

DAVE,,OVER

Equius accuses Dave of "verbal misdirection and hoofbeastplay," but then he goes on to claim that he's not much of a poet. Which is a TOTAL LIE. His slam poetry is incredible. Also the conversation almost immediately veers in a homoerotic direction, due to Dave's frequent habit of using gay innuendo to own his targets, combined with Equius's habit of urgently insisting that others get assertive with him, making almost no effort to disguise the fetishistic nature of the demand. There are yaoi fires being stoked here in a completely plausible way. If Karkat had died, and Equius had survived instead, there's a decent chance things could have worked out a lot differently between these two.

- A. Hussie P2:A5:A2:C4

SCENARIO: *Post-Murderstuck¹. Humans & trolls meet. Gamzee is dead. Somehow, Equius AND Karkat survived.*

The inhabitants of the meteor are as follows: Dave, Karkat, Rose, Kanaya, Terezi, Equius, The Mayor, and Vriska.

WHAT HAPPENS:

After a series of ironic mindgames and bouts of gay² chicken Dave Strider and Equius Zahhak have entered a Pale quadrant relationship. Dave does not see the relationship as something serious, let alone real, but to Equius this is deathly important. They begin to spend most of their time together, they write raps together, they beatbox together, they wrestle, they work on Can-Town with The Mayor. Dave is often accidentally hurt during their horseplay and is regularly bruised all over his body, his shades now perpetually cracked to match Equius'. Dave's mental and emotional states begin to deteriorate, Equius' begin to loosen up... They share an intense and unique bond. To Equius, Dave is his new Nepeta; and Dave has a new Bro³.

¹ /homestuck/4331

A colloquial term referring to the period on the Meteor that begins with Eridan's murder of Feferi, and ends with Karkat's pacification of Gamzee.

² /homestuck/2826/

³ It also parallels Horuss and Rufioh's relationship, but no one cares.

Dave feels deeply uncomfortable with how things are between them. Frankly, he does not like Equius and is subconsciously associating the abuse Equius is unwittingly doling out on him with his memories of Bro. The girls all at various points bring to question the bizarre, violent and often gross nature of their relationship, Kanaya mentioning that their behavior isn't exactly normal for a typical moiraillegiance. Unfortunately he downplays his own negative emotions and when discussing his relationship with others he infantilizes Equius, claiming "he doesnt even really get whats going on most of the time, hes honestly harmless. hes a simple guy. mostly just wants a cold glass of milk. a dry towel, if its not too much."

This strikes most of the rest of the meteor-dwellers as a surprisingly insensitive thing for Dave to say about someone he is quite obviously in a relationship with. Equius has, after all, been kind of turning a new leaf, insofar as a guy like that is even able to.

Karkat, however, sees an opportunity. (:>B

KARKAT AND DAVE'S EMOTIONAL CHEATING:

Karkat becomes Dave's therapist through (and only reprieve from) the constant retraumatization. Unfortunately, Karkat's enabling ASS encourages Dave to continue exploring his feelings toward his male moirail. Karkat is happy to teach Dave *anything* about troll romance he might need to know to keep up with Equius, and who is Dave to say no to his *new best bro*?⁴

Dave brings up being unintentionally physically abused every time Equius comes in contact with him, but Karkat helpfully lets him know that's just how trolls are, and that Equius is actually pretty kind, and that Equius also just lost his last moirail so DON'T BE A DICK. But sometimes Karkat takes a different tone, saying that if Dave *really* doesn't like Equius that he could *maybe*... well... no... he shouldn't. (:>B

So yeah. They're lowkey emotionally cheating.

KANAYA: You Really Seem To Be Acting Like Daves Moirail Lately

KANAYA: Or Dare I Suggest Even Straight Up Being It

KARKAT: THAT'S A MISUNDERSTANDING. EQUIUS IS HIS MOIRAIL. THAT WOULD BE CHEATING.

KANAYA: Karkat

KANAYA: You Are Being Messy

KARKAT: HUH? WHAT. I CAN'T BE A GOOD *FRIEND*

NOW????????????????????????????????????

KARKAT:

KARKAT:

KARKAT:L:B

⁴ /homestuck/5937

This vexes Kanaya.

KANAYA: ... Its Your Choice

KANAYA: Just Do What You Think Is Right

The thing is, over the years, the meteor-dwellers have come to realize that Equius... is actually awesome. He's learned a lot, and the time spent away from the cruel social trappings of his upbringing has mellowed him out considerably. He's become a lot better at controlling his temper, he's kinder, more playful, more willing to hear you out. As his number one simp⁵ often says during this period, *it's not his fault he's so god damn fucking STRONG.*

More and more, Dave's dismissive attitude about Equius and his personhood begins to piss people off as they realize that Equius is trying his hardest to make their relationship work. Karkat's guilt begins eating at him. He looks for a friend to confide in: first Terezi, who wants nothing to do with this shit, then the Mayor, who doesn't give great/any advice, then he texts John, but there's no service, then past/future Karkat, but they're like nah take me off this shit man, then Rose, but Karkat actually decides to turn around and walk out of the room before even opening his mouth. Finally, he soft launches the *concept* of venting to Vriska, and in turn she kindly lets him know that if this is *what she thinks it is* and Karkat chooses to share it with her, she will 8R8K both of his arms.

VRISKA: Karkat, that's... a good one! Hahahahahahahaha!

VRISKA: You reeeeeeeeeally had me going there for a second!

VRISKA: You and your rom8ntic fictions, sheesh!

VRISKA: 8ut I know you wouldn't 8ctually F8CK 8VER my good 8uddy Equius l8ke that, R8GHT????????

Karkat continues cheating with Dave. Only now with the added pressure that if he gets caught, he will be reduced to a red stain⁶.

PALE POGO SISTERS:

Nepeta is resurrected as GCATNepetasprite. As part of Vriska's plan, GCATNepetasprite has been assigned to back up Jake against The Felt. Equius does not know she has been brought back. She and Dave share their first in-person⁷ moment before the battle.

It begins fairly pleasantly; they reminisce about their few passing conversations. Their anxious excitement to reunite with Equius and Dirk respectively causes their conversation to drift towards Equius alone. Dave is quick to deflect any real conversational progress on his feelings about Dirk.

⁵ /homestuck/7458

⁶ /homestuck/1668

⁷ /homestuck/2792

They do a bit of joking/venting about their moirallegiance with Equius, dancing around the fact that the only reason Dave is with him has been rectified now that Nepeta is back.

GCATNepetasprite doesn't seem to know how she feels about her new situation, and lets Dave take control of the conversation. Dave's words towards Equius become increasingly hostile and uncharitable. After a particularly scathing line, GCATNepetasprite speaks up in Equius' defense.

"that's not the kind of thing you should say about your moirail. i get that he's sweaty and scary and difficult to talk to and too dangerous to hug and a weirdo and a cr33p⁸ but he's my FURIEND!"

Dave is stunned. He reflexively begins to stammer out a retort, but -

"what makes you think you're so much better than him?"

Dave neglects to tell Equius that Nepeta has returned.

DAVE AND DIRK MEET ON THE LILYPAD:

When the meteor arrives at the new session, Dirk, Dave, and Equius are able to meet on the lilypad right away. Witnessing Dave and Equius' in-person dynamic, Dirk immediately believes he's clocked what's going on - a muscular, bespectacled and inappropriately sexual rapper has, intentionally or not, completely exerted his physical control over this waifish victim's entire life? Yeah, no way.

"Stop! You're hurting him!" Dirk shouts, as Equius (unintentionally) casually bruises and batters Dave. And Dave honestly just gets pissed. Something protective in him awakens. "leave him alone dude hes just equius." Dave snaps back. He's shocked himself, the first words he's uttered towards this new version of his Bro were involuntarily in defense of *Equius*? This seriously freaks Dave out. The illusion that what he's been doing with Equius for the past three years has just been a long ironic joke is breaking. He needs to talk to Karkat, but Karkat isn't responding.

COLLIDE - CASUALTIES:

Davesprite and Karkat stage a prison rebellion. Karkat is killed by The Condesce in a violent struggle.⁹

⁸ /homestuck/2162

⁹ /homestuck/8086

Further casualties in the "Collide" event included Her Imperial Condescension, GCATNepetasprite, Dad Crocker, Jack "Spades Slick" Noir (A2), Jack "Bec" Noir (B1), Jack "Lord Jack" Noir (B2), Doze, Matchsticks, Die, Davesprite, Equius Zahhak, Clover, Cans, and Tavspersprite^2.

COLLIDE - EQUIUS' SACRIFICE:

Equius takes the place of Dirk on the roof with Dave and Terezi, facing off against Spades Slick and "Lord Jack." At the critical moment, he gives Dave a trusting, loyal nod. Dave chops his head off. But in this timeline, he doesn't go back to catch the head. He doesn't bring him back. Equius is dead.

THE FALLOUT:

They've won the game, but lost so much. Dave finds out what happened to Karkat and absolutely loses it. He lays into Vriska, asking "whyd you send the stupid fucking fake dave????????¹⁰ if it was me none of this wouldve ever happened." He puts Karkat's death all on her, and in front of everybody. It gets so bad that Vriska breaks down in tears. Terezi can't look Vriska in the eye.

FLASHBACK - BEFORE THE LILYPAD

KARKAT' S CONFRONTATION:

Karkat, having finally worked up the courage to attempt to steal Dave out from under Equius, approaches his musclebound romantic rival. He's got a whole speech rehearsed in his head. He's hyped up, feeling manic, electric, and ready. Dave's recent distance can be fixed, this can all be salvaged. It'll all be fine. It'll be better than fine, it'll be... beautiful.

What Karkat doesn't expect is that as he takes his first breath and prepares to launch into his diatribe, Equius breaks down into tears. Startled and unable to prevent himself from being lowkey an emotional slut, Karkat's momentum is completely arrested, and he finds himself hearing Equius out.

What he hears changes everything. Equius has been affected pretty badly by Dave's increasingly obvious discomfort and emotional distance, and as Karkat sits there listening to Equius pour his heart out, he realizes that over the years spent on the meteor, this racist muscle-freak has become a tr00ly considerate, kind person. Still weird, obviously, but as Karkat sits and really listens, he realizes what he's always sort of known, and simply tried not to think about: that Equius has been pushing himself as hard as possible to be better for Dave. The guilt begins to catch up with him. What... has he been doing?

Then, in a moment of astonishing emotional vulnerability, Equius takes his glasses off. He sniffs, giving a guilty, sad smile, deriding himself for his selfishness in monopolizing the conversation and asking Karkat what it was he needed him for. Karkat barely hears him. All he sees is the deep, honest blue that's been sitting behind those cracked shades the entire time, the beautiful soul of a man who loves with his entire muscular fucking heart.

¹⁰ /homestuck/5944

Reader, you need to understand: this is the Shades Moment. The Zahhak Eye Moment¹¹. Karkat has been waiting for this moment for years now, but Dave never really had the courage to give it to him. Now, after all the games, the avoidance, the guilt, the lies, all that he's done to and taken from Equius, it's Equius here giving it to him.

The air is thick with pure, unadulterated romantic honesty. Karkat is more than just stunned; he is moved. *Stirred*, even. And it shows, because as Equius holds his gaze, a flicker of primal, almost instinctual understanding sparks behind those sapphire eyes of his. They both need the same thing, something Dave has been unable to give them.

Without thinking, Equius' hand finds its way to Karkat's waist. It's gentle, gentler than Karkat could possibly have imagined.

"UOH," Karkat says.

What happens next is transcendently fulfilling. Physically, emotionally, psychologically... on every possible level. It's an explosion, a quadrant-shattering supernova, a joining more fundamentally soul-altering than anything as comparatively flat as Sprite²ing.

It is Perfect Play.

Hours later, Karkat asks Equius to promise him that they'll approach Dave and just put everything on the table. Equius wholeheartedly agrees; they'll do the honorable thing and all figure it out... *together*.

Smiling and calm, Karkat sinks into a deep, velvet slumber. Equius lets him lie there for a while, then, after a last fond look, leaves for the Lilypad to reunite with Dave.

PRESENT DAY

FAMOUS LAST WORDS:

Before the survivors go through the victory door, Dave notices one unread message from Equius on his phone. For obvious reasons, it must've been sent a while ago and he had just missed it. He quietly reads it all the way through.

Dave looks up and says to the person standing nearest to him:

"i wish id told him"

"Told him what?"

"that i don't like men"

Dave never has a relationship with another man. He is spiritually unfulfilled.

¹¹ /epilogues/meat/38

THE//END¹²

¹²If only you knew how bad things will truly get.