



A Year With You

Batman - All Media Types · Alvin and the Chipmunks - All Media Types · Not Rated
· 5583 words

by Arukir

Contents

A Year With You 3

 Chapter 1: January -- New Year's 3

 Chapter 2: April -- Fool's Day! 8

 Chapter 3: August -- Anniversary 12

 Chapter 4: September -- Birthday!..... 15

 Chapter 5: November -- Dia De Los Muertos 20

A Year With You

Fandom: Batman - All Media Types, Alvin and the Chipmunks - All Media Types Rating: Not Rated Category: Gen

Warnings: Creator chose not to add warnings

Characters: Simon Seville, Harleen Quinzel, Alvin Seville, Theodore Seville, Bruce Wayne, Joker (DCU), Alfred Pennyworth, Victor Fries, Nora Fries

Tags: Not Beta Read, Not Canon Compliant, Alternate Universe - Human, Crossover, Alternate Universe - Teenagers, Alternate Universe - Superheroes/Superpowers, April Fools' Day, New Years, Día de los Muertos | Day of the Dead, Amnesia, Birthday, Birthday Fluff, Birthday Party, Birthday Presents, Pets, Science Experiments, Bands

Words: 5583 Chapters: 5 chapters Status: In progress Published: 2024-04-01

Alvin, Simon, Theodore! Are human and Bruce Wayne's adopted kids/new Robins. Harley is Joker's adopted teenaged daughter, and Simon's best friend.

Twelve chapters, each a different month/Holiday, focusing on Simon and Harley.

Okay, so... No one's a murderer/rapist/cannibal/pedophile/etc. The Rogues are mostly thieves.

The 'chipmunks' showed up on Bruce's doorstep when they were seven, completely amnesiac.

- Simon has dark brown hair, blue eyes, and wears glasses. His hero name is Kookaburra.
- Alvin has medium brown hair and hazel eyes. His hero name is Cardinal.
- Theodore has light brown hair and green eyes. His hero name is Quetzal.

Enjoy!

Chapter 1: January -- New Year's

Simon finds out that Harley's has a problem. He fixes it.

Simon's fake name means Eyes Four, The Genius. I think, I used Google translate to make it...

10...

9...

8...

7...

6...

5...

4...

3...

2...

1...

"Happy New Years!" The cry went out through Gotham as it switched from December to January. Heroes, civilians, and Rogues were all celebrating in their own ways.

And some of them were even celebrating together.

"Happy New Year's, Kooky!" Harleen 'Harley Quinn' Quinzel grinned, throwing confetti everywhere.

Simon shouted in surprise, quickly covering his mouth. He looked around at all the guests at the annual Wayne New Years party; luckily, no one had noticed. He grabbed her and pulled her behind a decorative pillar.

"What are you doing here?" He whispered. "How did you even get in here?"

"Ya really should've learned not ta question me by now." Harley shrugged. She was barely recognizable, wearing a pretty but 'normal' blue dress. "I came here ta see ya! It is a major holiday, afta all."

"Wh- listen, I appreciate that, it's always great to see you." Simon sighed. "But why aren't you with Jok- J?"

"He's in Ark- indisposed, at tha current time." Harley answered, shrugging in false nonchalance.

"What about Pam? Or Jon and Ed?" It felt really weird to just call the villains by their names, but he couldn't exactly be overheard talking about Riddler and Poison Ivy, now could he?

"Same." Harley shrugged again, giving a small frown. "Nearly everyone's indisposed, or undergr- unavailable. Or homeless."

"Where are you living?" Simon asked.

"Around." Harley waved it off. She grinned and pulled him back into the main party. "Now come on. I wanna dance!"

"We're talking about this later, HQ." Simon groaned, allowing himself to be led out onto the dance floor.

"Puhleeze; for tonight, I'm Maven Rickwell." Harley winked, leading them in a dance.

"Okay, Maverick." Simon smirked, twirling her around. She giggled, and he found himself laughing along with her.

He always did.

"Come on, Si!" Alvin waved him over to a table he and Theodore were at. "We've barely seen you all night. Who's thi- Harley?!"

"Maven Rickwell." Harley held out her hand, grinning. "Nice to meet ya, Mistah..?"

Alvin smirked, catching on to the game. "You can call me Vince Stone, my dear."

"Oh, oh!" Theo clapped his hands. "Can I be Travis Eclipse?"

"Why- you know what, nevermind." Simon shook his head. "You do you, bro."

"Waiter!" Alvin waved a server over, whispering an order to him. The man nodded and hurried off. "So, what about you, Simon?"

"What about me what?" Simon asked, pulling out Harley's chair for her before sitting down.

"What's your name, silly." Theo laughed.

"I... Ojos Cuatro El Genio." Simon answered, taking a second to think. Harley barked out a laugh, caught the confused look on his brothers' faces, then laughed more.

"Your food, Sirs and Miss." A server walked up carrying two large platters with-

"Burgers and fries?!" Simon blinked, at a loss for further words.

"Thank you!" Theodore smiled at the waiter, helping him unload the food.

"Yeah, thanks a whole bunch!" Harley waved goodbye, then looked at the food. "Look, there's even smoothies."

"The caterers will make anything you want, if you know how to ask for it." Alvin grinned. "Of course, a true magician never reveals his tricks, so don't-"

"I have an interest in cooking, so we help out in the kitchens once a week." Theo smiled softly. "They kinda like us, I guess."

"How could they not? Ya guys are awesome!" Harley grinned. "Speaking of food, you'll never guess what Uncle Jervis drank in front of Auntie Ivy..."

"Bruce?" Bruce felt a hand pulling on his suit. He excused himself from his frankly-boring conversation with some socialite or other (they were all the same anyways), and turned to find Simon. "Can I talk to you? Privately?"

Bruce nodded, leading him out of the main room and down a corridor to his office. Alfred was there, avoiding the party cleaning.

"Sirs? Is everything alright?" Alfred asked, looking at Bruce's worried brow and how Simon was wringing his hands.

"It's fine, Alfred." Bruce answered. "Simon just wants to talk to me about something."

"Actually..." Simon paused, speaking slowly. "I think Alfred should be here as well?"

"Certainly, Sir." Alfred nodded, leading Simon to the chair in front of the desk as Bruce sat behind it. "What do you wish to say?"

"I think Harley might be homeless." Simon had decided that direct was the best approach.

"Harley? As in Harley Quinn?" Bruce asked, waiting for his nod. "I thought she was The Joker's ward?"

"She is, but he's in Arkham." Simon explained. "As is almost everyone else that could watch her, if they aren't homeless themselves or in hiding."

"Certainly she must have someone watching her." Alfred shook his head. "If you don't mind my asking, how did you get such information?"

"She sorta broke into the party?" Simon shrugged apologetically. His weird friendship with the master thief often led to such things. "She's being really dodgy about where she's staying."

Bruce tapped at his computer, checking some records. "He's right, almost everyone is in the Asylum or missing."

"That poor girl..." Alfred was fond of children, Rogues or no.

"I was wondering... Can she stay here?" Simon asked, quickly adding "Just until Joker or someone else is out. Please? I don't like the idea of her by herself, but I'm pretty sure she'd rather lose a limb than go back in the system."

"Not to mention she'd most likely run away from anyone else." Bruce sighed, looking thoughtful.

"I shall prepare a guestroom." Alfred said decisively, giving Bruce a small glare when he opened his mouth to protest against just letting a thief live with them. He moved towards the door. "Please inform Ms. Quinzel that breakfast will be late tomorrow, considering the long night."

"Alfred?" Simon called, stopping the butler in the doorway. "Happy New Year."

"And you, Sir Simon." Alfred nodded, smiling. "Sir Bruce." And he left.

"She can really stay?" Simon quietly asked Bruce.

Bruce smiled. "Yes. We can't turn a child out on the street, after all. But she better behave herself."

"I..." Simon was about to say that of course she would, but he'd hate to lie to Bruce. "I will try my best to make sure nothing goes missing?"

"I'm gonna regret this, aren't I?" Bruce shook his head, chuckling.

"Most probably." Simon agreed, adding a chuckle of his own.

Chapter 2: April -- Fool's Day!

Kookaburra, Cardinal, and Quetzal decide to handle a crime on their own.

Harley goes on house arrest because she's too young to go to Arkham.

Kookaburra, the Blue Robin, leaned away from a half-finished building far above most the city. He scanned his eyes over the cityscape, looking for any trouble. He tapped his earpiece.

"Cardinal, Quetzal, either of you see anything?" He asked. "I've got nothing over here."

Big fat zero. Cardinal complained over the comms. *What, are all the criminals sleeping?*

It's very quiet tonight. Quetzal agreed. But you can see the stars! They're very pretty...

"Alright, I think it's time to head back." Kookaburra decided. "Meet up at the pick up zone, I'll call Batman to-"

An explosion rocked the night.

Did you guys see *that*?! Cardinal screeched.

Since when are explosions green? Quetzal asked.

The explosion, and it's resulting smoke, had indeed been various shades of green. Kookaburra watched as the smoke curled impossibly to form a question mark above the city.

Kookaburra grinned, despite himself. "Looks like Riddler's up to his old tricks. What do you think, do we call for backup or-"

Oh, come on! Cardinal laughed, excitement clear in his voice. *We can handle Riddler without Batsy. Worse case, we spend a few days trapped in Crane's basement listening to him prattle on about formulas.*

"Alright, head towards the explosion, but don't attack until we're all there." Kookaburra opened his glider, jumping off the construction site. "Remember to turn your trackers on. Alfred will freak if we get caught, we don't need to make it harder for him to find us."

Isn't tomorrow Riddler's birthday? Quetzal asked. Why would he work on his birthday?

Maybe he's trying to steal himself something shiny. Cardinal mused. Or he might be trying to remind everyone that it's his birthday, make sure they come.

"I can't believe I'm going to have to give him his present in Arkham." Kookaburra muttered. "Maybe he'll escape in time for me to have HQ pass it along."

You got him something? Cardinal asked, incredulous.

Oh! What is it? Quetzal sounded excited.

"It's just a solar-powered digital puzzle game." Kookaburra answered. "It uses a primitive AI to make more complex puzzles as you go on."

He'll love that! Quetzal giggled.

Did you forget that he's the villain?! Cardinal hissed.

"He's also my best friend's honorary uncle." Kookaburra reminded him. "Not to mention my hacking tutor. Besides, he got us something for our birthday."

That resulted in five city blocks being cordoned off! Cardinal replied.

Yeah, but you have to admit it was fun. Quetzal hummed, adding And tasty... Mmm.

Kookaburra dropped down in front of a surprisingly-intact building, double checking- yes, this was definitely the source of the smoke.

"This has got to be the nicest-looking exploded building I've ever seen." Cardinal snarked, dropping beside him.

"Maybe we have the wrong place?" Quetzal was the last to arrive. "Though the smoke is coming from here, so... Did they rebuild it?"

"I doubt it, they didn't really have that much time." Kookaburra raised an inquisitive eyebrow, watching the smoke continue to rise. "It looks like he just faked an explosion?"

"Whatever, we'll figure out once we're inside." Cardinal swung his longsword around a few times, heading towards the building. "Forward march!"

"Please don't shout, I don't want to lose that quickly." Kookaburra muttered, following the Red Robin inside, a Green Robin trailing after them both.

The entire place was covered in green question marks, spray painted onto every able surface (even the ceiling!). Model mazes and giant puzzle boxes were haphazardly 'organized' along the floor. It was definitely Riddler's style, but...

"Does something about this feel wrong to you guys?" Kookaburra asked. "It's almost Riddler's style, but just a little off?"

"Off?!" A voice asked from the shadows, mock offense battling with amusement in its tone. The doors and windows slammed shut, bright spotlights switching on to reveal a familiar clown. "I'll have you know I spent *hours* looking at old crime scene photos to make this replica!"

"An' by that, Mistah J means I did it." Harley Quinn popped a bubble of gum, grinning and cartwheeling over to the confused trio. "But I don' mind! This ain't gotta be perfect, afta all. Just needed ta lure ya in, an' it did that well enough."

"What's going on?" Cardinal demanded, pointing his sword at Harley. "Where's the Riddler?"

"Oh, him?" Joker laughed, waltzing over and pushing the sword away with a brief glare. Then he grinned as widely as ever, pretending to think. "Hmmm... If I remember correctly, he's all the way on the other side of town, robbing that new ultra corn maze with dear ol' Spooky!"

"Uncle Jon wanted ta take Uncle Ed somewheres nice for his birthday!" Harley explained. "So we offered to make sure no lil' birdies messed things up."

"But don't worry, kiddies!" Joker chuckled. "We've got plenty of fun for you here tonight. Or you can just give up and watch cartoons while we wait for Batsy to come save you. Your choice, since Harl's fond of ya and all."

The brothers looked at each other. Kookaburra sighed. "What kind of cartoons?"

Hours later, Batman finally managed to break in, finding his sons sitting around an old television eating cereal with Harley Quinn and The Joker. This wasn't surprising, the decor on the other hand...

"Stealing Nygma's gimmick, Joker?" Batman asked.

"Just pulling a little April Fool's joke on your little flock here, while also giving a birthday present to a dear friend." Joker said in mock sincerity. He pointed to the TV set. "Can we finish the episode before you haul me to Arkham?"

"Auntie Ivy doesn't have a TV." Harley added, making her eyes big. The boys joined her.

"...Fine." Batman grumbled, sitting crossed-legged in front of the screen, accepting a bowl of cereal from Joker. He scanned it for poison, then started eating. "But after this, it's house arrest for at least a month."

"Okay, okay." Harley rolled her eyes, but quickly glued them back to the screen.

She wouldn't want to miss it if Wile E finally caught his bird, after all.

Chapter 3: August -- Anniversary

Fries has been acting weird. Simon and Harley do something nice for him.

Any version of Mr Freeze I write will eventually save Nora and live happily ever after.
Still sad, though...

"Goodnight, Simon." Bruce said, shutting the door.

"Night, Bruce." Simon muttered, rolling over and snuggling under his blankets. It was a calm, peaceful sort of night.

So of course it had to be disturbed by something repeatedly hitting his window. He groaned, wishing he could just ignore it, but he knew better by now.

He pulled his glasses on his face, opening the window and barely avoiding a small pebble that had been thrown. "You're gonna break something, HQ. What do you need?"

"I need ta talk with ya, Kooks." The blonde girl stage whispered from her perch on the tree outside his window. She easily somersaulted into his third-story window. "Somethin's wrong with Uncle Vic."

"His wife's dying." Simon said dryly.

"Where's Carddeck an' Lil Q?" Harley asked, looking at the empty red and green beds.

"Sleepover." Simon was much too tired for this. He yawned, sitting down on his blue bed.

"Ya' didn' go?" She asked, sitting crossed-legged on one of the other beds.

"No, I have a science project in the morning." He shook his head. "Much too important- what?"

Harley was staring at him. "You're homeschooled, how can you have a project due?"

"... It's a personal project." Simon answered, perhaps a tad too defensively.

"Puh-leeeeeze tell me you aren't reverse engineerin' Uncle Jon's toxin again!" Harley playfully groaned, throwing herself backwards to lay down.

"Speaking of uncles, what's up with Dr Fries?" Simon asked, partly avoiding the topic and partially actually curious.

"I don' know, he's just..." Harley sat up, moving her hands in front of her as she looked for the word. "...different."

"Different how? Has he stopped or started a particular hobby? Changed his eating or sleeping habits? Gone quieter or started speaking more?" Simon had been friends with Harleen Quinzel for years, and knew that she often took some prompting to properly explain her thoughts. "Grown gills?"

"He just..." Harley shook her head. "He won' talk as much as he used to. And he won' play chess with me. And he keeps looking at the calendar and sighin'."

"...what month is it?" Simon asked, a horrible suspicion forming in his gut. He opened his dresser drawer, grabbing his phone. "Harley, it's August 17th."

"So?"

"Haven't you ever read Dr Fries' Arkham profile?" Simon quickly hacked into the database, showing her. "Miss Nora and his anniversary is in two days."

"Poor Uncle Victor." Harley took the phone, thinking. "Hey, Kooks? Think ya could find information 'bout Nora? Like her hobbies an' interests an' stuff?"

"Uh, maybe, if any of it's online or in a computer." Simon took his phone back, beginning the search. "Why?"

"I got an idea on how ta make thing's a lil' bettah for Uncle Vic." Harley grinned. "But I'll need ya to help me."

August 19th. Wayne Labs, secret Subzero Department...

Dr Victor Fries wandered along the corridor, towards the Cryogenic Room where his dear Nora was being kept safe by the generous Mr Wayne. He didn't know what Bruce Wayne got out of keeping her alive, but the billionaire always let him in to do his research, and never reported his breakout until August 21st. A day to celebrate and a day to mourn, though he usually just did the latter on each.

It was selfish, he knew, to take time away from his research for such a frivolous thing as an anniversary she wouldn't even be able to celebrate. But he couldn't bring himself to spend the day any other way than sitting in front of her tank, eating takeout and telling her how he was doing. Lately, he'd even started informing his unconscious wife about his... Associates, their families, even their kids. But every year, this day was more or less exactly the same.

Except this time, when the door to the Cryogenic Room was ajar, allowing frantically whispered voices to be heard from the usually-soundproof area. Victor growled, an usually intense display of emotion for him, and barged in. He wasn't allowed to carry his Freeze Gun on Wayne property, but he was more than willing to defend Nora with his bear hands if he had to.

Instead of attackers, he found Miss Quinzel and the blue Robin (he went by something ridiculous like Kookaburra, but Victor preferred to think of him as The Blue Robin). They were nervously standing in front of Nora's tank, surround by-

Victor froze. They were surrounded by some of Nora's favorite foods and books, including some he'd completely forgotten she liked. There was a small folding table with a candlelight dinner hastily but beautifully set up. Quinzel held out a photo album marked 'Through The Years'.

Victor mutely took it, flipping through a few pages. Inside were photos of both himself and Nora, separately and together, from their college days onwards.

"We know this day's hard for you." Robin told him. "There's no way for us to really change that, but we wanted to make it a little less hard."

"We wanted to do somethin' special for ya an' Nora." Quinzel added. "Do ya like it, Uncle Vic?"

"...Yes." Victor gave them a very small but real smile. He looked to Nora. "I think we like it very much."

Chapter 4: September -- Birthday!

It's the boys' birthday! What will they get?

Posted on my birthday, yay! ☐☐

Trigger warning: Brief anxiety/panic attack from Simon. I don't know if the warning's necessary, but better to be safe I suppose.

Good trigger warning; fluffy animals!

The animals' names were gotten from my original ideas for the boys' hero names (Robin Sapphire, Robin Ruby, Robin Emerald).

"Simon. Simon. Simon!" A heavy knocking sounded on the basement his lab door, startling him into nearly dropping the Joke Gas sample he'd been working on.

Simon growled, taking a calming breath as he locked away his experiment, climbing up the stairs to open the door. "Yes, Theodore?"

"Hi Simon." Theo grinned.

"Hello, Theodore." Simon smiled back, his brother's good mood always infectious, despite the interruption to his work. "While I always enjoy conversing with you, was there anything specific you needed?"

"Our birthday's soon." Theodore sing-songed.

"I'm aware. My phone has a calendar." And it had been all the brothers had been talking about for weeks. "I'm sorry, Theo, but I was in the middle of something, so..."

"What are you gonna ask Bruce for?" Theodore asked, his smile shrinking just a little.

Simon narrowed his eyes, noticing an uncharacteristic nervousness in the other. "Why do you want to know?" It wasn't like he had anything against telling him, but it was an unspoken tradition that the three would keep their present requests secret from each other. It made things more exciting for all three of them.

"I... I want to ask for a pet." Theodore outright frowned now. "But I don't know if Alfred will let me, since he'll be the one that will take care of it when I'm out. I figured I'd have a better chance if I was the only one asking for one."

"Especially since you're the least likely to get bored of an animal." Simon filled in, nodding. "Well, no worries -- I have zero interest in adopting an animal. Babysitting HQ's hyenas is enough for me."

"Do you think Bruce and Alfred will say yes?" Theo asked.

"On one hand, owning an animal is a big responsibility." Simon smirked. "On the other, so's saving the city. It's not a definite, but I think you'll be fine."

"Oh, I hope so!" Theo hugged him. "Thanks Simon. Now I have to go talk to Al. Have fun with your experiments, bye!"

Simon shook his head, going down the stairs with a smile.

"An' a one, an' a two, an' a one two three four!"

Simon strummed on his guitar, singing in a bored voice. They'd practiced this same song at least twenty times by now.

"Stop!" Alvin yelled, turning around to face the others. "Guys, guys, guys -- do you even know what music is?!"

"I think we sound good." Theo complained, dropping his drumsticks on his bed and stretching.

"No one is going to care if we aren't perfect at own birthday." Simon added. "If we keep this up, we're going to be too sick of this song to play it at all."

"Ya playin' you're own birthday?" Harley asked, climbing through their window. "What, Brucey won't spring for a band? Ain't he rich?"

"We want to play." Simon explained.

"We're trying to start a band, but we just can't get this one right." Alvin groaned, rubbing his temple.

"Aren't ya musical geniuses or somethin'?" Harley asked, perching herself on Simon's desk. "Why're ya havin' trouble?"

"It's a four person song." Simon pushed her off his desk, reorganizing things she'd moved. "It's our favorite, but we're going to have to pick something else."

Alvin started to protest, then deflated, nodding sadly in agreement.

Harley sent a small glare to Simon for pushing her, then looked around at the trio. "Ya know... I sing."

"What?" Alvin blinked at her, followed by his brothers. "What do you mean, you sing?"

"I jus' mean, if ya need a fourth," She shrugged, "I'm happy ta help."

"I... Suppose there's no harm in trying." Simon smiled, sharing a glance with his brothers. "Let's give it a try."

"...and that's the way. We. Rooooooll!" They finished the song to thunderous applause from the party guests.

"Ha, we knocked 'em down!" Harley cheered, jumping to do a midair split. She was wearing a pink and gold opera mask.

"That's not the expression." Simon half-heartedly corrected, staring happily at the cheering (masked) faces.

"What happens once but is celebrated again and again?" Edward a completely unrecognizable brunette in a green mask asked.

"That's surprisingly easy." Simon grinned, hugging him.

"He's not going to stump you on your birthday." Jonathan a redhead in a surprisingly-not-scarecrow-themed orange mask grumbled.

"Selina said I couldn't." Ed whispered, winking. "Happy birthday you three."

"Thanks." Simon looked around. Were there a lot villains then he expected to see at his birthday? Yes, yes there were. Was it a whole lot of fun? Definitely.

A loud crash followed by gasps told Simon that one of Bruce's ice sculpture things must've fallen. A complaining Joker man in a rainbow mask being led away by the scruff of his neck told him they were all lucky Alfred was against corporal punishment.

It was a good night. Dancing, friends, games -- everything one (or three) could want in a party. Including-

"Presents!" Theo yelled, jumping up and down. "Presents, presents, presents!"

"Give me, give me, gi-" Alvin caught Simon's glare and cleared his throat, "-ve us!"

They got puzzle books and boardgames, booksets and sports equipment, and even gardening supplies ("Thank you, Miss Isley!" Theo grinned, hugging his present. -- "You're welcome, Sprout." She smiled at him from behind her green and black mask). Then, it was time for the best presents -- the once Bruce and Alfred picked out!

"Each year, you boys make requests on what you want. But this year," Bruce chuckled, "Alvin merely wanted 'something fun', and Simon didn't ask for anything."

Simon facepalmed. He knew he'd forgotten something, but his experiment had been way too close to completion to worry about such things. Ah well, there's nothing he was really hoping for this year anyways.

"So we only had Young Sir Theodore's request to go off of." Alfred added. "So we may have fulfilled it for each of you."

Simon, Alvin, and Theodore shared a look, completely silent. Then they all talked at once.

"Please tell me-"

"You didn't!"

"Really!?"

"Surprise!" Bruce lifted a cloth off a table, revealing three kennels in blue, red, and green. "Come say hi to your new pets!"

"And know that they are your responsibility." Alfred huffed. "If you neglect them, they will be given away."

The brothers slowly approached the cages. Theo opened his first, since he'd requested this, finding a beautiful green bird he immediately started cooing over.

"I'm going to call you Emerald." Theo stroked her feathers. "Emma for short."

Alvin was next. To his delight, a brown puppy ran out and tried to play tug-of-war with his pants' leg. He laughed. "You've certainly got energy? Oh, you aren't too bad, are you... Ruby?"

As Theo listed bird facts to a bewildered waiter and Alvin played with his new dog, Simon just couldn't bring himself to open the last cage. He didn't want an animal, he didn't know what kind it was, what if he bonded to it but couldn't properly take care of it because of his time working and then Alfred would get rid of it and--

"Deep breaths, Kooks." A voice whispered in his ear, a slender hand on his shoulder. "I'll take it if ya don' want it, but put on a good show for all da guests, alrigh'?"

"Alright." Simon whispered back. He unlatched the cage, revealing a small dark grey kitten. He picked her up, and she lazily curled up in his arms, already purring. He smiled, already mentally cursing about getting attached, and petted the resting cat.

"She's so calm!" Harley grinned. "Cats are nevah that calm, in my experience. What's her name?"

Thinking of his brothers' choices, Simon answered "Sapphire."

"Hello Saphi." Harley cooed, gently petting her furry head.

Simon smiled as the kitten slowly sniffed her hand, looking curious. Maybe having a pet was going to be nice.

After all, what's the worst that could happen?

Chapter 5: November -- Dia De Los Muertos

The boys go on vacation and learn about the Day Of The Dead.

A little darker than my usual stuff...

"99 bottles of juice on the wall, 99 bottles of juice!" Alvin sang at the top of his lungs from the backseat of the car. "Take one down, pass it around..."

"99 bottles of juice on the wall." The three brothers sang together.

Simon leaned against his window, going between watching the scenery and texting on his phone.

[RoguesHQ]: Heya, Kooks! Watcha' up to? Having a good vacation?

[FourEyedGenius]: Technically, the vacation hasn't started yet, but yeah -- it's pretty good. Al threatened to sing 99 bottles unless Bruce got us smoothies.

[RoguesHQ]: How many times has he sang it?

[FourEyedGenius]: We're on the fifth. Theo and I joined in somewhere during the fourth, but only for the chorus. He's sang about milk, smoothies (of course), car oil (???), tea, and now juice.

[RoguesHQ]: Wonder how long till he runs out of things to say!

*Opps, meant ?

[FourEyedGenius]: r u kidding? Bruce'll give in long B4 my bro's imagination.

Sry, Theo freaking out bout something, gotta go by

"Theo, what's the matter?" Simon leaned over Alvin to look at his other brother, causing him to stop singing.

"There's zombies!" Theo pointed out his window, where a large group group of people in a graveyard. "And they're... throwing a birthday party?"

"Theodore, those aren't..." Bruce sighed, flicking eyes out the window and back to the road. "It's Dia De Los Muertos today."

"Dia- what?" Alvin asked.

"The Day Of The Dead." Simon said quietly. "It's a Mexican holiday, though they aren't the only ones who celebrate it. It's a day to remember those who have died. They aren't throwing a birthday party, they're building altars to mark their lost loved ones."

"Oh." Theo went back to looking out his window.

Alvin waited until they were a ways past the graveyard before resuming his song.

[RoguesHQ]: What was Lil Q upset about?

[FourEyedGenius]: I'll explain later. How's your day going?

[RoguesHQ]: You wouldn't believe what I did at Uncle Ed's house! I'd be embarrassed if it wasn't HILARIOUS

[FourEyedGenius]: Tell me about it.

"Did you boys have a fun day?" Bruce asked, walking along the a foot path towards their hotel.

"A great day!" The boys answered together, sipping hot coco from paper cups as they watched the sunset.

"I'm glad. Remember to go straight to bed after dinner, no staying up all night on your phones." Bruce warned as he unlocked the hotel door. "We need to get up early if you want to go to the play tomorrow."

"We're gonna see a play! We're gonna see a play!" Theo started chanting, soon joined by his brothers.

"Did you hear anything else I said?" Bruce asked in fond exasperation.

"I heard dinner!" Alvin cheered, running towards the kitchen.

"I heard 'phone', and now I remember that HQ wanted me to call her." Simon headed towards the couch.

"I heard that we're going to a play." Theo answered helpfully.

"Good thing we brought our own bed sheets." Alvin grumbled, tearing the pillows from his bunk. "Who chooses mustard yellow?!"

"I think it's a nice color." Theo said from the top bunk, ignoring the fact that he himself had switched the sheets for his green ones.

"You think everything's a nice color." Alvin retorted, getting tangled up as he tried to make his bed. He fought valiantly, but eventually ended up on the floor, halfway under the bed. "...help."

Getting up from his own bed across the room with a groan, Simon went to help the other. He expertly untangled the sheets, swiftly making the bed. "Our shared color-based obsession doesn't make other colors bad, Al."

"Yeah, yeah, whatever." Alvin rolled his eyes.

It was some time later, when the lights were out and they were all nearly asleep, when Theo spoke up.

"Simon?" He asked, waiting for his brother's grunt of acknowledgement. "If we can't remember our first seven years, does that mean who we used to be is dead?"

"What? No, of course not." Simon sat up, squinting his eyes to try to make out the others in the dark, but it was impossible without his glasses. "Those memories are still there, Theodore, we just can't access all of them yet. Why do you ask?"

"Well..." Theo thought for a second. "I just wanted to know if we have someone to remember, for the Day Of The Dead."

"We aren't Mexican, Theo." Alvin grumbled, though Simon could pick out a faint undercurrent of worry in his voice.

"Simon said that others can celebrate it." Theo defended. It was quiet for a while longer, to the point that Simon thought that Theo had fallen back asleep, before he spoke again. "Do you think our parents are still alive."

Simon could hear Alvin's breath catch in his throat, so elected to be the one to answer. "There's no way to know, Theo."

"What do you think they were like?" Theodore asked.

"They... Most likely had brown hair." Simon said slowly, searching for traits they all three shared. "And maybe had slight mental issues, though our stuff might just be the result of brain damage from whatever gave us amnesia."

"I bet they were tall." Alvin pitched in quietly. "Since Si's such a giant. With great senses of humor, cause no way I got that from Brucey."

"You could've gotten it from Alfred." Theo said thoughtfully. He hummed. "I wonder if they were a girl and a boy?"

"Considering the time period, our biological parents most likely were." Simon answered. "Whether they were together, whether we were born through a surrogacy or donated material -- we really can't know."

"Do you think they were nice?" Theo asked.

"Of course they were, T." Alvin scoffed, and it was easy to know he was rolling his eyes, despite the dark. "Where else would you get it from?"

Simon almost pointed out that that wasn't how genetics worked, but decided against it when Theo made a happy noise.

"I wonder where they are." Theo whispered. "Do you think we'll find them some day, if they're still alive?"

"Maybe, Theodore." Simon sighed, laying back against his pillow. "Until then, well... We have Bruce."

"We'll have him even after that." Alvin mumbled, already half-asleep again.

Little did the three know that even as he brought them comfort, they brought comfort to Bruce as well. They weren't the only ones to try to remember lost parents that night, after all.

— end of "A Year With You" —