The solution to Gak’s feelings of isolation were so simple that Jackson was surprised it had taken him so long to think of it. In fact he probably never would have thought of it had he not had a surprise run-in with one of the few people that had ever met Gak before.

 “Hey, man! You’re Gak’s friend, right?” Asked a particularly lanky red-head. To say that Jackson was shocked would be an understatement. He kept Gak’s existence pretty much a secret so to have someone that he didn’t know come up to him in the middle of the cafeteria was unfathomable.

 “Uh… yeah…?” Jackson replied skeptically. He gave the dude a quick glance over. Nothing about this guy seemed particularly sinister. He seemed like your average college guy. In fact he was kind of cute in his own right. The freckles on his cheeks really stood out, and the shaggy mop that he called a haircut actually seemed to work for him.

 “What? You don’t recognize me?” The guy asked incredulously, but the playful smirk and the devious glint in his eye made it clear he wasn’t actually upset. “Man. I guess it is kind of hard to recognize me now that I am not completely covered in toilet paper, huh?” The lanky redhead said playfully.

 All at once it hit him. Jackson’s jaw dropped as a flash of recognition washed over him. “You’re the mummy!” Jackson gasped.

 “The one and only.” The guy replied. He struck a cheesy pose and pointed both thumbs at himself to really ham it up, but his bravado quickly faltered. He seemed to be momentarily pensive and then outright embarrassed. “… although… now that I think about it, I guess there are a lot of mummies out there, huh?” He asked sheepishly.

 “Well, you’re the only one I can claim to have met firsthand so that’s something,” Jackson replied amiable. He then gestured towards the seats at the table near him, and the redhead was quick to take the invitation.

The dude slid into the chair opposite of Jackson and propped his head up on his elbows. There was a brief pause where he seemed like he was waiting for something, but when it was clear that Jackson wasn’t about to say anything, the newcomer was quick to get the ball rolling.

“So… uh… what’s your name, anyway? I feel like I should have asked that earlier, huh?” The guy said awkwardly.

“Hm? Oh. My name’s Jackson, and you are…?” Jackson paused for a moment and was going to let the newcomer introduce himself, but he wasn’t given the chance. No sooner had he begun to ask than he heard a familiar voice in his mind shouting the answer.

*Ryan! His name is Ryan.* Gak explained. He sounded incredibly happy. In fact he was so giddy that the emotions started to bleed over into Jackson’s consciousness too. It wasn’t the first time Jackson had felt Gak’s emotions bleed through. It was one of the side effects of sharing headspace with a psychic entity. Although it seemed weird to call it a side effect. That implies it is a negative effect, but Jackson generally enjoyed the additional rush of emotions that came with having Gak around. Gak was so easily excited and quick to laugh that Jackson felt that he himself had become a happier person by extension.

“… You’re Ryan right…?” Jackson answered his own question before the redhead even had a chance to do so.

“Oh? You remember me? I didn’t think we spoke enough to really leave that much of an impression.” Ryan replied. He was clearly taken aback, but he did not seem put off – quite the opposite in fact. He seemed to relax immediately upon hearing that Jackson remembered him well enough to remember his name.

“Well… Gak told me about you.” Jackson replied. He felt weird saying it. It wasn’t technically a lie, but the truth was a bit different.

“Really? I’m glad to hear it! I was actually hoping to get the chance to talk to him again. I haven’t seen him around campus at all, but I guess I don’t actually know what he looks like without all the… you know…” Ryan explained awkwardly and gestured up and down and all around his face and chest and added, “… the blue.”

Jackson chuckled, but he wasn’t chuckling at Ryan’s exaggerated gestures. He couldn’t help but wonder how Ryan would react if he found out that ‘the blue’ as he put it, was actually how Gak normally looked and not part of some very elaborate and lifelike Halloween costume.

“Well he looks pretty much exactly how he did when you saw him.” Jackson explained.

“That is incredibly unhelpful, dude.” Ryan replied while pouting visibly.

“Sorry… I guess that was kinda not very useful info, huh? But if it helps, he hasn’t been around campus much so that’s probably why you haven’t seen him around.” Jackson replied awkwardly. He felt genuinely bad for the guy, but what could he say? There’s no way he could tell the truth about this situation.

“He hasn’t been around? I thought he was enrolled in classes here. We were talking about the last calc test when we met last. He’s not sick is he? Is he alright?” Ryan was getting more and more worried with each question he shot Jackson’s way.

“Woah. Wait. Wait. Calm down. Gak is fine.” Jackson said in an attempt to calm down the overly excitable new arrival.

Ryan breathed a sigh of relief and then was once again chattering away at full speed. “Oh… well that’s a relief… but I still want to hear how he’s doing. Have you talked to him recently?”

“I actually just finished talking to him.” Jackson replied.

“Oh? How long ago? It he still around? Do you know where he went?” Ryan rattled off. He was firing off questions at blinding speed. Jackson had to gesture for him to calm down so that he could even get a word in edgewise.

“Woah, woah. One at a time.” Jackson said. He paused a moment for Ryan to calm down and then continued his explanation, “but to answer your questions I did just speak to him a moment ago, but he’s already headed home.”

*Huh. That’s not exactly true though…* Gak chimed in.

*It’s not exactly false though either* Jackson silently replied to the voice in his head.

“He’s gone home…? Aww man. I really wanted to show him something…” Ryan grumbled.

“Oh? What is it you wanted to show him?” Jackson asked.

“Oh. It’s nothing much. I just saw this cool video and it made me think of him. I thought he’d want to see it.” Ryan replied.

“Now I’m curious… Can I see it?” Jackson asked.

“Well… I don’t see why not.” Ryan replied with a shrug. He quickly fished his cell phone out of his pants pocket and then after a few pokes on his screen flipped it around so Jackson could get a good look.