# Wallowa

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**Summary:** What would you do if your best friend was dying?

## \*Chapter 1\*: Wallowa

There's dried blood on the floor.  
It's a deep red. Almost fake, almost like it's not real. Almost like a cartoon, or a videogame, or something.

But it's not.  
It's just there, bright as strawberry jam on the floor. Before long it'll be like the flecks on the wall that look like mud. The flecks I also haven't had the energy to clean.

The irony of this. I'm usually so on top of things. I'm usually so clean.  
If you had asked me before, I'd tell you I could fix anything on the face of Mobius, but I can't fix this. I can't make it any better. Fuck, I can't even clean up after you. At least, nothing that's not in your immediate way.

When you were too weak to stand and you tried to clean your own sheets after you had sneezed blood all over them, I had to stop you.  
Practically had to drag you away by your collar.

I had to sit you down and tell you it was going to be alright while I changed your sheets and just threw the bedding you had found comfort in before out.

Your eyes aren't something I'd noticed before.  
Not truly.  
Until now.  
The way they're so wide, so soulful. Bluegreen. Always watering, as if you're just about to cry, but you hold it together.

The record you like plays while you struggle to keep those big watering eyes open. It's a song you love, but don't exactly recognize anymore, as you're not always here.  
When you sneeze blood across my face, and I just don't know what to do about that.

I let it sit until you fade out before wiping away at my face mindlessly with a handkerchief.  
And I look down at you and your eyes are still fluttering, even though you're not here anymore.  
Your eyes rolling around the back of your skull, out of your control.

With my right hand, I hold yours, as my left stokes your forehead absentmindedly.  
Soaking a rag you can't see in a bowl of ice you don't recognize and squeezing it out before replacing it across your forehead.  
Even when you're awake, you don't seem to notice it's there.

The fur behind your ears is matted and clumped, and I try to cut it away without being too intrusive to your dreams.  
I try to keep you as close to you were before all this. And still, even in your sleep, you're sneezing, coughing up blood, and there's nothing I can do about it.

Being only slightly younger than you, I can't help but feel like I need an adult, someone far more qualified.  
Despite the fact that I am an adult. Even though there's nobody left who'd qualified.

Your body shudders. You take me with you as everything you find comfortable just quakes beneath your feet.  
And goddamnit, I try to hold our world steady but it just quakes and quakes into something I don't even hope to understand.

The cold candlelight flickers as you struggle to hold onto yourself. It's another one of those nights.  
Gripping your blanket tightly as tears leak from the sides of your face.

I do my best to wipe them away. I do my best to tell you that everything will be okay.

Your breathing is ragged.  
Sucking in air through your contaminated throat like a sloppily tied balloon through a gopher hole.

It breaks by heart every single time you try desperately to breathe in. I just wring the rag out into one bucket and dip it into another.

Cleansing.  
Capturing that cool essence that puts you less and less at rest every time I do it.

You're struggling.  
Miles "Tails" Prower. The most capable Mobian I know.  
Struggling. Suffering.

I don't let myself sob while you seem cognizant.  
I don't let myself cry when you can see me.

I just smile at you, even though I can't help my eyes watering, and I stroke the top of your head while trying to tell you that it's going to be okay.  
Trying to convince myself more than you. You don't seem to have been here in a couple days.

You call me Sonic when you talk to me. I don't bother correcting you as I stroke your fur, trying to comfort you.  
Saying, "I don't want you to take offense to this, Sonic," as you breathe out like a dying flame forced through torn, wet paper.

"I won't," I tell you, just as okay if I'd been who you thought I was.

"I think if my parents hadn't died," you say, licking a streak of blood across your lips. "I think I'd be better off. I think I'd be okay."

"You are okay," I tell you, trying desperately not to break down. "You're going to be okay."

You shake your head weakly. "I've seen the worst and best in people I could possibly see," you say.

I squeeze your hand. "Hey."

You look at me, for the first time in days in my eyes, for the first time with any recognition in your head. "Amy?"

I nod vigorously, trying desperately to clamp out the emotion in my face while tears stream freely from my eyes.  
Out of my control.

"Amy," you say distantly.

"Tails," I say, a smile as bittersweet as it comes. Squeezing your hand as hard as I can.  
Desperately trying with all the energy I have left to just let you know I'm here, to let you know I'm with you. No matter what happens.

Your eyelids fluttering like a camera lens shuttering, trying to capture everything at every possible speed.  
You grab my forearm, your withered ungloved hands trembling their way up my bicep and to my shoulder.

When you look at me again, I'm not me again. You see something else, in your own little world.

"It would have been better if I was raised by Aunt Bunny or Aunt Sally," you say, earnestly. "They liked me. You never did."

Your eyes close as your grip weakens and your hand falls back by your side. Your breath slowing. Time truly taking its toll on you.  
I whisper into your ear: "I love you, Tails."

And I kiss you on the temple.

Because that's all I can do.