

Calling the gathering a 'party' was probably optimistic on John's end, but he thought he deserved it. Getting a dozen or so people together for some pre-Halloween snacks and laughs was definitely something to be proud of, no matter the actual size of the party!

All around the living room, people had clustered in pairs and trios to chat and compare costumes, the styles ranging from cheap and comical to those with clear effort put into them. John himself had opted for the traditional bedsheet-ghost costume, albeit with a hood cut into the sheet to let him breathe a little better. He'd already done a circuit of the room complimenting everyone else's costumes and thanking them for coming, so now all that was left was to answer the door and let Dave in, the other man being fashionably late as always.

Dave wore a plain white shirt under a red leather jacket. Blue jeans encased his legs, and a pair of black biker boots covered his feet. He had his hair pushed up into a simple pompadour, and wore a casual smile on his face. "Sup, Johnny boy?" he asked, flashing a finger gun at John. "Not too late, am I?"

"Only like ten minutes, it's fine." John grinned, stepping back from the door to let Dave in. "Come in! Do you have your costume with you?"

"This *is* the costume, man, can't you tell? I'm rocking the greaser look." Dave stuffed his hands in his jacket pockets as he entered, waiting for John to close the door behind him.

"That? Come on, Dave, that's hardly a costume!" John exclaimed. "You wear that jacket all the time anyway, it's not a costume if it looks like you're just dressed for an *actual* party!"

"What, I should wear something as stereotypically nerdy and basic as a bedsheet with holes in it?" Dave retorted as he entered. "C'mon man, you know that ain't my style!"

"The bedsheet ghost is a classic! And anyway I'm the host, it wouldn't be fair if I had the coolest costume at the party. You could've at least come as something other than another type of coolkid."

"It's the only thing that works for me, I'm just that good." Dave shrugged, clearly joking as he hyped himself up. "It wouldn't work if I tried to mix things up too much. Like seriously, can you imagine me dressing up like some sort of nerd?"

"That would've been a really cool costume, actually," John mused. "You could've put a pillow in your shirt or something like Gamzee did for his Stay-Puft costume." John pointed to the troll in question, chilling on the couch with his arms around Karkat (as a lobster) and Sollux (as a grim reaper) and clearly enjoying himself. Sure enough, Gamzee was in an all-white costume with accompanying face paint and dye, with a lumpy pillow stuffed down the front of his shirt.

Dave followed John's finger, laughing softly when he saw the trio. "Yeah, no thanks. Sol's got the right idea for costumes, I'm not gonna wear something that makes me hide every time someone takes a selfie."

"You care way too much about social media, man." John sighed and shook his head. "Really though, that nerd costume idea would've been really interesting. I kinda wish you'd have worn it so I could see you in it!"

Dave rolled his eyes behind his shades. "Sure man, whatever you want..." With that he parted ways from John, heading to the kitchen for snacks and some punch as he rubbed at his stomach.

John huffed, crossing his arms as he let Dave leave. He made another circuit of the room to ensure everything was going well - complimenting Gamzee on his costume again mostly out of spite - before following Dave into the kitchen to see what needed restocking.

Dave had sat himself at the table. He was the only one in the room, munching on a bag of chips. Something was... off, about the scene before John, but he couldn't quite put his finger on it... Maybe to do with Dave's unusual focus on the snack, or how still the air felt, or just how... *loud* the eating sounded.

"You're not even going to say hi to anyone else? I could've gotten you snacks if you wanted to go sit with Karkat, you know."

"I know your house, man, easier to just come get it myself." Dave answered between mouthfuls, shaking the last crumbs out of the bag before neatly folding it and reaching for another. "Hey, you gonna put anything else out here? Kinda lacking variety right now, there isn't even any candy."

"Uhh..." John shook his head, focusing himself. He could've sworn he saw something glinting in Dave's mouth... "S-sure Dave. Hold on." John tugged open the pantry and pushed some stuff aside to reveal the party-sized bag of candy hiding in the very back. "Got it!"

"Sweet, hand it over." Dave gestured insistently with one hand until John passed over the bag, which he quickly ripped open and poured into one of the already-emptied bowls set out for just such a purpose. "Riding over here made me hungry I guess, gotta get some fuel in the tank before I go be social."

"R-right, yeah..." John frowned, watching Dave as he kept snacking. He kept having to blink, sure he wasn't seeing things right, but he could've sworn that Dave's shirt looked tighter than it had before. Had he worn something in the wrong size by mistake, or...?

Dave tugged his jacket off, shifting as he did so. “Urf... ah, there we go. Was getting a little warm in that.” He draped it over the back of the chair, giving John an unobstructed view of Dave’s... belly? What the heck, where’d that come from? Dave was track-star thin yesterday!

“Dave, a-are you... feeling okay?” Even as John’s alarm grew, he couldn’t look away from the obvious change. At its current size Dave’s gut still looked relatively firm, as if simply bloated with food, but it was still far too much to be explained away. His shirt was starting to come untucked from his jeans, revealing a small triangle of bare skin under his navel.

“Yeah, why?” Apparently the growing fat wasn’t yet enough for Dave to notice himself. He reached for the bowl to keep eating (John definitely saw a glint of metal in his mouth), his shirt coming further untucked at the stretch until he paused, noting John’s expression. “Dude, are *you* feeling okay? You’re whiter than the sheet.”

John bit into his lower lip. “Dave... can you stand up for a sec?”

“Uh... okay?” Dave did so, a sliver of belly visible between his waistband and shirt. “Why?”

“Just-” John had to stop and take a breath, now able to see Dave’s thighs filling out his jeans. “Just look at yourself, okay?”

“Seriously, John, you sound really out of it. Are you sure... you’re...” Dave trailed off as he looked at his reflection in the fridge, jaw working soundlessly for a moment before he got a hold of himself. “What the hell?!”

Dave’s belly looked soft and squishy as his fingers gripped it. His fingers and hands looked somewhat thicker, as did his neck and cheeks. “John? What the hell is happening to me?” Dave grimaced down at his lower half.

“I don’t know! Why are you asking me!” John raised his hands defensively, trying to keep his eyes to Dave’s face as the once-athlete prodded and tested the heft of his belly. This didn’t help him keep his composure much, as Dave’s face was similarly softening up. “I was just saying something so *you’d* know before you kept eating like a - well, like that!”

As Dave turned around to look at his reflection again, his hair seemed to be growing longer in the back, a hair tie binding the strands together into a simple low ponytail. “Whoa...” John muttered. Dave turned back around to face John.

“What? What happened?”

“Uh, nothing big, just - your hair’s kinda...” John gestured vaguely to the back of his own head, guiding Dave as he reached up to feel through his hair.

“Jesus, this is long,” Dave muttered as he tugged experimentally at the ponytail. As he did, John could hear a definite change in his voice - the slight glints of metal he’d seen before coalescing into thick bands across his teeth, accented by large red brackets, all of which adding a slight lisp to his speech. “Fuck, am I wearing braces now?”

John just nodded. All the while, Dave’s body was continuing to swell. His jeans, once skintight and a dark wash blue, began to soften and redden into what were clearly sweatpants. Green writing stenciled itself across the front of Dave’s shirt, Japanese kanji John couldn’t read.

Dave’s legs shook slightly as he continued to fatten, the weight beginning to either overpower or entirely replace the lean muscle John knew he’d had that morning. Short hairs poked out unevenly across Dave’s chin and in a trail beneath his bellybutton, looking distinctly ungroomed compared to the great care Dave normally put into his appearance.

John grabbed one of Dave’s big arms and helped him down to the ground before he fell. “There we go, easy, easy... want me to get Gamzee in here?”

“Don’t even think about it, John, I’m serious.” Dave’s words were almost drowned out by the heavy *WHUD* of his backside settling on the floor. “I’m just gonna - gonna catch my breath for a few minutes, then I’ll go out the back door and nobody has to see me like this.”

“But your car’s out front,” John pointed out. “Besides, I don’t think you’re gonna be able to drive like this,” he added with a poke to Dave’s belly.

“I’ll walk my ass home if I have to.” Dave tried to bat John’s hand away, but he was so slow and his arm so large that he only succeeded in making his shirt ride up more. “I’ve gotta work all of this off somehow anyway.”

“Dave... it’s okay to need a hand,” John replied, handing Dave the bag of candy. Dave didn’t even hesitate before stuffing a handful in his mouth.

Dave’s shades began to shift on his round face, their frames growing square as the lenses became transparent. Through them, John could see restrained tears building in his bright red eyes. “I don’t wanna be seen like this, man... forget dorky costumes, everyone’s gonna get their phones out if they see me.”

“No they won’t!” John was quick to offer comfort, patting Dave’s back reassuringly. “We’re all friends here, I’ll make sure nobody does anything bad. I can move the snacks out into the living room too, so people don’t come back here.”

Before he could follow through with that, the door was pushed open and a new figure emerged. “Yo Egbro, what’s...” Gamzee’s voice trailed off as he entered the kitchen and froze at the sight of a huge blob of a guy in front of him. “What the fuck?”

Dave's eyes widened, visibly wet from the risk to his reputation, but John sprang into action. "Gamzee, hey! Dave's just, uh, having some trouble with his costume, okay? He came as a huge nerd, haha, how cool is that?"

Gamzee blinked slowly, taking in what even John knew was probably the flimsiest excuse he could've come up with. Eventually he either decided not to press or simply took John at his word, grinning lazily. "Hell of a costume, brother, way to commit. I just used a pillow, see?" He untucked his shirt from his trousers for a moment, revealing the pillow stuffed against his body to pad his figure out. Tucking it in again, he squatted down and poked at Dave's belly. "Need a hand, Davebro?"

Blushing hard, Dave nodded. He stayed still as Gamzee grabbed one of Dave's hands, John grabbing the other. "One, two, three, HEAVE!"

Together, the two pulled Dave back to his feet. He wobbled considerably as he was righted, threatening to tip forward all over again, before finally finding his balance with the two's help. As Dave widened his stance somewhat, John noticed his boots had also changed - turning from the almost knee-high leather they had been into simple white and red sneakers, plain white socks peeking out slightly from within them.

"Hey Gamzee, can you help me get Dave home?" John asked.

"Sure man, I can do that. My car's big enough." Gamzee nodded, helping Dave sit down in a larger chair normally reserved for John's dad. The chair creaked slightly, but didn't give.

"Thanks a lot, that'd be great. I'll get Dave out in a minute, can you maybe bring it into the driveway so he doesn't have to walk as far?"

"No problems with that," Gamzee agreed, giving a lazy salute before leaving the kitchen. The moment he was gone John got up and closed the door, sliding a chair under it to give him and Dave a minute of privacy.

John rubbed Dave's shoulder, unsure of what else he could do. "What now?"

"Hell if I know." Dave panted softly, still recovering from the movement. "It's gonna take me... fuck, months at least to lose all of this, if I even can. I guess... right now, I just gotta get out front without losing the rest of my reputation. I guess you don't have another bedsheet you can spare, huh, Egbert?"

"No, sorry. But... oh!" John lit up, stepping back towards the table. "If you want to cover up, your jacket's pretty big! Maybe you can... uh, never mind." The leather jacket was entirely missing - in its place was a black hooded sweatshirt, with bones cartoonishly printed down the sleeves and a ribcage across the front of it. It was probably big enough to fit over Dave's head, but even

without putting it on, John knew it wouldn't even stretch as far as the shirt did to cover his doughy middle.

Dave groaned as John held the hoodie up for him to see. "I like my irony and all, but this is just stupid..." he muttered. "At least it looks... kinda cool, I guess."

"Exactly! Here, maybe if you tie it around your waist it'll stop your shirt from riding up so much." John helped Dave lean forwards, looping the hoodie around his middle and tying the sleeves together behind his back, tightening them until Dave let out a small grunt from the compression. "Does that look better?"

Dave looked at his reflection again. "... guess so?" He shrugged. "Sorry about hogging all your time at the party, man," he sighed.

John's reply was delayed by the doorknob jiggling, a moment before someone knocked on the door. "John? Car's ready," Gamzee's voice called out.

"Thanks, just a sec!" John called back, before turning to Dave again. "And you're fine, I don't mind! I can come back and hang out with everyone once you're home safe, and it's fun hanging out with you too. Hey, maybe you can help me with my homework on the drive," John teased, waggling his eyebrows.

"Don't get cute, Egbert. Now c'mon, help me up before Gamzee gets a crowd."