

Script for "Asriel Has Two Souls, Gaster Has Many!" - Draft Four
By BlackfootFerret, aka Robert Emmett Taylor IV

The story of Undertale is all about SOULS.

What they're made of. The trials they face. And how, through Determination, they can keep going, even when damaged.

Monsters souls contain the powers of compassion and magic. While humans souls are stronger, yet darker. They are able to persist after death, but also able to exist without compassion, and are always at risk of becoming The Real Monsters.

The friendly monsters need the power equivalent of seven human souls to break the Ancient Barrier that imprisons them in the Underground, and so far they've only collected six. So they see killing Frisk, the human visitor the player controls during the game, as a necessity for freeing their people.

But some creatures are not what they seem. And Sans, who somehow has a power level far greater than Asgore, The King of All Monsters, is secretly doing everything he can to save Frisk, for reasons of his own.

However, there is another way to break the barrier, even without taking Frisk's soul.

Legend says it would take almost all of the monster SOULS in the Underground to equal the power of a single human SOUL. But if that many monster SOULS could somehow be collected, over time, or through the sudden culling of monsterkind, someone could use them to destroy the Barrier, possibly overnight..

This is why King Asgore told Doctor Alphys to continue Wingding Gaster's work, and learn how to use Determination extracted from human SOULS to allow monster SOULS to persist after death, and make their collection possible.

And this is how Flowey/Asriel was able to destroy the Barrier by sucking in the souls of all the monsters except the ghosts in the Underground, then added their power to the six human SOULS for the equivalent power of Seven.

Or at least, Asriel believed he only had seven at the time.

But Alphys and Asriel were not the only creatures who learned to gather monster SOUL power.

Another creature is gathering SOULs in the background of Undertale's story. A creature whose efforts threaten the past, present, and future of monsters and humans alike, and doomed Alphy's humane efforts to gather souls from dying monsters before she even began.

Determination turned Undyne, a normal monster by birth who needed years of training to land a single hit on Asgore, into a powerhouse that could throw Queen Toriel off the throne. If Undyne serves as the control group, Determination should turn monsters into super soldiers, instead of melting them into mush.

But the Fallen Down monsters sent to Alphys' lab required repeated Determination injections just to open their eyes. And then they melted together when they touched each other, while Undyne touched Monster Kid repeatedly without merging with him. The Fallen monsters became the ghostlike shapeshifting Amalgamates, melting together so completely that it was hard to tell where one monster ended and another began, as if there was nothing inside them to maintain their individuality.

Undertale's hidden files says there's no disease among monsters, and Falling Down is natural when old ages strikes, but this doesn't explain why Shyren's young cousin and buff Aaron were among the Fallen.

Alphys could never have extracted souls from the monsters sent to her lab. Because someone else had already stolen their souls. And the reason their bodies persisted afterwards was because their assailant had already injected them with Determination as part of this process.

It's impossible to see what's inside someone, just by looking at them...

And the same goes for a creature looking within themselves. Because Flowey/Asriel believed he was soulless because he could no longer feel compassion, yet he was still able to express every other emotion.

But our best friend is in for shock.

Because at the end of Undertale, Asriel Dreemurr has TWO souls.

And the ghost of Gaster.. Has many, many more.

I'm BlackfootFerret, and welcome to The Ferret Theory!

And while I haven't uploaded often, it's been a busy year.

The narration for “The Afton Family Horcruxes” is up and running.

This nearly three hour theory video/mystery drama is the result of several years of blood, sweat, and tears, and weaves everything I’ve ever learned about Five Nights at Freddy’s into a single neatly-tied package. The Afton springsuit animatronics were designed to absorb human souls from the beginning, but they were originally intended to protect the souls of each member of the Afton Family from death, instead of hunting the souls of strangers. My findings explain many events from the novels, and I can’t wait for the upcoming movies!

My second big Steven Universe theory “Followup to: Rose Quartz Ate/Saved Pink Diamond”, scored several hits with the show reveals last year!

The Diamonds really were part of Steven’s family, even if they didn’t realize it themselves at first. And rather than fighting the Diamonds forever, Stevens’ destiny is to heal their divides, and save not only Earth, but also Homeworld, and the rest of the Universe as well.

“Finn the Mandalore”, my theory about the potential epic destiny of the humble protagonist of the new Star Wars movies, just got more plausible when Maz Kanata revealed herself to be a blaster and jetpack-wielding Mandalorian.

Max is the perfect character to mentor Finn in the ways of battle, just as Yoda once taught Luke in the ways of the force. Only a Mandalorian, one of the greatest warriors in the galaxy, can hope to fight a force user one on one and win without using the Force themselves. The First Order has been kidnapping young Mandalorian children and using their gift for battle to create elite stormtroopers to overrun the galaxy. Once Finn discovers the truth about his past, he can use this as a weapon to turn the First Order’s own stormtroopers against them, and free his people.

But while I was working on all these theories, and learning more about the art of video crafting, another world was always eating away at the back of my mind.

A unique world of friendly monsters where, if you made the right choices, nobody had to die.

Tobyfox’s Undertale is one of the most powerful gaming experiences I’ve ever had. And inevitably, my thoughts would return to its mysteries again, and again.

While this is the first video I've made about Undertale, I've been posting my Undertale theories online for several years now.

I put the outline for "The Secret of Sans" on reddit on January 26th, 2016. (https://www.reddit.com/r/Undertale/comments/42s4pk/the_secret_of_sans_undertale_theory_up_coming/). And followed it with my theory that Asriel still has a soul at the end of the game, and will eventually have two, on the Undertale Wiki June 13, 2016 (<https://undertale.fandom.com/wiki/Thread:92698>). And like my FNAF theories, they've become more detailed and refined with each iteration as I delved deeper into the lore.

These are just my theories. And in any detailed mysteries like FNAF, Steven Universe, or Undertale, there are probably details I missed.

But the patterns I found fit so many lore details so well that I feel I must have at least brushed the truth, and opened up avenues of exploration that many haven't seen before.

I believe I can show why Asriel Dreemur doesn't fade after the True Pacifist Ending, and seems to still be around in some form in Deltarune. Not only does he still have a soul, but it's actually a human soul. And his own monster soul will regenerate over time, leaving him with two.

I can show you why I don't think Wingding Gaster's death was an accident. He was killed by his own best friend, who faced a terrible choice, and paid a terrible price to try and stop Gaster's Darkest Experiment.

But the most surprising thing I found was something I wasn't looking for: The true identity of Frisk. A discovery that forced me to question not only everything I believed about Undertale, but what I believed about myself.

I held onto these ideas for years. Partly because I was struggling to finish other projects, and didn't have time to give Undertale the video it deserved. But mostly because revealing my theories required me to do something that tested my own character, and face a reckoning with another theorist that was years in the making.

And now that chapter 1 of the sequel Deltarune has come out, and more chapters are on the horizon, the time has come for me to gather my own determination and courage, and share what I found with you.

This is my story.

Chapter 1: Saving Asriel Dreemurr

The most heartbreaking part of Undertale is the fate of Flowey/Asriel Dreemur.

For the entire game, Flowey, who keeps claiming to be our best friend, acts as our worst enemy.

He tries to kill Frisk through trickery as the first encounter in the game. And then makes a point of tormenting every decision we make, somehow possessing the supernatural power to know when we've made a mistake, like killing Toriel, and reloading our Save to try and erase it.

When we fight King Asgore Dreemur, and try to spare him, Flowey is right there to kill him instead, steal the six human souls, and subject us to one of the most insane boss fights in gaming history. He delights in killing us, over, and over again, until finally the six human souls rebel under their own power, rendering him helpless.

It's a true temptation to stab Flowey when he's down, and each time you try to spare him he mocks you with all the horrible things he'll do to you and everyone you love if you let him live. But if you persist in sparing him, he'll become truly confused by your kindness, and eventually run away.

It turns out that the flower that became Flowey was animated in part by the dying dust of the Monster Prince Asriel Dreemur, who was once the nicest creature in the world.

Asriel's own childhood best friend, Chara, the first human to fall into the Underground, once told him she had a plan to free the monsters:

She said she would poison herself with buttercups, allow Asriel to absorb her human soul, and with that power the two of them would be able to pass through the Barrier and return to her former village on the surface. There they could collect six more human souls, and Asriel could return with the power of seven human souls to destroy the Barrier, freeing all of his people.

But when Asriel carried Chara's body back to her village, the humans saw him, thought he had killed her, and attacked.

It was then that Chara revealed her true plan: To take Asriel over from inside like a puppet and use him as a tool to destroy her own people, who she hated for some reason.

Chara thought her human soul could easily overpower Asriel's weaker boss monster soul. But Asriel was kind to the core, and refused to let Chara lash out at the villagers, restraining her even as the other humans hit him with blow after blow. And rather than fight back, Asriel returned back through the Barrier, dragging Chara's body and soul with him, and collapsed and died in the royal flower bed, infusing it with his dust.

As well as the seeds of the first golden flowers he brought back from the surface world, one of which would eventually become Flowey.

Asriel was a good kid, who suffered a terrible fate he didn't deserve.

Flowey was Asriel's broken shade, and was no longer able to feel all the love and compassion he used to have, no matter how hard he tried.

At first he used his new ability to rewind time by reloading his save file to help others. But after seeing the same story replay a hundred times, he started to experiment, and began killing people, much like how a veteran Undertale player might attempt the No Mercy route out of curiosity.

At the end of the True Pacifist route Flowey absorbed the six human souls that Asgore captured, as well as the souls of all of Frisk's friends, finally regained his true form as a boss monster child, then warped into the twisted God of Hyperdeath.

Hyperdeath Asriel offered Frisk the impossible battle of a little kid fighting a god, toying with him, believing his victory to be inevitable. But after saving the souls of all the friends he made along the way, Frisk rekindled Asriel's ability to feel compassion. And after several conflicted moments, Asriel realized he couldn't bring himself to hurt Frisk, and stopped fighting.

For a brief moment, we get to meet the Asriel that used to be, a little kid full of love, the true best friend anyone could have.

Asriel is willing to do anything to save his friends, including sacrifice himself. So he uses the power of the souls he's collected to break the Barrier, then frees all the souls and restores their bodies, giving everyone else their long-sought-after happy ending.

But afterwards, Asriel tells Frisk that without a soul of his own, he's doomed to fade back into a compassionless flower again. That after only a momentary chance to say hello, he has to immediately say goodbye again.

Asriel doesn't want his friends and family to suffer losing him a second time, so he begs Frisk not to say anything about him, and walks back into the darkness of the Underground, even as the others dance into the light.

It's a legendary heartbreaking story about love, redemption, and loss.

But I don't think this is the complete story.

Once you complete the True Pacifist Ending, you can go back and talk to everyone you met along the way.

Just like Earthbound, they all have something new to say after the adventure. It makes the world seem even more alive and dynamic, gives you a reveal feeling of making a difference, and provides the chance to learn more about the world.

And if you go all the way back to the beginning, you'll find Asriel there, still in boss monster kid form. He still believes he's going to fade, but so far isn't showing any signs of reverting to the compassion-less flower he used to be.

Asriel believes he must fade.. Because after giving up all the captured souls, he no longer has a soul of his own.

But young Asriel is missing a vital bit of lore about his own kind. And if you stop by old Gerson the Turtle's shop along the way, he'll tell you a secret.

If you ask Gerson "Is Asgore a Goat?" he'll tell you about Boss Monsters. When they have a child, the SOUL power of the parents flows into the child, causing them to grow as the parents age. Toriel and Asgore haven't been aging, and are essentially immortal, because they didn't have a boss monster child until Asriel, and then lost him. And Asriel in his flower form didn't count.

At present, Asgore and Toriel are the only two boss monster parents we know of. Which means this bit of lore can only apply to one creature in the entire game: Asriel himself.

If Asriel can hold onto his current form, his monster soul that dissipated during his death will gradually recharge over time! If he can hold out long enough.. Asriel will have a monster soul again!

But there's no cause for alarm, because Asriel is in no danger.

In fact.. At the end of Undertale, even though he doesn't realize it himself... Asriel already has a soul that will keep him from fading. And it's far more powerful than the one he had before.

Let's look at the story of Chara and Asriel again, in detail and depth...

Long ago, Chara, a child with a single stripe on their shirt, was the first human to fall into the Ruins. The opening animation shows her fleeing her village and running into a cave, then tripping and falling through The Barrier into the world of monsters below.

While Chara and Frisk's gender is never overtly specified in the games, likely a deliberate decision to let any given fan identify more closely with whichever character they like, Chara's sprite seems more girlish than Frisk, and I have reason to believe Frisk is a boy. So for simplicity during the rest of this video, I'm going to call Frisk a boy, and Chara a girl, to more easily specify each, and so I don't constantly trip over the pronouns.

Chara was found by Prince Asriel, who brought her back to his parents, and the Dreemur Clan adopted Chara as a member of their royal family.

Life seemingly went well for a while, with Asriel and Chara growing up together. Although Chara would occasionally make creepy faces that disturbed Asriel.

Chara's creepy faces were signs of a greater problem. Something terrible had happened to her back in her home village, so bad that she ran away from the world of humans and climbed a cursed mountain which few returned from, not caring if monsters or oblivion awaited her below. This trauma left a scar on her soul, leaving her unable to feel true love and compassion for others. She secretly viewed the monsters, even Asriel, as tools rather than people. She wanted revenge on her village so strongly that she was willing to sacrifice anyone to get it, even herself.

And after accidentally poisoning Asgore by substituting butter in a recipe for buttercups, Chara came up with a plan.

She told Asriel that she's poison herself, and let him absorb her soul. A being with both a human and a monster soul would be powerful enough to pass through the Barrier on their own. Asriel was to tell his parents that Chara's dying wish was to return to her village to see the golden flowers blooming there, so they would let Asriel carry her body back to her village.

But the Real Plan, so Chara said, was to kill six humans back at her village, take their souls, then return home to break the Barrier.

Asriel didn't like the plan, but promised Chara that he would trust her and go through with it. But when the villagers saw him with Chara's body, and moved to attack him, Chara revealed her TRUE plan.

Char tried to take over Asriel from within like a puppet, to use this body and soul as a tool to kill EVERYONE in the village she hated, throwing away all the love of the Dreemurr Family in one massive horrible trick, revealing that she had never even cared about Asriel himself in the first place.

With a damaged soul that could not feel compassion, Chara felt no connection to others, viewing them as worthless objects rather than people.

But when Asriel realized what was happening, he restrained Chara, and prevented her from attacking her villagers, even as the humans hit them repeatedly.

Asriel carried Chara's body back through the Barrier, then collapsed in the flower garden, dying and scattering his dust and essence over the garden, infusing the golden flower seeds that had clung to them from the human world with it.

Sometime later, Asriel woke up again, and found his mind in the body of the first golden flower that bloomed from where his dust fell.

He also found he had strange powers he'd never possessed before. Whenever Asriel died, he discovered he had power of Determination to keep living, and reset time to an earlier save point. Just like humans like Frisk could.

But Asriel, now calling himself Flowey, had lost something as well. This monster, who had once been overflowing with love, could now feel every emotion, except compassion. He could feel angry, scared, horrified, surprised, vengeful, confused, even sad. But even when Flowey visited his mother in the Ruins, hoping against hope that she of all people could help him feel the love he used to overflow with.. He still felt nothing.

As re-emphasized in Deltarune, Compassion is something that comes from the soul. And while Asriel's former monster soul was overflowing with it, the soul he now possessed was damaged, and unable to feel compassion at all.

This is what drove Flowey to become homicidal. He tried helping people at first, but when it didn't help him feel, he began killing them after his resets, as if the lives of those he once loved didn't matter at all. And this feeling came to a head in the True Pacifist showdown with Frisk.

Even when Asriel regained his boss monster form by absorbing the six human souls and all the monsters except the ghosts, he didn't regain the ability to feel Compassion, even though the

monster souls inside him were filled with it. The wound was in his soul, not his body, blocking his ability to feel the compassion of the other souls within him as well.

Hyperdeath Asriel toyed with Frisk, believing him to be his old friend Chara, and planned to kill him again, and again, repeatedly resetting the world until all memory was erased.

But Frisk was able to feel the souls of his friends trapped within Asriel, and reach out to them. He restored the memories of Toriel and Asgore, Alphys and Undyne, and Sans and Papyrus. And all the while Hyperdeath Asriel leered above Frisk, never changing his attitude, as his ability to feel hadn't changed.

But then Frisk felt a seventh soul deep within Asriel, and reached out to it.. Calling a name.. And the moment Frisk did, Asriel felt something returning to him that he hadn't felt for a long time.

A old memory was unlocked, that both was Asriel's, and wasn't.

A memory from the first human who fell into the Underground.

Of being found by young Asriel, and being helped to her feet. Then of being adopted into the Dreemur family.

The memory of when Asriel and Chara met each other for the first time.

CHARA! Chara was the name that Frisk called out, and when he did, it struck the core of Asriel's being like no previous attempt had, reaching a place so deep within him that not even Asriel was aware of it.

Frisk found Chara's undying human soul, still persisting deep inside Asriel after he had absorbed it during their doomed Buttercup Adventure. And bit by bit, wave after wave, Frisk began to heal it. And as he did, Asriel began to gradually feel compassion again.

At first Asriel didn't know what was happening, shouting that he didn't need anyone, and struck out at Frisk to stop him. But Frisk weathered the attacks, determined to save him and Chara both.

Asriel's attacks became half-hearted as the realization of the pain he had caused, of the pain he was causing to others right now, dawned on him. Godlike power or not, horrible betrayal or not, Asriel still cared for Chara, and believed Frisk to be his old best friend.

A final surge of fear gripped Asriel as he considered what would happen to him, if he gave up his captured souls. And he hit Frisk with one last blast of all of his power!

But Frisk wouldn't quit, as his compassion for his friends gave him power and the Determination to survive even this ultimate attack.

And as his empathy grew, Asriel found he could no longer attack Frisk, feeling the shame over his actions overtake him. And Asriel gave up his mantle as the God of Hyperdeath, and changed back to the little kid he had always been.

A little kid who then found his courage, grew up, and did what had to be done, breaking the Barrier and releasing his captured souls to save everyone.

Flowey/Asriel couldn't feel compassion, Because Chara couldn't feel compassion.

Asriel and Chara had combined their souls before they died. And while monster souls normally dissipate when they die, human souls live on.

If Asriel still had his original monster soul, even as Flowey, he would have still been able to feel compassion. But Flowey couldn't feel compassion, because his monster soul was gone.

But Flowey was still able to feel every other type of emotion. And his newfound ability to defy death by reloading his save was definitely a human power, fueled by Determination. Flowey told Chara-possessed Frisk in the No Mercy route that he could no longer load his save, because her Determination was greater than his. Both characters possessed similar powers, because both had the power of a human soul.

Even though he didn't know it himself, Chara's original human soul still glowed with Flowey. And once Frisk healed Chara's soul, it resorted Asriel's ability to feel compassion, as well. Then he was able to feel all the love in all the other monster souls inside him, and knew what he had to do.

And this is why Asriel doesn't fade at the end of Undertale.

Asriel has two souls. His own monster soul that's slowly recharging over time with his parent's energy. And the healed human soul of his best friend Chara, that he shields within him still.

Even after Asriel released all the other captured souls, he was still able to feel compassion, and worry about how his family might be hurt if they had to lose him again.

Because Frisk healed Chara's soul, so it could feel love once again. And because of this, so could Asriel.

Part 2: Chara's Curse

This begs the question.. If Chara's human soul is still in Asriel.. What soul does Chara have in the games?

Flowey answers this question in the No Mercy route after Frisk kills Toriel, by referring to her and her "stolen soul". Frisk's soul, the one the player is actually able to control.

We see something like that at the end of Deltarune Chapter 1. Where Kris, who has a very Chara-like single stripe on her shirt, tears out Frisk's soul and throws it in a cage, where the player is still able to move it around during the cutscene. We might control that heart.. But Chara now controls the body, including the heart while it's inside her.

Asriel and Chara's dust scattered over many flowers besides the first one, so a spark of their essence can be found in ALL the golden flowers. This is why you find patches of golden flowers growing in strange, inhospitable, yet convenient places in Undertale. Alphys studied how injecting flowers with determination made their seeds cling more firmly, creating flowers that were determined to live and grow in seemingly impossible places.

Undyne remarks in her phone calls that those flowers just started to grow in that little patch Frisk just happened to fall onto, as if they had a mind of their own. Undyne thinks this idea is ridiculous.. But Frisk had a flashback of Chara's memories when he fell into that improbable golden flower patch, a vision of when Asriel found her when she fell down. If these semi-sentient flowers had pre-knowledge of exactly where Frisk would fall, and choose to grow in a place that would break that fall.. It certainly raises interesting questions of how closely Chara and Frisk are linked through time.

But whether they were already linked before or not, when Frisk fell onto that first bed of flowers, he became infected by Chara's lingering essence, which was doubly unlucky because that was the very place Toriel had buried Chara's body.

Now comes the big question. Who are we, during the game? Is Frisk in control of himself, or is he possessed by Chara?

The answer depends entirely on how you act.

Whenever Frisk makes decisions that are truly his own, and resists the easy temptations to gain power and money by killing monsters, he gains more control over his own destiny.

If Frisk isn't fully evil, he can look in the mirror in Asgore's house, and it will tell him "Despite everything that's happened, it's still you." And if Frisk is completely innocent, and achieves the True Pacifist Ending, Asriel will finally realize Frisk isn't Chara, but someone entirely different, and apologize for the misunderstanding.

But the reverse happens whenever Frisk acts more like Chara instead.

Chara, with her broken soul, is a creature without mercy or compassion, and only considers her own wants important, not the wellbeing of other creatures. And the more Frisk acts like her, the easier it is for her influence to affect him. Until the player finds that another force seems to be vying for control of Frisk, and directing him to take actions that the player hasn't authorized, like deliberately wrecking all of Papyrus' puzzles and being no fun at all.

Then even creeper things start happening.

Dialog starts to change, and instead of the inspiring messages we get at save points when Frisk is filled with determination, we just get the zombie-like word "Determination", devoid of life or creativity. Or worse.. The text turns RED, and an entirely different voice speaks to us, one we don't like at all.

On a No Mercy route when you look into the mirror in Asgore's house, you're instead treated to the blood red words "It's Me, Chara", or whatever name you choose for The Fallen Human at the beginning of the game, since Chara is short for "Character".

A popular theory says that Chara is actually the narrator in Undertale, and she only knows what she learns along with us during the game. For example, she thinks monster candy must taste like licorice, until you actually try it and discover it doesn't taste like licorice at all, teaching the narrator something new that they remember from then on.

The game also enters "serious mode" whenever you encounter members of the Dreemur family, as funny names for items like "ButtsPie" for Toriel's butterscotch pie, suddenly gain simple, humorless names like "Pie". As if fighting the Dreemurrs brings back painful memories to the narrator. This theory is presented in spades by an epic Tumblr post by Adamency (<http://adamency.tumblr.com/post/143284030397/greetings-uh-so-ive-been-working-on-this>) This seems completely plausible to me, and I've adapted this theory into my own.

It does seem like the narrator's outlook on life becomes darker or lighter depending on how you act. A glass described as "half-full" on an innocent playthrough becomes "half-empty" as the

narrator's pessimism grows. If you get in the habit of killing monsters, the narrator looks at Monster Kid and simply says "In my way" and "Looks like Free EXP".

The more negative Frisk acts, the more the narration changes from a positive 3rd person telling, and more into a negative 1st person narration that makes it sound like Chara is in control, instead of YOU.

The more Frisk acts like Chara.. Striking without compassion or mercy, the more Frisk becomes like Chara, in both a metaphorical, and literal sense. This time, Flowey is right when he believes he's talking to Chara, as she's taking Frisk over, body and soul.

The process comes to a head at the end of the legendary Megalovania fight with Sans. Sans is, somehow, able to know exactly what attacks Frisk is going to throw at him, and dodge them every time. Even when Sans falls asleep, he's still able to sense the very moment Frisk plans to attack, and dive out of the way. Until, suddenly, a second attack, one that the player did not authorize, swings at Sans, taking him completely by surprise and finally landing the fateful hit.

We don't realize it at the time.. But that decision to attack Sans while he's sleep.. Is the very last action that 'Frisk' ever takes.

When Chara's unauthorized attack hits Sans, making him bleed very un-skeleton-like red blood, Sans isn't actually finished. He stands up, quips at us about heading to Grillby's, then limps offscreen, and seems to talk to a Papyrus that we thought was dead, as if he's suddenly opened a portal to another dimension, leaving us to our fate. It seems the narrator was wrong about Sans being the weakest enemy, and only having 1 hit point after Sans survives six-figure damage.

And then, and only then, do we finally hear the end of battle sound, gain a ton of Execution Points, and reach Level of Violence 20. Strangely, without the familiar message of "You Won!"

Because you didn't win. In fact, Frisk just lost everything.

You only get Execution Points in Undertale when you actually kill something. But Sans doesn't die at the end of this fight. So where do we get the EXP?

Chara gets the EXP... by killing Frisk, and finally taking him over completely. And from then on, the story belongs entirely to her, and Player Choice is entirely gone.

We have no chance to spare Asgore, Chara destroys him without hesitation.

And, most heartbreakingly, not only does Chara destroy Asriel, she makes an example out of him, slashing his flowery form over, and over again, until every last trace of him is purged from existence. Until there's nothing left of him at all.

This final death of Asriel is infinitely more horrible than it seems.

Remember whose human soul is still inside Asriel?

CHARA'S.

Flowey wasn't kidding when he said that Chara had a stolen soul after killing Toriel.. She was in the process of stealing Frisk's soul, bit by bit, having already lost her own earlier on.

When Chara destroys Flowey.. She hacks her own original soul to pieces!

Karma is a more militant form of The Golden Rule, which says that if you do bad things to others, bad things WILL happen to you. It's a pure moment of poetic horror, then, when the last victim of Chara's mindless murder spree is herself!

But we're not done, yet.

Traditionally, when a player enters the name of a character at the start of an Roleplaying Game, it's understood that this Character will be the one they control during that game. That essentially, this Character is their own avatar in the game, who represents Them.

But Undertale turns this expectation on its head, because no matter what name you input for The Fallen Human, you'll always be controlling Frisk. The name of "The Fallen Human" you entered at the start of Undertale is instead the name given to CHARA, the first human who fell into the Underground.

And we have unwittingly given "Chara" ****OUR OWN NAME****!

And knowing this, the true ending to the No Mercy route makes perfect sense.

Once Chara stabs Sans, Sans realizes that Frisk gone now, and there's no longer anyone left to save. So he leaves us, Chara, to our fate.

And once Asgore and Flowey fall.. There's only one more person left for Chara to destroy.

So Chara finally reveals herself, breaks the Fourth Wall, and looks out from the screen directly at US, The Player. The one who gave her their own name. And after a charming, progressively more creepy conversation, she smiles, says the two of you are going to be together FOREVER..

Then stabs *YOU* right through the computer screen!

After this, there's only one way to play the game again. And that's to make your arrangement with Chara official.. Submit to her control and beg her to restore this world.. And give her your own soul.

Our determination is now her determination. Our soul is now her stolen soul. And no matter what we do from then on, no matter how many times we play the game... this transaction can never be undone. Chara is the one saving, and the one who decides how the story ends. And even if you complete a True Pacifist run again, Chara will always get the last laugh at the very end.

If you restart Undertale again after a True Pacifist run, resetting the game but not Flowey's memory that persists across time, Flowey will ask you to leave Frisk and his friends alone.

Flowey will warn you that the power to reset memories is the very power you once fought to prevent him from using.

Then, when you persist in restarting the game, Flowey will ask you to reset his memories too, smiles, and ends the conversation dramatically, by calling you, The Player, "Chara".

And then we're at the menu screen with the option to True Reset. With creepy music playing in the background.

When slaying monsters, you have to be careful you don't become one of them yourself.

We are Chara.

And we decide what happens to her, or whether she finds redemption or not.

And this is also why everyone feels such a powerful connection to Asriel Dreemur.

Asriel doesn't just have any human soul within in him. He has Chara's soul. OUR soul. And when we decide his fate, we also decide our own.

If we save Asriel, we save ourselves, by saving him.

And if we destroy him, we are the one who is lost.

Part 3: The Inventions of Alphys

The library in Snowdin says monster SOULs contain love, hope and compassion, and remarks that the true nature of SOUL is unknown, especially since humans have proven their souls can exist without these things.

Since the library can't even spell its own name right, there's some debate about how accurate the information inside is. And as in the human world, the difference between what people think they know, and what they actually know, can be enormous. And while it does seem like most monsters are much nicer than humans, they can still do some questionable things.

As likeable as Doctor Alphys is, she lied and manipulated many people during the game.

Alphys told Frisk Mettaton was a bad guy to set herself up as a hero when she saved him time after time, hoping to get Frisk to like her. Although it was all an act that became increasingly noticeable over time.

What Alphys actually did is drive Frisk away by lying to him, and anger Mettaton to the point where he started to attack Frisk for real, hoping to use his soul to travel to the surface and reach a larger audience.

Alphys told the families of the Fallen Down monsters that they were back, and everything would be fine. But then didn't answer their emotional pleas for information when the Fallen fused into the Amalgamates and became warped almost beyond recognition.

And whether Alphys realized this or not, she turned Undyne, her greatest crush, into a walking science experiment by feeding her ping glop that was much more than simple ice cream.

So not everything is as it seems in the world of Undertale. And just like our often unreliable narrator Chara, our favorite characters can be deceptive, or simply wrong about the nature of the world.

And the largest half-truth resides in one of the largest structures in the Underground: The Core.

This sprawling complex is built directly on top of a lava field, and requires a wolf to constantly throw ice in the river to keep the structure from overheating and slowly melting. And according to Alphys this incredible facility was designed for the simple purpose of generating electricity.

But for a mundane power plant, the security inside is paranoid. Massive laser arrays are prepared to immobilize anyone walking through the structure. Force fields block access to areas. Steam vents, which Undyne says were designed to help cool down the Core, double as a mode of transportation in an incredibly dangerous system that only a Mad Scientist could love!

It's impossible to draw a complete map of the Core's internal areas because the rooms are designed to rearrange themselves as a security measure. And it's quite likely there are many facilities within that Frisk or even Alphys have never seen.

The difference in technology and architecture between rustic Snowdin and its "LIBRARBY" and the futuristic Core is staggering. It's hard to believe the same people built both structures. And the Core's mundane mission of acting only as a power plant comes into question when we learn of a very special facility with it: A portal to warp time, space, and dimension.

Doctor Alphys reveals in the first Mettaton encounter that she's been doing a lot of research into alternate dimensions. And since it took her only seconds to turn Frisk's phone into a double bag of holding by installing a miniature dimensional drop box into it, she's gotten very good at it.

The Core was commissioned by King Asgore at the request of the previous Royal Scientist, the legendary Wingding Gaster. The same Gaster who was shattered across time and space by falling into his own creation. One doesn't just fall into another dimension by accident, Gaster must have been doing his own research into dimensional travel at the time, which somehow went wrong.

But in spite of Mettaton's joke that Alphys searches other dimensions as the only way of finding a suitable date, her research, and Gaster's, had a high-minded goal: To find a way to bypass The Barrier without resorting to the grim business of soul harvesting.

The idea is simple: If you could warp to another dimension where The Barrier doesn't exist, you could simply walk through it on the other side, then take a second portal back to the original dimension. Two quick portals, and the Dread Barrier would exist forever as a colorful glowing reminder of why building intolerant walls is never the answer.

It was a noble goal. But sadly, bypassing the Barrier didn't succeed. And Asgore was forced to order Alphys to begin a new plan: To start gathering the souls of dying monsters in the hopes of acquiring the power equivalent of the 7th human soul, and destroy the Barrier with soul energy.

Still, Alphy's research on large-scale portals came in handy. During a No Mercy run, Undyne informs Chara-possessed Frisk that Alphys is evacuating the remaining monsters into The Core, and plans to send them somewhere where Chara will never be able to hurt them. Since Chara destroys her entire universe when she wins, the monsters would have had to flee to another dimension in the multiverse to avoid sharing this fate.

And then there's the lingering question of what happens to Frisk on a Neutral ending.

It takes both a monster soul and a human soul for a creature to walk through the Barrier. But no matter what choices you make in the game, Frisk never absorbs the boss monster souls of either Toriel or Asgore, the only two Frisk would be able to. So Frisk reaches The Barrier with no way to pass through it, or progress further.

And yet, whenever Sans tries to call Frisk at the end of the game, Frisk is always gone, and Sans has to leave a message.

An elevator to the True Lab is right next door to Asgore's castle. If Frisk knew about The Core Portal, and how to reach it.. He may have sent himself back in time to try again.

It's an interesting idea, and something to keep in mind as we move forward.

Part 4 - The Determination of Undyne

Determination is a recurring theme in Undertale. It's how someone like Frisk can keep going, no matter how badly the odds are stacked against them. And learning more about Determination is key to better understanding the world of Undertale.

And a key to learning about Determination is in the history of Undyne, the head of the Royal Guard. Because at some point in her life, this willowy fish person underwent an amazing transformation.

Early in life, Undyne trained as hard as she could to try and best King Asgore in the sparring ring. But even after years of training, all she managed to do was land a single hit on him! King

Fluffybuns outclasses her so badly he was actually apologetic about it, and congratulated Undyne when she did succeed in landing that hit!

Asgore was one of the rare and powerful Boss Monster goats, while Undyne was a normal stick-person of a fish monster. She never should have had a chance against Asgore in the first place, and landing even one hit was a big accomplishment!

And yet, many endings where Undyne and Toriel are both alive, Toriel reverses Asgore's policy of killing humans, only to have Undyne personally kick Toriel, the Queen of All Monsters, off her throne "with her strength" as Sans tells the tale.

What? If it took Undyne ages to land a single hit on King Asgore, how could she hope to actually defeat Queen Toriel in battle?

The game says that Asgore and Toriel have the very same stats of Attack 80 and Defense 80. And after one-shotting both Flowey and Asgore with a single fireball, one might easily think Toriel was stronger than her ex-husband.

And yet Undyne was not only able to defeat Toriel in single combat, she also became one of the two Ultimate Bosses in the No Mercy timeline. Undyne the Undying is frighteningly powerful, and second only to Sans himself in terms of raw boss Power Level in the game.

How did a normal monster become stronger than a Boss Monster?

With Undyne's Determination.

Undertale makes a point in telling us that, somehow, Undyne has Determination within her. Even though this powerful substance is only generated by human souls.

And the uniquely horrible melting end to her Neutral boss fight makes certain of this, giving her character traits similar to the molten shifting forms of the Determination-enriched Amalgamates.

How did Undyne get her Determination? Theorists like Geek Remix have pointed out that the source is likely one of Alphy's experiments. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YY7V77w5WUU>)

One of the six humans that came before Frisk, but after Chara, died in a patch of seagrass where the Old Shoes are found, possibly leaking some of their blood and Determination into the seagrass. Undyne remarks that she was going to throw spears at Frisk the first time she saw him, but the seagrass he was hiding in was "Scientifically Protected" by Alphys, so Undyne held back, not wanting to hurt the mysteriously-important grass.

A machine in Alphy's normal lab takes this green grass and grinds it up into a surprisingly pink substance. During her date, Alphys hurriedly confesses several things to Undyne, one of which is that she only really uses that seagrass to make ice cream.

But there's a disconnect here. In her phone calls Undyne says she hates the taste of ice cream, but loves the pink stuff that Alphys makes. And she likes eating it either chilled, or heated up.

The patch of seagrass Frisk hides in isn't the same as the one the Old Shoes are found in. But if the seagrass acts anything like Asriel's golden flowers, the new patches probably do contain some essence of the original human.

So knowingly or otherwise, it seems that Alphys has been feeding trace amounts of Determination to Undyne for a long time. Although Alphys does seem to think the pink stuff actually is ice cream.

One thing I really want to know is: Has Alphys been eating this pink Not Ice Cream, herself? She mentioned watching anime in her pajamas while eating frozen yogurt. If Alphys has been eating the pink stuff, she might actually have as much Determination as Undyne! We never actually got to see Alphys in combat, so this is a mystery left for later chapters, like Deltarune.

But accident or not, Undyne serves as the Control Group for how Determination should affect an average monster. Undertale wasn't kidding when it said a monster with a human soul would be a being of incredible power, if the lingering touch of a trace of a human's essence could empower Undyne so greatly!

Just think! If the Underground had many, many monsters who were also infused with Determination, Asgore would have an unstoppable army! So why wouldn't someone inject Determination into as many monsters as possible?!

Because something here is very, very wrong...

After the attempts to bypass the Barrier failed, Asgore had the bodies of many monsters who had "Fallen Down" delivered to The True Lab. Asgore instructed Alphys to begin the generations-long task of collecting the souls from dying monsters until there was finally enough monster soul power to equal a Seventh Human Soul, starting with these Fallen.

The Fallen monsters were comatose, giving every sign of being dead, or dying. And at first, nobody thought anything was amiss, because monsters had been falling down of old age for a long time.

One of the secret files hidden in Undertale's code mentions Falling Down: "Unfortunately, monsters are not experienced with illness. However, when monsters are about to expire of age, they lie down, immobile. We call this state "Fallen Down". A person who has Fallen Down will soon perish."

Either monsters are immune to disease, or they simply haven't experienced it down in the Underground. The only health problem they seem to have, other than being stabbed by visiting humans, is Old Age.

But there's a problem with this explanation.

Shyren is a young monster, yet her sister also "Fell Down", and became part of the Amalgamate Lemon Bread. A monster fusion that also included Aaron, who's literally as healthy as a horse. There is no way that these two monsters were experiencing old age. Yet they still Fell Down all the same, and disease cannot explain this.

Alphys theorized that injecting Determination into dying monsters would strengthen their souls so they wouldn't shatter the moment they left the body, allowing them to be collected. But when she injected it into the Fallen, there was no immediate change. Their bodies kept persisting, as if they were -already- determined not to die.

None of the bodies turned to dust, and Alphys didn't succeed in collecting a single monster soul. So Alphys got frustrated, and kept injecting them with higher and higher levels of Determination.

Until something DID happen..

The Fallen monsters opened their eyes, and began to wake up again.

At first, everything seemed fine. It looked like the Fallen had miraculously recovered, and Alphys sent letters to their families, saying their loved ones would soon be returning home!

But then... horror struck.

The Risen Fallen began to merge together into the terrifying, twisted forms of the Amalgamates, almost ghostlike in their ability to shape shift and defy any attempts to kill them.

In her own version of the Secret Lab Entry 17, Alphys theorized: "Monster's physical forms can't handle "determination" like humans' can. With too much determination, our bodies begin to break down. Everyone's melted together..."

But we already have the example of Undyne, and perhaps even Alphys herself if she ate the pink frozen treat. Here is at least one monster who has a decent amount of Determination in

them, but seems to thrive and gain strength from it rather than turn into mush. Undyne touched Monster Kid several times, and never melted into him.

Why didn't the Fallen Down monsters turn into Super Soldiers like Undyne when Alphys gave them Determination? Why did it take so many repeated injections for them to gain the strength to simply stand up again?

Now I have another question: Why did the Fallen Down monsters fuse together.. So completely?

The Amalgamates were blended together to the point where you couldn't see where one monster began and another ended.

But we've seen other fusions in Undertale, most notably Omega Flowey, where Flowey fused with the six captured human souls. Unlike the Amalgamates, though, we could always see where the six souls were in this fusion. And they kept enough of their individuality to actually break free from Omega Flowey's control and turn on him when his torture of fellow human Frisk became too much to bear.

Hyperdeath Asriel absorbed all the monster and human souls in the Underground except for Frisk and the ghosts. Yet Asriel was also able to break up this fusion and restore all of the captured souls to their original forms. The captured souls never blended together, they were just contained in the same body. And while having extra souls within them gave Omega Flowey and Hyperdeath Asriel the ability to shapeshift, their personalities remained in control, rather than blending with the others.

Why were the Fallen so much weaker than Undyne?

If they weren't dying of old age, and disease was unknown to monsterkind, what put them in this deathlike state? If they really were dead, why did their bodies persist and live on, instead of turning to dust? And why did they form the inseparable Amalgamates when they fused, instead of maintaining some individuality in the fusion because of their souls? Why wasn't Undyne able to get a single soul from any of them?

Because the Fallen Down monsters sent to Alyph's lab had no souls to give.

Someone had already injected the Fallen with Determination.. And stolen their souls, leaving their determined husks behind.

Part 5 - An Ode to the Fallen

As incredible as it may seem, the Underground is facing a plague of monster soul thefts.

Alphys thought the Fallen showed a typical reaction of what Determination did to monsters. But with Undyne acting as the Control Group, we can see that the Fallen were not typical monsters to begin with.

And this plague isn't limited to the Underground.. It's happening in the Ruins also.

Several smiling Vegetoids appear in the amalgamate of Snowdrake's Mom, a horrible contrast to her own incredible unhappiness and hopelessness.

But you can only encounter Vegetoids in the Ruins. And while some do appear with all the monsters telling the story of Asriel to Frisk, the Ruins are their natural place.

When we first met Toriel, she said she was making her daily rounds to see if anyone had "Fallen Down". Our first instinct was to assume she was looking for humans that has fallen from the world above, just like us. But no humans had fallen into the Ruins in several years. And yet here we have The Queen of All Monsters personally making daily patrols to look for anyone who had fallen down. Toriel wasn't just looking for humans.. She was looking for afflicted monsters as well. And felt that such frequent patrols were necessary.

Are there enough monsters out there to make one dying of old age a daily occurrence? Not likely. In the Undertale Ending Map (<https://pcy.ulyssis.be/undertale/endings.pdf>) San's dialog in the No King Ending reveals that if you killed 20 or more monsters he says "hey, at least things are less crowded. 'Cause of all the people you killed."

The monster population is relatively small, and monsters Falling Down should not be a daily occurrence. And yet, SEVERAL Vegetoids were in the fusion with Snowdrake's Mom. For all her show of keeping to door to the Ruins shut, it does seem like Toriel had to open this door regularly, even if she locked it behind her, and had to have dealings with Alphys or someone else in the Underground to get the Fallen Vegetoids to the True Lab for Alphys to work on.

So whoever was going about stealing monster souls, they had to have access to both the Underground and the Ruins. And if Toriel was the only one who could use the door, the Monster Soul Thief would have to use another means of transportation between the two areas.

Now, Undertale's lore is weirdly specific about which types of creatures have the power to move between the Ruins and Underground at will, other than Toriel. There are only two types: Those who can burrow, like Flowey and the Vegetoids, and ghosts who can phase through the walls, like Napstablook.

Toriel would never engage in something as dark as soul theft. And while Flowey is certainly willing to try this, for most of the game he doesn't have the power.

The game says extracting the soul of a living monster would take a great amount of power, saying that such a thing would be difficult. While also saying it's POSSIBLE in the same sentence. And while Alphy's soul harvesting experiments weren't successful, her theory at least was sound: It -would- take an injection of Determination to allow the soul of an ordinary monster to survive outside their body and be collected.

So the soul thief we're looking for must have the following abilities: 1) They must be able to travel freely between The Ruins and The Underground. 2) They must have knowledge of how Determination Extraction works, and the means to inject their victims with Determination to make collection of their souls possible. And 3) They must actually have a source of Determination available on hand to power these injections. Which means they must either possess, or have access to, a human soul.

So when we find a creature who meets all three of these rare requirements, we probably have our monster soul thief.

And it isn't Alphys, because her experiments weren't successful in harvesting souls, and Alphys didn't have the ability to travel to the Ruins.

And it isn't Flowey, because Flowey didn't have knowledge of Determination Extraction, or believe he had any soul at all until he stole the six captured human souls. So Flowey had no source of Determination he knew about to call on.

The only burrowing creatures besides Flowey would be the Vegetoids. And it seems unlikely that one of these sentient vegetables would have the mad scientist smarts to pull off soul thefts. Snowdin is a bad place to grow vegetables, I doubt many would choose to go there. And the vegetoids wouldn't have access to a human soul.

The ghost Napstablook is a much more interesting candidate. We talk to Napstablook in both the Ruins, and his home in the Underground, since as a ghost he can travel as he pleases.

The ghosts are the only creatures we've seen that were able to resist Flowey's soul vacuum. Ghosts also seem to enjoy the flower-like status of being neither humans nor monsters, since

Asgore looked at Chara and couldn't tell what sort of monster she was, yet recognized Frisk immediately as a human.

And even if he acts meek, Napstablook is very powerful. If you don't complement his hat when he shapeshifts to Dapperblook, Napstablook will accidentally destroy Frisk by crying an unavoidable bullet hell of tears.

But only monster souls can use magic. And Napstablook's magical tears are what drives off The Mad Dummy, another ghost who could only be affected by magic. So our musical friend Napstablook must have a monster soul at his core, which means he doesn't have a source of Determination to draw on for injecting victims. So even if Nap had dark ambitions, which seems very out of character for him, he would still lack one of the requirements for our Monster Soul Thief.

It's interesting to note that only a few creatures in Undertale have the power to actually shapeshift:

Ghosts, like Dapperblook, the seemingly related Amalgamates with their constant shifting, Flowey with his ability to change his head shape, and Mettaton with his robotic transformations.

This is important, because Muffet the Spider Queen said that a creature with a sweet smile had offered her a great deal of money for retrieving the soul of a human that came through with a striped shirt. And that she'd seen the one who hired her, who she didn't recognize, changing shape in the shadows.

Muffet wasn't looking for Chara, because in the No Mercy route Alphys is the one who warns Muffet against Frisk. This request came recently, and responds to Frisk's actions during the game, so it wasn't an old request from years before when Chara was alive.

It's widely assumed that Mettaton is the one who paid Muffet, just like he hired the mercenaries in the Core. And while Mettaton says his EX form debuted at the deadly dance-off, his original function as a human eradication robot, his Neo Form, is something he can shift into at will. So technically, Mettaton has the limited power to shapeshift.

But there's a problem with this. With his TV show, Mettaton is the one big source of entertainment for the monsters, and he's the single most recognizable personality in the Underground! And even if he can change his shape, his very recognizable robotic voice always remains the same no matter what form he's in. There is no way that Mettaton could have fooled both Muffet, and her entire spider court, from recognizing his legendary voice.

Mettaton only has three, distinct, very robotic forms. So Mettaton could not be the ghostly sprite that was watching Frisk move through Hotland, or the fluid-looking Redacted sprite which resembles it.

And Mettaton had no issues about fighting Frisk in person. In his original form he was impervious to all of Frisk's attacks, so why would Mettaton be afraid of fighting him, when he could run right over Frisk like a tank?

Mettaton might have hired the mercenaries in the Core, but hiring the Spider Queen seems a little too sneaky. Mettaton said he hired everyone that went after Frisk, but there could well be a second creature with the same goal that Mettaton didn't know about.

And Mettaton thought he needed Frisk's soul in order to pass through the barrier, and reach a human audience. If the ghost in Mettaton is Napstablook's cousin, then it would make sense that Mettaton would have a monster soul too. Which means that Mettaton didn't have access to a human soul, or a source of Determination, and couldn't be our Monster Soul Thief.

No.. whoever our mysterious Soul Thief is, causing the plague of Fallen monsters, they needed more than a way to travel between the ruins in the Underground. They also needed to have knowledge of Determination Extraction, and how to use it to harvest monster souls in the first place.

And there's only one other creature besides Alphys who knows how this works.

Alphys didn't actually invent the Determination Extraction machine. She built it from blueprints she found in the True Lab. A lab in Core, which didn't exist until the Core was built by the previous Royal Scientist. The same brilliant scientist who also pioneered Dimensional Portals, as well as much of the amazing beyond-surface-human technology the monsters suddenly, mysteriously gained.

And this scientist, who vanished without a trace?

The one who was shattered across time and space?

Was also a member of the human race.

How can I say so, without fear?

(EXTREME CLOSEUP OF THE TALKING HUMAN HEAD IN GASTER FOLLOWER #1's HAND!) His follower's holding his head, RIGHT HERE!

Wingding Gaster was a natural at researching Determination, in part because he was a human himself, and had a natural source of the stuff beating in his own chest. And even when he became a ghost, Gaster was still a ghost with a human soul that acted as a portable source of Determination wherever he went.

And paying Muffet to harvest Frisk's soul wasn't the only time Gaster tried to attack Frisk indirectly.

In the elevator out of the True Lab, amniasic Frisk hears a voice he doesn't remember. This voice claims to know him, and says it's been a long time since they talked. Flowey talked to Frisk hours earlier, that was hardly a long time. And even though Flowey has a talent for mimicking voices, they're always the voices of other characters he's heard before.

So even if the Elevator Voice was coming out of Flowey/Hyperdeath Asriel's mouth, it still belonged to someone else.

And Gaster is the most natural choice.

Another time that Gaster chooses not to fight Frisk directly is during the Mystery Man encounter behind the rarely-spawning grey door.

Here we seem to catch Gaster sleeping, a very human behavior. And unlike nearly all the other Undertale NPCs, Frisk is able to walk right through Gaster free of collision checking, reinforcing his ghostly nature. Gaster only wakes up when Frisk tries to interact with him directly, and then immediately retreats and phases out of existence with a surprised look on his face.

What history do Frisk and Gaster have together?

What score is Gaster trying to settle against Frisk?

And if an incredibly powerful ghost like Gaster, who shows signs of Determination Melting just like the invincible Amalgamates, wants vengeance on a little kid like Frisk.. Why is Gaster afraid of fighting Frisk himself?

In order to answer these questions, we first have to learn more about another mysterious character who also shadows Frisk, but plays a helpful role rather than malicious one:

Sans.

Part 6 -- The Secret of Sans

Frisk has a past, but he can't remember it.

Each game he wakes up, wearing a bandage that has already been used many times. The fall hit his head, and we start the game knowing as much as he does: next to nothing.

Or perhaps, since Chara is the narrator, and we are her, the narrator only knows what we know, and Frisk has no way to share with us what he remembers. We can see how other characters respond to what Frisk says, but we can never hear what Frisk is actually saying ourselves.

But either way, Frisk's past is still a mystery to us.

Why would Gaster, a nearly invulnerable ghost with the mind of a mad scientist and the power of several souls combined, be afraid of a little kid whose most furious strike can barely knock over a tomato?

Because Gaster knows something about Frisk that we don't.

Perhaps our kid has other powers as well?

Frisk's true, full identity is a secret I've reserved for the end of this video.

But the first step to getting there involves background details that are easy to overlook: Long, dramatic flashes of light, followed by thundering darkness.

When we first type in our Character's name, there's a dramatic surge of light and a deafening swell of sound that drowns out all reality. And then Frisk's story begins, as we wake up in the Ruins, having just fallen down on a bed of golden flowers.

And there's a long hallway to the east that leads to a door, making this first room look like a key.

The second surge of light and sound happens when Frisk leaves the Ruins after encountering Toriel and Flowey. As if this step in Frisk's journey is the beginning of another story, as well.

There's a BOOM: Undertale! By BOOM: TobyFox! And then Frisk steps into the Underground as the Ruins door seals behind him, and notices one of Alphys' cameras watching him from the rocks.

The next time we experience this surge of light and sound is at the neutral end of the game, after Frisk encounters Omega Flowey. In a corridor that strangely parallels the one we met him in after encountering Toriel.

Again there's a BOOM!: Undertale. By BOOM!: Tobyfox! And then we get a phone call from Sans, and the ending dialog to the run.

An ending that started just like the beginning.

It's very interesting to note that except for the tiny little pillar on the right of the door, which is missing in the Key Room at the beginning, all three of these doors have identical sprites. Which is uncanny, because each door shows -exactly- the same timeworn marks, as if they were all the very same door. These doorways aren't just simple portals, they're significant bookmarks in Undertale's story.

And just stepping through these doors doesn't cause the booming flash by itself. At the end of a True Pacifist run, you can walk all the way back to the Key Room at the beginning to talk to Asriel. And whether you're coming or going, there's no booming flash. These are just simple doorways now, who have already served their purpose in bookmarking the story.

There are only two outcomes where this cycle of the ending being the beginning breaks:

In the True Pacifist Ending where you get the flash, but not the boom, as the previous story is ending and a new story is about to begin.

And the No Mercy ending, which ends in complete darkness because it's the End of Everything.

It does seem like the True Pacifist ending is the canon ending to Undertale. Because after Frisk wakes up, he finds himself in another version of the Key Room, surrounded by all his friends. And once Frisk moves to the last door, Undertale tells him that his adventure will really be over this time, in contrast to all the other times before.

But now we have a mystery.

The Beginning and End of Undertale are certainly important moments. But what about the Second Flash? The one that happens just before Frisk steps into the Underground?

Even stranger, only the Neutral Ending Door and the Ruins Door share the exact same pattern of a surge of light and sound followed by BOOM! Undertale, by BOOM! Tobyfox, since the beginning only features the light surge.

It's as if the Neutral Ending is connected, not to the beginning of the game, but to the Ruins Door instead.

What could happen at this moment in time that rivals the importance of the beginning of the game?

Because outside the Ruins door is when Frisk meets Sans for the first time.

Sans is a very strange sort of monster from the start.

While he's officially on duty to watch for humans, recognizes Frisk as one immediately, and has standing orders from King Asgore to harvest the soul of any human that arrives to ensure the freedom of all of monsterkind... Sans decides to help Frisk rather than turn him.

Sans tells Frisk to hide behind "that conveniently-shaped lamp" that's sitting out in the middle of the field, unplugged and useless. But this oddly-shaped lamp turns out to be a pixel-perfect match to Frisk's silhouette! As if Sans not only knew what humans looked like, but what Frisk would look like in particular!

It turns out the lamp wasn't necessary, because even when No Mercy Frisk refuses to hide behind it, Papyrus doesn't seem to recognize Frisk as a human anyway.

But it does leave the question: How did Sans know that lamp would perfectly hide Frisk in advance? Sans must have been the one to place it there, and the lamp's unique design suggests Sans created it, too. A simple snowman or large cardboard box would have also hidden Frisk with much less effort from the supposedly lazy Sans, and be far less conspicuous.

It's almost like Sans was trying to use the lamp to send Frisk a message?

Sans and Papyrus become less like enemies and more like friends with every step on the road to Snowdin, with one half-baked puzzle and jape after another.

And it soon becomes clear that for all his Skeletor impressions, Papyrus has no intention of actually hurting Frisk. He passes up chance after chance to attack him, choosing to talk instead, and either reveals the solution to his own traps, or doesn't have the heart to even activate them.

Even when Papyrus does manage to defeat Frisk, he won't hurt him. Papyrus just puts you in the easy-to-escape doghouse and says he's holding you for Undyne to arrive.

If you fail his boss fight repeatedly, Papyrus will actually start giving you hints about how to defeat him, starts leaving Frisk more gifts in the doghouse, and eventually asks if Frisk just want a place to stay, revealing that he never intended to hand Frisk over to Undyne anyway.

And if you really double down on losing to Papyrus, he eventually offer to let you skip the battle entirely to get on with the game, and accept his own defeat. Acting less and less like a human-hunting fanatic, and more and more like a co-conspirator with Sans to keep Frisk safe.

It's hard to tell exactly how much Papyrus knows, and how much of his behavior is just acting. In his phone call when Frisk approaches the Core, Papyrus seems sad for a moment, as if knowing something bad is eventually going to happen.

Sans and Papyrus aren't just a couple of goofballs Frisk happened to bump into, their story is much deeper than this, and their fate was entwined with Frisk's from the beginning.

Undyne, the captain of the Royal Guard, remarks in her phone calls how Sans puts in just enough effort to not get fired from his job as a human-watcher, while still being terrible at it. Except for when Frisk showed up, which Sans didn't tell her about at all.

When Undyne chases the fleeing Frisk, she actually stops long enough to glare at Sans, who is blissfully sleeping at his guard post and making no attempt to catch Frisk whatsoever. Undyne gives the camera a disgusted 4th-wall breaking glare, then continues the hunt, leaving Sans behind.

But is Sans really just lazy? Or putting up an ingenious act in being just lazy enough to prevent Undyne from replacing him with someone who actually would hurt Frisk?

In the neutral ending where you kill every main character except Papyrus, Papyrus becomes the ruler of the Underground, and Sans works tirelessly in the background to try and keep the monster world from falling apart.

Which surprises everyone, including Papyrus.

And when Papyrus asks Sans what the new Human Policy should be, Sans responds “We can’t judge humans to be all good or all bad.”

Sans is a lot more competent than he looks.

If you tell Sans that Papyrus isn’t cool while dining at Grillby’s, Sans will say your sarcasm isn’t cool, and notes Papyrus was the one who suggested he get the sentry job in the first place. Sans likes that Papyrus is there to call him out for being lazy. “Even though nothing could be further from the truth.”

Sans is definitely nobody to trifle with.

The No Mercy ending reveals that Sans is actually the most powerful boss in the game, who’s several orders of magnitude stronger than Asgore, the erstwhile “King of All Monsters”.

If Sans wanted to be the King of the Monsters himself, he could have torn the crown right off Asgore’s head any time he wanted, and not even Undyne the Undying could have stopped him.

But no matter what ending you get, Sans never becomes the ruler of the Underground. And even in the No King ending where every other main character is dead, Sans will still not take the throne, choosing to leave it vacant instead.

Sans is incredibly powerful, very smart, and not lazy at all. He would certainly make a strong King. The only reason Sans doesn’t become King is because he chooses not to, feeling for some personal reason that it would be wrong for him to rule the monsters.

Why?

It takes Chara all of her epic gear and LVL 19 power just to have a ghost of a chance at defeating Sans.

If Sans wanted to kill Frisk the moment Frisk stepped into the Underground, Sans could have crushed him like a baby bird.

The only reason Sans doesn’t immediately free the monsters is because he chooses not to hurt Frisk, again for personal reasons of his own.

Why?

At the MMT dinner, Sans says that Toriel, a lady he claims not to even know the name of, that he met by telling knock knock jokes through the Ruins Door, made him promise to protect the next human.

And that he was willing to disobey direct orders from the King of All Monsters in favor of the request of an unknown friend with a great sense of humor.

And that this, and only THIS... is the reason Frisk isn't dead where he stands.

It's a tall tale, and there are problems with it.

Right before the Megalovania fight, Sans says "Sorry old lady. This is why I never make promises". This could mean regret at making that promise.. Or it could mean that Sans never made such a promise in the first place.

And Sans' refusal to use Toriel's name is strange. Because at some point, one of them MUST have had contact with the other beyond telling knock-knock jokes through the Ruins door.

One of the first things Toriel does is give Frisk a cell phone, an older model with a keychain attached to it. This is the same keychain that Frisk uses to pick up the keys in New Home. And even on a No Mercy run, when Alphys doesn't upgrade your phone, Chara-possessed Frisk still uses this original key chain from Toriel to manage the keys.

Why is this keychain important? Because if you repeatedly reload the game and talk to Sans in the Judgment Hall on a Pacifist run, playing the password game to prove you're a time traveler just like Sans himself.. Sans reveals that the key to his mysterious room is already on your keychain.

Someone, either Alphys or Toriel, secretly passed Frisk the key to SANS' ROOM when they gave that phone to Frisk, or upgraded it.

Almost as if that phone belonged to Sans to begin with.

Which would make sense, because Sans is always the one who has Frisk's phone number at the end of the game.

And since Toriel lives alone, and still has her own phone, she must have gotten the extra phone from someone else.

And we know for a fact that someone in Sans' circle of friends has Toriel's phone number.

The post-Pacifist dialog reveals that Sans and Alphys know each other. And CoolSkeleton95, revealed to be Papyrus wearing sunglasses, is friends with Alphys on Undernet. Alphys has been using her camera network to record all of Frisk's movements from the moment he stepped into the Underground, so any friend of hers would have constant updates about what Frisk was up to. And since Sans and Papyrus are already friends of hers, they can keep track of Frisk through her.

The big question is.. Who called Toriel to join the others at the end of the game on a Pacifist run?

The True Pacifist Run is the only time Toriel ever leaves the Ruins to stop Asgore from attacking Frisk. Alphys notes that Papyrus called everyone there.. Except "her", meaning Queen Toriel.

And I have reason to believe that the person who called Toriel was Sans.

When everyone shows up to interrupt the Asgore fight, Toriel lets something slip. She recognizes Sans as the voice behind the door, but doesn't immediately know his name. So Sans winks, and gives his name. And the moment Toriel realizes that HE is Sans, she has a flash of recognition, and turns to Papyrus, saying "This must be your brother, Papyrus! Greetings, Papyrus! It is so nice to finally meet you! Your brother has told me so much about you!"

Sans and Toriel have been talking to each other for a LONG TIME already!

But while their communications through the Ruins Doors were verbal, Sans and Toriel have also been conversing with each other in a non-verbal fashion. And also in a non-visual fashion, because Toriel didn't recognize Sans by sight.

The only way this works is if Sans and Toriel were texting each other, exchanging information using only words rather than sight or sound.

So Sans told Toriel all about his brother Papyrus through his text persona, and Toriel only realized that Sans and The Knock Knock Joker were the same person at this very moment when they met up in person.

Toriel did mention that Alphys upgraded her phone to add a Texting feature. But while the game makes it sound like this just happened, Undertale is very good at trying to make us assume things in haste. Toriel and Sans started texting each other while standing two feet apart, and it's quickly clear that they're both skilled with texting, reveling in each other's dork-ness like old friends, to Papyrus' chagrin. Alphys must have upgraded Toriel's phone with texting some time ago.

Toriel is the only one who could have been collecting the Fallen Down vegetoids from the Ruins and delivering them to Alphys' lab. So Toriel -has- been leaving the Ruins, and visiting Alphys, on a regular basis. Just because Toriel didn't want to see Asgore doesn't mean she'd neglect the other subjects of her kingdom. And nervous Alphys was more than happy to let Sans be the one who texted the Queen.

When Alphys upgraded Frisk's phone, she made a point of saying that it has a key chain, even though it already did. It's very likely that this keychain is the same one from the original phone. Which means whoever gave Frisk's phone to Toriel, most likely Alphys, made sure that the key to Sans' room was already on it.

However you look at it, Alphys and Toriel must have met face to face at some point in the past for Alphys to upgrade her phone and receive the Fallen Down Vegetoids. And even if they didn't meet directly, Alphys would have certainly seen Queen Toriel on her extensive camera network, so Alphys must have known who Toriel was.

But Alphys and Papyrus both acted like they didn't know who Toriel was when they met her, both whispering their surprise to Frisk. However, Undyne, who wasn't part of the conspiracy, correctly guessed that Toriel was Asgore's ex right away. So Alphys is definitely faking her surprise here, she must know who Toriel is.

I'm not sure I believe Papyrus' witty confusion, either. If CoolSkeleton95 was born in 1995, he would have been at least 16 when Toriel left. Papyrus has a strangely deep vocabulary for someone who acts like a fool, and even he would have known there was a Queen, and probably what she looked like.

It does seem like Sans, Papyrus, Alphys, and perhaps even Toriel herself to some level, knowingly or not, were all working together on a plan to monitor Frisk, knowing well in advance that he'd arrive, and test him for some reason.

And Sans certainly knew that the key to his room was already on Frisk's chain. Because Sans himself pointed this out to Frisk after testing to see that Frisk was able to time travel, just like he could. And not only is Sans testing Frisk's memory to see if he remembers to use this time-traveling ability.. But Sans will only reveal the truth about his key if Frisk is completely innocent.

So there was some uncertainty about Frisk's character going into this adventure, and testing him was a high priority for Sans and all of his friends.

And Sans certainly planned for Frisk to use his room key. Because after Frisk goes into this dark room, and the stripes on his shirt start mysteriously phasing between one and two stripes as if two timelines were crossing in this weird extradimensional space... Papyrus arrives and turns on the light switch, momentarily mistaking Frisk for Sans. And Frisk finds a note taped to the

treadmill he wakes up on, which says “the truth is that you got owned, nerd.....” continuing the very conversation the two of them had in the Judgement chamber.

Papyrus wonders if Sans is pranking Frisk across time and space, remarking that he hates it when Sans does that, considering it immature. So Papyrus certainly knows that Sans is a time traveler. But the pranking part is less certain, because in this room you find one of Sans’ greatest treasures: The Silver Key which opens the secret lab behind his house.

“The Silver Key” was an H P Lovecraft story about time travel, and time travel is something you have to do just to get here and find that key. And inside, you find a mysterious veiled machine that seems to be broken, as well as pictures of people Chara doesn’t recognize, and artifacts that seem to be from a different world.

This broken machine, which Sans with all his powers and knowledge of Quantum Mechanics still seems unable to fix, is like the very vehicle that brought Sans, and any traveling companions he might have had with him, to Snowdin in the first place.

And Sans has just gifted access to these most private of his treasures... to Frisk.

It’s almost like Sans, Papyrus, Alphys and Toriel all put together an elaborate scheme to test Frisk’s character, only revealing their greatest secrets if he passes their tests.

Alphys even knows that Sans was the one who called Toriel rather than Papyrus, which means Alphys knew Toriel was coming in advance, and shouldn’t have been surprised to see her.

And Sans certainly does have Toriel’s number, because he and Papyrus go to live with her in several of the endings, and she actually opens the door for them.

Any way you look at it, for whatever reason, these characters aren’t telling Frisk the whole story.

And if Sans was really just protecting Frisk because of a vague promise he *didn’t* make to the voice of an unknown woman he knew *very well*, why on earth did he go to such lengths to arrange for Alphys to smuggle the key to his legendary room onto the keychain of the phone Toriel handed to Frisk?

Scratch that.. How did Sans, or anyone else, even know that Frisk was coming in the FIRST PLACE? They’d have to know that to put all these tests in place in advance. And, of all the humans of any age and size who might have fallen from above, how did Sans know Frisk’s Exact Body Shape to put The Convenient Lamp in place before he arrived?

Sans is certainly a time traveler, and his pre-knowledge of Frisk's story is downright eerie.

In fact.. Sans' ability to remember rewind time is eerie, too.

Flowey, with the power of his secret human soul, was able to rewind time to his save file just like a human player could. And he could also remember things Frisk did, even if Frisk rewind time to undo his own actions. If you killed Toriel, then rewind time to undo it, Flowey remembers exactly what you undid, and taunts you with it, one of the creepiest scenes in the game.

Now, If you repeatedly fight King Asgore, Frisk is the one who tells Asgore how many times they've fought, because Frisk remembers, and Asgore with his monster soul doesn't.

However, if you repeatedly fight Sans, SANS is the one who tells Frisk how many times they've fought. Or how many times they've talked together, when he's seeing if you're worthy of his room key.

How is Sans doing this? And why is he so interested in helping Frisk, a human, evade the monsters that believe taking his soul will lead to their freedom?

Because like Frisk, Sans is also a human.

Part 7: The Secrets of Sans

We've already covered many reasons why Sans must be a human.

Sans is somehow several orders of magnitude stronger than Asgore, the King of All Monsters. And even stronger than Undyne with her second-hand Determination.

Sans can remember past timelines just like Flowey and Frisk, something only characters with a full human soul and save/load abilities seem able to do.

Sans feels more loyalty toward Frisk, a fellow human, than to Asgore, who would otherwise be his King. And Sans never becomes King of the Monsters himself, even though this power is within his reach, because as a human he feels it would be morally wrong from him to rule the monsters.

But there are many more clues to Sans' human condition throughout the game. And the best place to start is by comparing Sans to Papyrus, who's supposedly his skeleton brother.

Papyrus is definitely a real monster from the Underground.

His fleshless bones are in clear display, leaving no room for a disguise. He turns to dust right in front of our eyes just like all the other monsters, rather than bleeding like Sans.

Toothy Chica in Grillby's mentions that monster food doesn't pass through the body like human food does, but vanishes, which explains how Frisk can eat six Legendary Hero subs in a few seconds without exploding. So even if Sans drank a tanker truck of ketchup before his fight with Chara-possessed Frisk, it still wouldn't linger in his system to leak out after he was stabbed. So when Chara stabs Sans, that isn't ketchup we're seeing.

If you return to Grillby's after killing Papyrus on a neutral run, you'll learn that Papyrus only ever drinks milk, which makes sense because he's literally made of calcium. Sans, though, is Grillby's #1 customer who orders a vast variety of food, and now that Sans has left after Papyrus' death Grillby is worried about his restaurant's financial future.

Papyrus never eats his own spaghetti, and neither does anyone else, so Papyrus' side of the fridge is always packed with the stuff. But Sans' side is empty except for a single bag of chips. Undyne knows Sans uses the fridge because she's noticed him making "hundreds" of midnight snacks at times when she was visiting and crashing on the living room couch.

And Papyrus recalls Sans once making an egg pie, which resonates with The Abandoned Quiche Frisk finds stashed under a bench in a hidden room you can only access with bridge flowers, or by teleporting. Hot dog-obsessed Sans definitely eats a variety of things, and knows how to cook food that's edible by humans.

Then there's the matter of sleep.

Papyrus might nap, but he never truly sleeps.

Undyne knows Papyrus is dead when she can't reach him on the phone, telling Frisk that Papyrus always answers her within two rings, morning noon or night. If Papyrus actually slept, it should take him more than two rings to get to his phone at night.

Papyrus frequently berates Sans for how he can nap for hours, which Sans corrects with the word "sleeping", which Papyrus still doesn't consider an excuse.

Undyne recalls on her phone calls how Sans made hundreds of midnight snacks, but Papyrus never seemed to know how to sleep. And when Papyrus and Undyne talk about Sans' excessive napping over the phone, Undyne ponders if "sleeping" isn't a better word, which makes Papyrus scream "UNDYNE!! NO! NOT YOU TOO!!".

While many monsters sleep, Papyrus can't. But his "brother" Sans sleeps frequently.

Then you can see the truth right on the skelebros' faces.

Papyrus has a fully animated face, with moving jaws and a full range of dramatic expressions for every possible emotion.

But Sans' mouth never moves when he talks. In fact, Sans' huge maniacal cartoony grin NEVER changes, forcing him to act and emote entirely with his eyes! Even when stabbed, Sans' head just leans back for a moment, with not even the pain of near death breaking that grin.

It's almost like Sans is a little kid, wearing overly baggy clothes and a huge costume skeleton head to conceal his true nature from the human-hunting monster world.

Granted, it does look like Sans has a thin skeletal neck when you look at him from behind at Grillby's.

But Frisk, sitting right next to him, also has the very same cartoonishly thin neck. So this body type isn't out of place for Undertale humans.

Sans also tries to scratch his head and side during the dinner, acting as if the skin he wasn't supposed to have was itching.

Sans loves making Skeleton Puns, and reminding anyone watching that, yes, he and Papyrus are both brothers, and yes, they are both skeletons, just in case there was ever any doubt!

Papyrus tries to tolerate these puns in the name of friendship, but it's clear they do grate on his nerves at times. Especially when Toriel joins in, or in the Lost Souls encounter where Sans loves the puns but Papyrus doesn't.

The puns don't tickle Papyrus' funny bone because as an Actual Skeleton, he finds them borderline racist. A feeling that Sans, as a human, doesn't share.

And Sans knows what the Sun is, and what humans look like, two things Papyrus doesn't claim to know. And even if Papyrus is kidding about not recognizing humans, which all the other Undertale creatures seem able to do, he really hasn't seen the Sun. If his Undernet persona CoolSkeleton95 was born in 1995 he'd be in his 20's or so. Papyrus was born in the Underground, and has never seen the sun.

But there was a Sun from whatever world Sans traveled from in his Silver Key Machine, because he has seen it before.

Sans and Papyrus might call themselves brothers, and with all they've been through together they probably do consider each other Blood Brothers. But since Papyrus is a monster from the Underground, and Sans is a human from unknown lands, there's no way they had the same mother.

There's also something else about Sans that sets him apart from Papyrus: A Darkness.

The library in Snowdin says that monster souls are full of hope, love, and compassion. And it also says that the true nature of SOUL is unknown, because humans have proven that their SOULs don't need these positive elements to exist.

While there's some question over how accurate this information is since the "librarby" can't even spell its own name correctly, and is bound to be somewhat bias in favor of monsters, there is a trend where humans are much more likely to have darkness in their souls that can't be denied.

The author of the waterfall glyphs was surprised that the humans attacked and started the Ancient War, saying that even though a monster with a human soul had appeared, called Kanashi by some of the Undertale Fandom, the humans still had nothing to fear.

Most of the monsters that attack Frisk in Undertale are either misunderstood, or can be reasoned with in some way, and are just attacking Frisk because their King ordered them too. And even Asgore, the Dreaded Lord Fluffybuns himself, is ultimately a nice guy who was forced to make a terrible choice for the good of his people.

Young Asriel was a model monster, full of love and hope, and the whole Dreemur family were willing to risk everything to help a human child in need when Chara arrived, even if she was damaged, and couldn't appreciate what they were doing for her.

Papyrus is a model monster as well. For all his showmanship, he'll never hurt Frisk under any circumstances. Undyne remarks that while Papyrus is tough, he could never hurt a snail. A remarkable trait that, sadly, made him unfit for the grim purpose of the Royal Guard.

But Sans... is different.

And while he does his best to hide it underneath his japes and jolly exterior, Sans wears his happiness like a mask just like the one that covers his human face.

And now and then his eyes disappear, leaving empty holes, and suddenly his grin takes on a sinister quality that chills us to the bone.

Because Sans isn't an innocent character like Papyrus. We know for a fact.. than Sans has killed someone before. Many, many times. And while he seems ashamed and self-conscious of this wound upon his soul, and tries hard to make the best decisions in a tense situation, his LOVE level is actually very high.

And if he wants to, Sans can give you a very, very bad time.

Flowey asks Frisk not to tell Sans about him, because in the various timelines he's experienced in the past, Sans was frequently the one who caused his "resets". In other worlds, Sans ended Flowey's story and forced him to reload his save many times before.. By killing him. Over, and over again.

Sans is willing to hurt others when the situation calls for it, and is very capable of doing this. And even though he does try to reason with No Mercy Frisk, he's also willing to trick Frisk into surrendering, then kill him as a betrayal action, just like how Chara-possessed Frisk himself might have dealt with other bosses like Toriel and Papyrus.

Has Sans killed anyone else in the present, past, or future, besides Flowey and Frisk?

It's an interesting question to keep in mind.

But now we have a paradox to solve: Why was Sans willing to kill Flowey many times in other timelines for the crime of simply messing with Papyrus.. And yet sit back and watch Frisk actually kill Papyrus.. Sans' own blood brother in bone... and do nothing about it?

Sans could have easily saved Papyrus from Frisk. Just like Sans would have easily crushed Frisk the moment he emerged from the Ruins, like stepping on a baby bird. But even when Frisk betrays Papyrus' goodwill attempt to spare him, Sans does nothing other than complain about it angrily over the phone.

And we know Sans was watching the Papyrus fight, as well as all the others. Alphys still has him patched into her camera system. The very moment Papyrus falls, Sans stops going to Grillby's. And we see Sans in the background of Shyren's musical fight soon afterwards, selling tickets made of toilet paper if he's happy, or just watching darkly with his hood up if he isn't.

Sans knows everything that Frisk is doing in the Underground. Killing monster after monster, and boss after boss.

And yet Sans still refuses to fight Frisk, forcing himself to watch the destruction, instead. And it's only when Frisk is so thoroughly evil that failing to stop him would result in the destruction of the entire universe, that Sans finally gives Frisk his legendary Bad Time.

It's almost like Sans would rather do anything else in the world.. other than fight Frisk.

Why?

And why would Sans, who is so protective his true identity, go to such great pains to secretly give Frisk the fabled key to his room? He would not have done this for just any human passing through.

I have reason to believe that other humans HAVE passed through before, while Sans and Papyrus were in the Underground. And just as King Asgore didn't want to take the first captured soul and attack the surface himself, Sans didn't interfere to save the six humans who arrived after Chara, either.

And how did Sans know exactly what Frisk would look like, and stir his lazy bones to build The Convenient Lamp, when much simpler ways of hiding Frisk were available? Even when the action of hiding Frisk from Papyrus wasn't even necessary to begin with?

The game makes a point of reminding the player just how convenient this seemingly useless lamp is, twice. So it's something Toby definitely wanted us to think about.

Sans definitely knew that Frisk was coming, and exactly what Frisk would look like, down to the pixel. And Papyrus likes Frisk so much that he refuses to stop believing in him, even when No Mercy Frisk answers his offer to spare him with a stab. And socially-awkward Alphys was so flustered at meeting Frisk before she could fresh up that she went into a panic. And Queen

Toriel was willing to put her own life on the line just to test Frisks' character at the start of the game.

Which leaves us with a thundering question:

WHO IS FRISK?

And why is he so special to everyone?

The simplest explanation might be that Frisk is an innocent human. And only a truly innocent human can unlock the True Pacifist Ending, save Asriel Dreemur, and finally bring about The End of the Barrier.

Sans, who has killed before, is no longer innocent, and is no longer capable of achieving this happy ending on his own. So Sans and his friends are secretly trying to protect the next human that comes through, while also testing them to see if they're finally the one who can achieve the best ending for everyone.

This might be the explanation. And it might explain why the six humans who came before fell, if they didn't pass the test and got taken by Undyne and the Royal Guard.

But consider again, the bind Frisk faces at the end of a Neutral Run:

Frisk never absorbs either Toriel or Asgore's boss monster souls, and without Gaster's determination-powered mad science there are no other monster souls he can absorb. So Frisk is never able to go through the Barrier at the end of a neutral game.

But Frisk must have gone somewhere, because Sans always has to leave him a message. And Sans is the one who has Frisk's phone number, as Frisk is probably using Sans' old phone, which he gave to Toriel so she could give it to Frisk.

Normally, Sans talks to Frisk like a friend. But on particularly dark runs, Sans will add something else to his dialog: A warning that Frisk should never come back.

Why would Frisk ever come back?

HOW could Frisk ever come back?

Now consider there's an elevator to the True Lab in the Core that leads to both Alphys' lab and Asgore's castle. And as we covered before, there's a time and space portal somewhere in the Core.

The only way Frisk could have escaped from the all-seeing eyes of Alphys and Sans is if he left the Underground completely, without passing through the Barrier. And the only way Frisk could have done this was if he warped to another time and place. And the only way Frisk could have warped to another time and place that we know of is if he used the Dimensional Portal in the Core.

Sans' room might have been an alternative, but in order to realize that he had to key for that, Frisk would have to have already earned the True Pacifist ending, and likely left the Underground completely.

So our friend Frisk likely went back in time. And either this allows him to start over from the beginning, or it allows him to re-insert himself into the story at a different point in time to try and change things for another version of himself.

Let's brainstorm for a moment.

If Frisk did go back in time, to try to help an earlier version of himself get a better ending.. What would that look like to the earlier version of Frisk that encountered his future self?

Keep this question in mind along with the others.

But one thing is certain: Sans not only had pre-knowledge that Frisk was coming and what he looked like.. But he also knew many of the things Frisk would encounter on his journey once he arrived.

When Frisk calls Papyrus outside of Alphys' Lab, Papyrus mistakes the word "Lab" for "Labrador", and wonders if there are dogs inside? Sans winks, and says "I wouldn't rule it out." There are indeed dogs inside.. In the amalgamates downstairs in the True Lab. Which is why Alphys keeps a massive bag of dog food upstairs.

Sans is always just in the right place at the right time to help Frisk.

Sans is sleeping on the job just in time to allow Frisk to escape from Undyne.

Sans establishes a hot dog stand in Hotland right at a point where Frisk would badly need some food. And the snow on the roof suggests this is the very same stand he had in Snowdin, which he teleported to Hotland along with himself.

Sans also repeats this trick in Deltarune by warping both his house and the renamed Grillby's out of the Underground and up to the surface, making him a very powerful psychic indeed.

And during his battle with Frisk, Sans is the only character in the game who can actually dodge Frisk's attacks, almost as if he can see them coming.

Then Sans says some very strange things:

At the MTT dinner, Sans tells Frisk "You must really wanna go home. I know the feeling buddo." but then asks him "Maybe sometimes it's better to take what's given to you. Down here you've already got food, drink, friends.. Is what you have to do.. Really worth it?"

And if you've survived the game so far without dying at the MTT dinner, Sans will wink and say "That's right. Well (wink) chalk it up to my great skills." Although he doesn't know everything, because if you HAD died before then, Sans is curious about the expression on your face.

In battle, Sans says "Look, I gave up trying to go back a long time ago. And getting to the surface doesn't really appeal anymore, either. Cause even if we do... we'll just end up right back here, without any memory of it, right?"

It wouldn't just be Sans who lost his memory, going back. It would be Frisk, as well.

And Sans did have somewhere he wanted to go back to, he wasn't born in the Underground. Or even, strangely, the surface world directly above.

But when he weighs the options of a life of food and friendship with the monsters, or ruining all of that by killing their beloved King just to go home again.. Sans choose to spare Asgore and stay in the Underground. And Sans tries to convince Frisk to do the very same thing.

Almost as if Sans and Frisk have both lived the same story.

Then there are several amazing coincidences.

Sans and Frisk are almost the same size and shape, the same kid-size that makes them look like dwarves to most of monsterkind. And you see that both Sans and Frisk have the same cartoony pencil-necks when they sit side by side at Grillby's.

And whatever Frisk orders, Sans agrees with, so they seem to have similar tastes in food. Video game adventurers have to eat a ton of food to maintain their hit points, so it's no surprise that both Sans and Frisk have voracious appetites, and can never have too much food.

When we first see Sans, he's a darkened silhouette that creeps up behind Frisk, so that for a moment, we have only a shape to compare with Frisk's own. And the two shapes then face each other, each appearing almost like the mirror reflection of the other.

This comparison is even more powerful the last time we see Sans in the judgement hall, where both Sans and Frisk are silhouettes with the very same stained glass windows behind them, and a pillar separating the two almost as if they were ink blots on a symmetrical page.

And Sans never asks Frisk what he's thinking when he reflects in the Judgement Hall, because somehow, Sans always seems to know.

And then, Sans says something during his boss fight that will creep me out to the end of my days:

"I know you didn't answer me before, but... somewhere in there, I can feel it. There's a glimmer of a good person inside you. The memory of someone who once wanted to do the right thing. Someone who, in another time, might have even been... A friend?"

"C'mon buddy. Do you remember me?"

Do. You. Remember. Me.

Sans knows that Frisk knows Sans.. from another time.

Sans is a powerful psychic. And like the 6 human souls that rebelled from Omega Flowey, he has the psychokinetic ability to move things with his mind, a weapon he uses just as effectively as his stolen Gaster Blasters.

Undertale makes a point of showing us that Sans can teleport many times. Although, strangely, it never actually lets us see what it looks like when this happens. Each time Sans teleports, the screen goes black, and a unique distinct clicking sound plays.

So with his psychic abilities, it's no surprise that Sans can look into Frisk's mind, and see what's in there.

Or.. is it?

Before both the dinner at Grillby's and the dinner at the MTT resort, Sans tells Frisk he's going to show him a shortcut. Then, after they both walk the wrong way, or even up a dead end alley, somehow both Sans and Frisk appear together right where they want to go.

Strangely, though, Sans never teleports Papyrus with him. In post-Papyrus Grillby's you learn that Sans always appears first during his frequent visits, and Papyrus always arrives a little bit later, looking annoyed. Either Sans was just being a joker by refusing to teleport Papyrus with him... or Sans wasn't able to bring Papyrus, because Papyrus didn't have the ability to teleport along with him.

Psychics as powerful as Sans are certainly rare, even among humans. But we see at least two of them in Undertale.

Once Frisk declines Sans' offer to spare him, "The Real Battle Begins", and this time there's no question that Sans is trying to actually kill Frisk.

And part of upping his game involves running Frisk through a series of fast Wario-ware styles scenes, where Frisk must find a way to survive a certain number of seconds before the screen goes black, and another minigame starts.

But how DOES Frisk survive these impossible situations?

In one scene, two tall towers, both impossible to jump, fly at Frisk from opposite sides of the screen, intending to crush him between them like a fly between clapping hands! To escape this you have to jump in the middle of the screen and clock as much air time as possible ..and then the scene blinks out just before the walls actually hit Frisk, saving him just in time.

But when this happens, you here a very particular sound:

A TELEPORT CLICK.

The very same teleport sound that Sans uses whenever he disappears, in fact.

But Sans isn't the one teleporting here! Sans is definitely intending to kill Frisk, and isn't about to warp him to safety this time.

The only way Frisk could avoid the impossible situation of being crushed between the bone towers... was if Frisk also teleported, under his own power!

FRISK is also a powerful psychic! Perhaps every bit as powerful as Sans himself!

No wonder Gaster had misgivings about fighting Frisk. This little kid is much more powerful than he seems.

Although this still doesn't explain why Gaster hates Frisk so much, and seems to want revenge on him.

But Sans' power has limits.

While Sans was able to read Frisk's mind, and use this power to dodge Frisk's attacks, Sans wasn't able to see Chara's attack coming because he couldn't seem to read her.

It might be because Chara's a ghost, and it might be because Sans and Frisk are both powerful psychics radiating their thoughts.

But it also might be because Sans and Frisk share a uniquely powerful connection.

Which brings me to one more nagging question about Sans:

Out of all the Undertale characters, why is SANS the one who judges Frisk in the end?

On the surface, everyone else is more qualified.

Asgore is the King, and highest political authority.

Undyne is the strongest, and has the most unyielding sense of justice.

Papyrus is the most innocent, and most worthy to call out others on their misdeeds.

Alphys is the smartest, and has the best knowledge of what Frisk has been up to.

And Toriel has all of these qualities put together!

Why is Sans.. the killer clown slacker with a childish sense of humor, the one most qualified to pass final judgement on Frisk's soul?

For one very powerful all-consuming reason:

Sans IS Frisk. From another time.

Sans wouldn't give the key to his room to a stranger. But he would give it to Frisk.

And when Papyrus finds Frisk on the treadmill in Sans' room, it takes him a moment to realize that he's looking at Frisk instead of Sans. Because Papyrus does seem to know what Sans actually looks like.. And the resemblance is close enough to make him think for a moment to tell one from the other.

The Silver Key machine is likely the vehicle that Sans, and whoever came with him, originally used to warp into the Underground, which then broke when they tried to return through the Barrier.

But at some point in the future, Sans and Papyrus both used the portal in the Core to warp back in time in an attempt to change the future. The shopkeeper in Snowdin recalls how they both just appeared in town one day, and asserted themselves.

Sans is a future version of Frisk, who went back in time to change the timeline he originally experienced, in the hopes of helping an earlier version of himself get a better ending.

Which is why Sans doesn't want to fight Frisk. Because if he did, he would literally be fighting himself.

And this is the final horror of the No Mercy path.

Chara-possessed Frisk get so caught up in his murderous rampage, that his last casualty is literally himself.

Sans tries to convince Frisk there's there's absolutely nothing to gain by keeping this path. Sans tries, to the very end, to reason with an unreasonable Frisk.

And while the final knife strike does hit Sans, Frisk is the one who actually falls and generates the Executions Points that Chara receives, as she finally takes over Frisk's body and soul completely, effectively killing him.

Which is why "You Won!" doesn't appear at the end of the Sans fight. Because Frisk doesn't win. He, and eventually the player, have just lost everything.

Earlier in the fight Sans was able to look into Frisk, and still see a shard of the person he used to be. The one that cared, and tried to do the right thing.

But once Chara strikes, Sans realizes the battle is over: Not because he's been defeated, but because there's nothing left of him in Frisk to save anymore.

So Sans leaves, bidding Chara a fond farewell as he creates a portal to another timeline, and says hello to another Papyrus as he travels to a dimension where his best friend is still alive.

And leaves Chara to her doom of a lonely universe full of nothingness.

When Sans asks Chara-possessed-Frisk his famous question: "Do you think even the worst person can change? That everybody can be a good person, if they just, try?" Sans wasn't asking for Frisk's sake.

He was asking for his own.

Under all his defenses, Sans seems to be a good person who tries to do the right thing, but is living with the guilt of having made a terrible mistake.

So when the Underground falls to ruin because of Frisk's actions, Sans says "I like to take it easy, you know? ... That's a joke. This is what happens when people like me take it easy." before he tells Frisk to go to hell.

Sans left his timeline and traveled to the past because the ending he got on his own run wasn't good. And the scars on his soul from his own bad decisions still weigh on him.

So when No Mercy Frisk does his dirty work, Sans forces himself to watch every bloody knife-swing. Not because he enjoys it, but because he feels he deserves the pain of watching, and knowing.

Sans didn't travel to the past only to find someone who could save the monsters...

Sans wanted to find someone would could save himself, too.

And help him undo a cursed legacy that haunts him to this very day.

Chapter 8: Approaching Gaster

When Gaster first came to the Underground, he must have seemed like a miracle worker.

Alphys claims the only reason monsters have modern human technology is because they reverse-engineered all the junk that flowed down the waterfall from the world above. Diligent hunters like Bratty and Catty have salvaged this junk, and figured out how it worked.

This is why the monsters have electricity, cell phones, and little wonders like the Christmas Lights you see in Snowdin.

Without actual contact with the surface for ages, the monsters have no frame of reference for what the human civilization above actually looks like. Alphys and Undyne both enjoy anime and manga, and Undyne was horrified to learn that humans do not actually swing ten-foot swords or pilot giant robots on a routine basis, feeling horribly let-down.

Chara, our sometimes helpful and sometimes homicidal narrator, is from the human world of the surface above. And she gives us dialog options that suggest that, just like in our world as players, the magical super-technology in manga is just a fantasy designed to look cool on the page, and is not the normal human experience at all. And the surprisingly normal level of technology we see in the surface town of Deltarune suggests that the humans living on the surface of Undertale's world are very much like our own.

But somehow, the monsters of the Underground gained access to technology that the humans above had never actually seen before.

Alphys installs two extra dimensional bags of holding into our phone in a matter of seconds, one of which links to all of the dimensionally-linked boxes we find laying on the ground all through Undertale. As if these wonders that bend time and space are about as interesting to the common monster as a discarded cardboard box. And Alphys has a huge portal in the Core that she plans to use to evacuate the monsters fleeing No Mercy Frisk to another dimension entirely.

When you get to the Core, high-powered lasers are as common as light bulbs. And sentient transforming robots like Mettaton actually exist, and work! You can build an epic transforming structure in a lava field without it melting, and you can turn a cell phone into a jetpack or laser gun with the touch of a button!

Undertale's monster technology is -already- anime made real! There's no way that any of this stuff was salvaged from the human world above, because this technology doesn't exist up there! And since the monsters didn't research this tech on their own, it must have all come from another world!

Someone of remarkable brilliance must have visited the Underground from another world, and left his mark on the entire monster civilization. A scientist capable of doing things even beyond what the humans of the surface above could achieve.

It's no wonder that King Asgore made the Revered Wingding Gaster the Royal Scientist of the Underground.

And after Gaster's death Asgore had to search far and wide for a replacement, only finally settling for Alphys years later.

As his followers say, Alphys might work faster, but Wingding Gaster was a hard act to follow.

Asgore liked Gaster so much that he gave Wingding control over most of the monster economy to build his dream project: The Core, a massive complex somehow standing in the middle of a lava field.

And besides the cover story of this amazing structure acting as a power plant, it also housed The True Lab that served as Gaster's mad science headquarters, until his eventual death by falling into this very creation, and being scattered across time and space.

Gaster was like the Wizard of Oz to the monster world, except this time he was REAL!

And it's hard to argue with a scientist who could take an abstract concept like Determination, and turn it into an extractable resource that could be injected into others.

If you told Gaster something was impossible, he's do it just to show you it wasn't!

And this is why Asgore named Gaster the Royal Scientist, gave him the massive resources he needed to build The Core, and tasked him with the single most important mission in the Underground: To break the Barrier, by any means possible.

Gaster's sudden death was a blow to the whole monster world. His followers recall how his life was cut short as he fell into his own creation. And the method of his death is still possible today, because his ghostly followers wonder if Alphys might suffer the same fate, poking around Gaster's old lab and replicating his experiments into Dimension Portals and Determination.

One doesn't get scattered across time and space unless you have a portal that can take you there, after all.

The Memoryhead amalgamate, the first one Frisk encounters when visiting the True Lab, is unique in that it doesn't actually resemble any monsters we've seen. It attacks you with ghostly heads that might resemble Gaster, has stats that are strangely determined by Frisk's own +10, talks through Frisk's phone, and puts a piece of itself in Frisk's inventory, which becomes the Bad Memory.

So not only does some shattered piece of Gaster still seem to haunt the True Lab, but the memory Frisk receives from Memoryhead might also be a -personally- bad one for him, or narrator Chara.

Perhaps they have met Gaster before?

Asgore was so saddened by Gaster's loss that he ordered a memorial fountain made in his honor. And although Mettaton defaced it with a statue of himself, you can still see the fountain standing today.

The plaque on the MTT fountain reads: "Royal Memorial Fountain / Built 201X / Mettaton added last week".

This isn't a memorial to Mettaton, because he's still very much alive.

And the date circled on Asgore's calendar in New Home says the end of 201X, which narrator Chara says is an old calendar, as it shows the date she arrived in New Home.

So if Mettaton was added last week, he certainly wasn't part of the original fountain.

We can tell this fountain was originally made for Royal Scientist Gaster, by elimination.

Narrator Chara says she arrived in New Home around Christmas 2019, according to Asgore's calendar. And the opening animation of Chara falling into the Underground could be in Winter, since there are no flowers around. So Chara and Asriel would have had to wait for the next Spring for the flowers to bloom before they could go on their doomed Buttercup Adventure, and track golden flower seeds back to the Underground.

So the very earliest date Chara and Asriel could have died was in Spring 2020, which puts their deaths after the construction of the MTT memorial fountain in 201X.

Also remember that Chara was officially adopted into the Dreemurr Family, and there is no way that Asgore or the monster world would allow Mettaton to deface a memorial to an actual member of the royal family with his own disrespectful water-puking effigy. So while the person

this fountain was made for did travel in the Royal Circles, they could not have been a member of Asgore's family.

Asgore and Toriel themselves were effectively immortal, because Gerson says Boss Monsters only age as their soul energy transfers into their children over time, and until Asriel they didn't have a child. Asgore with his huge trident does look like the Monster King from the open video, and Gerson recalls that beloved King Fluffybuns gave Home and New Home their titles because he was terrible at thinking up names.

So while there probably were other Boss Monsters, which would have given Gerson his knowledge about Boss Monster Children, Asgore has been King ever since The War of Humans and Monsters.

Which means royal succession wasn't a problem for the Dreemur family, which again rules out the MTT memorial fountain being made for a royal family member.

If there was another statue in the memorial fountain before Mettaton, although the plaque only mentions the fountain, it wasn't the statue we give an umbrella to in Waterfall.

Undyne says that statue has been there forever, and nobody knows where it came from.

From the horns it does seem to be the statue of a boss monster, but not anyone that we've seen before. And although it's raining, the figures at the base are strangely dry, making me think about that song "It's Raining Somewhere Else".

There's a deeper mystery here, but this statue definitely wasn't taken from the memorial fountain.

And with nobody to fight other than the odd exploring human, it's unlikely any of the Royal Guard distinguished themselves outside of baking contests. So the fountain wasn't for a Royal Guardsman.

All of which leaves the previous royal scientist Wingding Gaster as the only person in the royal circles confirmed to die around this period, who was important enough to earn a fountain for himself, but not so popular that a public outcry would stop Mettaton from altering the fountain.

So Royal Scientist Gaster seems to be the only glorious candidate the 201X memorial fountain could have been made for.

Now consider the timing of Gaster's death, as it relates to the arrival of the other humans, and his own Determination research.

In Frisk's timeline, the one Sans changed by traveling back to the past along with Papyrus, Gaster dies before Chara ever reaches New Home.

Chara falls into the Underground at the end of 201X, which puts her arrival at New Home around Christmas 2019. And by this time Gaster had not only died, but there had also been time to construct a memorial fountain in his honor.

Which means that during the timeline Frisk experiences in Undertale, Gaster died before Chara, or any of the other six fallen humans, arrived in the Underground.

Yet somehow, Gaster was still able to conduct his research into Determination Extraction, because Alphys discovers Gaster's blueprints for the DE machine in the True Lab, which is how she was able to build her own.

But how could Gaster perform his groundbreaking research on Determination, if there weren't any captured human souls for him to experiment on yet, and seemingly no source of Determination for him to use?

Unless Gaster was willing to perform these experiments on himself, certainly a dangerous idea, there must have been at least one human hiding in the Underground at the time Gaster was working in The Core, who provided this supply of Determination to Gaster themselves.

And if Chara was the first human who fell from above, this unknown human hiding alongside Gaster must have arrived in the Underground through some other means.

Like warping in using the Silver Key Machine.

Sans told us that he didn't arrive in the Underground alone.

He arrived along with at least one other, because "We" had gone to check on an anomaly in the space-time continuum, where timelines kept starting and stopping, until eventually everything ended.

Sans wasn't the one who made the Silver Key Machine, which is why he wasn't able to fix it. For as much as Sans does know about quantum mechanics, only a true Mad Scientist of amazing brilliance could have made such a machine.

And Sans revealed that he isn't from the human world above, either. Because in his fight dialog he mentions that going home again, and getting to the surface, are two separate things for him. That the surface world of Undertale was never his home in the first place.

And we know for a fact that Gaster wasn't from the surface, either. Because he came from Another World.

The River Person warns Frisk to "Beware the man who speaks in hands". And also to "Beware of the man who came from the other world."

Both these lines mention "man", as in "human". And they are both certainly about Gaster, because he is The Man Who Speaks In Hands, and since Sans is trying to help Frisk rather than kill him, Frisk has no reason to beware of his future self unless Chara's ghost warps him completely beyond recognition.

Which means that the River Person is telling us that Gaster also came from another world, just like Sans did.

The Silver Key Machine doesn't just transport people through time and space like the Core Portal, it can transport them to completely different worlds!

And Gaster is the only mad scientist we know with the raw talent to build such a device. The very device that Sans tried to fix himself, but wasn't able to.

Which means that when Sans traveled from his home in The Other World to the world of Undertale, Gaster, the inventor of the Silver Key Machine, made this same trip along with him.

So at one point in time, Sans and Gaster went adventuring together, and were the best of friends.

The idea of Sans and Gaster once being friends isn't far fetched. In fact, we have proof these two characters have met.

Sans is carrying Gaster Blasters, weapons of amazing technology with Gaster's name engraved on the side. Just like the Silver Key Machine, Sans didn't invent the Gaster Blasters, he only uses them. Sans must have once had access to Gaster's technology that rivaled even Alphys, since she never seems to have discovered or replicated these amazing weapons while exploring Gaster's notes.

The Gaster Blasters might be artifacts from another time entirely, and may never have been invented in Frisk's timeline at all.

But Sans isn't the only one who's seen a Blaster. An update to Undertale revealed that Papyrus might once have possessed a Blaster of his own. He tells Frisk that if the Annoyed Dog hadn't stolen his special attack, he might have gotten blasted by it.

What do Sans, Papyrus, and Wingding Gaster all have in common? They're all members of The Font Brigade, the only characters in Undertale who talk in the fonts they're named after, showing they all share some type of strange bond.

And we know from his secret Lab Entry 17 that while Gaster was setting up his Darkest Experiment, he was confiding in two other people in the lab, and asking them "WHAT DO YOU TWO THINK?"

Alphys only entered the scene, and took over Gaster's old laboratory, after he died. But in Entry 17, Gaster is still alive, so Alphys wouldn't have replaced him yet. And Alphys would have no reason to be in that room.

This means that the other two people the room with Gaster during his Darkest Experiment would most likely be Sans and Papyrus. Because all three characters are in the Font Brigade, Papyrus and Sans are very close, and Sans has followed Gaster all the way from The Other World, sharing his dread secret about being a human in disguise.

What happened on the Night of Gaster's Darkest Experiment?

Whatever it was, it was certainly something dark.

Darkness is a trait more likely to appear in humans than monsters. And only the ghost of a human mad scientist could have been able to carry out the secret theft of so many monster souls in both the Ruins and the Underground.

Only Gaster's ghost seems both capable and willing to execute such a plan, since predatory soul harvesting is about the darkest thing any creature can do.

The only reason Asgore instructed Alphys to begin the generations-long task of collecting souls from dying monsters was to eventually destroy the Barrier for the good of all. And the only reason Asgore and Alphys attempted this dark route was because the earlier attempts at bypassing the Barrier through dimensional travel failed.

Alphys needed soul power to break the Barrier. And the only way she could see to collect normal monsters souls was by using Gaster's Determination research.

Which was the very reason Gaster researched Determination in the first place, when he was the resident Royal Scientist. Because once bypassing the Barrier failed, the only alternative to breaking it was with SOUL power.

So Gaster developed Determination Extraction and injection from the very beginning, as a way to collect monster souls.

And if necessary, steal them.

I've covered all the reasons why I believe Sans must be a living human, and the future version of Frisk. And most of the reasons why I believe Gaster must have also been human, although I've saved the largest one for the end of this video. The two came from the same world, using the same machine Gaster invented, both possessing powers far beyond the humans of the world above.

I've sometimes toyed with the idea that Papyrus might have once been the skeleton of an actual human, and perhaps even Gaster's former skeleton.

But if CoolSkeleton95 was born in 1995, he would be around two decades old by the time Gaster died in Frisk's timeline in 201X. So while there are still mysteries surrounding Sans' brother in bones, Papyrus is certainly a normal Underground monster during the game, and definitely not Gaster's skeleton. So Papyrus could have easily met Sans and Gaster when they arrived, and joined their party.

When Sans and Gaster originally arrived in The Underground, they probably recruited Papyrus (whether he knew this or not) as a native ally to help maintain the credibility of their undead monster disguises as Sans posed as a skeleton, and Gaster pretended to be a ghost.

And for a while, the three of them were the best of friends.

But then, something terrible happened that cut this trio of friends down to two. Because when Sans and Papyrus warped back in time to invade Frisk's timeline, Gaster was no longer with them.

Without their mad scientist friend, the Silver Key Machine would remain broken forever. So even if Frisk did manage to break The Barrier, Sans would still have no way to return to his own world.

And both Sans and Papyrus were carrying Gaster Blasters. Artifacts from the original Alpha timeline that was no longer connected to the Beta timeline of Frisk's world.

... or.. Were these two different timelines still connected, after all?

The very fact that Gaster, Sans, and Papyrus were able to jump between timelines says that these strings of reality weaving through hyperspace must have still touched in some fashion, otherwise traveling between them would have been truly impossible from the beginning.

Which means that somewhere out there, there must still be an echo of the Alpha Timeline, when the Font Brigade were still friends. Some lingering clue of what the world looked like before tragedy struck, tearing friendships apart, and forced Sans and Papyrus to engage in the desperate plan of invading their own past to change the future.

Somewhere, in the ether of Undertale, hiding on the very edge of our perception, there must still be some evidence from the Alpha timeline, so we can tell what the world used to look like, to contrast with what it later become...

And it just so happens...That there is a memory from the Alpha timeline, hidden deep in Undertale's code, in the form of the TWO secret True Lab Entry 17s.

You'll never find Gaster's Lab Entry 17 just by playing the game. You have to hack the files that govern Undertale's reality to make it appear as something only we, the Player Chara, can see. Making this file, animated with its own uniquely creepy music, one of the legendary secrets of Undertale.

But if you dig even deeper, you'll find a SECOND Entry 17, with an entirely different author.

The second Lab Entry 17 is stashed deep in the very code of the game, an echo of a footnote. It writes about the formation of the Amalgamates. In it, the author theorizes that monster bodies can't withstand large amounts of Determination without melting. A theory that's incomplete because it doesn't account for Undyne in her role as the control group.

This second Entry 17 wasn't written by Gaster, but by Alphys, the royal scientist who replaced him after his death in 201X.

And now, we have our link between the Alpha and Beta timelines.

Somehow, both Alphys and Gaster once stood in the very same place in the True Lab, working on the very same project, at the very same point in time in their respective timelines.

The timing of Entry 17, appearing between 16's "no No NO NO NO NO" and 18's "The flower's gone", has an eerie significance. The moment Gaster mentions that his next, Darkest Experiment will be very interesting... Flowey animates, and disappears. Much to Doctor Alphys' surprise and chagrin.

When it came to collecting the power equivalent of Seven Human Souls in a single body that could wield the combined power of both the human and monster souls to break the Barrier, Gaster the living human faced the very same problem as Alphys the monster:

Humans could not absorb other human souls, any more than monsters could absorb other monster souls.

So Gaster and Alphys couldn't simply take this power into themselves, or give it to Asgore, because none of them could absorb all the souls required.

Instead, both Gaster and Alphys had to create a vessel out of a living creature that was neither human nor monster, then bind this vessel to their control as a type of puppet, so they could force the Vessel to wield the power of Seven Human Souls to do their bidding, and break the Barrier for them by remote control.

Which means that through a quirk of overlapping timelines, Gaster and Alphys BOTH created Flowey in their respective realities!

And because Gaster shared a link with Flowey that transcended time, the shade of Alpha Timeline Gaster may have been able to exert a ghostly influence over the Flowey of Alphys' Beta Timeline.

Of the two Entry 17's, Gaster's version seems to lead the most logically to Alphys' Entry 18. Gaster performs a dark experiment..and suddenly Flowey begins to move. And Alphys realizes that her flower is gone, and seems to have no way to track where it went.

Someone is controlling Flowey the vessel now...

And it isn't Alphys.

An enduring mystery of Undertale is the strange voice that calls Frisk in the elevator just as he tries to leave the True Lab. Right before the elevator goes haywire, and sends Frisk crashing upwards to Asgore's Castle, whether he wanted to go there or not.

It's easy to assume from the vines blocking the elevator door after this trip, that the voice we're hearing is coming from Flowey. Which seems to make sense, because we hear exactly the same voice coming from Hyperdeath Asriel a few minutes later.

But there's a problem with this theory. Because while this voice is coming from Flowey/Hyperdeath Asriel, it isn't Asriel's voice.

The Elevator Voice claims to have known Chara, specifically, from the past, and says that they haven't met in a long time. But it's only been a matter of hours or at most a day since Frisk last talked to Flowey. And while Flowey is sometimes uncertain about why things are happening, the Elevator Voice has the tone of an evil mastermind whose grand plans are finally coming together flawlessly.

Both in pitch and attitude, the Elevator Voice coming from Flowey is not his own. And like all of Flowey's other impressions throughout the game, it's a voice that originally came from another character.

If you listen closely, Alphys' voice and the Elevator voice are similar in construction, while different in pitch. Whoever is controlling Asriel is someone similar to Alphys, but not Alphys herself.

Gaster's ghost is the one controlling Flowey, and is using his legacy as the flower vessel's original creator in the Alpha Timeline to attempt to puppet Undertale's version of Flowey in the Beta timeline.

While some of Asriel's dust and Chara's soul is in that flower, and Asriel seems to regain control after Frisk heals his soul, Gaster has been influencing Flowey's actions for some time.

And it's hard to tell who is talking to who at any given point, because of one very creepy coincidence:

It doesn't matter if the conversations between Flowey and our protagonist represent Asriel talking to his former best friend Chara, or Gaster talking to his former best friend Sans... because either way, the conversation will be the same.

Both stories involve one best friend who turned on the other.

Because just as Chara betrayed Asriel, Sans also betrayed Gaster.

The two True Lab Entry 17's reveal one major change between the original Alpha timeline, and Frisk's Beta timeline that was created when Sans and Papyrus warped back to the past:

Gaster didn't die in 201X in the original timeline.

He stayed on as the Royal Scientist right up to the point in time where Alphys wrote her own Entry 17: A time after Chara had already visited the Underground, and Asgore had collected six human souls from the ones who followed her.

A point in time where, if someone was able to collect almost all of the monster souls in the Underground, they could break the Barrier instantly.

And since Chara and Asriel's doomed buttercup adventure happened in Spring 2020 at the very earliest, and Chara the narrator tells us that Asgore's calendar was old, this means Gaster originally survived many years into 202X.

Which means that when Sans and Papyrus warped to the past, both packing Gaster Blasters, their changes to the timestream triggered Gaster's early death in 201X.

And whatever happened on The Night of Gaster's Darkest experiment, it shattered the Font Brigade, and prompted Sans and Papyrus to return to the past... Without Gaster.

So, let's summarize the order of events we have so far, very quickly:

Sans and Gaster were two human friends from The Other World, a world where anime super-technology was real, and humans had amazing mind-powers.

They detected an anomaly in the space-time continuum happening on a different world, where timelines kept stopping and starting, and eventually lead up to the End of Everything.

So Gaster made The Silver Key Machine, and warped to the problem world to investigate, bringing along his best friend Sans to help deal with whatever trouble they might encounter along the way.

Once they arrived, they found the Barrier prevented the Silver Key Machine from warping back to their homeworld again, breaking it in the process of trying. So unless Sans and Gaster could find a way to destroy or bypass the Barrier, there was no way for them to go back to The Other World they came from.

To blend in with the monster population, Sans dressed up as a skeleton while Gaster pretended to be a ghost. And they befriended Papyrus, a real skeleton, to help make their undead disguises more plausible.

Gaster was a scientist of great power and imagination, exceeding that of even the greatest minds of the human world above. He showed the monsters how to do amazing things, and gave them hope they desperately needed.

Once Gaster's feats of technology reached the ear of King Asgore, he named Gaster the Royal Scientist and gave him the most mission of all: To Break the Barrier by any means possible.

With the resources of all the monsters behind him, Gaster designed and built The Core, a mad scientist lair of incredible power. Not only did it provide electricity to entire monster world, but it housed private labs where Gaster could work on his most sensitive experiments away from the prying eyes of the monsters working in the Core above.

After his attempts to bypass the Barrier through dimension travel failed, Gaster began to study the Determination generated by human souls as a resource that could be extracted and put into monsters, so their souls could survive outside their bodies and be collected. And since he began this research before Chara and the six humans who followed her fell into the Underground, Gaster had to use his own soul and that of his friend Sans as the source of Determination for his experiments.

In the original Alpha timeline, Gaster stayed on as the Royal Scientist even as Chara and the six humans had their misadventures in the Underground. It was good thing Sans and Gaster had kept up their monster disguises, because after Asgore's edict that all humans would be harvested, discovery would have meant the end of them.

All of Gaster's work came to a head on the night of his Darkest Experiment, which he wrote about in his version of Lab Entry 17. He read this message to Sans and Papyrus, who were still his friends at the time, and were both in the room with him on that fateful night.

Both Gaster and Alphys were researching how to break the Barrier by the collection of monster souls in their respective timelines. And both created Flowey as a vessel to hold all the human

and monster souls collected so that the power equivalent of Seven Human souls could be channeled in one place to finally destroy the Barrier.

Whatever transpired in that fateful final night of the Alpha Timeline, it didn't go well. Because Sans and Papyrus used the time portal in The Core to journey to the past without their friend Gaster, appearing in Snowdin out of nowhere and asserting themselves, according to the Shopkeeper.

When Sans and Papyrus traveled to the past, it altered the timeline at the point they entered, making the future different from that point forward. This created The Beta Timeline, the reality Frisk experiences in Undertale.

A world where Wingding Gaster had already died years earlier in 201X, and had a fountain built in his honor as a fallen hero of the monsters.

Tracking the precise movements of time travelers is always a difficult thing.

But through some sequence of events, Sans had once taken Frisk's journey earlier in the Alpha timeline, making him the Alpha version of Frisk. So Sans knew that Frisk would eventually arrive, and roughly when, and was able to set many things in motion before Frisk's game began in the Beta timeline.

It's possible that Sans actually removed Gaster from the picture before Frisk arrived, in an attempt to save his earlier, more innocent self the burden of dealing with him personally.

Using Gaster's own blasters to blast him would be a strange irony. But whether this was a battle, or just an accident remains to be seen.

Sans and Papyrus then established themselves as human-hunting guards to prepare for Frisk's arrival. And they befriended Alphys, the new Royal Scientist, to aid in the cause of monitoring Frisk and doing what was possible to test him while also keeping him from harm.

Sans knew there were dogs down in Alphys' True Lab, he's been there before, even recently. Sans may have befriended Alphys in the first place by giving her a tour of the Core to prove he was telling the truth. Sans also needed Alphys to help him get back in touch with Toriel again, but in a way that didn't blow his cover as a human.

When Frisk finally did arrive, Sans tried to send him subtle hints like The Convenient Lamp to let Frisk know who he was. Attempts to jog his memory that didn't require Sans to blow his cover as a skeleton.

So Frisk had his adventure in Undertale, while slowly recovering from the head wound he gained after his fall, gradually regaining his memory and powers. And whenever Frisk reached the neutral end of the game, he used the Core Portal to go back along his own timeline and get a different ending.

And all the while, Frisk's steps were dogged by Flowey, a vessel once created by both Alphys and Gaster to break the Barrier, that contained some of the essence of Chara's best friend Asriel Dreemur, as well as Chara's original soul.

And following Frisk, always hiding in the shadows, was the vengeful shade of Wingding Gaster. The ghost of someone who had once been Sans' best friend. Who somehow knew Chara's name, and addressed Frisk as if he were her.

There's a strange dark symmetry here. Whether you look at Flowey and Frisk's conversations as Asriel talking to Chara, or Gaster talking to Frisk, the conversations are both the same. In both cases, the first character will say they were the best friend of the second, while also seeking revenge for being betrayed by them in the past.

Asriel and Gaster share another musical link, as both are referred to as "Him". Asriel's Theme is simply called "His Theme", while Gaster's Theme in the secret Sound Test room is actually called "mus_st_him", breaking with the other three Sound Test songs whose file names all reflect their titles in the game.

While the creepy character creation music for Deltarune is titled "Another Him", yet doesn't seem to involve Asriel at all.

So now we come back to the moment where everything went wrong.

What WAS Gaster's Darkest Experiment?

And what happened that night that was so bad it shattered not only the Font Bridge of friends, but the entire timeline as well?

The following is my attempt to re-enactment the last night of the Alpha Timeline in dramatic form.

It's a work in progress, and I'm open for suggestions for changes to individual character dialog. And I hope to get some real voice actors to bring these scenes to life at some point in the future.

But I present to you the story of three friends, whose bonds were so strong that to save each other, they would travel to the end of the world.

Or destroy it.

Chapter 9: Screenplay: "The Night of Gaster's Darkest Experiment"

(The scene starts with a completely black screen, as Gaster intones Entry 17:)

Dark Darker Yet Darker
The Darkness Keeps Growing
The Shadows Cutting Deeper
Photon Readings Negative
This Next Experiment
Seems
Very
Very
Interesting...
(spooky) WHAT DO YOU TWO THINK?

Sans "(deadpan) If you ask me? I think we could use more light..."

(The lights flick on, revealing a mad scientist laboratory deep in The Core decked out to the 9's, with computer screens everywhere. One wall has a large, currently inactive portal with some wires running off it, attached to a control panel, and a small metal box. Another has a rack with adventuring supplies and gear, including several Gaster Blasters. And another, the wall to the east, has a doorway leading out into the rest of the Core.)

(Gaster and Sans are standing in the room, while Papyrus is by the doorway, having just flicked on the light switch.)

Papyrus "Behold, dwellers of the dark! I, The Great Papyrus, have found the Switch of Light, and brought happy radiance back to the lightless recesses of this distressed stronghold!"

Gaster "(droll) Thank you Papyrus, for finding the lightswitch."

Papyrus "It was the best I could do for my two greatest friends: Gaster, our Royal Scientist Ghost Wizard, and Sans, his microscopic sidekick!"

Sans "Bone-jour. Our chef spares no ribbing."

Papyrus "I can't overlook it when my diminutive brother in bones stumbles about in the dark! Someone might step on you!"

Sans "I love your choice of words, Papyrus. They're always quite, Humerus."

Papyrus "Sans! What did I tell you about using your juvenile skeleton puns in front of Gaster?"

Gaster looks to Sans "It seems he has a bone to pick with you when you're being a numbskull."

Sans "Eh, he doesn't have the guts."

Papyrus "The entire Core just blacked out, and all you two can do is make bone puns?"

Sans turns to Gaster "He sees right through us. Phantasmic."

Gaster grins "A haunting assessment. I think he's worried your jokes will get BOOed"

Papyrus "Ghost puns!? No! This isn't better at all!"

Sans "We should give this grave situation the living room it needs. Why did the power spook out?"

Gaster types at a terminal "While charging the Core capacitors for the experiment, we ran into an unexpectedly large power drain. Coming from.. Snowdin, Waterfall, Hotland.. New Home... Everywhere!?" Why is this happening, today of all days?"

Sans activates some cameras, and colorful scenes appear from through the Underground "Hmm.. seems like most of the Underground is celebrating?"

(The screens show several scenes. Snowdin is blazing with extra lights as a parade moves through it. Waterfall has a rave in progress where everyone has glowsticks. Hotland is setting off fireworks. And New Home is having a full-fledged laser show, with beams bouncing off a giant inflatable Gaster balloon covered in gilding like a disco ball. And everywhere there are signs such as "He Will Save Us!" "Our Freedom is at hand!" and "The Barrier breaks tonight!")

Sans hmms "It seems everyone knows about our experiment today."

Gaster isn't happy "This was a Top Secret operation! No one other than us was supposed to know about it! How did the word get out!?"

(Papyrus idly hums a few bars of Undertale music, acting conspicuously inconspicuous.)

Gaster spins to face Papyrus "Papyrus, did you tell EVERYONE about my Top Secret Experiment!?"

Papyrus "Well.. I had to tell Asgore. And he told Undyne. And she told Alphys. Who told Bratty and Catty.. Who told.. Basically Everyone..."

Gaster is mad "Papyrus! I trusted you! This operation was supposed to be a SURPRISE!"

Sans "Easy G. After all, if your plan works, isn't this a bone-a-fied holiday?"

Papyrus nods "Yes! Your amazing inventions have given all of us hope again, Gaster! You showed us things we never thought were possible, built technology beyond our wildest dreams, and made us believe that monsters could do anything! And tonight is going to be your greatest trick of all, when you break the Barrier! That's the goal of this experiment, right? To set us all free?"

Gaster hesitates "The goal is.. To break the Barrier.. Yes."

Sans "Well then, what's the worry? What harm could a little partying cause?"

Gaster "The WORRY is that this operation has to be done PERFECTLY, and we can't have any more unexpected distractions! Any unknown variable could ruin everything! How is the reboot of the Core going?"

Sans checks "Most systems are normal. Although when the capacitors discharged early, it activated many of the Core defenses. We have a lot of monsters stranded by re-activated lasers and puzzles. They're calling for backup."

Papyrus "Allow me! It's time to save my befuddled kindred from beguiling booby traps and jumbles. And prove myself worthy to be a member of the Junior Auxiliary Culinary Royal Guards in Training!"

Sans "A unit Undyne created with you as the only member?"

Papyrus "Exactly! Bone Appetit!" Papyrus proudly walks out to do his duty.

Sans and Gaster wait a few moments to let Papyrus get out of earshot, then relax a bit, and start scaling back the character voices they were using, and start talking in the more natural tones of their real voices.

Gaster grumbles "Quite a friend you found there, Sans."

Sans "He's wordy, but he's very useful! When he's in the room, everyone's looking at him, and nobody's looking at us! He's helped maintain our disguises for a quite a while."

Gaster "And he still hasn't figured out that we're both humans, pretending to be monsters? That's good, I suppose. It feels like we've been trapped in one of those detective cartoon shows for years. Like that one with four hippie kids and the talking dog?"

Sans "I've often wondered if Scooby might be some type of monster. Maybe even Snoopy, too. It would answer so many questions. Do you think there's an Underground civilization of monsters on our world?"

Gaster chuckles "Well, I never thought we'd have an adventure stranger than our last one, so who knows. But I have to admit, this one takes all of the cake, and the donuts too."

Sans shrugs "At least it's been peaceful this time. And the food is really good too. I've never met friendlier people anywhere, certainly not in my hometown."

Gaster looks at him. "They're acting friendly at the moment because they don't know we're humans. Have you stopped to wonder exactly what would happen if our disguises failed? We're trapped in an underground civilization of creatures dedicated to the destruction of humanity. One wrong move.. And WE could bring that about! And who's to say they wouldn't find a way to invade our world afterwards?"

Sans meets his gaze "But once they learn humans were the ones who broke the barrier for them, they wouldn't want or need to destroy humanity anymore. They'll live on the surface with us, as friends! Just think, Scooby and Snoopy will finally have dates!"

Gaster doesn't smile, but goes back to his computer. The portal slowly begins to glow, along with the box nearby, and several bits of electronics. "There, I've started recharging the Core capacitors again, more slowly this time to compensate for the extra electric draw from outside. Once that big light on top of the portal turns green, we'll be ready to start the experiment again."

Sans looks over the displays "I've been wondering about some of your Core design for a while. Why so many lasers, traps and security robots on the inside? I also see you've made some new blasters.. Is there something I should know about?"

Gaster "Once we start this experiment, they'll be no going back. It could change the very nature of reality. Who knows what might happen."

Sans "Oh! You mean we might get visitors? (enthusiastic) We might have to fight more aliens from another dimension!?"

Gaster keeps his eyes on the screens "Something like that."

Sans grins, just a little too eager "Oh Boy! Just like old times!"

Gaster quirks a brief smile, but then discards it with a sigh "Sure.... Why not."

Papyrus returns after a bit "Ahem! Junior Jumble Assistant Solo Chief Royal Trainee Safety Inquisitor Papyrus, returning to report!"

Sans returns to his character voice "You must be getting promotions. That title gets more detailed every time we hear it!"

Gaster "What of the trapped monsters? Are the defenses still working at full capacity?"

Papyrus "Well, we switched off enough of the lasers so the monsters in the Core could get back to work. A lot of little robots came out of hatches in the walls. I never noticed those hatches before, they were hidden well.. A few tried to trap people in nets, the Royal Guards are still freeing them all."

Sans blinks "Wow. I hope nobody was hurt?"

Papyrus ponders "The lasers didn't burn anyone. But.. um..."

Gaster gives Papyrus an intense stare "...BUT?"

Papyrus' inexhaustible energy seems to ebb for a moment "We... did find a couple of guards. They were hidden in a ventilation shaft. Like someone had stashed them there. Probably those robots.."

Sans "Are they ok?"

Papyrus scratches his collar "Yes.. and No. They seem fine.. No visible signs of damage, and they're still breathing. But.. they're not moving. And they won't open their eyes. It's like they're asleep, but we can't wake them up. Like they've given up, and Fallen Down. Even though some were younger than me."

Sans stares at Papyrus.. And doesn't see Gaster suddenly shiver a bit, leaning on the computer, as if dealing with some internal struggle. The fit passes, and Gaster stands up straight again, glancing over "It.. must be a glitch in the security protocols. We'll fix the robots.. We'll fix EVERYTHING.. Right after this experiment is finished."

Sans looks at Gaster "Are you ok Doc? You look like you've seen a ghost!"

Gaster manages to crack a sickly smile "Very funny. I.. think I could use some refreshments. I'm going to need all my strength, before this is over..."

Sans nods, then turns to Papyrus "Alright, Solo Irreplaceable Royal Assistant Master Chief Chef Friend Papyrus! We need some grub. That sounds pretty good. Can you get us some Legendary Heroes?"

Gaster "(hurriedly) And Donuts! But.. not the spider kind."

Papyrus salutes! "Alright my ghastly skeleton crew! When I return, we shall Save The World!"

Papyrus leaves, upbeat, whistling a tune. Gaster watches him good, then shivers again, and falls into a chair, troubled.

Sans moves over "G? Are you ok?"

Gaster "yes, Sans. I'm fine. Or.. I will be. Once this is over. I hope." he looks up "I just have a lot on my mind. This experiment today.. What if it goes wrong?"

Sans "Don't forget that we're the good guys, Doc! We're the ones who face impossible odds, risk everything.. And win! Because someone has to save the world, and we're the only ones who can! And if the best plan fails, and everything starts going to hell? That's when we really shine, because when we come back from behind, it looks so cool that we get to wear sunglasses, even at night!"

Gaster smiles weakly "Don't switch the blade on the guy in shades, oh no. Many of your foes would have to wise to heed that line. It still amazes me, as different as our worlds are, that someone still recorded that same song in both. Just like how Peanuts exists here, too." he gets philosophical "It's strange.. I've warped the very nature of space and time to save humanity.. Yet it still feels like you and your determination were more important in the end. Like you were the hero, and I was just an NPC helping you along. I've always felt that kids like you were the future of humans. When we traveled here, and realized we couldn't go back, I almost gave up in despair. Not because we found a world of monster waiting to destroy humanity, but because the world would have to face them without you!"

Sans chuckles “Hey, look who’s talking! Our world, and several others perhaps, would have been lost 20 times over if not for your crazy inventions! When everything seemed lost, you’d break the laws of physics and pull our pajamas out of the fire. You were the smart guy who saved the world, I was just good at taking lots and lots of damage. What say we break this Barrier, fix that Silver Key machine, then show this world how YOU, Doc, saved the worlds of humans and monster alike!”

Gaster was smiling.. But it fades again at Sans’ last words “Yes.. save the worlds. Of Humans. And.. monsters.” he sighs, then looks meaningfully at Sans “Sans.. you must understand something. This thing that I’m doing.. I’m doing it for you. I’m an old man, I don’t have much time left. But you’re a young hero, and our world is going to need you. I have to get you back home, no matter what the risk or cost.”

Sans reclines in his chair, chuckling “You know me Doc. I live for danger. When you asked me to volunteer and go into that machine that extracted.. What was it.. Some type of energy from my SOUL? I didn’t hesitate for a second. You’ve already brought me back from far worse than that. We’ll get back this time too. I know I can trust you.”

Gaster almost looks ashamed for a moment, then reminisces “Your mother was wroth with me after our last adventure, she told me that *I* was grounded. Before we left, I promised her I’d bring you back. (slowly, very meaningfully) No matter what.. I had.. To do.”

Sans gives him a thumbs up, unphased. “I know, Doc. And I can’t wait for us to get home again. And I can’t wait to introduce my mother to Papyrus!”

Gaster seems sad, then, determined, nods “Yes. We all must do.. What we must.”

The light over the portal suddenly turns green with a chime, showing the Core capacitors are ready. Gaster gives a start, looking conflicted for a moment, casting a glance at the door uncertainty, where Papyrus still hasn’t returned. Then Gaster makes a decision, stands up, and moves to the computer, preparing to push a button “.. and may History judge us fairly.”

Gaster slams his fist down on the button...

AND EVERYTHING GOES TO HELL.

Alarms ring out throughout the Core. Lasers reactive, all of them this time, trapping the very guards who were rescuing those stranded from before. Hatches open, and robots of every shape and size start to approach any monsters still free.

On the screen, the Christmas lights in Snowdin flicker for a moment, then greatly dim, as a new white-hot star begins to radiate from the top of the Core.

Sans looks about, confused “G? What’s going on? What’s happening?”

Gaster stands, resolved, watching the screens like an emperor “History.”

Sans’ phone rings, and he picks it up. Papyrus is on the other line. Sans presses a button, then beams the image to one of the screens. The transmission has lots of interference, but we can make out Papyrus standing in a corridor with lasers everywhere, and several monsters running in confusion. “..sans!.. What’s...going.. On? ...all.. The.. traps.. Activated! So many.. Trapped!”

Sans “Hand on Papyrus, I’m on my way!” Sans runs for the door even as Gaster reaches out and says “Don’t--”

Sans smacks head-first into a force field, sliding back, dazed “What the.. We can’t get out!”

Gaster stands, more calmly now, a mad scientist in his element, confidently watching his plans unfurl. “No. Everything in the Core is controlled by this room. And while we can’t get out, nobody else can get in, either. And even if they did, we have the blasters to make a stand.”

Sans spins, staring at Gaster “G? Why.. would they want to attack us? What are you trying to DO!?”

Gaster calmly moves over the portal, fiddling with some controls by the little box. “Only the power equivalent of seven human souls can destroy the Barrier. And Asgore has collected six. But I found a way to equal the power of a seventh soul, without having to sacrifice you or I. We can have that power.. If we collect the souls of almost all of the monsters.”

On the screens, the situation is getting progressively worse as the light burning on top of the Core brightens. The Christmas lights in Snowdin short out, plunging the town into darkness. The dancers in Waterfall start to fall down, gasping, as if the life is getting sucked out of them, the glowsticks themselves starting to wink out. Batteries of fireworks in Hotland catch fire while they’re still on the ground, sending monsters running for cover. And above New Home the massive Gaster Parade Balloon starts to warp in horrible ways, turning into a burning monstrosity that begins to descend on the down, even as it swells.

Papyrus on the screen, full of static “Robotsss.. Everywhere.. Where are.. They all coming from!? Why are..they.. Throwing darts?”

Sans stares in horror “But only boss monster souls persist out of their bodies. It’s impossible to collect the souls of most monsters, they vanish when they die!”

Gaster shake his head in disapproval "People say so many things are impossible, because they don't have the courage or imagination to try." he turns to Sans "Human souls persist after death because they have an energy in them called Determination. Once I figured out how to extract this energy, I could inject it into monsters and steal the souls from their still-living bodies, leaving behind an empty husk that would gradually decay over time."

Sans "The Fallen Down guards stuffed in the vent.. That was YOUR doing?" anger flashes "You used the determination from MY SOUL to do this!?"

Gaster smiles "That was only the beginning. It takes an incredible amount of power to extract the souls from living monsters, especially en mass. So I built an incredibly powerful facility in the middle of a lava field that could do the job. I promised Asgore I'd find a way to break the Barrier, and I have."

"THEY TRUSTED YOU!" Sans screams "**I* TRUSTED YOU! You're going to genocide an entire underground world of friends just so we can GO HOME!?"

Gaster chuckles, a genuinely ghostly sound "Genocide? No, my dear Sans. Asgore and all the monsters outside the Core will be collected, but the Core shields those within it. Which is why I spent so much time setting up traps and an army of robots to capture those within. They'll live, broken and leaderless, as our prisoners. And their plan to destroy the human world will be over before it began."

Sans growls "And you'll only telling me about this NOW? You planned this from the beginning, didn't you? We finally find a world full of nice people, and the first thing you think of is how to destroy it?!"

Gaster scratches his chin "Destroy? Not necessarily. I have a theory that it might be possible for an extracted soul to regrow a body under the right conditions, so simply being absorbed might not be the end. And I aim to capture the monsters in the Core, not kill them. The only ones who will die are the ones who resist."

Papyrus' voice comes over the PA again "... take this you evil robots! And that! And THAT! Leave my friends alone! Sans! What's happening!?"

"I kept my word" Gaster gazes at Sans "The Barrier shall fall this night."

"NOT LIKE THIS!" Sans cries, and swings a hand, picking up a chair with an invisible force and hurling it at the Portal. But Gaster also gestures, deflecting the chair easily, sending it crashing to the floor. Sans growls, then gestures with both hands, tearing a chunk of computer out of the wall and hurls it at the increasingly bright portal like a boulder. But Gaster gestures with a single hand, and halts the massive chunk of metal in midair, easily matching Sans' power.

“Now now now” Gaster smiles “We’re going to need THAT to help control our friend later.”

“HOW?” Sans sweats, still pushing with both hands “How can you be stronger than me?! You were never this powerful before!”

Gaster raises a second hand, and pushes the computer backwards even as Sans strains. “I told you.. Rrr.. that I learned.. To steeeal monsters souls. Aren’t you..rrr.. Curious.. Where I PUT them? I needed a test subject.. And knew you’d never agree. So I absorbed them.. myself! Just in case.. You proved... DIFFICULT!..”

As Gaster calls more and more on the power of the monster souls, he seems to change, becoming someone darker and very different than before, even as his power steadily grows. A darkness seems to surround him, and for a moment a second face, upside down on his chest, forms, talking in unison with him. “You asked.. If we might find.. Alliens. We fouuund oonnee.” And with a final push the computer slams back into the wall.

Sans staggers “Doctor! I don’t know what you’ve done to yourself.. But you’re becoming corrupted! A darkness is consuming you! You have to STOP!”

Gaster coughs, regaining some of his old manner as the second face fades. “No great scientific discovery is gained without risk. You’ve seen what only a few monster souls have done to me.. I feel years younger, and stronger than I ever was! With enough, I might even become immortal! It was worth the chance.”

Gaster walks over to the box and opens it, revealing a single golden flower, hooked up to wires. “Monsters cannot absorb monster souls, any more than humans can absorb human souls. So I adapted this flower as a vessel to contain both, an instrument to wield the power that I can control. Once the Core magnet gains full power it will draw in all the monster souls outside the core, feed them through the portal, and into this vessel. Once I feed it the six human souls it will attain godlike power. No invaders will ever threaten our world again!”

“And YOU Doctor? What about YOU?” Sans clenches his fists. “Who will save our world from YOU?”

Gaster chuckles darkly “Our world will welcome me back as a hero. We’ll bring our captured monsters from the Core back with us. They won’t be free.. But they’ll see the surface. And then we can breed them, turn some into invincible abominations, and harvest the rest to supply souls for those in power, so they might stay in power, and heed my every word. Discovering your monster friends will be the greatest thing that ever happened to mankind.”

“They aren’t the real monsters.” Sans falls into battle stance “YOU ARE.”

Gaster smiles, beckoning him with a hand “WE are. Don’t forget that you’re human too.”

“MORE SO THAN YOU!” Sans tosses another chair, but as Gaster blocks it Sans keeps moving, hurling items at both Gaster and the portal from every direction, a bullet hell of speedy attacks that Gaster and his slower reflexes struggle to block. Sans smashes his hands together, and a section of ceiling above Gaster tears free and falls, even as the floor under the Doctor’s feet also tears free and lifts, trying to smash him in a plate metal sandwich. And as Gaster reels from the ferocious barrage, Sans makes a clawing motion towards his real goal, the Gaster Blasters, pulling one of them through the air towards him.

Gaster arghs, and blocks them in flight “You’re not getting your hands on my blasters!”

Sans growls “I don’t NEED my hands!” and curls his fingers, pulling the trigger remotely through psychokinesis, blasting Gaster with the power of his own weapons “If you don’t stop, I’LL MAKE YOU!!” as blaster after blaster flies out of the rack and fires steady beams at their designer, forcing Gaster to block two beams with his hands, two with his feet as he floats in the air, then taking a fifth square in the chest as the second face reappears, growling.

Gaster’s voice roars with duality “TTHHAATTSS EENNOOUUGGHH!” as he makes a flinging motion, and all five of the blasters suddenly swing and fire, right at Sans. The blast smashes Sans into the wall, shattering a computer. Sans falls to his knees, shaken, but alive.

Gaster chuckles, sending the blasters back to the rack, the second face staying this time, speaking in unison with the face above. “Ah, ‘Sans’. With all your amazing psychokinetic abilities I wish my own son had. You USED to be the hero, but this is MY story now. Even so, you may still play a part in it.”

Gaster gestures, and a glowing cage of force fields surrounds Sans. Sans slowly rises, feeling the new barrier with a hand, which glows as he pushes at it, but doesn’t give an inch. “You’re.. Sparing me?”

Gaster smiles, gesturing to the screens, and their images of increasing horror. “It’s almost time. I wanted you to watch. And your Doctor friend is still in here, too, and still cares for you. You will suffer watching what happens, and he will suffer, watching you.” Gaster laughs.. A dark, ugly sound, using the same voice, yet sounding very different from before. “Don’t bother trying to break that shield, you never will.”

Sans tries anyway, pushing at the shields, then bashing a fist against them, running around trying to find a weak spot, growing increasingly frustrated and desperate even as the Alien continues “You see.. As troublesome as he’s been in the past, I still need your Doctor friend, just like I need all of my instruments to effect change in this world. His fine mind is an invaluable tool. And if I could turn you dark as well, your courage and strength would be great assets for me.”

The glowing of the portal nears a critical mass. And all over the Underground, monsters are falling down, gasping for life, the last lights starting to wink out as the blazing white-hot star on top of the Core becomes overpowering. Wisps of dust start to seep from monsters, as the Gaster Balloon becomes a leering, molten horror that somehow still refuses to pop.

Sans runs about frantically in circles, looking for a way out as Papyrus can be heard again “.. we can.. Only hold out.. A bit longer.. Here they come! Aahhh.. Block their shots.. The others must survive! Sans, are you there? Answer me!”

The Alien chuckles, turning away from Sans to gaze at the portal in expectation, the dual voice sound more like it than Gaster now. “It still amazes me, with how long I’ve been playing this game, that some prideful creatures still think they can beat me at it. And to his credit, your Doctor friend almost did. But in the end, I always get my due.”

Sans stops pounding the shields, blinking, then starts running around in circles in a controlled manner, faster, and faster, as rapidly as he can.

The Alien spreads his arms, welcoming the deadly light shining from the portal. “The Prophecy will now be fulfilled. And the Underground shall go empty.”

Sans starts moving incredibly fast now, his motions blurring, leaving afterimages as he approaches the speed of light!

The Alien “And we shall return to his world, as heroes, and begin a new day for humanity.”

The portal vibrates, reaching its maximum power as the whole Core starts to shudder.

Papyrus screams “SANS! HELP!!”

The Alien roars in triumph “AND I SHALL FINALLY HAVE THE POWER OF GO--”

Sans screams, and *teleports*, phasing right through the shield without breaking it, leaving afterimages as he crashes right into Gaster’s back! Time slows as Gaster careens into the active portal, which short-circuits, bathing Gaster in jagged lightning, tearing his body and soul into ribbons that shatter across space and time with one horrific, echoing dual SCREAM.

The entire Core shakes, warping as the evil star twists, then blasts apart into colorful fragments that sail to the edges of the Underground, lighting the ceiling as they pass.

Sans stares at the haywire portal that Gaster disappeared into in disbelief. Then he’s rocked by a series of horrific pains as the screen suddenly rewards him a staggering boatload of Execution Points, and one Level of Violence after another. A surge of compounding damnation as his

screams echo off the walls, just before the Core circuit breakers give out again, and everything plunges back into darkness.

Time passes.

Sans kneels in the darkness, weeping.

The room is dark, except for the occasional heartbeat. A red aura that seems to pulse from Sans, somehow illuminating him so we can see him. A figure with empty eyeholes in a smiling mask. A creature of dead bone white surrounded by impenetrable darkness.

One of his eyes is trailing tears. The other trails a stream of blood.

He's a pitiful creature wracked by pain. And guilt. Doomed forever to be haunted by his mistakes.

A demonic creature lost in the dark, holding off the tug of the waiting abyss for just a little longer, through the raw determination of his failing will to live. Even if that life holds no possibility of redemption.

And then, just when he's bowing his head, and beginning to accept that there's no escaping the Darkness...

There's a click, and the lights in the next room come on, revealing a familiar silhouette standing in the doorway.

"Sans?"

Sans blinks, his eye dots visible again. He wipes his mask and looks up at the door.

There's another click, and the lights of the control room turn on, revealing Papyrus in the doorway, giving Sans a concerned look.

Papyrus' armor is heavily damaged, showing myriad laser burns, cracks from ballistic impacts, fabric tears from the grasping of miniature robotic claws. The downy coating from the feathering of a multitude of small darts sticking to it adds extra volume to his armor, making it look, if anything, more impressive. But otherwise, Papyrus looks surprisingly good.

Papyrus takes a long look around the damaged room, then goes to Sans “Sans.. what happened?”

Sans is feeling so many emotions right now that he forgets to switch back to character voice, and talks to Papyrus in his real one, perhaps for the first time. “Gaster.. He wanted to harvest the souls of all the monsters outside the Core to break the Barrier. Then.. keep everyone in the Core as prisoners for test subjects. And worse.”

Papyrus kneels down “But he’s no longer here?”

Sans shakes his head “No.. I stopped him. I... pushed him into the Portal. It went haywire.. And.. it killed him.”

Silence for a moment. Then Sans says “Papyrus, you’re OK? I thought.. You were dead?”

Papyrus smiles a little, glancing down at his armor. “Oh, Undyne said it best. I couldn’t hurt a snail, but when it comes to taking damage, I’m pretty tough.” he plunks one of the feathered darts from his armor and rolls it in his fingers. “When the defenses turned on us, it was chaos. Lasers blocked the halls, so I had to stand in a few of them to let others by. Robots were everywhere, trying to throw nets around the Royal Guard who were trying to untrap others, so I turned the nets blue so they fell short. This huge robots with miniguns for arms crashed through the wall, firing these little syringe darts to everyone, so I jumped in front of it. I was sure that would dust me.. But these little things didn’t hurt me at all. Things were looking bad, but we managed to hold it together, long enough for the power to go out again.”

Sans slowly gets to his feet, shakily “You’re.. A hero Papyrus.”

Papyrus looks quizzically at Sans as he stands also “Me? I did what anyone would do if their friends were attacked by robots. The Royal Guard are the heros, they’re the ones who have to save everyone, and how could their do their job unless someone saved them first?” Papyrus brushes the darts off his armor “Undyne tried to tell me something after the lights went off, like ‘You deserve to be..’ but then she fell asleep. Took several of those darts. I guess she really wanted a nap?”

Sans tries to smile “Well, Royal Guard trainee apprentice assistant padawan Papyrus.. It looks like you’re just going to be called ‘Guard’ now.”

Papyrus looks horrified “No! I like long names! More words make titles cooler!”

Sans looks around the room, taking it all in, coming to terms with everything that happened “Well.. I’m glad you’re a hero. It’s good there’s at least one still around.”

Papyrus tilts his head at Sans "What? What about you? We've have all been done for if you hadn't shut off the Core again. You just saved all of us!"

"SAVED?" Sans spits out the word "I haven't SAVED anyone! Gaster and I are the reason everyone was in danger in the first place! If we hadn't come here, the Core would have never been built, and none of this would have happened! If I hadn't been so.. DAMN STUPID!.. And let Gaster do all of this, so many people wouldn't have gotten hurt! And I had to kill my best friend to stop it!" he grabs Papyrus' arm "I had to kill my best friend, Papyrus! I JUST KILLED MY BEST FRIEND!"

Papyrus doesn't move, and just looks a little sad "I thought I was your best friend?"

"I..." Sans stops, and lets go, sobbing a bit "What am I going to do, Papyrus? Gaster and I came from another world in the Silver Key Machine he built, and it broke when we tried to go back through the Barrier. Even if we could still break the Barrier somehow, which seems impossible after this, Gaster's the only one who could fix that machine.. And now he's gone. I can never go home, Papyrus. I can never go home!"

"You could stay here?" Papyrus suggests "Among all your other friends? They know you did your best, they won't blame you. And whatever you say, you did save us all. You're going to be popular now, don't you see? You're going to be popular.." Papyrus sighs "Something I always wanted to be."

"It's hard to appreciate that others like me, Papyrus, when I don't even like myself." Sans looks at his hands, which tremble a bit "I've killed someone, Papyrus. Someone who was like a father to me. The cool father who went on adventures with me, instead of the one I only talked to on the phone. I don't think I'll ever feel clean, or innocent again. And I don't know why.. But I feel only someone innocent can save this world, and break that Barrier." he looks up "And that person is no longer me..."

"We may not always be who we want to be." Papyrus says, then chuckles "So ironic, coming from me. But a hero always does what they can. And whether you believe it or not Sans, the Future of Monsters depends on you."

Sans stops for a moment, then laughs. "That's.. Funny." he gestures to the portal "He said I was the future of humans, before.. That.. happened." he sighs "If only I knew then, what I know now, things might have been different. I guess there's no sense living in the past."

Papyrus tilts his head "Well, if you could go back and talk to an earlier version of yourself, what would you say to him?"

"I would say.." Sans starts, then steps, staring at Papyrus "Wait.. what did you say again?"

Papyrus ahems "I asked, if you could go back, and talk to an earlier You, what would you say to him?"

Sans stares "Papyrus.. THAT'S IT!" Sans looks at the portal, then around the lab "Gaster was studying traveling through time and space. He made that portal at first to look for a dimension where the Barrier didn't exist. I CAN go back in time, and try to change the future! Papyrus, YOU'RE A GENIUS!"

Papyrus adjusts his collar "Er.. I do cook a mean plate of spaghetti, that only sometimes bites people back?"

Sans keeps going "We can go back, change the past, and make it so that earlier version of me who left from the Ruins has a better chance at making better choices, and keeping his innocence. I might not be able to break the Barrier anymore, but if I help the earlier me, he can!"

Papyrus smiles "We should set up a guard station outside the Ruins, and wait for the earlier you to arrive. That way we'll be the first ones to meet him." he grins "Or any OTHER humans who pass by."

Sans stops, and slowly looks at Papyrus, realizing he's still using his real voice. He switches to character quickly "Now Papyrus.. how much do you.." then Sans realizes it's no use, and goes back to his real voice again. "... How much do you know?"

Papyrus chuckles "I could recite the Royal Guard roster forwards and backwards in Pig Latin while riding a unicycle. But if we're talking about you and Gaster being humans.. I've known that for quite a while. I always wondered why you only drink things in public, and wait until night to have so many midnight snacks. One night I waited outside the window and watched you pull off that mask to eat. You eat a lot more than just ketchup. And no skeleton I've ever known was able to teleport, or actually needed to nap for hours every night. So when I saw your real face, everything made a lot more sense."

Sans gazes up at him "And you never turned us in?"

Papyrus looks hurt "I couldn't do that. They'd take your soul, and I couldn't allow that. Rule 1 of having friends is that you protect each other. And when I met the two of you.. It was the first time I ever felt cool by association!"

Sans gives Papyrus a hug "Papyrus, I'm sorry. All this time I thought you were crazy. But you're the best friend anyone could ever ask for."

Papyrus smiles "I'm not crazy, just really Extra most of the time." then, more serious "Do you know why Gaster did what he did?"

Sans looks about, starting to pack bits of gear for the trip “He thought monsters would destroy humanity, so he set out to stop them before the Barrier fell. But it was more than that.. He’d become corrupted by some kind of alien, and it was getting him to start doing terrible things, like stealing monster souls and absorbing them himself.”

Papyrus starts to pack too, gathering a few bits of bling and nicknacks “Do you know what kind of alien it was?”

Sans “Unfortunately..” he cocks a Gaster Blaster “.. I think I do. It’s an entity he and I have both fought before, something that tried to destroy our world.” Sans shudders “I don’t know when he became corrupted, or how long it’s been eating at him. I don’t even know how much of him is still left in that shell. Saving him may be impossible.”

Papyrus tsks “And what would the Doc say, if he heard you claim something was impossible?”

Sans stops, then chuckles a bit “He’s says ‘Almost anything is possible, if someone has the courage and imagination to try’. And after all the crazy things I’ve seen him do, I’m in no position to argue.”

“Well then..” Papyrus dons a pair of sunglasses, then turns to Sans, offering him another pair. “It’s settled. We’re going to travel to the past to save the future of humans and monsters alike!”

Sans blinks “Papyrus.. You’re coming too?”

Papyrus smiles, adjusting his shades “Of course! We heros have to stick together!

Sans “But it could be dangerous! We’re not just traveling in time, but dimension too. When we go back it will split the timeline, and everything could change. I have no idea what this earlier version of myself could be like. Humans have darkness in their souls, Papyrus. He might be a real monster, and try to kill everyone! We won’t know unless we test him. And ten minutes ago, a human tried wiping all the monsters out!”

Papyrus pushes the sunglasses onto Sans’ mask “And ten minutes ago, another human stepped up, and stopped him. Judge people not by what they are, but by what they do. And whoever this earlier version of you is, I believe in him, as much as I believe in you.”

It’s impossible to read Sans’ expression with the sunglasses on, but he has no words to give Papyrus in response. Instead, Sans goes over to the portal controls and types on the keys, as the portal begins to glow a different color than before. “Papyrus.. I was lost in the dark before you arrived. Gaster was right when he said meeting you monsters was the best thing that ever happened to humanity, but he said it for all the wrong reasons. You remind me that there’s still good in the world, and that it’s worth fighting for. If you ever left me, I don’t know what I would do.”

“That’s why I’m coming with you.” Papyrus smiles “We may not have the same mother, but that doesn’t stop us from being brothers.”

Sans finishes programming the Portal, which glows white. “OK, it’s ready. We’re going to appear in Snowdin a few years before the other me arrives, hopefully we can do something about Gaster before then.” he turns to Papyrus, and hands him one of the Gaster Blasters “There’s several miles to the Snowdin. We’ve got a full rack of blasters, half a pack of spaghetti. It’s dark outside, and we’re wearing sunglasses.”

Papyrus salutes “Hit it!”

Sans steps into the portal, along with Papyrus “Don’t look back...”

The portal flashes, and both of them vanish in a surge of light. Which gradually fades, leaving the laboratory empty.

Time passes. And then...

A ghostly figure fades into existence in the center of the lab.

Before, he was an old scientist pretending to be a ghost. But now, he’s a ghost in truth, something neither human nor monster. An amalgamation of the ultimate scientific mind, and an entity of unknowable mindless power.

Now, he is Wingding Gaster in truth. And duality rings in his voice.

“So... Sans. That is your choice. To betray your own people to these monsters. So be it. I will make sure your Mother never sees you again.”

Gaster gestures with an ethereal hand...

And the golden flower vessel slowly begins to move.

(Fade to black. End of Scene.)

And that’s how I believe Sans and Papyrus left the original Alpha timeline, and established the Beta timeline by warping several years into the past. As a last-ditch attempt to change the past to save the future.

If you try to tell Sans that Papyrus isn't cool at Grillby's, he'll tell you sarcasm isn't cool, and that Papyrus gave him the idea to establish the Snowdin guard station in the first place. Sans is glad to have Papyrus around, to call him out when he could be doing better. Papyrus' positivity is what gave Sans hope to continue on, and it's something Frisk owes his life to.

Papyrus may say that he doesn't know what humans look like, but all the other Undertale monsters have no trouble figuring this out. A human was a member of the Royal Family for a while, not too long ago, and the Royal Guard is certainly briefed about them as part of their orders to hunt them down.

And once again, Papyrus says he's keeping you captive long enough for Undyne to arrive if he puts you in the doghouse, but changes his tune and asks if you just want a place to stay if you fail his boss fight multiple times.

Papyrus is in on Sans' plan, along with Alphys and Toriel.

After all, Sans once met Toriel, too. Even if he went by a different name at the time. Sans is the Alpha version of Frisk. That's how Sans knew if he knocked on the Ruins door for ages, she'd eventually respond.

There are still a few questions I can't answer. Like why didn't Gaster or Sans rewind time to undo The Darkest Experiment?

Flowey tells Chara-possessed Frisk that he can no longer reload his save, because her Determination seems to exceed his own. Sans' determination to save his friends could have overpowered Gaster's conflicted plan to enslave and destroy them, and prevent him from reloading.

Sans might have also seen no point in rewinding time because Gaster was already infected by the alien from their world even before they arrived, and he couldn't rewind time far enough to undo that. And if Sans told the monsters in the past what Gaster was planning, they would have followed Asgore's orders and harvested them both.

Why does Frisk always end up back in the Ruins, wearing an old bandage that has already been used many times?

Perhaps the portal sends him back in time to when he first fell from above, helping him restore his earlier save instead of the most recent one?

Or it could be, since we find the same type of bandages in Chara's coffin, and wake up right where Toriel had buried Chara, that Frisk and Chara share some sort of linked destiny that spans timelines, much in the same way that both Alphys and Gaster both created Flowey? We assume that Frisk fell from above before our game began, but the while we saw this happen to Chara, Frisk may have simply teleported or warped to the Ruins rather than falling.

Why did Gaster die in the past during Frisk's Beta timeline? Did Sans kill him, again, or did something go wrong?

Whatever happened, the monsters still revered Gaster in Frisk's timeline, otherwise they wouldn't have made a fountain for him. Although they didn't love him like a member of the Royal Family itself, because no one objected to Mettaton adding his own water-puking effigy to the fountain later.

And since Gaster died long before his Darkest Experiment was ready to activate, the monsters kept using The Core as a benign power plant, never knowing of the doom that might be waiting for them all hiding in The Core's unexplored recesses. A plan Gaster had made to solve The Monster Problem from the very beginning.

And why do the stripes on Frisk's shirt flash between one and two stripes when he enters Sans' room for the first time?

Perhaps there is some greater link between Chara and Frisk that crosses timelines?

This idea of separate timelines and dimensions still able to touch and influence each other may seem strange, but it's far from impossible.

Because Timeline Bleed like this is a central mechanic in the project Toby made before Undertale.

Chapter 10: Secrets of the Earthbound Halloween Hack

Swankybox pointed out an interesting coincidence in DeltaRune, where Kris finds a picture of characters wearing Halloween costumes eight years earlier.

Which is exactly when Tobyfox launched his now-infamous Halloween Hack of the classic game Earthbound. As if, rather than just a fan project, it marked the beginning of a much greater story.

And if you'll hear me out, and keep the Undertale theories I've suggested so far in mind, I can show you how the Hack does set the stage for Undertale. And provides the secret origin story of one of the most mysterious characters of all time.

There are enough coincidences between the games to be notable.

Earthbound's energy PSI Points are commonly called "PP", a possible attempt at toilet humor. DeltaRune doubles down on this by using "Tension Points" for energy, which one NPC jokingly calls "Toilet Paper".

Earthbound is famous for its bizarre, often non-lethal combats, as people and inanimate objects infected with Giygas' corrupting power turn back to normal when you beat the sense back into them. This focus on non-lethal encounters, very different from most RPGs where slaughtering monsters is so normal that it's rarely questioned, was a literal game-changer in the gaming industry, and an influence on Undertale/Deltarune's construction.

But while Undertale and Deltarune encourage the player not to kill enemies, the Halloween Hack sticks out as the black sheep of the family, in a world where something has gone terribly, terribly wrong.

Right from Character Creation you notice something different.

While Paula, Jeff Andonuts and Prince Poo have the same sprites, Ness has been replaced by the red-and-black haired sword-wielding bounty hunter Varik, who's radically different in every way.

The game doubles down that Varik isn't psychic right from the start, reminding you that you can't even use your PSI Rockin Favorite Thing Special Attack which Ness spams constantly in Earthbound, although you do get to name it.

A dog in town refuses to talk to you because you aren't psychic. Multiple people in Twoson Town remember a different boy hanging out with Paula, a boy other than Varik. Time and time again the NPCs remind you that you that Varik isn't Ness, just in case there was ever any doubt. Our sword-swinging bounty hunter Varik that kills people for money is very different from the bat-swinging Boy Scout from Earthbound.

Varik wakes up from a noise outside just like Ness in the original game, but once he leaves his room another narrator takes control, claiming to pull Varik out of his dream while he's laying down in a pile of puke. There's a white flash.. And Vark find himself in front of the Manager's office, who politely -demands- that Varik go on a mission.

A monster just attacked the town, and a girl watched the long, gorey process of her parents being slowly and painfully torn to pieces by it.. Without ever thinking to go and get help. Despite the carnage, this weird town is strangely upbeat, having locked all the manhole covers in the hopes of preventing another attack. But Varik's mission is clear: Find where the monster came from, and deal with it.

The town of Twoson is bizarre.

Girls are sunbathing in winter. The bike store has a ton of bikes, but won't sell you one because ALL of them are for show. Mr. T loves eating halloween candy laced with metal. Pigpen from Peanuts talks about how dinosaurs walked the Earth millions of years ago. Someone left a sign in the middle of the street that points out where the manhole is, and when Varik tries to use the key he got from the manager to open it, he discovers it's already been conveniently unlocked for him, threatening the lives of everyone in town! Trippy Halloween mutants roam the lawns, and a kid-eating dinosaur turns back into a regular dinosaur when defeated.

The entire town is one huge pixelated drug trip, and I'm not even counting the guy in the Sombrero!

And then something even weirder starts to happen.

After Varik fights goons about town and gains some levels, he starts to gain something else: PSI abilities. Powers that Varik shouldn't be able to have, because he isn't psychic. And whenever Varik dies, something that happens a LOT in this game, he sees an image of Ness, who assures him he's having a bad dream, and wishes him good luck as he teleports away to some impossibly-long distance.

The first big story twist happens when Varik meets Paula's Dad, who says she and 3 other boys went back in time to defeat Giygas.. But never returned, a change from the original Earthbound story.

In Earthbound, Doctor Andonuts puts the souls of our heros into robots, so the Phase Distorter, which he says can't transport organic matter, can send them back to the past to fight Giygas. And after the fight our heros' souls leave the robots and return to their human bodies in the present.

But in the Halloween Hack the souls never returned.

Paula's Dad knows that sending Paula to the past to fight Giygas was right, but he still partly blames "the stupid Doctor" who sent them there for why they didn't return. The first time Doctor Andonuts is mentioned in the Hack.

Apple Kid says Doctor Andonuts has been missing ever since the bad news that Ness and his friends weren't coming back hit, and is curious what happened to him.

So after some leveling, Varik heads into the sewers, in search of both The Monster, and the missing mad scientist.

And this is where the game starts to get dark. REALLY dark.

Each level of the sewers is like descending into another layer of Hell.

At first, the monsters are simply stronger, and grosser than normal. But soon Varik finds himself literally wading through a river of blood, and vile creatures that explode in incredibly gory detail, throwing the non-lethal part of the game right out the window.

There isn't just one monster, there's a WORLD of them. They must be coming from somewhere. And the closer Varik gets, the worse everything becomes.

Yet the Mysterious Narrator is always there, revealing these horrors to Varik, and saying that some unknown force keeps forcing his legs onward, and onward, not letting him stop, or ever go back. And at key points where Varik tries to go back, another white flash appears, and keeps him right where he is.

And the Mysterious Narrator tells Varik that he senses the greatest monster of all.. Just as Varik opens the door to Doctor Andonuts' lab.

What follows is the strangest conversation I have ever seen.

At first Andonuts seems to recognize Varik, asking him if Mr. Brickroad the dungeon maker referred him as a helper.

But when Varik mentions his son Jeff, Doctor Andonuts has a breakdown. And says that not only Jeff, but every being in Winters--no, every being on EARTH and the UNIVERSE--is dead.. Because he sent his son Jeff and his friends back in time.. To perish.

Andonuts says his life is now meaningless. So he made the monsters to destroy the world.

Then Andonuts sees something in Varik's eyes that chills him to the core.

A look he recognizes as belonging to someone else.. The Mysterious Narrator "Oh those EYES you're its NO, those eyes came back! So you came back, WELL..."

Andonuts says he's invented a machine to send himself to Magicant, the realm of his own mind. "This world is dead and.. I've become senile with guilt and rage. Please.. Please let an old man rest in peace. Leave.. Me..." and Andonuts teleports away into the machine in front of your eyes, using his psychokinetic powers.

The Mysterious Narrator will not let Varik leave this lab, white-warping him back inside if he tries to use the door, or the stairs.

Your only option is to go to the machine, and then face the greatest choice in the game: Whether or not to kill Doctor Andonuts right then and there.

The Mysterious Narrator clearly wants you to kill him. After all, that's why the Mysterious Narrator forced you to come here in the first place! It only presents you with one -visible- option, the option to strike and kill Doctor A, as the simple, clear, and rational choice.

It's only by experimenting with the controls that you discover a secret second option, which prompts the Narrator to scold Varik and tell him to make a REAL choice. "What do you Varik, devil killer, Giygas destroyer... What do you do!?"

This new title the Mysterious Narrator gives Varik raises questions. Varik never went to the past and fought Giygas, only Ness and his three friends who never returned did that, so it makes no sense to call Varik the "devil killer, Giygas destroyer".

...unless there's more to the story that we don't know?

If you choose to strike, there's a gale of laughter as the Narrator describes the blood pouring from the machine, and Andonuts' pitiful cries for help. Before the scientist falls out of the Magicant Machine, dead. Then our mysterious Narrator 'friend' takes away our legs, our arms, and our mind, before gleefully informing us that we made the right choice! "You did the right

thing Varik. It was really brave of you to make that choice. We need people like you to make decisions like that. You're a true hero! THE END. Ha,Ha,Ha”

It's very clear that The Mysterious Narrator is NOT, actually, your friend. And is actually a far greater monster than Andonuts, who believes it can control you like a puppet.

And if Varik does resist this evil influence to the point where he discovers how to press B when over the hidden second choice, the Narrator is horrified, and will scream at Varik to stop!

“YOU WANT TO KILL THE MONSTER, WHY ARE YOU OPENING THE DOOR TO HIM? Your legs aren't lying to you! That knife doesn't lie to you! Varik, if you open that door, time and space will collapse! DON'T OPEN THAT! WAKE UP! THIS IS ALL JUST A DREAM, ISN'T IT!?”

But to continue the game, Varik must ignore The Mysterious Narrator, and enter the machine, warping himself to the world inside Doctor Andonuts' mind.

And while everything is weird beyond reason, time and space does not collapse. So the Mysterious Narrator was definitely lying to us.

Andonuts' mind is full of fractured memories.

Recollections of being bullied as a child for being a nerd, as well as numerous fears and regrets.

Apple Kid says Andonuts hides deep in The Sea of Eve, afraid of even his own mind. You'll have to recover his Courage, which is buried under his fear, to find him, and hopefully save him.

Varik has many adventures in Magicant.

He meets a series of Flowey-like flowers with bad attitudes. “H-hey! You used me in a science experiment! How would you like it if I dissected YOU!?”

And Variks begins to fight Doctor Andonuts' personal demons, figuratively, and literally.

While on a quest to find the Doctor's Courage, Varik reaches the Zexonyte meteor, and sees a grown woman appear and fly around his head like Buzz Buzz.

“Honey, I need to talk to you about something. Lately, you've been acting kind of.. Disinterested in me. Is there something wrong? Is there something wrong with me? Honey.. Is there

something you're not telling me? Honey please.. You're not hiding something from me, are you?.."

And then a boss fight starts, as three demons, each part of a buff manly man, spawn, all of which are named "NO". And you have your choice of attacking a crotch, a powerful arm covered in blood, or a muscular chest.

A popular theory about the "NO" fight is that Andonuts was a closet homosexual, which might explain why he was no longer interested in his wife.

But this theory has a problem, because the Doctor's wife says his recent behavior is a change from before, when their relationship was different. There was a time when Andonuts DID talk to his wife, and during this time they had a son together, Jeff. Andonuts used to be interested in his wife, until something happened that drove a wedge between them.

And we're going to see that, despite their sometimes rocky relationship, Andonuts does care for his son, and sent him away to boarding school for ten years for a very specific reason.

But let's look at the "NO" boss fight again, from another angle:

The Doctor's wife just asked him if something was wrong, and it's very clear that something is.

Andonuts now has two choices: He could summon his courage and tell his wife the truth, even if it's something bad that she doesn't want to hear. Or, he could do the traditionally macho thing, pretend to be large and charge, and brush aside her honest questions by lying, and saying "NO."

This boss fight isn't about homosexuality: It's about Lying, and a terrible choice Andonuts has to make. Between whether or not he tells his wife the truth, something bad is going to happen.

And after the fight, Andonuts looks at his wife's tombstone, full of regret, and says he'll never lie again.

Doctor A's personal demons are urging him to make the wrong choice, telling him to lie to his wife and say "NO". Which is why Varik is fighting those very demons right now in this boss battle.

It might seem impossible to win the "NO" fight at first, but it can be done. You can score a devastating critical smash on the chest to destroy it in one hit, and if one of the three demons falls, the other two follow.

However, most players take the easy choice and opt to flee from this fight, because it's one of the few boss encounters you can actually run away from.

Choosing to either fight and tell the truth, or flee and say "NO", is our own personal test of courage every bit as nail-biting as the one Andonuts himself went through in the past when he formed this memory. Bravely fighting demons with a sword is all well and good, but having to confess that you've done something terrible to your wife is a stab to the heart that no shield can block.

So what did Andonuts actually do in the past? Did he drive away his wife by being cold to her, and refusing to tell her something she deserved to know? Or did he confess something terrible to her, in the hopes that her love for him was strong enough that she could forgive him?

The sad truth is, we never find out. Because no matter how our fight with "NO" resolves, the result is the same.

Either way, Doctor Andonuts' wife leaves him.

Because even if the good Doctor told the truth, it was a truth so terrible that she left him, anyway.

What could Doctor Andonuts have done, that his own wife would consider unforgivable?

The secret seems to center around their son, Jeff.

In the next world you visit a series of rooms, each being a scene from the Andonuts household.

In one, Dr. A's wife asked if he loves her, and their son Jeff, becoming increasingly exasperated that he barely talks to EITHER of them!

In the room after this, you find a boy in a green Jeff-like outfit kneeling down. He begins to say "I CAN FEEL THEM IN MY HEAD.." which gives the first impression that he's a psychic child hearing voices in his head.

But the child breaks this assumption with his next few lines: "I CAN FEEL THEM WITH MY TONGUE. THEY'RE HARD. I USE THEM TO CHEW FOOD." and we realize that he's talking about his teeth instead. This child isn't psychic, far from it, he had no psychokinetic powers at all. Even though Dr. Andonuts himself certainly does.

Jeff Andonuts is famous for being the only one of the four Earthbound heroes who has no psychokinetic powers at all. Which is strange, because his father does, and Jeff is a certified

genius who's able to defeat monsters with rockets, and mad science inventions like his HP Sucker, which is the best weapon against some bosses.

It's clear that Jeff does have his father's genius. Which makes it very strange that Jeff doesn't also have his father's mind powers. And meeting the powerless Teeth In Head Kid in the Andonuts house, right after Andonuts and his wife had their argument, increases the likelihood that Jeff's lack of powers is related to the drama, somehow.

After meeting Jeff, and fighting the boss Dearthheart, Andonuts reveals that he does love his son:

"When Jeff came to me for help, it made me so happy. Happy... I know I wouldn't be able to raise him by myself. I wouldn't want him to turn into a shameful monster like me(!!!). So I sent him away to boarding school. Now he's not a monster. He's almost a hero. I feel that if I help him do what he wants most, even if it's something ridiculous.. If he accomplishes that, I'll turn back into a normal person. I won't be a monster anymore."

Let's talk about THAT conversation for a moment!

Doctor Andonuts sent his young son Jeff away to boarding school for TEN YEARS.. Because he didn't want Jeff to turn into a Monster Like Him. That the best thing for Jeff.. was to be as far away from his father as possible.

Doctor Andonuts has terrible self-esteem, calling himself a monster. And he believes this not because of something he IS, but because of something he's DONE... because he believes that if he can help Jeff have a good life without powers, he'll redeem himself, and not have to consider himself a monster anymore.

Doctor Andonuts has done something terrible that he can't forgive himself for, that somehow relates to Jeff and his lack of powers. And he probably stopped talking to his wife and son the moment he realized that Jeff didn't have powers, somehow blaming himself for this. And his wife apparently agreed with him that it was a terrible thing.. Because even if he told her the truth, she still left him.

So the billion yen mystery is: What terrible thing did Doctor Andonuts DO?

Keep in mind that these scenes are events from Andonut's memory that happened BEFORE he sent Ness and his friends on their doomed trip to the past. So while remorse over the lost child heroes might have finally driven Doctor Andonuts insane, that happened later in time, and can't be the thing that drove a rift between Andonuts and his family.

The really creepy thing about Teeth in Head Kid is that while he might be wearing Jeff's green outfit, and it would certainly make sense for Jeff to be in this scene.. Teeth In Head Kid also has VARIK's distinctive black and red hair. And just like Jeff, Varik isn't psychic either.

Or at least, Varik shouldn't be.

But as the game progresses, Varik develops powers like barrier shields that are difficult to explain as non-psychic tech abilities. And when Varik learns advanced powers like "PSI Magnet", there's no escaping that he's using psychokinesis, even though Varik doesn't have any powers!

Or does he?

Or is it him, doing it?

Remember when The Mysterious Evil Narrator called Varik the "devil slayer, Giygas destroyer"? This title could only belong to Ness and his friends, Varik certainly never killed Giygas.

But Varik can see Ness. Ness is the one who shows up to help Varik find his courage to continue on when he dies. Somehow, Ness, who supposedly died in the past, is here, talking to him.

And it isn't just Ness.

Whenever you defeat a boss in the Hack, something special happens. A voice appears, calling themselves "Courage". And whenever you return to the start of Magicant afterwards, you find you're not alone. One of Ness's friends has also joined your party. The very one who just talked to you, in fact.

Paula appears after you defeat or run from "NO". "I am Courage. I've been called to help you fight the demons plaguing this old man's mind." and she asks you to seek out two of her friends, then adds: "I wonder if, Dr. Andonuts.. Are you just a self-conscious old fool?"

When you talk to Jeff on his neon throne, he thinks you're Dr. Andonuts, and talks about seeing Paula in his dreams, and how he must join her and the others. "Will you help me? ...! Yes Thank You! I knew I could count on you.." then he says to the side "(I'll see you again in another 10 years, what's that supposed to mean? Am I just supposed to say goodbye like this!? In that case.. Goodbye)"

And then Dearthart appears, a shadowy figure with a glowing, broken heart, almost Undertale style. With a name that's a combination of Dear and Dark.

This fight is especially important because Toby made original music for it, something that was very difficult to add to the ancient rom files. It opens with "Dearthart is your own fault". Dearthart pierces your soul and scrambles your heart into pieces. And when you defeat it, its core shatters, and its body fractures into bits. Which is so much like Undertale that it hurts.

And then you get another message from "Courage", who makes it clear it's Jeff talking. He says he loves his Dad, who has never been good with communication, and it's sad to see him lock himself in his own mind. Jeff tells Varik they should go find Prince Poo (which confirms that Paula was the first Courage) and save his dad!

But then Jeff adds something haunting: "Just one question though... How can someone make a time machine if they don't understand time travel?"

It's an important question to remember.

As well as line about "See you again in another ten years..."

The third journey involves navigating a museum dedicated to all the people Dr. Andonuts has killed, with Jeff and his friends first and foremost. There's a broken robot for Ness, and an empty pedestal for Varik. Doctor Andonuts sound increasingly sinister and insane, seeming both proud and injured beyond words as he asks "How DO we kill so many people? Well, it's easy! Come back here, behind the scenes! WE'VE got all kinds of things to show you!"

The use of the word "WE" is jarring.

It's as if two different people are talking through Doctor Andonuts, and he certainly sounds very different here. As if someone else is whispering into the Doctor's mind... just as The Mysterious Evil Narrator is constantly whispering into Varik's.

Is Andonuts also talking to The Mysterious Evil Narrator? Is that how Andonuts recognized the look in Varik's eyes from their first meeting that wasn't his own? It's a look from a creature he's talked to before?

When Varik, Paula and Jeff find The Phase Distorter, the machine Doctor Andonuts used to send the Earthbound heroes to the past as robots, Andonuts talks about how he had such high

hopes for the machine. It would have been the first time he made something that not only worked, but was actually helpful!

But Jeff's question about how someone who doesn't understand Time Travel could make a Time Machine lingers...

And when Doctor Andonuts gets the idea in his head that organic life could not be sent back in time---An idea disproven in Earthbound itself as Pokey warps in with his own time machine before the final battle with Giygas, gazing down at the robot kids with a huge smirk on his fat fleshy face---Andonuts talks about how he operated on the four children to put their souls into the robots.

Even though he wasn't even a real doctor, and didn't truly know what he was doing. It simply worked, as if by magic...

And then, Andonuts realizes The Phase Distorter was a deathtrap, right as the machine turns into the third boss, and tries to devour Varik and his friends whole.

After the battle, Andonuts mentions how Giygas' henchmen stopped showing up hours after the robot children left for the past, but never came back. The Doctor realized to his horror that the method he used to send them to the past wouldn't work for sending them back to the future!

"I killed them." he says, "I killed my own son. I killed my son's friends. There's not enough Zexonyte left for another time machine", so no rescue was possible.

Then Andonuts recalls himself becoming overcome with grief, and creating the army of monsters that attacked Varik's world.

And then Andonuts looks around, at Giygas' brain and guts that they're all standing in, and says "I'm becoming warped. Look around. What is this!? I don't remember this. It's.. I'm scared. I'm scared of it!"

Doctor Andonuts never went to the past, and never saw the inside of Giygas' lair like the others did. If this world is crafted from only his memories, Giygas' lair shouldn't exist here.

And yet, even though Magicant is formed from his memories.. Here they are, standing inside Giygas' guts. And since Varik never saw this scene either, these memories can't be coming from him.

It's almost like Giygas himself is there in Magicant, with Varik and Andonuts. Talking to them both, and whispering deceptive things in both of their ears.

And then, Prince Poo's Courage appears, and we finally get answers for what's happening:

"When we defeated Giygas, the future split in twain. In one future, Giygas has always been defeated, because we defeated him in the past (the original Earthbound story). In the other future (the future of the Hack) Giygas' defeat is new. Giygas's technology allowed him to invade every time and space simultaneously. This includes even the ones he was already defeated in."

It's almost like how the timeline of Undertale was split when Sans traveled years back in time to.. Fight Gaster?

This established the Beta timeline, where Beta Gaster died in 201X.

But it doesn't prevent the shade of Alpha Gaster, our Darkest Experiment friend, from also following Sans to the Beta timeline through the same portal, and re-invading a world he'd been erased from.

Remember the question Jeff asked earlier? About how someone who didn't understand Time Travel could make a time machine?

Doctor Andonuts didn't know how time travel worked, any more than he knew how medicine worked.

But Giygas did.

And it was Giygas' patented time travel technology that allowed him to invade all worlds, simultaneously.

So the only way Doctor Andonuts could have made a time machine, using Xexonyte that didn't exist on Earth but just -happened- to crash from space at just the right time and place for him to use it...

Was if Doctor Andonuts had done the unthinkable, and made a pact with Giygas himself.

Which would also explain why Andonuts, who wasn't a real doctor, could perform miracle robot surgery on the children.

Remember the horrible thing Andonuts didn't want to tell his wife?

Andonuts owed a great portion of his amazing powers to making a pact with the very enemy that would one day try to destroy humanity.

And even if Doctor Andonuts didn't pay it himself.. There WAS a price.

And now we also know who The Mysterious Evil Narrator is..

It's Giygas.

He might have been defeated in Varik's world in the past, but he's been able to re-invade this clean world from his strongholds in other dimensions, and now he's back.

And Giygas is very, very angry.

Using the link he once forged with Doctor Andonuts, Giygas is slowly but steadily invading his mind, and trying to take him over from the inside.

Forcing Andonuts to build an army of monsters to destroy the world is only the most recent, most overt stage of this. Giygas has been exerting steadily increasing influence on Andonuts for some time.

Remember how Jeff's father told him that he'd see him again, in ANOTHER ten years? That wasn't the Doctor talking, that was Giygas. And sure enough, it's happening here.

Doctor Andonuts is afraid of even his own mind, because Giygas wants to use that keen mind as a weapon to assist him with his own mindless state. And trying to lock himself away from the world, to protect the world FROM HIM, is our Doctor's last ditch line of defense.

Yet even that last defense can't stop the memories of Giygas from invading Magicant.

In their very first conversation, Andonuts saw something in Varik's glare that wasn't his own. A blaze of inhuman hatred that Andonuts himself has seen before, and recognized immediately.

Because just as Giygas was trying to use Andonuts as a tool to destroy the world, Giygas was also trying to use Varik as a tool to destroy Andonuts.

Varik is a mercenary who kills people for money, who already had a great deal of darkness in his heart. And even with the incorruptible Ness trying to help guide him like an angel sitting on his shoulder, the darkness in Varik's soul allows Giygas a way into his mind, and Giygas is there too, acting as the Devil sitting on the other shoulder.

Let's quickly summarize the story so far:

Years earlier, Doctor Andonuts, frustrated with his own lack of success, did the unthinkable, and made a pact with Giygas. The very Alien who would one day try to destroy his world. The same way that a different Doctor Faustus once made a pact with the Devil.

For a while, Andonuts enjoyed amazing, virtually magical powers. Yet every amazing thing he made was also cursed in some way, because of the nature of the energy he used to make it with. And in the end, his pact with Giygas didn't bring him the happiness he wanted.

Then, horror struck. Giygas claimed a price for assisting Andonuts, by draining the psychokinetic powers from the Doctor's young son Jeff.

Andonuts realized that, just like Dearthart, what happened to Jeff was his own fault. It was never something he intended to happen, but it happened all the same. One doesn't make a pact with the Devil without the Devil getting his due, in the worst way possible.

Andonuts couldn't bear meeting the eyes of his wife and son after he realized what Giygas had done to Jeff. And how could he reasonably expect his wife to forgive him for what he'd done, if he couldn't even forgive himself?

So Andonuts became socially withdrawn, and barely talked to his wife at all, even when she was screaming at him and wanting to know what was wrong. So whether she left in disgust, or died from the stress, Andonuts soon found himself raising his young injured son, alone.

The Doctor couldn't bear the thought of Jeff growing up around the corrupting influence of his monster of a father. So Andonuts sent Jeff to boarding school for ten years, in the hopes of teaching him new talents to replace the ones that were stolen from him, and make sure that his son grew up as differently from himself as possible.

Doctor Andonuts saw helping Jeff become a hero rather than a monster as the one thing that could redeem his own sorry fate. Because even though he wasn't much of a father, or husband, Doctor Andonuts did love his wife and son.

And Doctor Andonuts never forgot what Giygas did to his son. Ever.

So when Giygas' next invasion came, Andonuts did something downright ballsy.

He tried to use the very power and technology that Giygas had gifted him from their pact, to help his son and the other Earthbound heroes warp to the past and destroy Giygas for good. Using the very power of the enemy against itself.

And in the original Earthbound world, it actually seemed to work. Giygas was erased from the past, saving the future, and the four heroes returned home triumphantly, with only the mischievous Pokey left to worry about.

Unfortunately, the World of the Hack wasn't so lucky, and Giygas was able to re-invade this world, and come back. And when he did, the devil from space came looking for his due.

Doctor Andonuts had betrayed Giygas, and for that, he had to DIE.

But Giygas also had plans for Andonuts and his amazing mind that stretched beyond death itself. And he planned to use the ghost of the good Doctor, infused with his limitless evil energy, to create a dark champion much more deadly than Pokey.

So even while Giygas manipulated Doctor Andonuts to create an army of monsters to punish the world.. Giygas also sent Varik to kill him.

Which takes us back to Varik, Paula, Jeff and Poo returning to the start of Magicant after defeating The Phase Distorter. Finally ready to begin their dive into the Sea of Eve, and finish their quest to either kill or save Doctor Andonuts.

And a big question is, how can any of them be here at all?

Prince Poo's Courage informed us about the split timeline, and how while the original Earthbound heroes are safe in their original timeline, they never returned to the world of the Hack.

But this very communication reveals that different timelines are still able to touch in some way. And people with similar fates in both worlds can become close enough for their minds to touch and assist each other.

This is how Ness is able to lend Varik his PSI powers and help him recover from death.

Varik and Ness aren't the same person, any more than Frisk and Chara are. But they're both the Protagonist in different games in related worlds, even if one is the bright future of Earthbound, and the other is the dystopian chaos of the Halloween Hack.

And if Ness and Varik's paths can somehow cross through time, it should be possible for Frisk and Chara, and Flowey and Gaster, to experience similar Timeline Bleeds in their own respective worlds as well.

When Varik meets up with Angel Ness, Ness says "Hey me! I found my cap that you lost. What? Who am I? Who are you? Aren't you me? No, you're... hahahahhahahAHAHA!" which may have been Giygas interrupting the conversation at the end.

Whenever someone says hahahahaha in the Hack, it does seem to be Giygas speaking.

The trip to the Sea of Eve is the trippiest. Varik follows in Ness's footsteps as his friends turn into robots as he descends deeper into horror and madness.

You also meet an Amalgamate, a precursor to the ones you meet in Undertale, who somehow has Ness' special PSI Rockin attack that you choose for Varik at the beginning of the game that he could never use. And still can't.

Then we meet Andonuts' wife, who gives us a kiss, and teleports us out of the horror, and into a sunny field right before the final confrontation.

Many NPCs here both try to talk Varik out of continuing his quest, and urge him on. They suggest that despite how it looks, Varik DOES have a choice about how to move forward, just like he had the almost invisible choice to not kill Andonuts at the beginning. And there's even a teleport back to Twoson, as well as a bus stop to return to the hub of Magicant. Although neither of them seem to be working.

A portal back to Twoson makes sense, because of the super-difficult mushroom area to the Northwest at the beginning of the game that was near instant-death for Varik if he fought anything in it. Returning here with friends and advanced powers would make navigating this forest possible, to see what other secrets it might hold.

Although the method might not be discovered yet, I do believe there's a way to activate the Twoson portal and Magicant bus stop, if someone uses the right objects.

There are unsolved mysteries in the game, like what the Toothbrush you start the game with is used for. If it acts like the Mystery Key in Undertale, you have to stand in just the right place and manually use the object for it to work.

There -was- a monster with bad dental hygiene in Magicant, to say nothing of Teeth In head Kid. I wonder what would happen if someone tried to use the toothbrush on them?

But now, since we haven't found any other alternatives, it's time to fight Doctor Andonuts.

We get more creepy narration from Giygas as you enter the cave:

"The ground is made of vile intestines. You are inside the monster." Varik gets the feeling that his body is becoming a robot, his legs pulled forward as if by magnets. "You are inside the monster. The monster." then "YOU ARE THE MONSTER".

Giygas seems to think he can control Varik completely now. And perhaps at this stage, he's right.

And then the four sprites from Mother 1 appear inside the final cave leading to Doctor Andonuts and Giygas. And for some reason, Ninten can't look backwards.

When you reach the final showdown spot from Mother 2/Earthbound, the hole in the Devil Machine opens. But instead of showing Ness's face this time, the hole is empty.

And right when Pokey would appear in his own time machine from the original game, we instead get a hacked version of the Uboa sprite descending in front of us, altered to look more masculine. And the voice of Doctor Andonuts rings out, speaking the line of Pokey, Giygas' right hand minion. "Varik! Are you surprised?"

Andonuts stares in horror at his own form. "Look at what this world has done to me. LOOK AT ME!" then he berates Varik "YOU'RE NOT A HERO.. You kill people for money. Where's the heroism in that? YOU WENT INTO AN OLD MAN'S MIND SO YOU COULD KILL HIM!" Which isn't entirely correct, since we choose not to kill him, and went into his mind as an alternative. But he's listening to Giygas more than us now.

Andonuts is filled with fear, and doesn't want to die. "PUT THE KNIFE AWAY! You and your puny bodies.. STAY BACK. You are making this old... This old horrible monster.. Cry."

And then stage one of the fight begins, with a monster called "Id".

Which would normally be the dark part of a person that enjoys causing pain to others. Except the Id of Doctor Andonuts makes no attempt at defending itself, and instead pleads with Varik and his friends to just leave it alone. It almost seems like a cocoon that something terrible might hatch from.

“Look at my giant, ugly body. Isn’t this punishment enough? Why, why do you have to hunt me down. Please just go away.”

But there’s no way to flee from this fight. And as Varik’s attacks continue, Doctor Andonuts confirms a few theories:

“Varik, I know that even if you didn’t attack me, you would break down eventually. Your eyes.. HIS EYES.. they are so full of bloodlust. When you look at me, I want to scream!”

Even time Varik attacks the Id, it’s a critical SMASH attack. The battle is becoming something very, very personal. Giygas wants revenge on Doctor Andonuts for aiding in his earlier demise. And Giygas has plans to use Andonuts...after he dies.

Then the last attack breaks the cocoon, and while the fight with Doctor Andonuts himself ends.. The battle only now begins.

The screen fades out, then back in again, and Giygas’ trademark screaming baby face is now floating in the background, while all that remains of Andonuts is a ball of darkness, seeming to absorb the Giygas energy around it.

“WHAT IS THIS FEELING. ... hahaha, I know what this feeling is... It’s hatred. For the person who came so far. Just to destroy an old man. My mind is gone. All that is left is pure hatred. g-GUHHmyNOhahahahaha. People say I can’t take what I didh out. WI...”

And then the ultimate human intellect fuses with the ultimate mindless power of Giygas. And then we fight a being who looks like Doctor Andonuts, but clearly isn’t.

“YOU SEE THIS BURNING, BLOODY UNIVERSE? YOU SEE THIS ULTIMATE, UNLIMITED POWER?” Then Not-Doctor Andonuts opens up with a swearing tirade, as the power of raw hate consumes him, and Megalovania begins to play!

What follows it the most awesome and hardcore multi-stage fight sequence in the entire game. Not-Andonuts tries rude jabs, fire, ice, then The World’s Most Powerful Psychic Attack, while swearing a blue streak and doing everything possible to make Varik and his friends pay.

If you lose this fight, you don’t get a second chance unless you restart the game. Because if you die here, the message is different, and says: “Oh, Varik, it’s all just a dream! Just kidding, YOU’RE DEAD FOREVER. HAHAHAHAAHAAHAAHAAHAAHA...” with the hahahaha literally repeating forever.

Just like what happens if you die to Omega Flowey, a similar cascade of HAHA's that might not have even been from Flowey at all.

Especially if my theory about who is controlling Flowey is correct.

But here and now, Doctor Andonuts seems like a real human. You can freeze him, and make him numb, stunlocking him as a potential way of winning the fight if you don't try and reflect his Ultimate PSI attack back at him.

Until, finally, Varik scores the final hit. And after a pause, the music goes dark.

"Varik! You see how pathetic I am? Even when I'm in my own mind. Even when I'm fighting for my life. I guess.. I guess I'm better off Dead. ... You remind me a lot of my Son's friend. Hahaha. I'm.. I'm going to go now. I feel really exhausted. So.. Varik! If we ever meet again... You're going to.. Get the.. Shhh..i..."

And then Dr. Andonuts flashes, and disappears, defeated. And YOU WON! Appears, along with the battle victory music.

And for this ultimate fight in the game, Varik and his friends gain ZERO experience.

Almost as if this fight wasn't the end at all. And no enemy actually fell.

There's a flash back to the last room and the Uboa sprite for a moment, with lines going up and down from his eyes in a very familiar fashion.

And then Varik is standing back in Andonuts' lab. Alone.

And Giygas the Evil Narrator continues his narration.

"When you opened the door, Dr. Andonuts was staring upward, eyes empty. He's dead. ... not really feelin' that much about it. You feel a little like this situation could have been avoided. Oh, well. You really did have a choice.. You could have stopped altogether.. Or kept going. He's lying there, still looking up. He's probably in heaven now, or something. Oh well, mission accomplished."

And Varik finds he can finally walk out of the Lab again.

A SWAT team gives Varik a ride home, and everything seems fairly nice in Twoson. "It's Halloween today, I guess. That's pretty cute."

Giygas reflects on Varik's life, and its lack of meaning. "What's up with all this moral crap? Let's just go to sleep now, really... Your eyes are normal, your have a working head. Nothing' on fire or made of concrete or something stupid.."

But Varik can't sleep. Something is still wrong.

And then.. IT happens.

"ALL OF A SUDDEN A GHOAST JUMPED INTO THE ROOM AND POOTED ON YOU! AND YOU SCREAMED WITH FRIAGHT!!!! OH NO!!! !!!!!!!!!!"

"Then you just kinda laughed, 'cuz it was dumb."

"You slept pretty well after that."

"And that's the end."

At least, it's the end according to Giygas, unreliable narrator that he is.

Because in Tobyfox's Earthbound Halloween Hack, we say goodbye to Doctor Andonuts...

... and hello to the ghostly amalgamation of Dr. Andonuts, the ultimate mad scientist, and Giygas, the ultimately powerful mindless evil. As they fuse together, and become one of the most mysterious and threatening adversaries in all of video game history.

The ghostly creature we know as Wingding Gaster.

Epilogue -- "Finding Frisk"

Dear watchers, I want to thank you for taking this long journey with me, and seeing it through to the end. Your patience and open mind in giving my ideas a chance is a gift that I can never repay.

Now comes the hardest part of all.

I have a confession to make.

And like Doctor Andonuts, I thought about running away from the truth, fearing that I might also get a bad ending by revealing it.

But I haven't traveled all this way just to lose my courage, and say "NO".

And you all have a right to know the truth. Or at least, as much of it as I know, and am able to tell.

Whether or not my theories turn out to be true, I've seen great beauty in the world of Undertale. And at the very least, I hope I've been able to share some of this beauty with you, and give you things to think about you may not have seen before.

But when I first came to this land, I was a very different person, with very different goals. And following the nature of short-sighted humans, they were dark.

I was not originally on a mission to fully understand Undertale, and pass that understanding on to others to bring people closer together.

Instead, I had one, singular goal in mind, as a mission of vengeance:

I wanted to destroy the Ness Theory.

Let me explain.

It's a long story.

And again, I have no way of knowing if it's the full story. But since it's the only part I know, it's the only part I'm able to tell.

I used to be a huge fan of Game Theory, and MatPat was one of my personal heroes.

He was the one who first inspired me to become a Youtube theorist. And many of his theories, such as Link is Dead, and his breakdown of Don't Hug Me I'm Scared, were works of art that captured not only the factual connections between bits of lore, but the meaning of the art as well, the soul of the message the artist was trying to convey.

And his first two FNAF videos drew me into a world that I fell into, and had to explore.

I was always too much of a chicken to play FNAF myself, being high strung with a childhood fear of clowns. Whenever I watched Markiplier or others play I'd always mouse along the progress bar at the bottom of the Youtube video to detect when the next jumpscare would happen. And even knowing when a scare was coming in advance, I'd still sometimes jump out of my chair.

But after watching several playthroughs and theory videos, a thought started to tug at the back of my mind, and due to my Obsessive Compulsive nature it would not let go.

Didn't Jeremy Fitzgerald of FNAF 2 fame -have- to be the Bite of '87 victim, logically, by elimination?

FNAF 2 was the only restaurant open in 1987, and it was only open for two weeks--Jeremy's shift being the second one--and it formally closed immediately after Night 7. The Save Them Massacre of six victims caused the police investigation, not the Bite of '87, and since the Bite was never mentioned during FNAF 2 it couldn't have happened yet. The robots were only hostile to the staff, not the kids, and the police murder investigation lockdown from Night 5 onward would have kept any outside child customers from entering Freddy's anyway.

Phone Guy survives FNAF 2 to work in FNAF 1. The first week guard--Purple Guy William Afton--transfers to the day shift during Jeremy's week, then bugs out before the police lockdown begins, to show up later as the protagonist of FNAF 1. And Fritz Smith survives Night 7 with a pink slip.

The only staff member who isn't accounted for is Jeremy Fitzgerald, who disappears after being assigned to the day shift after Night 6.

The more I thought about it, the more solid the case seemed. But when I watched other theorists, few of them seemed to see this. So the idea festered in my mind, until I finally got off my butt and made my first ever theory video, the terribly named "The Final Theory."

I spent more months thinking about FNAF in the back of my mind while at work, trying desperately to find some sort of story that would fit the evidence.

If Phone Guy was responsible for the safety of others at Freddy's, why did he oversee three generations of killer animatronics, knowing full well what they did to night guards? Why did Phone Guy actually seem to be cheering the animatronics on? And why was the method of murder always stuffing someone inside an animatronic, something that should be nearly impossible to do unless the robots were actually designed for that purpose from the beginning?

For three months straight, I tried every idea I could find, but time and again some detail didn't fit.

Then, after no simple solution worked, I started trying increasingly crazy ones.

Have you ever seen those humorous Demotivational Posters? Picture a ferret in a detective outfit staring at a dartboard with a dart in his hands. Now picture that the dart board is completely free of darts, yet the entire surrounding wall is covered so thickly with missed darts that it looks like a wall of feathers. Then paint a leering Flowey-like smiley face on the dartboard and title the piece "Frustration", and you'll know what it was like being me during that time, wondering if I'd ever score a hit, and somehow escape this obsessive purgatory.

Finally, more out of desperation than anything else, I tried an outrageous idea: People were getting stuffed into robots because a mad scientist was trying to discover how to put a human soul into a robot!

So I pulled back my hand, and threw this dart, fully expecting it to be another dud...

...and dropped my jaw, gaping, as the dart sailed through the air and struck the bullseye.

Suddenly, it was like dropping a seed crystal into a solution.

All the mangled bits of seemingly random FNAF lore started to slowly drift towards the center and crystalize into a pattern.

It wasn't much at first, and I made a countless number of mistakes and revisions along the way.

But slowly, ever so slowly, FNAF began to make an inkling of sense.

My research got a boost one day, when I watched a video by Ryan and Other Ryan of the 8bit Gaming Channel.

At the time I was pondering the paradox of Phone Guy both being a villain himself, yet also a victim of some other entity in the Night 4 phone call of FNAF 1.

Then 8bitgaming made a video highlighting the slight shade difference between the Purple Guy sprite, as seen in FNAF 2's "Save Them" minigame, and what they coined "The Pink Guy" that shows up and kills a kid outside the restaurant in "Take Cake to the Children", as well as appearing in "Foxy Go Go" just before Foxy walks into a room full of dead kids.

After looking more closely at these sprites, their differences became even more remarkable.

Purple Guy had rounded edges, but Pink Guy was blocky and square. Purple had glowing white eyes, while Pink had dark lightless eyes. Purple was as thin as a skeleton, while Pink was hefty. Purple had a comically long neck like a giraffe, while Pink had no neck to speak of.

And neither one looked entirely human.

The more I looked at them, the more certain I became that these sprites must belong to two different people. That instead of one villain responsible for all the carnage at Freddy's, there were actually two. And while some said the Purple Guy was an older version of the Pink Guy, what sort of person gets taller with age?

So I adopted The Two Villain Theory into my work, and pondered that FNAF's story must be far more complex than anyone realized.

In my spare time while working full-time overtime each day at UPS, I cobbled both my own Mad Scientist Theory that the springsuits were designed to absorb human souls from the beginning, and 8BitGaming's Two Villain Theory about The Pink Guy, into my second theory video, and my first-ever epic-length musical one: "The Color Brothers". A story about how Mastermind Pink and his minion Purple were kidnapping children to test a device to put human souls in robots, so they could both eventually become immortal robots themselves.

In hindsight, The Color Brothers got many details wrong.

It missed the entire existence of The Afton Family, that the Puppet does survive FNAF 3, and somehow missed the importance of both of the Shadow Animatronics, who would eventually become my favorite antagonists in all the videos going forward.

But the two seed crystals that The Color Brothers formed around, The Mad Scientist Theory and the Two Villain Theory, remain the centerpieces of my work even today.

And even after over 20 FNAF videos, they're still there in "The Afton Family Horcruxes", my last-best attempt to explain the story of Five Fights at Freddy's 1-4 in the same detail this video went into Undertale today.

It seemed like my Undertale-style determination had paid off. As small as it was, I felt certain that I must have found a crack somewhere in FNAF's seemingly-invincible armor. That in a life

filled with many regrets, I'd finally done something of significant value. And I wanted to share it with the world.

So I spent a few more months learning more about the craft of video editing, hurrying to try and finish before FNAF 4's release, and published The Color Brothers on July 21st, 2015. Two weeks before FNAF 4's scheduled release on August 8th.

I figured I'd finished with plenty of time to spare. And the next day, as a bit of a lark, I sent a link to The Color Brothers to Scott's fan email box, adding it to the pile of thousands of communications he probably gets every day.

Then I was shocked, when, out of the blue, FNAF 4's release was suddenly up-jumped to July 23rd, the very next day! A decision that caused chaos for most of the big Youtube Let's Players because they were at a convention. It wouldn't be something Scott would do lightly, there had to be a reason for it.

FNAF 4 was very deep, and very confusing. But in spite of this, The Color Brothers actually scored a few hits!

The Yellow Freddy animatronic, who I'd been calling Spring Freddy before the name was confirmed as Fredbear, was indeed revealed to be a main antagonist. And the story DID center around The Bite of '87 victim. Who, from everything I could see, actually WAS Jeremy, the night guard we play as in FNAF 2!

I was elated! I'd wished the video would have longer to grow before FNAF 4 hit.. But it felt like I'd struck a nerve, somehow. That my infant channel had done something real to help the fandom!

And my greatest hope of all was that somehow, MatPat himself would see my work, realize the value in it, and use it to help him along in his quest of solving FNAF.

And this is where the story turns dark.

A month after I published The Color Brothers, Game Theory came out with its "Why FNAF Will Never End" video. And the positive tone of the earlier videos seemed to immediately vanish.

Rather than expand on the promise of hidden lore, this video seem to take the stance that FNAF didn't have much of a story to speak of. And even seemed to suggest that throwing together a bunch of random pieces that could never fit together was a clever trick to keep theorists guessing eternally for an answer that didn't actually exist!

I couldn't believe it.

Here's MatPat, saying that people have a Choice about the story, when Scott is on record as saying that a real, definitive answer to FNAF existed. That rather than exploring new ideas about where the answer might be, MatPat was instead expressing skepticism that FNAF was solvable at all!

I felt like I'd been physically struck.

Hadn't I just shown the world that FNAF had an epic story, waiting to be found? That the rabbit hole was far deeper than anyone realized?

Or was someone as small as me just too tiny to notice?

The hope I'd been feeling soured, and twisted into something else. A wrong had been done here, and I now hoped against hope that something could be done to fix it.

And a month later, there was.

MatPat was hosting the Second FNAF Megastream, actually the first complete one since the original steam had tech issues. And several of the big names were there: Razzbowski, Dawko, the two Ryans of 8bitgaming, Smike, and MatPat's own FNAF loremaster sitting next to him on the couch, Alex Faciane.

I was there watching it live on screen, along with so many others. I figured that with the two architects of the Two Villain Theory there in the room, someone was bound to bring up the Pink Guy at some point.

The entire reason the Megastream was formed was to try and make a breakthrough about FNAF's mystery, something they'd all hoped to do that night. Every idea should be on the table, no stone should go unturned.

And I almost jumped out of my chair when Alex, sitting right next to MatPat, brought up the Two Villain Theory, and said it was something they should all talk about.

Here it was, my chance to play a part!..

... only for that hope to immediately evaporate, when MatPat himself tabled the idea.

And never would give a reason why.

Alex tried a few more times to bring it up again, but each time, this idea, which I felt in my bones was on the path to finding the answers, was passed over, and never explored, by Matpat's express command.

I couldn't believe what I was watching.

The hope I'd felt beginning to resurge suddenly turned to volcanic ash, the type the burns your lungs when you try to breathe.

MatPat had every right to talk about what he wanted to on his own channel, on his own time.

But to silence someone else, his own personal FNAF lore expert no less, was unexplainable. And incomprehensible at an open public forum where people came there to speak and be heard.

This wasn't the end by a long shot, though.

The Third Megastream also didn't talk about the Two Villian Theory, even though Ryan did try to bring it up at the start.

And eventually, Game Theory declared open season on the very idea itself with "The Pink Guy Truther's Club". Somehow denying that The Pink Guy even existed, despite the evidence right there in the sprites. Outright declaring war on an Idea, and declaring that no serious theorist worthy of the name should even consider using it.

The very idea, that I felt in my bones, led to the answer to FNAF.

Remember that look on Gaster's face when Sans pushed him into the portal?

Or when Chara tried to take over Asriel from within like he was just some kind of toy to her, and had always been?

That's what it felt like.

I fell into a long depression.

I didn't sleep regularly.

I lashed out at people at work with fits of anger, with little provocation. With all the unreleased tension of an idea I obsessively had to express tearing at the fabric of my mind.

You see, if Matpat had actually debunked the Two Villain Theory live on national television, I would have been good. Heck, I would have been overjoyed!

At least the idea would have had its day in court and been looked at by the experts. And the theorist community would know that both the idea, and perhaps even myself, existed.

If MatPat could have found real flaws in my theories, I would have done what I'd already done several times when I discovered I'd gotten a detail wrong: I would have revised my theories to accommodate the new evidence. Something I'd end up doing regularly for all my theories, be they FNAF, Steven Universe, Star Wars or Undertale.

But to treat an Idea as being so meritless that it's not even worthy of being discussed... even when other famous faces at the forum supported it...even after I'd made some correct predictions using that idea?

It was like my own mentor had said I didn't have the right to exist.

I considered quitting theorizing altogether.

But, my own Obsessive personality wouldn't allow this.

MatPat had started me on this journey, and I had to finish it. Even if I had to haul my own feet forward, like Varik being dragged onwards by Giygas.

To say I was angry would be a comic understatement.

I lashed out at Matpat many times in many forums, saying several things that lacked grace, most of which I now regret.

But the conventional wisdom of the FNAF fandom was that the Two Villain Theory was dead. And on reddit, my words were met with the same respect one might reserve for a crazed heretic hermit screaming from a hill.

A poor soul so deluded that he believed he was the only sane one, that only he knew the truth, and that the rest of the world was crazy.

Which finally brings us back to Undertale.

While researching the game, MatPat came up with his own surprisingly radical idea: That Sans the skeleton was actually a character from another game.

He believed that Sans was actually Ness from Earthbound.

And he posted his own crazy Ness Theory idea on the world stage, along with some somewhat interesting evidence, like the Starman pattern on Papyrus' gear.

And MatPat went so far as to say that the Ness Theory was his favorite theory of all the ones he'd ever made.

The community scratched their heads, then turned away from the idea en mass.

The Ness Theory was panned. The Ness Theory was parodied.

The Ness Theory was discarded by the mainstream, and shamefully banished to the hills along with the world's heretics.

I watched all this happen from my own hermit hut in the hills, still flying the Two Villain Theory flag from the rafters. And the irony was so thick I couldn't escape a feeling of dark satisfaction.

Hello Matpat! Welcome to Heretic Hermit Hills, population TWO!
Guess who's coming to dinner! >:)

They say you don't know a man until you walk a mile in his moccasins. And by adding a quick photoshop edit to turn those shoes into Water Moccasins, one might accurately recreate my experience up to that point.

But while all of this was happening, a brilliant plan formed in the back of my mind, as a way to get back at MatPat for good.

The Ness Theory was already on its last legs...

So I would be the one who killed it!

I would wade into the world of Undertale like an unstoppable invading human, and dive deeper into the lore than anyone had ever gone before.

And I would search for The Smoking Gun that destroyed the Ness Theory, and MatPat hopes and dreams, in the same way he'd done to me!

Determination built.

I started to research in earnest.

And once someone with OCD and Asperger's has a goal in mind, they won't stop until they find it, or die.

I would watch every video, look under every stone, and utilize every archive, until I found what I was looking for.

I was the hero of this story, and I had a monster to kill!

If the smoking gun that destroyed The Ness Theory existed, I ***WOULD*** find it!

...

..

.

But no matter how hard I looked, it continued to elude me...

...

..

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And then, something else happened, that was far, far worse...

...

..

.

I started to find evidence.. That -supported- the Ness Theory, that others had missed.

Clam girl, a new NPC added with the update, says a lot of colorful things. But there's one thing that she's very sure of: Your neighbor has a daughter named "Suzy". And this Suzy might be the reason you came here in the first place.

Is this a reference to Susie, the purple monster hero from Deltarune? Possibly, although it's spelled wrong.

But your protagonist does have a neighbor named Susie, in Earthbound Zero.

Sans shows off his amazing powers of telekinesis during his boss fight, and his eyes flash between yellow and blue whenever he uses it. The two colors on the stripes of Ness' shirt.

And while Ness' special PSI attack is never formally defined, leaving that up to the user, there is a flashback to baby Ness in Earthbound where he reaches for a bottle across the room.. And it starts moving towards his fingers.

So Ness does have the power of telekinesis in Earthbound, canonically.

Then there's evidence in what Undertale WON'T show you.

While the game taunts you, time and again, with Sans' ability to teleport, it will NEVER show you what it actually looks like when Sans does this.

Even when Sans literally teleports in front of your face after telling you you'll have a bad time, the screen always goes black as the teleport sound plays, then returns a second later.

A very strange, very determined omission that Toby wouldn't make such a point about unless actually seeing Sans teleport would be too large of a spoiler.

In Earthbound, Ness has a unique method for teleporting.

He and his friends run around and around in circles with increasing speed, trying comically not to crash into anything, until they finally fly off the screen in whatever direction they were headed at the time, somehow magically ending up exactly where they intended to go, even if it was in the completely opposite direction.

Sans does this very thing twice when he invites Frisk to dinner with him, walking the wrong way outside Snowdin, then walking up a blind alley at the MTT resort.

Both Sans' telekinesis, and his ability to teleport, match Ness' own abilities.

Many have said that Sans uses magic, but the six human souls that rebel against Omega Flowey show that, if not magic itself, human souls do possess a different power of their own.

There's no magic in Earthbound, only the pseudoscience of Psychokinesis. So while Sans may be able to do amazing things, this is no proof that he's using magic.

Then there's a massive Easter Egg hidden in Hyperdeath Asriel's glowing wings.

If you look very closely, you might be able to make out the shapes of buildings moving about in this chaotic surge of light.

Texture hunters found this image, and it's almost a dead ringer for the urban cityscape in Earthbound's Fourside.

The game uses two copies of this image moving over each other to help disguise this, but when you view the image by itself it's a 99% match.

But the real nail in the coffin at my attempt at vengeance came at the end of the Halloween Hack, when Doctor Andonuts' mutated sprite came down from above.

Yes, this sprite is a reference to Uboa. But if you look very, very carefully.. You'll see a black line rising from one eye, and the suggestion of another line falling from the opposite one.

The trademark eyemarks of Wingding Gaster.

Varik isn't the main character of the Halloween Hack. Not even GIYGAS is the main character there.

The entire story, from its very beginning, centered around one person: Doctor Andonuts. A legendary mad scientist from another world, capable of doing seemingly impossible things.

Who else do we know who could make a time machine, go on adventures with children in said time machine, and revolutionize the technology of the monster world to an anime-powered level far beyond that of the human world above, and make all of it look easy?

The entire Halloween hack, from its very conception, had the goal of establishing a parallel background story for this amazing scientist that was parallel to Earthbound's own.

The hidden story of Doctor Andonuts in the Hack may have even been one of Toby's real theories about the original Earthbound games!

Earthbound did have the lasting power to inspire others to look for a world more complex than the one they imagined, and Undertale is only one example of this.

Doctor Andonuts must be one of Toby's favorite characters of all time.

And Doctor Andonuts, corrupted by Giygas, is the only character I can see with both the power level and awesome story potential to fit the shoes of the legendary Wingding Gaster.

And now, I was a in a bind.

Here was Gaster, before me. At any time, I could claim him.

But Gaster and Sans both traveled from The Other World together, the world I now realized was the World of Earthbound.

And as the Halloween Hack repeatedly reminds the player, Ness is missing. Varik isn't Ness. Paula, Jeff and Poo are all here, but not Ness.

Ness is gone. Ness is elsewhere.

Ness is in another world. The same one Doctor Andonuts traveled to.

And if I wanted to claim that Doctor Andonuts was Gaster, I had no choice but to also confirm MatPat's Ness Theory... myself.

I'm embarrassed to say that I agonized over what to do for a long time.

You can still find some of the precursor notes I made for my Undertale theories online.

I posted my crude outline for "The Secret of Sans" on reddit on Jan 26th, 2016:

https://www.reddit.com/r/Undertale/comments/42s4pk/the_secret_of_sans_undertale_theory_up_coming/

And I posted my prototype theory for why Asriel doesn't fade at the end of Undertale in the Undertale wiki forums on June 13th, 2016: <https://undertale.fandom.com/wiki/Thread:92698>

For three years, I sat on these ideas, pondering what to do.

The last thing in the world I wanted to do was personally confirm Matpat's favorite theory.

But if I didn't throw my support behind the Ness Theory, I could never claim that Gaster was Doctor Andonuts. And I'd be denying myself the chance to solve one of the greatest mysteries in gaming.

And then there was the moral question.

People can make honest mistakes.

Theorists make mistakes all the time, and live in a land of constant uncertainty. And it's only when they can finally put that 1000th piece of the jigsaw puzzle in the perfect spot so that everything makes sense, that they can finally claim to say that they're completely right.

And in order to find what fits, theorists have to try every possible outlandish idea until something clicks.

And epic Mysteries rarely take the simplest path, but revel in twist-filled tales of improbable deeds. Murder on the Orient Express remains one of the world's favorite mystery novels today specifically BECAUSE it has an unlikely epic twist at the end, which defies all probability and expectation.

So it takes a high dose of creativity and the courage to take risks and disagree with others, to even have a chance at making a dent in an epic Mystery like FNAF or Undertale.

Hermit strategists like Zhuge Liang/Kongming, the Sleeping Dragon of Shu, were revered for their intellect, and left huge footprints on the battlefields during the Romance of the Three Kingdoms era. And while the One Voice who disagrees with the crowd might be crazy, they might also be your Ben Kenobi, the one person with enough insight to see what others miss.

So if you want to find answers, it's important that every voice is heard.

But deliberately leaving out relevant information about a story isn't cool. In fact, it's horrible. Theorists are supposed to find the truth, not conceal it.

Deliberately misrepresenting the story of ANY creative project is a terrible thing.

Deliberately misrepresenting the story of a masterwork like Undertale... was unthinkable.

Eventually, I ran out of time.

When Deltarune Chapter 1 came out I knew I had to act, or forever hold my peace.

And even if it wasn't what I wanted, the exact inverse of what I wanted in fact...all my theorist instincts and the evidence I'd collected told me that the Ness Theory was real. And I could not, in good faith, avoid talking about it.

And even if I didn't reveal it, the sequels to Undertale eventually would.

While I was thinking, I came to a realization.

Stories are works of art, and they deserve to be told.
They're treasures that belong to the whole world.

Even the warlike Vikings revered good storytellers, because stories were how their deeds were recorded for all time.

In the grand scheme of things, my disagreement with Matpat was ultimately meaningless. All that mattered was finding the truth. And putting personal motivations above the common good, like what I was doing by trying to avoid the Ness Theory, just wasn't cool.

The whole reason so many kind viewers like yourselves watch Youtube Theorists like us is because you're hoping against hope that one day, we'll find something real. Or at least tell a few good stories along the way.

Theorists like us spend most of our lives stumbling about a dark room wearing sunglasses, trying to look so incredibly cool...while also trying not to smash face-first into a brick wall we didn't see, while the whole world is watching.

It didn't matter what I wanted. I had an obligation to all of you to share whatever I found.

And while history might judge whether my theories were right or wrong, I would have done my best with passion, and 100% maximum power, because I had been honest to my audience.

So I set aside my differences, and wrote my thoughts down in a script. The very script you're reading right now.

Which, as you probably guessed from reading the Darkest Experiment screenplay, fully supports the Ness Theory.

And this is when I made my final discovery about Undertale.

All along, I'd hoped that my theory that Sans was a future version of Frisk would somehow displace The Ness Theory, with one theory overwriting the other.

But that isn't what happened.

Instead, both the Future Frisk theory, and the Ness Theory, seem to fit together like a pair of puzzle pieces. Like two keys that were both required to unlock a door.

Sans was definitely a future version of Frisk. Sans knew almost everything that would happen to Frisk in advance, and tried to help him with this pre-knowledge. They both had the same psychokinetic teleport ability. And while Sans either wouldn't or couldn't teleport Papyrus along with him, he gladly took Frisk along, and treated him even better than his skeletal best friend.

But Sans was also Ness. The entire Halloween Hack was leading up to Doctor Andonuts being Gaster. And establishing that Ness was missing. Earthbound's influence on Undertale, and Sans in particular, couldn't be denied.

So Frisk was Sans. But Sans was also Ness.

What do you get when you invoke the Transitive Property of Equality? Where if $a=b$, and $b=c$, then a must also equal c ?

FRISK MUST ALSO BE NESS!

Which makes sense, because from the very beginning, Frisk was always the one wearing the two-striped shirt. The very same pattern Ness always wore.

We didn't get to meet a legendary Earthbound hero in 3rd person, we WERE that hero from the very beginning!

And all this time.. Sans wanted to save himself, and the whole Underground, by helping Frisk remember the hero he'd always been.

And because I never played Earthbound as a kid, I never would have developed the Ness Theory on my own.

MatPat with his talents found the first key. And I found the second key with mine.

And just like it takes two people to pilot a Jaeger in Pacific Rim, it took both of us to find Frisk.

We spent so much time being enemies, when we should have been friends all along.

Sans once asked us a question:

“Do you think even the worst person can change? That everybody can be a good person, if they just, try?”

And when Sans asked Frisk that question, he was asking about himself.

Can someone who has made mistakes, even terrible ones like Doctor Andonuts, still turn their lives around and do the right thing? Can someone who has lost their innocence, ever learn to like who they are again?

The answer is: Yes.

There's nobody in the world who hasn't make a mistake.

And there's nobody in the world who's perfect. Even White Diamond had her imperfections, and those flaws are what ended up redeeming her in the end.

Any adventurer who has ever taken a risk to do what they felt was right has likely made tons of mistakes. We all try to find the best path with incomplete information. And inevitably, we sometimes miss a detail, and get things wrong.

That's why people become Theorists: to find the answers they don't have.

And even if someone is so afraid of making mistakes that they avoid speaking up and taking risks, that itself is a mistake, because life is an active sport, and nobody truly sits on the sidelines.

The world might seem grim. And our path, like Varik's, might seem set.

But there are always choices, even if they might be hard to see.

And ultimately, we are the ones who decide how to live our lives, and the ones responsible for how they turn out.

The best ending often requires the hardest path. But we all have the power to find that path, if we keep open minds to see where we're going, and the determination in our hearts to see the trip through.

Friends can become enemies. But enemies can also become friends. Nothing is set in stone unless we believe that it is.

Perhaps the reason Asriel has two souls is that he's protecting Chara's?

Perhaps one day, when he finally recharges his own monster soul fully, Asriel can safely return Chara's soul to her, and give her a new chance at life again, where she can finally feel compassion once more? A happy ending for everyone?

Perhaps even Gaster himself might one day be saved, and the souls he claimed could go free, and live their lives again? And once Gaster returns to the party, he can fix the Silver Key Machine, and he and Sans can finally go home?

Other RPGs might fight with swords, but to get the best ending in Undertale, Love Is All You Need.

...although it never hurts to pack a lot of food.

Sans had to scour the infinite multiverse countless times in his quest to find an innocent version of himself who could save both Asriel, and himself. And time and time again, it ended in frustration and heartbreak.

But there are infinite possibilities in an infinite multiverse.

Which means that somewhere out there, there's another version of ourselves who did the right thing, and lived to tell the tale.

And no matter how many mistakes we've made, that person, our Courage, is waiting out there to be found.

And deep in our hearts, we can find them.

If we can only remember their name.

Thank you all, for listening to my story.

Goodnight everyone.

CREDITS

The Final Jam that plays during the Credit is “Remember Me” by Fox Amoore:

Bandcamp

<https://foxamoore.bandcamp.com/track/remember-me>

FurAffinity (lyrics and cast credits)

<https://www.furaffinity.net/view/12489534>

(the lyrics to the song appear at the bottom of the screen while the Credits roll above)

(the font starts with Comic Sans. Sans is the one singing the song)

(the text color sometimes alternates between blue and yellow, sometimes both)

I took a movie to bed last night
The hero journeyed to set things right
His smile.. was familiar to see

He fought off the world and never failed
Got the girl cause he held tough and prevailed
Just like a better ... the way I remember... Me....

Tell me it's not too late
To be the man I used to be
Tell me..Tell me...
You'll help me see

There's a way to reverse my fate
Help me find the way back to where
I can...
Remember Me.

Once I was the star, and life was fine
Then I got scarred and began to decline
I watched other movies, and forgot about mine
And if I had a job I'd send flowers to you

(for a moment, the font changes)

(font returns to Sans)

(suddenly, both blue and yellow colors)

If I had a life you could share in it too
If I had.. The strength..
I'd need nothing..
But you.....

Tell me it's not too late (stronger font returns, and persists)
To be the man I used to be
... used to be...
Tell me.. Tell me...
You'll help me see.

You want a man who won't sit and wait
For others to succeed.
Well I'll be that man. (back to single color)
Please...
Remember Me.

(musical interlude)

Tell me it's not too late (back to Sans)
To be the man I used to be
Tell me... Tell me.....
You'll help me .. see...

(music swell)

That in time I can animate... (strong font, both colors)
And the spirit I need.. (words get larger)
We'll all be free... (larger)
IF YOU... (Larger)
CAN... (A SCREAM)
REMEMBER..... (HALF THE SCREEN, solid blue strong letters)
..... ME! (Ness's two yellow stripes appear on both words!)

(long hold, then eventual fade)

(Final Jam credits)

Wooah ooooo... (small, back to Sans)
Wooah oooooo... oooooo.... (fade)

(The end picture with Frisk and his friends fades in)

(Asriel fades into the picture)

FIN.

NOTES:

-- Add part where Chara might be resurrected in the future to the end. That's why Asriel has two souls, so he can heal and restore hers, then give it back without fading himself.

-- Add Fourside image in Hyperdeath Asriel's wings.

https://www.sprites-resource.com/pc_computer/undertale/sheet/77910/

- Add Jedi and Sith analogy about how helping others is a roundabout way of also helping yourself, because all life is connected, monster, human, whatever.

-Flowey soft resets after True Pacifist, but remembers Frisk. And deliberately calls the Player "Chara", the name we choose, thinking it was ours

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tI0Pb_z4HSU

-Add list of unsolved mysteries. The phasing Grey characters. Ice-E and the crossword, etc.

-ALREADY REFERENCED -- The phrase "him" is used both for Asriel (ie, "His Theme") and Gaster (Gaster's Theme is named, "Him") https://youtu.be/NcFe_wRZP6w?t=1280

-Add how Memoryhead's Gaster heads give Frisk specifically a bad memory, as the monster puts a piece of itself in his inventory. Frisk has dealt with this creature before.

-Deltarune's "Before the Story" has Hopes and Dreams in it. This is Chara's story.

-The Waterfall Runes say 'it would take a great deal of power to take the soul from a living monster', which says this task would be difficult.. But not impossible.

RESEARCH MOTHER 1 & 3!

Ultimate English Mother 1 Translation:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hzr9yYlyMuk&list=PLMrpFY5oU1DangphC_B2N6x8uhacQ5TCa

-- Apparently Humans got PSI powers from Giygas' people from the beginning! I thought Doctor Andonuts was ballsy for trying to use PSI against Giygas, but ALL the Earthbound heros have been doing that from the beginning!

-- Memoryhead (<https://undertale.fandom.com/wiki/Memoryhead>) says "Lorem ipsum docet" as one of its phrases. "Lorem ipsum" can be translated to the placeholder text "pain teaches"