

second chances

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/28411983) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/28411983>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Categories:	Gen , M/M
Fandom:	Homestuck
Relationships:	John Egbert/Dave Strider , John Egbert & Dave Strider , John Egbert & Jade Harley , Dave Strider & Rose Lalonde , Poppop Crocker Alpha John Egbert/Dirk's Bro Alpha Dave Strider , Poppop Crocker Alpha John Egbert & Grandma English Alpha Jade Harley , Poppop Crocker Alpha John Egbert & Dirk's Bro Alpha Dave Strider , Dirk's Bro Alpha Dave Strider & Roxy's Mom Alpha Rose Lalonde
Characters:	John Egbert , Poppop Crocker Alpha John Egbert , Dave Strider , Dirk's Bro Alpha Dave Strider , Jade Harley , Grandma English Alpha Jade Harley , Rose Lalonde , Roxy's Mom Alpha Rose Lalonde
Additional Tags:	Alpha Timeline (Homestuck) , alpha au , First Meetings , Pre-Relationship , Enemies to Friends to Lovers , sort of?? , not outright enemies , you'll see when we get there , tagging for Homestuck is always so CONFUSING , Alpha!John and Jade are the same age as Alpha!Dave and Rose
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of little spies and cake rebels
Stats:	Published: 2020-12-29 Words: 3,057 Chapters: 1/1

second chances

by [ofmorninglory](#)

Summary

Pieces of a puzzle you didn't know you were putting back together suddenly appear and click right where they're supposed to, bringing memories about a life you were unsure was yours into focus. Suddenly, you're standing at the edge of an abyss, watching a countdown trickle down to zero, and when you turn to your right, Rose's hand is reaching for you.

or

Famous director Dave Strider meets stand-up comedian and public enemy no. 1 of the rebellion, John Crocker, and finds out there is so much more to him than he let's on.

Notes

Hello, everyone! Almost six months after my last upload, I bring you a small snippet of my Homestuck Alpha AU, where I decided that John and Jade deserved to be the same age as Dave and Rose and fight the rebellion together. This is also an AU because it will probably end very differently than the actual Alpha timeline ended up like, but that's still waiting to be decided in the outline that I have not yet written.

This is also a gift! For the wonderful Paula Zotter, who has made this year much more bearable with her presence alone and has been an amazing friend in the short time we have known each other. Her birthday was almost three weeks ago (dec. 8th!) and I've JUST NOW finished writing (and beta-ing) to upload it. Paula loves Alpha AU I think even more than I do, and so I wrote a little snippet for her about John and Dave's first meeting (plus a lot of Dave's internal monologue, because we love it!) Thank you for being such a wonderful person (who drew me for my birthday even tho I didn't dESERVE IT) and I hope to congratulate you on many more of your birthdays! Love you!

A very big thanks to Lyssa, my lovely beta and friend, who takes time out of her break time to check over my writing to make sure everything works out in the end. Love you tons, darling!

Without further commentary, here's Dave Strider and John Crocker meeting for the first time. Enjoy!

When Rose walks into your life it's like everything falls into place.

Pieces of a puzzle you didn't know you were putting back together suddenly appear and click right where they're supposed to, bringing memories about a life you were unsure was yours into focus. Rose steps into your office wearing a black coat over an all white ensemble and sits before your desk with the grace of a feline. Her eyes shine lilac under the light pouring from the window behind you and her red-lipped smile is sharp. You recognize her immediately from her book release, but something tugs at you in the back of your head. Suddenly, you're standing at the edge of an abyss, watching a countdown trickle down to zero, and when you turn to your right, Rose's hand is reaching for you.

Before you can touch her fingers, you're back in your office, and this woman, whom you have never met before today, is staring at you with a softer look. Around her neck hangs a pendant in the form of a sun. Sadness holds your throat in a vice grip, as you try to even out your breathing. The grandfather clock you bought on a whim at a yard sale last Spring ticks stubbornly to your left.

She asks you if you have time. You answer that she's already stepped into your office unannounced so the least she owes you is an explanation. When she hands you a black handkerchief with the initials 'RL' embroidered in gold in one of the corners, you barely register that you're crying.

As she tells you the story of four kids who once played a game only to almost lose it all, there's no part of you that doesn't believe it.

//

Dirk and Roxy come when you and Rose are both 25, just like Lalonde had said they would.

Dirk Strider lands on a meteor unscathed by the grace of whatever god is left, wrapped around a devil-looking puppet that you cut in half and throw into the nearest ocean. Rose is surprised that you did it without her instructions, but you tell her that there is nothing in this goddamn world worse than puppets. If your lil' bro-slash-son had a thing for them, then you were going to condition him out of it from the moment he landed in your life.

Being a parent is a full-time job, you find out, but it's also a rewarding one. Way before Rose was in your life you would've never thought of yourself as a family kind of guy, but there's something in the way this kid is smarter than you by age four that makes you swell with pride and happiness. Dirk is quick on his feet and even quicker on the uptake. Whatever comes, you are certain that he could come out of it with only a paper clip, a sharpened down pencil, and his wits. In your room, you hide albums upon albums of photographs of him growing up, hoping he never finds out just how weak you are for this kid.

Roxy and he are troublemakers when put together. They've blown up your kitchen more than once, and have managed to make Rose's cat completely purple without rhyme or reason. You know you would've never been able to be a proper parent without Rose by your side, but it's never easy to keep a straight face when the kids keep turning all of Rose's white dresses into pink monstrosities just before a book signing or press conference. She hates it, and will ground them both for a month whenever it happens, but she still goes out into the world looking like a more stylish version of Dolores Umbridge out of spite.

You enjoy almost six years of peace when, one day, Jade Crocker walks into your life.

//

She introduces herself as Jade English and begs you to never use her middle name. You assure her that the most you know about her are the countless conspiracy theories that have existed around her and her brother since she allegedly disappeared, and you watch in dismay as bright green eyes look downcast and fill with tears alarmingly fast. Rose course-corrects by asking her inside your home and hoping a cup of tea is enough to appease her.

Jade is a little younger than you, but she already has stars in her fingertips and space in her eyes. She's the daughter of the one and only Betty Crocker, who has been wrapped up in scandal ever since Jade herself had ducked out from the public eye back when she was thirteen years old. Crocker had tried to diffuse the tension by claiming that Jade was overseas at a boarding school, but the girl had never come forth to talk about it herself. Her younger brother, John Francis Crocker, had not provided any answers to the mystery either, laying low for the most part in the aftermath of his sister's disappearance, only to pop back up again a couple of years back in the Los Angeles comedic scene.

Jade herself was the owner of a prolific overseas company, something you hadn't known anything about until the exact moment she had sat across from you and told you her story. She had started Skaianet only a little bit after she had run away from home (because yes, she had run away from home, and no, she hadn't been sent away by her mother), only to have it be boosted by an unknown benefactor in recent years. You tell her it's funny that all of you had gotten your projects funded by unknown benefactors, and she answers that there's nothing coincidental about that.

The story that comes out of her mouth next, filling in the pieces of the puzzle that Rose hadn't been able to conjure from your joint past memories, seems far-fetched and unbelievable, but it makes everything click into place with ease. Suddenly much more starts to make sense about your life and your son's future, and the Batterwitch becomes an even greater threat than Rose had initially anticipated. Jade asks if you'll fight with her again, and you're suddenly thrown into a checkered battlefield, looking over at a green spectre that looks like Jade with a pair of dog ears. You'd laugh if there wasn't grief clutching so strongly at your chest, and when you come back, Rose's hand is placed delicately on top of yours.

Your life becomes a mess of past memories, present days and future predictions, but you hold on to the little family you've created, and tell Jade you'll do whatever it takes to ensure Dirk has a chance at life.

//

With Jade around, Rose starts remembering much more about your past lives.

She tells you about John Egbert, known today as John Crocker, who was your best friend in that past life. She talks about him like he's dead, as she does with all the old versions of yourselves, and the fondness in her voice makes it clear how much she cared for him, too. From what you've gathered of those stories, however, John was a little prankster shit, who laughed easily and trusted twice as fast. His element was Breath, as opposed to your Time, Rose's Light or Jade's Space, and he was the glue that kept you all together. John flew the highest, Rose had said with a sad smile on her face, and like Icarus, his fall had been tragic.

But he came back. Rose isn't clear on the details on that one, but John Egbert was unkillable and became a god way before any of you did. He soared the skies with a smile on his face. Missed his father too late. Scratched the disc that brought you all into this timeline.

John Egbert was a hero.

John Crocker, on the other hand, is only a comedian. Jade doesn't like to talk much about him, but most of the stories you had managed to coax out of her spoke only about how laughter had been his first defense mechanism. He was funny, and used that to his advantage, holding shows for himself and his sister, who had once been his best friend. When Jade had run away, however, John told her he had to stay. She had accepted that, if only because she knew that's how it was always meant to work out in the end.

He holds shows in Los Angeles now. Some of your contacts in high places know of him and have, on more than one occasion, tried to offer him unfair deals with the hope that he'd be stupid enough to take them. Crocker keeps surprising them all by sending back contracts with all the proper changes made and refusing them when none of his revisions are accepted. You respect a man who can hustle.

So many things about him sit wrong with you, however. When you see him in photographs with the Batterwitch, happy and full of life, something churns uncomfortably in your

stomach, chipping away at your inner peace. It's hot and acidic, and it makes you want to punch whatever object is nearest. His smile, so bright and perfect, infuriates you to no end, and the little memories you have of him (of his so-called 'beta self') resurface with hot, white rage lining them. John Crocker looks exactly like John Egbert, but it pisses you off that they're not the same.

A hypocrite is what you are. You know you're not the same, either.

Dave Strider in his last life had been a scrawny kid that didn't live past fourteen, fighting for a scrap of validation from a man that wasn't Dirk but could just as well be. When you look in the mirror, you see traces of the little boy he used to be, outlined almost perfectly in the bags under your eyes and the deep red of your irises, but everything else about you is different. You have a son, for starters, and you're waging a different war than he did. Outside, the world has moulded you to be fundamentally equal, yet so apart from one another.

The boy you used to be wonders if John would recognize you like this.

//

Jade tells you that she wants to bring John to your side and Rose attempts to break her desk.

It would be hilarious if you didn't know exactly how Rose was feeling. The moment the words come out of Jade's mouth your heart falls to your feet. The boy inside of you that was John Egbert's best friend bangs his fists against your ribcage, pleading with you to agree with Jade, to bring the last one of the four so you can hug his nerd face into your chest and press your cheek on top of his hair while he tries to break free. Your words of disapproval die in your throat as you battle with the half (halves?) of you that are dying to see your old friend again, and Rose lets Jade know exactly what she thinks of her plan.

John Crocker is not John Egbert, you tell the boy you used to be, trying to silence the voices down so you can think clearly. John Crocker is a man who grew up taking advantage of the opportunities that the Batterwitch made for him. From his undergraduate business degree, to the freedom to pursue his own career. He's happy in the position that he was put in, as the Condesce's golden child, and something about it just sits wrong with you. Jade might not see it, but you and Rose most definitely do.

Jade puts her foot down on the issue and that's that.

//

When John Crocker walks into Jade's office at the Sunlit Bar, brought here by a favor Mulaney owed Jade, everything you thought about him suddenly seems so trivial. You recognize bright blue eyes behind his square glasses, and the toothy grin with which he greets his sister before engulfing her in a tight hug. The muscles of his back, which you are left staring at, flex under the tight, blue shirt that expands over his shoulders, and something tightens in your chest at the sight of a tattoo peeking from underneath his black hair, tucked securely at the base of his neck. Jade and Rose had said there was a low probability that John remembered anything from your past lives, given his aspect and his personality, but the symbol that's nestled in the curve of his spine says otherwise.

Once John finally untangles himself from the octopus that is a Jade English hug, he turns to you, and it seems like all the color drains from the image until all that is left is the blue of his eyes. Your breath catches in your throat, and the old Dave Strider bangs his fists against your ribcage again, trying to push you forward until you can wrap your arms around John and hug him tight.

He must've felt observed, because John becomes bashful after a few seconds when you won't stop staring. The comedian scratches the back of his neck nervously, looking back at Jade as he tells his sister that her friends are a little weird. Trying to regain face, you push your shades closer to your face and talk for the first time since he walked into the room.

“Well, Rose isn’t here,” you say, trying to ease the tension of your shoulders. “I’d say she’s the weirdest from the two of us, but Miss English does hang out with some very wicked people now and again.”

John makes a face, a little like he finds you hilarious but doesn’t know just quite what to make of it, and he says. “Well, you’re weird enough to cover for this Rose character, whoever she is.”

“Oh, you’ll love her!” Jade saves you, stretching her arms so she can grab her brother’s shoulders again. “She’s very fun! She might take a while to warm up to you, but she’ll love you, I just know it.”

You doubt it, a little bit, but Rose can be civil enough to keep pretenses. No matter how either of you felt for John Egbert (or the dim memories you both have of him), John Crocker still didn’t seem trustworthy after years of being raised by the Batterwitch herself.

You don’t say any of this and simply leave the siblings to catch up on what John has missed.

//

John believes blindly. He has no memories of the game or his past life, but he says strange things happened often enough around the house that it’s difficult not to believe. When Jade and Rose finally disclose the entire thing, he sits there, unblinking for a couple of seconds, before smiling and announcing he could never be Jade’s enemy.

You recognize, he’s a powerful asset to have on your side. He’s a direct connection to the Batterwitch, which means that, as long as he isn’t found out, John can bring the rebellion important information to sabotage whatever plans Crocker has. Not only that, but John is on the spotlight almost constantly, which means that coded messages could be sent on a more

regular basis through his shows and interviews. Rose and you still don't trust him completely, but he brings results and support to the rebellion.

"Why don't you like me?" he asks you from across the table in Rose's home. "You and Rose, I mean."

It takes you a little bit to catch up with his question, too lost in your own thoughts that you don't process what he is talking about.

"We don't not like you," you answer, scribbling down the next line of the code you received last week that Jade asked you to crack together. "It's nothing personal."

"See, David," John says, and you just *know* he's smiling one of his stupidly toothy grins. "It's exactly those kinds of answers that make me feel like you and Rose have a problem with me."

You offer him a tight lipped smile, but don't bother to look up from the notebook where you're writing down your half of the message. If John bothered to do his job rather than keep asking stupid questions, then you'd be done by now, but here you both are.

"You're thinking about it too much," you tell him again. "Please focus on your half of this code so your sister doesn't come murder us both."

The little laugh that escapes John's lips is adorable and makes the old Dave Strider squeeze your heart uncomfortably tight. You tell that little twerp to settle down, and try to to focus on the task at hand again. Inner Dave seems to grow louder the further you try to ignore him. It's starting to piss you off.

“Weren’t we best friends?” he says. “In the game, I mean.”

That does it. “Why does it suddenly matter?”

As you finally turn to look up at him, you find him smiling at you in a way that he hasn’t since he’s become a part of the rebellion. His eyes are soft, crinkled at the corners, the curve of his lips curled at the edges like he knows a secret that you’re not aware of. He looks genuine, in a way that it makes John Crocker look so much more like the John Egbert you only know glimpses of from your past life. You try to get words out to make him stop looking at you like that, but the wind catches in your throat.

“I guess it’s silly,” John tells you, biting his bottom lip with his ridiculously straight teeth. “I don’t remember anything the way you, or Rose, or even Jade do, but whenever all of us are together--I don’t know, I guess life just makes a little more sense.”

You don’t answer anything to that, because you don’t know how to. You understand what John is saying, but you hadn’t expected him to feel the same way you did. It warms your insides in an inexplicable way.

John simply shrugs after a while, turning away from you to stare at his notebook again.

“Anyways, my part is done,” he announces. “Do you need any help with yours?”

Maybe you can give this John a chance.

End Notes

So, I guess funfacts about this fic:

-John doesn't remember anything from the game or his life as John Egbert. The fact that he mentions being best friends with Dave is only because Jade told him about it, but not because he remembers himself. He probably never will remember his life before the scratch, but he gets really strong feelings.

-There's already an 18 page headstart on John's life with the Condesce where he explains these feelings, and how he tends to hang around people who remind him of someone he can't remember, and then ends up ditching them because they're not exactly how he wants them to be. Kind of shitty, but John's one big identity crisis, so I think it hits him sometimes without him noticing.

-Rose and Dave aren't John's enemies, and John is not their enemy either. They simply don't trust him. Rose eventually caves because she misses Egbert and feels like she didn't show him that she cared enough in their past life. This AU, whenever I do write it, will probably have a lot of Rose & John friendship feels because I love them.

-I don't expand much on it, but Jade does leave the Condesce when they're very young. She asks John to come with her, but something tells him that he cannot. This is also explored in the John Egbert side of this fic that I might be uploading soon-ish!

-John's really good at cracking codes! That's Jane's genes for you, I guess! I know it's not a canon thing, but I like the idea of him being lowkey good at catching secret clues like his grandma/ecto-mom.

-Jane and Jake aren't on earth yet (another thing that makes this an AU) but they'll eventually get here, it's just a matter of time, really. Dirk's and Roxy's age difference with Jane and Jake will be almost a decade, but they're still going to be very good friends, the four of them.

-When I first started writing this story, my beta got the draft popping up in her drive's recent works and it was titled "alpha johndave" and she sent me a voicenote asking me if I was okay. I realized I've become so desensitized to the words alpha, beta and omega thanks to Homestuck that I couldn't immediately see anything weird about it. My beta also placed a comment in revision when I mentioned Betty Crocker asking me if it was, indeed, the cooking lady. Lyssa checking my Homestuck stuff has become a whole aesthetic.

-Also, yeah. John Mulaney is part of the rebellion and he knows John Crocker personally. Most people say John Mulaney is basically just John Crocker in real life (which means that yeah, I sometimes use his shows for Crocker) but I think they'd be more like rivals/friends. Don't ask me why, I'm just here for it.

-I love this AU more than life.

Hope you enjoyed it!!

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