

# Contortion With Kanaya

By msfemboss

## Chapter One

Trolls, Dave decided, were fucking weird. Not only content in eating their weird food and watching their weird movies and just being annoying, they had to be freakishly stretchy as well. Not like Elastigirl type of stretchy but it may as well have been. Rose called it 'contortion' and apparently some humans could do that type of shit too, but whatever.

Kanaya was the one who was best at 'contorting' or whatever it was called. She was also, unsurprisingly, the most graceful. He had only seen her move in that way a couple of times - she was well aware of the fact that it tended to freak him out and thus limited herself - but it was oddly hypnotizing. Weird, but cool at the same time.

Of course Rose had been the one to notice him ogling her girlfriend... matesprit... whatever, because the universe hated him. And, because the universe continued to hate him, she invited him to sit in on one of Kanaya's stretching sessions. His sister had assured him that she would be there also, and that there was nothing to be afraid of.

*"Contortion is a natural thing, Dave. Don't be a baby about it."*

Well, that was a challenge if he had ever heard one. Of course he was going to show up to the session. He mustered up his courage before entering the room, cape swinging dramatically behind him.

Kanaya blinked, glancing at her matesprit. "I didn't realize that we would be having company." The troll looked a bit flustered at Dave's presence, eyes moving to look only at Rose. The light player smiled before gently patting her on the back.

"It'll be fine, Kanaya. Besides, perhaps with two of us we can finally work out the kink in your shoulder, yes?" If this was a cartoon, Dave decided, Kanaya's eyebrows would have shot right off of her head and straight into space. In reality, though, they had basically reached her hairline. Close enough, honestly.

The rainbow drinker hesitated before nodding. "That... would be appreciated, if Dave's willing -"

"I'm right here, you know."

"If *you're* willing then," she said before continuing, "I would appreciate your help in stretching out my left arm. Rose, if you could take your normal position...?" Dave only

wished he could have come up with a smart remark quicker as Kanaya straddled the slim metal table in front of them.

She went from straddling to a split in an instant, legs seeming perfectly flat on the surface of the table. Rose gripped her right leg and pushed it upward, causing Kanaya to trill happily. "A little bit faster please, Rose." The girl complied, only stopping the movement when the foot was just beyond her girlfriend's head.

The pleased noises continued. Rose nodded to her brother before pointing at Kanaya's back leg. "If you could do the same thing with that one it would be appreciated."

He hesitated before nodding, swinging his legs across the bench. He was surprised at how muscular Kanaya actually was, at least by the feeling of her legs. She always looked so slim and graceful. He wasn't sure how such hard muscle could still look dainty from afar.

"If you could pull back my arm, Dave, I would appreciate it." She lifted up her left arm and he grabbed it before slowly pulling it back towards his own body. Arm circles were something even he could do, which confused him. He had seen Kanaya do far more extreme moves without assistance, so what did she need him for -

"Now, if you could bring it around my back?"

Oh. Well, that made sense. Sort of. He nodded, only realizing as he started to pull her arm laterally that they wouldn't be able to see his movement. She let out a pleased purr as he heard a slight crack from her shoulder.

Rose lowered her girlfriend's leg before rising from the table. Dave followed suite, allowing Kanaya to swing her left leg back around to the front. The troll stretched forward, easily reaching beyond her toes and to the edge of the table. She seemed to be folded in half. Dave flinched; even just looking at her caused him physical pain.

After about a minute she rose back up and shifted to the side. "I think I'm going to go ahead to the wall now, Rose. If you could just spot me?"

"Of course." The troll smiled shyly before moving to the wall. She placed her leg up on the wall, slowly inching it upward. She pressed her hands against the cold metal, closing her eyes and letting out a deep breath before creeping her leg up further. She only stopped once her leg was flat against the metal, the hem of her skirt falling to her hip.

She took another breath before leaning back. Dave expected her entire torso to follow. Once again his expectations were not meant; only *half* of it leaned back. Anything beneath her ribcage was completely still, flat against the leg on the wall. She bent back about forty five degrees before stopping and taking a breath.

"How can you even do that?"

"The hole's still healing." Rose and Kanaya both said. It was kind of weird that they could speak in sync so easily, but that wasn't the question that Dave really wanted to

ask.

"How far can you go?" Dave didn't realize that he was asking the question until it came out of her mouth, which he then immediately regretted. Rose smirked at the confused look that was forming on Kanaya's face.

"I was trying to keep it subtle since I know that this sort of thing bothers you, but if you want me to go further I certainly can."

Then she snapped in half.

Dave could handle many things without getting flustered. Fighting with Bro and seeing at least ten dead versions of himself had given him a new appreciation of life. One with less caring, more irony, and reacting as cool as possible.

This was not one of those things because *holy shit Kanaya had literally just broken right in front of him.*

He fell to the floor in a heap of crimson and dark red.

"Rose, is he alright?"

The girl waved it off. "Give him a couple of minutes. It was his fault for asking, anyway."

Mornings were usually the time that she stretched alone in order to prepare for her more intensive contortion later in the day. Most of the trolls were asleep and Rose tended to slip into the dream bubbles or read in her respiteblock.

She was definitely not expecting a certain bespectacled Strider to be waiting for her in the main block. Kanaya definitely did not expect him to ask her to teach him 'how to do the stretching shit'.

"I don't want to be quite so extreme as, uh, what you were doing. You know, the whole *destroy your spine* type of deal," he said, adjusting his glasses.

"It was only a forty-five degree angle, Dave. No need to be so dramatic. Why are you interested, anyway?"

"Well, it looked cool. That's the most important thing, yeah? But seriously, what if we meet Jack again and I get my ass handed to me? Bro was one of the fastest guys I've ever seen and he still... Look, if bein' flexible can give me some sort of an upper hand, it's definitely something I need to be."

Kanaya hesitated, cocking her head. "Are you sure about this? It's not exactly easy and can sometimes be painful... can humans even be that flexible?" She could remember her friends thinking that she was insane for stretching and exercising so often. Not that she had much else to do during the day while her friends slept.

"Well, back at home Bro took me to a circus once and there were all sorts of people that could do weird shit. So I'm assuming that yeah, humans could do it. Unless

they're aliens in disguise or somethin'. That would definitely liven up -"

"Dave," Rose had always said that it was better to cut him off at the beginning of his rambling than in the middle, "are you actually motivated enough to do this?"

He responded to her question by simply sliding his sunglasses down his nose, revealing his red eyes. Kanaya was pretty sure she had seen a similar move in one of those movies Rose had made her watch. Or was it Karkat? It wasn't important. She decided to take it as a yes, regardless.

"We'll start off easy, then. I usually go for one hour in the morning and then two or three in the afternoon. Of course you wouldn't remember that part since you were on the floor during the rest of my training," he opened her mouth to cut her off but she continued, "First we'll warm up. You can start by running to your respitblock and putting on something more appropriate. Shorts and a loose shirt should suffice."

Dave grumbled before taking off. Kanaya had to admit that the boy, despite not being as wirey as a troll, had at least some semblance of muscle. The constant sword fighting probably helped with that, she assumed.

While she waited for her new student she set up two chairs and spread them apart so there was a small amount of space between. The troll sat down on the left chair before lowering herself onto the right one, shifting so that her pelvis and shoulders were her main supports. She made a mental note to push together the chairs for Dave before flexing her spine upward. The exercise was grub's play for her now, but she distinctly remembered having issues with it when she was first starting, requiring the gentle touch of her lusus to even hold the position.

She released the position after a moment, settling back down before arching up again. *Rinse and repeat thirty times, ten for the absolute beginner...* Her sensitive ears picked up Dave's return. "Hey Kana-"

"Shh." The human immediately shut up, allowing her to finish the last twenty eight flexes. With a soft grunt she swung up into a sitting position before turning to face Dave.

"That was the exercise I started out with. Of course trolls are a bit more naturally flexible than most humans, so I'm going to put the chairs together and only ask you to perform ten of those. I call them my flexes, though there may be a more official term for them." Kanaya shrugged. She shoved them together, waving her hand to give Dave the okay. He laid down and allowed her to adjust his positioning.

"So just sorta rise up?"

Kanaya nodded. "Yes, but keep your hips and shoulders as still as you can. It's alright if they rise a bit. Go as slow as you need to, and if it starts to hurt, stop." She noticed that he bit his lip as he nodded. Her glowing eyes flashed.

"I'm serious, Dave. You could get seriously hurt-"

"You're doing the mom thing again, Kanaya." She sniffed before moving into her next exercise, keeping an ear out just in case Dave started to struggle.

After her first warm up she always started with the classic standing back bend, usually going to the point of getting her head through her thighs. She shifted her hips, allowing the thin layer of skin over her torso hole to flex tight as she arched her back forward. Her legs naturally moved forward, her center of gravity remaining at her feet despite the forward movement of her pelvis.

Her arms naturally crossed over her chest as she attempted to keep her torso straight. Admittedly this was where she started to have trouble. Not that it was impossible for her to put her head between her legs, of course, but it took a certain amount of patience that on some days the troll just didn't have.

She felt her legs stiffen as her spine continued to shift where the bend was being contained at. While it had started at the top it moved slowly down her vertebrae, allowing her to grasp her legs by only slightly unfolding her arms. Kanaya grabbed her knees, pressing her skull in between her slim thighs. After a moment of holding the position she triumphantly released it, coming slowly back into her usual standing posture.

Dave hadn't made a single noise, but the troll could tell that he was struggling. "How many have you done?"

"Maybe two? I dunno, kinda lost track after one. How the fuck do you even do these without it hurting?" He sat up with a groan, arching his back forward to crack it.

"I said that if it started to hurt not to continue, Dave. Did you actually *run* to and from your respitblock?"

"Um..." He coughed.

"Dave. Go run a lap or two around the meteor. It doesn't have to be a sprint, just a jog will suffice." The human seemed to consider protesting before deciding against it. He hoisted himself slowly off of the chair before jogging out of the room. Perhaps, Kanaya mused, she would have Rose make sure that he was actually doing his exercises. The girl often accompanied the troll on her afternoon jogs, after all.

Free of the human for a few minutes allowed Kanaya to have a bit more freedom with her movements, since she wasn't required to be at someone's beck and call at a moment's notice. It was always nice when she had time to herself, not bothered by her inherent desire to help everyone around her.

The troll spread her feet and lowered herself into a bridge position, rising up onto her toes as her hands touched the floor. As she awkwardly toddled her hands forward she could hear the scolding tones of her lusus in the back of her mind. Sure, the bridge method was hardly the proper way to rise into a standing back bend, but it was the way she had unfortunately learned. Being one of the few trolls interested in the art meant that she had to rely on a lot of movies to hone her craft. Bad habits were, of course, inevitable.

She grabbed her ankles and moved upward, allowing her legs to shift forward once again. The climb was slow, but she could balance herself fairly well now that she had trained for so long. The troll rested her head against her thighs, closing her eyes and allowing her horns to brush against her calves.

"So, why didn't you tell me you were giving lessons now?" Kanaya's eyes snapped open and she rose slowly back to her feet. Her matesprit was smirking at her, arms crossed against her chest.

"Did you run into Dave or something?"

"Almost literally. I basically had to dive out of his way since he wasn't actually looking at where he was going. He told me he was working out with you, so I pretty much assumed you were attempting to teach him to bend in all of your... exotic ways." Rose wriggled an eyebrow before smiling more genuinely. Kanaya felt her skin heat up, knowing by Rose's giggle that she was probably blushing a bright jade.

"Next time you hold a lesson, maybe let me know? I know I'd like to show you the moves *I'm* capable of learning." She planted a kiss on the troll's pale cheek before casually strolling out of the room.

A very flustered Kanaya sat down in one of the chairs, hand on the nearly warmed cheek. Well, at least keeping up with two students would give her the opportunity to continue to improve.

## Chapter Two

"You know Rose I'm starting to wonder if you even need my help." The human was in the dolphin position, legs perfectly straight. She wasn't even shaking as she pressed her forearms into the ground, butt in the air. Looking at her straight on she could have been a perfect acute triangle.

Rose only turned her head towards her matesprit and smiled slyly. Another second passed and she exhaled, slowly moving her knees to the ground and sitting up. Both Kanaya and Dave could only stare at her in silence. The Light player relished in it, rolling her neck.

Dave was the one to break that silence, of course. "How the *fuck* -"

"My dear mother was always amazed by the gymnasts on the television. I'd say it was surprising that she hired a yoga instructor at one point, but I doubt it shocks either of you. Of course I tagged along, since I very much doubt she wanted her young daughter to join her," she smiled fondly at the memory, "I went into the class to spite her, but I ended up actually enjoying it. Of course I may be more advanced than my dear brother, but I'm nowhere near as flexible as you, Kanaya."

Kanaya clicked her tongue before nodding. "Yes, well, I'm not entirely familiar with Earth yoga, but it looks pretty basic. If I could describe a stretch, could you perhaps

give a name to it?"

"I can certainly try." Dave coughed.

"Uh, sorry to interrupt whatever ya'll are goin' on about, but I'm not familiar with any of this." Kanaya nodded at him, scratching her chin.

"We can start with the one that Rose was doing. It's pretty basic, by troll standards. I'm just surprised humans can even achieve that level of flexibility." She fell to her knees then crawled her hands forward, allowing her spine to stretch as much as it could. Without making a single noise she hoisted herself up into the triangle and placed her elbows onto the ground.

Dave followed her example, flinching as his spine cracked. He ignored the pain, refusing to acknowledge what Kanaya had told him before - he definitely didn't need to stop. Bro had always said that pain meant that the exercises were working, and wouldn't he know human anatomy better than a troll who wasn't exactly combat trained? When he tried to lower his forearms he let out a groan.

Rose placed her hand on his leg. "Don't worry about going all the way, Dave. That position's just as legitimate. It's called the downward dog. Don't feel bad if you can't get this immediately."

As if to add insult to injury Kanaya was quickly closing the gap between her outstretched legs and torso. Effortlessly she moved her weight back onto her feet and rose back up before shaking herself out. She moved her arms in circles before facing her pupils once again.

"You're not very good at this whole teachin' thing, Kanaya." Dave grunted, dropping to the floor, spine cracking once again. Rose glanced at him but he waved her off. Kanaya bowed her head before rolling her neck again.

"I will try my best to improve my teaching methods. We're going to stretch the back the other way this time. You get down onto your knees and push against your feet until you're bent back, except that you have to keep the upper legs straight up. Does that have an Earth equivalent, Rose?"

The girl tapped her bottom lip. "I believe I'd have to see it in order to know."

Kanaya nodded before dropping to her knees again. She pressed her palms against her feet and then slowly began bending backwards. Her torso slowly stretched back as her pelvis rotated slightly forward. As she settled into a final position - her ribcage was so parallel to the ground that Dave believed it could be used as a table - she threw her head back to face them.

Rose smiled. "Ah, yes, the camel pose. Just out of curiosity, could you go any further?"

"Er, I can certainly try." She continued to bend her torso back. Dave moved next to his ecto-sister.

"You're totally gettin' off on this shit, ain't you?"

"Perhaps. Ah, she's going into the King Pidgeon pose." The seer winked at him before returning her attention to the troll. Kanaya's head was nearly at her feet, her arms bending back to compensate for the sudden weight. She was practically a perfect triangle. Rose watched Kanaya settle into the pose before turning back to her brother. "Are you going to try this one, Dave?"

The knight discreetly touched his back, running his fingers along his sore spine. The laps that Kanaya had him run as well as the earlier stretch hadn't helped any of the pains that he had already been having just from practicing his sword fighting on his own. He grimaced. "Lalonde, I could barely hold an upside down dog -"

"Downward dog," Rose corrected as she settled into her own camel pose. Unlike Kanaya she could not bend all the way, instead stopping at a point where her rib cage was not quite parallel.

"Whatever. It probably wouldn't be productive to either of ya'll if I tried."

"You won't get anywhere if you don't at least start somewhere, Dave. I thought you knew that, considering your history with blades."

He growled at that before going onto his knees. The boy hesitated before grasping his feet. Then he started bending backwards at a quicker rate than his sister and Kanaya. He let out a gasp as his back creaked and cracked, finally biting back a wail as he settled close to the pose that his sister was in. Everything was fine except for the blinding pain and the fact that he had probably moved much faster than his not-quite-as-flexible-as-Kanaya body would allow.

Snapping up alerted Rose, who looked up at him with a frown. "Was that at least three breaths, Dave?"

"Yeah. Yep. Definitely."

"Dave -"

"Look, don't worry about it, Rose. Just, uh, stay here starin' at your girlfriend." Kanaya was peering at him from her head's spot on the floor, her ribs close to facing Dave directly. "That's still fuckin' weird, by the way. Look, I'll be back later. Tomorrow, right?" He took off into the main meteor rooms.

While the two were talking, Kanaya had moved into a triple fold, her head carefully tucked between her thighs and her arms stretched straight beyond. Noticing Dave's departure, the troll moved back into the King Pidgeon before straightening up so that her weight was purely on her knees. She frowned. "Is he alright?" She transitioned smoothly into the heron pose, sitting down on her right foot and lifting her left leg straight above her head.

Rose shrugged before moving into the lotus position. It wasn't exactly a big stretch but it was a classic. "I'm sure he'll be fine. I can talk to him later, if you're that



concerned."

Kanaya returned the shrug. "I'll believe you when you say so. You know him far better than I do."

The seer chuckled. "You'd be surprised."

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CG: RUMOR HAS IT THAT YOU'RE SPENDING TIME BENDING WITH KANAYA

TG: there are like six of us who would be spreading rumors like that

TG: and dont say the clown i havent seen him in weeks

CG: I SAW YOU GO IN THERE WHEN SHE'S MOVING LIKE A MEOWBEAST IN HEAT

TG: thats disgusting

TG: and not even remotely accurate dude

TG: like seriously

CG: HOW DO YOU EVEN STAND GOING IN THERE? IT'S DISTURBING AS FUCK.

TG: see im actually with you on that one its really fuckin weird even by troll standards seriously what the hell is up with you guys

CG: I WALKED IN THERE ONCE AND SAW HER WITH HER LEG LITERALLY ON HER BACK WITH HER FOOT IN FRONT OF HER FACE. WALKED THE FUCK OUT OF THERE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE SINCE I DON'T THINK ANYONE IS SUPPOSED TO MOVE THAT WAY.

TG: thats nothing ok see she can do this thing where she goes into a back bend which even i can do but then she like

TG: she like fuckin snaps in half or some shit

TG: like its obviously not actually in half since im pretty sure shed be dead and she definitely aint god tier so shed be rotting wherever the fuck the rest of the bodies went

TG: but thats not the end of it like once her spine is good and mauled she moves her legs even closer and grabs them and puts her head on her feet and acts like its no big deal

TG: shit even impressed rose

CG: WELL THAT'S WHEN WE KNOW IT'S FUCKING INCREDIBLE ISN'T IT? QUICK, THE GREAT SEER ROSE LALONDE WAS ACTUALLY IMPRESSED WITH SOMETHING SOMEONE OTHER THAN HERSELF DID. RING THE ALARM AND RAISE THE DEAD WE'RE FUCKED.

TG: dude dont be a dick

TG: i mean i know thats what you do best but damn

CG: DOES TEREZI KNOW ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE DOING?

TG: uh

CG: SO NO

TG: dont worry ill tell her eventually

TG: maybe

CG: UH HUH

TG: whatever dont worry about me and my shitty relationships

TG: how are you doin on that front btw

CG: FUCK OFF STRIDER

-- carcinoGeneticist [CG] ceased trolling turntechGodhead [TG] --

TG: heh

## Chapter Three

"Alright, try it now." Kanaya grunted as Rose lifted her legs from the floor, raising them up until they were at a ninety degree angle with the ground. The maneuver was basically a reverse candle, since her stomach was on the floor rather than in the air. She let out a quick squeak of pain as her matesprit moved too quickly.

The noise caused the human to stop. "Are you quite sure you're ready for this? I mean, not that I doubt your abilities, but I'd rather you not break your back for this."

"I will tell you when to stop, Rose. I know my limits... I would just like to see if they have increased over the last few months." The girl grimaced before gently pushing the legs again. The troll pushed herself off of the ground with her hands, her torso coming up into a planking position as her pelvis rotated in order to keep up with her legs.

Kanaya could remember the days when she had to use a swing to stretch even as far as Rose was pushing her. Her spine curled and popped as the skin of her stomach stretched and her groin continued to move. The distance between the torso and legs grew ever smaller.

Finally it got to a point where the stretches were becoming painful. Kanaya gasped. "Alright, that is enough." Rose released, allowing Kanaya to slowly move back onto the ground. "How did I do?"

"Hm... not bad. I'd say you reached just beyond a forty five degree angle, if that means anything to you." The troll sighed, releasing herself from the chest stand before moving onto her knees.

"It is definitely an improvement, I suppose. I am surprised Dave isn't here yet."

Rose shrugged. "I haven't seen him since yesterday, actually. I believe he was speaking with Karkat about something?"

"Odd how the two are friendly now," Kanaya muttered. "I hope that he's alright."

"I'm sure he's fine."

Dave was definitely not fine. In fact he was currently with Karkat, the troll trying to help him work the kinks out of his back. Unfortunately for the human he knew little about fixing spines, which led to a lot of guess work and Dave wishing that he could honestly just die and come back. It would be better than the pretzel shapes Karkat was trying to bend him into, at least.

"Holy *fuck*, if I wanted to be doin' this I would've just gone to practice with Kanaya."

Karkat hissed, roughly shoving him back down onto the floor. The human slammed his chin onto the linoleum with a yelp. "I'm trying to help, asshole! Why the fuck would you come to me, anyway? Is your think pan in backwards -"

"I don't want Tz knowing -"

"*What* don't you want me knowing, cool kid?" Dave let out a silent curse as Karkat froze, his clawed hands still on the human's shoulders. Even from his spot on the floor he could tell where she was by each click of her cane. Despite knowing that she couldn't see him he closed his eyes when she came forward.

The female troll leaned down and sniffed him curiously before looking towards Karkat. The red of her eyes seemed to flicker playfully as she picked up his nervous scent. "Do I smell a bit of black flirting going on in here?" Terezi took their shocked sputters in gleefully. "I didn't know you were into this sort of thing, cool kid! I mean Karkat's been -"

"No. Just... fuck no, Tz. There's nothing going on with that. *At all*. Seriously, you can stop the whole sniffin' thing."

"So what is going on?" Her voice was still light and airy, which meant that he had basically played right into her hands. Dave twisted her neck to face Karkat, who only met

his eyes awkwardly. "Hm?"

"Nothing's happening, Terezi. Don't look so fucking excited."

Terezi clicked her tongue and crossed her arms. "You're both on the floor together, acting super suspicious..." The troll grinned before doing her best attempt at showing all of her teeth. Dave was reminded of a shark that had just smelled blood. The image was made all the more terrifying by the fact that said shark was *Terezi*.

Yeah, definitely not something he wanted to deal with or even think of dealing with. "Look, don't worry about it -"

"Oh, I'm not *worried*, Dave. Just curious. Don't worry, cool kid, I'll figure this out eventually. Maybe even sooner than you want me to, hm?" She cackled at the sudden fear scent that filled the room before immediately taking her leave, cane clicking rapidly on the floor.

It wasn't until the sound completely faded that both troll and human relaxed, Karkat slumping on top of Dave's back. "You still haven't told her?! Are you fucking stupid?"

"Look, it's obvious she's going through some shit right now, let her play detective \_."

"I'm not going to keep your fucking secrets for you, Strider!" The troll stood up with a huff. The human glanced back at his retreating form.

"...You know my back still hurts -"

"Figure it out yourself."

It was boredom and the slight desire to find her brother that sent Rose on her second run around the meteor. Kanaya had offered to join her, but the girl had declined. If she was going to confront Dave about his injuries, she was going to have to do it on her own. Kanaya had a way of mother henning even when she didn't want to, and Rose knew enough about the Knight to know that being babied would only drive him further away.

She had to admit to herself that progress was going a bit slower than she had expected, which wasn't in itself surprising. The human longed to move the same way her matesprit did. She could only imagine effortlessly able to fold into a triangle or ball. At least Kanaya seemed eager to help in any way possible, even though the troll had a tendency to breeze through exercises without realizing how hard they were.

Even that morning Kanaya had led her into a back bend exercise. It was supposed to end with the rib cage on the ground in pretzel formation. Apparently the move itself was very simple... if you were already able to contort without pain. While Kanaya had been able to move into the position quickly - and was even able to stretch her legs out straight in front of her while managing to widen her legs to avoid her horns - Rose had

struggled with even the back bending part. It wasn't that she couldn't do a back bend, because that part was easy.

The part that led to struggle was the rest of the folding, the part that required the pelvis to move behind the rib cage in an unnatural way. Kanaya had made it look so *easy*, able to bend back without even a second's hesitation...

Rose continued to run, speeding up slightly. She wanted to feel challenged, but not given something impossible. Perhaps that was how Dave felt. The girl slowed her pace as she passed his block. It was empty, save for a few cans that had been nicked from the Mayor. As she ran she considered picking them up and returning them.

And then she crashed straight into Terezi. They both yelped, though Rose was actually thrown onto the floor by the force. The troll merely looked slightly dazed, though recently it seemed that dazed was Terezi's only expression. Other than *that smile* she had when she knew exactly what was happening.

"Way to run into the blind troll, Rose."

Her tone seemed teasing enough, but Rose knew to be cautious. Terezi could be rather volatile if she chose to be. "Sorry about that, Terezi. Are you alright?"

She sniffed in response. "What brings you to this part of the meteor?"

"Ah. I run a lot here. Usually in the morning, actually, while you all are asleep."

"Hm." Terezi seemed unconvinced.

The two stood there facing each other in awkward silence. Terezi's expression seemed to twist into something more confused. Rose sighed, deciding to take the bait. "Is there something you need?"

"I'm wondering what Dave's keeping from me. You wouldn't happen to know... would you?" Her dark eyes seemed to meet Rose's purple. The Seer did not flinch. It was definitely interesting that Dave was hiding the lessons from his matesprit... if the two were even still together.

Yes, that was definitely something to bring up next time she saw her brother. Rose gave the troll a tight smile. "I'm not sure what you mean, Terezi. I wasn't even aware he was hiding anything."

"Of course you weren't," Terezi muttered, barely loud enough for Rose to hear. "Well, if you hear something from him you should let me know." She didn't wait for a response, choosing to step around the girl without another word.

Rose's eyes followed her movements for a moment before she continued on her run. Well, there were multiple things to ask her brother now, that was for certain.

## Chapter Four

It was odd, being alone in her session for the first time in two weeks. The troll had waited for about ten minutes for the humans to show up, but when neither of them appeared had simply started going into her stretches on her own time. It was only as she was pushing herself into a backbend did it occur to her to check Trollian. What if there had been an emergency and Rose wasn't able to get into contact with her?

Kanaya grunted, bending her knees and stretching out her arms as her torso started to touch the ground. She reached for her husktop, which was just barely in range of her outstretched hands. Staying in her bent position, Kanaya opened up the computer and Trollian, then waited for the program to recognize if she had any missed chat requests.

Sure enough there was tentacleTherapist, flashing on the screen in all of her light purple glory. Kanaya clicked to open the window, and was immediately greeted with a wall of text.

TT: Kanaya, I'm sorry to say that I won't be able to come to this morning's session. I'm still hunting for Dave in order to make sure that he's alright. I suspect that he's hiding with Karkat, so I'd like to be able to catch him while he's still awake.

TT: I'm also not sure how relevant this is for you, but Terezi seems to also be hunting down Dave. I have a feeling that he has yet to tell her that he's been training with you. Now, I've never known Terezi to be the jealous type, but I can tell that she's rather frustrated with Dave's lack of communication.

TT: I know, what a shock. My brother, not able to talk clearly or concisely with people? Unheard of.

TT: Anyway, that's all. I'm in no danger or anything, so if you're worrying you can stop that. Hopefully I'll see you this afternoon, if that's quite alright? Sorry once again.

Kanaya closed out the window without responding, pushing the husktop away as she forced her weight onto her chest in order to bring her legs into a chest stand position. So no surprises on any front, unless she counted the possibility of Terezi poking her nose into the classes if she caught even a slight whiff of Dave's scent.

She wondered briefly if she should have messaged Rose back, at least to acknowledge that she had read and understood what she was saying. The last thing that Kanaya wanted was for Rose to think that she was mad for skipping the lesson. Maybe she could go seek out Dave or Terezi and try to help work things out?

There was her meddling side again. The troll closed her eyes before releasing her

position to lay flat on the floor. Certain moves were becoming a bit trickier since the muscles within her hole were healing, sealing the torso shut. Admittedly it would be easy to puncture it again without pain, but she didn't really want to think of doing such a thing.

Perhaps, she mused, the best thing she could do was wait for problems to solve themselves. Sitting idle was not in her nature, however, and so she stood up and stepped out of the room, ready to take action.

Terezi, meanwhile, was growing frustrated. She had never had such a hard time tracking down her cool kid, even when he tried his best to hide from her. The blind troll wondered if he had cheated at their game by heading into the dream bubbles, but decided against it. Usually she could at least find a sleeping body somewhere, and the bubbles had lately just been barren deserts and lands from a session that she did not know.

Oh, she *knew* he was still on the meteor. She caught slight whiffs of his odor in various common places, spread thin like old grub sauce. But then it would fade almost immediately as soon as she entered the respite blocks, drowned out by the scents of two other familiar trolls and Rose.

At least his scent wasn't mixing with Gamzee's. Purple and candy red didn't mix well, regardless of what Karkat thought.

For the third time that morning she passed by the mutant's respite block, not even thinking to peer inside or to check on him.

This ended up being fortunate for Dave, who was blissfully unaware of his matesprit's hunt. Instead, he was inside Karkat's room straddled over two chairs as the troll spotted him. Every time he pulled his midsection up off the chairs Karkat's eyes would flash with worry, as though he was worried about getting caught with a dead Dave in the room.

It would have been funny as hell to leave him hanging like that, Dave thought. His back cracked ominously as he arched up higher, causing the troll to wince.

"Could you not make noises like that?! They're fucking ridiculous!"

"Don't be a baby. It just means that the exercises are workin'!"

"Kanaya's going to kill me if she finds out you've been doing this without her supervision. I'm a fucking enabler and there's going to be another rampage and -"

"Dude, calm down. It's fine. What Kanaya an' Rose don't know won't hurt them." He grunted, relaxing back onto the chair. Dave released the chair legs that he had been desperately hanging onto to in order to keep balance. His knuckles were white as a dead man's, which probably wasn't a good thing.

Still, it wasn't going to stop him. He was never going to be as good as Kanaya or his sister, that much was obvious, but he still wanted to be able to do *something*, if only to make sure Kanaya's feelings weren't hurt or some bullshit.

"Don't push yourself so hard," Karkat snapped.

"Could you please go hide under your bridge or wherever the fuck you sleep? Seriously, you're killin' my vibe here."

"It's a recepuracoon, and no. Not until you stop!"

Dave grimaced. "I'll stop when I'm dead."

"That's not exactly reassuring -"

Karkat was cut off by a light cough. Rose was leaning against the door frame, arms crossed against her chest. "You know, I'm surprised it took me so long to find you both when you bicker so loudly." She turned towards her brother and looked at him expectantly.

"...What? This isn't like your mind trick shit you try and pull with -"

"No. I'm simply wondering what you're doing and why you're doing it without proper supervision."

"I've got Karkat."

"If Karkat were truly qualified to supervise he would've told you that you're gripping the chair too tightly and in the wrong position. You should lightly grasp the edge of the *seat* of the chair, not the legs."

Dave fell silent for a moment before shifting his hands up to the seat and shooting an accusatory glance at Karkat. "What the hell, Karkat? I thought you were supposed to be on top of all this!"

The troll threw his hands up defensively. "Don't pin this on me, dumbass!"

Rose rolled her eyes and rubbed her temple. It was way too early in the morning to deal with this. "Dave, if you really want to impress Kanaya, you should just not hurt yourself. Okay? Because none of us like when you do that. I know you have your martyr complex going on, but I'd much rather you take things slow with us than try and do it on your own. And no, Karkat does not count as 'not *doin'* it on your own'."

The human sighed, lifting himself into a sitting position on the chair. "Fine, whatever. I guess you're right, anyway, especially since I nearly died last night tryin' to do a backbend. Maybe I could try again, or something."

She smiled. "That's all I'll ask, Dave. Thanks."



Kanaya found Terezi curled up next to the Mayor in Cantown. She was absently drawing with red chalk on the ground, her drawings lacking their usual enthusiasm. The Mayor twittered worriedly as Kanaya approached her friend.

"What do you want, Maryam? I'm kind of busy."

The jadeblood glanced at the drawing that she was working on. Not much of anything, really, considering that she was just dragging the chalk around in a plain circle. "I can see that."

"Was that human sarcasm? It sounded like human sarcasm."

"Look, I just wanted to tell you that whatever problems you're having with Dave, event though they're probably complicated -"

"He won't talk to me or tell me where he's going. Did I do something wrong? I don't think I'm clingy for just asking what he's up to. It seems like everyone on the meteor but me is in on the joke, too." She aggressively jabbed the chalk into the ground, causing it to crumble and the Mayor to gurgle mournfully at the loss of his in progress Library-slash-Memorial Park.

Things were more dire than Kanaya thought. Was Dave honestly that ashamed to be in her classes? It wasn't like she had seen him for the last few, anyway. Her husktop buzzed within her skirt. She sighed, digging around in her pocket. Why had she sewn the thing so large? After a few seconds more of searching she managed to pull it out.

TT: I got Dave to give everything one last chance. We'll both be at tomorrow's session.

Kanaya smiled. Perfect. "Terezi, if you want to know what's going on, you should come to my training tomorrow morning."

"That sounds suspicious. You know if anything weird is going on I'll have to take action."

"Just trust me on this one. Come tomorrow and you'll see."

## Chapter Five

"I alchemized a cane for you to use out of those chairs and part of a table in the dining room. I wouldn't mention the table to anyone, actually. I don't think that I was supposed to use it, but I'm kind of curious to see if anyone will notice that it's gone." Rose shrugged, trying (and failing) to hide the smile that was on her face. She placed the blocks next to Kanaya and moved out of the way.

The troll quietly gripped onto the wood, claws digging in as she hoisted herself up. It had been at least a sweep since she had last used a proper cane, and she was pleasantly surprised that humans had them in their world. Apparently they were actually somewhat easy to purchase, too. No trying to smuggle one across a desert in the day time on Earth, she assumed.

Kanaya pushed herself off the ground, transferring her weight onto her arms as her lower body gracefully swung into the air. She tipped her face forward, her horns pointing outward like a ram about to charge. Her left leg moved forward, changing the straight form of her hand stand into an extremely lopsided 'Y' shape. The right leg followed its partner and her pelvis twisted, turning her into a sideways 'V'.

"You're being awfully quiet today, Kanaya." Rose's light purple eyes scanned her girlfriend's form in silent admiration. How she could hold herself for so long without even twitching was a complete mystery to the human. Even the yoga instructors her mother brought in and the contortionists she had once watched on TV were not so perfect. She wondered how they would feel, being beat out by the alien equivalent of a human teenager.

"Hm?" The jaded troll relaxed her arms, folding them in on themselves as she vertically moved her legs behind her once again. It was like a push up position, Rose decided, if said push up didn't need any sort of support for the legs. The troll tilted her head back up and then turned to face the human, all the while moving all of her weight onto the right hand. She let go of the block with her left hand, and then twisted her body so that she wouldn't fall over.

Her strength was truly remarkable. Rose wondered if this was a thing that all trolls could do, or if Kanaya had just trained hard enough to be able to hold that much weight with a single appendage. Then again, the girl could swing around a chainsaw with ease, so perhaps Rose shouldn't have been so surprised by anything that she could do.

"You just seem very deep in thought. Do you want to talk about what's bothering you?" Dave would've had a field day with that. He always loved when she tried to talk like an actual therapist. She wondered if Kanaya would even get the reference. Did Alternians even have therapists? Considering the murder rate that apparently plagued the planet (and even the meteor), she doubted it.

Maybe she could stand in as the first official Alternian therapist, if they ever got around to winning the game. It was something to bring up with Karkat, maybe.

Kanaya sighed, slowly placing her hand back on the wooden block. "I'm just concerned about how today will go. What if Dave does not show up? What if Terezi is still angry? There are too many unknowns."

"Life is full of unknowns."

"I do not really need your human cliches right now, Rose. I just need to figure out how I'm going to work this out. Thank you for the cane, though. I may use it more today. Do you want to see if you can track down Dave?" The troll released the hold on her legs

and dropped back to the ground.

"Anytime, Kanaya. And yes, I'll see if I can find him. Not really that many places he could run, are there?"

Dave wasn't running away from his problems. In fact, he was heading right towards them. He was just going very, very slowly. Karkat had pretty much forced him out of his respitblock, even slamming the door on him once he had just barely cleared the door. Nothing says friendship like nearly having your fingers smashed.

He was so caught up in his thoughts and trying to move like a snail that the troll behind him went completely unnoticed. That is, until she licked him. He froze, fingers curling into his palms. "Hey, Terezi."

"Cool kid. Where are you off to?"

Well, fuck. He glanced over his shoulder, unsurprised by the wide grin that was right next to him. She could probably tear off his ear if she wanted to. Which she might, considering the fact that he had been aggressively avoiding her. He was about to answer when she grabbed his shoulder and squeezed tightly.

"No need to answer, since I'll know soon enough. You're hanging out with Kanaya, aren't you?" Terezi took his lack of an answer as affirmation. "Good, since she invited me to join her this morning. You should know that legislacerators always get what they need to solve a case, Dave."

She gave him a final lick before taking off, cane clicking on the floor. Dave stood there, mind trying to pull together the information that Terezi had just supplied. Kanaya had invited Terezi to watch the practice? Well, not watch, obviously. Sniff?

"There you are, Dave! Kanaya's waiting for you." He sighed as his sister approached. She was clad in yellow and orange running clothes, which had never really seemed her style. Maybe she was trying really hard to embrace her title or something. He wondered if he should be sticking closer to his own assigned color scheme. He already wore a lot of red anyway -

"...Dave, are you even paying attention?"

Well, time to face the music. Dave sighed as Rose grabbed a hold of his arm and began to pull. At least John wasn't there to make fun of him.

Kanaya, meanwhile, was in the middle of executing a back bend push up. Her eyes never left Terezi as she brought her head through the small gap between her calves. The blind troll had arrived just moments prior and had crinkled her nose once she realized exactly *what* Kanaya was doing.

Terezi had been rather quiet until Kanaya had formed herself into a 'C' as her starting move, legs nestled comfortably between her ribcage and arm pits. Then she began to talk, which only made Kanaya groan inwardly. "Why are you still doing this kind of thing?"

"It is good exercise. Besides, it comes in handy when you are fighting. Which we'll be doing a lot of when we get to the new session." Kanaya grunted, pushing down on the ground and moving her weight. Her balled up body slowly moved up off the floor, only stopping once her arms were completely straight.

"I don't see how rolling up in a ball helps you fight anything. Unless you're trying to imitate a shellbeast. Maybe you're trying to distract the enemy by compressing the papaya smell?"

"Terezi, you are a good friend but I would appreciate your silence during this. Thank you." Considering the way that her grin widened, Kanaya decided that she had done a poor job of hiding the frustration in her voice.

As she was lowering herself to the ground, Dave and Rose appeared. The jadeblood glanced at Terezi before looking straight at the humans. "Dave has something he wants to tell you, anyway."

"I do?" Rose nudged his side. "Oh, uh. I've been sort of practicing contortion. I'm pretty shitty at it. I didn't want to tell you cause I suck and you think it's stupid as hell. Anything else?"

Terezi quirked an eyebrow before cackling. "That's it, really? I thought that you, Kanaya, and Karkat were having a really weird ashen thing or something. It is stupid, I'll give you that. Completely useless, too." She grinned, tilting her head towards Kanaya. The other troll was blushing bright jade, though Dave couldn't tell if it was from embarrassment or anger.

"Alright, well, now you know. Forgive me for ignoring you, or whatever?"

"Hmmm... maybe, cool kid. You're going to have to help me and the Mayor later, though, since you've been gone so many days. You know how frustrated he is that the eastern quarter isn't done yet?" Terezi gave Dave a little lick before heading for the door.

Kanaya blinked. "You're not going to stay?"

"Of course not. I think it's stupid and I can't see what's going on. Talk to you later, cool kid." She departed, leaving the three. There was silence for a moment before Kanaya coughed, stretching her arms above her head. The troll slowly moved into a back bend, gripping her knees. She pushed her head between her calves carefully, feeling the skin along her hold stretch easily.

"So, ready to get started?"

## Epilogue

"How does she do that?"

"It's called a bridge, Dave, and it's actually really basic. You could probably do it too, if you tried." Rose sniffed before returning her attention to Kanaya. The troll was lowering herself back to the ground, moving her weight onto her chest. Through the tight material of her shirt Rose could see that the closing up her hole had been slightly ruptured.

She wondered briefly if she should ask what had happened, but decided against it. Kanaya didn't seem too concerned about it. In fact, the rip seemed to be helping her progress into a cheststand since she was no longer impeded by the muscle and tissue that would have previously slowed her down.

How the troll could survive without many of her major organs was a mystery to Rose, something to be solved some other time. The human stood up, brushing her hands against her bare legs. "Ready to stretch, Dave?"

"Nah, I'm fine just sittin' here. You go ahead and -" Rose yanked her brother off the ground, hiding a smile at the squeak of protest that escaped him.

"Don't worry, we're going to start out easy and with exercises that actually pertain to what you want to do. I'm going to assume that you wish to become better with movement based on your conversations with Kanaya. Is that correct?"

"Yes -"

"Good. Hang onto the table edge and start swinging your leg as far back as you can. After thirty swings switch to the other leg." She smacked him on the shoulder and ignored his grumbles, choosing instead to sit next to her girlfriend.

Kanaya was still balanced on her chest, her knees solidly on the floor and her pelvis up proudly in the air above her head. Her horns were precariously close to her groin, carefully standing in between her parted thighs. Rose nodded approvingly. "A triple fold. Very nice."

"I'm going to assume that what you said isn't sarcasm." The troll tried to tip her head upward to look at her matesprit, but ultimately decided against it as her horns touched skin.

"It wasn't."

"Good. I was starting to think I wasn't getting better at reading the signs." She took a deep breath before returning to a regular chest stand. Kanaya released the pose, resting on the ground for a moment before standing up. Her eyes flicked over to where Dave was finishing his leg swings.

"Have him do static leg stretches next."

"Sure. What's next for you?" Rose motioned to Dave, who groaned before settling down on the floor. The static stretches were nothing new to him - he assumed that they meant the generic leg pulls and butterflies - so he would at least be able to breeze through them.

Once he had himself stretched as far over his left leg as he could possibly be, he snuck a glance at Kanaya and his sister. The troll was standing up, hands reaching far above her head. Dave could see her well defined back muscles tensing through her skin tight shirt. It was almost hypnotizing to watch them move as she slowly stretched her arms out in front of her.

She then went into a handstand, arms tensed against the ground. Her spine then appeared to cave in on itself, though Dave knew now that she was simply flexible enough bend her spine that far. Her butt was nearly touching her head.

The troll only stopped when the cheeks were wedged in between her horns, causing her to blush slightly. Her horns, as was the case with most all trolls, were two of the most sensitive spots on her body. Even her own clothed body touching them sent tingles down her spine. Kanaya coughed, trying to regain her composure, though she could tell that Rose knew *exactly* what had happened by the way she was grinning.

"This is called a headseat... I feel like the term is self explanatory enough for you?"

"Oh, absolutely. We had human performers that could do this, though it must be more challenging for you because of your horns. Am I correct?"

She sniffed, moving back into a normal handstand. "Perhaps. I haven't seen a human do it, obviously, so it's hard to judge whether it is easier for them." Kanaya dropped to her feet and patted her hands against her shirt.

"Would you be interested in helping me with a move? It's really only something that two people can do and -"

"Sure. Just tell me what to do."

Kanaya cocked her head towards the set of chairs that had been sitting abandoned for the past few sessions. "Grab one of those and climb on top."

Rose obeyed, dragging the chair over to Kanaya before standing on top of it. Kanaya climbed on after her, nestling her body against her matesprit. She could feel Rose's chest rising against her back as she reached her hands behind her. "Take my hands. I'm going to have to step on your foot for this and I apologize."

The human chuckled, taking her hands. "It's fine, Kanaya. Do what you have to do."

"Thanks." She hesitated for a moment before putting her right foot onto Rose's own. She felt the human flinch behind her before settling. Kanaya lifted her left leg behind her, stopping only once it was straight over her head. She felt Rose move a bit to

the side in order to avoid getting hit, her hands tightly squeezing the troll's own. "Alright, now lean me forward."

Her matesprit complied, tensing her own muscles as she moved Kanaya forward from the standing split. The troll released her right hand before swinging the arm back up around the stabilized leg. She grabbed onto Rose's outstretched hand without missing a beat, her armpit nestling itself around her right leg.

Once she estimated that her legs were parallel to the ground, she looked up and around her leg. "Alright, stop. Hold it if you can. This is a good way for me to stretch and I've never been able to do it... please let me know if you want to let go, though."

"You've never been able to do this?" Rose asked. The move was so lovely that she couldn't imagine *why* Kanaya had never attempted it. She'd have to ask Dave later what it looked like from an outside view. His gawking had to be good enough for something, after all.

"No one else has really shown any interest in this, as you know. You saw Terezi's reaction. Vriska outright condemned it when I was her moirail. I spent a rather stupid amount of time chasing after someone who hated a hobby close to my heart, thinking back on it." She curled her toes as she stretched her muscles. She had no idea that her calves were so tight.

"I don't see why trolls don't appreciate contortion as an art form. It's rather lovely when someone like you is doing it."

Kanaya glanced up at Rose. "I appreciate the compliment, Rose. It was even somewhat smooth."

"Thank you."

The troll swallowed, wiggling her toes. "Trolls don't really see the purpose of art or fashion. It's so strange to think that we birthed a species like your own," she mused. Kanaya tugged at Rose's arm to communicate that she was finished. The girl started to hoist Kanaya back up onto the chair, her left leg swinging back around as she righted herself.

Rose grunted, shaking out her arms. Kanaya's eyes widened in alarm and Rose shook her head quickly. "No no, I'm fine. I'm just not used to holding that much weight for so long. Though you're considerably lighter with that hole reopened."

"Ah." So she had noticed. Kanaya decided to ignore the bait and slid onto the floor, going easily into a split. She brought her left leg up onto the chair front and gripped it, pulling herself closer together. After what she had done with Rose, this was practically her cool down period. Oversplits were incredibly easy next to everything else.

Realizing that she wasn't getting an answer about the hole, Rose sat next to her girlfriend. She studied the pose before moving into her own split with relative ease. There was no way she was going to be able to do an oversplit, though.

The room slipped into a comfortable silence. The girls continued to move into various yoga poses, though Kanaya always opted to go for the more complicated version of whatever they were doing. Dave had gone into the butterfly position while Kanaya was doing her headseat, and hadn't moved an inch since.

Perhaps this entire thing wasn't for him. He was perfectly content to watch Kanaya do her own thing, though. Maybe he could volunteer as some sort of cheerleader-slash-audience type deal. Even if Kanaya questioned his purpose, Rose would probably appreciate it.

While they were preoccupied with each other Dave stood up and slipped out the door. Terezi and the Mayor were waiting for him to finish up the third apartment block in the eastern sector. He was sure Kanaya wouldn't mind his absence. The only rule on the meteor was that you didn't keep the Mayor waiting, after all.