned and took a more few steps before looking back at the hybrid as if to see if the younger boy was following.

The hybrid's sneer died down as he stood in place for a moment before remembering he was indeed offered a place to sleep. *'Why not?... I've used the others for shelter and food before. If he's offering...'* he thought as he silently followed the mage through the city. Akuma looked at the cobblestone roads again as they walked. He knew he was starting to sound like Albel. It seemed no matter what he wanted to do for others, his stubborn nature put up a mean front to steer others off. He glanced up, seeing it was going to start raining again. A flash of lightning lit up the sky for a brief moment before it started to drizzle. The hybrid picked up his pace and was soon caught off guard by Nick's sudden stop. He had been jogging by now and ran full into the suddenly halted mage.

"Woah there," Nick said. "In a bit of a hurry, are we?" he asked as Akuma glanced over his shoulder growled audibly again, untangling himself. The hybrid had already skimped out on a fight to not get wet; of course, he wasn't going to take his sweet time out in the rain. Then again, running into the mage made his front a bit damp as a result. They had reached the door to Nick's house. They went inside as the mage closed the door behind him before flicking on the lights and went into the next room. There was a couch and two arm chairs sitting opposite of each other, all centered around a fireplace. Walking over to the fireplace, the mage lit the logs alight and disappeared up the stairs. Akuma approached the fireplace and plopped down on the floor. As the time passed, he laid down on his side and purred contently at the heat as it dried him. Nick came back down wearing a dry t-shirt and a pair of sweat pants. His hair was also all ruffled up. Moving to sit by the fire, he said to Akuma, "There is an extra room upstairs, across from mine, that you can use."

Akuma stayed silent, still disgruntled from before. It was still midday but the cozy fire made him feel lethargic. His hood was pulled back again, letting his messy silver hair spill onto the floor. Akuma opened an eye as sat down by the fire. He wanted to break the silence somehow. Akuma wasn't good at anything casual; just chaos. Oh wait, chaos. He made a toothy grin to himself before dusting his face and rolling over to face Nick, who was combing a hand through his own hair. He steadily inched closer before reaching out and biting Nick's leg with his fangs. It was a brief bite, not hard enough to break skin, but to make the brunette let out a sharp yelp and jump away onto his feet from the hybrid, who grinned wider. A silver key was dropped from the mage. Akuma moved back quickly, rolling onto his back a few feet away and grinning another toothy & mischievous smile. He watched Nick in a studying behavior at his reaction. No strikes back. Akuma instantly took this as a weakness, knowing he could probably get away with a lot.

Nick rubbed the spot with his hand and glared down at the silverette. He demanded, "What the hell was that for!?" Akuma's grin melted into a smirk. He stared at Nick for a moment, recalling the mage always held back before as well. It further spurred his conclusion that he could get away with more than just "a lot". So why apologize? He scooted closer, still lying down to make is subtle and swung his claws out at Nick's legs in response. The human jumped back again as the hybrid took a brief pause to lick his teeth

like an animal would. As he did, the orange sheen that had been there was wiped clean. Akuma stared at Nick smugly, awaiting a response. The mage brought his hands together to create a ball of water, which he then promptly launched at the hybrid boy. "Bad Akuma, you don't do that!" he chided.

The hybrid perked up and rolled away from the throw, but still got wet from the after splash and the flooding on the floor. It wasn't just water; no, it was ice cold water. Akuma froze up for a second, gasping at the feeling. The shock turned into anger. He rolled onto his knees and let loose a loud growl, angry eyes burning into Nick, who had another water ball on his hand. Akuma had only meant to play before, but ice cold water had just shorted his circuit. He wanted blood for that. He jumped to his feet and ran at the mage with his claws out. He grabbed out at Nick, but the older boy jumped back and dodged the claws with ease. The hybrid's fangs were bare to follow with a bite. Akuma snarled against Nick's arm as he felt his teeth meet flesh. The mage gasped and tried to jerk away, but couldn't. Akuma grunted and let go as he felt something cold and hard smash against his face. It was the water ball that had been frozen into snow.

Nick scolded the hybrid again for his actions, "Let go, you little fucker. After all I've done for you, you're going to try and kill me over a little cold water. You ungrateful little whelp." That did it. Akuma shoved Nick away as hard as he could muster. He stood heaving and rubbing the snow from his face. His cheeks tainted into a pink color and he spun away. He jerked his hood up over his head and ripped the front door open, walking furiously out the door without closing it. Akuma gnashed his teeth as he walked, his throat tightening and his vision near red from anger. The cold rain didn't help his mood. He hated water; he hated cold water for valid reasons, but he never shared much of anything about himself with others. Akuma slowed as he heard pattering footsteps behind him. Nick called out, "Akuma wait!" The hybrid spun on his heel, baring his fangs at the mage, who solidified the air above the younger boy and created a makeshift umbrella for him. "What the hell has gotten into you?" Nick continued to walk behind him. "This isn't normal, Akuma. What's wrong?" He paused a second before adding, "You're going to catch a cold out here."

It hardly registered over the hybrid's current state. He couldn't even feel the coldness biting at his skin. He yelled, "STAY AWAY FROM ME!" His thoughts turned irrational and erratic. He tried being friendly in the only way he knew how, try to play and take in a friend. And as usual, it was punished. At this point, he wasn't sure if he was shaking from coldness or anger. "Stay away..." his voice lowered as he held up his claws. His eyes were narrowed and set on Nick, looking almost wild.

Akuma backed away as Nick took another step towards him. "I'm not going anywhere, Akuma. In fact, you're coming home with me, now," the mage said sternly. The hybrid growled back as Nick demanded, or rather stated, "If you're going to sulk and be pouty that's fine, but you're going to do it at home where it's warm, not out here in the rain."

*'He's sorely mistaken,'* Akuma thought, glaring across at him. Backing away further as Nick closed in, he yelled, "Are you deaf!? I said stay away!"

The mage held his hands out in front of him cautiously and crept forward slowly. "I don't know what your problem is, Akuma, but we need to talk this out, okay? Whatever it is, it isn't healthy to keep it bottled up. You need to let it all out sometime and if you don't talk it out, well..." Nick stopped for a second, just looking at Akuma. "Well just take a look at yourself." The hybrid didn't want to express himself anymore. Anytime he tried to do something right, it backfired. Akuma snarled as the mage continued to creep forward and turned again, running off down an alley. If Nick wouldn't listen, he'd create space between them. The freezing rain kept biting at his skin and his cloths grew heavy from water, but he continued anyway.