

**unmuted**

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# unmuted

by [backflipintothesun](#)

## Summary

When Villager received an invitation to Super Smash Bros Wii, he didn't quite know what to think.

The world was a cold, heartless place that would capitalize on every opportunity to bring him down, tearing at his heels.

He was ostracized and harassed when he was young for things he couldn't quite control, to the point that it was too late to turn back. Now Villager was left with a choice- leave his current family for a more profitable solution? Or abandon a chance to support his family in order to stay with them?

Little did he know that he would have a taste of both in choosing one.

And maybe a little bit of love, too.

# Turning Over a New Leaf

## Chapter Summary

TL;DR, Villager whump

## Chapter Notes

Violence! Lots and lots of violence in this prologue!

Wanted to get exposition out of the way so I wrote a prologue that accidentally went over 9k words...

This will probably be the first fic I'll ever keep on this platform, since the past two I've made were really awful haha

I'll try to explain how things will work out in the afterword, but for now please enjoy ^^!

Couple of things that are important to know before you read is that this is NOT set in a game where Villager is the mayor. The village, or really town to be more specific, is a rather large one, with civilized roads and buildings. (Not a city though.)

Please be kind since I am still a growing writer!

(Edit! I fixed the issue! Yay! Now things that were italicized in my document should be here :]!!!!)

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

When he was very young, he had no friends.

Nobody to talk to, nobody to whisper his secrets to.

Certainly, he still had his mother. But she was too busy, too *good* for the likes of Villager, so she left too, leaving a poor, small child to fend for himself. Her only contribution for his pursuit in success was funding for his education, which she cared little about. She stopped by every once in a while, but it wasn't for his sake. It was only to check the mailbox to find any stray letters that had missed her flat in the far side of the city with her boyfriend, as well as to

make sure Villager hadn't ratted her out to the cops for the little stash of marijuana tucked in the corner of the quaint house's garden.

Villager himself wasn't a bad kid- or so he considered himself. He didn't have anyone to talk to, so he'd fill up the empty void of the far too big house with his voice- singing, chattering loudly about his day, or even just grumbling loudly about schoolwork.

He didn't do the same things his mother or family did, like farm weed or smoke twice a day. He didn't litter or go to clubs like his older siblings did, or commit crimes or do anything shady. He was just a kid, after all, and tried his best to not let his family affect his decisions.

All he did was do his homework and mind his own business.

Unfortunately, his classmates didn't think so highly of him.

Despite his best efforts, they all gave him a stink eye every time he stopped by, flinging petty insults and being rough with him. Perhaps it was because of the faint smell of weed that stuck to his bag due to his mother's farm, or his ratty shoes and worn down clothes, or his far too happy and peppy personality which made a few students disturbed. All in all, they merely disliked Villager.

And sure, Villager was fully aware of their dislike. But they wouldn't *really* hurt him, would they? They're just messing around, right?

After all, who would want to harm somebody in such a manner in a peaceful town like this one?

//

*"Fly me to the moon, and let me play among the stars~"*

A ten year old Villager trilled happily as he stuffed his bag with his notebooks and stray pencils scattered on the desk he had crafted himself.

He wouldn't call it an ornate work of art, but he was proud of the fact that it had served him for a little over a year. Definitely nothing to scoff at, considering his age.

The short, scruffy boy with the jaggedly cut bangs hastily checked his calendar, small hands scribbling messy words onto the tall sheet of paper. His wide, round eyes scanned his room for an item, lighting up when he found it.

He lifted a small potted plant from its nest by his windowsill and gave it a small stroke on its leaves, smiling fondly at it.

Villager attended "*Wild World*," a local elementary school that was united with a middle school just next door called "*City Folk*." He personally thought the school names were a little cheesy, considering his classmates were all different species of anthropomorphic animals, but he didn't really judge.

Humming a bouncy tune and clutching the straps of his backpack, he proceeded to hop his way to school, dark brown eyes glittering.

Today was going to be a great day! He just knew it.

Taking his time enjoying the long path to the front gates of his school, he bounced his backpack twice before cheerfully walking in, an upbeat smile plastered onto his face.

He passed by Whitney, giving a short wave which the tall white wolf hesitantly returned. She talked anxiously to Diana, a purple deer, who merely laughed at whatever Whitney had whispered and gave her a comforting pat on the shoulder.

On the other side of the duo was Bam, a jock chattering excitedly to a very lax Beau, a bookworm. The two deers passed by Villager's excited trot and hesitated, before continuing

their walk and endless discussion about-

"Volleyballs! I mean, haven't you seen the anime? I uh- shoot! I think it was called Haikyuu, or something, yeah!"

"Bam, as interesting as volleyball and volleyball anime are to you and me, i hope you know the bell is going to ring in a minute or two and our classes are on the other side of school."

Villager was blissfully ignorant of his fellow classmates' sudden hush hush whenever he rolled around, putting it off to their usual antics and dislike of him in particular. So when he turned the corner and bumped in a very tall figure, he paused the playlist that was on loop in his head and looked up, eyes wide with surprise.

A tall, mean eagle stood before him, a rough scar slicing across his beak and cheek, stark black feathers framing his face. His wings were turned into a cross armed stance, feathers a dark shade of maroon- or even black. Cold, brutal, and merciless gold eyes peered at him, his two cronies, a cat and a mouse, tittering loudly behind his large frame.

Villager had the misfortune of bumping into Obsidi, the middle school bully who found no issue in taking out his anger onto innocent little grade schoolers, unknowing of the dangers in the world.

"One..." Obsidi murmured, crouching on his knees to get to Villager's face level. "Didn't I tell you what would happen if you stuck your face anywhere near my vicinity?" The eagle spoke in a low, monotone voice, but the hidden threat was still there. The cat, who looked to be a regular siamese with a crooked tooth, jeered at Villager, while the dark green mouse pulled out his phone.

He glared at Obsidi defiantly, but his confidence wavered as the eagle seemed to be in a very bloodthirsty mood that day.

Villager himself wasn't really sure why Obsidi gave him the nickname "One." It had little to no significance to him himself, and there was nothing that Villager could go off of that could possibly tell him.

The thought was suddenly ripped away when Obsidi grabbed his wrist tightly, far too tightly, and leaned into his face.

*"Answer me, One."*

Villager jumped, flinching at the sudden movement and bracing himself for what was to come.

"Y-you said you would... you would..."

Villager's voice stuttered out when he saw the menacing glare in Obsidi's eyes.

He didn't even do anything wrong! He was just on his way to classes, no big deal. Villager's eyes started to shift, looking for a potential way to evade the inevitable.

At this point, many of the students were starting to gather around the blockage in the hallways, clearly curious about what was going to transpire.

"I'm having a bad day, One. You know why?" The eagle chuckled, sending chills down Villager's spine. "A certain someone promised me a little thing- just a couple of smokes." His eyes narrowed onto Villager's face, the already frightened boy growing pale realizing just who had refused Obsidi's packs.

"See- I waited a little. Paid my due first, 'course, so he could get 'em. He didn't deliver. Good ol' Yellow. He's your brother, isn't he?"

"Yellow" was the nickname for Villager's older brother. He quite enjoyed being reckless and driving around in his racecar, earning money on the side by helping out desperate kids like Obsidi or nabbing some of the sales mom gets. Despite his seemingly wide-eyed, innocent look, he's quite competitive and loves coming out on top. Obsidi knows just how much his

family cares about him, and the answer was a flat null zero. Yellow would dismiss Villager even if he did run to him and complain about the bullying.

They all never did care, really.

However, even if Villager had a reason to defend himself, he was certain that Obsidi was going to beat him to a pulp regardless, and was already mapping out a quick and easy path out of the school in his head because of it.

Before Obsidi even got a chance to get in the first hit, the bell rang shrilly and cut through the tense moment. The students that had gathered around jumped as if they were pulled away from an immersive TV rather than a very real, very cruel situation.

Villager let out a sigh of relief- at least he had a bit of time left to recalibrate and think of what to do.

Obsidi growled, aggravated at the fact his prey was snatched away just centimeters away from his claws, but his eyes pulled upwards into a knowing smirk. This immediately put Villager on edge, as if Obsidi was pushing a very sharp blade into his neck and was just about to slit his throat.

"I'll see you around, One. Don't forget."

And the eagle strode away.

//

Obsidi's threat sat with him heavily all throughout his classes.

Normally, his threats would be short lived and he would burn off his anger some other day, via bullying people for their lunch money or simply acting threateningly and taking pride in the fact that multiple students cowered in his presence.



But this time around, Villager was pretty damn sure that Obsidi wasn't messing around, and this worried Villager.

Obsidi had been pretty mad before, but why now? It was just a pack of smokes, right? What other possible reason could Obsidi be angry for to cause him to literally give him a death glare?

The thought plagued his mind all throughout his class periods, zoning out where he should have been taking notes, (and being scolded harshly by the teacher in turn.) He distractedly picked up what his classmates were saying, eyes still glazed over and deep in thought.

"... yeah but at least you aren't going to be spending time with her! Like- she's such a bitch!" A pink wolf named Freya said loudly, but was quickly hushed by Kiki, a black cat.

"Ah- Freya! I'd rather you not call her that!" Kiki spoke softly. "But I suppose she is a little bit irritating."

"Yeesh, be grateful you aren't spending the three day weekend with *Stinky*. I mean- it's all in his name!" A white cat named Merry chimed in.

The trio scattered apart when the final bell rang, and the room was starting to buzz about, ready to head home.

Villager jumped to his feet with a start, eager to get out of the hot, stuffy room. He quickly grabbed his bag, making a mad beeline to the door. The doorknob was so close, just out of his reach, mere centimeters-

"Wait!" Hooted someone.

Villager stopped.

He turned around to find himself face to face with Blathers, his History teacher.

All things considered it was quite a surprise to be held back by the owl, whose brown feathers were fluffed up in a prim and proper way.

Blathers really didn't call out Villager all that often, though he is one of the nicer teachers on campus. His soft eyes and nervous personality completely threw off the fact that he was an owl- a predator known for their terrifyingly cold stares. But Blathers looked at Villager with kind eyes, and all of Villager's complaints left the window.

Maybe Obsidi would leave the school before he finished his talk with Blathers.

"Hoot! Come here, child." The owl gestured towards a seat that was situated next to his large leather armchair. Villager sat cautiously, still not quite sure on what Blathers wanted to say but not feeling at all in danger.

The two immersed themselves in conversation, Villager's initial worry now washed away. He hadn't really ever had such a... *fun* conversation with one of his teachers before, for they were always so quick to the point.

Blathers spoke meaningfully- he started off with little fun facts before teetering into the subject matter of his essay, (which he had noted how well he had done.) By this point it had been long past the school dismissal bell, and Villager was quite certain Obsidi would not be willing to linger around the school that long.

Sneaking a glance at the clock, Villager sheepishly coughed politely in the middle of Blathers's tale, making a point to make it firm.

"Sorry, sir. But I do think it's well past the time I should be heading home by now!"

The owl swiveled his head to the clock in a sharp manner. "Dear me! I didn't intend to keep you so long!" Blathers chuckled softly. "Well, I must say it was *wonderful* speaking to you, young Villager. Perhaps we should talk some more some other day!"

Blathers quickly ushered Villager out of his classroom and into the empty hall, clicking his door shut.

Villager let out a sigh of relief. Looking at the clock had told him how it had already been two hours since dismissal, which meant that what was essentially everybody was now at home. (Or that was the hope.)

Clubs were often held at the students' homes, since the school was so close to where everyone lived. Due to this, kids could just walk on home with no consequences.

TL;DR, there was absolutely no reason for anyone to still be staying after school.

*There's no chance Obsidi's still waiting for me*, Villager thought smugly. He fastened the straps of his bag and set off to the large school entrance doors, ready to head home and just take a day off.

As he was nearing it, however, he heard a particular set of voices that stopped him dead in his tracks.

"Come on, boss! Can't we just go home, the squirt's probably not even here anymore!" A high pitched, nasally voice called out, but was quickly cut off by an almost childish stomp.

"No." Obsidi's voice snarled. "I know he's still here, probably skittering around like a coward. All the school doors are locked save this one- there's no way he could have left already."

Villager took a step backwards, unwilling to engage with Obsidi and whatever he wanted to do. Why was he still here? Couldn't he have a day *away* from him?

Villager was about to turn tail and run, even though Obsidi had said how there "was no other exits open," but bumped into someone's feathery chest.

"Hoo! Villager, I didn't know you were still here!" Blathers laughed while Villager turned pale as a sheet. Obsidi and the nasally voice, (the green mouse,) cut off abruptly, taking a look at Villager and Blathers.

"And Obsidi and Radley, too! It's been quite a while since I have last seen you two, you should stop by and say hi sometimes. What are you three doing, still here on campus?" He tittered curiously, head angling to the side in a questioning glance.

Villager was about to bump in, defending himself and forcing him away from Obsidi to have no correlation with him, but Obsidi beat him to it.

"Ah, mister Blathers sir," Obsidi said politely. His entire demeanor changed, the once angry and threatening pose now relaxed into a tall, respectful one, bowing his head to the owl.

"We were merely discussing our joint group assignment with little Villager here. He sure does try to escape our little meetings, though I can't seem to see why..." The eagle tapped his feathers to his chin. "But regardless, the *Wild World* and *City Folk* departments joined up for one week for our English project."

"Ah! Well don't mind me- I'm just heading on home. I trust that you boys will all leave before the janitor locks up, eh?" Blathers chuckled, unknowing of the panicked look on Villager's face. "After all- it is a three-day weekend! Kids like you should all be having fun in the sun, playing to your heart's content!"

Blathers continued past the three students, making a small wave behind him. "Take care, boys!"

They watched the owl get further and further away, until they heard the faint *click* of the main school doors clamping shut.

The moment Blathers was out the door, Obsidi turned swiftly to Villager, eyes alight with something cold- something *dark*. Villager was frozen, trembling like a leaf and gripping his bag strap so tightly his knuckles were turning white.

Radley, the green mouse cronie, grabbed Villager's wrists tightly, pulling them behind him. He was immobilized- stuck under the mercy of the large, imposing eagle.

"Come on, *One*. Did you want to run away again? You like running, don't you?"

A swift kick to Villager's gut. Villager wheezed, doubling back but prevented by the tight grip of Radley's arms. *Not again...* Tears pricked his eyes, teeth clenched in a defiant scowl.

He won't show weakness to him.

"Nobody can save you now. I don't know what kind of deal you struck with Blathers in order to get your hide out of this one but it didn't work."

Obsidi pushed Villager's stomach with a clawed foot. Villager yelped, stumbling back and forcing Radley into the lockers from the pure strength of Obsidi alone, feeling heavily bruised and already very weary. His legs were trembling beneath his frame.

Villager's head was snapped to the side- a punch to the face. He cringed, knowing full well that the hit would leave a nasty bruise.

Obsidi's forceful assaults grew swifter, every punch packing the eagle's own pain into it. Villager gave a startled cry as he heard a crack when Obsidi kicked his ribcage.

Villager struggled to stay upright, to stay *alive* . He couldn't give up- not like this.

Another kick by Obsidi. He felt his foot erupt into an endless shower of pain and he *screamed*, the pressure blinding his vision and the tears that were budding on the ducts of his eyes grew into fat little drops, sliding down his cheeks as he wailed.

There was a little bit of blood trickling out of his nose.

Obsidi seemed to be getting more and more agitated with every hit based on his livid eyes growing more cold exponentially. His punches were still strong, but his arms were starting to shake.

He looked like he was about to explode.

"Listen. Tell your brother something when you see him next."

The eagle leaned down next to Villager's ears, his feathers cutting into his skin. Villager attempted to stifle his sob but failed, hiccups riveting through his body.

He was so tired.

*"I'll fucking kill him,"* Obsidi snarled. *"I'll beat him to death. He won't survive another damn day. He has to pay for the shit he's said, what he's said about 'ma, about sis."* He lifted his eyes up to make eye contact with Villager and narrowed his eyes into slits.

*"He'll fucking pay, and it'll be more than through goddamn money."*

Obsidi was shaking now, shoulders quivering violently. His breaths were coming out in shaky gasps, feathers standing on end with his fists clenched tightly by his side.

He took a wide swing

A solid hit. Villager crumpled.

A sharp jab. He lost his breath.

A painful strike. He can't feel his left eye.

One deadly hit. His stomach clenched nothing, forcing Villager to retch his empty stomach.

Strike one.

Strike two.

Strike three.

An out, but returned with twice the amount of vigor.

At this rate, Villager was incapable of supporting his own weight, his arms far above his head still held by Radley. The green mouse seemed just as frightened as Villager was, his eyes wide with worry and his own frame shaking with fear.

Obsidi grabbed the collar of his shirt, pulling him up into the air. With one hand, he snatched Villager's small canary yellow bag and thrust it onto the floor, the contents spilling out into a wide fan. He pried open the locker that Radley had initially been leaning against and shoved Villager inside ruthlessly.

Villager gasped, finally free from the torrent of blows. But feeling the closed, cramped space around him, his mouth dropped into an O and he leapt for the locker door which was now shut firmly in his face.

"P-please!" Villager stuttered, banging his fists on the door- the first words he had spoken since Obsidi's flurry of punches. At this point, the tears on Villager's face were turning into a downpour, an ugly expression plastered onto his face while he peered desperately through the locker's grates.

"Let me out- *please*. Please, please, I'll do anything. I can't- you can't keep me in here for three days. I'll *die* I'll- please *please!*"

His desperate sobbing was now turning into yells, palms pressed against the door. He could see the two animals on the other side, their expressions unseen but their eyes seen clear as day.

Stoic, gold eyes.

Terrified black dots.

Then they left. Just like that.

They left him alone in the locker. After most likely breaking several bones and causing a great amount of internal bleeding and bruises, they left him for dead.

They left him alone in a large school for three days with no way to contact anybody, (not like they'd come,) and left his only ways of finding help just out of reach, tantalizingly close.

They left him with nothing. They left him with nobody.

They left him with only himself, his wild, racing thoughts and his trembling legs and his broken, choked breathing barely passing through the ten year old's lungs as he heaved and heaved but couldn't get anything out.

"Help me!" He screamed. "Help me, somebody please!"



But his cries hit empty air, and nobody came.

He persisted. " *Please, somebody, I'm right here, I need help, somebody come and help me-*"

His sob choked him, arms now laid by his side defeated.

"Please..." he whimpered.

"Where are you?"

//

One hour had gone by.

It had felt like a year, but it was only the beginning of Villager's trial against his endurance.

Two hours.

Then three.

Then twelve.

And finally, a full day had passed by.

Villager had spent the first twelve hours yelling himself hoarse, voice cracked and worn down with overuse after pounding his now aching fists against the wall. His body screamed for medical attention, his bloody nose having stopped a long time ago.

Belatedly, he realized that nobody was at the school, so it was unlikely that anybody would come in the first place.

He persisted regardless.

When rays of red light started to peek through the cracks, Villager searched the dim locker he was in for any items that could potentially help aid him. A few loose sheets of papers and what he thought was a wad of gum later, (yuck!) He pulled out a half empty bottle of water as well as a very wrinkled looking package of gummies. With a sigh, he opened the pack and selected a small red strawberry accompanied by a little grape.

Popping the two chewy snacks into his mouth, he hesitated on opening the bottle of water, but his parched and hoarse throat said otherwise.

He took a little sip of water.

It turned into a draught.

Not realizing just how much he drank, he jerked the bottle away from his mouth and stared in horror at what was left of his only source of fluids for the next few days.

A small sliver of water sat on the bottom of the bottle, lit up by the dim light from the setting sun.

Villager capped it and set it aside. He'll drink what was left once daylight struck.

He slept in an uncomfortable position, sitting on the bottom of the locker in a fetal position, small arms wrapped around his short legs.

He cried and cried and cried.

"Please..." he said in a small, small voice- almost too small to hear.

"Help me."

But nobody came.

//

It was a beautiful early Monday morning, and Gulliver was a happy sailor.

The sun was barely peeking over the mountains, few townsfolk up to bat on rising up so early.

He worked as a janitor at a joint school to earn money for his slightly run down boat, but he didn't hate the job. Rather, he quite enjoyed it! What with the energetic children and kind teachers- they were all nice folks, nice folks indeed...

Sure, there were the unfortunate kids and the big mean kids and the unassuming teachers, but every school had them! He was always available to put a stop to any injustice he saw, for Gulliver was a noble gull.

Why, he had to assist a short kid with choppy brown bangs recently, helping him pay for his lunch after he had presumably lost his card. (Gulliver found it tucked behind the condiments bar, of all places!)

Whistling a jolly tune, he mock tap danced his way to the school doors, rattling the lock with the rusty key and pulling it open after a satisfying *\*Click!\**

After rummaging around the janitor's closet and pulling out the mop and bucket, he continued along his path and started to dip his mop into the cleaning solution, making quick, reflexive pushes at the tiled floor.

As he flicked the lights on for the next hallway, however, he paused momentarily.

A lone, open canary backpack sat pathetically off the middle of the hallway, pencils and notebooks scattered as if they were thrown onto the ground.

Feeling a bit unnerved, Gulliver let his mop rest on the wall and made cautious steps towards the bag, suddenly feeling as if he were in a horror movie. Now toe to toe with the obviously kid-sized pack, he crouched down and shuffled around the inside, searching for some sort of identification.

He found it on a little plastic school lunch card, which looked beaten and scratched as if a lot of hands were on it. A little boy's face sat on the card, the name a bit muddled but still visible enough to read.

Villager.

Looking a bit closer to his surroundings, he noted the angle at which the items flew out of the bag and raised his eyes slowly to a tall, lone locker, sitting innocently among the plethora of other lockers.

He noted the small dent on the locker where a small child's head would likely be able to reach.

With bated breath, he jiggled the locker's door and cursed after realizing it was still shut tight.

Sliding a mildly crumpled piece of paper out from his pocket, he quickly scanned the locker number and muttered under his breath. Finding what he was looking for, he shoved the paper in his pocket and slowly slid the combination in place.

27.

10.

10.

He pulled the locker open and was immediately pushed down by a sudden weight, letting out a squawk of surprise as the body of a *boy* simply crashed into the seagull's frame.

He pulled the boy from his chest and gasped at how *pale* he looked, dark purple bruises marring his face and healed over scabs and cuts covering his arms and knees. His left eye had an awful bruise, various injuries scattering the boy's complexion. His clothes looked crumpled and smelled awful, as if he were stuck in the locker for an extended period of time, (which Gulliver was now realizing might have actually been the case for the young brunet.) His foot looked absolutely *awful*, not facing the right direction and tilting in an odd angle. He was barely standing at all, and judging from how thin he looked Gulliver could only assume that the boy had essentially *nothing* to eat nor drink for the time period he was in the locker.

He was snapped from his disbelief by a small, dry cough, the weak boy twitching in the gull's arms.

With great care, (and making sure his injuries were not fatal,) he gently laid the boy against the locker, making note of the small crumpled water bottle, (with some miscellaneous liquid stored in it,) the scattered paper stained with blood, an empty wrinkled bag of snacks, and the fact the inside of the locker door was scratched up and had a minor dent curling inwards on the inside, which was what lured Gulliver to opening the locker in the first place.

He quickly yanked out his phone and dialed 9-1-1 as quickly as he could, shuddering wings pressing the phone to his ear while the clock ticked by.

He took one last glance at the barely breathing boy's face and squeezed his fist.

Who would have done such a thing to a young, ten year old boy?

//

Villager didn't talk.

It had been two months since Villager had been pulled from the locker, and he still wouldn't talk to the interrogators about who had trapped him in the first place and why.

"His larynx should be in working order," a tall woman with orange hair pulled up into a ponytail walked around the room anxiously.

"We've given him a sufficient amount of fluids and medicine to help sooth his inflamed throat, and have set up a dietary plan for when he leaves the hospital. Despite his extreme dehydration and lack of food, we've managed to stabilize the level enough to ensure he is alright."

"Okay, has he had any visits from any family members as of yet?" A slightly shorter man with a buzz cut held a clipboard in his hands, scribbling madly onto a sheet of paper.

"No," replied the ginger. "His mother has not picked up the phone nor has she responded to our emails, and his alternative contacts aren't responding either."

The two nurses walked out of Villager's room, leaving the boy to himself and the constant beeping of the heart monitor.

To say that being trapped in a locker for three days straight was unpleasant was a vast understatement. For the little ten year old boy, the experience was beyond traumatic, forcing the once energetic child to be cold and distant around figures he should be trusting, (like the two nurses that kindly oversaw his recovery.)

Villager stared blankly into the room's walls, mouth not uttering a single word, eyes zoned out and blank. A distant ache filled his bones as he shifted slightly in his bed, but he shrugged it off.

Leave it for future Villager.

He knew he was in bad shape when he was dragged in by the nice janitor man, but he didn't really pick up everything they were saying. His head hurt too much to listen, and the little pricks of the needle poking into his skin didn't affect him at the time of the testing. What he did hear were faint words of "broken bones" and "low levels of nutrients," plus a big word that made Villager clutch his head violently.

He thought about his family- what shenanigans they were up to. Big brother "Yellow" and just what he had said to make Obsidi so angry.

He stared distantly out the window, hands folded neatly in his lap.

He did not utter a single word.

//

As the days turned into weeks and the leaves started to fall from the trees, Villager continued to live alone.

The house was now dusty and cold, empty and unforgiving. He didn't care, and he was pretty damn sure that his family wouldn't either.

His once positive and optimistic personality morphed into some sort of pessimistic, angsty one as he lived his life boiling the pot where all his grievances laid.

Obsidi never apologized for what he had done, despite Radley ratting him out. He was expelled from the school, Villager not being his first offence, and he never saw the eagle again.

Big brother "Yellow" did stop by once, only out of obligation due to nobody checking in on him. He had a lit cigarette in one hand, driving an expensive looking car in the other.

He talked about how Obsidi had been so "bitchy," as he put it, and was always very emotional whenever the two had to exchange their goods based on their deal. Yellow had soon learned that Obsidi's parents went through an absolutely *nasty* divorce, the mother digging herself into a ditch of debt and alcoholism.

Case in point, Obsidi had been greatly affected.

The eagle had nobody to turn to, nobody to trust. (Yellow had stated those words as if Obsidi was meant to be pitied, but his face had upturned into a cold, cruel smile.) So eventually, he had turned onto Villager, throwing his pent up rage and frustration onto his little "punching bag."

Yellow had laughed mockingly, making little fake squeals of pain, expecting Villager to respond hotly, but to no avail. The boy had simply stared at him, expression blank and emotionless.

Yellow had left as quickly as he came, the entire conversation feeling like it had passed in a minute. Really, the time taken for Yellow to relay the information to Villager probably *did* take a minute, for the high speed racer was eager to leave as quickly as he could.



And as he watched the car's toxic fumes rise into the atmosphere, Villager realized how he had never felt just as *alone* as he did right now.

With a put off sigh, he turned and shut the door to the dim house with a soft click, feet pattering on the stairs and crashing into his old, worn down bed.

Eyes half closed, his thoughts drifted off in small puffs, feeling sore and tired.

Maybe tomorrow would bring more good than bad.

*// Two Years Later //*

*Villager stumbled in the crevice between two tall buildings, the sun barely reaching in the narrow passage. His arms were covered in scratches and bruises, a bit of blood trickling out of a scrape on his knee.*

*"Look at 'im! Think he has any fight left?"*

*"Nah, let 'em be. We got the money, we don't need the cops after us too."*

*With sharp cackles, the gang members revved their motorbikes and drove off, leaving a beaten, moneyless, and bruised Villager in the dusty alley.*

*He coughed, the now 12 year old boy brushing off the dirt from his arms and staggering upright, but ultimately failing as he collapsed back onto the cracked pavement.*

*As darkness fell, maybe it would claim him, too.*

Villager woke up to the cold stone floor and a bitterly chilly midafternoon. The sun was hovering above the mountains, deep shadows etching onto the walls. Shuddering madly, he shakily wrapped his cold hands around his shoulders, hoping what little body heat he had could help warm himself up.

He tried to bring his knees to his chest, his puffs of warm air and chattering teeth feeling all too loud while his legs twitched and jolted madly in his hands.

Burying his cold, cold, cold head into his freezing knees, he shuddered again, body never stopping for even a moment, always shaking.

A hot, burning drop started to form in his eyes.

Scalding, thick tears fell sloppily from his face and onto his knees, sniffing and crying while the cold wind snapped at his bare skin like whips.

He didn't even look at the existential dread of his lost possessions and location, too lost in his misery to hear its bays of attention, nor the pattering of footsteps that approached ever closer to Villager.

"Hey kid." A gruff voice called out to him from above.

Villager quickly stopped the noises, carefully peeking through his arms to see who he was dealing with and how fast he would need to run.

A short, portly tanuki stood before him, covered in a thick sweater vest with his hands stuffed in his pockets. His eyes were heavily lidded, as if he hadn't slept in days, and his nose jutted out prominently.

"It's pretty cold. What are you doing outside, with no parents and wearing just a tee and some shorts?"

Villager blinked, still processing what the raccoon had said. He shrugged in response, the figure a little hard to see through his violent shivers.

"The weather's going to get worse, you know." The raccoon held out a paw as an offering to Villager. "If it's alright with you, why don't you warm up in my little shop? It's not all that far away, and the fire's already started."

Villager's eyes widened, genuinely surprised at the kind offer of hospitality. He blinked, considering the offer, but quickly accepted.

He would really rather keep all of his limbs rather than lose them to the cold, even if it was a bait to something worse.

What was there to lose?

Taking the tanuki's outstretched paw, he struggled to pull himself up, his muscles frozen from the time spent in the cold.

He began to hobble beside him, hands clenching his arms tightly. He started to run out of breath even with the average paced walking they were doing.

"I'm Nook, by the way," the stranger said. "Tom Nook."

Tom gave him a little side eye, as if inquiring for Villager's name, but Villager didn't see it for he had stumbled on his own feet, crashing to the ground with a soundless thump.

Effortlessly, Tom grabbed Villager's arm and pulled him upright, allowing Villager to lean on his stout figure. Sharing their weight, the two approached a shabby, small shop with a charming blue-red color scheme. A large sign with the words "Nook's Cranny" was plastered over the door, a little jingle being heard as they walked in.

The heat was felt immediately, the fireplace crackling and warm. A rather simple interior greeted Villager, rows of tables with furniture or clothes or everyday materials sitting by or on top.

Tom left Villager to stand on his own, the boy hobbling his way to the fireplace. Sitting on the stool provided, he leaned into the deep warmth, eyes fluttering shut in a brief moment of calm.

He felt a tap on his back.

Jumping, he swirled around, eyes wide with alarm, but quickly relaxed realizing it was only Tom, who had a thick, wool blanket in his paws.

Letting him drape the warm thing onto his back, he visibly relaxed, shivers and shudders now slowly dying down in little twitches. Villager's eyes stayed glued onto the fire, the dancing flames entrancing him into staring longer.

He hadn't realized he was leaning into it until Tom cleared his throat loudly, causing Villager to slam back into his stool in surprise.

"Never did get a name from you, kid. Have any family, any friends I can contact?" Tom asked.

Villager stared at him for a moment, opening and closing his mouth. He attempted to push sound through his throat, but the feeling of unease and discomfort forced him to shut his mouth.

He made a writing motion with his hands, of which the tanuki took a couple of tries guessing. With a notepad and a pen eventually handed to him by the sheepish raccoon, he began to scrawl out words and short sentences, separating them by little tics.

'-My name is Villager. I have no friends or family.'

The tanuki frowned, tilting his head ever so slightly to the right. "No friends or family? How about guardians, then? Any adult figures you can contact?"

'-No.'

Villager briefly considered Blathers, but worried about how the scholarly owl would react to having him dropped off at his home.

He wasn't going to take his chances.

"Right, kid. Well, do you live nearby at least? Or have shelter or somewhere to stay?"

Villager paused for a moment to think of just how far he was from home.

He had initially set out from his carcass of a house to have some fresh air and enjoy the start of winter, but a surprise had him detoured and knocked out cold.

He had been walking around the perimeter of the town, and was ambushed near the other side of it, which meant that he was pretty far off from home. Night would fall by the time he was halfway there, and he was worried about another assault.

'-I live on the other side of town. I'm not sure if I will be able to reach it before nightfall.'

Villager sat with bated breath as Tom rubbed his chin, expression thoughtful.

"I see. Well, then I suppose you can stay with me for the night. I haven't hosted anyone before in my home, so do forgive me if anything is messy or uncomfortable." The tanuki

stood, popping his spine and facing Villager.

"Give me a moment to prepare a space for you to rest in, as well as some medication for your wounds. It will be a bitterly cold night, and there are no heaters here except for the fireplace. I want to make sure my guest does not freeze to death, yes yes."

He pulled off his sweater and tied a little blue apron around his waist, going into a room tucked in the corner of the shop, the door clicking shut behind him while rustling noises were heard.

Villager stared blankly at where Tom just was, zoning out deep into his thoughts.

Nook's Cranny was clearly a little run down and beat up, judging by the weathered wood and crooked foundation, the items inside looking second hand and a little roughed up.

If he were to assume, he would think that the shop owner was running low on funds, every action using money bringing him closer to bankruptcy.

But to think a tanuki like Tom, who wore a modest stained blue apron and had heavy bags under his eyes, a little too formal yet very warm in his personality, had welcomed him into his home. He had a chance to walk by, but reached out a paw instead. He used his own materials and is even offering up his home for Villager to sleep in, which warmed his heart much more than the fireplace did.

He had a lot of thank you's to write out to the tanuki.

Tom returned with a folded blanket and a bamboo mat, a little rectangular pillow nestled on top. A first aid kit was tucked under his arm. Placing the items by the fire, which was now at a dull roar, he unrolled the mat and set the blanket aside, encouraging Villager to put the thick wool blanket aside, which he did.

"I know it isn't much, but it was either this or the stone cold floor. I usually use this mat to sleep on, but I'll have to resort to my extra blankets in order to keep out the cold."

Feeling rather touched, he felt a little snuffle come out from him, rubbing his eyes with his thin fingers.

Tom looked startled, a little confused as to why Villager had suddenly started to sprout tears. "Kid- why are you crying? Is it not to your tastes? If you'd like, you could take the cushions I've set up for sale, but I'll need them back at the end-"

Villager shook his head, a little smile gracing his still wobbly lips. Dragging the notepad out from under his stool, he scribbled a little note and showed it to the tanuki, whose eyes widened a tad bit.

'-I'm crying because you offered me a home. I haven't felt this way in a long time. Thank you.'

The note was short and sweet, but Tom looked just as touched as Villager felt, the tanuki's eyes curling into a happy upside down U shape.

"Course kiddo," he said fondly. "You're my guest. I'd never let a guest suffer, 'specially in weather like this, yes yes."

Villager tended to his wounds while Tom spread out the mats and blankets, the boy making little hissing noises as he pressed the cotton ball covered in alcohol onto his cuts and bruises.

Villager crawled into the blankets in the shirt and shorts he was left in the cold with, having no change of clothes to go into. (Tom's were far too big, and the clothes he had hung up on the racks were either too small or too big.) With his eyes peeking out from the blanket, he made a little glance towards Tom, who was setting up his own sleeping space by the dying fire with only two blankets and what appeared to be a relatively stiff piece of wood he was using as a pillow.

Catching his gaze, the tanuki gave him a little smile.

"Good night, champ."

Good night.

//

Villager had made it his routine to pass by Nook's Cranny as often as he could, whether it was to say hi on days where he was short on time, or to hang out and finish his schoolwork, even help run the shop while Tom was away.

Tom was his very first friend.

Through Tom he had met his second friend, Isabelle, a down to earth modest shih tzu that worked hard and was far too underpaid for her effort at her other jobs. Despite her respectful exterior, she has a very wide arrangement of words to choose from when in Nook's Cranny, but tends to stick to a colorful array of "Fucking hell!" and "Goddamn bastard!" to name a few.

She works at Nook's Cranny to help out, initially as volunteer work but she stayed to keep both Tom and Villager company. (She was very supportive and had rather interesting topics to talk about each and every day.) Villager was rather terrified of crossing her the wrong way, and considered himself lucky to call himself her friend.

There was Tom's ex, (and Villager's third friend,) Redd, who occasionally popped in here and there to greet Tom with a quip or two, more often than not featuring a very descriptive sex joke. (Tom eventually installed a "Redd Not Allowed" sign in front of the windows, which the kitsune ignored every time. The sign was eventually forgotten and treated as a side joke.) He would also often call Villager "cousin." He found it rather similar to Tom's habit of calling him "kid" and adding a "yes yes" to the ends of his phrases.



The two were rather cute.

At some point, Redd had asked Villager if he knew what sign language was, to which he said no. He had been using mostly pen and paper or gestures to indicate what he wanted. Redd had quickly taken Villager under his wing for sign language classes, explaining how while not many people knew it, it was still a useful language to learn.

(This was how Villager had learned that Redd was fluent in sign, the kitsune commonly using it to irritate Nook through ridiculously descriptive statements which the tanuki refused to respond to, despite having a decent grasp of how to read it.)

Villager learned basic day to day skills while at Nook's Cranny, such as gardening or crafting furniture. Due to money being tight, the team at the shop often had to build their own materials or get items donated to them in order to have sales. It was tedious, but the hard work felt good to Villager.

It reminded him who he was doing this for.

He learned plenty of other skills as well, examples including but not exclusive to boxing, and harvesting lumber, those two in particular staying as his hobbies for the years to come.

As the leaves started to fall again from the trees, Tom brought two tiny twins that were squealing in his arms.

He explained to them how some cruel bastard had left them in a cardboard box with the words "Adopt Me" scrawled on, with nothing else protecting them from the elements. So he had taken them with him.

Tom had asked them if they would be able to help out in taking care of them, which Isabelle, Villager, and even Redd had agreed to. (Redd had wanted to call them Tom's Nooklings, but was quickly socked in the face by Tom before he could even finish his whole thought.)

Isabelle cooed at the two, agreeing only with the condition that she could take care of them at a certain time due to her overlapping jobs and school times.

Villager was in a similar pickle, still having to attend school and usually having a lot of injuries to accompany his way to the shop, hindering his efforts to arrive on a certain schedule. Adding on the fact that he was mute and still a minor, Tom decided Villager would help take care of the two while Tom or Isabelle was working the shop.

Redd only came by occasionally and not on a day to day basis like Tom or Isabelle, so he declared himself an emergency guardian, in case nobody could show up. (For an ex, Villager really thought Redd was exceptionally friendly, and was rather glad he was, too. There were a lot of days neither Tom, Isabelle, nor Villager had time to nurture the twins.)

And as the seasons changed quickly, so did the twins, Timmy and Tommy. They quickly learned how to walk and were starting to get a lot more comfortable in the shop, their incoherent babbles beginning to include words like "Da." (Villager really wished he had a camera to take a picture of Tom's absolutely head over heels expression, a stupid smile on the tanuki's face.)

At this point in time, it had been a little over two and a half years since he and Tom had met, and yet it felt like they knew each other forever. He considered Tom a father figure, a tanuki who was determined and hard working with all he did.

Villager's sign gradually got better and better under the guidance of Redd, managing to hold and read conversations between him and the kitsune.

Isabelle, the kind person that she was, learned a little bit about sign from Redd for Villager's sake, preferring to spell out her words rather than use both her hands to gesticulate her words. The twins started to learn early from Redd as well, and the kitsune eventually had to schedule different times for everyone to come to Nook's Cranny in order to keep everything organized.

The shop started to feel a lot more homelier, and Villager found himself at it a lot more often than his own home, preferring to head straight there immediately after his studies finished.

He smiled more. His eyes were a tad bit brighter. He was gaining his spark back. He wasn't as pessimistic anymore.

He couldn't think of any reason why he would leave the little utopia that he had formed with his friends and what was quite possibly his family.

And then a letter arrived in the mail.

//

*Dear Villager, (Animal Crossing,)*

*I am Master Hand, the host of an annual competition called the "Super Smash Bros" tournament, hosted every year, and we formally invite you to join our "Wii" Year, and potentially more afterwards.*

*Our requirements in having an invitation is that one person(s)/ creature(s) has a significant development in their life towards something or someone important, (most often case being saving the world, side cases include self discovery or unlocking a form of an ability,) has a commitment or skill to what they do, (i.e. fighting, plumbing, ghost hunting, etc,) or has a wide arsenal or variety of skills which can be put to the test on other fighters or competitors, regardless of method of execution. (Examples include using a gun, a hammer, a vacuum cleaner, a baseball bat, your own fists, etc.)*

*We have selected you to join our ranks. Though you may be young, as well as a person coming from a more quiet side of the multiverse, we hope that you may find your way to us.*

*Should you accept our invite, we request that you send us a letter back with a simple, straightforward response, and we will send you train tickets and a packing guide, as well as a newcomer's manual as soon as possible.*

*We would like a response before September of this year, and we will be expecting you to arrive from that moment on to November 21st.*

*Any arrivals or sent letters after that time will be considered invalid and you will not be able to enter the tournament.*

*Feel free to share this letter with those you wish to share it with in order to organize a proper response by due time. More information shall be provided once you accept.*

*Best of luck and well wishes,*

*Master Hand*

Villager stared at the letter in his hand, a little dumbfounded at what he had just read.

"Smash.. Wii, huh?" Tom said, peering over Villager's shoulders. "Sounds rather fun, doesn't it?"

Villager shrugged, still in shock at the invitation.

Smash Bros was a universe-wide tournament that picked up people or creatures from all across the multiverse. Animal Crossing, or the general area where he resided in, (his town was called New Leaf,) was in a rather tucked away corner of said multiverse. It was quiet, nothing really happened except for the occasional fight or scuffle.

There was nothing dramatically... entrancing about his town.

The fact that Master Hand, who was practically a deity, decided to pick up *Villager* of all people really shocked him.

He idly pulled out a little black card that was tucked behind the letter, eyes dazedly reading over the silver font.

*Annual Payment of 500,000, unit may change depending on realm.*

His mouth dropped into a wide 'O,' eyes widening.

That was a lot of money.

That would not only be enough to help fund for Nook's Cranny for a long while, it would also help with the twins and maintaining the house and-

"Are you going to accept?" Tom inquired.

Villager swiveled around, head almost nodding in a quick paced 'Yes!' But paused when seeing the expression on the tanuki's face.

It was sad- a little bit knowing, as if he were expecting Villager to just pack it up and leave, never looking back.

He swallowed the lump in his throat.

He had to take the opportunity. He wasn't quite sure *how* or *why* Master Hand had selected him of all people, but it was an opportunity of a lifetime.

But was it worth leaving behind his friends?

His family?

Before his thoughts could spiral into a confused panic, he felt Tom's thick furry arms wrap around his shoulders in a deep hug.

"Kid," he started gruffly. "I've watched you grow, from a little squirt to the young man you are now. You're no pushover, you know?"

Tom chuckled, letting go of Villager and clapping a paw on his shoulder.

"You're a part of this family now. Don't you forget it."

Villager felt his eyes moisten, tears budding his eyes. It was his turn, now, to encapsulate Tom in a bear hug, crushing the tanuki in his arms.

An unspoken thank you was exchanged between the two.

A new future. A new path.

And Villager knew he would still have his family behind him.

## Chapter End Notes

Just stating it again, this chapter was mostly exposition, just wanted to put things aside before I dig into the meat of this story.

Strictly speaking I want to write a lot of action scenes, since it's Smash Bros.

In terms of plot and having an overarching plotline, this story is unfortunately not going to go that route. I'll write about Villager and how he interacts with the world around him, as well as how he deals with it.

If I wrote anything inaccurate about his sign language, (or his game,) in any which way, please tell me!

Wild World + City Folk: An Animal Crossing game which had you play as a citizen of a town. In this story it is used as a school.

New Leaf: An Animal Crossing game where you play as the mayor of a town. In this story, it is the name of the town in general where Villager lives in, his "state," being Animal Crossing.

Obsidi: An original character I made just for this chapter and/or for potential callbacks. He is a golden eagle, (the species.) I didn't want to offend anyone by accidentally using their favorite villager, so I just made up my own.

(Even though this is Smash Wii, I'm going to use the combat or fighting moves in Ultimate for more accurate fights. Only the Smash Wii newcomers AND everyone who was in smash beforehand is here, despite the Wii version excluding some. Newcomers to Ultimate, however, aren't here. Just a note.)

Thank you for reading! I'll try to make the next chapter as soon as I can!

# A Rocky Start

## Chapter Summary

TL;DR, goodbyes, confusion, a new meeting, and a new antagonist.

## Chapter Notes

Hey!

Thank you guys so much for the support for the first chapter! I was really surprised people actually wanted to read it, so I present chapter two!

I think I've planned out the whole fic, but I'm kind of dissatisfied with it so I may revisit it.

(Edit: I fixed Chapter 1 on 4/5/21 to make it easier to read and to make it all rich text. Yet still, it doesn't italicize beginning or end notes. Sorry about that...)

I did make it clear when Villager or someone else was thinking, writing, or signing. Example is thinking, (pretend it's italicized,) 'Example' is signing, (again, italicized,) and '-Example' will be writing.

Please enjoy!

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

"Rise and shine, cousin! Don't want you to be late to your train!"

Bright beams of early sunlight peeked through half folded window shades, lighting up the room that was thrown into general disarray.

Villager groaned loudly, his eyes squeezing shut, trying to keep out the sun. The voice was far too loud, and it was far too early for such a rude awakening. He struggled to push his arm through his blankets, but managed to shove out the bird towards his very loud guest.



"Oh come on, don't be that way! It's always best to wake up at dawn, especially on important days like these!" The individual trilled in an excited tone, footsteps pattering closer.

Villager felt the blanket being swept away from his body, curling up as an instant reaction. Grappling at the air, he gave a dejected sigh before turning over and giving his opponent a withering glare.

Redd only gave him a cheeky grin in response, throwing Villager's blanket aside and helping him up to get ready for his leave.

It was early November, a couple of days before the tournament would begin, and Villager was quite anxious. So many different faces and new people to meet- it would be rather terrifying to just walk in and say hello, much less participate in the same competition they were in.

The boy grabbed a plain red tee with a number printed on it, blue shorts piled on top. The boy clambered out of his messy room and into the bathroom, mind still not processing that this would probably be the last time he'll come home in a while.

He ignored the faint white scars that sliced his torso neatly and stepped into the shower, cold water dripping off his smaller than average frame. Shutting his eyes momentarily, he simply thought while the steam rose steadily from the ground.

What would it be like to be around so many different people- different creatures or individuals? What would they think of boring little Villager, a boy with no words?

He was certain that Mario, a multiversal celebrity, was going to be there, as well as the plumber's in-universe comrades and friends. There were certainly many other famous heroes or icons dotted about, but there were also underground newcomers that were to join the tournament with him for this year's championship.

His sleepiness was chased away by budding excitement. Which individuals would mark his first battle? Would he be able to outwit them, despite his small stature?

Feeling a little bit more awake with thoughts buzzing in his head, Villager dried himself off and took the stairs two at a time, barely aware of his surroundings. The smell of a traditional American breakfast caught his attention as he started to move towards the kitchen, stomach feeling painfully empty as he had not eaten the night before in his anxiety.

"Hey cousin!" Redd greeted him cheerily, a smile quirked on the kitsune's face. Villager himself couldn't help but smile softly back.

'*Good morning, Redd,*' Villager signed, glancing over at the luggage resting innocently at the front doors before taking his seat.

A plate with pancakes was placed gently in front of him, a crudely drawn smiley face in whipped cream staring at him soullessly. The sickly sweet syrup that was poured generously on top had caused a bit of the cream to melt, making it look more like a crying expression than a happy one.

Villager tentatively took a fork and dug into his breakfast, Redd coming over to him with a pink frilly *Kiss the Cook* apron and a spatula.

His eyes seemed a little puffy, but Villager pretended not to notice.

"So..." the kitsune started. "You're going to Smash."

Villager gave a short nod, hands occupied with the food.

Redd fiddled with his spatula, a slight frown creasing his face. He looked like he wanted to say something, however his muzzle remained stubbornly closed.

The awkward silence followed the two throughout breakfast and through the luggage check, Redd silently standing off to the side with a forlorn look on his face while Villager made sure

he was packed and ready to leave.

With several bags outside the house splayed out before him and the car, Villager looked back, eyes traveling up and down the window to the base of the house. His potted plant was perched ever so timidly on the windowsill, Redd's bronze fur coming into his vision.

Over the course of meeting Tom and the rest of his family, they had all once taken him "home", for Villager would often pass out at Nook's Cranny for one reason or the other. While Villager had left his address for Tom to take as safekeeping in case something happened to him, Tom never violated his privacy and went over to his house willy nilly.

So when the tanuki and the rest of the family saw the poor excuse of a house he was living in, they immediately rushed to fix the pathetic mistake Villager had made of giving them his address.

While it was true Villager's blood family never stopped by save a few of his siblings for less than legal reasons, the house had fallen into general disrepair after Villager had lost his voice and his passion. The floors were dirty, dust coated every corner of the shabby house, and the garden was infested with weeds and mites. Since Villager had often spent a lot of his time at Nook's Cranny, only coming home to sleep, his bedroom was the only really "clean" area in the house, and even that was a bit cluttered. The kitchen was completely barren save a couple of moldy fruits and cereal boxes.

Truly, it was a pathetic sight.

While Tom was simply scandalized, Redd and Isabelle took it upon themselves to make Villager's house feel more homely, forcing him to care about the shack, even if he really doesn't. They demolished the weed garden, (thankfully,) removed any dust or grime from the halls, threw away his siblings' left over trash and belongings for they weren't coming back any time soon, (Isabelle had to shield Villager's eyes while Redd made various disgusted noises while throwing things in the trash. It was rather amusing.) And so on and so forth.

Basically, they helped him clean up the house.

Redd in particular had helped with repainting the exterior, the once plain and chipping red paint now a beautiful deep indigo, golden swirls traced onto the shingles and wood planks in order to replicate a famous painting. (He knew the others wouldn't mention it, but he cried long and hard after their hard effort. As if there was any other evidence needed to show him that *this* was his family.)

His brief daydream was snapped away from him as Redd slammed the trunk doors shut, the luggage having already been put away while Villager had been thinking.

About to apologize, Villager raised a finger, but Redd beat him to it with a little grin.

"Don't worry about it, I know you're probably nervous," Redd said, the first words he had said since breakfast. "Come on- I'll drive you to the station. Tom and Isabelle will meet us there with the twins. I can't stay long 'cause I got work but..."

The kitsune cleared his throat, looking away.

"I know you're going to get absolutely smothered by Nookie and Isabelle with tearful goodbyes and heartbreaking sobs but..."

Redd gave him a shaky smile. "I'll miss ya, cuz'. I really, really will. You'll be gone and I'll have to deal with Nookie all by myself and you won't get to see Timmy and Tommy grow up and-" He gave a long, dramatic sniff, before erupting into a wail and crushing Villager under his arms in a squeezing hug. Startled, Villager's eyes blew open wide, hands raised and unsure what to do. But as the seconds drew on, he slowly lowered his hands onto the fox's back.

They stood like that for a while, but not until Redd broke apart, wiping at his muzzle with his paws, still sniffing.

"Sorry, sorry. You know how it is with me- good old emotional Redd, heh. Let's get moving, I'm sure the others want their own share of you too, you know?" The pair boarded the car, Villager climbing into the passenger seat and slinging his seatbelt across his chest. As the car started up and the engine roared into life, the journey from the beautiful masterpiece of a

house to the station felt brief, Villager spending his time simply taking in the world around him.

When the bumpy ride began to slow to a stop, Villager's eyes darted up to read the thick bold sign with the words "Animal Crossing Station" emblazoned on it.

Hopping off and unloading his luggage with Redd, he waved a quick goodbye as the kitsune drove off to his workplace. Villager ventured through the small crowd in the station, animals and people alike waiting for their stop.

Finding the sector he was meant to be in, he dragged his luggage to the drop off and looked around, spotting four distinct animals arguing fiercely not too far away. Making a little involuntary giggle under his breath, he crept behind them, two of the four arguing fiercely about something or the other.

"Oh come off it, Tom. I'm sure Villager will like it," said a higher pitched voice. She had an exasperated expression on her face, slight bags trailing underneath her eyes.

"That's the thing, Villager's too nice to refuse a shi- I mean, a bad gift. Who's to say he hates it internally but just accepts it since he doesn't want to sound rude on his way off to a large multiversal tournament where he likely won't see us again for more or less than a year?" A more masculine voice fretted anxiously, his tail swishing back and forth while two smaller figures gripped his hands tightly.

Villager gave a quick tap on Tom's shoulder, the tanuki whirling around in his surprise and almost smacking Villager in the side with his too-alert tail. Isabelle didn't give much of a reaction, most likely due to sleep deprivation, but gave him a short wave hello.

"Villager!" "-ager!" Piped up two small voices, and Villager looked down to see the twins, Timmy and Tommy, eagerly jumping up to catch his attention. With a big smile, the boy hoisted up the two against his chest with some effort, realizing just how much they had grown.

"Hey kid! Scared me for a moment, ho ho..." Tom chuckled nervously, one paw rubbing against the back of his head. Isabelle gave him a quick swipe at his arm, to which the tanuki groaned in pain. Villager made another small uncontrollable laugh, Timmy and Tommy making little chirping noises in surprise. He let the two go back to the floor, the twins landing softly on their two feet.

While it was true Villager was selectively mute, he was still able to sneak small sounds that were out of his control. He doesn't want to speak, and he doesn't try, the traumatic experience from oh so long ago still plaguing his mind. The most noise one could get from the boy were little laughs or noises of shock and anger, but physical words were never heard. Yet the sounds still showed how much Villager trusted someone, and the two laughs that popped out was more than the amount of noise he had made in the entire month.

"Jeez, lay off it, will 'ya?" Tom hissed at Isabelle while the shih tzu laughed madly.

"Oh come on, just get it over with! Best to do it now rather than some time in the next year or two," Isabelle shot back.

Villager tilted his head slightly, a little perplexed at their exchange. *'What do you have to show me?'*

Tom sighed and dug into his satchel, drawing out a small wrapped present in the shape of a long rectangle. Gesturing for Villager to open it, the amused boy carefully tore off the wrapping to reveal a neatly folded letter and a laminated picture sitting in a wood picture frame.

"I know it's not much, but we all thought we should give you something before you left." Tom fiddled with his fingers, expecting a response.

Villager was staring at the photo, however, still processing the image before him. The photo was clearly a little bit worn down, a tear in the corner that even the new and thick picture frame couldn't cover. It was shot on a particularly sunny day, all the faces laughing joyously on a picnic blanket. The photographer seemed to be Redd, since the entirety of Villager's family was in the center frame except for him. Timmy and Tommy were timidly hiding behind Tom, still new to their family, Isabelle holding up a peace sign. Tom looked

disgruntled but had a slight smile on his face, and Villager was positively *beaming* , the most expressive grin splashed brightly on the boy.

Villager looked Tom straight in the eyes, then rushed at the tanuki at high speeds. He gave a surprised "oof!" when Villager charged at him, wrapping him and his family up as best as he could with his short arms.

"Attention, attention! Departure for the *Sakurai* in ten minutes! Please head to your station if you have not already and show your conductor your ticket, and as always, have a safe trip!"

The announcer's voice rang loud and sharply throughout the station, breaking apart the thick, emotional moment.

Isabelle gave Villager's head a pat, a wide smile pointed at him. "Good luck, Villager! Don't get beaten by some loser, you better get as many wins as you can!" She laughed, but then her expression turned serious. "And you better not forget about us, too, 'kay?" Villager gave a sharp nod, taking her words seriously. The bags under her eyes certainly helped with setting the message in.

"You'll be heading off now," Tom said sadly. "Stay safe, kid. Write to us. We'll always respond back. Don't get into trouble on the first day, and don't forget to read that letter while you're at it." He wrapped Villager in another bear hug quickly, before stepping back to let Timmy and Tommy waddle up to Villager's feet.

"Bring back sweets?" "-sweets?" They asked politely, big eyes starting into Villager's soul.

The boy gave them a thumbs up.

After many-a last minute hugs and vaguely threatening goodbyes, Villager carefully put the present and the letter in his bag and finally found himself standing before the *Sakurai* , eyes wide with amazement.

The *Sakurai* was the transportation that was used in order to bring different creatures or people to the Smash Bros sector of the multiverse. It took on different appearances depending on the place that it is stopping in, but for Villager, it donned the appearance of a plain red railroad train. Despite its humble looking exterior, it still had a sleek, powerful aura that made Villager shiver just looking at it.

Slipping out his ticket from his carry on and showing it to the conductor, he boarded the large train, the interior simple yet filled with so much *space*. Trying to keep to himself, he passed by wildly different people and creatures, some speaking weird gibberish languages and some speaking in a strange accent.

Finding his seat, he took a long look at his surroundings, taking note of the occupants of his partially empty car. The train rumbled as it began to move.

There was a man, eyes shielded by a thick helmet, with a falcon symbol flaunted loudly on his clothes and helm. He seemed to be sleeping, leaning back comfortably on his seat with his chest slowly rising and falling. Across from him was a literal robot, its rectangular body folded up in a more space-convenient way as if it were powered off as well.

But what caught his attention the most was the only awake occupant, a brooding black haired teenager with a golden laurel sitting on his head. He had blazing red eyes and a modest black toga, yet he somehow screamed "BACK OFF" in all capital letters. A pair of ebony black wings were tucked to the side of his body.

His expression was absolutely livid, and Villager was a little taken aback by the antagonism. He must have been caught staring, however, for the said dark haired teenager whirled around and gave Villager a smoldering glare, his brows drawn in to shape an sharp V.

*Someone got off on the wrong side of the bed*, Villager thought, but it was swiftly cut off.

"What are *you* looking at?" The teenager hissed like a cat, wings flaring in a way that mimicked an animal's intimidation tactic. He seemed mightily irritated, and Villager gave a couple of steps back in order to avoid any confrontation.



But apparently, this was a mistake, for the same dark angel began to advance towards him, seeking out an opening.

Villager was suddenly heavily reminded of Obsidi.

"What business do you have here? There's no way Smash invited you, look at you!" He jeered, gesturing to Villager. Rather caught off guard, Villager gave the teenager a blank, dazed look, still retreating to his seat.

Yet the dark haired teenager with wings still advanced. "Why aren't you talking back, huh? Too scared? Why're you here if you're such a little *pussy*?" His wings were spread fully now, his scarlet eyes feeling much more darker and crueler than they had before. For a moment, Villager didn't see a teenager, but rather a tall, menacing eagle with the same dark look in his eyes, the glittering gold replaced with a bitter red.

He felt his face stiffen into a neutral expression, eyes gazing past the teen's shoulder and into the void. He acted lifeless and emotionless, trying to avoid making any more expressions to prevent the other teenager from striking first.

He felt null. Nothing. Like a dead bug on the street in a sunny day. Nobody would care about his lifeless form, in fact they'd likely step on him, crush him further into dust until there was nothing left.

He deserved to be punched. Because after all, wasn't he right?

But rather than that, he didn't feel anything at all, the looming presence suddenly disappearing and now just a little bit... smaller?

Villager refocused his vision slightly to see that the guy who had been trying to intimidate him suddenly looked a little unnerved, eyes locked straight onto his with an expression of unease. It took Villager longer to realize he was unnerved because of *him*, but he didn't quite feel the satisfaction of the dark angel backing off.

He felt a cold pit grow in his stomach, but his face would not change from the blank, emotionless mask it had casted upon itself.

His heart beat too quickly in his chest.

A loud crash came from the opposite side of the car door, muffled yelling and laughter filtering in. Turning his head, he watched as the door flung open to reveal a teenager who looked exactly the same as the dark angel but light, carrying little buns and what appeared to be various sweets and chocolates in his arms. His brown hair bounced in a lively manner while his face was in a happy, excited grin, white wings flapping quickly behind him.

"Pittoo!" Said the angel, bouncing over to the still intimidated dark angel. "Pittoo" merely gave the angel a dirty glare, standing upright and dusting off his robes, trying to return to his "cool" persona.

"Pit." Pittoo stated.

"I got some of these absolutely fantastic pastries and sweets from Kirby- oh, you don't know him, he's a little pink orb that's just so~ cute!" The angel "Pit" continued to ramble on, his personality clashing starkly against Pittoo's. Said dark angel was merely grumbling and cupping his hands against his ears, strictly not looking in Villager's direction.

Villager backed away from the pair and finally sat down in his seat, still tense from his encounter.

Somehow, the falcon man and the robot didn't rise with all the commotion that went on, but Villager counted it as a small miracle.

Closing his eyes, his stony expression relaxed into a more natural state. Shadows of Obsidi still haunted the dark emptiness on the back of his eyelids. Letting out a sigh, he clutched his bag close to his chest and peered out the windows in an attempt to distract himself, the train still bumping unceremoniously on the tracks.

"Attention, we will now be heading to the Pokemon universe; Kanto Region, Silph Co. Please fasten your seatbelts and avoid looking directly outside the windows."

The vision of the tunnel that the train was traveling through was blocked off by steel window blinds, cutting out all the light from the outside. Having already fastened his seatbelt, he yelped as the train started to rumble and press him back into his seat as it began to speed up, rushing faster and faster.

Squeezing his eyes shut, he felt his stomach writhe with butterflies, severely disliking every second the train spent in hyperdrive. He was so concentrated on not heaving his insides out that he didn't notice his surroundings shifting from a steam powered train to a more modern design.

When the train had finally seemed to have come to a stop, he tentatively opened his eyes.

The metal blinds were no longer covering the window, and on the other side was a spectacularly tall building, various people walking around with a wide variety of creatures following or roaming wild.

This was the Pokemon Universe, and Villager had never been so starstruck.

Since it was his first time out of his own universe, he tried to take in every corner of the new world, Pokemon seemingly filling up every corner. He stared out the window, his face in a mild form of surprise and wonder, but still absorbing the beauty of the Kanto Region.

Those few minutes of simply observing each individual Pokemon and environment felt like seconds to Villager, and within no time at all the train began to shift and start again. But even as the train moved, he still watched the outside world turn into a blur, the mess of colors hypnotizing.

///

As the sun started to set low in the sky, a sleek and clean train pulled up to a station. Said station was empty, various blockers forcing the occupants of the train to walk in a singular path to the Smash Mansion and not wander off to the civilian side.

The modern sliding doors opened with a clean swish, the once quiet area now filled with noise as people, creatures, and aliens alike all walked out, chattering with each other.

The small pack all gathered their luggage, friends and companions all mingling together.

Among them was Villager, dragging and hoisting his bags with the use of both his arms. Eyes set ahead of him, the automatic exit doors to the station opened up with a soft hiss and the glory of the Smash Mansion was presented to him in its full glory.

A gigantic, towering structure with elegantly carved pillars made of marble and stone fortified the walls, the roof plated with bright red shingles and various chimneys that were illuminated by the rusty orange glow of the sun. A beautiful garden spread around the front and to the side, flowers and trees of varying shades and sizes lining up the path to the front entrance, an inviting floral aroma wafting from their petals. A glass greenhouse could be seen peeking out from behind the structure, the last rays of the sun glittering in fractals through the panes, a trimmed hedge wrapping around the perimeter.

The mansion was set on an isolated part of the main city, the faint roaring and cheering of fans and paparazzi being heard even from their distance away from the people. Since it was beginning to dip into night, the sky was lit up with strobing beams that glowed in brilliant colors, the tall city buildings hosting gigantic electric billboards advertising one thing or another. Faint music could be heard from the distant cityscape as well, the pounding beat running under Villager's feet. A well guarded wall protected the mansion from any mobs.

While the rest of the details of the exterior couldn't be seen from Villager's position out at the front of the mansion, he noticed the two tall brilliant blue beams of light that sat side by side the building, giving the entire mansion that ethereal glow.

Stray oohs and ahhs could be heard from his crowd, and Villager had to admit the sight was indeed quite impressive. There were many newcomers to the tournament, him included, and despite all the formal contracts that they all had to go through in order to partake in the competition, it was still quite the magnificent visual overall.

Villager followed the crowd into the open front doors of the mansion, the flowers and building looking that much more magnificent up close.

Famous, familiar faces greeted them all, as well as a giant towering dismembered hand and other character Villager had yet to meet.

"Welcome to the Smash Tournament," spoke the hand. While it clearly didn't have a mouth, its voice was dictated clearly and powerfully. "I am Master Hand, the host of this competition. Please put your bags away in the center of the lobby. It will be transported to your own personal room by the time you arrive there." The hand swept its long fingers towards the middle of the room, a golden circle marking where it wanted the items to go.

"After you have done so, introduce yourselves to one of our twelve veterans for your slip to your own personal room that you will use throughout your time here with us. This includes individuals who have joined us for previous tournaments. If anything is not up to your satisfaction, come back down and speak to either me or one of the Twelve." The said "Twelve" that Master Hand had spoken of each raised a hand, a comically small sticker with the words "Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_" stamped onto their chests.

"Once you have found yourself situated, you are free to roam the mansion and do as you please for the next few days. Our other competitors will arrive soon, and after that preparations for the tournament as well as introductions to all you newcomers will occur. Please abide by the rules provided to you beforehand, and enjoy your stay. Curfew starts at eleven."

While his fellow companions muttered amongst themselves and started to head towards the middle of the room to deposit their luggage and finally relax after their long ride, Villager took a moment to examine the original Twelve that Master Hand had pointed out.

The infamous Mario stood proudly by the door, already being interrogated by another competitor, (most likely a fan of the adventuring plumber.) By Mario stood a more timid man dressed in bright green apparel, expression that of pure nervousness and a little bit of fear.

That must have been Luigi, Mario's infamous brother who often helped Mario throughout his journeys.

Beside the green clad man stood a tall, beefy gorilla with a little neck tie, and Villager automatically assumed him to be Donkey Kong. A rather handsome looking tall blonde man in dark green with a worn down yet charming face stood next to the gorilla, as well as a fully armored woman with her helmet off, who had allowed her long blonde ponytail to cascade off the side of her suit. A yellow rat-like creature sat on the blonde woman's shoulder, red cheek pouches buzzing with electricity.

Those three must be Link, Samus, and Pikachu respectively, making quite an intimidating group.

While those six stood at one half of the room, the other half was standing opposite of them. A green dinosaur, two pink orbular balls, and a rebellious looking anthropomorphic fox stood together in a group, leaning against the wall with expressions varying from face to face. While Yoshi, Kirby, Jigglypuff, and Fox were all certainly very different in terms of species, they still seemingly got along fine, conversing between each other naturally despite the language barrier.

A boy in a red cap with a baseball bat stood by the wall as well, a welcoming smile on his face. While Villager didn't immediately recognize the boy, he quickly realized that it was Ness, the "PSI Wonder" as the media tilted him. Beside him was the tall, muscular man with falcon emblazoned clothing that Villager saw taking a nap on the train, and slapped his forehead for not recognizing the all powerful Captain Falcon, a fierce and speedy man with fists that could light itself on fire with the power he builds up between each punch.

Villager quickly noted the Twelve in his head and set aside his luggage, politely letting a few of the other incoming Smashers to put their luggage away first. Walking up to the multi universal celebrity's line that he never thought he would have had the luck to meet, he waited patiently with bated breath.

"...of course you may, of course!" Mario said, finishing off his conversation with the person before Villager. As the Smasher walked away with his pink hoodie and sharp upturned hair, Villager found himself before the short man with the infamous moustache. He suddenly felt a drop of nervousness in his chest, a little bit worried about making a lasting first impression.

"Hello, my boy! And-a welcome to the Smash Mansion!" Mario exclaimed enthusiastically. "Can I-a have a name from you?"

Villager reached for his pocket, patting around to pull out his notepad. Feeling nothing, Villager frowned before checking his other pocket, to which he had no such luck.

He had left his only method of communicating in his luggage, which was already transported up to his room.

That drop of nervousness growing to a stone, Villager looked anxiously up to Mario's face, who was merely waiting patiently for Villager to pipe up. "Don't be shy, my boy! Plenty-a newcomers here, you aren't the only one who'll be nervous!" The man chuckled, moustache twitching in amusement. Dread crept up Villager's spine as he tried to think of a way to communicate with the other.

*'My name is Villager'* he signed, hoping to hell and back that Mario would somehow magically know sign language.

But his attempt was in vain, for the plumber gave him a brief frown in confusion.

Villager attempted a writing motion, to which the plumber had difficulty interpreting. "I'm not-a quite sure what you need, young man," Mario said softly. "Perhaps you should see Master Hand or one of the other members of the original Twelve. Maybe one-a them could help?" Mario gently pointed Villager to the others, the plumber quick to turn back to the line that had grown significantly while waiting for Villager to finish up.

Villager was crestfallen, disappointed he couldn't "talk" with Mario the way he wanted to.

"Finally, God what a nuisance..."

"Tch. Too shy to even talk? This tournament will be too easy if freeloaders are going to be here."

Shame accompanied Villager's disappointment, and his shoulders slunk down as he rubbed the sides of his arms. Walking up to whichever one of the Twelve was closer, he found himself before Link, his line having been emptied out shortly before Villager approached him.

"Hello," the Hylian said in a soft yet strong voice. "What is your name?"

Villager's hands trembled a bit, wondering if it'll end futilely just like it had gone for Mario. Biting his lip, he cautiously signed his name letter for letter.

*'V. I. L. L. A. G. E. R. '*

Link's blue eyes widened a fraction and Villager took it negatively, dropping his head. He prepared to just find a pen and paper somewhere and embarrass himself more along the way, but paused as he heard a little cough.

"That's an interesting name. I'm Link, though I'm sure you knew that."

Villager's head whipped up, round eyes meeting the more mature and older Hyrulian's narrow ones. In his surprise, he failed to process Link pulling up a holographic screen, shifting around names and pulling up Villager's information. After a few short seconds of typing, a slip of paper manifested itself into his hands, a little magic residue imprinting itself onto the fine fibers.

"Here's your room number and the respective information that comes with it. As Master Hand had stated before, you are free to return down here to ask questions or merely roam around." Villager snapped out of his surprise, taking the slip with careful hands. Link gave him a pat on the shoulder and gestured for the next person in line to move forward, Villager's thank you's unable to be formed through his shaking fingers.



In this place filled with new futures and new people, somebody understood him. Somebody knew sign.

He still had hope after all.

//

Villager's room was situated on the third floor of the mansion, and he was becoming rather thankful his luggage was already automatically teleported there. The stairs, while beautiful, was quite a task to climb, especially with other Smashers running up and down them.

He had almost lost his footing when a bright blue blur whizzed by him, an unapologetic "Sorry! Coming through!" being heard, followed by a few tiny brightly colored creatures with flowers on their heads or wings on their backs. They squealed loudly and pounced after the blur, also not seeming aware of Villager's nor the other Smashers' presence.

He'll have to get used to it.

Finally reaching his floor, Villager looked around, his eyes analyzing every nook and cranny. The hallway that split to his floormates' rooms were fairly plain, bright green indoor plants complementing the clean cream walls. A few faint voices and video game noises could be heard in one of the rooms across from him, bright lights flashing through the door frame. It wouldn't bother him too much, hopefully.

Unlocking his room, Villager entered the surprisingly well sized area, consisting of only a singular bed, a table, a personal bathroom, and a window showcasing a marvelous view of the mansion's gardens. His suitcases and bags sat in the center innocently.

More than pleased with his new living quarters, he began to unpack his belongings, setting aside his personal items and clothing to be put away. After about an hour of roaming and personalizing his room, he shuffled around the bottom of his suitcase and felt a little stiff rectangular sheet of paper bump his hand, as well as a thick wood frame.

Pulling the items out, he carefully set aside the picture frame with his family in it, looking curiously at the card he hadn't yet opened. Deciding to dig into it now, he opened the flap and was greeted with a child-like scribble that vaguely resembled a boy, two small brown blobs standing by him.

*Vilger, Timyy and Tommy!*

Smiling fondly at the crayon drawing, he proceeded to read the neat handwriting written on the other side of the fold, noting the little paper pouch that was glued on the corner of the page.

*Hey Villager!*

*By the time you read this letter you'll probably already be on your way or at the Smash Bros Mansion. But by then, hopefully you've already opened your present, ho ho!*

*Since you'll be gone for a while, we will make sure to tend to your plants and your house, and our arms are always open should you ever come back to visit. Isabelle's studies are almost wrapped up, Timmy and Tommy ready to start school once the new semester starts. It will be quite hectic, and it's sad to know that you won't be here to witness these changes.*

*We'll try our best to consistently send letters to you with updates about everything that's going on, and we expect you to do the same!*

*We'll miss you a lot, champ, and we know you're going up against a bunch of the strongest folks in the multiverse. But we'll be cheering you on, no matter what! Go for it, kid! Good luck!*

*Sincerely,*

*Tom Nook*

*(P.S, we also left you another small gift! It's a hypherilull seed, and we left instructions on how to care for it on the back of the card.)*

While Villager didn't cry, he did hug the card close to chest after reading it and shut his eyes, letting himself sit in the room that was rapidly getting darker and darker due to night beginning to fall.

Two knocks were heard at the door.

Rising up, he placed the card gently on the table, deciding to find a suitable pot for the plant at a later date. Turning on a lamp, he shoved his notepad and pen into his pocket and hesitantly walked over to the entrance of his room, undoing the locks and peering out.

Before him stood a boy who was slightly taller than him, blond hair messily covering parts of his cheeks and pointy elf ears. He wore a green tunic akin to that of Link, (but a shade lighter,) and wore a long, worn out hat. His smile was infectious and he wore it ear to ear, his hands with peculiarly sharp nails seated by his hips.

But what caught Villager's attention the most was his eyes. It was rather unique, appearing at first as a dark greyish black, but upon closer inspection a glimmer of cerulean stared right back at him, the shift in color shocking him.

"Hello," The boy said cheerily. "I'm Toon Link! Welcome to the Smash Mansion!" His voice was a little rough and high pitched, but Villager found that he quite liked the sound.

Pulling out his pen and paper, he scribbled a few lines

'-I'm Villager. It's nice to meet you!'

Toon Link somehow gave him an even wider smile than he had before. "Great to meet you too, Villager!" He laced his hands behind his head and stood in a comfortable position,

leaning on one side of his body. "I haven't heard of you before, so I can only assume you're a newcomer, right?"

Villager gave him a quick nod, appreciative of him not mentioning the lack of words.

"Neat! Are you alright with me showing you around, or are you good?"

The mansion was absolutely gigantic and the idea of exploring it on his own was daunting, just imagining it sending shivers down his spine. He gave a very rapid nod to the blond boy.

"Alright!" He unlaced his hands and set them by his side. "There are a lot of cool people on this floor, and maybe I could introduce you to them! Is tomorrow after breakfast okay with your tour? The orientation doesn't start until this Sunday."

Villager gave him a small smile in agreement. The energetic boy's eyes glittered.

"Cool! Catch you later, Villager!"

Toon Link gave him a wink, (to which Villager adamantly refused to admit he had become flustered over,) and walked off to his own room.

Shutting the door with a snap, he sagged down into the ground in relief that the encounter hadn't gone badly.

And hey- he had a tour to look forward to, didn't he?

///

Villager had woken up early, taking the morning to maybe look around and meet some more people before he began his tour with Toon Link.

Washing up and slipping on a comfortable casual outfit, he set off to find the dining hall first. If he did find it and memorize its position, Toon Link wouldn't have to use up energy showing him around there.

After many wrong turns and somehow finding himself on a completely different floor he was sure was *not* the dining hall, he gave up looking for it on his own and decided to ask for help. Noticing two men wearing a classic, plain, yet well crafted tunic, he approached them and pulled out his notepad. The red haired one raised his eyebrow at him while the blue haired one merely watched him come near.

'-Hello. Could you point me in the direction of the dining hall please?'

The blue haired man opened his mouth to respond, but the red haired man beat him to it. "The dining hall? Are you new here?"

A look of recognition suddenly covered redhead's face. "Wait... aren't you the shrimp that held up the line to registration? Do you know how fucking annoying it is when people deliberately stall just to talk to celebrities?" The blue haired man was urging the redhead to stop talking, but he pushed on with no signs of slowing down.

"Honestly, squirt, if you aren't going to talk to Mario because you're too shy, why go to him at all?" The blue haired man was holding his head in his hands, embarrassed of the redhead's attitude.

"It's stupid- you're inconveniencing everyone just by loitering in line. Geez, don't you agree, Marth-"

"Marth" clapped his hand over the redhead's mouth, his eyes burning with irritation. "Please excuse Roy. He's been awfully fired up since yesterday, taunting all the newcomers. He thinks he looks tough, and everyone's told him off for his behavior. Yet he persists."

Marth shoved Roy aside, shooting the other man a glare before turning back to Villager.

"I apologize for his behavior, for he is clearly too... excited. It is a bit peculiar that you use pen and paper, but do not be afraid to speak up. All of us... well, most of us are nice people. Trust me."

Villager blinked, dazed from the interaction. He gave a nod, not listening to what Marth was saying, and absentmindedly gave him his pen and paper to write the directions down on.

In the blink of an eye, he was now walking away from the duo. Disoriented, Villager turned around and gave the two a last glance.

Marth was talking adamantly about something to Roy, who was rolling his eyes and tapping his foot impatiently. Turning back around, Villager looked down at the notes he was holding limply, barely managing to read the elegant handwriting.

*Turn right and follow the hallway to the stairs that lead down and take it all the way to the second floor. Then enter the large set of doors to your right.*

Trusting the words on the paper, he followed the hallway for a short amount of time until his feet eventually led him to the large set of stairs connecting all the floors.

It was then that the impact of Roy's cruel words hit him, Villager pausing before taking the flight down.

He didn't realize just how... bad of an impression he left on others in the Smash Mansion. He was aware he was leaving an impression, sure, but the intensity of it blew him away, and not the good way.

A bitter seed of doubt planted itself in his heart as he continued his search for the dining hall, head still foggy with confusion and shock.

## Chapter End Notes

Right so,

There are certain characters whose games i have never personally played, only knowing them from Smash.

If I offend anyone by my portrayal of the character, I'm sorry. But do keep in mind this will basically be my headcannons and such for the roster.

Thank you for reading, and to next time!

# New Faces

## Chapter Summary

TL;DR, Villager meets a new person and also learns a bit about the combat system.

## Chapter Notes

I'm terribly sorry the chapter took so long to come out, I had been preoccupied and I found myself distracted and unmotivated to write.

Due to that, this chapter may or may not live up to your expectations :(

But regardless, I have planned out the (drafts) of the next few chapters, and I've also figured out how many chapters I want this to be. Roughly 11-13 chapters at max, though that number may vary.

I will also revisit previous chapters and touch up/ fix it so that it's easier to read. No need to reread it again.

And also, thank you very much for the support I have been getting! It has been very nice to see, and helped push me to actually finish the chapter and move forwards!

Here's a recap since this took a while:

Villager lost his voice due to a horrible trauma regarding Obsidi, a childhood bully. His family didn't care about him and neither did his classmates, so he felt the crushing loneliness and desperation fill him. Villager finds himself in a lot of scuffles for looking weak, and one particular one leaves him half breathing. He was eventually found and adopted by Tom Nook, helping the raccoon around in exchange for his company. Eventually, Villager gets a letter from Master Hand and realizes he is invited to the Super Smash Bros Wii Tourney.

He leaves home with sad goodbyes and a few parting gifts, boarding the train that would take him to the tourney. Unfortunately, he crosses a fellow Smasher "Dark Pit," who's in a sour mood. This results in a brief quarrel, but it quickly ended and Villager was able to relax after Dark Pit calmed down. The train arrived at the Smash Mansion, and all the people/ monsters that were on board began to grab their room numbers and set away luggage. Villager got to meet his idol Mario, but he quickly found the situation sinking when he realized he had forgotten to take his pen and paper with him to talk, and was therefore left with no way of communication. He was eventually sent to Link's line, and as a last ditch effort Villager tried sign language. Surprisingly, the Hylian knew, and Villager was able to go off to his room and settle down. He meets Toon Link for the very



first time, a nice and welcoming presence. But he also meets Roy, an older boy who was angry at Villager, which makes him wonder how many others feel the same way as Roy.

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

Outside the Smash Mansion, a pair of birds played together on the branches of a tall oak tree. Their wings fluttered and flapped as they chattered about whatever birds talked about at the break of dawn. In their hustle, they accidentally knocked a branch into a window, but birds being birds, they flew away, unknowing of the exhausted, worried boy that tried to rest inside.

The boy in question had his eyes wide open, staring into the ceiling as a small clock ticked in the corner of his room. He flinched when he heard a loud *thunk* at the window, but didn't get up to investigate. He didn't seem to be breathing correctly, and as the seconds went by the boy shut his eyes and let out a deep, tired sigh.

It was the dawn of the orientation, yet Villager didn't sleep a wink.

Certainly, he had met all sorts of other new individuals here and there as he was passing by, but since he was a newcomer himself he was anxious to introduce himself. In front of a crowd. In front of various villains, ridiculously powerful heroes, and very influential people.

His heart wouldn't stop beating out of his chest.

He knew it was an irrational fear, of course. Why bother joining if he was to be scared, after all? But at the same time, he wanted the opportunity to prove himself. To his family back home, he could take care of them too.

Just like they did him.

Giving up trying to sleep as the sky began to brighten more, he rolled out of his bed and washed up sluggishly, splashing his face with water and pulling on a warm sweater to fight the morning chills. Eyes heavy with exhaustion but body refusing to let him rest, he stumbled

out of his room and headed for the kitchen, minding his surroundings as he dragged his feet there.

He had passed by a few other early morning risers, bidding a hello to a bleary eyed boy around his age who had what Villager thought was a Pokemon by his side. (He didn't quite respond, though. Surprisingly, his Pokemon did.)

Villager eventually found and entered the kitchen area, looking around for the spare mugs and sitting on a stool, waiting for the water to boil.

The kitchen was open 24/7, but just because it was open didn't mean it was a good idea to go in there all the time. During meal times, for example, Toon Link had told him how the food would quite literally fly from one part of the room to the other to save time, and that Villager *really* didn't want to be caught in the crossfire. (Apparently, Toon Link spoke from personal experience. He didn't probe further.)

Drawn out of his head by hearing a few other individuals enter the room, he looked up to see the blue anthropomorphic bird Falco pull up a stool beside him and *thunk* his head onto his crossed wings, clearly tired and just wanting to start off his day. Judging by the still-brewing pot of coffee nearby, Villager assumed that was what he was waiting for.

Villager decided to take the time to look around, peering at the Smashers that had decided to rise up early in the morning for their daily brew. The Mario brothers were murmuring about something together while drinking their own individual disposable cups, their words undecipherable from Villager's distance but still appearing quite casual in appearance.

Samus, her full body armor removed and only clad in her skintight blue "Zero Suit," was adamantly ignoring what looked to be Captain Falcon in only his helmet with a regular tee and boxers flirting with her, his movements exaggerated and voice at a surprisingly respectful volume, (but Villager still heard the occasional lewd comment, which made him avert his eyes to a different individual.)

A boy who was a similar age to him with upturned blond hair was sitting close to him, looking blankly down at the table while his feet kicked aimlessly below him. Villager didn't remember his name, but he vaguely recognized the hairstyle and wondered if he saw him before on TV.

Before he could examine the rest of the room further, the hot water machine let out a soft ding that caught his attention. Hopping off his stool, he looked in surprise to see the blond jump with him. The two walked over to the machine, not really saying anything to each other, and selected their mugs. Villager went for the hot water first, about to choose any random tea bag before being suddenly interrupted.

"Don't choose that one."

Villager looked up to meet blue eyes, his head tilting questionably.

"I've had it before, it tastes like liquified chemical perfume and cheap candy. Too artificial," the blond elaborated.

Nodding hesitantly, he rummaged around his pockets for his notes, (which he doesn't go anywhere without after what had happened last time,) and clicked his pen, scribbling something quickly.

'-What do you recommend?'

The other took a moment to read, squinting his eyes before responding. "I'd say one of the more common herbal teas. My personal favorite is green tea, though you could try oolong. The particular brand the Hands selected for that tea is rather good."

Going with the advice, Villager took an oolong pack and dipped it into his mug of water, watching it seep and change its colors to a warm brown. He lifted it to his lips and took a tentative sip, eyes widening.

Sure, he's had his tea. While Tom, Isabelle, and Redd were more coffee individuals, Villager liked the tea bags Isabelle sometimes brought with her from work and enjoyed every sip, despite its bland taste.

Whatever he was drinking here? It outmatched the cheap, wrinkled tea from home. Eagerly going for another sip, he recoiled from the scalding hot water hitting his tongue before hearing a little giggle.

Villager looked up.

The blond was laughing behind his hand, his cup already filled and a little paper with string hanging over the rim. "Don't burn yourself! I had the same reaction too when I tried the herbal teas here. It almost tastes like they literally planted the original tea leaves in the garden and plucked them fresh just for us." He gave a softer chuckle.

Villager smiled, appreciative of the blond's advice and casual conversation. After scaring off whatever drowsiness he still had, (he was going to regret it later,) he gave the blond a quick goodbye before ducking out of the kitchen, hand clenched around the handle of his mug and feeling the warmth radiate from the cup.

Villager slipped through the slightly ajar door of his room, sitting on the edge of his bed, sipping the drink slowly as the oolong dregs swirled around the bottom of the cup. As he drank the silky liquid, he considered what had happened in the past few days and pressed his finger into the rim of his cup.

Toon Link had been gracious enough to give Villager a deep look around the mansion during their tour, though even with his detailed description Villager still somehow got lost very often. Sometimes it felt like someone was playing tricks on him, making him bump into walls or doors that he *swore* wasn't there before.

Mulling over his thoughts, Villager glanced over at the hyperlull seed that he had recently potted by his windowsill, the plant already sprouting. Its intricate blue-green swirls wrapped around its tiny, fragile stem, vibrant colors promising its eventual bloom. Villager smiled softly at the present Tom had given him and the picture frame next to it, setting his now empty cup aside and opening the window blinds to allow the light in.

Silently shuffling around and eventually leaving his little corner, Villager made his way to the main room, sighing in relief when he found it. Taking a seat off the side, he folded his hands on his lap and rested his head on the back of his chair, eyes wandering. He watched a particularly loud group of participants, their movements animated and excited.

His attention was drawn, however, to Master Hand approaching the front stage, its fingers swaying elegantly. The corporeal being carefully floated up to the podium and brushed its palm off, a short but stern cough leaving its throat. The low chatter in the room quieted.

"All newcomers. Please be seated, the orientation will begin shortly."

The scratching and rustling of chairs filtered through his ears, and Villager sat up in his seat. Hearing a chair pull back next to him, Villager turned to see a familiar blond haired face- the same boy in the kitchen that morning who had offered tea tips. Villager gave the other a small wave, to which the jittery boy returned.

"Is it okay if I sit here?" The blonde asked.

Villager nodded, and the boy sat down by him, quieter than a mouse. Strangely, he seemed a lot more nervous now than he did earlier that day. Perhaps it was because of the different people that surrounded them? Regardless, the two boys shared a content silence as they waited for everyone to settle.

Master Hand hovered patiently at the platform as a few members of the Twelve took their places behind the hand on the stage. It tapped the mic with its large index finger before speaking.

"Thank you, all. Today I wish to start off by establishing core rules and formally introducing you all to our little tournament. If you haven't already been met before, the figures behind me are the original Twelve. they have been participating in this tourney since day one, and are fully comfortable as well as suitable to answer any and all of your requests or questions within reason."

The hand floated around the stage, taking the mic with it, allowing for its voice to be projected evenly.

"Let me introduce all of you to each other. I hope that we may be civilized individuals and treat one another with respect."

Master Hand snapped its fingers and a scroll appeared in its palm. Villager watched, mystified, as it elegantly flapped its wrist to straighten the paper. The hand, holding the scroll like a human, called out a name bright and clear. A name he was worried was going to be called out first, regardless of all the others in the room, and a name that made his stomach drop with dread.

"Villager, from the Animal Crossing universe."

His mouth dried up when the hand gestured in his direction and a little blue hologram hovered over his head. Everyone's eyes were pinned onto him, and he squeezed his fists as he gave a small, fake smile. He wasn't sure if he was meant to say anything, if at all.

Yet just as quickly as the attention was on him, it left, Master Hand calling out a new name and the blue light that was above him switching to someone else. Sighing in relief and relaxing once all eyes were looking elsewhere, he slumped back into his chair and let his eyes aimlessly follow the blue hologram jump across the room to the other newcomers, listening as Master Hand listed their names and universes.

"Hey, you alright?"

Villager lifted his head to meet the gaze of the blonde that had sat next to him. His blue eyes were laced with concern, hand outstretched in a hesitant yet comforting manner.

"You seemed really stressed out when Master Hand called you out, so I wanted to make sure you were okay."

The sudden calling of his name certainly stunned him and also made him feel a little bit sick, but thankfully it was only for a second. He felt a little bit guilty for making the other unnecessarily concerned for him in this way. Despite that, he still appreciated the gesture, and Villager gave the other boy a closed eye, genuine smile.

The blond returned the smile and the two turned to face the stage once again just as Master Hand finished up introductions.

"And now, we shall get into the specifics and points of interest of this tourney. After all, we don't want to have any lawsuits for the deaths of our competitors, eh? Not like any of you can die on the grounds, anyways." The deity laughed, before continuing.

"First of all, as I'm sure you have all read in your contracts, you can't take major, critical condition damage when onstage. My magic prevents so; any cuts, blasts, or punches that would normally be fatal only feels like a pinch." The Hand snapped, summoning a sharp looking blade. "I shall use this item as an example. Mario, if you may, could you step up and be an example to our dear audience?"

The plumber walked over with a curt nod, standing with confidence in front of the many fighters. Villager watched with barely concealed surprise and discomfort as the magical floating hand stabbed Mario in the chest. But instead of the usual cry of pain or blood spurting from the wound, only a small slit was visible on the man's overalls, which surprisingly patched itself up the moment the sword left his chest.

But what was more shocking was the meter above Mario's head, manifesting itself almost silently with the number '5%,' then quickly disappearing soon after. Brushing off his clothes, Mario casually returned to his spot as the audience began to clap respectfully.

"Of course, being on the battlefield is not restricted to only swords. There are also individuals who fight with their fists, with guns, with various limbs or interdimensional monsters. Here at the Smash Wii Tourney, we're rather open to the various different and individual ways you all fight, which is why we have requested for you to bring your own weapons or tools from your own home world."

"Additionally, as I'm sure you have all noticed, your homeverse abilities have not been activated and have been temporarily disabled when you stepped onto the mansion's grounds. On the battlefield or training grounds, these abilities will return to you."

Villager paused at those words, fingers twitching slightly.

In his home universe, it wasn't out of the ordinary to see a human or animal use their Pocket ability on certain items, the items carried or items allowed *to* carry depending on each region. Not every individual had the ability, though it tended to pop up most commonly in humans.

In his little, out of the way town, Pocketing was incredibly rare and quite unseen, the only people or animals Villager knew to be able to use it being Tom Nook and himself. While Tom used it often to move around furniture, (albeit not very often,) Villager had barely used his ability, preferring to use his own body and skills harbored through practice. Pocketing wasn't a skill he was... well, skilled with.

And he couldn't forget the judgemental stares that he had received from his classmates when he was just a young kid. Barely old enough to write properly. He couldn't forget the taunting words, the innocent compliments edged with blades, the heartless way those people jealousy pushed him around until he decided to never use it again unless absolutely necessary.

Looks like "necessary" meant now.

The rest of the orientation went by like a blur, the other things Master Hand covered being basic rules, stocks, items, stages, teleportation, its magic, scheduling, and other important information that went in one ear and went out the other. The members of the Twelve on the stage demonstrated a few examples, and those were the bits that had caught Villager's attention the most. Tidbits of information filtered in, too, something about how "There are some fighters in the mansion that are only here to watch, supervise, or help assist with the tourney instead of partaking in it..." or how "A few of you might recognize some of the figures that the Assist Trophies replicate themselves into from your home verses. They aren't the actual form, though. Merely a shade..."

Villager could tell the hand's long talk was starting to affect the other newcomers too, a couple of them appearing to be nodding off.

Eventually, they were all finally dismissed from the hall, Master Hand passing out a little sheet filled with the scheduling specifics of the tourney as they all left. They had started the meeting in the morning and it was now mid-afternoon, delicious smells wafting from the cafeteria next door.



Villager began to stretch his arms as he walked, bones cracking quietly. His gaze was focused on what was ahead of him, so he jolted when he felt two taps on his shoulder completely unwarranted.

Whirling around and almost slapping the person in the face, he paused and lowered his hand as the blond boy that had sat next to him stood there awkwardly, rubbing his arms nervously.

Blushing out of embarrassment, Villager scrambled for his notepad, scribbling a few lines and showing the blond.

'-Sorry! Didn't see you.'

The other boy gave a weak laugh before nodding. "It's alright, probably should have called your name. Villager, right? Did you like my tea recommendation?" The blond started walking by Villager as they made their way into the cafeteria, their conversation only between them as the strong sounds of chatter hung heavily in the room. Villager's shoulders relaxed along with the other's.

'-Yes, the tea was delicious! I'll have to try your other recommendation as well. My name is Villager, indeed. Master Hand didn't call you, though, what is your name?'

"Lucas," the boy replied. "My name's Lucas. I'm glad you liked the tea! And well, he didn't call my name because technically I joined last year's tournament as a newcomer. I came late the first time around, missing the orientation, and had to have a general run down from a friend."

'-If you already knew the rules, why sit through orientation again?'

Lucas laughed. "You'll think I'm weird for this, but I wanted to get every last bit of information. Even though my friend gave a pretty decent rundown, I was just curious to see what he had missed." The blond rubbed his nose nervously. "He had indeed missed a surprising amount, but it was just the minimal stuff and at least he told me enough to get through the rounds for the tourney last year."

Villager blinked, a bit curious as to who this friend was, but shook it from his head. '-Why didn't you ask Master Hand for help?'

Lucas shuddered at that, a pale look crossing his face. "At the time, Master Hand was out of town and the only one I could consult was Crazy Hand."

At Villager's confused expression, he elaborated. "Master Hand's brother. Master Hand doesn't usually let Crazy Hand be the first thing newcomers see or hear, in fear that it might drive them away. As its name implies..." Lucas sighed. "Crazy Hand didn't help at all. Just spouted out some ominous violent jokes and twitched madly. The tournament was starting very soon, too, and everyone was so busy. I didn't want to be a bother."

Lucas let out a small breath, a short silence stretching between the two. "That was a bit too personal, wasn't it? Did I talk too much?"

Villager shook his head rapidly. '-No not at all! I was curious, thank you for being patient with me :)'

Lucas gave a small chuckle at the little smiley doodle, the two boys continuing their slow but steady conversation as they piled food onto their plates. Lucas talked about how he had some worldly issues back home so he wouldn't be able to actively partake in the tourney until a little bit after it had already begun, how that was part of the reason why he wanted to listen to the official orientation spiel, and different tips as to approaching the Smash Mansion. Villager gave little nods to show he was listening. Eventually, they walked out of the line with their plates of hot food in tow. Unsure of whether or not Lucas wanted him to follow, Villager trailed the blond to a table near the entrance of the cafeteria, where a few figures already sat.

Right off the bat, Villager recognized Toon Link, the boy standing on his seat exclaiming something to his table, their expressions varying from mortified to amused. Nearby, Ness of the original Twelve was laughing heartily at whatever Toon Link had said. His eyes brightened when he saw Lucas approaching, calling out to the blond loudly. With all the noise in the cafeteria, his shout was drowned out, but not before reaching the ears of the approaching duo.

"Hey, Lucas! C'mere c'mere, how was the orientation? Tired of all the blab by Master Hand? I'm insulted you didn't think my explanation was good enough all that time ago, me being here so long meaning that I'm one of the few that have Master Hand's spiel memorized to a T! Well, almost to a T... hey, who's your friend?"

Lucas and Villager had sat down opposite to Ness, and Villager perked up in surprise at the mention of his presence. At the speed Ness was talking, he almost missed his question.

'-I'm Villager,' Villager wrote, showing it to the boy. Ness nodded, a bright smile still on his face.

"Nice to meet'cha, Villager! I'm Ness, one of the original Twelve. I can introduce you to the rest of the group if you want!" The raven haired boy said, his energy bursting at the seams.

"You don't have to speak for all of us, Ness." A boy with a long, dark forest green cap spoke softly, analyzing Villager with his bright cyan eyes. "I am Young Link, one of the reincarnations of the original hero in my universe."

A red capped boy with dark brown hair piped up next, his voice quiet yet holding a form of strength. "I'm Red. A fellow newcomer." He gestured to a blue, boy-ish robot laying on the wall, his eye sockets blank. He had a long cord attached to the wall, evidently charging. "That's Megaman. He is also a newcomer. He may look deactivated, but he's still conscious and can hear us all."

Villager nodded in understanding before turning to Toon Link, who was grinning toothily.

"Come on, Villa! You already know me! Wasn't our little 'date' enough?"

Spluttering, Villager flushed in embarrassment and covered his face with his hands. His reaction garnered a few laughs, but his embarrassment didn't die down until a while after the topic had passed, lunch passing by like a blur.

(Eventually, Villager managed to sneak a punch at Toon Link's arm, to which the boy admitted he deserved.)

Ness pulled Villager aside afterwards, the sun's rays steadily getting lower and lower in the sky. The member of the Twelve gave Villager a positive, reassuring smile, giving him a pat on his back.

"I know it's getting a bit late and you probably want to nap all of Master Hand's drabble off, but do you want to do a practice round? Just to demonstrate all the funny little details. I can wait for you at the portal while you get your stuff. As a member of the Twelve I kind of see it as my duty to help newbies get started, or at least try a round before the previews."

'-All right,' Villager scribbled, pocketing his notepad and giving a short wave to Ness as he ran to his room, running up a few flights of stairs. Excitement and apprehension drove him forward each step at a time, his eagerness momentarily blinding him to a few issues he forgot about on his way.

It was only when Villager was standing in his doorway, staring at all his tools and weapons lined up on the wall, that he realized he had absolutely no idea how to move his weapons. He grabbed his face in frustration at himself and slumped against the doorframe, sliding down and resting on the ground, defeated.

How was he meant to meet with Ness now? He couldn't just not go, but at the same time saying that he cancelled because he "didn't know how to move his weapons" seemed like a terrible and horribly embarrassing idea as well.

Lost in thought, he didn't notice when a familiar figure approached from the edge of his vision, moving slowly and carefully towards him. When the figure suddenly tapped his shoulder, Villager yelped and whirled around in shock, surprised to see Toon Link squatting next to him. The blond was staring at him curiously.

People should really warn him before touching his shoulder.

"What're you doing on your doorframe?"

Villager blinked, before realizing Toon Link was quite right. Rubbing his cheek sheepishly, he pulled out his notes and scribbled a quick note.

'-Need help transporting weapons to the entrance. Do you know how?'

To Villager's surprise, Toon Link just laughed, standing back up.

"Course! Was that all you were hung up about?"

Again, Villager felt a flush of embarrassment swath his face. He nodded, averting his gaze.

"Alright, it's super easy! Can I come into your room?"

The pair sat around an open space on the ground with various items stacked on top of each other, Toon Link muttering to himself quietly and pulling out random items from his pockets while Villager merely checked his tools and weapons once again. An axe, net, and shovel in a sheath was tucked safely to the side, while a heavy bowling ball took the center. There was a slingshot with various pebbles supported by a little bag, a pair of boxing gloves resting against it. Peculiarly so, three large radishes were wrapped up and kept to the side of the pile as well. Villager didn't really remember packing them for the tourney, but he figured it must have been misplaced. He'd check it out later.

Gently moving the gloves and tools aside, he picked up his sapling seeds and his empty canister, peering at the bag to make sure the seeds were not damaged.

Satisfied with the check, Villager put it back down and pushed past his helmet and uninflated balloons to make sure that his firecracker, an item he was very hesitant on bringing, was safely out of the way for any ignition. (Villager didn't want his tools on fire, after all.) After making sure his umbrella and stick were also safely in place, he glanced towards Toon Link.

The said boy was still muttering to himself, now pacing the room. Villager watched him for a short while before standing up and peering at the pot sitting quietly by the window.

Picking up his extra pail for his hyperlull seed from the side of the windowsill and filling it with water from the sink, he carefully poured water onto the little sprout, happy to see its leaves dance and sway under the gentle watering. He picked up the pot and lifted one of the plant's leaves, the underside of it seemingly glowing in the orange light of the setting sun.

The tranquil moment was ruined, however, by Toon Link suddenly jumping up and snapping his fingers, surprising Villager and making him almost drop his plant.

"Found it! Here, check this out."

Still clutching his plant, Villager walked over to Toon Link, staring at what looked to be a slightly crumpled sheet of paper. Unimpressed, he raised an eyebrow to Toon Link, only to see him stare back at Villager with a look of excitement.

"It's a seal that Master Hand gave me! It's kind of like an easier way to transport things, because look!" Toon Link suddenly took the plant from Villager's hand and placed it by the rest of the pile of weapons, mistaking it for something he was to use in the tournament. Before Villager could even react or protest, Toon Link placed the seal onto the top of the pile and tapped the intricate patterns once.

All of a sudden, the entire lot of things glowed a pale blue, including his pot, and faded out of existence, leaving nothing but a little magic residue.

There was a cold feeling where Villager had felt surprise.

"Neat, huh? I got it before the tournament started in order to move our training or fighting equipment somewhere easier to access when our rounds came up. I just so happen to keep mine in my pockets all the time, but it's a little bit wri-"

Shocked and confused, Villager barely registered his words and whirled onto Toon Link, frantically signing words despite the boy not knowing a lick of what he was saying. Villager's mouth opened and closed, but no words came out. Only raspy sounding noises of complaint and confusion.

There was anger in his eyes, anger he tried to reign in after seeing how surprised and a little bit scared Toon Link looked.

The green clad boy took a couple of steps back and laughed nervously, putting his hands up to show no aggression. After knowing for sure Villager wouldn't pounce, he spoke.

"Whoa, whoa, take it easy! Your stuff is okay. The seal only transported the items exactly as they were placed to the area I wanted it to go, which was the training room I'm assuming Ness went to."

Breathing heavily, Villager apologized, averting his gaze in his shame for acting out so suddenly. Toon Link accepted the apology with strides, thankfully, but it didn't stop the gnawing hole of guilt and worry building in Villager's chest.

He walked with Toon Link to his door, barely paying any attention to the world around him. He had almost bumped into the Hylian, Villager's eyes darting up suddenly when the little Hylian stopped in front of him.

"Will you be okay?"

Turning around, Villager looked at Toon Link. The blond's eyes stared into Villager's own, expression genuine and a bit nervous. His eyebrows were creased slightly to make a look of concern, hands behind his back in a non threatening way.

Strangely, it felt like this version of Toon Link felt so much different from the Toon Link he had talked to at the lunch table.

There was a pause in the air, a feeling of tension. No words or notes were shared between the two for a short while.

'-I'll be okay. Thank you.'

What could have been a look of disappointment or relief flashed across Toon Link's face, but it was gone so quickly Villager thought he had imagined it.

"Alright. Ness will tell you all there is to know at the training room. Your weapons being moved is usually a one time thing, so you probably don't need the seal again anytime soon."

He raised a hand, lips quirking into a lopsided smile. "See you later!"

'-And you.'

Turning around, Villager proceeded to walk down the hallway, chest still tight. He shoved his hands in his pockets and adamantly looked ahead, taking the stairs down.

Had he looked back, he would have seen a pair of eyes filled with confusion and another emotion he couldn't identify, trailing his form down the steps until he disappeared entirely.

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"Villager! You're here!"

Ness waved his arm high, despite the distance between him and Villager not being all that big. Villager gave a small laugh at the motion, for it was quite similar to how Ness had greeted Lucas earlier that day.



Villager returned the gesture, looking around the room for his things. He spotted them by the side in the exact same position as it was before, as Toon Link had promised. Analyzing the pile, he scanned the base for a certain item.

"Oh, your stuff arrived here a little while ago. I didn't touch anything, but I just wanted to let you know that after our mini match, I can help you put your things somewhere safer so it's easier to access once rounds start." Ness had approached Villager from his left, leaning over to talk to the boy more clearly.

'-Thank you, I'd appreciate that.' Villager wrote, not facing Ness when he showed him the note.

"Cool! Well, whenever you're ready! It's really just a quick three stock round, so pick any weapon of any shape or size and come to where I am."

Villager walked over to the pile of weapons and tools, careful to not jostle anything in case it would all come crashing down. He looked around the base searchingly until he finally spotted a lone, thankfully upright potted plant, sitting on the ground with a slightly bent stem. Feeling a shred of worry lodged in his throat, he ran over and lifted it up, peering around it, mouth dry.

There was nothing but a small scratch, so insignificant and minor that Villager felt foolish for even feeling such dread at the prospect of the damage being greater. He took a deep breath, and exhaled slowly.

Setting the plant on the ground, he began to look for his weapon of choice. The particular one he wanted was somewhere around the base of the pile, perhaps stuck between two other items but hopefully not so stuck it would be impossible to take it out.

After a few seconds of shifting around and pushing aside lighter tools and trinkets, Villager spotted it. He reached out and grabbed the handle of his sturdy axe and attempted to yank it out, stopping only when the pile threatened to fall. Sweat dripping down the side of his face, he tried again only for the same result.

"Do you need any help?" Ness called from his position. All he had was a yoyo, his hand resting on his hip. His expression wasn't cruel nor impatient, which Villager was grateful for. He wasn't sure how he would have responded if Ness wasn't feeling more on the positive side.

Villager nodded, and the raven haired boy responded by running up and jumping towards him, soaring in the air in a long arc, his shoes landing on the floor with a soft thump. Jogging the last few feet to him, Ness looked at what Villager was trying to pull and gave it a small yank, noting the wobble of the stack.

Deciding to work together, despite the danger the wobbly stack showed, Villager approached his tool. Grabbing the hilt with both hands, Ness assisting from Villager's other side, the two boys pulled as hard as they could, heels digging into the soles of their shoes. A tool Villager didn't catch fell off the top of the pile, and he hoped it wasn't anything too dangerous. He bit his lower lip, hoping that nothing else would fall.

Thankfully, against all odds, the axe came out before the pile tumbled into itself. Villager grasped the sturdy oak wood handle and tossed it gently between his hands. Ness was watching nearby, retreating a little back to wait for Villager.

After making sure all his items were secure for now and assuring himself nothing else will go wrong, Villager made his way to join Ness.

He spotted and attempted to step around his plant that was still sitting on the floor.

He lost his balance.

Wide eyed and confused, his shoulders hunched into himself as he crashed into the ground, the sound of not only a body but also fragile clay breaking ringing across the room. He squeezed his eyes shut instinctively, the axe he had held in his hand clattering away and coming to a rest by Ness's feet.

Despite the fall, Villager couldn't keep still for long. The moment his body recovered from the fall he jolted upright and whirled around, looking desperately for his hyperlull plant. He

certainly found it, but not in the most optimal condition.

Villager stared, dumbfounded, at what remained of the gift Tom Nook had given him, the dirt splayed out on the ground in an unattractive splatter. The pot itself was shattered and had various spiderweb-like cracks, the mere scratch from before being obliterated into bits. The seed itself, however, was what had devastated Villager the most.

An uneven, ugly cut drove itself into the plant's leaf, the poor thing barely hanging onto each other. Typically, seeds would be able to grow even after a nasty split, but whatever Villager was looking at now was not merely split. It looked broken beyond repair.

Not only squished to the point it looked like pulp, the leaves themselves were ripped apart from the stem. The stem itself had also sustained damage, being bent and a little bit broken in what appeared to be three different places. The hypherilull seed's interior was spread wide open, its protective outer parts and more delicate inner parts flattened and pathetic.

He felt tears building on, and he knew it was a stupid reason to cry.

Villager, the boy who mourned over a plant. The precious gift that Tom had given him, now a broken shell. Barely even a shell, at that. He thought the scare with Toon Link was bad, but the actual devastation felt so much worse. He felt a feeling of guilt and resignation crawl up his spine.

He would apologize. To Tom Nook, to Ness, to Toon Link, to everyone. He'd say sorry, he'd go as far as beg for forgiveness, cry himself hoarse. He'd tell himself that he would never make a mistake again, pick up the pieces and glue them together, despite not knowing that each shard was disintegrating behind him.

But he would do it again, wouldn't he? He was just clumsy, weak, pathetic, quiet Villager.

A nobody, a kid, an idiot.

Despite Villager's overdramatic acceptance of his fate, he took notice of a shard rattling suddenly on the ground in the corner of his eye. He watched, eyes glazed over in shock, as the broken pot somehow seemed to be... stitching itself together, the seed that had just been crushed to bits closing up, the leaf resealing its rip. A faint white-ish blue aura pulled each piece together, shard by shard, plant fiber by fiber, and before he knew it, his hyperlull plant had been returned to its former appearance.

Magical residue sat heavily on the plant's leaves.

"Oh! Oh God, are you okay?!" Ness cried out, the raven haired boy running up to Villager's side and helping him stand up. Ness's comforting and questioning words went over Villager's head as the boy was yet again rendered speechless.

Honestly, at this rate he would have to start speaking in order to express his shock.

Hands that weren't controlled by him moved into his back pocket. He clicked his ballpoint pen and wrote slowly, barely looking at the paper pad and continued to stare at his repaired plant.

'-How did that happen.'

Ness crouched by the plant, looking over the top, before standing back up. "This room, by default, has Master Hand's magic stowed inside. It renders it so that all objects that had been broken in here repair themselves. That's how sword fighters don't break their swords or how clothing can't really be ripped that much. This room also allows fighters to not get hurt severely, plus it transports and 'loads in' worlds when we're ready to fight."

The psychic lifted up Villager's axe and passed it over to the boy. Villager, responding out of instinct, took the handle and finally looked away from his plant and stared blankly at Ness's face.

"Master Hand should have talked about this room, but I guess it just went over what happens *in* the room rather than *where* it is. Oh well. That's what I'm here for!" Ness smiled at

Villager. "I'll wait over there. Put your pot somewhere safe, maybe somewhere noticeable by the pile of stuff."

Villager, heeding his words, gingerly picked up the pot and carefully, carefully placed it by the base of the stack, eyes glued onto it even as he backed away.

The hyperlull seedling danced innocently under his scrutinizing gaze.

Satisfied, (for now,) that it wouldn't go off and break itself, Villager hopped over to where Ness was, stepping gingerly into the circle and stumbling in his step when the ring glowed blue. He watched, astonished, as his surroundings began to change from a regular, empty room to a wide, flat stage. Little floating platforms hovered above his head, and as he looked further he could barely believe his eyes.

A beautiful, lush waterfall cascaded beneath his feet as separate islands hovered by the side. A half crumbling, half standing Coliseum stood ominously in the back, beautiful flowers stemming through the broken cracks. Grass that glittered like gems brushed against his ankles comfortably, and he loosened his grip on his axe as he felt the cool breeze brush by his face.

"Pretty cool, isn't it?" Ness asked. "This is the Battlefield! Luckily, it isn't necessarily real, for if you fell off this platform you'd surely die." The boy laughed darkly, which Villager didn't quite know how to react to. "But you don't! Let's have a quick round, it's better to experience fighting on one of these stages for yourself than to learn verbally."

Before Villager could even blink, Ness was already in front of him, yoyo swinging upwards dangerously, grazing his chin. In his surprise, he failed to dodge in time and the toy crashed into his head, knocking him backwards. Expecting pain, he flinched and shut his eyes tightly, but he only felt a little tap.

He didn't feel much of anything.

With the realization he didn't need to worry about fatal hits, Villager clumsily blocked Ness's next swing with the blunt side of his axe and countered by pushing the flat side of the blade

into Ness. The raven haired boy let out a grunt, not expecting such resistance so soon, but smiled from the exhilaration.

"Looks like you're ready to fight! Try not to fall!"

Villager rushed at Ness with his axe, eyes ablaze with energy and excitement. Expecting Ness's dodge, he attempted a wide swing, smiling in satisfaction when it hit. He watched the meter over Ness's head go up.

But unfortunately for him Ness had other plans than to be hit by Villager's swings. The boy leaped above him and landed deftly onto a platform, gripping his yoyo tight and flicking it easily at Villager, tangling itself onto the brunet's arm and dragging him upwards.

Surprised, he momentarily dropped his weapon and watched in unmasked horror as Ness grabbed his collar and punched him in the gut, his own meter steadily growing higher. Realizing he could fight back, Villager vainly attempted a weak struggle, but it was too late.

He was flung out of the stage and into the void.

Watching the stage grow more and more distant, he squeezed his eyes shut and expected the worst. A loud crashing noise was heard, but he didn't find himself hitting any hard ground.

Rather, he was standing on another separate hovering circle, a thin layer of blue light surrounding him. He looked down to meet the gaze of Ness, who was playing with his yoyo tauntingly.

His meter was down to zero once again.

He leaped at Ness, utilizing the double jump explained by Master Hand and swung his axe around, managing a strike. Ness stumbled back and dropped his yoyo, which Villager used to push him to the edge of the stage. Now Ness teetered dangerously, and Villager felt triumph at feeling the victory of taking a stock for the first time.

But that feeling was lost when Ness had somehow taken his yoyo back without moving from his spot, flinging it around in an arc and pushing Villager back from the corner he had originally forced Ness into. Now the raven haired boy laughed, flipping the toy back into his palm and bouncing on his heels to the ready.

"Items return to the user no matter what, remember?"

Villager sighed, realizing his mistake, before pulling himself back together.

In the end, the two boys sparred for a grand total of three minutes and a half, Villager swinging and sometimes hitting his target while Ness used his yoyo to catch Villager by surprise and make him lose his stocks instead.

While Villager failed to steal a single stock from the bright eyed yoyo master, to him it was all worth it. The lurch in his stomach when he narrowly avoids a hit, the blood pumping in his ears, every swing and strike that he managed to make catching Ness off guard- it satisfied him to no end.

It didn't matter that he lost. He just wanted to feel that rush again.

And if it meant taking on the strongest champions of the multiverse?

So be it.

## Chapter End Notes

Hope you liked the chapter ;;! This was like a little taste of the combat I kind of wanted to work with, so I'll do my best to make it as entertaining as possible.

This chapter also addressed and tied up some questions I asked myself about this AU and I hope it isn't too confusing! I just wanted to make this world seem more...

intricate?? Not sure, haha.

Anyways, to next time! Hope to see you again!



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