

# Qeresî Patreon by Thomas Bell (02/April/2022 - 30/December/2023)

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[Snippet Links](#)

[Apr 2, 2022](#)

>> [Here's a public link listing all the snippets available for each tier so far](#) <<

The links to the snippet files will change on a monthly basis, so always check back here to get the most recent link. Old snippet posts will *not* have working links anymore!!

## Snippet links:

- **Tier 1, On the Run:** See [this post](#) for the latest link, containing all tier 1 snippets so far.
- **Tier 2, Successor:** See [this post](#) for the latest link, containing all tier 1 & 2 snippets so far.
- **Tier 3, Crown:** See [this post](#) for the latest link, containing all the romantic snippets and character snippets published so far.
- **Snippets planned for February:** D POV scenes for CH12, specifically their romance

[R's Character Snippet: The Nightmare](#)

[Apr 3, 2022](#)

Hello all!

To celebrate the launch of my Patreon, I'm posting the first character snippet for the month early instead of a weekly progress report! As described in the tiers, through these posts you will get access to a separate html game file on itch io where you can "play" through the character snippets with your own Crown!

The link for these will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

I'll be adding 2 character snippets a month (see the pinned posting schedule) and will alternate between which LIs I post every month so that there's an equal split.

All that being said, [here's the link to the character snippets](#) for everyone that's Tier 1+. Enjoy!

[Thank you so much!](#)

[Apr 5, 2022](#)

I've already posted about this on the AToC Tumblr blog, but the launch of this Patreon has gone *so well* and completely surpassed my expectations, so to thank you all for your support, I wanted to add a little extra to show my appreciation!

I'll be releasing an **extra character snippet** focusing on a fan-favorite side character in AToC, Tûjo! This will be made available for all tiers.

You can expect it to be posted this Saturday: I'll also make a post announcing it once it's up, so I'll keep you updated!

I hope you have a great week 💖

[Development Sneak Peek: CH 9 Opening Scene & Şahmaran](#)

[Apr 6, 2022](#)

Hi everyone, hope your week is going well!

This is the first Dev Sneak Peek I'm posting, so I want to start it off by cautioning that there will be *mild* spoilers for future chapters in these posts - mainly in terms of coding, future characters, and lore. If you're a person who absolutely hates spoilers, though, proceed with caution!

### **Chapter Nine: Opening Scene**

To kick it off, my development focus for this week is the opening scene for Chapter Nine which will feature the most important and complex variation in the story so far!

I've already seen players on the Discord server notice that the last line of Chapter Eight seems to differ based on a certain choice made in previous chapters, but here are some extra tidbits I can give away while I'm working on the coding for the scene:

- While the "main" variation is based on a single choice, **there is a hidden, cumulative stat** in the game that has been tracked since all the plot-related choices you've made starting from Chapter 5 up to Chapter 8
- This hidden stat will determine the **outcome** of the opening scene
- The outcome will then affect **all the reputation points** your Crown has built so far with the nobles, the public, and Kham
- Based on this, Chapter Nine might look *wildly* different between two playthroughs!

Here's a little preview of what one part of the coding looks like so far:

So, in short, make sure you have your plot choices in order by the time Chapter Nine comes out ;)

## **\*\*Character Design**

**\*\*I've** also already been working on the design of certain characters your Crown will encounter in the (near) future. Most of these are minor characters, and others are *much* more important, but I'll tell you about the most recent one I'm working on!

I've been thinking about the character design of **Şahmaran**. I want her to look as close to her original depictions in mythology as possible, while still making sense as a character in-universe. This is what she's typically depicted as in Kurdish folklore:

I like the idea of her snake-half going up past her chest, but I think I'd like to give her arms and shoulders as well so she can lounge around and pose more naturally - and also not have to drag her face/hair over the ground when she's slithering around lmao. Would also explain how she put her jewelry on. How did she do that if she doesn't have hands???

Folklore art is not always realistic, to put it mildly.

To build on that, there's no functional reason for her to have a chest or breasts outside of looking "sexy" or - let's be honest - "fuckable", which isn't something I'm interested in catering to. So, no belly-button, no breasts, she's really going to just be a snake up to her armpits!

Aside from that, the little snake-feet she has are really just, cute? So I don't think I'll incorporate that, I want her to have a really regal and powerful aura when she's eventually introduced, but I'm *definitely* keeping the sentient snake as her tail. That's just an incredibly sick character detail.

I haven't *fully* decided on what her human part looks like yet, but I'm thinking of giving her an unnatural green-tinged skin color to fit with her snakeskin, and she'll definitely have snake-like pupils as well. I'll also keep the long black hair and the glittering jewelry the same.

Aaaaand that's it for this month's sneak peek! I hope you had fun with these previews 🥰

## [Tûjo's Character Snippet: Meeting X](#)

[Apr 9, 2022](#)

Hi everyone, hope your week has gone well!

As promised, to celebrate the Patreon launch and how successful it has been, I've added Tûjo's character snippet to the Bonus Content on itch.io! You can find it through [this link](#).

The link for these will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Thank you all again for supporting me, and enjoy 💖

## [Weekly Progress Update \[10/APR\]](#)

[Apr 10, 2022](#)

Hey everyone, hope you could end the week on a good note!

This is my first progress update on my Patreon and I'm super excited about it, though most of it will be related to planning and coding. Nothing particularly thrilling or juicy yet I'm afraid!

As those of you who have seen my Development Sneak Peak earlier in the week may have already seen, this week I've been busy with planning the structure of Chapter 9 and sorting out the coding for the big opening scene! Chapter 8 ended on quite the cliffhanger, after all.

Some things I've planned out for the opening scene so far:

- Big branching routes depending on previous plot choices made, with **6** major variants and outcomes
- These 6 variants are then impacted by personality variables, the love interest route, and friendship stats with other characters
- Finally, the Crown's choices on how to handle the outcome of the opening scene will also have varying effects on the relationships they have and on their reputation as a ruler

Other things I'm planning for Chapter 9 are very much related to having the Crown actually sit down and get a routine going for their daily duties, becoming acquainted with the day-to-day living as a Crown, and their responsibilities.

There will also be further plot developments in Chapter 9 building off of the goals set by the Crown in the previous chapter, so there's that to look forward to 🙄

I have deadlines for college coming up on Monday and Tuesday, but after that has been handled I'm hoping to actually get a word count going. My tentative word count goal for the rest of April will be **~7k words**; I'm aiming for a summer release for Chapter 9, and hopefully getting a solid start on it in this month will help with that.

I'll let you know how it goes through these weekly updates!

Until next week 💖

## [D's Character Q&A](#)

[Apr 14, 2022](#)

Hey all! The voting for the poll came in, and a whopping 50% of you voted for D! There were also a few questions sent in that will be answered for this Q&A as well - one specific submission only wrote down questions for A so I'll save that for when it's A's turn ✨

Also a general note: this Character Q&A is posted a week earlier than usually scheduled because I'm planning on releasing X's character snippet next weekend and use the last week of April to focus on university coursework. I've got a *lot* of deadlines lined up for then, lol

Without further ado, let's move on to D's Q&A!

**\*\*First question! What is your go-to comfort meal?**

**\*\*\***"That would be şorbe nîsk (lentil soup). It's one of the dishes my uma would make whenever mother and I returned home after a long time of being away. Especially in winter, it always warms me."

**\*\*What is your favorite childhood memory?**

**\*\*\***"Going fishing in the marshes. I'm not particularly good at fishing, my parents are both much better at it than I am, but it was a little quiet time to myself. Whenever I was upset at something or I had a lot weighing on me, I'd borrow a boat and go fishing for a few hours. The marshes in Penawar are beautiful, and peaceful. It helped to clear my mind."

**\*\*Favorite animal?**

**\*\*\***"Flamingos."

**\*\*Really?**

**\*\*\***No. They do look pretty, though; there's a lot of them in Penawar."

**Okay, so what's your *actual* favorite animal?**

"I don't have a favorite. My horse if I had to choose, I suppose. Her name is Zembeq." (Zembeq is a type of white lily.)

**\*\*Who do you consider to be your best friend?**

**\*\*\***"Zembeq."

**\*\*...Aside from your horse.**

**\*\*\***"Then my mother."

**\*\*That's sweet, but let's rephrase: who are you closest to, outside of your horse and your relatives?**

**\*\*\***"Define 'close'?"

**\*\*The person you can tell anything to, someone you consider an equal, someone you spend a lot of time with...**

**\*\*\***"By those standards, that would be Xelara/Xelef."

**\*\*But you hate each other?**

**\*\*\***"Yes, but I can tell them anything. Such as that they're reckless, arrogant, and have somehow deluded themselves into thinking they're the Spirits' gift to the rest of the world when truthfully they're a menace to society."

**\*\*And the spending time together part?**

**\*\*\***"I've been seeing a lot more of them than I strictly wanted to lately, due to the Crown's arrival. Wholly against my will, I assure you."

**\*\*But you still consider them your equal.**

**\*\*\***"No comment."

**\*\*If you had a talent for magic, what kind of magic would you like to do most?**

**\*\*\***"Inner magic would suit me best: healing magic specifically seems like it would be the most useful, practically speaking. I tried learning it during my younger years in the army, but I never managed to go above healing small scrapes and cuts. Especially in combat situations, healers on the battlefield can be vital to attain success."

**Okay, but if you had to pick magic that you *liked* and not magic that is *useful*\*\* , what would you choose?**

**\*\*\***"Then... air magic."

**\*\*Why?**

**\*\*\***"I saw a magus create a spinning vortex of wind once and set it loose on the battlefield. It wiped out a

dozen enemies effortlessly, but it also caused a lot of destruction on our own side. Practically speaking, it's not the most useful... but the power behind it was still impressive."

\*\*Last question: who is your favorite historic Crown, and why?

\*\*\*"I don't know about *favorite*, I don't have any favorites, but the Crown I admire the most is Crown Ardashir. He was put in a difficult situation, and it would've been easy to give into his brother to keep the peace. But he did what he had to do, he was committed to his duty to Arsur."

A pause.

"I hope I can do the same."

[Weekly Progress Update \[17/APR\]](#)

[Apr 17, 2022](#)

Heya gang, hope all the holidays are going well for those celebrating, and for those who aren't, hope you had a great week regardless!

To get right into the thick of it, I started writing the opening scene for Chapter Nine this week, and almost finished 1 of the 2 major branching variants. My wordcount for this week was **3.2k**, almost **halfway to 7k**, and with 2 weeks left for April I think I can safely say that I'll likely surpass it for this month!

My foremost writing goal is to get the opening scene finished: once I have that out of the way, with all the variants involved, I'll have a much easier time with the rest of the chapter. There's also going to be short **LI-specific variants** during this scene, which will also vary **depending on your relationship points** with them so far.

Consider it your first, small relationship check; there will be a bigger scene for it as well near the end of Chapter Nine, *especially* if your love interest is X or D 🙄

Not making any promises here, but I really hope to aim for a late June/early July release for Chapter Nine! That's also the deadline for me to finish my bachelor's thesis, so we'll see how it goes; take it as an optimistic first guess, lol

Other fun updates:

- With the Patreon pledges that I've reached already this month, I'm almost at my first goal, so I've put in **a commission** with Gabby ([artbygaia](#)) **for more official AToC art!** I'll post the WIP teasers here as well once there's any progress to report on from Gabby's end.

- While I can't give you a release date on this, I *will* tell you that the first side characters that Gabby will be working on are Tûjo, Heval and Şanazî, for the Crescent Blades 🌙✨
- Small scheduling update: I'm intending to take the last week of April to fully focus on writing AToC, so you'll get X's character snippet early, **next Saturday**! This will be made available for everyone who's at the Crown tier 👑

That was all for this week!

Until the next one 💖

### [X's Character Snippet: The Nightmare](#)

[Apr 23, 2022](#)

Hey everyone, hope you've had a great week!

The second character snippet of the month is a week early because I want to fully focus on writing AToC next week, aside from uni coursework. You'll still have the weekly updates tomorrow and next Sunday, but otherwise the Patreon will be rather quiet until May haha.

Without further ado, [here is the link](#) of the second character snippet of the month, X's nightmare scene from Chapter Three!

The link for these will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Enjoy 💖

### [Weekly Progress Update \[24/APR\]](#)

[Apr 24, 2022](#)

Hey gang, hope you had a nice weekend!

There won't be much to report on for this week's progress update. I've made it to **6.5k** words so I'm going to readjust my previous goal for April and set it at **10k** instead! It'll be a challenge to see if I can



make it, since **my overall goal for Chapter Nine is 40k**, which would mean that I'll be 25% of the way through with the draft after only 3 weeks!

No promises though lol

As far as the actual content of progress: I'm *almost* finished with the opening scene. The variations in it are so many that I think **it's easily going to take up 10k+ words** *just* for that. For comparison, the entire scene of Ashadūna's performance in Chapter 8 was 11.5k words.

Hopefully, the rest of the 30k words can be dedicated to story progression and LI scenes! I want to have room for 1 major scene for each LI route, and from previous experience that tends to average 3-4k words. Which, multiply that with 4, and **that's another 16k words** spent purely on that variation.

Which would mean that **there's roughly another 15k left** for story progression and plot developments!

Basically, this progress update ended up being a breakdown of the chapter structure and wordcounts lmao. But hopefully that gives you a better idea of what I'm currently working on, and what the timeline is looking like as of right now! I'm really hoping to up my wordcount goal for May to 15k, but even then it'll take me until summer to finish this bad boy.

That was it for this week!

See you all next time 💕🔥

[Weekly Progress Update \[01/MAY\]](#)

[May 1, 2022](#)

Hey all, hope you had a great week!

It's finally May and a few people have newly pledged in the past few days, so I'd like to start off by pointing out that my Patreon processing is an **up front charge**, which **renews on the first of every month!** If you ended up getting double charged because you signed up in the past couple of days or earlier today, send me a message and I'd be happy to give you a refund!

Now, onto the actual progress update: **I MADE IT TO 11K!**

As you can tell I'm very excited about this fact lol but it's A LOT more progress than I planned on for April! It means **I'm 25% done with the draft** already, and if I can keep up this pace for May and June, I

think a late June/early July update will be very much possible!!! No guarantees, of course, since I'm working on my thesis at the same time, but at the moment it feels very doable.

**My goal for May is 15k words**, which hopefully will put me at a total of 26k words for the draft, which in turn means I can dedicate (late) June to finishing the last scenes of the chapter, beta reading feedback and editing 💖

More specifically, in terms of content, **the major variants for the opening scene for CH9 have been finished!** For May, I'll be working on:

- The **aftermath of the opening scene** and a transition into **the Crown's daily routine**. After all the *mess* of CH7/8/9 the pacing calls for some stability and a little breathing space. I don't imagine this will take more than 5k words.
- Various scenes showcasing what the Crown's routine will be like, as well as putting them in the position **to make major policy and governing decisions** for the country. I would guess that this will also take about 5k words.
- Subplots and developments for the love interests, depending on their routes! This is one I'm *especially* excited about, as a character driven writer, because **the various LI routes in particular involve detailed character arcs** that will impact the rest of the whole story. The estimate for this is also around 5k words, though I expect to expand this later as well.

That's all my progress so far!

Patrons for Tier 2 and higher can look forward to the next Development Sneak Peak this coming Wednesday, where I'll be giving more details on what I've got planned for the Crown's daily routine and the political decision-making in particular.

For everyone else, thanks so much for your support until now, and I'll see you again next Sunday ✨

[Development Sneak Peek: CH 9 Previews & Empire Lore](#)

[May 4, 2022](#)

Hi everyone, hope your week is going well!

There'll be minor spoilers due to small excerpts from the chapter today, as I have finally written enough to start posting the previews! They'll be mostly dialogue, no plot or character spoilers, but if you're super sensitive about that sort of thing I'd take care not to read the screenshots near the top of this post!

It's a very, very, VERY long post today because I literally just can't contain myself when I'm writing about worldbuilding and lore, so let's start off with the fun, lighthearted bits!

## Chapter Previews

The opening scene has gone much better than I expected, and I'd love to share a few tidbits with you all!

There are a lot of good interactions between characters in the opening scene, but one of the ones I enjoyed writing most was this one for R:

R is everything pure and good in this world.

Anyway, while the shitshow of the opening scene is happening, that doesn't mean that there isn't any time for levity. Even inappropriate levity! Allow X to demonstrate-

Thanks, X. Very helpful!

## Arsur's Government

As promised in last week's Progress Report, this month's sneak peek is about what you can expect from the MC's routine as the Crown moving forward! In order to understand how the Crown rules, however, it's necessary to understand exactly what it is the Crown *does*.

So, Arsur's system of government. In most respects, it is a monarchy with an empire that functions similar to how the Ancient Persian Empire used to function, specifically the Achaemenid Empire.

The Achaemenids had a very sophisticated, centralized imperial bureaucracy, necessary due to the large amount of land governed by the king. The king can't be everywhere all at once, after all, so satraps were appointed to oversee the conquered vassal states, though the Achaemenids maintained a multicultural policy of allowing these states to keep their traditions, religions and customs so long as appropriate taxes and tithes were paid to the king.

The power of the empire was centralized in the king's court. This court typically was composed of the highest ranking officials and bureaucrats in the land, as well as representatives of the satrap to keep the king up to date on happenings within the various provinces of the empire.

For Arsur, the hierarchy is similar. I've envisioned the broadest lines as split between central hierarchy and provincial hierarchy:

### 1. The Crown

Supported by the Sorcerer, the Royal Protector, the General and the Cabinet Ministers of the Imperial Court that preside over different branches of government, all of which are appointed by the Crown.

Other officials that may be present during court sessions would be the Imperial Treasurer, the Imperial Secretary, representatives of the Mîrs and Inspector Generals (more on the latter below).

## 2. The Mîrs

Below the Crown, on the provincial level, rank the Mîrs. They each have their own courts within their provinces. These courts work like the Crown's own does, and are similarly attended by officials that aid them in governing their province. Now, here's where the juicy bits of the hierarchy comes into play.

While the Mîrs rank second only to the Crown, there are officials (such as the Crown's Sorcerer, the Royal Protector, and the General) who answer *solely* to the Crown, but are otherwise *not* necessarily ranked above the Mîr. They cannot interfere with a Mîr's affairs, unless explicitly ordered to do so by the Crown.

As such, the Mîrs (used to) have several constraints placed upon them to keep them in check. First, the Commanders of their Provincial Armies answer directly to the General, and as such, to the Crown. This way there is a separation between civil and military administration, minimizing the risks of possible revolt.

Second, the Mîr's court is also attended by the Eyes of the Crown and the Ears of the Crown, both appointed by the central government and the Crown themselves.

The Eyes of the Crown can be considered a "state attorney" in legal matters in the Mîr's court, to ensure they're not overstepping their authority in making decisions. The Ears of the Crown is akin to an Inspector General of the state. They are representatives of the Crown who make periodic, unexpected visits to the Mîrs and their administrators, and report any corruption and mismanagement directly to the Crown.

However, with the Crown having been absent for the past 10 years, the positions of the Eyes and Ears of the Crown have gone unfilled, which means there hasn't been any oversight in the Mîrs' courts in a decade...

### \*\*3. The Stewards

\*\*The stewards of the towns and cities in a province play a separate, particular role in government. The Council of Stewards, which represents the needs of their cities and towns to the Mîr, can bypass the Mîr and petition the Crown directly if they feel they are not being listened to.

The stewards also aren't appointed by neither their Mîr nor the Crown; they are representatives appointed by their own communities. The capital cities, where the Mîr and/or Crown resides, are the only exceptions. Steward Welat, for example, was appointed by Mîr Behram to be an extension of his court, and not chosen by the citizens of Marabad.

As you can gather, the government of villages is (usually) much more democratic compared to the central or provincial government. Citizens vote communally on governing decisions; the stewardship is often a rotating role taken by different citizens, and the steward is accountable to their fellow citizens to guide the governing process responsibly.

To help this process along, there are smaller councils within a town that preside over various matters concerning the town - such as a council for trade, a council for security, a council on religious matters - whose members also rotate regularly and are elected by their fellow citizens. The steward is similarly accountable to these various councils as well, and is expected to attend each council meeting.

During these council meetings the steward takes criticism from citizens on how to improve, and communities discuss and try to reach consensus on what action should be taken next. It's the steward's job to oversee these meetings and implement, together with the councils, whatever decisions are reached.

This is inspired very much by the real life Kurdish communes in Rojava, which is a modern government, but very much based on ideology and principles of communalism that I wanted to have present in the story.

### **What does all this mean for the Crown?**

Basically, it means that there are many, *many* messy court sessions in their near future. The administration of Arsur's Empire is in utter shambles, the Mîrs have gone without oversight for ten years, and there are many vacant positions on the Imperial Court that urgently need to be filled.

So, first order of the day: sort out your Imperial Court, ASAP!!!

For sources and more details on the real life inspirations for Arsur's government, you can find various articles and also a helpful YouTube video listed below!

That was all for this week. I hope you found the lore interesting! If not, well... I hope you enjoyed the previews at least lol

See you all next time! ❤️

### **Sources**

I don't think I'm allowed to share the PDFs freely, but if you message me in the patron channels of the AToC server, I can help you gain access to them if you're interested in reading them!

**\*\*On Rojava**

**\*\**The Communes of Rojava: A Model in Societal Self Direction***, A 40 minute video explaining the system of Kurdish communalism (also known as democratic confederalism) in the Rojava commune which you can watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDnenjldnnE>

Knapp, M., & Jongerden, J. (2016). Communal Democracy: The Social Contract and Confederalism in Rojava. *Comparative Islamic Studies*, 10(1), 87–109. <https://doi.org/10.1558/cis.29642>

Küçük, B., & Özselçuk, C. (2016). The Rojava Experience: Possibilities and Challenges of Building a Democratic Life. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 115(1), 184–196. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-3425013>

## On the Achaemenid Empire

Colburn, H. P. (2013). Connectivity and Communication in the Achaemenid Empire. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 56(1), 29–52. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685209-12341278>

Farazmand, A. (1998). Administration of the Persian Achaemenid World-state Empire: implications for modern public administration. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 21(1), 25–86. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900699808525297>

Tuplin, C. & Oxford Symposium on Coinage and Monetary History. (1987). The Administration of the Achaemenid Empire. In: *Coinage and Administration in the Athenian and Persian Empires* (9th edition). BAR Publishing.

[Weekly Progress Update \[08/MAY\]](#)

[May 8, 2022](#)

Hey all, happy Mother's Day!! ✨

This progress report will be a short one for this week. I've started working on the middle part of CH9 with all the Juicy Politics that's part of it, though I've also been refining and editing the opening scene a bit to tighten it up for later.

Those of you who read the Dev Sneak Peek from this week got some insight about the structure of **the Crown's Imperial Court**: it'll come into big play in CH9 and all the other chapters moving forward. The Imperial Court will be a very important mainstay in the story, as both the symbol and the centralization of the Crown's power. Think carefully about who you want to allow into your court 🧐

Moving on to more practical matters: my current wordcount for CH9 has increased with **+4k to a total of 15k words!** So we're well on track to reaching the wordcount goal for May, thankfully.

I *also* had a great epiphany this weekend about how **the CH5 choices** in particular will play a role this chapter with wildly diverging outcomes related to that and the attack in CH8/9. Which means more variation writing for me, unfortunately, but it'll be worth it in the end!!! 😭

Aside from that, I thought it would be fun to drop a preview of the opening scene for y'all while you're sticking with me on these progress updates:

X/D are so petty to each other lmao.

That'll be all for this week!

As always, thanks for your support, and I'll catch you next week for A's character snippet/the next progress update 💖

### [A's Character Snippet: The Nightmare](#)

[May 14, 2022](#)

Hi gang, hope you've had a wonderful week!

The first character snippet of the month is here - technically a bit late, since it's already Sunday in my timezone haha. Just pretend you do not see it 🙊

A's snippet was fun to work on but also decidedly darker in theme than the other ones; it was an interesting contrast considering their romance is more of a slow burn, and it really shows in their internal monologue for this snippet! Hope you won't be *too* disappointed that it's not fluffy or romantic lol

Also **note that there are massive backstory spoilers for A** in this snippet so if you haven't played through their route including and up to CH7 yet be aware of that!

Without further ado, [here is the link](#) of the first character snippet of the month, A's nightmare scene from Chapter Three!

The link for these will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Enjoy 💖

### [Weekly Progress Update \[15/MAY\]](#)

[May 15, 2022](#)

Hey all, it's been one *hell* of a week. Hope you've all managed!

I managed to get a bit of writing done this week, though not as much as I would've liked as I'm in the ~Methodology~ part of my thesis and currently in the collecting and analyzing data phase. It's going to be a long few weeks ahead of me lol.

Even so, I did manage to add another **+4k words** to the draft this week, to **a total of 19k words!**

*However.* I went back to the opening scene over the weekend and decided that the variations weren't quite differentiated enough - a lot of it felt like I was copy/pasting chunks of text interspersed with some flavor to specify a different location or LI relationship, but that's about it.

So, for this week I think **I'll go back and add/expand on the opening scene** a bit. Which means it'll be even more than the 11k words that it's currently at. Which might be a little bit ambitious on my part and could delay the chapter release, but I really feel like I can do more to improve it and give much more varied player experiences as a result!

The **total wordcount goal for CH9 might increase to 45k** as a result, but it's not that big of an increase, honestly. I can get it done in a week, so a little bit of a release delay is worth it to me to ensure the end product is where I want it to be at ✨

Also, another tidbit: **I changed the saving mechanic** for the in-game menu because the Rename Your Save pop-up is a total *nightmare* to deal with in a mobile browser, and I'm pretty sure it's the reason that the save function doesn't work on the itch.io app. So, I've revamped it to where it now will **automatically save your Crown's name, which chapter you're in, and their LI route if applicable**. It'll look like this:

So unfortunately no more Wacky Meme Save Names for the in-game menu, though you can still do so with **Saving to Disk** which is my recommended method of saving and renaming the saves in your files!

Note that if you load in an old save once CH9 is released that is somewhere in like, the middle of a chapter and save again, the save might be named CH0 because the variable that updates the save names are located at the start of each chapter; you have to visit the passage for it to update correctly. So it should correct itself once you pass by the first page of a chapter!

That's all I've got to report on for this week. I hope you enjoyed A's character snippet from yesterday too, if you haven't checked that one out yet!

See you next time 💖

[X's Character Q&A](#)

[May 19, 2022](#)



Hey gang! The voting for the poll came in, and *once again* 50% of you voted for X - although R was a very close runner-up this time.

There were also a LOT of questions sent in this time that will be answered for this Q&A, as well as ones I have saved for the other LIs in their future Q&As (mainly R and A) ✨

Onto X's Q&A!

**\*\*What is your favorite recreational activity?**

**\*\*\***"Do you want me to answer that honestly, or are there children present?"

**\*\*Please sanitize it as best you can.**

**\*\*\***"Well, mainly I enjoy the company of others. Spending time, and such [wink]. Anything that makes me some coin is a bonus, as well.

"Oh, and the brutal but righteous mercenary killing of deserving targets. That's fun too. Sorry, is that also child-inappropriate?"

**...Do you have other hobbies that *don't* \*\*involve coin, murder or sex?**

**\*\*\***"Whittling."

**\*\*You're joking.**

**\*\*\***"Obviously--I'm not *elderly*. I do enjoy a good spar, so I suppose... physical activities, something involving competition? Archery is fun as well, and I'm pretty good at throwing knives."

**Speaking of murderous hobbies, how many close shaves have you had in your lifetime, and what was your most recent near-death experience like?**

"Close shaves? Oh, too many to count. If I had to put a number on it, it would probably be in the dozens. More so in my youth, to be fair.

"My most recent one would probably be one from about four years ago. The Blades were hired to collect the heads of a few kidnappers holding people hostage and extorting money from a town in the north of Zerat.

"The problem was that the kidnappers were being sponsored by a noble lord something-or-other, I don't remember the name. Long story short, there were a *lot more* kidnappers present than we were told, inside a small fortress, and half of them were soldiers from the provincial army."

**\*\*How did you manage?**

**\*\*\***"Fair's fair--I abducted their lord. Once we made the exchange and the hostages were released, they put a bounty on my head. While I ran and had the idiots chase me, the Blades broke into their fortress and set the whole outpost ablaze.

"Anyway, I took an arrow to my back for being reckless, and fell off my horse. I wouldn't say I was near-death, exactly, but it was an extremely unpleasant experience.

"Damned horse."

**Is *that*** \*\*why you dislike horses?

\*\*"Oh, no, it's not for any traumatic reason. They're ugly beasts with horrible teeth and I hate them. That's all there is to it."

**Alright then. Do you have a historic figure you admire, and if so, why?**

"Would probably have to be Jin the Adventurer. She rode on the back of a Rukh once, you know."

**That's a character from a children's book.**

"You can't prove that she didn't exist."

**Be serious. There are no stories of historical figures that you look up to?**

"The only story that matters is mine."

\*\*What was the name that you were given by your mother? Did you maintain it, or choose another?

\*\*"She named me Çiya (mountain). When I was old enough to decide on my own name I chose Xelef/Xelara. Another hero from a storybook. I think I was... thirteen, maybe fourteen.

"...It was after my village burned down."

\*\*Have you lied to the Crown?

\*\*"Yes."

\*\*Do you regret it?

\*\*"...No."

[D's Character Snippet: The Nightmare](#)

[May 28, 2022](#)

Hey gang, hope your week has gone well and your weekend is even better!

As scheduled, D's character snippet has officially been released ✨

It's quite backstory heavy, with mild **spoilers for D's Chapter 7 scenes** as well, so be careful of that while you read! I think slow burn fans will definitely appreciate this snippet though haha.

I also added a minor change to the in-game save function where you no longer have a pop-up asking you to name your save: it automatically saves as whatever your Crown's name is. Hopefully that will make it less annoying to use on mobile/the itch.io app!

Here's [the link](#) to the character snippet! The link for these will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Hope you enjoy 💖

## [Weekly Progress Update \[29/MAY\]](#)

[May 29, 2022](#)

Hi everyone, it's been a while since the last progress update!! Hope you've all been well!

As a reminder, if you're a new patron and you pledged in the past week, since June is literally right around the corner, you'll be charged again on the 1st! Let me know if you'd like a refund for May so you're not unfairly double charged!!

I'm happy to say that I did manage another **4k words** since I last updated you, but that was 2 weeks ago as my thesis has taken priority for the remainder of May and probably will for the beginning of June as well. I'm in the final stages of data analysis and rounding up my conclusion, so AToC's progress has slowed a bit.

My goal for May was 15k words and I came up a bit short of that at **12k words**; the total wordcount for the draft is currently **23k words**! My (updated) wordcount for the chapter is 45k, so we're **halfway through the draft**!

That's still a very positive sign of forward movement, though my estimates for when the chapter will be released will probably take a bit of a delay. I think we're realistically looking at a July release if I can keep this kind of steady pace up. It's not as fast as I'd like it to be, but I unfortunately do have to prioritize.

As for content:

I've been working on **expanding the opening scene** and adding more meaningful variations between the two major branches! Also a bit of more personal flavor text; things like your Crown's state of mind, how they're feeling based on certain choices you've made in the past. **X and D** are especially

highlighted in this section as you try to handle the Attack, and I've had a lot of fun with their interactions ✨

I've also started chipping away at the **middle section of the chapter**, which has been a *delightful* writing exercise in court intrigue, slimy politicians, hints at hidden motives, as well as consequences to the Crown's reputation based on the decisions they've made so far. **R and A** come more into play here, and it's always great to watch them team up on the nobles lol

There's also an in-between check in where the whole gang comes together again with the Crown for a moment to process the events of the coronation, as well as a check in with each other, and to plan out your next moves 🙄

Basically, half of CH9 is set-up for the rest of Act I, officially named *The Mountains*, but unofficially I call it *We're In The Shit Now!!!* Imao

It's plotted to last till around ~CH14, but it can end up being longer or shorter than that depending on how things pan out chapter by chapter. The other half of CH9 is a few chickens coming home to roost 🐔

That's all I got for this week!

Until next time 💖

[Schedule Update & Bonus Snippet Poll](#)

[May 31, 2022](#)

Hey all!!

We're kind of in an odd in-between week in terms of my schedule. I use the weeks of the month to determine posting order starting from the 1st week of the month, but this week is kind of awkwardly split between May and June so I decided to use this as another opportunity for bonus content for all patrons ✨

This means the schedule for June will start properly next week, but for this week—specifically this Saturday—I'd like to release a bonus snippet for **all tiers** regarding some of the side characters like I did with Tûjo before!

It will be included with the bonus snippet game file on itch.io that has LI and MC customization, though they won't be very heavily featured in the stories.

Vote on who you'd like to see most, the poll will remain open until Friday 💖

Perjin

2%

The Crescent Blades (Heval, Tûjo, Şanazî)

19%

The Imperial Guards (Ezo, Kaja, Ziryan)

15%

The Palace Servants (Keko, Siham, Ishrah)

31%

Harun & Nazire

33%

Poll ended Jun 3, 2022 · 48 votes total

[Harun & Nazire Character Snippet](#)

[Jun 4, 2022](#)

Hey all!! The results of the poll were *super* close but Hazire won fair and square by a single vote. It's a much longer snippet than I usually write, bordering 2k words, but I really wanted to do their snippet justice especially as this is a scene that you won't be seeing in the main game.

The theme is their first meeting ✨ Naturally, *huge* story spoilers ahead, so be cautious reading it if you aren't up to date!

I've also added **more customization** for your Crown, including their last name and a few appearance options, both relevant to the Hazire snippet as well as for future snippets. So I'd recommend running through the customization and making a save game before reading!

For all patrons, you can use [this link](#) to read the snippet! For tier 3 patrons, I've also updated your game file so that you have the full collection of snippets released so far--use the link from [D's snippet post](#) from last month!

Enjoy 💖

## [No Update Today!](#)

[Jun 5, 2022](#)

Hey gang, I'm sorry to say there won't be a progress update today!!

Aside from the Hazire snippet I posted yesterday, I've virtually had no progress with AToC as I'm in the midst of writing out the results of my thesis 😭 It's the biggest and probably most important part, so I had to give it my full attention.

Thankfully it'll get much easier after the coming week as the biggest hurdle will be over with, assuming I can finish my results on time, so I'll be able to fully focus on AToC again by mid to late-June!

And, of course, I'll keep up with all the other Patreon content as scheduled. I'll see you all again for the Dev Sneak Peak on Wednesday, or during next week's progress update--fingers crossed I'll actually have progress to report on lol.

I hope you all enjoyed the Hazire snippet from yesterday!

Until next time 💖

## [Development Sneak Peek: The Imperial Court and Its Courtiers](#)

[Jun 8, 2022](#)

Heya!! Hope your week's going well so far. Frankly my sleeping schedule has been an absolute disaster the past month so I can't believe it's only Wednesday lol

I already gave y'all a brief overview of Arsur's main levels of government in the [May Sneak Peek](#), but now I think it's time to introduce you all to the various positions on the ✨Imperial Court✨ and their responsibilities!

## THE CROWN'S COURT

First, it must be understood that there is a difference between the Crown's **Inner Court** and their **Outer Court**.

The Inner Court encompasses the rooms occupied by the Crown on a more intimate basis, such as their bedchambers, bathrooms, dining halls, as well as the people who serve and/or join the Crown in these rooms. The Outer Court, as you may guess, refers to more public spaces, such as the throne rooms and the banquet halls where people not closely related and public servants will serve the Crown.

The Imperial Household, and its Imperial House, is an example of the Crown's Inner Court, while the Crown's Outer Court encompasses the nobles and elites who advise them in governance.

## 1. THE IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD

### The Imperial House

Aside from the Crown themselves, their family, lovers, friends and their successor are also part of the Imperial House. Aside from the latter, the former three do not earn any special authority merely by being related to the Crown, however, and if the Crown were to attempt to give them any it would cause a huge scandal. It is different if they already possessed rank or authority prior to the Crown's ascendance.

Loved ones outside of the Crown's significant other are titled **Crownsblood**--the "blood" part of the title refers to an oath sworn by blood, not that of blood-relation<sup>\*\*</sup>.<sup>\*\*</sup> Relatives through adoption are included, and many Crowns in the past have at times declared their closest friends as Crownsblood as well.

As for the Crown's lovers, should they take up any, there is a distinction made between casual lovers, styled simply as royal concubines, while long-term lovers of the Crown are titled officially as **Jewels of the Crown**, seen as equal to Crownsblood. A royal concubine can always be made a Jewel and a Jewel can always be "demoted" (read: dumped) at the Crown's whims.

Much like Crownsblood, Jewel(s) of the Crown do not have any authority to wield in governing. As a result the court has no say in who the Crown takes as a Jewel, unless political implications would be severe, such as the Crown deciding to court a royal from a neighboring kingdom.

If a Jewel had their own rank/title before being courted by the Crown, they maintain those after being made a Jewel. Generally, though, it is considered questionable or even wholly frowned upon if the Crown were to choose someone of the Imperial Court as their lover, due to possible biases and mismanagement that could cause.

The main exception to this is the Royal Protector, who--while part of the court--doesn't have much input into matters of governance aside from the Crown's protection and security.

### Courtiers

While the Crown is at the center of Arsur's government, the management of their imperial household is an indispensable aspect of the court.

Traditionally, Zeratul is considered the main capital of the entire Empire as it is its administrative capital: this is where royal decrees were issued, where provincial officials sent their reports and where visiting dignitaries were received. The Seat of the Crown, the palace in Zeratul, also was typically used as the Crown's coronation palace.

However, the Crown would often move palaces by the season, visiting other provinces, and would take the Imperial Court with them. Typically the spring would be spent in Marabad, the summer in Ilwan, autumn in Arzo and winter in Rushem. The Crown and their court would occasionally return to Zeratul for great national holidays or during periods of political turmoil.

You can imagine the Crown needs *many* people to manage the palaces, but can't be personally in charge of managing such a task considering their duties in governing takes up all their time. This is where the **Steward of the Court** comes into play: this Court Steward manages an administrative department responsible for all the royal palaces and royal properties within the Empire, and tends to the day-to-day needs of everyone in the Imperial Court.

The Head Servants, such as Keko, is part of the Court Steward's department. Currently, the position of Court Steward is vacant in the story.

While the Court Steward tends to the management of the Crown's household, the **Royal Protector** is in charge of the *security* of that household. While the Royal Protector personally guards the Crown's body, they are also in charge of the **Imperial Guards** who protect not only the Crown, but also the entirety of their Inner Court.

There is also the **Imperial Secretary**, who is in charge of more practical matters: planning out the Crown's day-to-day agenda, and communicating to the court or the Mîr in the Crown's absence, is foremost of their duties. This position is currently vacant.

Aside from the Court Steward, the Imperial Secretary and the Royal Protector, it is typical for the heirs of important noble houses to be educated and trained at court and become **courtiers**. Foreign dignitaries and visitors, especially friends of the Crown, would often be courtiers as well--this even included monarchs of other countries. Personal tutors for the Crown, or the Crown's successor, also fall under courtiers.

The ones most favored by the Crown were often chosen to be the Crown's personal **retainers** as well; often times noble houses will angle their heirs to positions like these, in order to gain the ear of the Crown. The Crown's **personal magi**--usually healers, diviners and scholars--were also considered important courtiers.

And then, of course, there is the most important courtier of all, considered the Crown's foremost advisor and companion, and their foremost expert on matters of magic: **The Crown's Sorcerer**.



## 2. THE IMPERIAL COURT

Aside from the Imperial Household, there are of course the more political positions directly in charge of advising the Crown on matters of governance. These would be the Crown's **Outer Court**. I'll put these in a list with short descriptions for each title: I think the wall of text has been long enough lol.

- **Ministers of the Court:** These are heads of various **bureaucratic offices** heading different arms and departments of Arsur's central government. Among these, the **Voice of the Crown** is the chief minister in charge, representing the Crown to the public as well as being the main liaison between the Crown and their Imperial Court. This position is currently vacant.
- **Minister of Law:** The head official in charge of advising the Crown on matters of legality and law, accompanied by several **imperial judges** at their court, usually chosen from noble families and given lifetime appointments. These positions are mostly still occupied.
- **Minister of Defense:** The head official in charge of advising the Crown on matters of defense. They are the administrative equivalent of the High General, and in charge of management and logistics for the Imperial Army. With this position vacant, the current General has had to take over these duties.
- **High General:** Often times simply referred to as the General. The foremost military official in the Empire. All the Commanders of Provincial Armies are directly under their command, and they in turn report solely to the Crown. They work closely together with the Minister of Defense. Appointed after the resignation of their predecessor, not yet sworn in by the current Crown.
- **Wisdom of the Crown:** The head official who heads a group of scholars and experts in various fields in order to advise the Crown. Think anything from agriculture, to infrastructure, to public health, etc. Often works closely together with the Crown's Sorcerer when it concerns matters of magic. Vacant.
- **Minister of Diplomacy:** The head official in charge of advising the Crown on matters of foreign relations. Vacant.
- **Minister of Personnel:** The head official in charge of appointing personnel to various court position in the Crown's name. Vacant.
- **Minister of Imperial Decrees:** The head official in charge of issuing the Crown's decrees to the public and to officials. Court scribes and royal historians who record the Crown's daily activities are also under their command. Vacant.
- **Minister of Correspondence:** Relays petitions from the public and stewards from various provinces, to the Crown. Vacant.
- **Representatives of the Mîr:** Not yet appointed by the Mîr.
- **Eyes of the Crown:** Vacant.
- **Ears of the Crown:** Vacant.

So basically, nearly the whole damn court is empty aside from the Office of Law lmao. It's practically a ghost town up there.

Have fun filling all these positions! ✨

## [Weekly Progress Update \[12/JUN\]](#)

[Jun 12, 2022](#)

Hey all, hope you had a good week!! It's technically the 13th in my timezone now but it's fine don't mention it 🤗

I've gotten back to working on AToC a bit. I didn't write much, just **3k words**, but at this point any progress is better than no progress lol

A fun idea I had this week and that I started working on was yet another ✨Dream Sequence✨ influenced by **the state of mind of your MC** as well as the **outcome of the opening scene** based on earlier decisions. This scene doesn't affect anything plot-related in the larger scheme of things, it's purely for your own MC's development, so I thought it'd be safe to talk about and give a little spoilers!

Basically, your MC's state of mind has been tracked based on a small choice made during another dream sequence back in CH6 with the water spirits, where you were given 3 choices on how your MC is dealing with their trauma, if you remember.

These choices correlate to your MC:

- holding onto the pain and accepting the suffering that comes with it
- holding onto the pain, realizing that they're hurting but too afraid to move on
- holding onto the pain in order to process it and heal in a healthy way, rather than let the water spirits take it from them

This decision will subsequently impact what kind of dream sequence you get in CH9 depending on how well the opening sequence went for you. Since there's 3 different outcomes (roughly speaking; there's lots of varying details but those won't be relevant here) and 3 different mind-states, the dream sequence has about **12 different variations**.

Here's a taste of the variation for an MC that has both **the worst mind-state** as well as got **the worst outcome** in the opening sequence:

So... yeah. Maybe it's more accurate to call this particular variation a *nightmare* sequence lmao. You definitely want to try to avoid that outcome. Or, hell, maybe you don't if you want to do a particularly tragic/angst-filled run for your poor MC 😭

In other news, I've also been chipping away at the main scenes involving the Imperial Court. The introduction to it has been especially fun to write, slipping in a few new background characters here and there to fill up the Royal Palace. I think I'll probably add a list of Imperial Court positions to the codex so that the player can keep track of all these characters haha.

That was it for this week! I'll see you all again next Saturday for X's character snippet 🙄

Until then 💖

### [X's Character Snippet: Chapter Four](#)

[Jun 18, 2022](#)

Hey all!! It's pretty late where I'm at (it's technically already Sunday over here lol) and I'm completely *beat* from thesis work so I'll keep this post short and sweet and let you get right to the snippet.

I don't think I mentioned this for all tiers yet, but I added a minor change to the in-game save function where you no longer have a pop-up asking you to name your save. Now, it will automatically save as whatever your Crown's name is. Hopefully that will make it less annoying to use on mobile/the [itch.io](#) app!

Anyways, here's [the link](#) to X's snippet! The link for these will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Hope you enjoy 💖

### [Weekly Progress Update \[19/JUN\]](#)

[Jun 19, 2022](#)

Hey all!

This week's progress report will be very brief since I don't have anything big to talk about at the moment. I handed in the final draft of my thesis this Friday for feedback, so most of my work on that front is finished!! My summer vacation is only 3 weeks away 😭

I managed to write only **2k words** (the total is at **27k** now), but in the process of fine-tuning the core of the chapter, I added *even more* variations to write. Granted, these are pretty unavoidable because of all the plot I've been building up to so far, so it'll be worth it in the end.

Multiply this by 2 for when **the attack outcome is negative**, and that's basically **12 different scenes** I have to write during/after the Crown's first court audience. It's similar to the dream sequence variations, so the scene won't be a long one, but even in the event that it's 500 words long that's still **an added 6k** to my wordcount lol

That's why I should probably add that a July release will likely only be possible for people who have a 2 week early release access reward tier. That is *NOT* to guarantee that the chapter will be finished in July, however; if anything I'm more comfortable placing it in August because I'd also have to give my beta readers time to edit this monster of a chapter haha.

That was all for this week! I'll keep working on it, and hopefully by the start of July I'll have a definitive release date for you ✨

Thanks so much for your support and patience, as always 💖

## [R's Character Q&A](#)

[Jun 23, 2022](#)

Hey gang! The results came in and about 60% of you voted for R this month, so A will automatically get the next month's Q&A.

We got a couple of questions specified for R from past voting rounds, as well as a bunch more from this round!

Onto the questions ✨

**\*\*Who is your favorite person to work with?**

**\*\***"I would say Ashti/Azad. We see eye to eye on many things, and the few times they do disagree with me I appreciate hearing their perspective. They never condescend to me; I can always count on them to be honest.

"Aside from them, I always enjoy seeing Perjin and discussing matters of magic with her. Her field is limited mainly to alchemy, minerals in particular, but as that's not one of my own talents we can exchange a lot of knowledge over the course of even a single conversation."

"I would've also said Dara/Delal, but... frankly, I'm not as experienced as they are yet, so sometimes it feels less like we're working together and more like I'm learning from them, like a student would from a teacher."

**What is the achievement that you are most proud of to this date?**

"Hmm... it would have to be... the first time I created magic between my fingertips. I must've been thirteen winters at the time, only recently a pupil of Lady Zerya's.

"She had already taught me how to conjure magic from the sky--I lean towards outer magic, in most cases--but creating it from within was much more difficult. Lightning in particular is an incredibly powerful element, and very tough to tame. I've burned my own hands more times than I could count.

"When I finally succeeded... to say I was overjoyed was an understatement. Lady Zerya looked so proud of me, too. I'll never forget it."

**What advice would you give your successor?**

"Find a trusted few friends for your inner circle, and keep them close. *Never* trust a noble, but keep them even closer."

**Is there any historic event or person you find interesting?**

"That would be Lady Viyan, the Crown's First Sorcerer. She served Crown Ashadūna; before the Empire was founded, Lady Viyan was the head of one of the Tribes of Sur that Crown Ashadūna allied with. In fact, one could say she was the main reason the alliance held together at all. Her achievements as the Crown's foremost advisor makes her a role model to all Sorcerers who followed in her footsteps."

**That's quite admirable. Speaking of which, weren't there rumors that Lady Viyan and Crown Ashadūna were lovers?**

"Rumors, yes. No one has been able to prove it with certainty; if they did have a love affair, they kept it secret. Even so, Lady Viyan advised the Crown to the best of her ability, though... such relationships are ill-advised. It could compromise the Crown's Sorcerer."

**Or it could compromise the Crown?**

"That's also possible, yes. The Crown might make decisions based solely on what their Sorcerer says, due to their relationship. That would be of great concern to the country, to say the least."

**\*\*Do you believe the Crown--the current one--can remain a good person forever?**

**\*\*\***"That depends on their choices. Even someone who puts the country first can make bad decisions if they were misguided in some way. It is the Sorcerer's foremost task to ensure the Crown doesn't stray from the path of truth and righteousness.

"As for our current Crown... it remains to be seen what kind of ruler they will turn out to be. They haven't had a chance to govern yet: I look forward to seeing what decisions they'll make."

**\*\*Hypothetically, if you were to fall in love with the Crown, would you still be able to hold them accountable if they become a tyrant?**

\*\*\*Of course. It would be my duty, in fact--personal relationships would have to be secondary to that. Though that's easier said than done, I'm not sure how I'd feel in the moment."

**Would you be able to kill them, if it comes to that?**

"I... I'd rather not imagine such a future. I don't know. I hope...

I hope I won't ever have to find out."

[No update today!](#)

[Jun 26, 2022](#)

I'm handing in my thesis!!!!!!

I'll see you all for R's character snippet next time! I'll be releasing it **on Thursday** so that June's tier 3 patrons will still have access to it 💖

[R's Character Snippet: Chapter Four](#)

[Jun 30, 2022](#)

Hey all, I hope June was kind to you!! Personally, I'm just glad I got it over with haha.

This month's tier 3 snippet is kind of depressing, I'm just going to warn you of that beforehand. But it also gives a look into how difficult the past decade has been for R, so that's a little more insight into their backstory and motivations!

Here's the [link](#) to their snippet! The link for these will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Hope you enjoy 💖

[Weekly Progress Update \[04/JUL\]](#)

[Jul 4, 2022](#)

Hey everyone!! So sorry for the late update, I honestly forgot about posting yesterday; I came down with Covid last Thursday so even though I've been locked up in my room I was pretty much preoccupied with that. My symptoms are thankfully mild (I'm vaccinated + boosted) but I've had a persistent headache and fatigue so I was a little bit muddled lol.

Onto the actual progress update!

First, I can say with certainty that we're most likely looking at an **August release date** for all tiers. I'm aiming for early August for the early access release, so the public release will probably be mid-to-late August.

This is in part because I have absolutely no self-control and keep adding scenes and variations to the chapter haha. I've written a small amount last week (just over **2k words**, the total is at **29k** now) but now that I'm FINALLY into summer vacation I'm expecting that number to shoot up starting from this week: I'll be **aiming for 7k a week** (so 1k a day minimum). If I can manage that until August I'll definitely smash my wordcount goal for CH9 Imao

As for the actual content, I've been having a *lot* of fun with all these court scenes. The shady political maneuvering have been absolutely juicy to write, the court intrigue is definitely coming into play now 🧐

Here's a small sample of what you can expect:

Wonder how the Crown is going to handle this one... well, I don't wonder, because I've already written the choices and their outcomes, but it was an *incredibly* fun scene to write lol. The nobles are definitely starting to show their fangs, so the Crown is going to have to learn how to deal with them very quickly or basically get run over.

I don't have much else to report on, so I'll end the progress report here!

As always, thanks so much for your patience and support 💖

Until next time!

[Weekly Progress Update \[10/JUL\]](#)

[Jul 10, 2022](#)

Hey everyone!!

I'm pretty much recovering from Covid right now so I blame my Covid brain from last week for forgetting to post the Dev Sneak Peek. Instead I'll post it this Wednesday, and then you'll have D's snippet on Saturday this week to look forward to as well!

Schedule updates aside, I actually did manage to write a little bit while sick (I added **2k words** for a **total of 31k** now), but I did more editing than anything else, to be honest. I think that was also very necessary because the chapter was getting a little bloated with exposition.

Speaking of which, I've been working on the codex entries especially this week!

First, CH9 is when you'll be getting a codex entry on the Imperial Court (for those with tier 2+ benefits, it's essentially the same information as was posted in the Dev Sneak Peek from last time, but slightly shortened). The current codex entry is 1k words long. So, it has a *lot* of info, but it's arguably also the most relevant codex entry for the Crown going forward. I think it'd be better for readers to have it all at hand in the codex instead of just making people memorize it all.

Also, I've decided to retroactively add character codex entries to the various groups the Crown has already been introduced to: the Crescent Blades, the Palace Servants, the Imperial Guards, and Arsur's nobility as a faction.

Initially I planned to add all these codex entries in later, but the way the story is pacing right now, I think it's better to add in the first time you meet each faction. It'd be *very* weird to get a codex entry for Siham and Ishrah like 1 month after your Crown has already been hanging out with them lmao. So that's another thing to add to my to-do list for the CH9 release!

For people with a save file in CH8, you'll have to remember to open up the character codex to read them because there won't be a notification in-game, as you would've technically "unlocked" it already haha.

That's it for this week. I don't have much big progress to report back on yet unfortunately. Hopefully the rest of July will be more productive now that I'm healthy again 🙄

Until next time!! 💖

[Development Sneak Peek: Romantic Relationships & "Marriage" Customs](#)

[Jul 13, 2022](#)



Hey everyone!! I've run out of CH9 specific previews for now so I decided this was a good opportunity to do a post for some world-building instead. Specifically, an aspect I've gotten a lot of questions about on the blog but didn't want to answer yet due to how far off we were from it in-game, but I think now is the right time to delve deeper into it: committed romantic relationships!

Note that none of the following is based in any real life history or culture as those tend to be very patriarchal, so all of this is straight from my brain lol.

## Relationship structures and social rules

First, romantic relationships can be either **monogamous or polyamorous**. Monogamy tends to be more common, but polyamory is an accepted part of society as well. When polyamory is practiced, though, all the partners involved tend to be/are expected to be **in committed relationships** with at least one other person involved--in other words, open relationships would *not* be seen as permissible. This goes together with the fact that "casual dating" would be highly frowned upon as well, or actually, just straight up unthinkable.

The reason behind this is a rigid mindset around relationships due to social customs involving **social hierarchy** and **magic**. Romance and courtships tends to be very structured in Arsurian society rather than allowed to be fluid, because they have various ideas about who is suited for who based on their family's class position, and **the family's reputation** is incredibly important.

(Note that this is considered separate from purely *sexual* relationships: if it's made clear that there are no intentions of courtship involved, people are generally free to sleep with whoever they want. X, for example, makes it *very* clear whether they want to court someone or only want to sleep with them in order to avoid issues like this lol)

If you're from a well-off merchant family, a good match would be someone from another family in a similar class position. Marrying from a family of other merchants, or magi scholars, for example. It'd be considered a "step up" for you if you courted someone with a minor noble title, unless your family was particularly rich, and similarly it'd be a "step down" if you courted someone with a more modest profession, such as a carpenter or a farmer, but both of these options would still be permissible.

It'd be borderline impossible, however, to court a noble with a high-ranking position, or to court someone poor with no suitable family background. Ironically, the more importance and renown your family name has, the more rules you get saddled with about who you are "allowed" to court in order to avoid public scandal. There is no custom of "arranged marriages", at least not formally, but you can imagine that families will tend to push their kids towards each other if they feel they'd be a good match. So, maybe mildly arranged through subtle social pressure lol.

As you can tell, the role of the family is pretty important--Arsur itself is a collectivist society, and its courtships tend to reflect this as well. For the average Arsurian, the rules are a lot less strict, but this

kind of attitude still widespread. Casual dating or open relationships could cause all sorts of issues if you end up getting multiple families involved.

There are, however, exceptions to the rules. The most politically powerful people in the Empire, such as the Crown, the Mîr, or especially high-ranking nobility, are known to take on casual lovers (royal concubines for the Crown, for example) at the same time as being in committed relationships. This is in part because it's very difficult for them to find a "suitable" match since their stations in society are so high, so they're kind of given free reign to mess around as much as they want. In fact, *being* a casual lover of one of these people is even seen as a brag and signifying status.

So, yeah, the social customs around this are quite restrictive and not remotely fair lol.

The common attitude around relationships is also reinforced by religion and the role of magic. More on that below!

## Romance and courtship customs

Unlike modern times, there are a *lot* less labels and stages to a relationship in Arsurian society, especially since casual dating isn't a thing, so there are much less gray areas.

First, there's basically **the courtship phase**. If you decide you like someone enough to pursue them, you're expected to propose a courtship to them as well as their family as soon as possible--to not do so but continue to flirt would be seen as shady. If the proposal is accepted, then you'll be getting to know each other more and deciding whether or not you (and your families) are suited to each other. The one upside is that the courtship phase can last a very long time, even several years, if that's how long it takes to make certain. There tends to be a *lot* of gift-giving in this phase as well to impress your potential lover's family especially lmao.

Obviously you can have multiple courtships going, so long as everyone courting you is aware of this and agrees to it. If they don't agree (i.e. they're monogamous) they break off the courtship and everyone moves on--breaking off the courtship is no big deal in most cases, and done pretty easily.

The second and final phase is **the promised phase**. Once two or more people do choose to enter into a committed relationship after courting each other for some time, this is where magic starts coming into play. During a **Ceremony of Promise**, they will exchange tokens with each other--usually some form of jewelry--that has an essence of their magic stored into it, and exchange these tokens with each other. In religious custom, as the spirit is considered to be the source of someone's magic, this is essentially like carrying your lover's spirit with you, as proof of your commitment to each other.

These tokens are called **Tokens of Promise**, hence people who are in this stage of the relationship are referred to as **being "promised" to each other**, as an equivalent to being "married" to each other. Similarly, equivalent to wife/husband/SO/partner, people in this stage are referred to as **"promised one"**, i.e. "my/her/his/their promised one(s)".

Even people who aren't usually sensitive or adept with magic tend to feel the effects of carrying a token of their promised one's magic with them. People who are promised to each other are able to sense each other even across vast distances, and are completely in tune with their promised one(s) feelings and emotional state. It's even possible to share magic with each other; magi who are promised are especially well-known of working well together and performing incredible feats of magic due to their bond.

People's magic signatures can even evolve due to the bond. Their affinity won't change, but it can take on characteristics of their promised one(s) own affinity. For example, Harun's affinity was to air and Nazire's was to fire. After being promised to each other for a year, Harun's magic signature, which felt like a calm breeze, became more similar to smoke carrying embers on the wind, while Nazire's tempered flames became more like a raging wildfire swelling in heat and intensity.

This phenomenon is also called a "**merging (of the spirits)**". It doesn't always occur; it depends on how good the relationship is. Some promised couples never achieve a merging ever (usually the case in more arranged relationships), while some experience it even mere months after becoming promised.

You can imagine that divorcing (referred to as a "**severing of the promise**", which requires the aid of a priest) could be a bit... painful, emotionally speaking but sometimes even physically. Especially people who have severed their promise after their bonds have already merged, tend to describe it as feeling a persistent, dull ache wherever they used to carry their token (finger, wrist, chest, earlobe, etc) as if they had lost a limb. Their magical signature sometimes reverts to what it was before, but... sometimes it also stays the same.

This is part of why the courtship phase can last several years as well. After you go into the promised phase, it's not only difficult for the families involved to separate but *especially* difficult for the actual promised couple who have exchanged tokens, let alone couples whose bonds have already merged. You want to be *extremely* sure of who you're promising yourself to in order to minimize the risk of separation later.

It's also, in part, why casual relations are so frowned upon. The weight and importance given to promising oneself feeds into the same rigid attitude towards how relationships are structured.

Aaand that was all for this topic! Hope you enjoyed the insight and have a better idea of what a committed relationship with the LIs could look like for your Crown in the future... 🙄🙄

Until next time 💖

[D's Character Snippet: Chapter Four](#)

[Jul 17, 2022](#)

Hey all!! Sorry for the late upload, but D's tier 1 snippet is finally here 💖

I probably won't manage a weekly progress report this week, but you'll at least have the character snippet to enjoy!

Here's [the link](#) for tier 1 this month (it has also been added to the tier 3 file, see R's post from last month for the link). The link for these will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Hope you enjoy ✨

## [A's Character Q&A](#)

[Jul 23, 2022](#)

Hey all! Another late post this month, I'm not sure what's going on with my brain but I keep missing the planned schedule post by a day or two lol. Maybe it's the lingering Covid brain fog 😅

As the other 3 LIs were already voted on the last 3 months, so there was no voting this time as this month's Q&A is automatically dedicated to A! Starting from next month there will be voting rounds again, this time including side characters for the Q&A as well!

Some of these questions were also sent in from earlier voting rounds, so if you have tier 3, don't forget to vote next time ✨

Onto the questions!

### **What's the best gift you have ever received?**

"The love and affection of those close to me."

\*\*Wow, that's... really sweet.

\*\*\*"I'm mostly joking. It was a pair of pendant earrings shaped like birds, with jewels inlaid in their eyes. My parents gave it to me during my naming day celebration."

### **That does raise the question, *did* you choose Azad/Ashti for yourself, or was it passed on from your parents? If you did choose it, then why?**

Brief silence. "...Maybe as a symbol for what I longed for at the time."

(Ashti means *peace*, Azad means *freedom*)

**\*\*If you could visit any place, where would it be?**

**\*\***"This isn't very adventurous, but my childhood home in our hometown. It's been years since I've seen it, I've always wondered what became of it. It was a small house by the beach, close to the port."

**\*\*Outside of your old home, any sights you'd like to see?**

**\*\***"I would like to cross the Seafarer's End one day."

**\*\*You mean the sea on Arsur's eastern coast, notorious for its sea monsters?**

**\*\***"They're not monsters, they're animals like any other. It'd be an adventure. I've seen everything else there is to see in Arsur, and visiting neighboring countries doesn't interest me."

"Besides, for all its so-called monsters, the Seafarer's End is beautiful. There are small, uninhabited islands where the water surrounding it comes in different colors like gold or pink, sometimes even in multiple colors like a rainbow, with vast jungles and forests that have yet to be explored."

**And they haven't been explored because...**

"The wildlife... isn't very friendly. Still, being able to chart it would be invaluable for trade with the countries further east from us. As of right now, trading by land is our safest option, which requires a much longer detour. It's worth the risk of attempting it."

**Aren't there more dangers that you can't account for? Whirlpools, seasonal storms, and the like?**

"Like I said, an adventure."

**Well, good luck with that. So, what would you want to be if you weren't the Royal Protector?**

"A sailor, obviously. Weren't you listening?"

**Okay, moving on to a different subject. When is the last time you cried, and why?**

"Define crying."

**Fluid ejected from your eyeballs.**

"A few days ago when I was cutting onions."

**...I mean, crying from sadness.**

"I don't know. Every now and then. Once every few weeks?"

**Really?**

"Yes, it's healthy. You don't?"

**Why do you cry?**

"Almost every day I meet someone who has lost everything they had, because the country is no longer being governed. I do what I can to help, but I can't be everywhere at once. Bandit groups forming mercenary companies and terrorizing entire regions of the country, nobility laying claim on land and destroying people's homes, poverty and disease sweeping through cities and killing the least fortunate by the droves, ordinary people caught up in political power struggles being exploited--

"You try looking at a parent who weeps over the dead bodies of their children, and keep your eyes dry. If you do not shed even a single tear, then your heart must be made of stone."

**Point taken, but maybe we should end on a lighter note. What is your fondest memory of your parents - separately or together?**

"When I was a young child, we used to have breakfast outside in the gardens of whichever palace we were staying at whenever the weather was sunny. My father would especially bring over musicians to play for us while we ate together as a family. We gradually stopped doing it as I grew older. It would be... the fondest memory I have of my father as well. During those times, early in his reign, he was much happier, healthier. As the Crown as well; he didn't rule with fear, back then. His mistakes came later on.

"Regarding my mother, I have many fond memories of her, it is difficult to choose. If I had to, I'd say whenever she would join me during my tutoring lessons in literature and poetry. She'd only been educated later in life, after my father was found to be the successor, and still very much enjoyed learning. After being tutored, the two of us would talk about our favorite excerpts from the lessons, or recite poetry to each other.

"...I wish I could remember which one was her favorite."

[A's Character Snippet: Chapter Four](#)

[Jul 30, 2022](#)

Hey all!! A's tier 3 snippet is here, and with that, all the CH4 snippets have been released! It was a very A-centric month this time haha 💖

**Note** that this snippet has *huge* spoilers for A's backstory if you haven't played Chapter 7 yet!!

The next set of snippets will be the LIs POV during their first meeting with the Crown 🙄

Here's [the link](#) for tier 3 this month. The link for these will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Hope you enjoy ✨

[Development Sneak Peek: The Nine Disciplines of Magic, Part I](#)

[Aug 3, 2022](#)

For this and next month's sneak peek, I thought it would be nice to go more in-depth with the nine types of disciplines that have been named in the story so far! Especially since your Crown will eventually be able to choose which one to learn in the story.

Most of these you can probably guess what they do based on their names, especially if you've consumed other fantasy stories before, but they do work in unique ways in Arsur considering the inner/outer magic system.

I've decided to split these up halfway through writing it because the post got *quite* long, so you'll get the first 5 disciplines this month, and the remaining 4 next month.

So let's get into it!

## The Neutral Disciplines

These can be practiced by either inner or outer types; it doesn't give any benefits or disadvantages to either type!

### Warding

This type of magic is going to become *extremely* relevant in CH9 especially, so consider this a preview for what you will also find out later in the story!

Warding magic concerns the realm of space and matter, in a very physical sense. Wards are made of sigils, which essentially ascribe certain functions to the ward, and are powered by a user's magic. Because writing the sigils is the main factor in this process, inner magic users don't have any special advantages over outer magic users; as long as someone knows the basic of putting their magic into a sigil, that's all they need to know as far as that is concerned.

There are 4037 Arsurian sigils in existence, and magi that wish to specialize in warding magic are expected to have memorized all of them and even be able to fluently write using sigils.

By using sigils you can create and place wards on various surfaces, objects, and even people.

The "sink" in the Crown's bathroom is a very simple form of ward: activating its corresponding sigil redirects the water to flow out of the wall and into the basin so the Crown can wash up. This ward is an example of a **boundary ward**; one that manages the boundaries of a certain space and manipulates which elements are allowed to pass through under certain conditions. The wards that guard the palace are also boundary wards.

A much more advanced form of ward is the **mental ward** used on the assassins that essentially controls their mind. Since the sigils are branded into the assassins' flesh using the mask, the ward is placed

upon the person's head, and therefore "controls" that space, i.e. their mind.

There are many other types of wards, such as **protective wards** used on garments to repel dirt, water, fire--and they can even protect against physical damage. While wards are effective against offensive spells, they are not fully immune to magic damage. The rule is: if the magic attack is *at least twice as strong* as the magic that made the ward, the ward will shatter.

There are also wards that can regulate temperature, such as wards with a cooling or warming effect placed on clothes to keep the wearer warm or cool in certain climates. Or ones placed in baths to heat or cool the water.

The main thing wards are *not* capable of doing is creating elements or objects. The sigils that a ward is made out of must fall in line with natural law, that is to say, they cannot conjure things out of nothing. The sigils listed in a ward can also not contradict each other: you can't write a condition that a ward must protect against water, for example, and then write another condition that says the ward must pull in water; this would make the ward malfunction.

## Divination

Divination is the discipline that uses the least amount of magic throughout its different rituals. I based this divination on the historical divination that was actually used in the Ancient Persian Empire. If you play A's route, you also get some details from them about the types of divination used in Chapter 5, but I'll go over them again here as well and add some new info too!

Firstly, divination does not solely concern predicting the future. There are also branches of divination that regard the present and the past.

To divine the future, there are several methods. Celestial divination, interpreting the positions of the stars, the planets and the sun to predict the future, is reserved solely for the Imperial House. For anyone else who has the money to afford it, there is palm-reading, face-reading, dream interpretation, and examining the innards of sacrificed animals.

To divine the past and present, there are fewer methods, and most are limited to being able to track down where a person has been or currently is by following the "thread" of their magic signature. One can also use the magic in someone's belongings to divine specific visions of their past, tied to that object. They cannot do this with a person themselves, however, as human beings have too many experiences; the diviner would be overwhelmed.

A's talent to read minds is similar but not quite the same; they don't see "visions" so much as the literal thoughts and memories that a person has, which may or may not be warped by a person's own perceptions. Their ability is more of a highly complex version of aura magic.



## Alchemy

I've described this type more elaborately [on the Tumblr blog](#) as well, but to recap: alchemy was seen as the in real life precursor to chemistry in the history of the Middle East as well. Of course, in the story, it's more so a fantasy element that is explicitly connected to magic.

Alchemy uses the magic of the ingredients one uses to create a tonic or potion with magic properties. It can also alter the properties of an object (or person). An alchemist never uses their own magic at any point, as it would interfere with the magic process.

The eye glamours that the Crown uses in the story are a good example of alchemy, and highly advanced alchemy can even permanently alter one's body as Perjin mentions during the Crown's first magic lesson. Alchemy is also one of the types of magic most used by healers to treat illnesses, ailments or infections.

## The Inner-Type Disciplines

These disciplines are most suited to inner magic types, but they can also be performed by outer magic types when given additional practice.

## Aura

This will be a short one as you've heard and seen a lot of examples of this in the story so far. Aura magic basically concerns the use of one's aura: the magic someone naturally exudes. This differs per person; the aura is what radiates someone's magic signature outwards.

A clear example is the highly advanced aura magic used by the Imperial Guards. They disguise their auras, and transform it to make themselves invisible to the human eye. Even outer magic types among the guards have mastered this ability; it's a prerequisite in order to qualify for the Imperial Guards. The Crown also partway disguises their aura from Perjin during their magic lesson, if they are an inner magic type.

You can also use aura magic offensively, or defensively. Transforming your aura to reflect the element you have affinity to; Nazire was able to cover herself in flame by using her aura, for example.

Connecting your aura to another person's aura also can give you access to another person's magic and, by extension, even their mind. A's ability to read minds is a highly advanced bit of aura magic. Similarly, you can also use your aura to protect against it, which is what X often did in the past whenever they and A came to blows.

Aura magic tends to be considered the foundation of the other two inner-type disciplines: healing and enhancement. Everything an inner magus does with healing or enhancing their own body requires at least *some* manipulation of aura.

## Enhancement

We've seen a lot of this in the story with X. Enhancing one's physical abilities and senses. X has predominantly displayed it by enhancing their senses: hearing, vision, sense of smell and taste, etc. They can also do the opposite, such as numbing themselves when they are injured to avoid feeling pain, for example. Further than sensing physical things, however, X can also enhance their sensing of magic; this is how they are able to detect other people's magic signatures across long distances, and immediately distinguish someone's unique characteristics in regards to their affinity.

Besides your senses, you can also enhance your strength, your speed, your endurance and your stamina. Some especially talented enhancement users have even been said to have enhanced their health and prolonged their natural lifespans by several years.

In combat situations, someone that is trained in enhancement magic can be especially difficult to take down, particularly one-on-one. Enhancing themselves physically *does not* make them immune to magic damage, however.

## Next time...

That was it for this month! We'll get into healing, summoning, ritual and elemental magic during next month's sneak peek, as well as some extra lore about how the magus system and its hierarchy functions.

Until then 💖

[Weekly Progress Update \[07/AUG\]](#)

[Aug 7, 2022](#)

Hey all, hope your week went well 💖

It's been a while since a proper progress update but I've had a lot of things cooking in the meantime that I'm excited to update you on!

In case you haven't seen in yet, I announced the release dates for Chapter 9 [on my Tumblr](#) a few days ago - it differs per tier, so make sure you check when your tier gets the release!

It'll be released similarly to how I release the character snippet on Patreon: it'll be put on itch.io on a separate protected page, and I'll post the link here for each tier on the chosen date. Make sure to check

in!!

## Chapter progress & new mechanic

I'm almost finished drafting the middle section which consists of the court scene, and have started working on the individual LI romance scenes. As for the beginning section, I've polished off the 2 main branches (they're 16k words each with 5k words of overlap, meaning *just* the beginning portion of the chapter is already 32k words in total!). As for the court scene, I'm 6k words in, so the total wordcount for the chapter as of now is **38k words**.

I think I've mentioned this before, but the new mechanic this chapter introduces are **relationship checks** with the love interests. It's a bit of a hidden mechanic (as in, the game does not *explicitly* tell you that it's there) but you'll be able to notice it if you pay attention to the way your LI and your Crown interact with each other without your input.

There are varying scenes during the start/middle of the chapter that will change whether your relationship with your LI is **high** or **low**. At the end of the chapter, you will get a romance choice, and this will be your main opportunity to try to "course-correct" your low relationship, or bolster your high relationship.

In terms of what this means for the story overall: a high relationship with your LI will unlock extra scenes, while a low relationship will lead to distance or conflict. Getting a low outcome for a relationship check once or twice doesn't mean you've already failed the game as you can always catch up by choosing the right romance options, *but*.

The game will **track how often you've gotten a 'low' outcome** during a relationship check. The more low outcomes you have at the end of the game, the worse your relationship with the LI will end up being.

So, a person with a consistently low outcome throughout the story will get an even worse LI ending than someone who had high outcomes as well, but just happened to fumble the ball at the end. Similarly, a person with a consistently low outcome who managed to save the relationship at the end will also get a variation in their ending!

I added this because I think it gives more complexity to the relationship than just Get The Minimum Amount of Points Required. Whether you've done consistently well, or you struggled throughout, I thought the game should acknowledge it. After all, if your Crown has had conflicts with the LI in the past but the game suddenly turns around and acts like they had a perfect romance all along... that would feel out of place lol.

So do your best!! Or don't, if you want to see the bad endings 🤪

## Art progress

If you remember, I said ages ago in another progress report that I commissioned Gabby ([@artbygaia](#) on Tumblr) more character art, this time for the Crescent Blades, namely Tûjo, Heval and Şanazî, and I got some initial sketches back!!

This was Gabby trying to figure out how to pose the three of them, and we realized the height difference between Heval and Şanazî was too big lol. She's going to make Şanazî a bit taller (courtesy of imaginary heels) to fit her better into the frame.

A separate sketch of Tûjo! We figured out the poses by now so Gabby will be drawing them each separately and then putting them into the frame together.

I'm *super* excited to see what the final product is going to end up looking like, and I'll keep you updated with further WIP shots as I receive them.

That was it for this week! As always, thanks so much for all your patience and support 💖

### [R's Character Snippet: First Meeting](#)

[Aug 13, 2022](#)

Hey all!! R's tier 1 snippet is here, the first one depicting the Crown's first meeting with the LIs in the story 💖

Here's [the link](#) for this month! The tier 3 file has also been updated with R's snippet, check [A's post](#) from last month for the link if you have that tier and would rather read it from there.

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Hope you enjoy ✨

### [Voting for Character Q&A](#)

[Aug 17, 2022](#)

Hi all, it's that time of the month again! Each LI has had a Q&A session, so I thought it would be fun to give various side characters a chance for a Q&A as well.

There's various characters to choose from, both individually and in pairings, but you can also submit suggestions for a character that isn't listed, and I'll put them as an option to vote on during the next round!

[Here's the form to vote](#), I'll close it sometime tomorrow before writing the Q&A!

**Edit:** I'm extending the voting by a day since I've received only 5 responses so far; I'll publish the Q&A on Friday night. Make sure to vote!!

### [Character Q&A: Tûjo & Heval](#)

[Aug 19, 2022](#)

Hey everyone!! Tûjo and Heval won the poll by 1 vote, though Kaja & Ezo were a very close runner-up, and there were several interesting questions sent in as well.

I'll save the questions that were intended for the other characters that won't get a turn this month until they are featured in the Q&A as well, thanks for sending them in ✨

Onto the Q&A!

#### **Can you advise how you chose your profession?**

Heval: "It wasn't really a choice, just something I happened to fall into. I don't have many other talents aside from fighting, so it was either this or joining the army."

Tûjo: "I was pulled into it by Xelara/Xelef. Being a mercenary might sound cutthroat, but the Crescent Blades have accomplished a lot of good in the world."

Heval: "Pulled into it? You readily followed Xelara/Xelef, from what I recall."

Tûjo: "...Your memory is flawed."

Heval: "Right."

#### **Specifically for Heval: how did you meet X?**

Heval: "It was a short while after Tûjo and Xelara/Xelef met, in fact. I was born in Zeratun, and I lived there for most of my life before Xelara/Xelef started the Crescent Blades."

Tûjo: "We ran into them when they were picking a fight with some kids who were harassing a stray cat. Xelara/Xelef took an immediate liking to them."

Heval: "The kind of scum that would hurt an innocent animal for fun should not be counted as people."

**Specifically for Tûjo: how did you train your magical skills to be what they are today?**

Tûjo: "I'm self-taught, mostly, though I've had some informal instruction from other Crescent Blades. We have a couple of former soldiers from the provincial and imperial armies who were trained in using magic for combat able to teach others the basics."

Heval: "There are also instructional tomes of magic one can read to gain further knowledge, though they're very hard to come by. I remember Xelara/Xelef gifting you one for your birthday a few years back, didn't they?"

Tûjo: "Xelara/Xelef is far too generous with coin. But yes, I appreciated it."

**How have the two of you moved through difficult moments?**

Heval: "Extreme repression."

Tûjo: "..."

Heval: [gestures to Tûjo] "See this perfect example."

Tûjo: "I am not repressed."

Heval: "Truthfully, it's because we're part of the Crescent Blades. We're all moving towards the same goal, and support each other when we're going through difficult periods."

**What kind of goal are you working towards, exactly?**

Heval: "Making the world a better place, one good deed at a time."

Tûjo: "Don't let Xelara/Xelef hear you say that, they'll make fun of you."

Heval: "What? It's *their* goal we're all following, not mine."

**What is your opinion of the Crown courting X?**

Tûjo: "Bad idea."

Heval: "Horrible idea. Not because Xelara/Xelef is unworthy--in fact, there's very few people that deserve them, in our opinion--but because..."

[Heval and Tûjo exchange a look]

Tûjo: "It's just better not to go there."

**Are the two of you interested in each other at all? In terms of romance or attraction?**

Heval & Tûjo: "No."

Tûjo: "The relationship between Heval and I, and Xelara/Xelef as well, is strictly platonic."

Heval: "We're close friends and comrades, but that's it. We see each other more as siblings. Besides which, I tend to court people who are chattier and more open with their feelings. Tûjo also has a very specific preference that I don't fit."

**What kind of preference?**

Tûjo: "Don't you dare--"

Heval: "He always seems drawn toward men who are academics or scholars, sometimes poets and artists too--the sensitive, intelligent sort I suppose you might say. They must also be hairy. Every man he's courted in the past has had a thick beard and a lot of hair all over."

Tûjo: "...Sleep with one eye open tonight, Heval."

**What would you say if X wanted the Crescent Blades to stay in Marabad?**

Heval: "I would convince them not to."

Tûjo: "It would be rather uncharacteristic. I can't imagine Xelara/Xelef staying in one place for very long."

**Any advice you have for the new Crown?**

Heval & Tûjo: "Bully the nobility."

[Weekly Progress Update \[21/AUG\]](#)

[Aug 21, 2022](#)

Hi everyone, hope your week has gone well!!

I've been working on the final scenes for CH9 and I'm more than confident I'll be able to send it off for beta-reading some time the coming week ✨

The initial estimate of 60k for this chapter has been cut down to **~45k** (which I'm literally 2k away from reaching) as I realized, while editing in between, that the middle part ended up being too bloated with plot points and choices that should be spread out more during future court sessions instead of dumping them on the Crown all at once.

It wouldn't really make sense narratively speaking for the Crown to have to make so many governing decisions all at once when they only have, like, 20% of their court present--besides which, it was killing the pacing too lol. So the Crown will still be making a couple of major decisions, both plot and relationship related, but the rest of the political issues I have planned will be introduced gradually as the story goes along and the Crown gains more experience as a ruler!

Also, the (hidden) reputation choices the Crown has made so far between the factions of nobility and the public will also start coming into play. Some of you *might* find a locked third choice during this chapter that you won't be able to choose, until your Crown gains sufficient points with that specific faction!

I'm going to leave it to my betas to tell me whether the point thresholds are too harsh or not haha.

Here's a preview of what you can expect from the Crown's first court meeting:

Turns out being the Crown isn't as cut-and-dry as it seems.

On the LI front, I've had a *lot* of fun with R's and A's scenes during the court meeting. The content for the LI has been split up into duos somewhat for this chapter; X/D at the start, A/R in the middle, and for X/D romancers they will get an additional scene at the very end of the chapter.

I can't give away too much, but the balance of LI content will regain itself in CH10, which will have more A/R content, as X/D will be less present during that chapter. Hence why I gave them an additional romance scene at the end!

That's it for this week, thank you all so much for the patience and support, as always.

Until next week 💖

[D's Character Snippet: First Meeting](#)



[Aug 27, 2022](#)

Hey gang!! I'm shocked I managed to finish this snippet on time considering I still need to complete the last bits of the CH9 draft, so I'm rather proud of myself haha.

It's D's turn for the first meeting this time!! Here's [the new link](#) to the game file.

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Hope you enjoy ✨

[Small Weekly Progress Update \[28/AUG\]](#)

[Aug 28, 2022](#)

This is kind of a super quick and short update as I'm literally in the last stages of writing the chapter and will likely send it to my betas some time tomorrow to be reviewed in the coming week. Then the tier 3 patrons will get access to the chapter on September 5th the week after 🙄

There were quite a few scenes I wrote in this chapter that I had to cut due to Bloating and will instead insert into future chapters. I also had to limit the size of some of the variants--remember that Dream I mentioned that MC will have that I planned to write 12 different variants for?

Yeah, no. It's 3 now. Lol.

Aside from that, I don't have much else to update you on since a lot of what I've been working on so far has been editing. I'll also be posting some chapter previews on the Tumblr blog next week, so keep an eye out for that!

And now, my brain has turned into complete mush, so... have some more WIP shots of the Crescent Blades art I commissioned from Gabby!

See you next week 💖

## [Chapter 9 Previews](#)

[Sep 2, 2022](#)

Hey all! I don't technically have any posts scheduled for this week since we're in between the regular monthly schedule, so I thought I'd post more previews for Chapter 9 instead ✨

These will also be posted later on the Tumblr blog, but you get to see them a little early!

Nightmare fuel on sale this chapter, for the low low price of FREE!

Now featuring our special guest: survivor's guilt!

And finally, Mysterious Locked Option, tell me your secrets...

The first release date is only 3 days away now, followed by the tier 2 and tier 1 release dates a week later. Hope everyone has their saves at the ready 🙄

### [Chapter 9 Early Access Release for Tier 3](#)

[Sep 5, 2022](#)

The release is finally here!!

First, thank you all so much for pledging, it's incredibly appreciated!!

Second, I've also set up [a Google Forms](#) for reporting any bugs or typos you may run into anonymously, in case you don't want to do so on Discord or through Tumblr.

There's also a player survey attached to the very end of the chapter, but beware some questions contain a lot of **big spoilers** for CH9 variations, so I wouldn't open it until you are completely sure you won't mind getting spoiled on other plot choices and outcomes!

You can discuss any spoilers freely on the Patreon Discord channels, or if you'd like to post about it on Tumblr don't forget to tag it as 'atoc spoilers' or 'ch9 spoilers' so that others won't be spoiled!!

Now, without further ado, [here's the link for Chapter 9](#) 💖

## [Development Sneak Peek: The Nine Disciplines of Magic, Part II](#)

[Sep 7, 2022](#)

Hey all! Last month I posted [the first part of a closer look on the disciplines of magic](#) in Arsur and what each looks like in practice, so here's part 2!

### Inner-Type Discipline

#### Healing

Healing magic, aside from using alchemy, relies heavily on a specific type of aura magic. Essentially, to become a healer, a user must train their aura to become **a healing type**: this is often done by long periods of meditation in locations that have high concentrations of magic from nature.

These are often considered sacred locations, commonly called **Sacred Sites**, and they are also where a lot of spirits tend to gather. For example, think of an ancient tree, or a mountaintop, or an oasis in the desert. The abundance of natural magic in these locations makes it so that they're rejuvenating to anyone who visits them, and temples are often built within or near such sites.

Once someone has spent a long enough time in one of these locations, soaking up the natural magic, their aura will gradually take on these same qualities. To be able to soak up the magic itself requires training and a high level of discipline; if an untrained person attempts this, they risk "overloading" their magic pathways by absorbing too much magic all at once, and thereby risk organ failure or even death.

Assuming the person soaking up the natural magic is trained, however, they can then use their aura to rejuvenate and heal other people, accelerating the healing process of their body to close up an injury or bolster their immune system.

The obvious drawback is that the healing aura will eventually return to normal the longer you spend away from a Sacred Site. This necessitates regular visits and meditations in order to keep healing people. Also, healing magic cannot cure severe diseases on its own. While it boosts your immune system, people rely on alchemical tonics and potions to cure them from illnesses.

However, as people in this world don't have a proper conception of what causes disease (they don't know about bacteria or viruses, etc), alchemical cures can only help so much. In the case of a natural disease caused by a virus, the most people in this world can do is bolster someone's immune system

and treat the symptoms with alchemy, and hope that helps enough to have someone survive. As such, plagues are still a big problem in this world.

There are magic-related issues that healing magic and alchemy *can* help with very well, though, such as when someone's magic core or their magic paths in the body don't function properly.

For example, if someone's body is weak after suffering from illness or injury for a long time, this can affect or damage the magic paths in their body as well. It can cause unwanted side effects, such as someone's own magic damaging their own body, or randomly casting magic when unintended and causing damage to their environment/others around them. In such a situation, healing can work very well to help restore these paths.

## Outer-Type Disciplines

These disciplines are most suited to outer magic types, but they can also be performed by inner magic types when given additional practice.

### Elemental

Elemental magic basically is exactly like what it sounds like: magic cast by using the elements in one's environment.

Mechanically, the difference between how elemental magic is used compared to aura magic is quite interesting as well, and illustrates also why inner magic types would struggle so much trying to use outer magic and vice versa.

With aura magic, someone uses and manipulates the magic already within them, whereas with elemental magic, someone uses their own magic essentially as an anchor-point from which they "hook" onto the magic of the environment, and manipulate it. You can visualize it kind of like a sort of magnetism: you can attach your magic to whichever element in the environment you want, at which point it will follow your will (and, quite literally, the movements of your body; think of R twisting the water that was flooding the Crown's quarters up into the sink, for example).

In other words, for elemental magic, it is vital that the magic *within* you remains completely unchanged and stable. If it were to fluctuate, it could cause an unintended ripple effect with the elemental magic you're trying to manipulate. However, for inner magic types, to manipulate and shape the magic within them comes most naturally to them. To ask them to keep their inner magic stable would basically be asking them to learn how to ignore their reflexes.

It's the same for when an outer magic type tries to learn inner magic. The magic within an outer user is typically so stable and still that it's very hard for them to learn how to move it or manipulate it at will; often for outer magic types it feels like trying to shape a rock with their bare hands at first.

Also, using your own aura should not be confused with outer elemental magic. R summoning a lightning spear with their own magic qualifies as aura magic; if they were to summon lightning from the sky,

however, *that* would be elemental magic. It's a subtle distinction, and non-magi often confuse the two.

Another thing to take note of with elemental magic is that sometimes, spirits will be attached to the element you're trying to manipulate--this then requires a form of summoning magic, albeit on a much smaller scale.

Going back to R flushing out the water in the Crown's chambers as an example, R used a "command" that addressed the spirits within the water, as they had claimed it as their territory. By doing that, R essentially bent the spirits to their will, and overpowered their claim to take control of the water instead. This is more difficult to do, and considered a more advanced form of elemental magic; if you're unprepared to take on the spirits, you risk angering them and inviting a backlash that could hurt you.

Like aura magic, elemental magic functions as **the foundation** for the other types of outer-type disciplines, namely summoning (as mentioned) and ritual magic, which are discussed below.

## Summoning

When we talk of summoning, it can involve either summoning spirits or summoning a type of natural magic, usually one with great force that the user themselves cannot manipulate.

For **summoning spirits**, the user would typically require some sort of conduit; either their own magic if it's strong enough or an object with great magical power. Think of the gemstones used in the coronation ceremony in CH7; they functioned as conduits to connect to the greater spirits of Arsur. For most common spirits, a summoner can typically use their own magic core as a beacon to summon nearby spirits to aid them. Summoning magic is, next to elemental magic, aura magic and warding magic, one of the most common forms of combat on the battlefield and often taught to soldiers.

For daily use though, say if you want to travel for a long distance, it's advised that you learn how to summon a spirit in case you run into trouble, such as protection from weather or animals or even bandits on the road. Because summoning is so simple, anyone gifted with magic, especially outer magic, can learn it instinctively without formal training. If you are untrained, though, you run into the risk of summoning a more powerful spirit than you intended, which can put a great strain on your body or cause unintended consequences such as the spirit being a little too, uh, enthusiastic in helping lol.

The other type of summoning involves **summoning a natural force**--this is the type of magic where a conduit or multiple magi are almost *a/ways* required, because a force of nature is obviously very powerful.

Farmers who are able to will often hire magi for this purpose, for example to help water their crops during a drought. The summoner magus will then want draw from a large body of water nearby, let's say a river, but to move *that* much running water likely requires much more magic and control than the summoner has. In which case, they need to use a conduit (such as gemstones) or multiple summoners present in order to "command" the river and its greater spirit to their will, and to summon the water to the crops.

## Ritual

Ritual magic is closely related to religious ceremonies and is kind of a mixed pot: it uses elements of summoning and elemental magic, and sometimes warding as well depending on the type of ritual being performed. The ritual can either involve asking aid from a spirit for an extended period, or making some sort of connection to the spirit. The coronation ceremony is the biggest example of ritual magic, that also incorporates summoning magic and elemental magic within it.

Ritual magic functions almost like a formula, or a contract that the user makes with spirits. It's why summoning is often a prerequisite of ritual magic if you wish to use a spirit during your ritual and there isn't one nearby.

The fundamentals of ritual magic are this: the user commits to a sacrifice, in exchange for a boon. The greater the asked for boon, the greater the sacrifice required. For the coronation ceremony, for example, the amount of magic required to power the gemstones used in the ritual was that of 10,000 magi from all over Arsur, namely priests who helped to power them. In exchange, the Crown was able to connect to the spirits of the land. It's why such a ritual could not be easily replicated by just anyone.

The difference between summoning and ritual magic is that for summoning, you don't require to form a concord with a spirit to use it, especially if your use is one time or a very short term thing as explained above. For ritual magic, the use tends to be long term or more involved.

As mentioned before, smaller rituals can involve simpler things such as forming a concord with a spirit, the most common example of ritual magic. In exchange for the spirit's aid, the user gives a spirit something they ask for in return, or a "sacrifice".

With fire spirits, as noted in the story, the "sacrifice" required is often to reveal a secret that the user has kept; the greater the secret, the greater the aid they will give. For air spirits, they require the user to share some sort of knowledge with them; something that took the user a while to learn, such as a skill, or often for scholars it will be a subject they've studied.

For water spirits, they also require knowledge, but that of self-reflection: the user must either acknowledge something about themselves that they have denied, confront memories they've tried to forget, or acknowledge flaws that they've tried to ignore or that are painful/difficult/embarrassing for them to admit to.

For earth spirits, their required "sacrifice" is (mistakenly) considered the easiest as it is material: giving physical offerings. Earth Temples will often be filled with offerings of flowers, fruit & vegetables, meats or sacrificed animals, furs, wines, coin, jewels or even weapons or trophies. The mistake that most people make is, when they wish for a large boon (such as their crops not to fail) that their offerings tend to be impersonal, or low in cost; that often doesn't earn a boon from an earth spirit. What an earth spirit truly wants most is an offering that holds personal value or has a high cost. The higher the personal value/cost, the greater the boon.

In the distant past, some would go so far as to sacrifice human lives for a boon, but this would often work out very poorly. For one, killing someone doesn't eliminate their spirit, which means it will only have their spirit very pissed off at you once they're dead and will do everything it can to ruin the ritual such as turning the earth spirits against you. The only way sacrificing another would work is if the sacrificed person does so willingly. So, consent is key lol.

That was it for this month!! Hope you enjoyed the closer look at the disciplines and have a better idea of what each of them looks like now 💖

[Weekly Progress Update \[11/SEP\]](#)

[Sep 11, 2022](#)

Hey everyone, hope your week is going well!!

It was certainly a busy one for me lol. I finally got to release Chapter 9 for Tier 3 patrons, and Tier 2 and 1 patrons will be getting access either tomorrow or later this week, with the public release right around the corner 👁️

To start things off with, I wanted to thank all the new pledges for helping me get past my 1k goal for the Patreon!! Based on this I've decided to release a **bonus romantic snippet for Tier 3**, as that was one of my promises for making my goal. I think the influx will be temporary, but for every month that I've reached 1k, I'll release an additional romantic snippet for that month 💖

I'll be posting a poll for Tier 3 half an hour after this post for you to vote on which LI you want to see featured first, so keep an eye out for that!! The voting will be a one-time thing, so use it wisely; I'll determine the rest of the order for any future romantic snippets ;)

Also, starting from October, **both character snippets will be made available for Tier 2** regardless of whether I make 1k for the coming months or not ✨

## Onto the Actual Progress Report

In between bug report fixes for CH9, I've already started planning the scenes for CH10 and will get started on the writing for it the coming week. While I have the outline for ACT I fully planned out, I haven't divided it up yet into chapters if that makes sense, so I need to see how many events will be able to fit into CH10 🤔

One major thing I can tell you with certainty is that you can expect CH10 to be sort of a come down moment from the Shitstorm that has been CH7-9 lmao. It's a chance for the Crown to become accustomed to their new life, where the drama mellows out a bit, and the focus shifts more fully on relationship development for the time being.

In that vein, there will also be a sizeable timeskip (you can probably guess how long if you play through X and D's routes in CH9). As cool as the political scenes were to write, I'm sure you don't all want to live out every single day of the Crown's life, or every single candidate they interview for the court, or every single meal they have. Well, maybe some of you do (you're so valid for that), but I do need to get the story going haha.

There will also still be subplots that were set up in earlier chapters progressing in the background, but they're not the focus for CH10! I actually had a *major* breakthrough earlier this week about an important subplot that I'm super excited to get working on hehe.

## **AToC's overall story structure**

Roughly, my story planning so far has been split up into 3 acts, excluding ACT 0 at the start which is essentially the common route.

Each act has its own **story arc**, with a Major Choice to make at the end of the arc that will count directly towards which ending your Crown will get. The availability of the Major Choices, however, depends on previous political choices made during the story arc. You get a taste of that in CH9 already, with the third choice during the court meeting which may or may not have been locked off for some of you.

Basically, if you sided against a specific faction a lot during the story arc, when it comes time to make the Major Choice for the arc, the choice relating to that faction may not be available to you.

For ACT 1, we're currently in what I call **The Nobility Arc** in my notes. I'm expecting this arc to culminate somewhere in CH13-14, depending on how I divide up the events. ACT 1 will probably be the longest act of the story with 9/10 chapters counting from CH5, because it has involved a lot of set-up in terms of plot and worldbuilding, future acts will probably be slightly shorter around 7 chapters.

Overall, I hope I can wrap the story up by CH30 haha.

## **Relationship progression**

As mentioned before, CH10 will be an important one in terms of romance and relationships for the Crown. You can expect another relationship check in this one, so if you started with a low variation in CH9 but corrected it by picking the right choice in your LI's romance scene, you *should* be able to get the high variation this time. The game will also acknowledge in the narrative that you course-corrected from low to high!

Unless your points were too low to be compensated. In which case, RIP, you'll probably get the low variation again lol.



However, if you get the high variation again, you can expect a lot of progression to occur in this chapter!! Even with D and X who, while they might not be physically present, still stay in touch 🗨️

That was it for this week!!

Hope you've enjoyed (or will soon enjoy) the CH9 release, until next time 💖

### [Bonus Romantic Snippet](#)

[Sep 11, 2022](#)

Due to the CH9 early access release I received an absolutely *huge* influx of new pledges, especially ones for tier 3, so I absolutely smashed my goal of getting to 1k a month 🙏

While I suspect this'll be temporary due to the chapter release, as I stated in the weekly progress update, I still wanted to show my appreciation in some way for Tier 3 patrons in particular, so I've decided that I will release a **romantic snippet** featuring the Crown and an LI this month for Tier 3!

It will be posted together with the first character snippet of the month the next weekend, so you have until Wednesday evening (CEST) to vote on which LI you want to see featured for this one. For reference, the character snippets planned for this month feature A (tier 1) and X (tier 3).

Happy voting!! 💖

R

25%

A

13%

D

41%

X

21%

Poll ended Sep 14, 2022 · 61 votes total

## [Chapter 9 Early Access Release for Tier 2](#)

[Sep 12, 2022](#)

The release is finally here!!

First, thank you all so much for pledging, it's incredibly appreciated!!

Second, I've also set up [a Google Forms](#) for reporting any bugs or typos you may run into anonymously, in case you don't want to do so on Discord or through Tumblr.

There's also a player survey attached to the very end of the chapter, but beware some questions contain a lot of **big spoilers** for CH9 variations, so I wouldn't open it until you are completely sure you won't mind getting spoiled on other plot choices and outcomes!

You can discuss any spoilers freely on the Patreon Discord channels, or if you'd like to post about it on Tumblr don't forget to tag it as 'atoc spoilers' or 'ch9 spoilers' so that others won't be spoiled!!

Now, without further ado, [here's the link for Chapter 9](#) 💖

## [Chapter 9 Early Access Release for Tier 1](#)

[Sep 15, 2022](#)

The release is finally here!!

First, thank you all so much for pledging, it's incredibly appreciated!!

Second, I've also set up [a Google Forms](#) for reporting any bugs or typos you may run into anonymously, in case you don't want to do so on Discord or through Tumblr.

There's also a player survey attached to the very end of the chapter, but beware some questions contain a lot of **big spoilers** for CH9 variations, so I wouldn't open it until you are completely sure you won't mind getting spoiled on other plot choices and outcomes!

You can discuss any spoilers freely on the Patreon Discord channels, or if you'd like to post about it on Tumblr don't forget to tag it as 'atoc spoilers' or 'ch9 spoilers' so that others won't be spoiled!!

Now, without further ado, [here's the link for Chapter 9](#) 💖

### [A's Character Snippet: First Meeting](#)

[Sep 17, 2022](#)

Hey all!! We're back with another character snippet, which I'm very proud of considering I released a whole chapter this month ✨

This one's for A's first meeting with the Crown in CH2! Here's [the link](#) for this month!

The tier 3 file will also be updated with A's snippet; I'll be posting it shortly, as it also includes **D's romantic snippet** as an added bonus. Keep an eye out for that!

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Hope you enjoy 💖

### [D's Romantic Snippet: Comfort](#)

[Sep 17, 2022](#)

Hey everyone, thanks again for pledging this month and helping me reach my 1k goal!!

As promised, here's the romantic snippet you all voted on, with D winning it by majority vote! Future romantic snippets won't have voting, but I decided to give you all this one for free ✨

Here's [the link](#), it includes all the character snippets that have been uploaded until now as well so you have a neat directory for all the bonus stories in one place. I hope to be able to keep adding romantic snippets as well!!

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Hope you enjoy 💖

[Sep 18, 2022](#)

Heya gang, hope you had a great week!!

I'm gearing up for the CH9 public release at the moment, so there wasn't much writing done this week either. However, there was a lot of planning done, and I think I've edited enough to start the writing process up this coming week after dropping CH9.

### Planned scenes

I've outlined the scenes in CH10 in what turned out to be, fittingly, 10 bullet points. It's pretty packed, so I think the chapter will be on the longer end, but the pacing will be slow and steady!!

One thing I'll tell you that I'm excited to get into is the **Crown's magic training**, as well as their **private tutoring**. Originally, I planned to have introduced all the tutors by CH8, but there was too much going on to fit it into the story.

The tutors were meant to be part of the main cast at first, but early on I realized the cast would grow too large with not enough time to give each character their due. In the end, I decided it would be better to make the tutors very minor background characters. There are so many subjects the Crown will be taught in, which means they'll have a lot of tutors as well. Let me show you with a list

### ✨ The Crown's Tutoring Extravaganza ✨

- In languages, such as various Arsurian dialects
- In literature, poetry and art
- In etiquette and courtly manner
- In physical training and combat
- In military strategy and tactics
- In domestic politics, trade and Arsurian history
- In foreign politics and diplomacy
- In geography and continental history
- In mathematics and astronomy
- In Arsurian magic history and theory
- In magic training and practice
- In ethics and philosophy

Lots of things for the Crown to learn! When they're not governing they'll likely be tutored, as there are a lot of things they need to catch up on. I plan to allow a choice for the player to decide which part of the tutoring the Crown likes best, and generalize it into preferences for **(1) practical subjects**, such as magic application, etiquette and physical training, **(2) creative subjects**, such as literature, art and philosophy, **(3) worldly subjects**, such as languages, history, and geography, **(4) logical subjects**, such as mathematics, astronomy and magic theory, and finally **(4) social subjects**, such as politics, diplomacy and trade.

I'm not entirely sure where military strategy would fit in here, so I'm leaving it out for now haha. I can't use terms like 'science/scientific' or 'humanities' in the game since those wouldn't have been invented yet, so to speak, so I'm using a fitting approximation.

The story also won't show every single subject being taught to the Crown, obviously, as that would hugely bloat the story. You can expect these to be mentioned in passing, with short timeskip snippets of the Crown learning. Like a training montage, but for their mind LOL.

Which preference would your Crown have? Something to think about 🧐

## More art WIPs

I don't have much more to share this week since I haven't started writing yet, so have some more WIPs for the Crescent Blades instead!!

Until next time 💖

## [Voting for Character Q&A](#)

[Sep 20, 2022](#)

Hi all, it's that time of the month again! It's time for another round of voting for the side characters ✨

There's various characters to choose from, both individually and in pairings, but you can also submit suggestions for a character that isn't listed, and I'll put them as an option to vote on during the next round!

I still have the questions from the last voting round saved, but feel free to submit new ones. For new patrons, check out the character Q&A tag to read past Q&As.

[Here's the form to vote](#)!! The Q&A will be posted on Thursday, as always 💖

## [Schedule Update for Tier 3!](#)

[Sep 20, 2022](#)

Since the month of September ends next Friday, the second character snippet of the month (X's First Meeting snippet) will be posted on **Wednesday the 28th** instead of Saturday so that you all can get the link in time.

Keep an eye out 💖

## [Character Q&A: Kaja & Ezo](#)

[Sep 23, 2022](#)

Sorry for the late upload gang, it somehow slipped my mind yesterday until I woke up this morning and had an Oh Shit moment because I thought *today* was Thursday lol.

The poll results came in with Kaja & Ezo having the majority vote! Let's see what kinda of questions we've got ✨

**Tell us something about yourselves. Let's start with Kaja! How did you end up in the army?**

Kaja: "Well, I'm actually from a relatively well-off family. My mother and older sister both studied at the School of Marabad, and my mother became a magus blacksmith. I have a fondness for weaponry because of it, and I was physically quite fit, so I thought, why not put all that to good use?"

**What about being a blacksmith, like your mother?**

Kaja: "It was tempting, but... I like *using* weapons more than creating them. The warding and sigils used on the weapons is how I became interested in warding magic. Also for armor, but it's not as interesting to me as using a sword that can *cut a hole through the air itself*. Nothing can compare."

**What about you, Ezo?**

Ezo: "For me, I ended up recruited into the army after a commander witnessed me out-aim his own soldier during a knife throwing contest. I was from a small village without much to do outside of farming and such, and there were always bandits around the corner, so I thought I could serve everyone better by being trained in the army."

**But evidently, you haven't gone back to your village.**

Ezo: "I go back whenever I have leave, but merely by being in the Imperial Guard is an effective deterrent. I made it known far and wide that I belonged to that village, so any thieves or bandits in the area know by now that if they harass anyone there that I'll come for their heads. I've had to make some examples a few times before they learned."

**How and when did the two of you meet?**

Kaja: "We actually met back in the Imperial Army; we were both being disciplined for acting outside of our orders."

Ezo: "I'm not ashamed to say I instigated that incident."

**What incident?**

Ezo: "Back in Zerat, there were some sellswords being paid by a rich merchant to threaten their competition out of business, but they terrorized ordinary citizens too after becoming emboldened by the merchant. Extortion, intimidation, assault, you name it.

"Our superiors were telling us to ignore it, and I assumed the merchant had bought them off as well. So, I got a few of my comrades together to solve the problem."

Kaja: "A friend of a friend pulled me in for it, it was fun!"

**How, exactly, did you solve the problem?**

Ezo: "We beat the shit out of the sellswords. How else would we solve the problem?"

Kaja: "Turns out that didn't solve the actual problem, though. Our superiors were apparently gathering evidence to have the merchant and the sellswords condemned by a judge and arrested lawfully. Which, uh... our little intervention almost ruined that plan. Hence the discipline."

Ezo: "Still worth it. All's well that ends well, right?"

**Why do you listen to A and D?**

Ezo: "Because they're our superiors?"

Kaja: "Wait, are you saying we *don't* have to listen to them?"

Ezo: "Sure, if you want to get kicked out of the guards!"

**So is it only because of hierarchy?**

Kaja: "Well, no. Captain Mirza and the High General clearly know what they're doing, and we trust their judgment."

Ezo: "Right. I wouldn't still be here if I had to work for a couple of idiots."

Kaja: "We respect them for the same reasons, but in different ways. General Dara/Delal is actually rather soft with people they like, once you get past their terrifying exterior; you can be a little bit looser with your manners around them, and they won't give a damn. Captain Mirza, though, is the opposite."

Ezo: "I still flinch at the idea of doing something wrong and earning a glare from the captain; they *hate* when people act overly familiar with them. I swear they can stare right into your spirit."

**Speaking of which, what do you think of the Crown?**

Kaja: "They seem nice."

Ezo: [snorts] "Sure, but it'll take more than that to be the Crown."

Kaja: "At this point I suppose we're just waiting and seeing how they do!"

**Any thoughts on them as a person?**

Kaja: "Well... they definitely seem easier to get along with than a sanctimonious noble or some condescending magus. I met so many of those while studying at the School of Zeratul, ugh."

Ezo: "So far, they haven't been lording their authority over others, so there's no reason to dislike them. It remains to be seen whether it stays that way."

Kaja: "I mostly feel bad for them, to be honest! They look like they've gone through a lot."

Ezo: "We've all gone through a lot... but the Crown certainly looks like they could use a few days of sleep."

**Would either of you ever consider helping the Crown hone their self-defense and magic skills if they asked you personally?**

Kaja: "YES!"

Ezo: "Calm down. We would help appropriately, and *only* for self-defense."

Kaja: "Oh please, the Crown has already been through TWO assassination attempts. They need to know effective killing methods in case-"

Ezo: "Ignore this little ball of barely contained bloodlust. Killing is not a joke, and should not be treated as such."



Kaja: "I'm not treating it as a joke, I'm treating it as a hobby."

Ezo: "...Now you're messing with me."

### [Quick update](#)

[Sep 24, 2022](#)

Hey all, hope your week has gone well!!

Just letting you know I won't be able to post a weekly progress report tomorrow as my whole house is currently being painted. Don't really have any space right now to sit down and write properly 🤖

I'm posting the tier 3 character snippet for X on Wednesday though, so I'll post the progress update around that same time as well!!

See you Wednesday 💖💖

### [X's Character Snippet: First Meeting](#)

[Sep 28, 2022](#)

Hello, hello! Made it to Wednesday and managed to finish this snippet in time.

It's not a very romantic one tbh, but it should give you good insight in what X's reasoning/mindset was at the time they cooked up their plan to use the Crown as bait for the FoV in the guards. Especially if you know their backstory with regard to Crown Piruz...

In any case, [here's the link](#)!!

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Hope you enjoy 💖💖

### [Tier 2 character snippets](#)

[Oct 2, 2022](#)

Hey everyone, as promised starting from October the character snippets that were locked to tier 3 will now be made available for tier 2 as well!!

You can use [this link](#) to find them.

The **romantic snippets**, however, are still and will be permanently locked to tier 3. Last month was [D/Crown](#), and this month will be A/Crown - check the [posting schedule](#) to find out more!

[Weekly Progress Update \[2/OCT\]](#)

[Oct 2, 2022](#)

Hey all, hope your week has gone well!!

Bit of a delay on posting the progress report as I realized last Wednesday I actually didn't *have* anything to report on, so I decided to just post it today. Thankfully, I do have a few more updates!

## Chapter progress

I've refined some of the planned scenes for this chapter and finally started writing yesterday!! Not a lot of wordcount in yet, but for the month of October I'm aiming for **5k a week**, and **20k by the end of the month**. If I can keep that up for November and December as well, then I'll be able to post CH10 in January of 2023!

Take all this with a grain of salt, though; it's **my initial writing goal** rather than a projected estimate. We'll see where I end up by the end of October haha.

As for which scenes I've started with, you might be pleased to know that CH10 will feature LI POV scenes. I know a lot of people appreciated that bit of insight in CH5, and CH10 seems the perfect place to introduce more of that; the pacing is just right for it, especially with the timeskip.

The first POV switch I've started writing is one for D's route! I was inspired by an idea I had yesterday which made the scene much juicier than I had in mind initially hehe. I'll give you more hints about it once I'm finished writing it.

Speaking of, since X and D will be absent and their interactions with the Crown will be limited to letters, I just had a very fun time today figuring out their handwriting. This is what I've settled on!

**For D:**

**For X:**

Yes. X is entirely illegible, on purpose. While they are very well-read, they are *not* good with handwriting, to put it mildly. Don't worry, the letter will be properly translated in the story, and both letters will have the standard button to switch to regular font for readability!

But also, the contrast is *hilarious*.

That's all I have to report on for this week.

Until next time 💖

[Development Sneak Peek: Arsur's Landscape, Climate and Wildlife](#)

[Oct 5, 2022](#)

Hey all, I thought it would be fun for this week's sneak peek to dive in a bit on the geography side of things. The geography codex in the game gives a basic view and description, and MC in the story itself sees Rojan's climate firsthand, but there's a lot more detail that'll be shown in future chapters. So let's dive in!

## General overview

The world that Arsur is located in has an overall population of 320 million, whereas Arsur itself has **a total population of 26 million**. It's one of the most populated countries, and it continues to grow over time.

The spread of the population across provinces looks like this, from most populated to least populated, though this also relates to some provinces being bigger/having more habitable space than others:

- **Zerat** - 9 million
- **Rojan** - 7 million
- **Avdin** - 4 million

- **Penawar** - 4 million
- **Şevan**- 2 million

\*\*Natural resources and climate

\*\*The Armas Mountains are a rich source of **stone and timber**, its highland valleys in Rojan the historical home of the tribes that were united under the First Crown and later expanded to encompass an entire Empire.

The western end of Rojan, the province of Avdin, and the province of Şevan are responsible for a sizable portion of **the trade** that flows into Arsur from Thalloi city-states as well as other island nations within the Sea of Igris. Sea trade flowing through Avdin is especially large, which is why Avdin is also referred to as the Merchant's Province. There is also some sea trade flowing in from Penawar's coast, but not as much due to how dangerous the seas are to traverse from that side.

Most of the population, evidently, is located in the center province of Zerat for a reason: its region spans Arsur's **most fertile agricultural zones**. The northern parts of Zerat experience enough rainfall to grow grain crops, while the southern parts receive virtually no rain, its agriculture dependent on extensive networks of irrigation canals. Zerat also depends on Rojan for such things as stone, metals, and timber.

Aside from the Ruhuth River that flows from Rojan down to Zerat, the most notable bodies of water within Arsur are the Ancient Marshes in Penawar. The people that live on these Arsurian river basins or who farm there have unique cultures somewhat distinct from other provinces, as they are said to share more commonalities with the peris in Penawar, though they are often looked down upon because of it.

The desert tribes in Şevan depend on the other provinces for much of its resources, as there is virtually no fertile land in the province and little to be mined. However, it is a critical anchor point for **trade with Qathesh**; the merchants in Şevan are one of the only people who know how to navigate the famed Silent Desert safely. Secondly, the oases within the Silent Desert are particularly renowned for their great concentrations of magical energy, and the waters within them possess immense regenerative properties; they are some of the most well-known Sacred Sites in Arsur.

## Weather patterns

- **Northern Arsur** (Rojan and the upper parts of Penawar) experiences warm summers and cold winters; Rojan is the only province that gets heavy snowfall during the winters. The higher up the mountain, the colder the temperatures get.
- **Central Arsur** (Zerat and parts of Avdin and Penawar) experiences hot summers and cool winters. Unlike Northern and Southern Arsur, it also experiences a mild rainy season of sorts; the wettest months are at the end of winter and the start of spring, generally a span of 5 months.
- **Southern Arsur** (Şevan and the southern parts of Avdin) experiences extreme desert temperatures.
- Avdin generally enjoys a more coastal climate and sees the most storms, whereas Penawar is generally the wettest part of the country and experiences the most rainfall.
- The entire region of Arsur is mainly arid and dry, and there are annual floods from the rivers near the start of the year.

## Flora

- Wheat, barley, lentil, almond, walnut, pistachio, apricot, plum, pomegranate and grape can be found growing wild across the Empire.
- Arsurian oak, covering more than half of the forested area in the entire Empire, is the most important tree species
- Mangrove forests in Avdin
- Many great oak forests in Rojan and Zerat
- Pistachio forests in Zerat
- The Ancient Marshes in Penawar, which are saltwater marshes. They contain forests of poplar and willow trees, and are dominated by various plant species like reeds, cattails and papyrus.

## Animal life

If you follow the Tumblr blog, you likely have seen this list come by before, but I'll put it here as well to make the overview complete.

### Common animals

- Includes bears, gazelles, wild pigs and boars, wolves, jackals, panthers, lynx, foxes, cheetahs, lions, leopards, elephants
- Domestic animals include sheep, goats, cattle, horses, water buffalo, donkeys, camels
- Notable birds include pheasants, storks, cranes, eagles, hawks, falcons, flamingos, pelicans and herons

### Rare animals

- **Giant serpents** in various climates; most commonly seen in the sea, but also known to be found in the desert. Said to be highly intelligent.
- **Man-eaters**, a creature with the body of a lion, the head of a human and the tail of a scorpion; known to be hostile towards humans and considers them its primary source of food. If one pops up, the nearest village or city often sends hunters to kill one as quickly as possible or notifies the provincial army
- **Rukh**, an enormous eagle big enough to carry off an elephant; it migrates yearly and can often be seen flying over Arsur in the autumn
- **Sîmir**, a giant bird with the body of a peacock, the head of a dog and the claws of a lion, it dislikes snakes and prefers to be near water; most commonly found in Penawar. It's known for being extremely intelligent, even more so than giant serpents, as it has in rare instances displayed the ability to understand human speech. Some Arsurian scholars dispute its status as an animal for that reason, and demand it be granted a status of personhood, similar to the peris and Şahmaran and her serpents.

- **Homā**, a bird that is said to never rest and fly in the sky forever, being phoenix-like in that it consumes itself in flames every few hundred years and rises again from the ashes
- **Shirdal**, a griffin; most commonly found at the peaks of mountains. The Armas Mountains are famous for having a large amount of them. Sometimes domesticated and used as steeds.

#### Cool trivia facts about animals in various provinces:

- Injuring or killing a sīmir is punished with execution in Penawar, and with either a jail sentence or hard labor in the other provinces.
- Man-eaters are most common in Zerat, for reasons unknown. Scholars speculate they spawn more often where there is a higher population, but no one knows how man-eaters are born.
- The rukh sometimes rests in the Armas Mountains in Rojan, and will be visible from Marabad's Royal Palace. It hunts the shirdal for food.
- The sailors and fishers of Avdin have developed a somewhat harmonious relationship with the sea serpents; traveling ships will bring along animals to feed to a sea serpent in exchange for safe passage.
- Şevan is home to rare silver cheetahs; it is why cheetahs are also featured on its provincial flag. These cheetahs are said to have the ability to turn invisible at night, save for a few glimmers of silver from their fur.

That was it for the sneak peek this week, I hope you got some interesting tidbits from this and can visualize Arsur as a country a bit better now 💖

#### [Weekly Progress Update \[9/OCT\]](#)

[Oct 9, 2022](#)

Hey all, hope you had a great week!!

I finally got some writing done after all the planning for CH10, though I think the initial goal of this 20k a month may have been a tad bit optimistic. **I got about 3k words** done lol, but let's see if I can ramp up the word count this coming week while I'm getting back into a regular writing schedule!

#### LI POV scenes

I've worked more on D's POV scene and got started on R's POV scene as well. While D's and X's POV scenes are more about what they're up to while they're on their own missions away from the Crown, R's and A's POV scenes further their subplots a substantial amount 🗨️

I won't give away any previews or spoilers for right now, but as A and R spend more time with the Crown in CH10, there will be more room for their character and romance arcs to grow! That is not to say X and D won't get any development on that front, but theirs will be consisting more of hints and foreshadowing for the time being.

When I first started writing the story I considered whether it would be realistic to have each LI's subplot progress at the same time, at the same rate. While that *would* be much easier to write for me, I decided it would make both the character and the romance progression feel artificial, as it would be timed intentionally rather than developed naturally.

So that's why there may be differences in each individual chapter for how quickly an LI or a romance progresses. It will all eventually equal in the same amount of content as more chapters get written, just at differing speeds.

Though of course that also means a lot more variation for me to write lol. An R romancing Crown will have a very different experience in CH10 compared to an X romancing Crown, for example!

## Crown development

On a more lighthearted note, I also planned on some fun time-skip scenes to develop the Crown's skills further. [In a previous update](#) I already went into the different subjects the Crown will be tutored in and the player choice given to which ones your Crown will prefer, but there's more personal development to be done!

Namely, the Crown's magic training as well as their physical training will both be shown more in-depth, since those lend themselves more to a visual, active scene rather than sitting through exposition given to you by a tutor lecturing you on Arsurian trade routes.

I like to think of CH10 to be a recovery chapter both from a plot perspective as well as a character perspective, both in the mental and physical sense. The Crown ended CH9 completely *exhausted*, so CH10 is a great moment to allow them to rest, recover, and start building a more solid foundation for themselves in terms of mental/physical health.

It's nuts what a good night's sleep, consistent meals and healthy exercise can do for your body. I promise the Crown's back/posture problems will soon improve lol.

As well as, the Crown finally having a safe space to explore and learn more about their own magic! An inner magic type Crown is also going to have different variations here compared to an outer magic type Crown, so that will be fun to write as they practice!! I'm *really* looking forward to getting to it, the magic scenes have been some of my absolute favorite things to write in this story ✨

Not much else to report on this week!! I hope these two tidbits gave you a bit more insight into what CH10 is shaping up to look like.

Until next time 💖

## [X's Character Snippet: Coronation Vision](#)

[Oct 15, 2022](#)

Hey all!! Technically a bit late with this snippet (it's already Sunday in my timezone) but managed to finish it while watching Bob Ross paint snowy scenery on stream lol.

It's maximum angst for X in this snippet, though you can also see the first beginnings of their relationship with the Crown starting to solidify.

Here's [the link](#)!!

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Hope you enjoy 💖

## [Voting for Character Q&A](#)

[Oct 16, 2022](#)

Hi all, it's that time of the month again! For those that didn't notice/are new, with the addition of romantic snippets to the regular schedule, I moved the Q&As up a bit, so from now on **the voting will be on the Sunday of the 2nd week of the month**, while the Q&A itself will be **posted on Tuesday**.

So, it's time for another round of voting for the side characters ✨

There's various characters to choose from, both individually and in pairings, but you can also submit suggestions for a character that isn't listed, and I'll put them as an option to vote on during the next round!

I still have the questions from the last voting round saved, but feel free to submit new ones. For new patrons, check out the character Q&A tag to read past Q&As.

## [Character Q&A: Perjin](#)



[Oct 20, 2022](#)

Hey all!! So sorry for the late update, I forgot my own updated schedule and was still moving through the week thinking the Q&A was scheduled for Thursday instead of Tuesday lol. I need to set an alarm for some of these posts I swear.

Perjin won the poll by 1 vote!! Master Keko was a *super* close second, but I'm also very happy to write more for Perjin as we haven't had a proper scene with either in a while 💖

So, onto the Q&A!

**\*\*What were your beginnings like, when you first started your education?**

**\*\***"I was fortunate that my family had the acquaintance of a few magi who could recommend me to the School of Marabad. They were healers, working in a clinic in one the city's less fortunate districts, and they noticed my interest in their craft early on.

"I would go to the clinic to pick up medicine for my mother, who was prone to falling ill, and I was always very curious about how it worked. Whenever my mother drank one of their tonics, she improved within hours; I was grateful, but also fascinated.

"The healers there were happy to mentor me--and to have a little bit of extra help in the clinic!"

**So you were interested in alchemy from a very young age?**

"Indeed I was, even before I fully understood *what* alchemy was. Entering Marabad's school was a great accomplishment not only for me, but for my family, even for my entire district; it was, and still is, exceedingly rare for anyone from poorer districts to qualify. For my apprenticeship near the end of my studies, I returned to the clinic and worked as their alchemist for quite a number of years."

**So you know quite a bit about medicinal tonics. What other areas do you specialize in, within alchemy?**

"In terms of alchemy, I have studied the alchemical properties of gemstones and minerals which are often used in glamours, with some overlap with metals. As such, I also often sell gemstones with special properties to blacksmiths, who then work these into weapons or armor. Gemstones have effects that can be difficult to achieve with warding alone; they are their own source of magic, and their effects typically last for decades whereas wards need to be replenished every few months, or even weeks.

"Beyond that, my knowledge of medicinal tonics also requires extensive knowledge in medicinal herbs. With that comes cursory knowledge of other types of botany as well, though it is admittedly limited compared to a proper herbologist. I don't know much about plants or flowers that don't have any medicinal properties.

"During my time studying I also studied elemental and aura magic--the basics--as well as warding magic. I dabbled in other areas as well, but not enough to call myself an expert."

**Would all of that be in line with what you typically sell as an alchemist? Special gemstones, medicinal tonics?**

"Yes, most of my clients tend to be other magi like blacksmiths and healers. I sell medicinal tonics or more complex potions, such as necessary body transformations, at very low rates, and to compensate, I sell gemstones or other luxury items such as glamours at a higher price."

**\*\*Do many people come along for full body transformations?**

**\*\***"I wouldn't say *many* compared to my day-to-day, but they're certainly one of the more regular ones. Most of the first-time customers tend to be rather nervous but also excited at the prospect, and each body transformation is tailored to the customer's specifications. Some need recurring transformations, others are happy with just one."

"The transformation does need to be limited to what is possible for someone's particular body structure. I can't completely reform someone's bones, for example, to make them significantly taller or shorter than what they were before, but *some* natural growth or shrinking is very possible if that were to be desired. Nor can I add new parts. A lost limb, unfortunately, cannot be returned through a transformation."

"Most people don't expect such huge changes, either. Usually they just want their body to better reflect themselves from the inside. It's a heartwarming occasion to see someone's eyes light up after a transformation, to see them finally comfortable in their own skin. I wish everyone could experience such happiness; I hope my work contributes to it."

**\*\*Could you share some wild stories from customers?**

**\*\***"I once had a noble who demanded for me to transform her pet chicken to have diamond feet."

**Is... that even possible?**

"Yes, but it would've been torture for the poor animal. Their feet are meant mainly to scratch the ground in search of food or run away; they need to be light and agile. Turning it into diamond would've made the claws far too heavy and difficult to use. It would've doubtlessly hurt itself, and lived in discomfort."

**So what did you do?**

"I didn't do anything. The chicken ended up escaping."

**On its own?**

"Yes. Someone left the cage open and a helpful farmer saw the chicken wandering the street, and picked it up."

**How fortunate.**

Perjin smiles. "Very fortunate."

**What other stories do you have to share?**

"Too many to name. One common misconception is... love potions."

**Oh no.**

"Indeed. It's born from childish thinking, and most often I tend to see insecure adolescents who don't know any better asking for things like these. Every time, I have a long conversation with them about the reality of what they're asking for--*forcing* someone to have feelings for them against their will.

"They tend to be rather embarrassed and somewhat horrified after realizing what using a love potion would actually look like, contrasting the fantasy they had in their heads. Especially when they hear that asking for such potions--that don't even exist--is forbidden under the law. At worst, it could even land them a sentence for hard labor."

**You don't report them?**

"They're children, as young as ten years old. How could I condemn them? I would much rather teach them.

"I *did* have a few rare occasions of adults who should--and *do*--know better than to request such potions... and those I did report. Especially to their families and their neighbors."

**Since you meet so many people through your shop, can you tell us about any notable sentiments you've encountered since the Crown has been found?**

"At the moment, the mood in the city is still largely festive, and it's not even about the Crown as a person. It's been so long that Arsur has heard any good news that most are taking this opportunity to celebrate, and regather some of the hope they lost along the way.

"There are also a portion of people who are wary, not ready to trust until they see proof of good intent. They've survived ten years without a Crown, and though Crown Ferzan was trying to move Arsur forward, many still remember the disasters of Crown Piruz' reign. I can't blame them."

**What about your personal opinion of the Crown (not romancing R)?**

"They have a great task ahead of them, I certainly don't envy them for it. But if I can help them in any way, for the good of the Empire, then I will be able to sleep better at night. If the Crown does well and cherishes their citizens, Arsur will prosper."

**What about your personal opinion of the Crown (romancing R)?**

"Well, Rêzan/Rozerîn has certainly taken a liking to them." Perjin's eyes sparkle. "I trust their judgment, though it may... be compromised, somewhat.

"Either way, if I can help the Crown, it will be for the good of the Empire. As well as my dear student."

[A's Romantic Snippet: Bed Rest](#)

[Oct 21, 2022](#)

Hello, hello!!

It's time for the romantic snippet this month and it's a very cute one. Kind of in line with D's snippet as well, it's all about comfort and care 💕

I think most of these snippets take place at a point where there is an established relationship between the Crown and the LI, since the Mutual Pining stages are still being explored in canon! Don't really want to spoil those character dynamics yet hehe.

[Here's the link](#) to the updated file with A's snippet!!

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Hope you enjoy 💕

[Weekly Progress Update \[23/OCT\]](#)

[Oct 23, 2022](#)

Hey all, hope your week went well 💕

This week's progress report will be a short one since I don't have anything big to talk about at the moment.

Remember that 20k wordcount goal by the end of each month? Yeah I don't think I'm gonna get past 12k in October 😊 Optimism aside though I *did* still manage to write pretty consistently every week even if the numbers are low, so I'm feeling good about CH10 releasing in the winter!

## Chapter progress

Honestly, putting together the scenes for CH10 and planning them out was the greater challenge this month. There's *so much* planned for future chapters, so many subplots developing, that I'm having to pick which threads are prioritized and which ones have to wait for a while longer.

To give you an idea, here's the rough sketch up of the structure for CH10, *excluding* the planned LI POV scenes. Mind that there are minor spoilers here for some of the scenes you will see in CH10, but very briefly as bulletpoints, nothing important! Everything that's a plot essential spoiler has been blacked out lol

Altogether that's 9 scenes + the romanced LI POV scene, so 10 different scenes in CH10. As you can tell, it's going to be a pretty *massive* chapter. Less variance compared to CH9 as well, so there's a *lot* more scenes each player will go through per playthrough. I won't be surprised if I manage to crack 70k words with this one, though I'm going to do my very best to limit myself to 40k-50k. For the sake of my own sanity and health, and also so I don't keep you waiting forever lmao.

As far as what I've actually written so far on paper, I've been working on all the fun bits for the LI POV scenes and other fun Crown-development scenes in between! I'm taking the approach of writing all the tidbits I want to write first, and then go back later to stitch them all together haha.

Not much else to report on this week!!

Until next time 💖

[R's Character Snippet: Coronation Vision](#)

[Oct 29, 2022](#)

Helloooo!

I am absolutely dead tired rn so I won't babble much on this post: R's POV for the coronation vision!! It is very sweet 😊

[Here is the link](#), enjoy ✨

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!



[Development Sneak Peek: Crowns of Old, Part I](#)

[Nov 2, 2022](#)

Hey all, hope your week is going well so far!!

For this month's sneak peek, we're going to look at some Crowns who haven't been named yet in the story. The Royal Codex so far goes from the 1st Crown, to the 11th and 12th Crown, to the 18th Crown and onwards. That's a *lot* of Crowns that were skipped over, so I thought, why not introduce them here?

I ended up writing a *lot* more than I expected for each Crown, so we'll do 3 Crowns this month, and 3 Crowns next month!

### **\*\*The Second Crown: Cunning Arsāma**

**\*\*Crown Arsāma** was originally a boy from one of the tribes of Sur who lived in what is now known as Zerat. His appointment as Ashadūna's successor was seen as rather fortuitous, if not convenient, for Ashadūna's newly-founded Empire: it strengthened the ties between the tribes of Sur and Arsur itself during a tumultuous time of transition. Not all tribes, after all, were like-minded or willing to submit.

Even with Arsāma's appointment as Ashadūna's successor, however, there was still considerable anxiety among the other tribes. Some in the province of Hathura, as well, considered his appointment to be an act of revenge from the tribes that King Fravastis had previously waged war upon, which made them fear for what would become of Hathura under Arsāma's rule.

After Ashadūna's passing, however, Arsāma accomplished something remarkable: he prevented civil war, and solidified harmony within the empire. It may not seem a great achievement, and is often underestimated by those who look to Crowns with more distinguished achievements, such as Zana's brokering of trade routes or Keybanû's treaty with Ivia. However, Arsāma continued the unification process that Ashadūna had originally started. Not through force, but through diplomacy, as well as political cunning.

Threats from neighboring nations loomed large upon the horizon. Historians have recorded the ways in which Arsāma would deliberately provoke threats from the outside in order to give people within the Empire reason to remain united. One famous anecdote exemplifies this best: during a visit from a rather arrogant and temperamental Thalloi prince, Arsāma provoked his ire with subtle remarks that would seem innocent to most, but ones that targeted the prince's weaknesses expertly.

The Thalloi prince lost his temper in spectacular fashion, threatening to run Arsāma's Royal Protector--who was also Arsāma's promised one at the time--through with a spear. The prince was apprehended, jailed for three days and three nights, then finally banished from Arsur, leaving in disgrace.

The storytellers that Arsāma had invited to the event recounted it throughout the Empire and beyond. Upon arrival home, the prince was stripped of his royal status by his mother, the queen, and disowned for his failure. Beyond humiliating the prince, however, it more importantly served as a cautionary tale to those who sought to sow discord from within: Arsur's enemies would destroy the Empire, if given the chance.

### **The Third Crown: Mighty Humati**

Crown Humati's reign was not as peaceful as her predecessor's. While Arsāma built a unified foundation for Arsur, that same unification now meant that the Empire was a greater threat to its neighbors. Arsāma's methods had provoked many foreign relations, and once he passed and the young Humati

took his place, several Thalloi city-states as well as nomadic Sacati tribes from the northern steppes above Arsur, saw this as an opportunity.

Fortunately for Arsur, Humati was no stranger to war.

Her prowess in military tactics and battle strategy was second to none. She outmaneuvered the Sacati nomads as easily on land as she sunk Thalloi warships at sea. Humati oversaw key battles personally, as she not only understood military tactics but also the importance of logistics. She revolutionized the organization of the army, which now incorporated the combined soldiers of Hathura and Rojan, as well as the warriors of the tribes of Sur.

Humati's armies were considered to be the most fearsome foe to have to battle at the time: Arsurian mounted warriors and battle magi still invoke fear to this day. Arsur came to breed horses with specific magical abilities to aid in battle, making them a nearly unstoppable force, and the specialized training of battle magi made them devastating on any battlefield. There are famous ballads written about the Battle of Artioch's Pass, where Arsurian battle magi summoned enormous whirlpools in the Sea of Igris that pulled countless Thalloi warships under, wiping out the entire fleet.

During Humati's time as the Crown, Arsur did not lose a single war and did not have to make a single concession. For every battle she lost, she paid her enemy back tenfold. Despite her military might, however, Humati did not go on an expansionist campaign. Rather than conquer new land, her military principles were not guided by aggression, but self-defense: Arsur would not attack anyone, so long as they did not form a threat to the Empire.

Despite her talent as an army commander, Humati realized the importance of building relationships, and moreover, she had personally experienced the horrors of battle as a young child and did not wish to inflict it upon her subjects unless it was absolutely necessary. While her tactics seemed ruthless to some, Humati always sought for ways to end a battle as quickly as possible, if it could not be avoided altogether. This mindset has become a lasting guiding principle for how the High Generals of Arsur are also expected to act, taking Crown Humati as their example.

### **The Sixth Crown: Eccentric Bardiya**

Crown Bardiya is a very odd case, in that there is next to nothing known about his/their reign. At least, not officially.

Royal historians have been employed at the Royal Palaces from even before Arsur existed. It is a holdover tradition from the Monarchy of Ardia that Ashadūna continued after founding Arsur. These historians record all the Crown's daily activities, as well as when they are handling matters of political importance or at notable events. These records remain for future generations, as well as future Crowns.

Unfortunately, most of Crown Bardiya's records were destroyed or disappeared. For the longest time, no one knew why or how, until a grave-robber managed to break into Bardiya's tomb, but instead of riches, they discovered a single book. It was a personal journal that Crown Bardiya left behind in secret.

The grave-robber was apprehended upon an attempted escape and later executed, but not before they were made to reveal their discovery. Scholars unearthed the journal and, to their enormous surprise, discovered that Crown Bardiya kept record of their *own* activities and, furthermore, was the culprit behind the destroyed records of his reign in the first place. The first journal was, in fact, the start of an elaborate treasure hunt that would lead the scholars on a 3 year long journey to collect all the journals that Crown Bardiya had written. Apparently, Bardiya detested the plain and objective way of writing from the royal historians, and was determined to have his records told in their own voice.

This eccentric behavior was not unusual for Bardiya. He was known to have a flair for the dramatic, and enjoyed outwitting, confusing or teasing others with riddles, personally-made puzzles, and philosophical conundrums. While this could make them quite frustrating to deal with in person, Bardiya also was a prodigious scholar of magic. In fact, they refused to take on a Sorcerer as he was of the opinion that he could do much better than any other magus out there, and they were probably correct in that assessment.

Bardiya is known as a founder of contemporary warding magic; before them, there was a very simple magic system and only a dozen sigils to choose from. Bardiya managed to find a way to invent new sigils through combining bits and pieces of the old ones, eventually creating the 4037 sigils currently in use. This warding magic increased the Empire's security immeasurably, aiding the armor and weapons used by its armies, and still keeps many of its important landmarks safe from harm.

That was it for this month! Next time I'll be introducing The Ninth Crown, The Thirteenth Crown (Ardashir's successor), and The Fifteenth Crown!

Until then 💖

[Weekly Progress Update \[6/NOV\]](#)

[Nov 6, 2022](#)

Hello, hello! Hope your week has gone well ✨

I've still been chipping away at CH10, though progress was a little bit slower the past 2 weeks since I was finishing up an exam period. Now, however, I'm free to work on AToC until January!!

## Chapter progress

I'm making good progress on the LI POVs, especially X's and D's as I've been feeling a bit inspired lately, so I've decided to share some previews in advance. No screenshots anymore because they format *horribly* in Patreon, but the Twine codes are still visible since this is literally just a copy/paste.



Here's the preview for **X's POV**, minor spoilers:

\$xname looks up to stare at their back as it recedes. “Heval—”

“Don’t,” Heval calls back, the rigidity of the word conveying that they are restraining their temper, as well as their fear. Their worry for \$xname. They won’t be party to this.

They slip away between the trees, back towards camp.

\$xname turns to Tûjo, whose eyes linger on the place where Heval disappeared from view, though \$xname can still hear their footsteps, heavy across the grass.

“Do you think I’m making a mistake, brother?” \$xname asks, \$xtheir voice quiet. Straining to even leave \$xtheir mouth.

Tûjo looks at \$xthem then, hesitation plain in the pull of his brows.

“I understand your reasons why,” he says.

“But?”

“But nothing.” Tûjo averts his gaze. “I’m not here to act as your conscience.”

“And if I were to ask for advice?”

Tûjo stays silent for a long while. \$xname can sense something inside Tûjo ease as the uncertainty around him clears up, perhaps with acceptance; he knows \$xname has already made up \$xtheir mind.

“Don’t get caught.”

And here's the preview for **D's POV**, which is a bit shorter as everything else is very spoiler-heavy:

“When?”

Nima’s voice is hoarse, strained into a croak when she responds. “When what?”

“When did you become one of them?”

She’s silent. Her silhouette does not move in the column of light that has captured her, the brightness of it burning through the barrier into \$dname’s eyes.

When finally an answer comes, it is far from satisfactory: “I don’t know.”

“Then tell me why.” \$dname’s hand presses against the cold stone column of the wall beside the cell, \$dtheir pulse throbbing through the limb. “Let me hear it, Nima, from *your* mouth.”

## Other stuff

Preview snippets aside, I'm currently also working on a bonus patreon snippet for longtime patrons who have been supporting me since the Patreon launch.

I gave them several prompts to vote for, but the prompts that are *not* chosen are ones I will use for the general snippets available on the Patreon page!

Here are some you may expect to see pop up from December onward 🙄

- Alternate timeline where Ferzan isn't assassinated/the MC becomes the Crown "the proper way" and the Crown and LI meet for the first time.
- Canon timeline, established relationship, the Crown saving \*the LI\* from an assassination.
- Alternate timeline where the Crown's parents haven't died and the LI meets them.
- Alternate timeline where the Crown isn't the Crown but an average person and they meet the LI at a party/during a job/during a tense situation/something else juicy

Some of these could be a romantic snippets and others I could tweak a bit to make it a character snippet, I'll have to think about it...

That was all for this week!

Until next time 💖

[D's Character Snippet: Coronation Vision](#)

[Nov 13, 2022](#)

Hey everyone, hope you've been well!!

It's time for D's character snippet, and with this, we're *almost* done with the canon POV scenes. After A's snippet releases later this month, I think I'll switch over to some of the alternate timeline scenarios I described in the weekly progress update for the months December and January.

But also, perhaps write a few snippets for other characters!

In the meantime though, you can enjoy this one. It's basically the moment where D decides to tell the Crown about their reasons for becoming the General in the first place.

[Here's the link!](#)

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Enjoy 💖

### [Voting for Character Q&A](#)

[Nov 13, 2022](#)

Hi all, it's that time of the month again! It's time for another round of voting for the side characters ✨

For new patrons: there's various characters to choose from, both individually and in pairings, but you can also submit suggestions for a character that isn't listed, and I'll put them as an option to vote on during the next round!

I still have the questions from the last voting round saved, but feel free to submit new ones. For new patrons, check out the character Q&A tag to read past Q&As.

[Here's the form to vote](#)!! The Q&A will be posted on Tuesday 💖

### [Character Q&A: Master Keko](#)

[Nov 15, 2022](#)

Hey all! Back again with another Q&A, this one for Master Keko 💖

The next Character Q&A for December will probably be the last one for a side character, after which we'll switch back to more Q&As for the love interests in the new year.

But for now, onto Master Keko's Q&A!

\*\*What enriches your life these days?

\*\*\*Beyond spending time with my loved ones? Well, let's see... I enjoy gardening and botany. The outdoor gardens can be a bit difficult to maintain, at my age, but I tend to the indoor gardens regularly. Many of the delicate flowers grown there were ones I planted myself.

"I don't have enough knowledge on it to be an expert, however. I'm merely a hobbyist." He smiles.

"Nature has a soothing presence, one I've come to appreciate more as I've grown older."

**\*\*Has it changed from when you were younger?**

**\*\*\***"As a young man I was very fond of rock climbing! I would still do it up until five years ago, when I had an accident. A small fall, and I fractured a hip. It was mended, but my climbing days are over, I'm afraid. Thankfully I am still in excellent health."

"I also enjoyed a good party. I was quite the dancer, if you can believe it!"

**\*\*What were you like in your youth, then? Very energetic, it sounds like.**

**\*\*\***"Oh, I was restless. Always running from place to place, traveling, making friends, enjoying life. I ended up serving at the palace by pure chance; first I served a minor noble house, and while attending to my lord, Crown Keybanû noticed my talent for entertaining guests. She poached me, as it were!"

"Serving at the palace, I learned how to direct all that energy and put it to good use. There's never any shortage of work serving the Crown, after all, and I discovered I had a good sense for organization. Crown Keybanû, funnily enough, was almost a mentor of sorts to me, in that regard. She ran a tight ship in all aspects of her life."

**\*\*It seems like she had an eye for your talents. What was your relationship with Crowns Ferzan and Piruz like?**

**\*\*\***"Crown Piruz was... well, he was a good man, once. He truly loved his family, but he also was prone to anxiety, shall we say. Whenever he was worked up, it became difficult to advise him; he would not see clearly. It was especially hard near the end of his reign..."

"Crown Ferzan was much more practical. He trusted my experience and my judgment, and gave me much more independence and authority, within the limits of my position of course. But it made running the household of the palace much smoother. I managed to raise the pay for the servants, expanded quarters for the servants and the palace guards, the kitchen--a happy staff makes for a happy palace, and a happy palace makes for a happy Crown."

He sighs. "When Crown Ferzan was assassinated... it was a great loss. Both to Arsur, as well as the people who had the privilege to know him."

**What are your thoughts on R, and on Lady Zerya?**

"I am not a Sorcerer by any means. When I graduated from the School of Ilwan, I did so as a scholar in theoretical warding magic. Much of the wards currently used by the Royal Palace were implemented because of my research, but it wasn't my passion in life."

"Similarly, I worry about Rozerîn/Rêzan at times, if I'm to be completely truthful. I ask myself, is this truly what they want to do with the rest of their life? I cannot teach them magic--they have long surpassed me on that front--so the only thing I can do is advise them as best I can."

"But I have no doubt in my mind that they are capable of becoming a great Sorcerer, even greater than their predecessors, and I do not mean that solely in ability. I have seldom seen anyone both so gifted as magic, while also possessing such a kind and humble heart. Anyone else might have let their title go to their head, and perhaps it was the difficulties Rozerîn/Rêzan experienced early in life--and later on, with the crisis of succession--that made them able to see so clearly.

"As for Lady Zerya, I respected her greatly; her choice to take on Rêzan/Rozerîn as an apprentice spoke well of her, at the cost of being alienated by her peers. As much as I hope to fill the void she left for Rozerîn/Rêzan, I know I can never replace her as a mentor."

**\*\*What can you tell us about A, being a palace servant for so long?**

**\*\***"They were always a quiet child. Very calm, very thoughtful, not as rambunctious as other children their age--but not shy." Keko laughs. "Oh no, Azad/Ashti always spoke their mind liberally whenever something, or someone, bothered them. I remember seeing them scold people thrice their age for condescending to them.

"They've also always possessed a mischievous streak. You would not have thought it, seeing how well-mannered and reserved they were as a child, but that made a perfect cover for all the pranks they used to pull.

"I remember once they sawed through the legs of a chair in the office of a bureaucrat who had insulted them. The chair collapsed as they sat on it while they were having a conversation with a few colleagues, and the bureaucrat came storming out of the office, red in the face and humiliated.

"I don't think they ever figured out it was Azad/Ashti who did that!"

### **What do you think about the new Crown?**

"Certainly, I do not envy the task ahead of them, but I intend to support them as best I can. Did you know, I intended to retire in the new year?" He smiles. "The Spirits have a great sense of timing. Perhaps they knew the new Crown would need as many experienced people on their side as they could get. I hope I can be of some use to them."

### **What has grounded you over the years, despite everything?**

"It is difficult to answer any one thing, there are multiple things, all of equal importance. Duty, friendship..."

**\*\*Love and family?**

**\*\***Keko smiles. "Duty and friendship are not separate from love and family; they were born from it. I do my duty out of love for Arsur, and out of love for my family who have found their home in it. I love my friends, as if they were my family. I hope the Crown will experience that, as well."

[Nov 19, 2022](#)

Hey all!!

The romantic snippet this month is a juicy one, as you can probably tell from the title! This one, like the others, takes place in the distant future of the canon timeline with R/Crown in an established relationship.

[Here's the link](#) to the updated file!! It also includes D's recent character snippet for ease of reading.

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for your tier, in order to get the correct link!

Hope you enjoy 💖

[CH10 Preview, Part I](#)

[Nov 22, 2022](#)

Heya!! Hope your week is going well 💖

I don't technically have any posts planned for this week aside from the 2nd character snippet, and next week we'll be in-between the monthly schedule, so I thought I'd post some previews throughout the week as I'm working on the chapter!! I haven't written a proper progress report in a while since there is very little news I can share yet; I'm still continuing to chip away at the chapter, but a lot of the scenes are so fun that I don't want to spoil it yet haha.

I can give away these little snippets though, so for today, here's a sneak peek at the sort of tutoring lessons the Crown is receiving!

"That peris, and Surian tribes, not be treated as a single entity." Master Youtab emphasizes her point with an example: "What do you know of the other provinces, Your Imperial Majesty?"

"Rojan used to be the Monarchy of Ardia," you begin to count off, "which in turn was founded through the unification of various tribes of Sur in that region. The tribes of Sur also settled Zerat and parts of Avdin and Penawar, and still live there as separate communities, though they are officially subjects of the Empire. Şevan was once Hathura, and was born from an entirely different society, first a vassal state and then a province."

Youtab nods approvingly. “That is a good summary of various groups in the region. Now, what can you tell me about the peris?”

“The peris in Rojan live in Anshan, also known as Kartan’s Forest.” It seems simple enough to recite. “They are very closed off towards human societies in general, partly due to their self-sufficient nature; they don’t need to rely on trade to get by, and prefer to be observers rather than engage with human groups.”

“Do all of the peris in Rojan live in Anshan?”

You halt, uncertain. It is what you assumed until now, but your tutor’s question makes you hesitate. “I’m... not sure. Most of them, I suppose.”

“What about peris in other provinces?”

Nothing comes to mind.

“How about the tribes of Sur?” Master Youtab asks instead when you stay quiet. “You listed their historical involvement in Arsur, but what do you know of them as they live in the present?”

You remain silent, your mind blank. You realize you know nothing—it is a very sudden, somewhat uncomfortable, and rather humbling sensation.

“This is not to embarrass you, Your Imperial Majesty.” Master Youtab is kind in her reassurance. “Most Arsurians, and in fact, even most academics would know little more than you do. But that is precisely my point: peri history is almost unknown to us. We don’t know when they settled here, what their communities are like, and have little view of the peris in other parts of the land. We know more about Surian tribes, but only by a little, and only due to historical alliances.”

It isn’t something you ever considered before. Such politics were far beyond your scope as a runaway, seeing how little time and opportunity you had to learn of such things beyond what you picked up from conversations happening at teahouses or bathhouses.

But it’s rather strange, now you think of it. How could you know so little of people who are essentially your neighbors?

That’s it for the preview! Stay tuned for Thursday and Saturday, I’ll be posting more previews then ✨

[CH10 Preview, Part II](#)

[Nov 24, 2022](#)

As promised, another preview today! This one's on the fun side of things ✨

"You realize it'll be over once I catch you?"

"If you catch me," \$rname replies, \$rtheir smile like the curve of a bow, aiming at \$aname in challenge. "Try your best, Royal Protector; the Crown is watching."

\$aname huffs a laugh as \$athey rolls \$atheir shoulders, the stance of \$atheir feet widening with one a step behind the other, knees bent, as if \$athey's intending on rushing \$rname down as soon as the sparring begins. "The same to you, \$rtitle Sorcerer."

"I'm not concerned." While \$rname holds \$aname's gaze, \$rtheir right hand moves conspicuously to hover near a small pouch tied to a slim chain around \$rtheir waist. "In fact, I look forward to showing the Crown exactly why I am \$their Sorcerer. You'll have to forgive me for using your imminent humiliation to demonstrate."

"The only thing you're demonstrating is how much you like the sound of your own voice," \$aname drawls, \$atheir tone unimpressed, though the smile on \$atheir face betrays \$atheir enjoyment. "Even \$xname doesn't talk this much before a fight!"

"At a loss for words already, \$aname?" \$rname fires back. "Defeated in the mind before we've even begun, I see."

You interrupt before \$aname can retort. As amusing as this is to watch, you *do* have a schedule to maintain.

"Are you two going to banter all day or will I get to see some fighting before the sun goes down?" you call out, a teasing remark that makes \$aname grin.

"We await your signal, Your Imperial Majesty."

\$rname meanwhile has fallen silent, a look of concentration replacing the humor on \$rtheir face as \$rthey and \$aname watch each other like hawks.

You pause for a moment, before declaring: "Begin!"

[Finished Crescent Blades Art: opinions?](#)

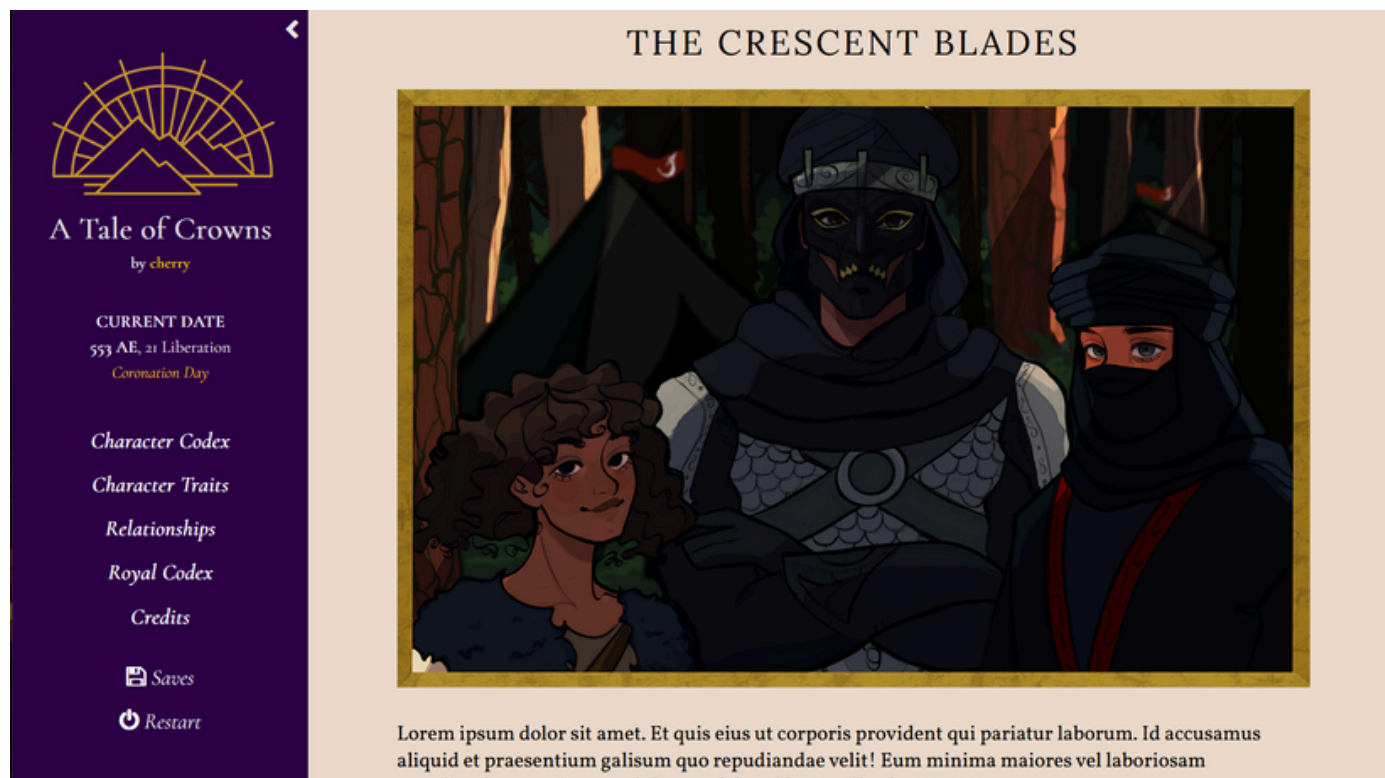
[Nov 25, 2022](#)



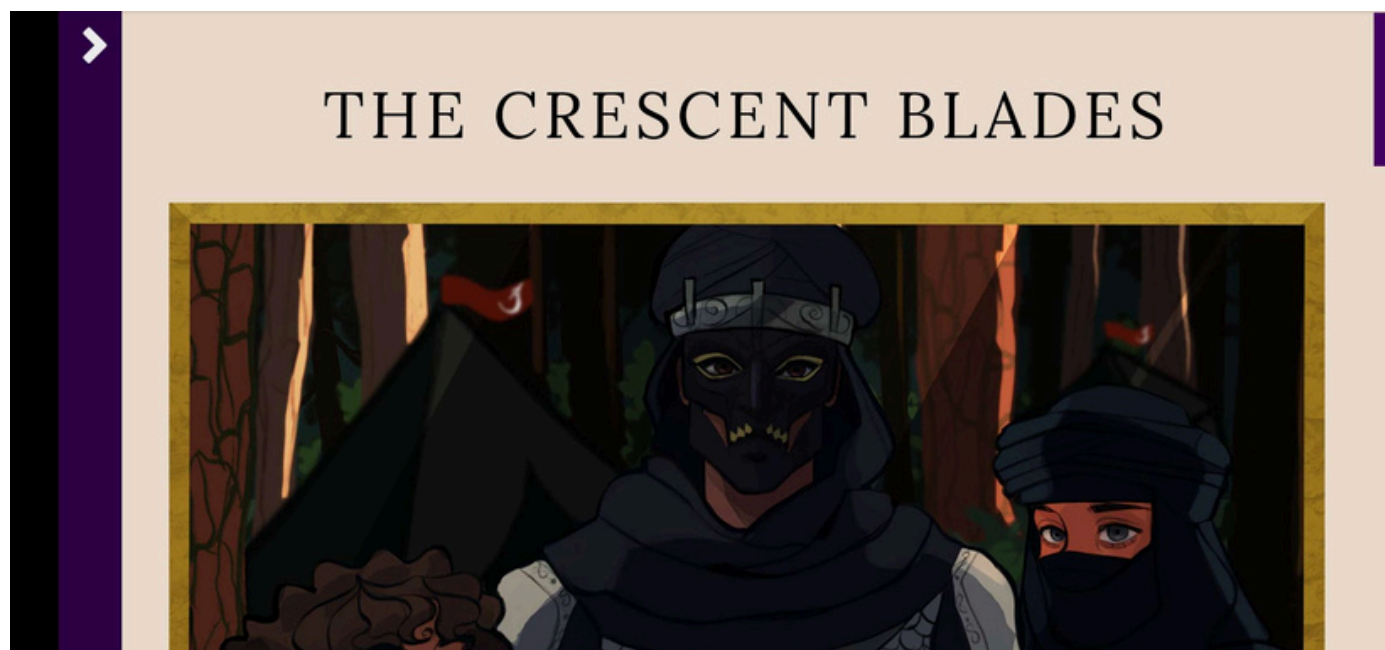
Gabby / @artbygaia finished up the Crescent Blades art that I'll be adding to the game once CH10 releases! The codex entry will also be automatically unlocked if you open a save past their introduction in the story in CH1.

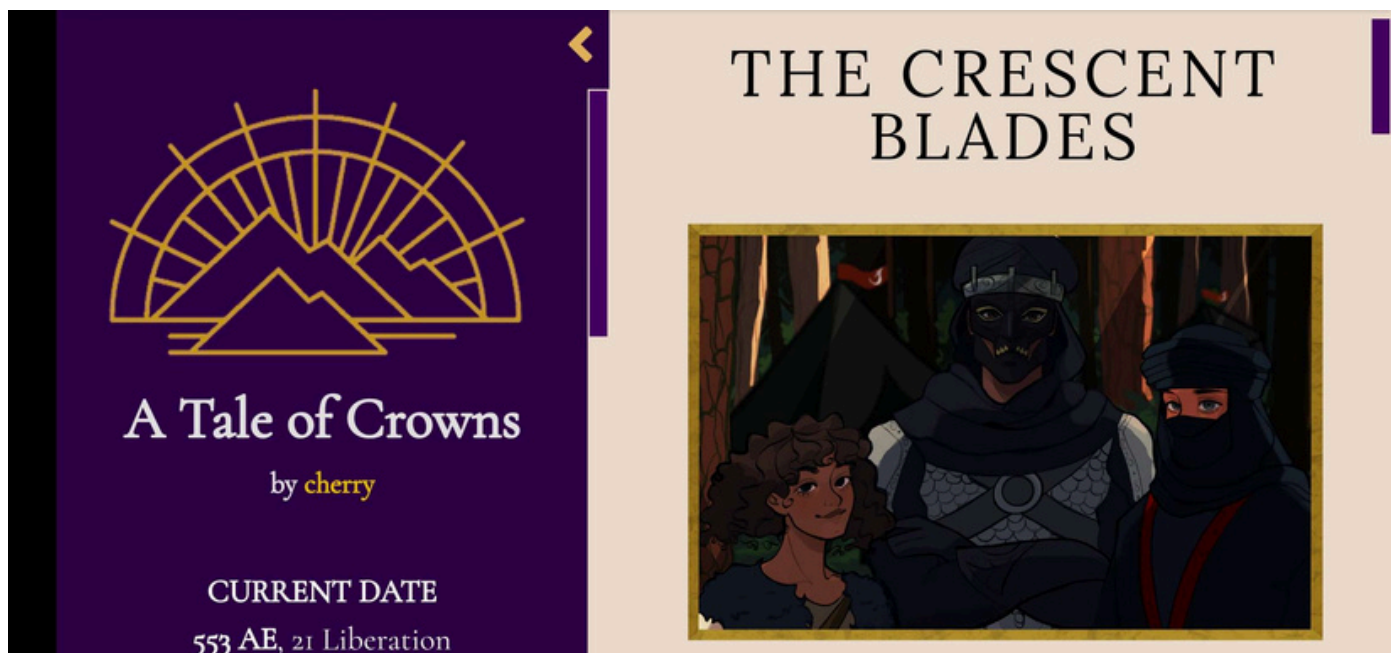
However, due to Heval's truly ABSURD height, the size of the art piece couldn't quite be in a banner format, so it ended up looking quite big within the actual game!

On PC:



On mobile:





As you can see, image automatically scales together with the window size of the game and when you open the sidebar, but I'm worried it's a bit *too* big, especially on PC. I can make it smaller, though it won't fit with the paragraph sizes beneath it as well, or leave it like this?

What do you all think?

Be sure to leave compliments so I can show Gabby as well!!! She really did a great job, as always ✨

[A's Character Snippet: Coronation Vision](#)

[Nov 27, 2022](#)

Hey all, sorry for the late upload!! I couldn't quite make it last night, but thankfully there's still several days left before the end of the month haha

This one is about A and more of their ~Parental Trauma~

It was almost a kind of prep for CH10, since that goes deeper into the backstory regarding *both* their parents, as well as their sister 🙄

[Here's the link!!](#) The [tier 3 file](#) that includes the romantic snippets has also been updated to include this one.

With that, we've gone through all the planned canon POV scenes for the LIs' character snippets!! I'll have to plan which ones will feature for the coming few months...

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Enjoy 💖

## [CH10 Preview, Part III](#)

[Dec 1, 2022](#)

New month, new preview!!

This one includes a cute little personality/conversation variation ✨

“How long have you been training with a straight sword?” \$aname asks, gesturing to his weapon.

“Only a few weeks, Royal Protector.” The trainee glances at you again, reluctance growing into anxiety on his face. “Since the palace needed more guards, after \$ctheir Imperial Majesty coronation.”

“Good.” \$aname hands \$atheir wooden sword to the bemused trainee. “Your skill levels are comparable, then.” \$cathey looks back to you. “Does this suit you, Your Imperial Majesty?”

### **IF THE CROWN IS 'BLUNT'**

“Aside from the fact that the boy looks like he’s about to shit himself, you mean?” you reply dryly. “Yes, suits me fine.”

\$aname snorts, smothering it before it can turn into a laugh. “Don’t worry, it’s only nerves. Isn’t that right, trainee?”

“Yes!” the boy says hastily, though his ears are turning red. “I will most certainly perform well so as to not cause you shame, Your Imperial Majesty, and I’m most certainly not shitting- I mean- defecating—”

### **IF THE CROWN IS 'CHARMING'**

You turn a skeptical eye on the boy. “How old are you?”

“Eighteen, Your Imperial Majesty.”

That’s about the last thing you wanted to hear.

“Skies, he’s a child.” You sigh, rubbing fingers across your forehead. “I’m going to spar with a *child*. This is embarrassing.”

“You’d better not lose, then,” \$aname remarks wryly, seeming remorseless, and you shoot \$athem a glare.

“I may be young, Your Imperial Majesty, but I assure you I’m the best of my class!” the boy insists, and you arch your brows at him.

“Didn’t you say you’ve only been training a few weeks?”

“Ah...” The boy looks away, ears turning red. “Yes, I did say that, but a week is not an inconsiderable amount of time, if one considers—”

## END VARIATION

“Trainee.” \$aname looks amused, though \$atheir voice is stern. “That’s enough.”

The boy lowers his head and his shoulders slump.

The regular posting schedule picks up again next week, but you can expect a progress report on Sunday 💖

[Weekly Progress Update \[11/DEC\]](#)

[Dec 11, 2022](#)

Hey all!!

It's been a few weeks since I did one of these, but my writing pace has been erratic lately. Hope the CH10 previews made up for that, in the meantime!!

(Also, I only realized yesterday that I totally forgot to write up the Dev Sneak Peek, I'll post that the coming Wednesday instead 😭)

As for current progress, this past week has actually been rather productive!! In terms of chapter size, I think this one will be a bit smaller in wordcount, maximum size being in the realm of ~35k if I'm being generous.

Currently, we're hovering between 17k-21k words, depending on which scenes I decide to cut out or include. There's soooo many things I want to get to with this chapter that I won't have a full view of it until I'm finished writing every scene that I have planned lol

At this point I'm guessing the chapter release will be somewhere in February, either early or late in the month, I'm not sure yet. It all depends on how the rest of December ends up being, writing pace wise. I'll let you know in a couple of weeks!!

In the meantime, here's another preview to tide you over ✨

This time, it's the Crown improving their magic skills! And a small moment with R...

“Let me dry you off, \$nickname.” \$name rises from \$rtheir seat, having been watching your lesson from the low dining table in your chambers.

“I can do it,” you reply, not wanting \$name to waste \$rtheir energy for something so simple. *[ If the Crown is an outer magic type ]* You hover your palm down your face and neck, pulling the rainwater toward your hand, and as it gathers in the air you chuck it out the window with a snap of your wrist. *[ If the Crown is an inner magic type ]* You pull your magic up to your skin again, though to a lesser extent this time. As it surfaces, your aura glows gold over your hands and face; the heat of the sun warms your body, the rainwater instantly evaporating and leaving you dry.

“You’ve improved quickly over such a short period,” \$name comments, and despite your little mishap at the end—you always struggle with the release—you do feel appreciative of \$rtheir and Perjin’s praise. “Better control and more stamina.”

It feels good to see your skills develop as you learn, improving and growing with every lesson, every practice session.

“I have gotten better, haven’t I?” you say with a hint of pride, brightening up a little despite your fatigue as you appraise the rain that has now evened out again.

*[ If R is not the Crown's love interest ]*

“At this rate, you'll catch up to the average magus in no time,” \$name says, seeming genuinely happy for you.

*[ If R is the Crown's love interest ]*

“More confident, too.” \$rname gives you a playful smile when you meet \$rtheir eyes again. “It looks good on you.”

Until next time 💕

## [Development Sneak Peek: Crowns of Old, Part II](#)

[Dec 14, 2022](#)

As promised, a continuation of [last month's dev sneak peek](#)!

### **The Ninth Crown: Beloved Dila**

Dila became the Crown during a time of relative peace; there were no wars to be fought, and Arsur had finally reached a point of stability. Dila's reign was best known for the flourishing of arts and culture within the Empire. In fact, it was during Dila's reign that pleasure houses grew into the influence they now possess.

Crown Dila was known for being a beauty without compare. It wasn't solely their looks, but also their innate charm that drew people to them; rather, her charm enhanced her appearance into something of almost mythical proportions. A few historians have encountered accounts that say that Crown Dila's magic itself was the cause, that she possessed a peculiar aura that wasn't quite elemental in nature, but rather one that enchanted onlookers. These accounts were not verified, however, and officially Crown Dila's magic is listed to have been an Earth affinity.

Centuries later, poets still compose verses referring to Crown Dila, describing rosewater flowing from their darkly coiled tresses, or the light of the moon held in the night of her eyes. There is even a famous story written of Crown Dila's encounter with the peri queen, where it is said Dila charmed even Queen Nis and was granted a blessing by her that would ensure a long, peaceful reign.

During their lifetime, Dila had the most lovers out of any Crown to date. Their royal concubines numbered into the two dozen at their largest recorded size, though Dila formally courted only four people during their reign; all four became Jewels of the Crown as well. Dila was very free with her affections, but also selective in who she romanced, even casually.

Their royal concubines were almost all artists, of various kinds. Painters, sculptors, dancers, singers, musicians, poets, writers and storytellers, even weavers of cloth and carpets—Dila greatly admired and loved all kinds of artistic expression.

Being a royal concubine usually meant to be committed to the Crown, but Dila went against convention and allowed their concubines to court whomever they wished. Many of Dila's concubines were artists who worked for pleasure houses, and thanks to gaining Dila's favor, their pleasure houses rose in status as well.

### **The Thirteenth Crown: Goldstained Sorgul**

Being Ardashir's successor, Sorgul inherited many projects Ardashir had started, but had been unable to finish before passing away. Most important among those was the Provincial School System, ensuring a public school in each province in order to provide education for all Arsuriens.

These schools were no small expense to fund, especially as the years went on. The nobility had always been opposed to the idea, but Ardashir had been too strong-willed and beloved by the people to successfully oppose. His political allies were many, the entire court was supportive of him, and the nobles who fell outside of that instead turned their attention on his successor instead, hoping to influence her.

They were successful. Perhaps feeling overshadowed by her predecessor, or motivated by fundamental disagreement with Ardashir's idealistic approach, Sorgul also did not fully approve of the schools. She could not get rid of them entirely, as that would risk a public revolt, so instead she limited entry to those who could pay an entrance fee as well as imposing an entrance test. It's speculated this was to offset the costs that building and maintaining the schools had cost, but it also became a convenient tool to keep those of lesser means out of the schools.

Furthermore, the schools became singularly focused on magic. Before, they were also intended to teach basic knowledge and skills, but that was no longer the case. Subjects like literature, geography and history were no longer taught; students were expected to have prior knowledge of these things in order to pass the entrance test. This meant that even poorer applicants who managed to scrape money together were easily turned away for their lack of knowledge.

Sorgul's successor took his cues from her, and would add an additional tuition fee on top, at which point it became almost impossible for the average person to get into one of these schools. Yet, Sorgul never managed to leave a lasting mark on history of her own, aside from unraveling the legacy of her predecessor. In the later part of her reign, she came to resent her title; she isolated herself in her palaces, leaving the court to run itself for many years until her passing, speaking only to her successor.

She was thus mockingly referred to as "goldstained": a Crown that never should have been.

### **The Fifteenth Crown: Heartsick Kanî**

Kanî was, for all intents and purposes, a competent ruler. He deposed a corrupt Mîr that his predecessor had let run rampant, solidified diplomatic ties with neighboring nations, and even got rid of the tuition fee required to the Schools of Magic—though he did not manage to get rid of the entrance fee.



While his reign was looked on with approval and he was judged a fair ruler, in his personal life, Kanî was rather miserable. The cause of his problems being the Mîr he deposed, or rather, his daughter. During the early years of Kanî's reign, he had engaged in a long, arduous political battle with Mîr Rubad, who had reigned over the province of Penawar like a tyrant.

Kanî's predecessor had been almost as corrupt as Mîr Rubad, only encouraging his tyranny, and the people of Penawar had suffered for it. During this fight with Mîr Rubad, however, Crown Kanî met his daughter, Xeyal, and ended up falling deeply in love with her. Xeyal herself was a kind-hearted girl who was gentle in nature, delicate in her mannerisms, charming to anyone she met—but also very timid.

Whether Xeyal was too scared to go against her father or was content in quietly benefiting from his tyranny, she was still complicit in turning a blind eye to her father's misdeeds. Kanî soon realized that he would have to punish Xeyal along with Mîr Rubad.

Eventually, the situation escalated to civil war. Kanî was forced to mobilize the Imperial Army to oust Mîr Rubad, with heavy heart. Once he was apprehended, there was no choice but to execute him for his misdeeds, but that left Xeyal to be dealt with.

While Kanî agonized over what to do, Xeyal quietly accepted her fate. Kanî tried to delay rendering judgment on her for as long as possible, instead keeping her prisoner in the palace. Xeyal herself even pleaded with Kanî to execute her as he did her father, the expected punishment, but Kanî could not bring himself to do it.

When Kanî tried to avoid that fate for her, however, the public grew increasingly restless. During an outbreak of protests in the city, diverting Kanî's attention, nobles from Penawar who had been ousted by Mîr Rubad used the opportunity to break into the dungeons and assassinate Xeyal.

Once Kanî discovered what had happened, he was so overcome with grief that he fell ill for five years. Even after his illness slowly abated, Kanî never fully recovered.

Decades later, on his deathbed, it was still Xeyal he called for.

[X/D Polyam Route Preview](#)

[Dec 17, 2022](#)

Hey all!! The R snippet will be delayed to tomorrow, as I got caught up in writing various tidbits for CH10, and ended up with a scene that I think would fit the eventual X/D polyam route much better.



Note that I'm **not** actively working on the polyam routes and it will literally take years before I can even get started on them, judging by my current writing pace 😭 By the time I get around to them, this scene will likely change--or maybe not, who knows!

It did help me get a ~Feel~ for how an X/D relationship would likely develop, though, so I figured it would be fun to share!! 💕

"I should have..." \$dname trails off, voice a tired murmur, fading away again.

Regret, guilt, shame.

It tastes like fire in \$xname's throat. \$dname isn't the one who should feel guilt, who should feel like the shameful one between the two of them. Even in a mistake that was not \$dtheirs to claim, \$dthey took it upon \$dthemselves and used it to better Arsur, to do *good*.

Compared to \$dname, \$xname's mistake is one \$xthey is still running from.

"I used to hate you," \$xname confesses.

\$dname blinks \$dtheir eyes open, slowly. \$cdtheir half-lidded gaze is glazed over from beckoning sleep, wobbling across \$xname's face before it manages to focus. Quietly, \$dthey exhales, "I know."

\$xname looks away, staring down at \$xtheir knees. "No, you don't."

Silence settles between them again, interrupted only by \$dname's steady breaths, gradually evening out. It's a strangely comforting sound, even among all the turmoil setting \$xname's thoughts ablaze.

The flames build slowly, pressing, until they reach \$xname's mouth and \$xthey cannot keep them contained anymore.

"You were stronger than me, \$dname," \$xthey says, "and I hated you for it. You still are."

\$dname takes another deep breath, parting \$dtheir lips—on the verge of sleep. It's the only reason why \$xname is able to say any of this at all, knowing there's a chance \$dname might not remember any of this, or mistake it as a dream.

\$cxthey waits for a response, tensed from head to toe, until a single word flutters from \$dname's mouth.

"Idiot."

It's so unexpected, yet so like \$dname at the same time. \$xname can't help but laugh, some of the tension leaving \$xtheir shoulders.

"I am." \$cxthey leans back against the chair, straining as \$xthey tries to steer back into more familiar waters, a more casual and less genuine tone. "But that's the way we are, isn't it? I hate you, you hate me. It's how we—"

"I don't."

\$xname snaps \$xtheir gaze from \$xtheir knees to look at \$dname's face; \$dtheir eyes have slid shut again.

For some reason, \$xname's throat feels tight. \$cxthey doesn't know why, but it does. \$cxthey never really believed \$dname despised \$xthem, yet held onto the illusion to cast it as a veil between them, keeping them distant.

To hear \$dname say otherwise stirs something in \$xname that \$xthey doesn't fully understand, and fears because of it. Something aching, terrifyingly kind blowing breath into parts of \$xthem that \$xthey thought dead.

"I don't hate you," \$dname mumbles, the briefest furrow of \$dtheir brow cracking through \$dtheir relaxed expression. \$cdtheir eyes shift beneath \$dtheir lids as if seeing something, walking the line of dreams, slowly drifting away. "You have good inside... \$xname, you are... good..."

"You can't say that." \$xname's voice trembles, \$xtheir hands even more so. "You don't know what I—"

\$dname does not hear the words; \$dthey sleeps.

\$xname falls silent and sits there in the chair. \$cxthey stares, unseeing, at the slow rise and fall of \$dname's chest with glassy eyes. \$cxtheir hands ball into fists.

The sun goes down in silence.

Catch you all tomorrow for R's snippet ✨

[R's Character Snippet: Meeting Perjin](#)

[Dec 21, 2022](#)

Hello, hello!

As you can tell, my schedule for December is in complete shambles, *however*, to make up for it I'm posting an Extra Long character snippet for R. It's roughly ~1400 words, so it's way above the usual count lol

Hope that makes up for the absolute chaos!! ✨

Also this is technically more of a side character snippet than an LI snippet, since it's told from Perjin's POV, so look for it under the "Side Characters" header in the file!

[Here's the link!!](#) The tier 2 and tier 3 files have also be updated to include this snippet (use the links from last month to read it there, if you want).

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for the latest link!

Enjoy 💖

## [RE: The December Schedule](#)

### [Dec 21, 2022](#)

Heya, quick update on what's happening schedule wise!

- **The Character Q&A** is delayed to Friday / no voting for that this time around, it'll be Siham and Ishrah this month!
- **X's romantic snippet** is delayed to Sunday
- **A and X's tier 2 character snippet** will still be posted on the usual time (Saturday next week)

Hope the last month of the year goes well for you 💖

### [Character Q&A: Siham and Ishrah](#)

### [Dec 23, 2022](#)

Hiya, here's the Q&A! Siham and Ishrah came in 2nd during last months voting, and since I didn't have time to put up a poll, I figured I should just pick them to close the year off with!

Starting from January, I think we'll go back to another round of LI Q&As, so you can look forward to that! For now, though, onto Siham and Ishrah's answers ✨

### **Tell us something about yourselves. Where you're from, your families, etc?**

Ishrah: "Well, I'm from a pretty big family that's originally from a village near Marabad! We moved to the city when I was little since there's a lot more work to be found here, but a few of my relatives stayed in the village. Like my uncle, who's a farmer! Sometimes I like to help out the gardeners at the Royal Palace, it reminds me of when I used to help my uncle."

Siham: "As for me, I was born and raised in Marabad. My fathers are both carpenters, and they wanted me to learn the trade as well, but I'm not very good at it. I do like carving wood, though. I have little figurines I sometimes work on."

### **How did you each get your jobs?**

Ishrah: "It wasn't anything special, really. I heard from a friend that the palace was looking for servants to clean it, and with how big my family is--I'm the fourth youngest of eight siblings--we definitely needed the income. So I showed up to the palace during recruitment day, and by the end of the day I was picked together with a few others."

Siham: "I ended up at the palace the same way Ishrah did. For mostly the same reasons. My family is pretty small, but we could still use the coin, and I wasn't sure what else to do since I wasn't suited for carpentering... recruitment day was a bit tiring, though."

### **What did they make you do on recruitment day?**

Siham: "Cleaning, cleaning, and more cleaning."

Ishrah: "And fetching things. And some people got to help with cooking. Oh, and weeding the gardens! But that part was actually fun, I got to help plant some of the flowers."

### **So you had to work before you even got paid?**

Ishrah: "Huh.... yeah, I guess so! I didn't really notice since I got picked, but the people who didn't get picked at the end of the day really did just give the palace a free day of cleaning. That's kinda..."

Siham: "Exploitative."

Ishrah: "I didn't want to say it, but... you're right, The examiner did say it was the only way to make sure the people picked were hard workers..."

Siham: "...In any case, I reported the examiner afterwards and Master Keko banished him from the palace. He compensated the people who didn't get picked for their day's work."

Ishrah: "You WHAT? How didn't I know about this?! I thought the examiner retired!"

Siham: (lol, lmao)

**Well, what about now that you've been serving at the palace? Is the allowance decent?**

Ishrah: "It's better than working as an apprentice at someone's shop, I think. But at least as an apprentice, you can get promoted. As a servant..."

Siham: "Bluntly said: once a servant, always a servant."

**Have you considered bringing this up with the Crown?**

Ishrah: "Of course not! The Crown has a *MILLION* other things they're worried about right now!"

Siham: "I agree, this isn't really an urgent matter."

Ishrah: "Maybe they could consider it in the future? I don't know. Siham, you should tell them about it."

Siham: "Wha- why *me*?"

Ishrah: "Well, *I'm* not going to do it!!!"

**So, if either of you could choose any profession, without worrying about money/resources, what would it be?**

Ishrah: "A gardener! Or a painter. Maybe a musician? I know how to play the flute... I don't know, there's so many things I'd love to learn!"

Siham: "...A magus, I think."

**How did you two meet each other? During recruitment day?**

Ishrah: "No, actually, we didn't run into each other until we got assigned to clean the throne room together. Do you remember that, Siham?"

Siham: "Yes. It was torture."

Ishrah: "It wasn't that bad!"

Siham: "The throne room is massive. There were nearly two dozen of us, and it still took us from morning till night just to *clean the floors*."

**Couldn't this be done more easily with magic?**

Siham: "Of course, much more easily. But none of the servants know enough magic to clean an area that large, and what magus would 'lower' themselves to do something as 'degrading' as menial tasks? Even if it's cleaning the throne room of the Royal Palace."

Ishrah: "I'm sure there are some magi who would be glad to help!"

Siham: "You're far too optimistic sometimes."

### **What do you both think about the Crown?**

Ishrah: "I definitely don't envy them... just thinking about having to be the Crown in this situation is enough to give me a stress rash."

Siham: "I don't really have an opinion right now."

Ishrah: "Really???"

Siham: "I wish them to be a good ruler and to be successful in their endeavors, since that would be for everyone's benefit... but there's no guarantee of that."

Ishrah: "I guess so... but regardless, I hope they'll do their best! As long as they do that I'm sure everyone will support them!"

### [X's Romantic Snippet: Nightmare](#)

[Dec 26, 2022](#)

Hey everyone, hope the holidays are going well!!

For this month's romantic snippet, I thought it would be fun to do a bit of role reversal. Like the other romantic snippets, this one occurs in the future, with X and the Crown in an established relationship.

[Here's the link!!](#) It also includes the recently uploaded R and Perjin character snippet, for ease of reading.

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for your tier, in order to get the correct link!

Hope you enjoy 💖

### [A & X Character Snippet: Their First Meeting](#)

[Dec 31, 2022](#)

Hellooo and happy new year in advance/belated, depending on your time zone!! I hope you'll have a wonderful 2023 ahead ✨

It's another lengthy character snippet to close the year off with at ~1400 words, as the title describes, centering on A and X's first meeting. It's mentioned briefly in the game during CH2, if you'll recall, but I had fun expanding on it with some additional worldbuilding as well as a fun little character moment.

Can be read as A/X if you squint, there's definitely some physical attraction present 🤗

It's written from A's POV, so you have to look for it under A's category! I've updated the tier 3 bonus file with this snippet as well for ease of reading.

[Here's the link!!](#)

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for your tier, in order to get the correct link!

Hope you enjoy 💖

[Weekly Progress Update \[01/JAN\]](#)

[Jan 1, 2023](#)

Whoo, first progress report of the year!! Hope everyone experiences a great 2023 in all areas of your life and that it'll be much kinder to us than 2022 was ✨

Some good news: I don't know what's in the water lately, whether it's just the relief of last year finally being over, but my writing pace has really kicked into gear the past week. I'm averaging 1k-2k words a day, which is pretty great!! We're heading **up to 27k words** now.

I'm also suspecting that I may surpass my previous estimate of 35k words if I don't keep a firm grip on how much content I want to insert because I am, once again, running away with the variations.

In my defense, with the amount of plot choices that have been made so far, it's a bit unavoidable. This chapter more than any other is making me consider how many variations I want to write out, which subplots can be momentarily set aside, and which ones need to be set up now rather than later.

The LI subplots currently take definite precedence, even though they're a relatively smaller part of the chapter in comparison to everything else. To give you an idea, the Crown's training and tutoring classes average around 7k words on their own, the political chunk of the chapter is 11k words, and the remaining 9k is taken up by the LI POVs so far.

Anyway, I've decided to pick out a deadline that I need to stick to in order to finish this thing before uni gets busy again: I'm intending to have the final draft for CH10 finished by **February 1st!**

Even if I can't make this exact date and am a few days late, it'll still give the betas enough time to beta-read in order **for all the early access Patreon/Ko-Fi releases to be in February**. Especially since this chapter won't be a very big one.

A modicum of self-control is one of my new year's resolutions for sure lol.

So, there you have it!! I'll be posting more CH10 previews throughout the coming weeks as I finish the rest of the chapter and fine-tune some scenes.

Until then 💖

### [Development Sneak Peek: Tribes of Sur Codex](#)

[Jan 4, 2023](#)

Hey everyone, hope the first week of the year is going well for you so far!!

Since we're a month out from the CH10 release, I thought it would be a nice preview to show off one of the definitive codex pages that will be added in the new chapter. As the title says, it concerns the Tribes of Sur!!

Excerpt from *Founding an Empire* as written by High Master Bahoz. Taken from Chapter Five, *Becoming Arsurian*, one of the chapters assigned to the Crown for mandatory reading by a tutor:

*"Since the Arsurian Empire was first founded, more and more tribes in the region moved to gather and settle in larger cities and towns, rather than remain on tribal lands. This was motivated by a range of causes, but at the core of it was one born from the environment.*

*Much of the tribal lands that encompassed Zerat, Avdin and Penawar had become battlefields, and many villages had been destroyed in the war against Hathura. The harm done to the land was not only physical, but spiritual; in places where many had died, the surrounding land became almost uninhabitable.*



*Lingering magic, both from the spirits of those that had passed on as well as the physical damage done to it, became poison to the earth. No crops would grow anywhere in its vicinity. Some places became plagued by ghouls, making it a danger to traverse, let alone live on. Treating the land was not impossible but would take decades of recovery efforts; nature heals its wounds slowly, though with resilience.*

*Some of the tribes, who existed largely independently from each other before but fought together in the war, came to the decision to work together to build new homes. Zeratun, the Empire's capital, is the biggest example of this: it was built with the labor and effort of multiple Surian tribes who cooperated, aided in funds by Crown Ashadūna.*

*These new homes were initially meant to be a temporary solution to provide shelter while tribal lands were being healed, but gradually became a habit and a preference for many. Over the centuries, the tribal members who came to live in these cities adapted. Tribal background is still a cultural marker, especially when interacting with others from different tribal backgrounds, but it also became part of the greater notion of belonging to a city, and as an extension of that, being a citizen of Arsur.*

*Like Zeratun, the cities of Ilwan and Arzo share a very similar history regarding the tribes settled there. Marabad is the only exception, as it was born from the Monarchy of Ardia; among citizens, distinctions are made mainly between Ardian heritage and tribal heritage. Şevan is not included in this consideration, as Hathurian history is an entirely separate subject with its own unique relationship to Arsur, which will be discussed in later chapters.*

*In contrast, those who continue living on tribal lands consider themselves citizens of Arsur in name only. They pay taxes, but are otherwise self-governing; the stewards of their lands and villages tend to conflict with stewards of larger cities, who are seen as Arsurian rather than tribal. Some tribes have come to consider those who live in the cities as outsiders, while others maintain familial relations with their tribal members; each tribe is very particular in its norms for heritage.*

*To conclude, the oft-repeated claim that Crown Ashadūna 'unified' the tribes of Sur is thus one grounded in a myth of glorification: there was no unification, only a military alliance followed by economic cooperation. In the centuries since, Surian tribal relations have become more complicated than ever before, and tribal fracturing has never been so pervasive as it is now."*

History and politics, my beloved.

Hope this was a fun preview, we're definitely getting into the thick of courtly intrigue with CH10 and gradually filling out all those "Unnamed" codex entries lol.

Until next time 💖

[Jan 6, 2023](#)

Another preview now that I've officially wrapped up the Crown Self-Care portion of the chapter!! ✨

This is for the A lovers 💕

"Forgive me, Your Imperial Majesty," \$athey says to you while frowning at the trainee, "but could I request you go again?"

"I don't see why not." You roll your shoulders and square them once more as Evdal gets up to his feet. Winning a sparring match does feel good, even with such a pitiful opponent. At least you can be confident in knowing you're better than a mere recruit.

Compared to facing down the arrow of an assassin, or having one chasing you down a tunnel, a sparring match is child's play. You have none of the nerves that are flustering your opponent, though he's also no doubt intimidated by your title.

It occurs to you that \$aname might be doing this on purpose, to lift your confidence.

So, as \$athey suggested, you go again, and even though trainee Evdal's wounded pride makes him more cautious, it doesn't increase his skill whatsoever. By the third round, the other palace guards start to jeer.

"Evdal is a poor opponent, Royal Protector, allow me to take his place!"

"This is a disgrace, Sewedi, have some respect for \$ctheir Imperial Majesty!"

"You're bringing shame upon the whole guard!"

After you trounce Evdal a fourth time, \$aname turns to the shouting guards, cutting through the commotion with chastising words: "Do you all believe yourselves so superior?"

The guards fall silent.

"Not a single person among you has ever been in battle before." \$aname continues to speak as \$athey offers a hand to where Evdal sits on the ground, after you tripped him. "Do you think your pretty little techniques will save you when faced with someone who wants to take your life? Do any of you have the spine to look hatred and bloodlust in the eye, and hold your ground?"

\$cathey pulls Evdal up, whose gaze is averted with visible shame.

“Half of the reason I’m training \$ctheir Imperial Majesty is because I know I cannot rely on any of *you* to keep \$them safe,” \$aname states, ice in \$atheir gaze as it passes on each and every watching guard. “Aside from the Imperial Guards, \$they will not find any protectors in you, not the way you are now. Get back to your training and stop embarrassing yourselves by picking on the youngest among you.”

## IF THE CROWN IS ROMANCING A

As you watch \$aname scold the guards, the sudden thought that \$athey looks good doing it occurs to you from nowhere. There’s something mesmerizing in the way \$athey wields authority...

Or perhaps you’ve been training too long; all the blood rushing through your head must be muddling your mind.

## IF THE CROWN ISN'T ROMANCING A

Harsh words, but you agree that they’re ones the guards need to hear.

Finally the Crown gets to beat someone up for a change!! I'm so proud of my monarch 🥺

[Beta Reading for CH10!](#)

[Jan 8, 2023](#)

Hey all, hope your week has gone well ✨

The amount of variations we're getting to in the latest chapters has increased to a rather large extent. I'm looking for more betas to add to my beta reading group to really make sure each story branch can be evaluated properly!

And also because I feel bad for my current betas having to do all that work lol

So I'm opening up applications for more beta readers! The minimum age requirement to join will be 18 and older, and being able to give commentary on the **substance** of the chapter is a requirement, whether it be plot, characters, or pacing. I'm not looking for betas who *only* want to spellcheck, so keep that in mind when applying!

[Here's the form](#), it's a very short and basic questionnaire with some more specifications and examples of what I'm looking for from a beta reader. I'll be keeping apps open for 1 week.

Hope you enjoy the rest of your weekend!

**EDIT:** Applications are closed! Thanks to everyone who applied 💖

[Weekly Progress Update \[15/JAN\]](#)

[Jan 15, 2023](#)

Hey all!!

Remember when I said I was going to do my best to remain under 35k words? Yeah that was an absolute lie, I'm fairly certain we're going to be over 40k by the time I'm finished because **I'm currently at 35k words** and there are still several scenes that I need to wrap up lol.

What I've already completed:

- The Crown's timeskip training and tutoring lessons (15k including variations)
- R and A's main story scenes, political (4k)
- R and A's romantic scenes (8k - 4k each including variations)
- D's POV & D-related romance content (4k)
- X's POV & X-related romance content (4k)

What is left to complete:

- Interviews of potential court candidates, including a political decision (~1k)
- Court meeting, including political decisions and outcomes (~3k)
- A scene with Kham, dependent on previous choices (~1k)
- A scene with Yekbûn and/or others, dependent on previous choices (~1k)
- A few codex entries (~1k)

I've cut out a bunch of the political/tutoring scenes that I'd written earlier, as it ended up bloating the chapter somewhat. Remember that talk with Master Youtab that I previewed a while ago? Yeah, I'm saving it for a future chapter; it will definitely be used, but it won't feature in CH10 yet.

I wanted CH10 to be more focused on the Crown's development and the building romance, rather than all the political strategizing that already happened in CH9. There's enough subplots going on as it is, so I had to make a choice on which ones are most pressing at the moment.

Don't get me wrong, there's still a good chunk of it present!! Just not as heavily featured as in the previous chapter.

## Release Dates and January Schedule

For a release dates, I'm still well on track to send my betas the draft at the end of January/at the start of February. If that succeeds and they have enough time to proofread it, my planned release dates would probably look something like this:

Public release: February 28

Ko-fi early access: February 26

**Patreon tier 1 early access:** February 24

**Patreon tier 2 early access:** February 21

**Patreon tier 3 early access:** February 14

Regardless of possible delays, I feel fairly confident in stating that Patreon early access, regardless of tier, will be in February! Ideally the release dates will be even earlier than this, but I don't wanna stress myself and my betas out lmao

As for the planned bonus content in January, there's a bit of a delay in scheduling. As you noticed, I haven't posted the first character snippet yet since I've been so busy with wrapping up CH10.

I'll still be putting up a poll for the Character Q&A shortly and post it on Tuesday, but the first character snippet will likely be delayed to Wednesday, and the romantic snippet will likely be posted next Sunday or Monday. I've decided it's better to give CH10 the priority and to get it out as soon as possible, rather than exhausting myself with making sure the bonus content is perfectly on schedule lol.

That was all for this week!

Until next time 💖

[Voting for Character Q&A](#)

[Jan 15, 2023](#)

We're back to Q&As for the love interests!!

Use the link below to vote on who you want to see first, and submit any possible questions you might want to see answered. Even if the LI you voted for doesn't win the poll, I'll save your question to answer it when they do get their turn.

The Q&A itself will be posted on Tuesday.

### [Progress Update/D's Romantic Snippet](#)

[Jan 22, 2023](#)

Hello, hello!!

This is a progress update *of sorts*; I've been very busy wrapping up the last scenes of CH10 and think I'll be able to send it to my betas for proofreading by next weekend!

The current wordcount is 44k words and the end wordcount for the chapter overall will likely be **~47k words**, with a single playthrough being ~35k words depending on your LI and plot/character variations! It's similar in size to CH9, in other words.

We're *definitely* on track to stick to the [previously announced release dates](#), so you can basically take that as a confirmation that they're official. The first early access Patreon drop will be Feb 14 for tier 3 as planned 🥳

Anyway, since I've been spending the last weeks of this month focused on finishing CH10, I haven't been able to give as much attention to the bonus Patreon content--as you may have noticed, I still have yet to post the R Q&A and missed posting the character snippets 😭

Frankly, the only bonus snippet I'm able to get out this month is D's Romantic Snippet, and I feel very bad about it (especially for tier 1/2 people who would essentially get *no* character snippets this month) so... I'm releasing it for all tiers!

If you're really bummed out by not getting the monthly character snippets, though, I totally understand and am more than willing to give you a refund, just shoot me a DM!

But hopefully the romantic snippet for D somewhat makes up for it, I made sure to make it a really cute one 🥰

[Here's the link!](#)

Sorry again for the mess of this month's schedule 🙏

[The CH10 draft is finished!](#)

[Jan 29, 2023](#)

Not a proper progress update this time since I'm only putting the finishing touches on CH10 at this point. The whole draft is finished, I'll just be doing some last coding and proofreading checks on my own and then sending the file off to my betas tomorrow ✨

In case you missed it, here are the release dates again:

- Public release: February 28
- Ko-fi early access: February 26
- **Patreon tier 1 early access:** February 24
- **Patreon tier 2 early access:** February 21
- **Patreon tier 3 early access:** February 14

Mark it on your calendars 💖

[Development Sneak Peek: CH10 LI Previews](#)

[Feb 4, 2023](#)

We're a little under 2 weeks away from the first Patreon early access drop for CH10, and since I've been busy with the editing/beta reader process I haven't been able to plan a lore post for this month.

Sooo, have some more previews instead!

These are from high relationship routes ✨

**For A:**

"There's something else I need to tell you," \$aname starts, "but I didn't want to speak of it in front of \$rname."

This surprises you. In the time you've spent with both of them, you got the impression that \$aname and \$rname get along very well together. "Why not?"

The water spirits still circle around \$aname's hand as \$athey twists \$atheir wrist, streaks of blue in the air trailing around and between \$atheir spread fingers. "It's a personal matter."

You arch your brows at this, staring at the side of \$aname's face as \$athey does not meet your eyes. "I don't understand. You've known \$rname a lot longer than you've known me, \$aname."

"I have," \$aname agrees, a rare hint of hesitance in \$atheir words as \$athey stretches \$atheir hand back out to the pool again. "But..."

\$cathey trails off as the water spirits float back to the pool, \$atheir attention shifting back to you.

\$catheir face is set in a calm expression, but there's something in \$atheir eyes that gives you pause. They're tinted a darker brown in the dimness of the temple than you usually see, brows above furrowed with the slightest wrinkle.

"I thought you would understand me better," \$athey answers at length, words spoken more quietly than they need to be.

You feel as if a hand has been extended to you, cautiously but willingly. \$aname is giving you \$atheir trust on a matter where \$athey has not given it to others before, and you realize at once how important this is.

## For R:

"Exactly how dangerous will that be?" you ask, and \$rname seems to be able to read the worry from your face as \$rthey gives you a smile.

"Master Zîn and Perjin will accompany me," \$rthey replies. "If anything goes wrong, they'll be there to help me."

That does make you feel better about it, but it's still a risk \$rname will be taking. "Maybe \$aname should go with you as well, just in case? I'm sure we could convince \$athem."

"Even if \$athey agreed, \$aname has \$atheir hands full with investigating the missing citizens," \$rname insists, though you see \$rtheir resolve faltering somewhat. The determination on \$rtheir face dims to something pleading. "I can do this."

"Of course you can," you say, so caught up in your urge to reassure \$rthem that your hand moves on its own, taking \$rname's in yours. "That was never in doubt, \$rname. I only want to ensure your safety."

Your thumb rubs across the peaks and valleys of smooth brown skin stretched over \$rtheir knuckles. \$scrtheir fingers twitch in your grip, but \$rthey doesn't pull away.



\$rname's hands are soft, but not as soft as you would've thought for someone who spent so many years living in palaces. The small callouses on \$rtheir hands and fingers are a lingering reminder of \$rtheir past, of how hard \$rthey has worked to get here.

When you look back up at \$rname's face, \$rthey looks a little flustered, looking down at your linked fingers. As \$rthey gathers \$rthemselves and meets your gaze, \$rtheir expression gradually softens with fondness. \$scrthey squeezes your hand, making your pulse stutter.

#### For X:

"Chief!" Heval strides towards \$xthem from between the Blades that are carrying and pulling the bodies of the bandits out of the way, a roll of parchment in their hand. "Letter for you."

They hand it over, and \$xname instantly recognizes whose it is from the magic signature seeped into it.

A smile widens on \$xtheir face before \$xthey catches \$xthemselves, quickly erasing it from \$xtheir lips.

\$cxthey ignores Heval's gaze burning a hole through \$xtheir face as \$xthey tucks the letter away in a pocket, keeping \$xtheir features carefully placid. "Thank you."

It speaks to \$xtheir self-restraint that \$xthey doesn't open the letter and read it until the bodies have been burned and the Blades have returned to camp.

\$cxthey feels it radiating with [the Crown's] warmth in \$xtheir pocket as \$xthey heads straight for \$xtheir tent for some privacy. Though, evidently, Heval does not approve; they hoped that \$xname would separate \$xthemselves completely from the Royal Palace, but it's not that simple.

Not that easy, either.

#### For D:

Glancing down at the contents of the letter, \$dname intends merely to skim over its last lines, yet—for what must be the sixth or seventh time already—ends up rereading it in its entirety.

[...]

\$cdtheir thumb traces the parchment in an absentminded motion, along the ink where \$name's name is written.

[The Crown's] magic signature is sealed within it, to ensure its authenticity. As \$dname brushes over the letters, \$dthey feels its heat radiate against the pad of \$dtheir finger.

Its warmth feels unexpectedly pleasant, like it did right after [the Crown's] affinity was first revealed. Perhaps it's due to the nature of \$dname's own magic, but [the Crown's] light feels soothing, invigorating—*inviting*.

[...]

\$cdthey closes \$dtheir eyes, quickly rolling the parchment back up, restraining \$dthemselves from squeezing it between a fist as \$dthey puts it back down onto the desk. This is not the time to be distracted by something as meaningless as word choice, let alone read into it for motives that don't exist—or worse, motives that *do* exist. It will only hurt them both.

Yet, despite the best efforts of \$dtheir mind to talk sense into \$dtheir heart, its attempts have not been entirely successful.

Hope these previews will be enough to tide you over until the chapter release 💖

[Heval's Character Snippet: Meeting X](#)

[Feb 12, 2023](#)

Hi everyone, hope your week has gone well!!

There's no official progress update this week since I'm still focused with CH10 and don't have much to report on for CH11. I'm in the stages of deciding the structure for CH11, and haven't set anything in stone yet.

I also need to make a few final edits to CH10 before the first early access drop the coming Tuesday 🙄

On the other hand, here's a lengthy character snippet of 1.1k words, featuring Heval and X meeting as kids! I'm thinking Heval and X probably met each other first, and X met Tûjo later on and introduced him and Heval to each other that way.

Here's [the link](#)!!

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for your tier, in order to get the correct link!

Hope you enjoy 💖

[Feb 14, 2023](#)

The release is finally here, and with it, happy Valentine's Day 💖💖💖

Thank you all so much for pledging, it's incredibly appreciated!!

There was a lot of editing involved in this chapter regarding which scenes to include; I have close to 11k words worth of scenes that I wrote for CH10 initially, but scrapped and am saving for later moments. There simply wasn't the space for it this chapter.

That being said, this chapter still amounts to **a total of 56k words**, with the average playthrough being 34-42k words depending on player choices regarding personality, plot, and romance. So, as always, I far surpassed my word count estimates in the run up to this chapter.

You can see why I had to scrap some scenes lol

Some notable changes with this new chapter:

- The codex page for the **Crescent Blades** has been added, including character art! It should be unlocked for all saves that are past Chapter 1
- Changed various lore related names, mainly the ones referring to the Major Spirits, in order to better reference the **Zoroastrian inspirations** that Arsurs religion is based on
- Darkened the background color further to be friendlier on the eyes. Some day, I'll add a proper dark mode, but that day is not today haha
- Edited the Arsurian Calendar to match with the new background color, and also corrected the start and end dates of the months!
- **IMPORTANT!!!:** It's *highly recommended* to replay the entirety of CH9 before getting to CH10. CH9 has some changes relating to LI relationship stats, so if you don't go back to play through those, you risk relationship flavor text messing up in CH10 (high relationship described as a low relationship, etc).

You can discuss any spoilers freely on the Patreon Discord channels, or if you'd like to post about it on Tumblr don't forget to tag it as 'atoc spoilers' or 'ch10 spoilers' so that others won't be spoiled!!

Now, without further ado, [here's the link for Chapter 10](#) 💖

[Feb 15, 2023](#)

Heya, hope everyone's doing well!!

Now that CH10 is pretty much finished on my end, I was thinking about what kind of Patreon content to post in the coming months since my planned schedule is pretty much cleared up.

So I thought, why not ask all of you?

You can vote in [this poll](#) what you'd like to see more of, what you think I should focus on, and what potential content you'd like to see me add in the near future. Note that it's not a *guarantee* that I'll add it, but it'll definitely be a big influence in my decision-making!

Thanks in advance 💖

[Chapter 10 Early Access \(Tier 2\)](#)

[Feb 21, 2023](#)

The release is finally here 💖💖💖💖

Thank you all so much for pledging, it's incredibly appreciated!!

There was a lot of editing involved in this chapter regarding which scenes to include; I have close to 11k words worth of scenes that I wrote for CH10 initially, but scrapped and am saving for later moments. There simply wasn't the space for it this chapter.

That being said, this chapter still amounts to **a total of 56k words**, with the average playthrough being 34-42k words depending on player choices regarding personality, plot, and romance. So, as always, I far surpassed my word count estimates in the run up to this chapter.

You can see why I had to scrap some scenes lol

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You can discuss any spoilers freely on the Patreon Discord channels, or if you'd like to post about it on Tumblr don't forget to tag it as 'atoc spoilers' or 'ch10 spoilers' so that others won't be spoiled!!

Now, without further ado, [here's the link for Chapter 10](#) 💖

[Chapter 10 Early Access \(Tier 1\)](#)

[Feb 24, 2023](#)

The release is finally here 💖💖💖💖

Thank you all so much for pledging, it's incredibly appreciated!!

There was a lot of editing involved in this chapter regarding which scenes to include; I have close to 11k words worth of scenes that I wrote for CH10 initially, but scrapped and am saving for later moments. There simply wasn't the space for it this chapter.

That being said, this chapter still amounts to **a total of 56k words**, with the average playthrough being 34-42k words depending on player choices regarding personality, plot, and romance. So, as always, I far surpassed my word count estimates in the run up to this chapter.

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You can discuss any spoilers freely on the Patreon Discord channels, or if you'd like to post about it on Tumblr don't forget to tag it as 'atoc spoilers' or 'ch10 spoilers' so that others won't be spoiled!!

Now, without further ado, [here's the link for Chapter 10](#) 💖

### [R & A Character Snippet: Their First Meeting](#)

[Feb 26, 2023](#)

Hey all, hope you've been enjoying the latest chapter!!

I'm a day late on this, but managed to finish it thankfully - a character snippet regarding the first time R and A canonically met. A was 23 years old at the time and R was 20.

It's a bit sad but also a bit sweet. I categorized it under R's character snippets, since it's told from their POV.

[Here's the link!!](#)

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for **your tier**, in order to get the correct link!

Hope you enjoy 💖

[Poll: Scenarios for Character Snippets](#)

[Feb 27, 2023](#)

Heya!! We're one day away from the public release of CH10, and I've already moved onto writing for CH11 (more on that the coming Sunday) so I'm finally returning to the regular schedule for Patreon content.

I've already got some good amount of snippets written regarding canon scenes now, as well as for side characters, so I thought it would be fun to move onto alternate scenarios between the Crown and the LIs.

With a bit of a romantic slant to them, of course 😊

This will **only** affect character snippets for tier 1 and tier 2. The coming romantic snippets for tier 3 already have their scenarios decided by me, so they're not affected by this. Check [the posting schedule](#) for further details - I picked a really cute theme hehe.

[Here's a straw poll](#) you can cast a quick vote on!!

### [Development Sneak Peek: CH11 Planning](#)

[Mar 1, 2023](#)

Hiya, hope your week is going well!!

I haven't posted a progress update in a minute since February was all about CH10, but I *have* already started planning and writing for CH11. Mostly because I suspect CH11 is going to be gigantic in terms of LI variation, so the sooner I got started, the better. Only a **5k word count** so far, but I've been writing the juiciest scenes first.

### **LI Scenes**

So, if you've played CH10 for multiple LIs, you'll have noticed that each LI has a very distinct event occur over the course of their route. While each LI has their own character arc and backstory disconnected from the Crown, their romance with the Crown does influence *how* they handle it.

This is exemplified in CH10: a **romanced R** wants to try harder as the Crown's Sorcerer and ends up [redacted], a **romanced A** feels bolstered by the Crown and stays out longer in the city to search, a **romanced D** hurries back to Marabad earlier than planned and [redacted], and a **romanced X** takes a drastic measure to ensure they can stay with the Crown in the future.

I am *extremely* excited with finally getting to CH11 now after this set-up, because CH11 is essentially where the LIs' character arcs, the Crown's main story and the Crown's romance with their LI all begin to intersect. It's going to be a massive writing challenge, but it's basically the first climactic moment and first **major relationship choice** in the Crown's romance with their LI!!

Here's a little preview for an LI scene I'm currently working on, just some lines of dialogue I've been writing. I won't say which LI this is for, but I think you can probably wager a guess...

*"I was set on my path long before I met you. Just as you were set on yours, long before you knew of me."*

*"Yet our paths have crossed. Where will they lead us now?"*

That's a pretty good transition to my next point, actually: similar to how CH9's first half diverged depending on the Crown's plot choices, CH11's first half will diverge depending on **who the Crown's LI is and their relationship status, high or low**.

The low variants for the romances haven't had major consequences so far, aside from some differences in how the relationship is progressing, but CH11 is where it gets *REALLY* real.

I really hope you'll consider having a separate low romance save for your Crown because the differences between a low and high relationship in CH11 are going to be pretty huge. Not irreversibly huge, mind you, but "this scene has a separate variable that will make the game remember whether your relationship was high or low at this point in time and how it went down" in the future lol.

So if you get the low relationship version in CH11, no worries!! You can still course-correct to a high relationship later on. If anything, it might make the high romance *more* spicy to have a low-romance moment like this influencing it. Just food for thought... 🧠🧠

## Political Choices & Subplots

Another thing I can give away for CH11 is that there will be 2 additional **major story branches**, similar to the one in CH9 regarding the assassin's escape attempt. These two branches are decided by:

- How you chose to investigate the matter of the assassin and the mental wards CH9: **using divination** or **searching the schools of magic?**
- How you chose to approach the peri trader in CH10: **asking Kham** or **going behind her back?**

Each decision will lead to different variations where you will uncover different bits and pieces of information for each subplot. It can really influence your playthrough in that way, as well as which decisions you will have available to you later in CH12 and onwards.

There will also be more court intrigue in the chapter, where your choices regarding **the Office of Law** and **Official Awir's proposal** will directly impact the way in which certain scenes go down. Even your main LI's scenes will be affected by this to some extent.



Both of these choices indicate whether your Crown is on the path to favoring the public, favoring the elites, or smack dab in the middle. As we get towards the climax of Act I, these variables will grow in weight and importance - they directly influence which ending your Crown will eventually get.

There will still be many opportunities to win points with the public and points with the elite in the future, so don't stress about this too much... yet.

That was it for this month's dev sneak peek! Next month I'll probably go back to posting more lore about the previous Crowns.

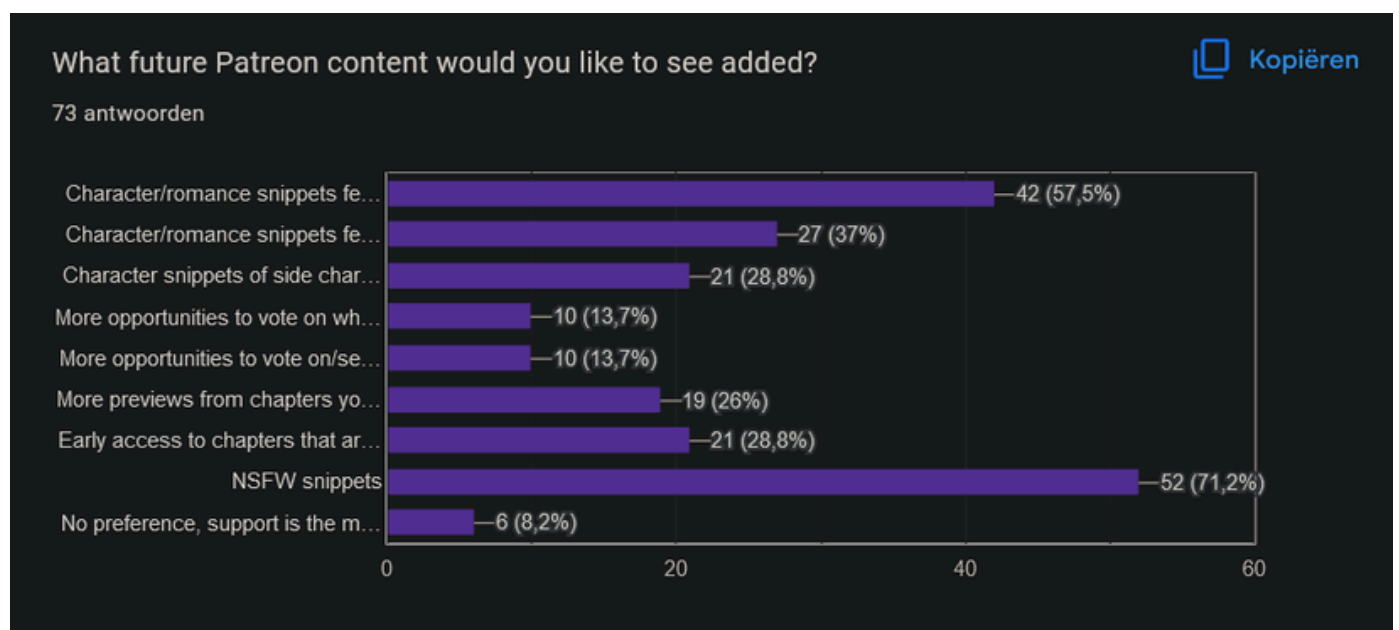
Until then 💖

### [Future \(Potentially Spicy\) Snippets](#)

[Mar 3, 2023](#)

Heya, this isn't really an update post or a planned post, but just wanted to let you all know where I'm at with future Patreon content!!

Based on the poll from two weeks ago, there were a few things that immediately became very apparent. I'll just let the results speak for themselves 🧠



I can't say I'm surprised, you're all such freaks (endearing).

I am glad to see most of you like the snippets so much, though, and want to see more of those!! I'm unsure how much I can accommodate next to writing AToC itself, but it has definitely given me some ideas.

As for the result that came in at an absolutely insane 71%...

Honestly, way back when I first started writing AToC I *did* have a nsfw version in the works, but I had to scrap it because the amount of variations required would completely bog down my writing process. I was actually really bummed out by that, too, so it would be really cool to write isolated spicy scenes for the Patreon instead!!

The only problem is... how to do it 🤔

See, the fact that both the MC and the LI vary in gender means there is an *UNGODLY* amount of variations possible if we're talking about spicy content. I can't go into much detail since the Patreon is still sfw at the moment, but trust me, it's a lot.

I think I would have to publish portions of each spicy scene, split up by specific segments. Or, I would have to alternate releasing a spicy scene with the romantic snippets, like every 2-3 months or something. If I were to write adult scenes with the LIs I'd want to offer multiple choices for the player to decide on how exactly it happens, and the ability to customize both the LIs' body types as well as the MC's.

You can imagine that would be a *lot* more work than just a straightforward character snippet. I would probably set it at a higher price at Tier 4 as well.

Also, I'm kind of worried about both Patreon's policy regarding mature content as well as Paypal, which is the only method I can use to transfer funds from my Patreon to my bank account. If either the platform or Paypal decides they don't want to mess with *any* adult material, I'd be in big trouble lol.

I'm going to keep thinking about how to handle this if I were to add it to the schedule in the future, but in the meantime, I'd love to hear your thoughts on it as well!!! Try and keep it sfw tho lol.

What kinda scenes would you want to see from spicy snippets? Would you mind if it was alternated every few months but you got complete scenes, or would you rather have bits and pieces of it if it meant monthly uploads? Let me know in the comments!!

[CH10 Deleted Scenes](#)

[Mar 7, 2023](#)

Hiya, hope your week is going well so far!!

I was going through some of the deleted scenes for CH10, and thought it would be a shame if they never saw the light of day, so I figured why not post them here instead?

## Scenes with R

This is part of a scene that I started writing, but decided to scrap for CH10 since there really was no space for it. I'll probably use it in a future chapter, because the scene itself would be very involved.

Originally this was going to be a scene where the Crown would interact more with the water spirits during some ~magic therapy~ recommended by a priest:

"I'm unsure," you admit to \$rname, furrowing your brow in thought. "It felt calming, but I don't know that it accomplished anything."

"The priest said it would take multiple sessions for your spirit to heal," \$rname says, and you notice \$rthey keeps a carefully neutral tone.

"\$rname, be honest with me." You give \$rthem a searching look. "Do you think this will truly help?"

Holding your gaze, \$rname appears conflicted for a moment, before \$rthey finally sighs. "I couldn't say. Some people seem to take to it, but others don't. In a few cases, I've even seen the spirits make things worse."

Another small moment with R, but mostly it's atmospheric flavor and a bit of lore. It was meant to be added somewhere in the timeskip, but I couldn't find a good moment for it. Might use it in a later chapter:

Once, you see a painting of Ashadūna that makes you pause to regard it. There are rays of sunlight drawn around the gold of her eyes as the rest of her face fades in the background, to the point where you can barely make out her features.

Her long hair winds around her body as if a serpent—like the symbol of Rojan, a snake wrapped around a mountain—as she cradles a round, red fruit in her hands. A pomegranate? There are other figures dressed in plain robes kneeling on either side of her, in reverence and worship.

"What do you think?"

You nearly startle at hearing \$rname's voice from beside you, not having noticed \$rthem joining you as you had been too absorbed in the painting; something about it makes you uneasy. Studying it for a moment longer, you eventually mutter, "I can't see her face."

\$rname gives you a knowing look. “Does that bother you?”

Frowning, you avert your gaze from Ashadūna’s sun-lit eyes and glance down at the fruit she cradles in her hands. It reminds you of your coronation vision. “Why a pomegranate?”

\$rname looks back at the painting. “I could not say, but it is an interesting choice on the artist’s part.” \$crthey frowns a little as \$rthey looks down the hallway. “What’s even more interesting is that this is the hallway the palace manifested.”

\$crthey gives you a curious look. “What were you thinking about when you wandered over here?”

## Scenes With A

**Mind the spoilers for A's route here, if you haven't played it yet!**

Here's a small tidbit of dialogue that I wrote on its own at first, but couldn't figure out where to fit it in. Also includes a little lore, and a romance specific dialogue line for a flirtatious!Crown:

“Is your eye color because of your father?”

\$aname frowns slightly, and for a moment you worry you’ve offended \$athem by mentioning Crown Piruz, but \$athey seems more confused than anything when \$athey replies.

“There is a theory along those lines, yes.” \$aname answers you even though \$athey seems taken aback by the sudden question. “A scholar told me about it once. Apparently the children of Crowns in the past have all had notable mixtures of colors in their eyes, sometimes unnatural ones. Mine are relatively plain in comparison to most.”

“There’s nothing plain about you.”

Next up is part of a scene from A's romance scene in the temple. I decided to shorten the conversation and cut a lot of this dialogue out of it because it felt too much like exposition and dragged the scene on for too long:

“What about your mother, Zhaleh?”

\$aname spoke with such affection of her before, but what was her role in all this, if Piruz was making such decisions? Jewels of the Crown aren’t responsible for what the Crown chooses to do, since they have no power of their own, but choosing to remain with someone who ruled like Piruz did...

“She was—” \$aname frowns. “She pretended not to see the things he did.”

Ah. “She wanted to keep her family.”

"That's a generous way of describing it." \$aname averts \$atheir eyes to \$atheir lap. "Both of my parents, they became accustomed to luxury, to power. He and my mother both very rarely stepped foot outside the palace, and citizens were barred from entering."

Completely severed from the rest of the Empire. You understand a bit better now how \$aname also remained so ignorant of what \$atheir father did as the Crown; no doubt \$athey was sequestered to the palace as well.

"We lived in what was supposed to be the heart of the Empire, yet we were completely separated from it." A scowl deepens on \$aname's face, yet through its resentment, you see its shame as well. Its guilt. "Arsur became nothing more than a throne to sit upon."

You wonder for a moment if you should ask your next question, not wanting to dredge up more painful memories, but the way it comes pouring out of \$aname... you get the sense \$athey's never really had the chance to talk to someone about any of this. Not truthfully.

"I know your father passed away from illness, but what about your mother?" you finally ask. "If you don't mind speaking of it."

The emotion in \$aname's face dims to something more controlled. Intentionally neutral.

"After my father passed away, Crown Ferzan asked my mother to be a diplomat for Arsur," \$athey explains. "People of Crownsblood can be made useful in that way; in countries with traditional monarchies, being of 'royal blood' carries more weight. And I suppose... part of her did feel remorseful, for looking away.

"She was in Arsekion, one of the Thalloi city-states, together with Ivian diplomats." The more \$aname speaks, the colder \$atheir voice becomes—trying to reign \$atheir feelings in, suppress them as best as \$athey can. "It was during the height of the Ivian Revolt. They were hoping to negotiate with King Callipides about a potential ceasefire."

You get a foreboding sense about how this story is going to end. "I take it that didn't go well?"

There's the slightest pause, before \$aname responds.

"During the negotiations, she was killed, along with the Ivian diplomats and King Callipedes himself." The loose fist \$athey has on the table tightens, contrasting the indifferent look on \$atheir face. "Opportunists in Arsekion, starting a coup. It inflamed the uprising in Ivia, and Ferzan was forced to intervene directly. A year later, he would be assassinated in Ivia himself."

A spark that lit the match. An entire chain of events, spiraling out of control, and \$aname's family at the center of it.

"How old were you?"

“Fourteen at the time.”

To have lost both parents, first at eight years old, then at fourteen—it is so young. You’re a fully grown adult, and even you had a difficult time managing. You can’t imagine how \$aname must have felt.

That was it!! There are more, fully written scenes that I scrapped from CH10, but I will be using them in their entirety in future chapters, so I can’t show you those yet.

Hope you liked this little peek though ✨

### [D's Character Snippet: Chapter Eight](#)

[Mar 11, 2023](#)

Hellooo, we're back on with the canon LI POV snippets!! This one takes place right after the convo the Crown has with Scholar Yekbûn.

This one was short and sweet, but I can also safely say this was probably the Main moment that made D realize there was some risk in how close they were starting to get to the Crown 😊

[Here's the link!!](#) The tier 2 and 3 files have also been updated.

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for **your tier**, in order to get the correct link!

Hope you enjoy 💖

### [R's Character Q&A, Part II](#)

[Mar 14, 2023](#)

Been a while since I did one of these!! With how CH10 went on R's route, I thought it would be nice to add a few romance questions as well. As an apology to R romancers haha. You can find the first Q&A I did for R [here](#).

Let's start with something lighthearted!!

### **What kind of hobbies do you enjoy in your spare time?**

"Researching different fields of magic. Lately I've been learning more about the sigils used in wards, and how they differ specifically across regions, but not necessarily across languages. This is evident in Arsurs itself: despite the many variations in dialects and languages, the sigils we use on the northern part of the continent are the same. Meanwhile, in the central region of Hidica, where Qathesh and a few other monarchies reside, they use an entirely different set of sigils-

"Ah, sorry, I'm rambling again! In any case, aside from my research, I enjoy reading literature and poetry, going horseback riding, falconry, and I've even dabbled in some blacksmithing. I suppose that's also related to magic, in a way, but I really admire the craft!"

### **Who would you say is your favorite Crown in history?**

"That would have to be the sixth one, [Crown Bardiya](#). He revolutionized the use of sigils, and expanded the functions of wards beyond what anyone could've imagined before. I've read that they were a difficult person to get along with, due to their eccentricity, but... honestly, the accounts of his exploits are very funny."

### **Have you had any past courtships?**

"I've had a few, but none of them lasted very long."

### **How come?**

"I was preoccupied in my search for the Crown. The longest courtship I had was with a soldier from the provincial army in Avdin, while I was searching there. It lasted for two years, but it was a bit unsteady. We couldn't see each other very often because how busy the both of us were, so eventually, we decided it would be better to break it off. My other two courtships were very similar."

### **Are you typically the one to ask to court others, or do others ask to court you?**

"Due to my title as the Sorcerer, I don't usually ask to court others in case I accidentally pressure someone to accept."

"The soldier I spoke of earlier, they didn't know I was the Sorcerer at first. We met each other in a local teahouse, where I was enjoying some of my free time - they didn't find out until we were a month into getting to know each other, and I was certain they liked me for me."

### **What kinds of people are you usually attracted to?**

"I don't know that I have enough of a sample to say. I'm still quite young and have only had three courtships before... but I suppose the one thing they all had in common was that they had a certain strength of character. They were passionate about something, determined to accomplish their goals."

\*\* (Assuming the Crown is romancing R:) How does the Crown match up to that?

\*\*\* "Oh... well... the Crown is a very strong-willed person. [They] might not feel this way, but to me and everyone else around [them], it's clear as day to see."

"If I had gone through what [they] had, I would be a wreck. Going from a life on the run to having to address the nobility, to make such huge decisions for the entire Empire--I don't know that I could've done it half as well as [them]. I know very few people who could. Not to mention having to do all of that while having lost [their] only family just a year ago... the Crown's resilience is incredibly admirable."

**You said you don't usually ask to court others because of your title. Would it be different with the Crown?**

"I... I suppose it might be. Assuming that I had feelings- that I had the intention of- yes, then I could ask to court [them] without much worry. Hypothetically speaking."

**Would it be an issue for the Sorcerer and the Crown to court each other?**

"It could be ill-advised, but it has happened before with previous Crowns. It was rumored that even Ashadūna herself courted her own Sorcerer, Lady Viyan, but nothing was ever officially recorded by the historians. I do know that Crown Dila, for example, courted both her Sorcerer as well as her Royal Protector, and they were two of the four who became Jewels of the Crown.

"Some in the Imperial Court might question it in order to undermine the Crown, but generally speaking, it's not very scandalous. The main concern I would have is that my feelings might get in the way of seeing certain situations objectively."

**Do you fear that would be a likely scenario?**

"Perhaps. If I were... If I were interested in courting the Crown, and [they] decided something that went against my own convictions... yes, I would worry that it would be a painful situation to deal with it.

"All I can do is hope such a situation would never come to pass- if I were hypothetically interested in courting the Crown, I mean! *Hypothetically!*"

---

That was it for this Q&A!! Next month we'll go back to voting for which LI to feature, and you'll be able to send in your own questions as well.

For tier 3, I'll see you again on Friday for A's romantic snippet. For everyone else, I'll post a progress update for CH11 this Sunday, so I'll see you then!!

Hope you have a great rest of your week 💖

[CH11 Title Previews](#)

[Mar 15, 2023](#)



I've started writing CH11 for each LI route, and with each route comes a different title for CH11. I thought it would make for fun previews 🙄

For A

CHAPTER ELEVEN  
Blood of Gold

For D

CHAPTER ELEVEN  
Honor Sacrificed

For R

CHAPTER ELEVEN  
Lost to the Storms

For Xelef

CHAPTER ELEVEN  
Son, Liar, Murderer

For Xelara

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# Daughter, Liar, Murderer

Some of you might recognize these from certain dialogue lines in CH7...

CH11 is definitely going to be very LI & Crown-centric. Can't wait to share it with you!! 💕

[A's Romantic Snippet: On a Date](#)

[Mar 17, 2023](#)

Heyaaa, hope your week has gone well so far!!

Since A's previous romantic snippet had the Crown taking care of them, it was time to switch things around and have A spoil the Crown a little in turn hehe. Like the previous snippet, this one also takes place in the future where A/the Crown are in an established relationship.

[Here's the link!!](#)

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for your tier, in order to get the correct link!

Hope you enjoy 💕

[Weekly Progress Update \[19/MAR\]](#)

[Mar 19, 2023](#)

We're back with the progress updates!!

Also back to working on AToC ✨

I finished an important class the past week and my uni schedule has just *hugely* opened up, which means for the next couple of months, I can really focus on writing CH11!!

So far I've only got **6k words** on the books, but with how well my writing has gone over the weekend, I'm hopeful I'll be able to reach 15k before March ends.

I'm projecting that CH11 will feature *the most* amount of variation for any chapter so far, so I won't be surprised if we blast past 60k words up to the 70k range. Each LI route alone will require near 8k-10k, which means almost 40k words could be devoted to just the romance arcs. Add to that the main plot storylines that are branching as well, and you get a LOT of variance.

If I can get to averaging 20k per month, I think it'll be doable to write it in 3-4 months!! An early summer release would be absolutely ideal, so fingers crossed and pray for me haha

## Current progress

Earlier in the month I skipped ahead a bit and started writing the major LI relationship climax scenes in between uni coursework, but now that I have time to fully devote to AToC I've switched to writing the beginning of the chapter.

The way CH11 opens, similar but even more extreme to CH9/CH10, will vary strongly depending on **who your LI is**, whether your LI relationship is **high or low**, and who has and has not been appointed to your **Imperial Court!**

This coming week my focus is X's route to start with, which is *quite* spicy. A Crown in a low variation has a very different perception of how CH10 ended compared to one with a high variation. A low variant Crown is oblivious compared to a high variant one, so that'll be fun once X finally shows up LOL.

But also, the political shenanigans that are already happening here are absolutely delicious. Part of X's route does have some overlap with all the others in the court scenes, though the cause for each will differ greatly, obviously.

Here's a small preview of a bit you might see occur across all LI routes, though it still depends on **who** is appointed to your court (and the Lord Samal referenced here is specific to X's route as well):

“Chief Minister, is this allowed? There must be procedure for the appointment of officials—”

“It is all at the Crown’s discretion,” Chief Minister Karwan states simply, turning away from the representative again to face forward instead.

“But this is highly unusual!”

The Minister breathes an exasperated sigh. “Oh, quiet down! Were you not using the same technicalities to get your way a moment ago, you insolent dog?”

“Do not speak to me that way!” Lord Samal erupts. “I serve Mîr Behram!”

“And I was already serving the Crowns of this Empire when your master was still suckling at the teat!” the Chief Minister snaps. “Now be a good boy and come to heel, we have many more matters to discuss.”

Looks like the Crown finally has some allies on their side after appointing their officials, which should make it a little bit easier on them. Although that also highly depends on what *other* officials the Crown appointed, or removed, or did not remove 🙄

I'm still thinking about the exact structure of the chapter in terms of the events that happen, but I think I will figure that out as I go along. Overall I'm as equally excited to get to the potential romantic developments this chapter as I am for the plot elements!!

I mentioned this before in the dev sneak peak for this month, but in terms of the romances, this chapter is definitely a climactic moment.

The exact decision you make can help you fully recover and have some goodwill to fall back on, if you are on a low relationship route, or make things *much* worse. It won't be impossible to switch to a high relationship variant even if you mess this scene up, but your LI *will* keep this moment in the back of their mind for the rest of the game.

Similarly, if you are in a high relationship currently, and you make the right decision, you can reinforce it and ensure your LI remembers this moment even if you have some rough times in the future. Or, there's the potential to mess up your high romance and have this be a stain that follows you for the rest of the game lol.

No pressure though!! 😊

That was it for this week, until next time 💖

[In Between: CH11 X Route Progress](#)

[Mar 21, 2023](#)

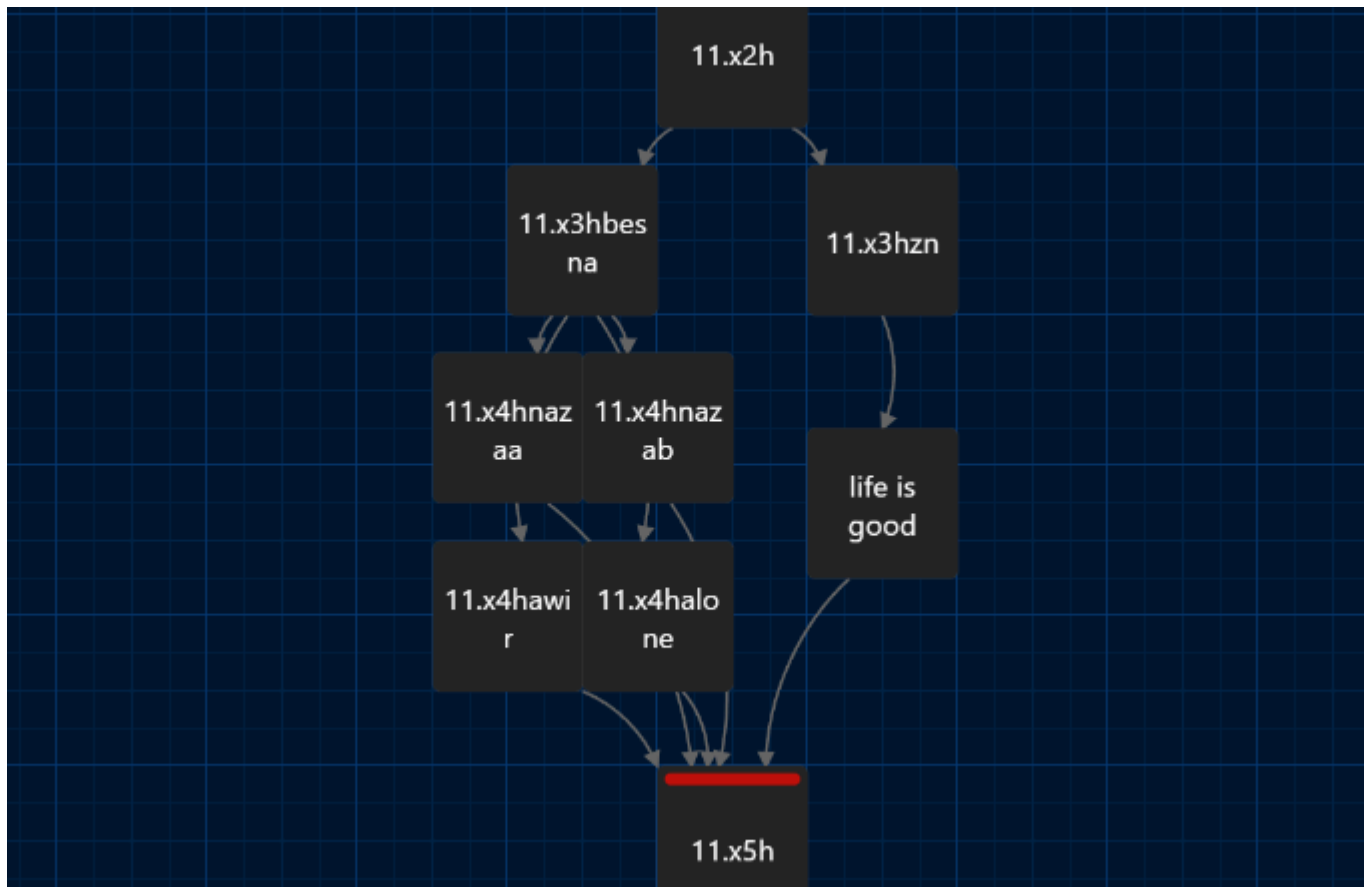
I don't know what's come over me the past few days but my writing pace has been absolutely *crazy* since I posted that progress update on Sunday haha. I've written between 1.5k-2k words every day since then and am already up to **10.195 words!!**

I'm really excited about it so I wanted to share. I suspect all this writing energy is because I've got a break from uni for the first time in forever lol.

All of my progress these past few days has only been for X's route, though, which it appears will have the most variants in its opening scene, just because it features the Imperial Court.

I have to account for 1. who the Minister of Law is (with 3 possibilities), 2. whether Lady Naza has been appointed as Minister of Defense or not and 3. whether an alliance has been made with the royal historians or not 🤔

The route especially diverges based on whether Minister Besna still heads the Law Office or whether you managed to dismiss her:



If Minister Besna is still part of your Crown's court, there are other ways to mitigate her influence (Lady Naza/the royal historians, with Lady Naza getting an added relationship choice during that scene; if you have neither of these you're kinda screwed), and it leads to a looooooot of variation. Whereas if you managed to boot Besna out back in CH9... as you can see, the route is MUCH simpler LOL.

And yes, as you can probably tell from the "h" at the end of the passage names, this only accounts for X's high romance route 🥲

I don't think their low romance route will be majorly different wrt the Imperial Court, but I will have to rewrite a lot of paragraphs to account for the fact that a Crown who's on the low romance path at the end of CH10 (**spoilers**) doesn't suspect X is behind the attack...

I'll be glad once I finally have this scene behind me, because it is logistically the most nightmarish to

deal with atm. All the other LIs' opening scenes, while they'll be equal in length, will also be much simpler and straightforward in comparison... a little mercy for me, as a treat 😊

I will have to repeat this process later when the Crown gets another (regular) court meeting in the main plot, so I guess it's good I have my variables already sorted out. I'm just going to have to write like a madwoman to get through these scenes and actually get to the JUICY parts (X's romance scene!!!! wait for me!!!!!!!!!!)

Hope your week has started out well 💖 Pray this writing pace keeps up for me so I can post the chapter in early June!!

### [X's Character Snippet: Chapter Eight](#)

[Mar 25, 2023](#)

Hello, hello!! It's time for X's POV of the Chapter Eight scene ✨

This one's a tiny bit spicy. Just the tiniest bit. But that's because the original scene was also a tiny bit spicy, haha.

[Here's the link!!](#) The tier 3 file has also been updated with it.

As a reminder, the link for these snippets will change on a monthly basis, and they also differ per tier, so make sure to check the **most recent** snippet post for **your tier**, in order to get the correct link!

Hope you enjoy 💖

### [Weekly Progress Update \[26/MAR\]](#)

[Mar 26, 2023](#)

Hey all, hope your week has gone well!!

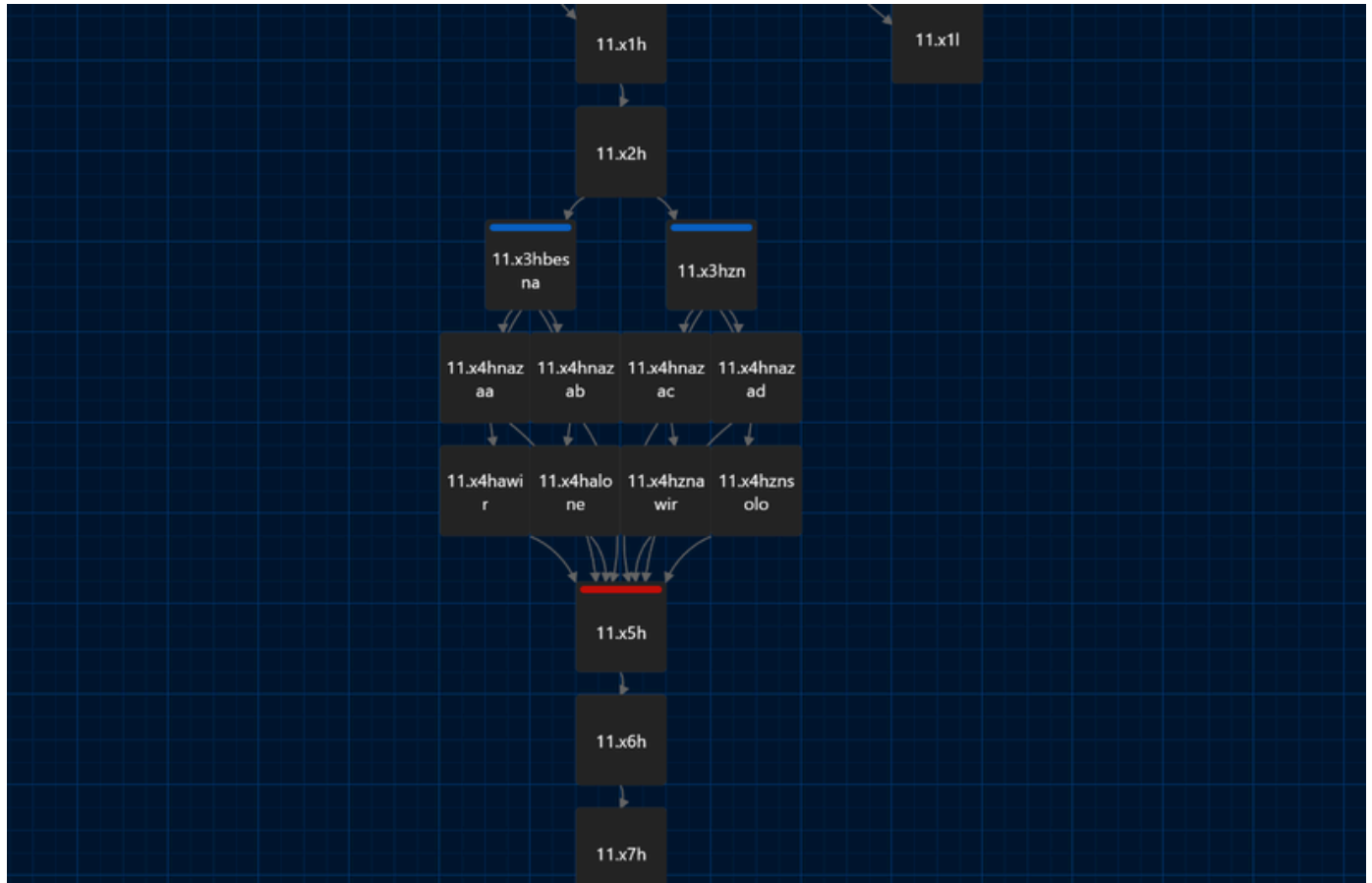
I'm well on track with CH11. If you saw the update I posted yesterday on the Tumblr blog, you already know I made it to **13k words** this week. With only a few days left in March I think I'll easily be able to surpass my 15k word goal 🙏

For April, I'll be aiming for a minimum of 25k, which means that I'll hopefully have 40k on the books before May begins, and the bulk of the chapter will be finished!!

## Progress so far

As for actual progress, if you'll remember from the [in between update](#) earlier this week, I had part of X's high route written already.

Currently, that same path now looks like this in my Twine file:



In other words, the high relationship variant for the X route opening scene is pretty much finished!!

I've decided to go straight ahead with X's high romance scene attached to this as well, instead of doubling back to write the low relationship opening. It would feel stifling to book all that progress and then have to go back and write the same scene ALL over again, just with a different perspective. I'm craving some scene progression right now haha.

As for X's high romance scene, it's going to be very spicy 🌶️

I've already started writing it out a little bit, here's a tiny preview:

*The smile gradually fades from \$xname's face. "You don't look happy to see me."*

*You stare back at \$xthem as your lips part to speak, to give voice to what you feel, but it is impossible.*

A high romance Crown is going to have a very different encounter with X compared to a low romance Crown. X still has to break some important news to a low romance Crown, whereas a high romance Crown is like "it's ON SIGHT." 😭

As such, a high romance Crown also gets a different relationship choice compared to a low romance Crown during the opening scene of the chapter:

What should you do? What can you say to escape this, to protect Xelef?

*Should you protect Xelef?*

- ◆ **You trust Xelef. If he did this, he did it for good reason, and you will protect him as much as you can.**
- ◆ **Xelef went behind your back. He did not trust you, so why should you protect him? You owe him nothing.**
- ◆ **You don't know what to think.**

Basically, a high romance Crown will have some time to mull things over before X shows up, while a low romance Crown will be confronted with it very much in the heat of the moment.

Things to consider 🤔

That was it for this week's update, the coming week we're in between the monthly schedule since April hasn't started yet, but I'll be sure to post another CH11 preview for X before I switch to R's route!!

Until next time 💖

[Weekly Progress Update \[4/APR\]](#)

[Apr 3, 2023](#)

A day late on this, woops!! Hope everyone had a good start on their week tho ✨

I'm happy to say I surpassed my 15k words goal for March and **made it to 18k words** by the time of writing this post. My goal for April will be 25k words, so hopefully by the end of it I will have finished all the LI route opening scenes and be up to ~45k words for the chapter!!

**Progress so far**



I've finished the first draft for X's opening scene and am halfway through their romance scene, but I've noticed my focus doing a bit of ping-pong with all these scenes. I *totally* forgot to post another preview for their route last week as well, so here it is instead:

"Why do you have that dagger?"

You turn to look at \$aname, taken aback by how stunned *atheyappears*. "xname gave it to me."

"\$cxthey gave it to you?" \$aname repeats incredulously, glancing back down at the dagger in your hands. "Did \$xthey tell you who it originally belonged to?"

"It belonged to someone else?" You assumed \$xname was the only one who owned it, but looking at it again, despite its well-cared for state you can make out subtle signs of wear and tear. Little scratches along its sheath, the edges of pearl looking a little worn along the handle. "Whose was it?"

"\$cxtheir mother's."

Your fingers tighten around its sheath in shock, then twitch with the urge to put it away. "\$cxtheir mother's? Why would..." You look down at the dagger in complete disbelief. "Why would \$xthey give it to *me*?"

In case you forgot about the dagger, it's time for it to make a little reappearance! Lots and lots of juicy moments in X's route, I've been having tons of fun with it.

However, as I said, I've been going back and forth between various scenes because there is SO much I want to get to, so I also made a good start on R's route for this chapter as well. That one is less juicy and more painful 😭

Your hands reach for \$rthem, but then halt and hover in mid-air, uncertain of whether you should even touch \$rthem while \$rthey's in this state.

"It's alright," Perjin speaks quietly from beside you. "You can hold \$rtheir hand, if you wish. Your magic won't cause any problems."

You take a slow, deep breath, calming yourself as you sit down on the edge of the bed and gently take \$rname's hand in yours.

"\$crtheir fingers are cold." Alarmed, you rub \$rtheir hand, feeling how clammy and cool \$rtheir skin is. You turn to Perjin. "Why does \$rthey feel cold? What's happening to \$rthem?"

Neither R or the Crown are having a good time at the start of this chapter, RIP.

I also *realllyyyy* wanna get to A and D's routes, but I'm exercising a modicum of self-control and forcing myself to book some progress on X and R's first, or I'll keep swinging back and forth on these lol.

Aside from the LI routes, though, I'm also very excited to get to the meat of the plot developments and the Crown's continuing development as both a ruler as well as their inner conflicts.

Those seemingly flavor text choices in CH6 and CH8, relating to how the Crown is dealing with their grief? Yeah, they're about to get very relevant in CH11. The pressure on the Crown has been building ever since they arrived in Marabad, and now, with the political stakes getting higher and higher, it's a very tense position to be in both mentally and emotionally.

The water spirits may or may not be involved! Who knows 🤔

That was it for this week!! Take note of the updated schedule that's pinned for Patrons! I've planned all the content out up to and including August now.

Until next time 💖

### [Development Sneak Peek: Crowns of Old, Part III](#)

[Apr 7, 2023](#)

Hey all, hope your week is going well so far!! Sorry for the late upload, it honestly completely slipped my mind haha.

We're back to more lore about past Crowns, ones that won't feature heavily in the story but might still be cool to know about to understand Arsur's history better. These are always fun to write up!! If you haven't read the past few posts linked below, I would definitely recommend doing that as well.

[Part I](#) / [Part II](#)

The next two Crowns here are... hmm. Let's just say Clown instead of Crown might be more accurate.

#### **The Fourth Crown: Medya the Would-Be Priest**

When Medya was chosen as the successor, he was recruited from a family of priests, as his epithet eventually came to reflect. He was a Crown that let religious principles guide him in all matters, often spending days at a time in seclusion for meditation and prayer.

His family was part of a sect of worshipers devoted to Apas, the Major Spirit of the Waters. Crown Medya, following its teachings, was a ruler known for long periods of reflection before making decisions.

It made him prone to indecisiveness, and overly dependent on the advice of priests.

In fact, during his rule, he instated a special Office of Rituals and appointed a favored high priest, Lady Avjin, at its head. Usually spiritual advice is given by the Wisdom of the Crown who will deliberate with both spiritual and secular experts in order to give many possible perspectives on an issue, but Crown Medya changed this dynamic. It was a controversial decision. Many praised him for prioritizing spiritual traditions, but just as many criticized him for elevating only *certain* traditions over others and forcing them upon the whole of the population. Some considered it to be in direct conflict with Ashadūna's aspirations to create a unified, but multicultural, empire.

Conflict continued to grow between various factions. Even the nobility, who first sought to take advantage of Medya's strict adherence to religious rituals, became aggravated at the Crown's insistence on involving his spiritual beliefs in every facet of his governance. Being chosen as the Crown likely had turned his previous, relatively normal devotion, into an almost feverish obsession for the spirits. This only became worse as time went on.

Soon, he named the high priest that he had previously appointed as Minister to the position of the Crown's Sorcerer. This was unprecedented. While a high priest could technically qualify, since priests are required to be trained as magi first, it was understood that the Sorcerer should prioritize *magic*, not spiritual guidance. Medya soon started to leave all matters of governance to his Sorcerer, preferring instead to pray and partake in religious ceremony.

Ironically, Lady Avjin was much more inclined towards governance than the Crown. While the public was still greatly dissatisfied with the situation, she managed to assuage the nobility merely by her willingness to bargain with them, whereas Medya had drawn a hard line in the sand before. While Lady Avjin essentially ruled, Crown Medya was rarely seen up until his death.

Long after Medya's rule, Crown Keybanû would abolish the Office of Rituals.

### **The Fifth Crown: Koban the Impotent Sword**

Crown Koban was an ardent admirer of Crown Humati, who was seen as an exemplary ruler where her military victories were concerned. Koban, on their part, was rather brash in comparison. While an effective military leader, they lacked in other areas of governance: their first solution typically tended to be to use the Imperial Army, where other avenues would have sufficed.

While their aggressive temperament proved useful in warding off the invasion attempts from the Saca in the north, it made them terrible at diplomacy. Much of the conflicts with Thallos can, at least partly, be traced back to Crown Koban's reign. They would demean and insult other monarchs, boasting about Arsur's military power as often as they could. While the public and some of the nobility were fond of their theatrics, perhaps even encouraging of it, the merchant faction were their greatest critics. Especially in the province of Avdin, which is the main point of trade from and to Thalloi city-states, their rhetoric was less than appreciated.

While Thallos was not much of a threat during this period, things began to change when Koban started poking at Qathesh.

Even those who supported Koban's arrogance before quickly began to turn on them. It was clear to everyone that Arsur could not compare to Qathesh when the empire was still in its infancy, and furthermore, Qathesh was a much more vital trading partner as well as a direct neighbor compared to Thallos. Inciting a war with them was nothing less than foolishness--Koban likely knew this as well, but had grown so conceited they thought they could taunt them without repercussion.

Thankfully, the Pharaoh of Qathesh at the time, Masaharta, knew Crown Koban was all bark and no bite. Still, he could not let any insult stand. When Crown Koban celebrated their bonding to their promised one, the gift sent by the Pharaoh was a single sapling of a fig tree. It was widely understood as a reminder of Arsur's youth as well as its small size compared to Qathesh. Crown Koban was stated to have been humiliated and seething with anger at the condescension, not that they could do anything about it.

The double entendre of their epithet was given intentionally.

### **The Seventh Crown: Lorîcan the Bullheaded**

Crown Lorîcan, as you can likely tell from her epithet, was known to be a very stubborn Crown. Many times unreasonably stubborn, with disastrous consequences as a result.

Once Lorîcan had made her mind up about something, it was impossible to tell her otherwise. She would argue experts who studied the subject matter for their entire lives, based solely on the fact that her authority was absolute, and being chosen as the Crown meant she would know what was best. Lorîcan's relationship with her Imperial Court, however, was not necessarily antagonistic. While the nobles were greatly annoyed by her at the start of her reign, they quickly learned that as long as they were the first to talk ideas into her head, it would be impossible for others to change her mind, and she would always end up in agreement with them.

If anything, this led to great friction between her and her Sorcerer. Noble Zinar was immensely frustrated as the nobility got a hold of Lorîcan and began talking in her ear before her Sorcerer could advise her on anything. Soon, this began to lead to arguments between Lorîcan and Zinar.

The boiling point came when a plague was spreading through the cities of Zerat. The advice from experts to burn dead bodies en masse was protested by the magi who did not want to risk themselves in the plague, and through the Imperial Court, they argued that burning the bodies would be in violation of many people's spiritual beliefs. In Arsur, dead bodies are most typically fed to carrion birds. While some groups do use funeral pyres, many believe burning or burying corpses would defile the sacred elements of earth and fire.

When Lorîcan accepted his judgment, neither Zinar or any of the others in court could tell her otherwise. Zinar finally lost their patience, and their argument with Lorîcan became so out of hand that at the end of it, the Crown ordered for her Sorcerer to be stripped of their position and imprisoned.

It is the great irony of Lorîcan's story that she, of course, eventually succumbed to the plague herself.

That was it for this week!! Suffice it to say not all Crowns in history made for good rulers. Some mismanaged Arsur out of malice, and others... out of outright incompetence lol.

Let's hope the MC can do better than these predecessors 🤪

### [Voting for Character Q&A](#)

[Apr 9, 2023](#)

We're back to voting for the Q&As!! Since R has already had theirs last month, for fairness, you'll only be able to vote for D, X or A this time 💖

Use the link below to vote on who you want to see first, and submit any possible questions you might want to see answered. Even if the LI you voted for doesn't win the poll, I'll save your question to answer it when they do get their turn!!

The Q&A itself will be posted on Tuesday.

### [Poll: Extra Romance Snippet ft. LI Pairings!](#)

[Apr 9, 2023](#)

Hey everyone, hope your week has gone well ✨

The amount of pledges I've received since the release of CH10 have been crazy!! Thank you all so much for your support 🙏

Since I'm already writing 3 snippets a month featuring the LIs with the Crown in some way, as well as doing so while writing the main game, my brain was *begging me* for something new.

I don't want to tackle the polyamorous dynamics yet, since I haven't worked out what a romantic relationship between the LIs would look like. So I decided, why not explore that in a Patreon snippet instead? And put that up for you all to decide and receive as a cute bonus for April?

Whichever pairing gets chosen, the snippet will likely be some sort of canon divergence either taking place before the Crown appears, or long after the events of the main game. To avoid massive spoilers,

haha.

[Here's the poll!!](#) I'll leave it open until Wednesday, then get started writing on the snippet and release it before the end of April.

Tier 3 patrons, don't forget to vote on [which LI to feature for the Character Q&A](#) as well!! I've moved it up a week this month so that I have the space to work on the extra snippet later.

Until next time 💖

## [A's Character Q&A, Part II](#)

[Apr 13, 2023](#)

Hey everyone, hope your week is going well!!

The results from the poll came in and A was chosen by a solid majority of voters, so they'll get to have their Q&A this month ✨

[Here's A's first character Q&A](#), in case you haven't seen that one yet.

I also received a few interesting patron-submitted questions, so let's get to it!

### **Favorite outfit and why?**

"I have a set of deep-blue robes that lighten into a brighter, more greenish blue whenever sunlight touches the fabric. It reminds me a lot of the gradients of the sea, from the dark parts of deeper waters to the radiance of shallower parts. It was a gift from R for my birthday last year, I've never worn it because of how fancy it looks. Perhaps I will during my birthday this year."

### **Have you ever had an unrequited love before? What did you do?**

"Of course. I think most people have, at some point. As for me, I was very young at the time, around 13 years if I remember right. She was the daughter of one of the servants, one of my playmates growing up, and at the time I was convinced she was humoring me. I never ended up confessing to her.

"Thing is, I ran into her years later as an adult and mentioned I used to have a crush on her. She laughed and told me she did too, at the time, but was too shy to confess to me."

### **So, what happened?**

Ashti/Azad shrugs. "Nothing. She was already promised to another, and neither of us held any feelings after such a long time. We mostly thought it was funny--but that experience did teach me to take a

chance while I still have it. It's better to risk being rejected than let the moment pass you by and regret it years later."

[If A is romanced] "...Although, maybe it's better that I didn't confess back then. I might've been promised to her now, which would mean... never mind."

### **Conversely, has anyone ever had one-sided feelings for you before?**

"A couple of times, yes. I've had a few admirers from a distance, but they were no better than acquaintances. I turned them down politely--some took it better than others."

### **Did they get angry?**

"No, they would mostly just be sad, but one started sobbing on the spot. I also had a few times when a friend confessed their feelings to me, though, when I didn't feel the same. Those times were a bit more difficult to deal with."

### **How did you handle it?**

"I let them both down easy, of course. The first time it happened, things felt strange with my friend for a while, but he eventually got over it. We went back to normal, and nowadays we can laugh about it. It helps that it was more of a crush than anything deep-seated."

"The second time, though... *that* particular friend was very much in love with me. It was a bit of a mess. I felt guilty that I couldn't return her feelings, and she couldn't spend time with me much anymore because it pained her too much. Eventually, we drifted apart. Sometimes things like that happen, it's no one's fault. Doesn't make it hurt less, though."

\*\*Let's move on to something more light-hearted. What's your favorite song or story to hear in a teahouse?

\*\*\*"You have to swear not to tell Xelara/Xelef."

\*\*Cross my heart.

\*\*\*"I don't believe you, but fine. It's the story of Xelef/Xelara and the Bandit King, Rizgar. Xelef/Xelara was hired by a village in Penawar to kill the Bandit King. Because his hideout was so heavily fortified, the Crescent Blades would've needed to lay a siege if they wanted to reach him, but they didn't have the manpower for that.

"So, the story goes, Xelef/Xelara snuck into the fortress, killed a few bandits while sneaking to the Bandit King, but then got caught. Someone in the village had ratted [them] out to Rizgar, and he was expecting them. Xelef/Xelara proposed to have a one-on-one duel instead, [them] against the Bandit King. [They] played on Rizgar's considerable pride, and he fell for it.

"Instead of actually fighting him, though, Xelara/Xelef took him hostage, used him to escape, then slit his throat the moment [they] stepped outside the fortress. The bandits became fractured without a leader, starting to fight amongst themselves, and the Crescent Blades took advantage to wipe their remnants out later."

**Are you sure Xelef/Xelara doesn't already know you enjoy listening to this story?**

"I *know* [they] know. That's why I need you not to remind [them], or [they'll] tease me about it for ages."

**If you had the authority of the Crown for a day, what would you do?**

"That's a tough one. There's only so much you can do in a day... any edict I could make would be easily reversed later, and anything large-scale would take more than a day.

"I suppose the most effective thing I could do would be to order raids on the estates of noble families, sell off their wealth and hand it out to the poorest among us instead. It would at least keep them fed for a couple of winters."

**What would you do if you had to choose between saving the Crown or a large portion of your guards?**

"I would save the Crown, no question. It's my duty as the Royal Protector, and any of the Imperial Guards would do the same. They know all of our lives are expendable compared to the Crown's. Not because the Crown's life is inherently worth more, but because of the consequences their death would have on millions of people.

"If they were assassinated like Ferzan, the chaos that would cause... it would leave Arsur extremely vulnerable. There are many, both within and outside of Arsur, who would take advantage. The citizens would be the ones to suffer most from whatever power-grab would occur after the Crown's death."

**[If A is romanced] And your personal feelings don't play any part in that equation?**

"...I never said they didn't."

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That was it for this week!!

I'll see you all again on Saturday for this month's tier 1+ character snippet 💖

[R's Character Snippet: Chapter Eight](#)

[Apr 18, 2023](#)

Heyaaa, sorry for the late upload!! I had an absolute shitshow of a weekend and couldn't muster the energy to write anything, but thankfully I managed it today 😭

I planned to write and release the extra bonus snippet today (which will feature D/X btw, based on the poll results), but it will have to wait until next week instead 😞



This character snippet is definitely a super cute one though. I'd say it's one of, if not *the* moment R really started getting a crush on the Crown and realizing as much at the same time ✨

Hopefully that makes up for the late upload!! [Here's the link](#), the tier 2/3 files have also been updated (see the pinned post schedule for the links to those).

Until next time 💖

### [X's Romantic Snippet: On a Date](#)

[Apr 24, 2023](#)

Sorry for the late upload, I was celebrating my mom's 60th birthday over the weekend with my family ✨

This one was really cute to write, it's an established relationship between the Crown and X but still in the courtship phase of things. Thinking about where the Crown and X's relationship is currently at in canon and comparing it to this snippet is kinda funny, the vibes couldn't be more opposite lol.

[Here's the link!!](#)

I'm hoping I'll have the X/D snippet out either on Wednesday or Thursday.

Until then 💖

### [Bonus Romantic Snippet: D/X](#)

[Apr 27, 2023](#)

Hey everyone, hope your week is going well!!

Based on the poll results from last time, X/D won out with a majority wanting to read it from D's POV as well, so that's what I wrote for this month.

I had so much fun with this snippet and it flowed so easily (literally wrote it in like, 2 hours) that I could just feel my brain flooding with gratitude-serotonin for being able to write a completely new dynamic. I'm definitely going to be writing A/R and A/X snippets for the next two months as well!!

For this month, though, you'll get this snippet. It's pretty juicy with a ~1.8k word count, I imagine it's a little bit of a canon-divergent scenario that takes place a few months before the Crown is found.

Like, in actual canon, this scene probably didn't happen, so it's a "what if D had acted impulsively for a rare moment" type of thing haha.

[Here it is!!](#) I updated the tier 2 and 3 files with it as well (see pinned post for their links).

Enjoy!! 💖

### [A's Character Snippet: Chapter Eight](#)

[Apr 29, 2023](#)

Heyyy, hope you're all having a great weekend!!

Damn I put out a lot of snippets back to back it feels like. It was basically 3 in the span of a week haha. And with this we finished all the POV scenes for CH8! The next two months will be for CH10 🙄

A's character snippet was fun to write, I got to add a little bit more detail about their backstory, as well as the first inkling of Developing Feelings from their POV. Sometimes you really need a good old slow burn to balance things out.

[Here's the link!!](#) I updated the tier 3 file with it as well.

Hope you enjoy 💖

### [Weekly Progress Report \[30/APR\]](#)

[Apr 30, 2023](#)

Hey everyone, it's the last day of April!!! Hope your week (and your month) is ending on a high note.

It's been a minute since the last progress report, but I'm more or less satisfied with where we're at so far. The word count came in at **~35k words**, so about 10k short of my goal for April, but I think that can

be rectified easily in May. I took a 1-week break from writing due to some uni stuff I had to take care of, so my writing pace took a hit lol.

Specifically, **I've finished the first draft for X's route** for CH11 and am mildly exasperated by my inability to properly estimate how long these sections will be. I thought it would amount to 10k at most, but **X's route ended up with 17k words** 😭

I do think that's a fair exchange, considering X romancers didn't get any romance content in CH10 beyond the letter exchanges. So it makes sense that X's and D's routes in CH11 would end up higher in word count compared to A and R. I'm guessing **for A and R, their word count will be closer to 12k** instead. I already have 6k written for R's route, so we're halfway to finishing theirs as well!

Still, this means that my goal for an early June release was rather optimistic, to say the least, since **the LI routes will need a total word count of ~60k**, potentially. I'll probably need June to write the non-romance scenes considering the LI content is taking up sooo much space this chapter haha.

CH11 will probably end up being close to 90k words, the largest chapter so far with the most variability in terms of LI routes and political choices. It's shaping up to be *crazy*.

I hope you'll be patient with me as I work towards finishing it in the coming months!!

## Progress so far

I'm gonna give a few more details on R, A and D's romance routes this time since I've finallyyyy gotten past the enormous hurdle that was X for this chapter lol

First, here's another **preview for R's route**:

*Your hands are not your own. They are much smaller, fingertips and nails stained with dirt, bony knuckles poking up from beneath deep brown skin that seems as thin as a delicate veil.*

*Without your permission, they reach up, towards the surface of a counter that's taller than you. Your fingers curl around the edge of a book—a voice drifts in from beyond a hallway, words too soft to make out.*

*You freeze, holding your breath, hands still clinging to the book. Your heart is pounding in your chest.*

*The voice goes silent.*

*Quietly, quickly, you pull the book off the counter. You hold it to your chest, encircled within your arms, and hurry back out the way you came. Ducking beneath a thick curtain, you find yourself on a familiar street. Not only familiar to the small body you inhabit in this strange dream, but familiar to you\*.\**

*This is where you found Perjin's shop.*

A strange dream... wonder what that's about 🙄

Aside from working on R's route, I've also written out the structures of A's and D's routes, and they are both equally juicy.

**A's romance route** doesn't *initially* have much variability in terms of high/low romance, but the major romance choice you make in their route has an ENORMOUS effect.

Unlike the other LI routes, this choice doesn't seem directly related to their romance or relationship either, but rather, it's about your Crown's priorities. A's romance has always been a slow burn partly due to A being naturally reserved, but also partly because of their hesitance due to your MC's position as the Crown.

As a result, the decisions your character makes as *the Crown* has a much bigger impact on how A views you compared to the choices you make on how to treat A directly. From A's perspective, sure, your Crown can act sweet towards them, comfort them, be good to them in however many ways--but how much is that worth if their reign as the Crown causes suffering and harm for others?

Maybe that's giving away a bit too much, but... yeah. If you're romancing A, your MC is going to have to win their trust as the Crown first, before A will feel comfortable enough to commit to them as a romantic partner.

**D's romance route**, on the other hand, much like X's route, has a lot of variability in terms of low/high romance, and the choices you make also adapt a little. A low romance choice set will be slightly different compared to a high romance choice set, because a low romance Crown approaches D differently compared to a high romance Crown.

Chapter 10 already hints a little bit towards the differences between a low/high romance as well. You can see it a bit in the letters your Crown writes to D, as well as from D's perspective.

The Crown's letter in a low romance refers to D as "the general", and confessed to feeling insecure about D not being there to guide them. As a result, D in a low romance is pretty much fussing over the Crown. They feel pressured to make sure the Crown is doing well as a ruler and is worried they won't be able to handle the Imperial Court on their own, which fuels their desire to return.

Meanwhile, the Crown's letter in a high romance refers to D as "a friend" rather than the general, and focuses more on how the Crown misses D's presence as someone they like, rather than their rank. As a result, D in a high romance has more confidence in the Crown's ability to handle themselves and their court, and feels free to think about their own attraction towards the Crown, which fuels their desire to return.

This thread will be continued in D's CH11 romance scene and made more apparent, especially if your Crown chooses to lean into it with the choices they make.

So, X's and D's routes focus a lot on the high/low romance variants, while A's route has a big focus on the choices your Crown makes, and I'd say R's route is a balance between high/low romance variants and their romance choices.

Aaaand that's enough insight from me before I completely spoil the entire chapter haha. Hope you like the way it's headed so far 🙄

Until next time!! 💖

### [Development Sneak Peek: New UI!](#)

[May 3, 2023](#)

Hey all, hope May has started well for you!!

I mentioned this on Tumblr yesterday, but I've been working on a new UI for AToC for the past week!! It's got the Settings API that allows users to edit fonts, font size and switch between light mode and dark mode. It also has a responsive mobile layout so you can comfortably play the game in portrait mode now.

There are still some parts I'm not entirely happy with. Foremost is that some of the images aren't sized ideally on mobile vertically, such as the LI portraits, and the Arsurian map and calendar. They look a bit tiny when viewed in portrait mode, but if you rotate your phone to landscape you'll be able to see them better.

There's also somewhat of a thing with dark mode since several of my images (such as the story act banners, D's letter, the symbol in R's route, the Arsurian calendar) use black fonts. I edited the images so that in dark mode you'll see them outlined with a light glow to make them visible, but again, it's not ideal. They're not very readable haha, but I figure that's what the text descriptions are for!

Also, in some mobile browsers, the pop-ups for the settings options don't seem to work - or maybe it's specific to Android/my phone. Like, they'll briefly pop open and then immediately close again before you can select anything.

I managed to get it working on Firefox, but as always, itch.io is very finicky, so if the pop-ups don't work for you, try opening the game in a different browser!!

[You can test out the new UI here](#). Small note: I customized it in a duplicate file of the main game in order to fiddle around without breaking the main game, so Twine registers it as a "different" game, which

means your saves won't work on it, unfortunately.

Let me know what you think!! If you have specific feedback/suggestions to improve the UI, [you can submit them anonymously here](#). I'd love to know if the new dark mode and font options make the game more readable, especially on mobile!!

I can't make any promises on implementing suggestion though, since I'm not a programmer or a graphic designer. So anything more complicated than "can you edit this color/add a font/make this thing bigger" will be beyond me lol.

Thanks in advance, I hope you like the new UI 💖

### [Weekly Progress Update \[14/MAY\]](#)

[May 14, 2023](#)

Firstly, happy mother's day to all the moms 💖

It'll be a short update this week, but I'll post an extra long preview for R's route to make up for it!! I've taken a little break this weekend since the weather warmed up for the first time this year and I wanted to take a rest to enjoy the sun, so **I'll be posting A's character snippet tomorrow**.

As for chapter progress, I'm almost finished with R's route!! X's total wordcount ended up at 18k due to Imperial Court variations, but I calculated it, and a single play-through will give you around 14k words, depending on which variation you get.

R's route doesn't have as many plot variations since the Imperial Court isn't involved in their route, but the overall wordcount for their route will likely be around ~10k-12k. I'm at 8k right now for their opening scene, so I'm working on the last stretch of it to connect it to the main plot. After that, I'm moving onto A's route!

Here's the preview for R's route:

You hold \$rname's hand with both of yours, overcome with an immense sense of helplessness. Turning to Perjin and Master Zîn, you ask, "What can we do?"

"I've already asked the Imperial Guards to bring Marabad's high priest to the palace," Perjin says, glancing at \$aname who gives a small nod. "What has happened to \$rname is neither within my nor Master Zîn's expertise. As an alchemist, I've never encountered anything like this before."

Master Zîn frowns as she looks down at \$rname, sleeping restlessly. "My pursuits as a magus were centered around the enhancement of the body, rather than the spirit. A fact that tends to haunt me during moments like these."

"\$crthey is stable," Perjin says, no doubt meaning it to be comforting, but it does little to reduce your anxiety when none of you know why \$rname remains asleep. "There is nothing any of us can do, Zîn. Blaming ourselves won't help \$rname wake any faster."

Master Zîn also doesn't seem convinced, folding her arms and remaining standing by \$rname's bedside. As if, were she to wait there long enough, \$rname might spontaneously awaken. You suppose you're sitting by \$rtheir bedside for the same reason.

"When you mentioned the high priest, do you mean Afrin?" you say to Perjin, remembering the priest from your coronation, though you haven't seen him since. "Would he be able to help?"

"Perhaps." It isn't as optimistic an answer as you wanted to hear, but it is better that Perjin is truthful with you. False hope is the last thing you want. "He is from the Sky Temple, so he would connect well with \$rname's affinity. I believe he also has training as a healer, and more importantly, a summoner."

You suppose that would be more helpful than alchemy. Priests tend to have strong connections with spirits, and learning how to summon them and communicate with them is a prerequisite for entering in service of a temple. Even if Afrin himself cannot heal \$rname, perhaps he knows of spirits who could.

"I need to understand what happened," you speak at length, breaking the brief moment of silence within the bedchambers as you address Perjin and Master Zîn. "Master Zîn, you said the Void touched \$rtheir mind?"

"Yes, we..." She exchanges a look with Perjin. "We are uncertain of what exactly happened. \$rname was looking around the room, examining the walls for any traces of the Void left that \$rthey could examine. We all assumed the effect would be less potent than what happened to the Pale Sword."

"Evidently, you thought wrong," \$aname remarks sharply, no doubt still displeased with \$rname doing this without \$aname being informed of it. You certainly can't blame \$athem, considering how this ended up. \$cathey must feel frustrated most of all, being that \$atheir duty is to protect you and \$rname, yet you both decided to keep this from \$athem.

"We were careless," Perjin admits, shoulders slumping as she looks at \$rname's face. "Blinded by our own excitement. There's so little we know about the Void, it was an unprecedented opportunity. We should have known better."

**IF ROMANCE WITH R IS HIGH/STEADY:**

“And I should have told you,” you say to \$aname. \$rname asked you not to, but that doesn’t matter. It would’ve been the responsible thing to do. “I trusted that \$rthey would be fine.”

\$aname’s frustration softens in the face of your and Perjin’s remorse, and \$athey sighs. “Perjin is right, this is unprecedented. Even if I were there, I can’t say with certainty that I could have prevented this. My skill in magic doesn’t compare to \$rname’s.”

You reflect on your own decision, and...

[[...you can’t help but think that you should not have let R go.]]

[[...you don’t think you were wrong to listen to R, even though it ended up going wrong.]]

[[...you’re not sure what you should’ve done, whether it was right or wrong to trust R.]]

#### **IF ROMANCE WITH R IS LOW/UNSTEADY:**

“I should not have let \$rname go,” you say to \$aname. \$rname asked you to trust \$rthem, but it doesn’t matter. Keeping \$rthem safe is more important. “We both knew it could be dangerous, but...”

\$aname frowns at you. “It isn’t your trust in \$rname that I disapprove of—if \$rthey insisted on going, you hardly could have stopped \$rthem. I only wish you would have informed me. I can’t say with certainty that I could’ve prevented this from happening, but there is a chance I might have.”

You reflect on your own decision, and...

[[...you do think you could have, and should have, stopped R from going.]]

[[...perhaps you weren’t entirely wrong to listen to R, even though it ended up going wrong.]]

[[...you’re not sure what you should’ve done, whether it was right or wrong to trust R.]]

It’s a little similar to the choice you get on X’s route, if you remember [the preview](#) I posted for them a while back. Note also the differences in how the choices are phrased with a high relationship, and with a low relationship.

The context is different than from X’s, of course, but I think it’s clear what kind of effect the first two choices will have on the Crown and R’s relationship, and what it says about your Crown’s mindset. The top choice especially can be interpreted as the Crown mirroring how their own parents treated them by sheltering them.

So, it’s a very conscious choice for the player on what kind of route they want to see play out, and if they envision their Crown to be open and trusting, or still struggling emotionally, which has consequences in their relationship with R as a result.

Again, you *can* recover from a low relationship in future romance choices. It’s very possible that your Crown, right now, has a tendency to be overly protective of R, and learns to grow out of it in the future.



However, it *will* be very hurtful to R in this moment, so be aware of that. In essence, it's a lack of trust in R's capabilities, after all.

That was it for this week's update!! I hope I'll be able to finish R's route within the next few days and move onto A's 🙏

Until next time!! 💖

### [A's Character Snippet: CH10 Scene & New UI](#)

[May 15, 2023](#)

Hey all, hope your week has started well!! ✨

I'm here with A's snippet as promised, AND I've updated the bonus content file with the new theme that I've been working on!!

I got some feedback from tier 2+ patrons after releasing it for the main game last week, so for those who have already seen it, I tweaked the background color for the dark mode since I was told the white-on-black was a bit harsh, so it should be a little easier on the eyes now!! Also fixed the settings menu acting a little weird, I think. I hope.

For those who haven't seen it yet, the new theme has settings to change font type and font size, as well as switch between light and dark mode, and it has an adjustable mobile layout so you can read it in portrait mode/vertically on your phone!!

**Note:** In some mobile browsers, the pop-ups for the settings options don't seem to work - or maybe it's specific to Android/my phone. Like, they'll briefly pop open and then immediately close again before you can select anything.

I managed to get it working on Firefox, but as always, itch io is very finicky, so if the pop-ups don't work for you, try opening the game in a different browser!! You can submit feedback about the new UI anonymously with [this Google form](#).

Anyways, about A's snippet - the slow burn is Slow Burning, but we've finally arrived at the point where the Royal Protector actually wants to be the Royal Protector haha. Only took us, what, 9 chapters? 😜

It's a glimpse of what (partially) prompts A to trust the Crown with the full truth of their backstory in Chapter Ten. Like, yeah, they say "it's because you trusted me first", but what A *didn't* admit to is how their personal feelings are also gradually changing as a result of that.

More of that in CH11, depending on what choices your Crown makes 🙄 But in the meantime, have this snippet!

[Here's the link!!](#) I updated the tier 2/3 files with it as well, though those don't have the new theme yet (see the pinned post schedule for the links to those).

Hope you enjoy 💖

### [Voting for Character Q&A](#)

[May 15, 2023](#)

Time for another Q&A vote!! R and A have already had theirs, so the choice is between X or D this time 💖

Use the link below to vote on who you want to see this month and submit any possible questions you might want to see answered. Even if the LI you voted for doesn't win the poll, I'll save your question to answer it when they do get their turn!!

The Q&A itself will be posted on Wednesday this time, since I was a few days behind with the character snippet.

### [X's Character Q&A, Part II](#)

[May 19, 2023](#)

Sorry for the late upload!! It took me a few days to get to this one. In case you haven't seen it yet, [X's first Q&A from last year can be found here](#).

**I'll be posting D's romantic snippet on Monday**, since I didn't have much time to write it - I've been focused on CH11 this week haha.

Onto X's Q&A!

### **What are the best things about leading a mercenary group?**

"Oh, that's easy. Doing good, helping people, feeling like you're making a difference even if it's small in

the grand scheme of things. Seeing Arsur, traveling together and being together with people you would trust with your life, without hesitation. The camaraderie, feeling like you're working towards something great together."

### **And the worst things?**

"I joke about it a lot, but truthfully... the fighting. The death. Having to kill, seeing your comrades get killed. The latter doesn't happen often, but when it does, it's... difficult to deal with."

### **If could give up being a mercenary, would you?**

"Not for a moment."

### **Even with how dangerous it is - with all the fighting and the death?**

"It's a risk we're all willing to take. Nothing worth doing is easy."

### **What about in the future? Would you be willing to settle down with someone?**

They laugh. "Far, far into the future, perhaps. When my bones are too old to travel. Until then? No, I wouldn't give this up for anything. Anyone who wants to court me has to come to terms with that."

### **What's your favorite song or story to hear in a tea house?**

"The story of [Crown Kanî and Xeyal](#). I have a fondness for tragic love stories, and this one, in particular, has inspired many beautiful songs. Ervin sings a beautiful rendition of it."

### **Favorite outfit and why?**

"The outfit I wore on Crown's coronation day. I like causing a little scandal every now and then."

### **What was the best night's sleep you've ever had?**

"Not technically a full night's sleep, but believe it or not, it was after one of my fights with Azad/Ashti. I was so tired out that I fell asleep like a baby afterward, right beneath the tree where we were both resting after we came to a stalemate. I didn't dream, I just... had a long, uninterrupted nap."

"When I woke up, Azad/Ashti was still sitting there, wide awake. They just looked at me and taunted me, saying they could've slit my throat for how careless I was. But the thought never even crossed my mind. I knew they'd never do anything like that."

\*\*[If X is romanced] If you saw the Crown flirting with someone else, would you be jealous?

\*\*They look confused by the question. "What for? We're not promised to each other, they can do whatever they want."

\*\*Even if it happened right in front of you?

\*\*"Look, friend, I wouldn't care even if the Crown decided to have a *public orgy* in front of me." A pause. "Well, I might care then because that would be arousing- but no. I would be far from jealous."

\*\*What if you were courting each other?

\*\*"And they flirted with someone I was unaware of? That would be cheating, and I would dump them. Is there a point to this line of questioning, or can we move on?"

\*\*What would you do if you had to choose between saving the Crown or your Crescent Blades?

\*\*"I don't know. Scream and cry and lose my mind, most likely."

\*\*You couldn't choose?

\*\*"How could I possibly choose? You are asking me if I would let my only family on this earth die, *again*, or let the whole of Arsur fall into chaos, risking war and invasions and the destruction of everything I've ever known. Who could answer that question without despairing?

"I don't want to think about it, I don't even want to imagine it. If the spirits are kind, I will never have to choose."

[D's Romantic Snippet: On a Date](#)

[May 22, 2023](#)

Hiya, sorry for the late upload!!

I was *supposed* to write a proper date for this prompt, but D whispered in my ear about how a sparring scene would be way sexier, so that's what ended up happening haha. It can kind of be counted as a date?

[Here's the link!!](#) The file has been updated with the new theme as well 💖

Hope you enjoy!!

[Schedule update](#)

[May 25, 2023](#)

Just wanted to let you guys know that the bonus planned A/R snippet will be released in June instead of May, and the A/X one will be released in July instead of June!! I'm really in the thick of writing CH11 and can barely keep up with my Patreon schedule as is, so I haven't been able to find the time to work on either one yet.

I'll still do my best to post R's tier 2 snippet tomorrow, which I'm excited about since it features their POV in CH10 - for *that* scene. R romancers know the one 🙌🔪

I'll probably add a little choice to specify if your Crown was the assertive or the passive one in that interaction, hehe. But that means it'll take a bit of extra work, so if I don't make it tomorrow, it'll be sometime during the weekend!!

Thank you for all your patience 💖

### [R's Character Snippet: CH10 High Romance Scene](#)

[May 29, 2023](#)

Heyyy!!

A day late with this, but I think it'll be worth the bit of delay. It's R's POV on the romance scene in CH10, specifically the high romance variant. I was considering writing the low romance variant as well, but I ran out of time!! Maybe I'll add it at a later date.

[Here's the link!!](#)

You can select the assertive or the passive variant for it as well, so for those who haven't seen one or the other, it's a nice sneak peek to see a few of the differences.

Enjoy 💖

### [Weekly Progress Update \[11/JUN\]](#)

[Jun 11, 2023](#)

Hey all, hope June has gone well for you!!

I was supposed to post development sneak peeks for tier 2+ patrons this past week, but I've had a bit of an impromptu break. A little mini-vacation to rest my mind before overworking myself, haha. The weather was really hot and sunny, so I spent most of my time enjoying it, which means I'll be posting the dev sneak peek this coming Tuesday instead.

I'm also hopeful I'll be able to finish and post the bonus A/R snippet the coming week as well, so keep an eye out for that ✨

## Chapter progress

I have a few things to report on the chapter, but I'll keep it short. First, the word count is currently 50k words, to where I've finished the first draft for R's route and am halfway done with A's route. I've also written bits and pieces for D's route, but haven't properly written scenes for it yet since I wanna finish A's first.

Realistically, CH11 will likely end up being an **August release**. I *realllllyyyy* wanted to release it in July at the latest, but this chapter is SO massive.

My brain is yearning for summer vacation at this point since it's the end of my last year at university too, and it desperately wants to switch off haha. It's so hard to write for hours at a time cooped up inside when the sun is shining. So, unfortunately, it will have to be August 😭

Also, since the LI-related and plot-related divergences will be especially huge in this chapter, I'll probably do another **call for beta testers**. This time, though, I'll open it up to the general public as well by posting it on Tumblr, so keep an eye out for that if you wanna apply for beta reading again!!

As for actual CH11 content, I don't have much else to report on that I haven't already stated in previous progress updates - all the planning and structure of the chapter remains unchanged.

So, here's some previews from A's route this time, with a few choice bits redacted due to spoilers:

"They could've died!" \$aname erupts, \$atheir sudden anger taking you aback. Even when you argued before, \$athey never reacted so intensely, instead choosing to freeze you out. This time is different. "They very nearly did die!"

You don't understand this reaction, your own voice raising in offense at being scolded for ensuring \$aname's safety. "I couldn't [xxx]! What would you have had me do?"

"Trust that [xxx], and save the people you swore to protect!" \$aname snaps back, pointing at the ruined warehouse. "They could have suffocated in there, they could've *burned to death* all because you [xxx]."

"But you are—"

\$aname's anger disappears as quickly as it came. Now, \$athey recoils, stepping away from you physically. It is so much worse than \$atheir anger. "Don't."

\$cathey averts \$atheir gaze, breathing heavily as \$athey wipes away some soot from \$atheir cheek with \$atheir sleeve. \$cathey's voice is much quieter when \$athey speaks again.

"You're the Crown, \$name." \$cathey exhales a deep breath, weariness settling in the weight of \$atheir brows as \$athey meets your gaze once more with a deeply troubled frown. "You can't act solely on your own desires anymore."

The way \$athey looks at you then—is it you \$athey sees, or is it \$atheir father?

And another one:

“I thought...” You inhale a deep breath, yet it doesn’t feel enough to relieve the ache in your chest. “You have to tell me these things before acting on your own, \$aname, you can’t simply—you can’t—”

“I understand.” \$aname lifts \$atheir hands to your shoulders, but doesn’t quite grip them, as if uncertain whether that would upset you more. “I understand, \$name. I’m sorry, I should’ve sent a message.”

You bend your head, leaning forward and resting your forehead against \$aname’s shoulder to hide your face. Part of you feels ashamed of your panic. You know the intensity of it is irrational and has little to do with what \$aname did.

It was the thought of \$athem disappearing without a trace, without any explanation, leaving you without answers.

“I thought something happened to you,” you confess against the soft fabric of \$atheir robe, words trembling between your lips. “It was like...”

The fire at the farmhouse.

Your father’s last words, your mother’s screaming. The wandering after, the *loneliness* of your grief, the feeling of helplessness in not knowing why any of this had happened. Why it had to happen to you, to your family.

You squeeze your eyes shut. “I can’t go through that again.”

After a brief pause, \$aname’s hands settle on your back. A light touch at first, almost cautious, but once you lean further into \$atheir embrace \$atheir arms wrap more firmly around you.

I'll post more previews for A next week, and hopefully a small one for D as well once I finally dig my teeth into the meat of that one. For now, though, hope you enjoyed these little glimpses!!

Catch you next time 💖

[Development Sneak Peek: Crowns of Old, Part IV](#)

[Jun 13, 2023](#)

As promised, the delayed dev sneak peek!! I've started releasing the old posts in this series in chronological order on the Tumblr blog, but it'll be months before I release this one and the previous one. Mostly I just wanted to have it archived neatly somewhere haha.

[Part I](#) / [Part II](#) / [Part III](#)

This time, we'll be taking a look at the reigns of the Eighth Crown and the Tenth Crown. With that, we'll only have the Fourteenth Crown, the Sixteenth Crown and Seventeenth Crown left for next time!! Here's the list of all the introduced Crowns so far, including the ones already mentioned in canon:

1. Ashadūna
2. Arsāma
3. Humati
4. Medya
5. Koban
6. Bardiya
7. Lorîcan
8. Bargiran (this post)
9. Dila
10. Jiyan (this post)
11. Zana
12. Ardashir
13. Sorgul
14. ???
15. Kanî
- 16 & 17. ???
18. Keybanû
19. Piruz
20. Ferzan

I think D romancers will find the story of the Tenth Crown, Jiyan, *especially* interesting...

### **The Eighth Crown: Bargiran of Great Mercy**

When speaking of Crowns that are of more humble backgrounds, Crown Bargiran is the one that comes to mind first. Due to the plague that swept through Arsur during the reign of Crown Lorîcan, Bargiran lost both her parents and was orphaned at a young age. Her older sister did her best to take care of them both, but she was only barely an adult herself, and they struggled greatly. Many nights were spent sleeping on the streets and begging for scraps of food.

It was Bargiran's great fortune that they were found, yet it was even greater fortune to Arsur. Bargiran had an uncanny talent in healing magic. Many of her days as an orphan was spent helping at a public



health clinic in exchange for food, where she quickly discovered her talent for magic, and especially her talent for healing and alchemy.

Shortly after, Crown Lorican received her vision, which showed her Bargiran. At this point, Lorican had already imprisoned her previous Sorcerer months before. As the plague continued to sweep through the lands, unabated, she knew that she was running out of time to find her successor. There was a real risk that Bargiran could die before Lorican could find her, in which case there could be an unprecedented crisis in Arsur.

No one knew what would happen should the successor die before they could officially receive the Blessing of the spirits during their coronation. Some scholars worried that it would bring the line of Crowns to an end. As such, no resource was spared to find Bargiran. Thankfully, she was found before disaster could strike.

Unfortunately, Lorican's tutelage was extremely short-lived. Only weeks after finding her successor, she would show signs of being infected herself, and within days she passed away. Bargiran became the Crown at the young age of sixteen--the youngest a Crown has ever taken the throne--and made it her sole purpose to put an end to the plague. Either by finding a cure, or by curbing it as much as possible.

It was upon her coronation that she chose the name Bargiran for herself, meaning "one whose burden is heavy". She knew it would be an incredibly difficult task. It would take ten years before Bargiran, together with expert healers from all over Arsur and even beyond, would find a cure. The need for it became even more dire for Bargiran personally when her sister fell ill.

Bargiran worked herself to exhaustion, famously fainting during a court meeting and falling off the stairs of the throne room, nearly breaking her neck were it not for her Royal Protector. Eventually, her efforts bore fruit, and after a long, devastating decade, Bargiran found a cure at the young age of twenty-six years old.

However, it was a great tragedy that she could not find the cure in time to save her sister. People far and wide considered Bargiran to be one of the greatest Crowns in history, likening her to a savior, yet Bargiran never forgave herself for not being able to cure her sister in time. While she helped Arsur heal from its wounds, Bargiran would never be able to heal herself.

**\*\*The Tenth Crown: Love-blind Jiyan**

**\*\*Jiyan was known for her/his/their love for life. It was undoubtedly the influence of their mentor, Crown Dila, who was famous for guiding Arsur into an age where the arts would flourish. This continued under Jiyan's reign, as he was equally fond of all the best things life had to offer. Perhaps to an excess.**

While Jiyan was a very capable Crown, especially good at navigating difficult diplomatic relations, they were also a very passionate person who tended to have an impulsive streak. Early in her reign this was brushed off, as everyone assumed Jiyan would mature into her role. He was only crowned at the age of twenty, after all, and would gain wisdom with time and experience.

Unfortunately, no one could anticipate the disaster that Jiyan's impulses would drag Arsur into.

It started as an innocent flirtation. Jiyan noticed the provincial army commander of Zerat during one of their court meetings. The commander in question, Asin, reported to the Crown regarding conflicts with some rebellious nobles within the province.

Jiyan was immediately taken with him. Commander Asin was of equal age to Jiyan, very accomplished at only twenty-eight years of age, and also said by some to have an appearance that was quite pleasing to the eye. Jiyan would find excuses to talk to him while he stayed at the palace, and Asin--very flattered the Crown would give him any attention at all--indulged her quite readily.

Soon, Asin found himself seeking out Jiyan as often as Jiyan would visit him. With the Royal Palace being in Zeratun, where Jiyan preferred to stay, it was very easy for the two to see each other whenever they wanted. Before either of them realized it, what had started as playful banter quickly spiraled out of control over the next few weeks.

It became a whispered rumor among the servants that the Crown had started to invite Zerat's army commander to his chambers. Jiyan's Sorcerer and Royal Protector already knew, of course, but they didn't think it necessary to intervene. The Imperial Court, however, had other thoughts.

They confronted Jiyan on her relationship with Asin during a court meeting. While some were clearly taking advantage of the rumors to weaken Jiyan's position, others had sincere reservations about whether it was a good idea to take a subordinate in charge of a sizable portion of the military as a lover. Zerat's army was the largest and strongest out of all the provinces, eclipsing even the Imperial Army at the time.

Jiyan dismissed their concerns, and the matter was closed, albeit not settled. While Jiyan and Asin's relationship had started out well, over time, they started to argue more and more. Not about their relationship, but about military matters. It soured their romance, both having part of the blame. Asin started voicing opinions on the Imperial Army which was far beyond his station, and Jiyan started belittling Asin's opinions on matters he *did* have expertise in.

The last straw came when Jiyan ordered Asin to round up the rebellious nobles and officially imprison them. Asin knew it would inflame the situation, but he was also incensed to be condescended to yet again, for a moment forgetting his rank. His outright refusal infuriated Jiyan who, in another moment of impulsiveness, stripped Asin of his rank.

To Asin, it felt like betrayal of the worst kind. He was disgraced, humiliated. To the servants and guards who witnessed the huge blow-up between the two, it came as little surprise when a few weeks later, reports came in that Zerat's provincial army had joined the ranks of the rebels and had begun an uprising in earnest.

Jiyan was struck with shame and regret, at many things. How he had treated Asin, and even having begun a relationship with Asin to begin with. The civil war that followed was a bloody one, though it was confined to Zerat and put down within the year.

The Crown was not present for any of the battles, or for Asin's eventual capture and execution. She never spoke of him again, and it was understood that one should never mention his name in Jiyan's presence.

The civil war that was waged during their reign became known as the War of Lovers.

[X's Character Snippet: Chapter Ten](#)

[Jun 19, 2023](#)

Hey everyone, hope your week has started off well!!

Slight delay on this one as I keep working on CH11, but it's a very big one for X. In terms of emotional damage, that is. Which is why I should also warn you: unless you have caught up with X's route up to and including CH10, this will have **MASSIVE SPOILERS** for their romance route.

Even if you don't care about spoilers, reading X's romance route first is highly advised, otherwise this scene will basically make zero sense to you lol.

For X romancers who are up to date, you can probably guess what this scene involves. Payam. That's all I'm going to say haha.

[Here's the link](#) (edit: sorry, I messed it up the first time and accidentally linked to the early access lmao). I've also updated the tier 2/3 files with it if you'd rather read it there, check the pinned post for their links.

I'll see you again for D's upcoming character Q&A, if you're tier 2+, or otherwise the weekly progress update that I'll post at some point next week!!

Until then 💖

[D's Character Q&A, Part II](#)

[Jun 24, 2023](#)

Hey all! There was no voting for Q&A this month since D was the only left haha. If you haven't read Part I of their Q&A yet, you can find it [here](#).

Bit late this week since I'm busy writing, so tier 3 will get the romantic snippet tomorrow instead. Tier 2+ will also get the character snippet on Friday instead of Saturday since that's the last day of June this month. Somewhere between tomorrow and Friday I'll also have the A/R snippet up.

Anyways, onto D's Q&A!!

**What's your favorite outfit?**

"My ar-"

**Armor doesn't count.**

"In that case, I have several sets of linen robes I enjoy wearing when it's hot out, on the rare occasion when armor isn't needed it. They're simple in design with subtle embroidery, and pleasantly lightweight."

**Xelef/Xelara asked me to ask you: does it show much skin?**

They roll their eyes. "Unless you're scandalized by my calves and elbows, no, it doesn't show much skin."

**What about your favorite season?**

"Spring. The weather is temperate and pleasant."

**Favorite thing to do when you're not working?**

"Training, physical exercise."

**Okay, what about an activity that has nothing to do with fighting?**

"Tending to my weapons and armor."

**Let me rephrase: an activity that does not involve anything that could be remotely connected to your work.**

"Hmm... playing backgammon. Whittling. Swimming. Fishing. Enjoying music."

**Music, really? What's your favorite song or story to hear in a tea house?**

"I like instrumentals more than the poetry of the songs. Being able to empty my head and simply listen to the strumming of a tembûr is much more pleasant than trying to follow along with whatever grand tale the storyteller is weaving. They always leave on a cliffhanger, too, because they know it'll fetch them the most coin. It's frustrating."

**When is the best night's sleep you've ever had?**

"Whatever the last time was that I slept in a proper bed, which would be whenever I stay in a city. I don't need much to have a good night's rest. I tend to need less sleep than most people to begin with."

**Have you ever courted anyone in the past?**

"Of course."

**How many?**

A thoughtful pause. "Three. Four, if you count the one that lasted all but a week."

**Really, a week?**

"It wasn't a serious courtship. Back when I was a soldier, a close friend and I, together with our group, were cornered into some tunnels by outlaws. We honestly thought we weren't going to make it, and one of her regrets was that she never courted anyone before. So I offered."

**And you broke it off after a week?**

"We escaped the tunnels after a week once reinforcements arrived and cleared out the outlaws. So, yes, after that it ended. We remain good friends."

**What about more serious courtships? Why did those end?**

"In some instances because we weren't well-matched. Sometimes you don't find out that you're unsuited for each other until the courtship phase, when you discover more about each other's quirks and habits."

"In other instances, it was an issue of time and distance. Aside from the week-long pretend courtship I mentioned, I never courted anyone in the army. My previous lovers were all civilians, and I don't think I have to tell you how having your lover away all the time can wear on a relationship."

**Do you tend to take the initiative when you're interested in someone, or is it the other way around?**

"I've always taken the initiative. Sitting around and waiting for someone to notice me doesn't suit me. Subtlety tends to waste time."

**You're not a romantic, then?**

"I didn't say that. I only said I wasn't subtle. You can still be romantic in a more direct way, rather than twirling your hair and making eyes across the room at someone, quietly hoping they'll somehow notice and read your mind."

**Speaking from experience?**

"You don't want to know the number of love confessions I've been subjected to from people who were confused by my surprise, because they thought gazing longingly at me from a distance somehow made their feelings perfectly clear on the matter. I wish people would be more straightforward."

**What's the worst love confession you've ever received?**

"That would be from a total stranger, who apparently only ever saw me from a distance, yet somehow fooled themselves into thinking it was love at first sight. It was more infatuation and obsession than anything else. I tried to let them down easy, stating that we hardly knew each other, and they said, 'I know everything about you, Dildar'."

**They called you by the wrong *name*???**

"As I said, they hardly knew me. They only knew that I was the general, and that I was handsome, and that was good enough for them. It took a stern talking to before they finally got the message that I wasn't interested. A little creeped out, even."

**So, you like taking the initiative, but it also sounds like you prefer your partner to be more assertive too?**

"Not necessarily assertive. Just honest. I don't enjoy playing games. I'm perfectly fine pursuing someone who's more shy, so long as they aren't too coy about it."

**(Assuming the Crown is romancing D:) Why aren't you as assertive with the Crown?**

"Aside from the colossal scandal that would result from the Crown courting their own general? I was rather distracted by the fact of *having* a Crown to begin with, to really consider whether I was attracted to them.

...I'm *still* trying *not* to consider it."

[R's Romantic Snippet: On a "Date"](#)

[Jun 25, 2023](#)

"Date" because this isn't technically a romantic date, but the scenario was sooo cute I couldn't help but write it. Also from R's POV, because it was even cuter that way.

It's also relatively close to the game's canon timeline, I'd say it takes place very shortly after the events of the game so R and the Crown are still in that honeymoon phase of their relationship. And absolutely acting like it lol.

So, [here's R's romantic snippet](#), as promised!!

Enjoy!! 💖

[D's Character Snippet: Chapter Ten](#)

[Jun 30, 2023](#)

Heyaaa, hope you had a great week!!

With this snippet we've finished all the CH10 POV scenes, and D's is a very cute preview for CH11 in my opinion.

Well, cute to *me*. Probably anxiety-inducing for the rest of you haha.

The file also already includes the A/R bonus snippet that I'm making a separate post for, mainly for tier 1 patrons who only have access to the tier 1 file. You can find that one on A's page.

Both of these snippets have also been added to the tier 3 file as well.

[Here's the link!!](#)

Enjoy 💕

[Bonus romantic snippet: A/R](#)

[Jun 30, 2023](#)

Hey all, hope your week has been good so far!!

Here's the free A/R bonus snippet, as promised. It took me a while to decide on the exact scenario since there were so many options my brain got a little overloaded.

In the end, I decided on a post-game scene, after the story in AToC has ended (and the Empire *hasn't* burned down lol). It assumes A and R didn't really have the time or space to deepen their relationship during the events of the game, and finally connect after everything has calmed down.

Avoiding spoilers for the main game, of course!!

The poll you all voted on ages ago also said a majority would like to read it from A's perspective, so it features A's POV. These two are just very sweet together. The wordcount came in at a cozy ~2k words.

You'll find the snippet on A's page. [Here's the link!!](#) I've also updated the tier 2/3 files with it, for those who also get to read D's tier 2 character snippet today.

Enjoy 💕

[Weekly Progress Update + CH11 Release Dates \[09/JUL\]](#)

[Jul 9, 2023](#)

Hellooo, hope your summer is going well so far 🌻

It's been a while since I gave a solid update but I wanted to wait until I was absolutely sure I could finally announce the CH11 release dates.

I'm **at 62k words** at the moment, having finished A's route and filling in the last scenes for D's route as well. The drafts for each LI route will be finished within the week, but there are some portions I'm not completely happy about, so I will have to take time to do rewrites as well. I've already been doing a LOT of editing of the past month lol.

But, I can finally get started on writing the last 15-20k words that consist of the main plot for this chapter!! It does mean that if I want to make it in time for an early access release, it *might* be a situation where only the LI routes are released for Patrons, and then the full chapter will be released together with the public release of the chapter.

Hopefully it won't come to that, but I've never written a chapter this huge before, so I'm letting you know just in case that ends up happening!! As for the release dates:

- **Tier 3, Crown:** August 17
- **Tier 2, Successor:** August 24
- **Tier 1, On the Run:** August 27
- **Public release:** August 31

So there you have it!!

Also, as you may have noticed if you're tier 2 or above, I haven't posted the development sneak peek yet. I've been entirely focused on writing CH11, so I think in the coming week I'll just post **extra-long previews for A and D's routes** instead of a lore post.

Final note, I also can't guarantee I'll be able to post the bonus A/X snippet this month, for obvious reasons. The schedule is HECTIC with writing right now haha. If I manage to post it in July, it'll likely be at the very end of the month, but it'll be 50/50 on if I manage it.

That's it for now!! Until next time 💖

[R's Character Snippet: What If The Crown And R Were Classmates](#)

[Jul 18, 2023](#)



Hey all, hope your week's going well!!

I'm a bit late with this but that's because I'm full steam ahead on CH11 at the moment. Also still need to post the A and D previews, hope I'll get around to doing that sometime this week!!

This snippet was fun to write, though, and quite a bit longer than the usual character snippet since it's ~1k words long. Also, I can't even really call it R's character snippet since it's told from the Crown's POV and has a bit of a romantic slant lol 🤪

It's about the two of them meeting in an alternate universe where they're both students at the School of Magic in Marabad. They're also quite a bit younger than in canon, around 16 years old I'd say, and the Crown is kind of a mix of assertive/reserved in this one. You can think of this as R being the Crown's first crush as a teen haha

[Here's the link!!](#)

Hope you enjoy 💖

[X's Romantic Snippet: Pleasure house visit \(bonus for tier 2\)](#)

[Jul 28, 2023](#)

Hey all, hope July has gone well for you so far!!

As you can tell from the title, the romantic snippet for this month is also released for tier 2 patrons, as I absolutely don't have time to write the 2nd LI character snippet this month. So to make it fair, I decided to release the romantic snippet as a replacement (and also as an apology that I still haven't posted the CH11 previews yet, they'll be up in the weekend I promise, I'm ass-deep in editing right now LOL).

It's very mildly spicy, too ✨ Implied adult content, but nothing graphic or explicitly described. It includes a small variation for whether your Crown is flirtatious or reserved.

[Here's the link!!](#) I've also added it to the tier 3 file, check [last month's romantic snippet post](#) for the tier 3 file link if you'd rather read it there.

Hope you enjoy 💖

[D's Chapter 11 Preview](#)

[Jul 31, 2023](#)

Heya, don't mind me, I'm just getting these previews out before the end of the month haha

The early access release dates for CH11 are still the same as I announced a while back, but unfortunately, it does look like I'll **only be able to release the first half of the chapter on Patreon** - basically, only the LI routes. The rest of the chapter will be released together with the public release

So keep that in mind if you want to pledge for early access in August!!

Anyways, here's a look at D's route for CH11, about 1k words in total from 2 separate scenes. I struggled a lot with picking which parts to post for D especially because *so much of it* is like, filled to the BRIM with spoilers.

I'll also post A's preview in a bit, but in a separate post for ease of reading:

\$dname appears not fully awake, perhaps an aftereffect of the distilled poultices \$dthey was given. The royal physician said it would make \$dthem fatigued, \$dtheir body expending large amounts of energy in order to consume so much magic.

You keep your questions about \$dtheir condition to yourself as you sit down on the edge of \$dname's bed.

*cdtheyslowlyblinksupatyou, darkeyesunfocusedastheydriftoveryour face.* "name?" \$dthey mumbles, as if confused to see you here.

"Yes, it's me," you reply softly. "Can you sit up a little? I need to apply a poultice."

\$dname hums, eyes slipping shut, and you fear \$dthey's about to fall asleep again. Thankfully, \$dthey opens them again, and \$then stares at you for a long moment.

"Am I dreaming?" \$dthey asks.

The earnest yet dazed question startles a laugh out of you.

"No, you're not dreaming." You shift a little closer to \$dname on the bed, though it's to reach the jar of poultice sitting on the nightstand beside it. "I'm here."

"To apply medicine?" \$dname snorts, closing \$dtheir eyes once more. "A likely story."

Your hands, reaching out for the poultice, still in mid-air. You cast a glance at \$dname's face, slowly taking the jar from the nightstand, thinking you must be mistaken. "What do you mean?"

"You're here because I long for it," \$dname mutters, eyes still closed, oblivious to the effect of \$dtheir words on your poor heart. "A dream to soothe me."

Your fingers clench around the clay jar, cold against the skin of your palms that seem to be burning. You glow with sudden warmth, from your hands to your whole body, radiating from deep within your chest.

\$cdthey *longs* for you.

If it were not for the weight of your bones keeping you grounded, you're certain your spirit would slip out of you and soar into the sky. After the way you parted, it feels like a victory—yet only won after days of fear and dread, of true danger to \$dname's life.

One you're reminded of when \$dname shifts on the bed, trying to get comfortable and wincing in pain when \$dthey jostles \$dtheir injured side. \$cdtheir brows twitch into a frown, drawing attention to the thin sheen of sweat on \$dtheir forehead.

You refocus on your task, opening the jar and scooping up a bit of poultice with your fingers. "Here, let me help."

Reaching beneath the blanket, you gently take \$dname's right wrist, pulling it towards you and turning it over with the inner side of it facing you.

\$dname's eyes crack open, peering at you from beneath \$dtheir lashes as you rub the poultice into the skin above \$dtheir pulse in soft, circular motions.

Its effect is almost immediate.

[...]

## IF THE CROWN'S AFFINITY IS BLESSING OF THE SUN

But then you think of Arsur's Sky. Seeing your homeland beneath it through the eyes of something so vast, so old, so infinitely greater than you. How small it looked, dwarfed by the vast expanse of land and ocean beyond it, surrounding it from every side. Protecting it from a cold and uncaring Void—the Sky is silent and watchful, and it asks for nothing in return.

## IF THE CROWN'S AFFINITY IS DEATH OF THE SUN

But then you think of Arsur's Waters. Winding through your homeland in rivers and marshes, gathering it in its arms that wrap around the coasts and shores from the yearning sea. How it loves you, unconditionally and unquestioningly, embracing you as it embraces all life that it gave birth to. Even if you lose all that you have gained, it will be there, always a home for you.

///

That is its duty.

Never once did *you* think of duty when you ran for your life, alone and wounded. Taking the throne was always a means of survival, and even then, it has only brought with it new challenges. Things that weigh upon your conscience, keep you up at night.

Yet, despite it all, it has given you purpose.

A slow, quiet realization. You hadn't even noticed the way it seeped in, burrowing its way into your bones ever since the coronation. For the first time in your life, you feel meant for something, and not merely because the spirits decreed it so.

Fighting it would do nothing but bring both you and Arsur misery. More than anything, to be chosen for this is an immense privilege, an opportunity to do good, to care for those in need. With that comes responsibility, and obligation.

Achingly heavy, but it is yours.

As you look at \$dname, you wonder if that's what \$dthey feels, even if subconsciously. That the reason \$dthey clings to this so much is because of \$dtheir love for \$dtheir home, and the people within it.

Maybe, somewhere over these long years, \$dthey has forgotten it. Maybe the shame and the guilt have won out, and now there is only self-punishment.

"Duty should not be so painful," you say, and though your words are sincere, you feel foolish for it when \$dname meets your eyes. \$cdthey has served for much longer than you have, and you don't want \$dthem to think you are lecturing \$dthem, but you can't hide your worry for \$dthem either.

"Should it not?" \$dname smiles faintly, a little wry.

"Would you ever ask anyone else to sacrifice all that you have?" you say, and the smile fades from \$dname's face. "Would you ever expect that of them?"

\$cdthey doesn't meet your eyes. "I know myself best. I know I can handle it."

"That doesn't mean you should."

"It was my fault that I—"

"Ten years ago!" You shake your head in disbelief. "It has been such a long time, \$dname. When will it be enough? When will you get to move on, to live your life?"

[Jul 31, 2023](#)

This one's a bit shorter compared to D since I also posted some snippets for A [last month in this update](#) if you didn't see it yet!!

Here's the preview:

Your throat nearly closes up at the sight of the burning buildings, the screams of fleeing citizens and guards trying to control the fire—horrible sounds echoing through the streets like a cacophony.

This could become a worse disaster than even what happened during the eve of your coronation. You've never had to contend with an emergency this large, especially not while it's still happening.

And all this, in the midst of looking for \$aname.

You look around the frantic scene, flanked on every side by Imperial Guards. Your eyes fall upon the highest-ranking city guard on the scene, barking orders and directing the flow of people trying to put the fires out.

"Where are the magi?" they shout at a subordinate, not out of anger, but to be heard over the din surrounding them.

"They should be on their way!"

"On their way?" The guard captain—so you assume—looks close to murderous. "They should have been here half an hour ago!"

As you approach, the guard's gaze falls on you, anger fleeing their features as they and their subordinate immediately bend into deep bows.

"Your Imperial Majesty!"

#### **IF CROWN IS BLUNT**

You raise your hand in a dismissive gesture. "There's no time for that. If you need magi to put the fire out, the Imperial Guards can help. Direct them where you need them most."

#### **IF CROWN IS CHARMING**

"If it's magi you need, my Imperial Guards can aid you until they arrive," you say. "Direct them where you need them most, captain. The citizens can't afford to wait."

///

The guard captain straightens up, and after their momentary surprise they quickly turn to your guards. "The area on the south quarter is where the fire is at its worst, there are still people trapped in the buildings..."

While the captain continues on, you turn your attention to their subordinate. "You there, have you seen the Royal Protector?"

The guard stares at you for a moment, and you resist the urge to snap at them in impatience before they finally answer you. "Y-yes, Your Imperial Majesty, but I... I'm afraid..."

Don't kill me for ending the preview there LOL I had to leave you in *some* suspense!

[Weekly Progress Update \[14/AUG\]](#)

[Aug 14, 2023](#)

Heya, hope your August is going well so far!!

I'm wrapping up the last bits for the LI routes in preparation for the first early access this Thursday, and the amount of variation ended up wayyyyyy surpassing my initial estimate.

The LI routes alone have ended up being **70k words in total**. The main reason for this concerns the variations in the court scenes that occur in D and X's routes specifically. The court scene accounts for 1) if you dismissed Minister Besna from the Office of Law, and if you replaced her with Nûdem, 2) if you made Lady Naza Minister of Defense, and 3) if you allied with Minister Awir and the royal historians.

So that's where the extra 10k ended up coming from lol. R and A's routes will also have a court scene, but theirs happens later on in the chapter, so it won't feature in the early access. You'll see it in the public release!

X and D also have a bit more in wordcount each since they were both absent last chapter while A and R got romance scenes, but to put the differences in terms you can compare easily:

R & A have around 15 passages each, while D & X have around 22 passages each.

Once again, I cannot understate how WILDLY different CH11 is going to be depending on your LI. If you're romancing R, you get psychological mindfuckery. If you're romancing A, you get a Huge Emergency in the city. If you're romancing X, you get a political crisis and a romantic confrontation. If you're romancing D, you also get a political crisis but it's followed by a long-awaited Backstory Reveal.

Also, I should mention, I didn't have the time to get the chapter beta-read. I'm making sure it's as polished as possible before releasing it, but if you notice more typos or bugs than usual, that's the reason why haha.

As soon as the LI routes are finished this Thursday, I'm going to finish up the "main" portion of the chapter. Right now I'm in the ballpark of 85k for the chapter as a whole, I think there's about 5-8k left to write. So yeah, we're definitely cracking 90k lol.

OH I almost forgot!! I'm going to have to release the first character snippet at the end of this week, since I'm prioritizing CH11's early access at the moment and couldn't find the time to write it last week. Sorry about that!!

Until next time 💖

### [Chapter 11 Early Access \(Tier 3\)](#)

[Aug 17, 2023](#)

It's finally here!!!!!!

Well, half of it anyway. Our final count for the LI routes is **72k words**, and that's including all of the stuff I had to edit out in order to streamline the chapter and balance out the content for each love interest.

Note as well that the LI routes aren't the only LI romance content you'll get in CH11. There are more tidbits in the latter half of the chapter, but they wouldn't fit neatly in the early access, so you'll just have to wait for the public release to see them!!

Also, as I mentioned before, I didn't have an official beta reading round so you may find more typos and errors than usual. I think I caught the biggest ones, and I'll continue to proofread to clean it up before the public release, but if you notice any please submit them [through this Google form!!](#)

You can discuss any spoilers freely on the Patreon Discord channels or in the comments here!! Actually, I'd even encourage it. I'd love some live reactions that I can post on the Tumblr blog as a preview for the chapter (I'll edit out your name/pfp, of course).

Now, without further ado, [here's the link for Chapter 11](#) 💖

### [X's Character Snippet: What If The Crown Was A Mercenary](#)

[Aug 20, 2023](#)

Subject of the character snippet in the title lol.

I'm still busy finishing up the last bits of CH11, so I won't bore you too much with a long post. This is X and the Crown knowing each other in an alternate universe, canon divergent scenario where the Crown followed in their mom's footsteps and became a merc!!

Short and sweet and fun to think about.

[Here's the link](#)!! I've also updated the tier 2/tier 3 files with the snippet, check the pinned post for the link to those.

Hope you enjoy 💖

### [D's Character Snippet: What If The Crown Was A Soldier](#)

[Aug 26, 2023](#)

Second character snippet for this month!!

A look at a little scene from a timeline where the Crown was a normal person who enlisted in the Imperial Army and met D there. Even in this AU scenario, they're still pining for each other/separated by Duty haha.

[Here's the link](#)!! The tier 3 file has also been updated with it.

Enjoy 💖

[A note on September](#)



[Sep 1, 2023](#)

I'm taking a vacation from writing AToC this month!!

You will still get LI snippets as I already have those written and queued (I just finished writing A's this morning haha) and I will log on solely to upload those. But aside from that, I won't be posting any progress updates, Q&A or Sneak Peeks.

I've been continuously writing the game for nearly 2 years straight now, so I'm taking some recovery time now that CH11 has been released. It's my birthday month too, so I thought it would be appropriate timing haha

Thanks so much for all your support, I'll see you in October!! 💖

[A's Character Snippet: What If The Crown Was A Soldier](#)

[Sep 10, 2023](#)

Hiya, hope September is going well for you so far!!

I'm enjoying my vacation at the moment and resting my head, but decided to post the first character snippet a week early.

A's alternate timeline snippet is similar to D's, where the Crown is a soldier serving in the Imperial Army together with them, but they're more of equal rank. It's definitely a very sweet snippet 💖

[Here's the link for tier 1](#)!! The tier 2/3 files for it have been updated as well, see the pinned post for their links.

Enjoy!!

[D's Character Snippet: Chapter 11 Reunion \(High Romance\)](#)

[Sep 18, 2023](#)

Hiya, back with another snippet!!

This one's a scene from Chapter 11 told from D's POV - specifically, the moment they finally wake up and see the Crown again. The POV is also told with the assumption that it's on a high romance route. I'll be posting a low romance variant for it the next time D gets a character snippet 🙄

[Here's the link!!](#) The tier 2/3 files for it have been updated as well, see the pinned post for their links.

Enjoy!! 💖

[X's Character Snippet: Chapter 11 Reunion \(High Romance\)](#)

[Sep 30, 2023](#)

Another POV scene from the latest chapter!!

It was so hard to choose which moment to write for X because they have such an extensive conversation with the Crown, but eventually I chose the most impactful one emotionally, from X's perspective. The kiss was a close second though, hehe.

[Here's the link!!](#) I have also updated the tier 3 file with it, check the pinned post for the link to that file if you'd rather read it there.

Enjoy!! 💖

**Edit:** I had to change the link because I jumped the gun and accidentally published this post for all tiers lol. Sorry for the inconvenience!!

[I'm back!!!](#)

[Oct 2, 2023](#)

Vacation over, we're returning to our regularly scheduled programming ✨

I regret to inform you I did not get a chance to play BG3 yet. It kinda got lost in the shuffle of all my other vacation stuff and frankly, its size is kind of intimidating. I can't spend 100s of hours blowing through games like I used to lol 🙄

Anyways, back to the Patreon schedule!

The Development Sneak Peek this coming Wednesday (for tier 2+) will be showing a preview for my planned outline of CH12. I'll be showing a smaller preview for it during my weekly progress reports for all tiers on Sundays as well!!

We're also getting back to Character Q&As for the LIs for tier 2+ so that should be good fun (don't forget to vote if you're tier 3 for which LI you'd like to see!).

The snippets planned for this month are QUITE juicy, these are the themes I've got planned:

- **For tier 1/On the Run**, it will feature A's character snippet of their CH11 scene with the Crown in the *low romance* variant, after the incident in the city.
- **For tier 2/Successor**, additionally, you will get R's character snippet of their CH11 scene, also with the Crown in the *low romance* variant, in the water temple.
- **For tier 3/Crown**, the romantic snippet will feature D trying to catch the Crown's attention after they've been separated for a while due to official business (assuming an established relationship). With a little bit of seduction, perhaps...

So yeah, October is turning out pretty angsty in terms of snippets haha. I guess it's fitting for spooky season!!

As always, thanks for your patience and support 💖

[Weekly Progress Update \[09/OCT\]](#)

[Oct 9, 2023](#)

Hellooo, we're back with the progress updates!!

This'll mostly be about the planning I have set up for CH12, though I have also already started writing it. I was aiming for 10k but managed 7k words overall, still not too bad for my first week! Hope I'll be able to crank up the wordcount this week now that I'm getting back in the groove.

This is an overview of what CH12 will look like:

- **Branching scene:** did you choose to visit the peri trader, or did you choose to have Kham arrange the meeting?

- **Main story scene:** Imperial Court meeting, the content of which changes depending on your LI route.
- **Main story scene:** Preparations for the expedition to the mountains
- **LI divergences:** Romantic high/low status and LI-specific plot outcomes (with Behram, D's position, the incident in the city, and R's resolution) will be brought up during the Imperial Court meeting, and cause variations throughout the entire chapter

To expand more on the fourth point, the LI subplots/romances that hit their first major point in CH11 will be carrying over to CH12. This will be especially apparent in D and A's routes, since their plot outcomes have the most direct effect on the story.

D's matter with their position as High General might become an issue for them if you got the more unfavorable outcome on that front. Not to mention the stolen letter, but it might take a bit longer to see the results of that particular plot thread...

A's romance has the biggest difference out of all the LIs so far where A and your Crown can be either in a really bad place or a really good place going into CH12. You'll get a chance to correct it if you're on A's low romance route, at least. So make sure not to squander the opportunity!

R and X are a bit more ambiguous and subtle in terms of their differences, though there will still be very notable variations, especially a low romance vs a high romance. X tends to keep a facade up, but I low romance players will be able to pick up on some underlying tension. Meanwhile R might be acting especially strangely in a low romance, I would definitely keep an eye on that if you're going that route with them.

Annnndddd I'll leave you with this cute little preview:

"It would be quite a detour to turn back and head for the western ranges, a week at least. Your father's goal was Peak Asha, was it not?"

"It was." The longer you are away from your throne, the greater the risk the nobility will notice something amiss. Perhaps it isn't worth the danger, and you should plan the visit to your hometown for another time.

\$rname thinks on it a moment longer, then says, "We could arrange to have shirdals delivered to us after we visit your hometown. It would cut the detour short to just a day or two."

"To carry us up the mountains?" You can't quite hide the wonder in your voice.

In case you forgot, a shirdal = a griffin. Who doesn't love a flying mount 🐉

That was it for this week!! Until next time 💖

## [Voting For Character Q&A](#)

[Oct 15, 2023](#)

We're back to voting for the Q&As!!

You can use the link below to vote on who you want to see first, and submit any possible questions you might want to see answered. Even if the LI you voted for doesn't win the poll, I'll save your question to answer it when they do get their turn ✨

The Q&A itself will be posted on Tuesday/Wednesday.

[A's Character Snippet: Chapter 11 Reunion \(Low Romance\)](#)

[Oct 17, 2023](#)

Hiyaa, sorry for the delay in the upload!!

This one's an angsty one as I mentioned in an earlier post. For all those A romancers who couldn't bear to try the low romance route with A in CH11, and for everyone else who's curious about A's route, you can now experience the scene without having to play it. And from A's POV at that!!

Naturally, massive spoilers for A's backstory, etc etc. So keep that in mind before reading it.

[Here's the link](#)!! I also updated the tier 2/3 files with it, see the pinned post for the appropriate links to those.

Enjoy!! 💖

[D's Character Q&A, Part III](#)

[Oct 18, 2023](#)

[Part I](#) / [Part II](#)

Hey all! The voting for the poll came in, and about 36% of you voted for D! Just about edged out X by 1 vote haha. There were also a few questions sent in that will be answered for this Q&A as well - one specific submission only wrote down a question for R so I'll save that for when it's R's turn ✨

**Do you wish the Crown had been found sooner?**

"Of course I do. Both for [their] own protection, and for the good of Arsur. Perhaps if the Crown was found sooner, then [their] parents would still be alive, and [name] would have the answers they so desperately seek now."

**What kind of animal would you say you most resemble?**

"A rhino. They're large and have tough hides."

**What would other people say, do you think?**

"Xelara/Xelef would probably say something idiotic, like a giraffe because of my height. Azad/Ashti and Rozerîn/Rêzan would, hopefully, would have more apt comparisons."

**What would be your ideal vacation?**

"I don't need a vacation."

**Okay, but IF you were to go on vacation-**

"I would not go on a vacation."

**Gun to your head, ideal vacation, now.**

"...A day at the beach? I don't know what people do on vacations. See my family?"

**What was your favorite subject as a child?**

"Weapon training. I enjoyed learning how to wield a spear, especially, though I've found maces to be quite effective as well with my height and build. Swordplay was also a pleasure to learn."

**What about theoretical subjects?**

"It would be either history or geography. Far beyond Arsur's, as well; there is a vast world out there with a wealth of knowledge to offer. We can learn much from other cultures and their histories, in order to strengthen our own."

**Would you ever want to travel outside of Arsur?**

"I wouldn't mind it, but it's not a desire of mine. I prefer staying close to home; I always have."

**So, which place brings you the most joy or peace? Is it home?**

"Home, of course. Back in Penawar."

**How do you deal with being away from home so often with the Imperial Army?**

"I remind myself of my purpose. Naturally, anyone would get homesick after a certain point, but there wasn't much of a choice. In the absence of the Crown, someone had to guard the country. Now that the Crown has arrived, it will afford me more leave to go back to visit my family."

**When was the last time you saw your parents?**

"More than a year ago, now. We regularly exchange letters, but I should like to visit them soon. But perhaps it's better that I haven't had an urgent reason to visit yet - that means the region has been safe and stable in my absence."

**Can you describe your ideal first courtship meeting (read as the Arsurian equivalent of 'date')?**

"I don't have an ideal of it in my head; preconceived notions and fantasies tend to close your mind to possibilities you might not have considered otherwise. Ideally, all I can say is that I hope we both enjoy our time together, regardless of where it may lead. I am already satisfied if I'm able to spend time together with someone whose company cheers me."

**Imagine you finish your courtship with someone and you decide to promise yourselves to each other. What kind of token would you want to receive from your promised one?**

"It would have to be something small, something I can easily carry with me without it getting in the way during a fight. Preferably, I would like a necklace. I could wear it beneath my armor, and not worry about losing it or having it damaged."

**When you promise yourself to someone, your magic connects through your tokens. Would you being peri-born influence it in any way, or does it work the same?**

"It... could. After my mother and my parent promised themselves to each other, my mother actually found flowering vines growing out of her left wrist one day--her forearm is covered by it, now. An effect of sharing my parent's peri magic. For my promised one, it probably wouldn't be as strong since I'm not a peri, but something similar might happen on a smaller scale. I hope they won't mind it."

**Do peris have a similar custom for promising themselves to each other? How do they mark committed relationships?**

"The peris in Penawar do, since their customs and that of humans have often blended together since ancient times--in fact, the aspect of magic connection is one that originated from peri custom, originally, before it spread through human communities.

"The peris in Rojan still adhere to original peri customs. It is more extreme: their very lives are bound together. If one of them is hurt, or killed, the other suffers the same fate. This is only possible for them since peris lack physical bodies; they are made entirely of magic. I don't think it could be recreated with humans."

**If it could be recreated, would you want to do it?**

"Of course not. To have my beloved die, because I died? What a selfish notion. I would want them to live on and find happiness. Even if they were hurt because I was hurt, I could never forgive myself for it."

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That was it for this month!!

Until next time 💖

## [D's Romantic Snippet: Making Time](#)

[Oct 28, 2023](#)

Hi everyone!!

Apologies for the very late post, I was swamped with a lot of personal circumstances over the past week, so I couldn't get the romance snippet out in time. I'll be posting the tier 2 snippet tomorrow as well.

This one's got some Mildly Spicy implications - D might not be as overt about their needs as some of the other LIs, but the Crown will definitely notice it when D misses them ✨

[Here's the link!!](#)

Enjoy 💖

## [R's Character Snippet: Chapter 11 Reunion \(low romance\)](#)

[Oct 30, 2023](#)

Hiya!!

Managed to get this snippet out before the end of the month, I hope November will be kinder to me haha 🥹🙏

This one, like A's, is pretty much Angst City. A look at what R is going through when your Crown chooses a certain option in their CH11 romance scene, and hints about how it might affect them going forward...

[Here's the link!!](#) I've also updated the tier 3 file with it if you'd prefer to read it there, check the pinned post for the link to that one.

Enjoy 💖

## [Schedule for November](#)



[Nov 1, 2023](#)

Heya!!

Just letting everyone know the topics and themes planned for this month's bonus content again. Think it'll be a good thing to do for each month going forward since free members are a thing now, so you can decide per month whether you wanna pledge ✨

The Development Sneak Peek this coming Friday (for tier 2+) will be dropping the last lore snippets for previous Crowns that reigned before the main character. For the Character Q&A there will be another round of voting, deciding between A, X and R!

As for the snippets, these are the themes I have planned:

- **For tier 1/On the Run**, it will feature R's character snippet of their CH11 scene with the Crown in the *high romance* variant, in the water temple.
- **For tier 2/Successor**, additionally, you will get A's character snippet of their CH11 scene, also with the Crown in the *high romance* variant, after the incident in the city.
- **For tier 3/Crown**, the romantic snippet will feature X (and the Blades) escorting the Crown to another city for business, but they have to stop at an inn to rest, and... yes. You guessed it. There Was Only One Bed.

Hope November makes up for all the angst I barraged you with in October haha

As always, thanks for your patience and support 💕

[Development Sneak Peek: Crowns of Old, Part V](#)

[Nov 10, 2023](#)

Final part of the Crown lore!! I might do a post for known Crowns like Keybanû and Zana to expand on their backgrounds in the future, but for now, all the list of past Crowns has finally been completed 💕

[Part I](#) / [Part II](#) / [Part III](#) / [Part IV](#)

As a reminder, here's the list of all the introduced Crowns so far, including the ones already mentioned in canon:

1. Ashadūna
2. Arsāma
3. Humati
4. Medya
5. Koban
6. Bardiya
7. Lorīcan
8. Bargiran
9. Dila
10. Jiyan
11. Zana
12. Ardashir
13. Sorgul
14. Bêdeng (this post)
15. Kanî
16. Xebat (this post)
17. Gulreng (this post)
18. Keybanû
19. Piruz
20. Ferzan
21. Your little meow meow!!!

**\*\*The Fourteenth Crown: Bêdeng the Glutton**

**\*\*Following** after the disastrous reign of Crown Sorgul, Bêdeng seemed to have learned all the worst lessons from his predecessor. Where Sorgul did her utmost to dismantle Ardashir's legacy as much as possible, particularly regarding the Provincial Schools, Bêdeng took it one step further by adding tuition fees to their admission, which essentially would bar the vast majority of the populace from being able to apply.

He was similarly avaricious in other areas. Taxes and tithes for commoners were at their peak during his reign. Even neighboring nations were not spared; Bêdeng was known for being utterly cutthroat during trade negotiations, which won him few allies and set back several relations with other monarchs in the region.

But what did Bêdeng do with all that accumulating wealth? The answer was simple: he merely collected it. Riches alone for the sake of them was something that appealed to him, and while he spent vast amounts of coin on personal luxuries, for the most part, a majority of it remained concentrated in the Imperial Vault. His insatiable desire for wealth and power led Arsur into a dark period marred by economic exploitation and social unrest. The Imperial Vault became a personal hoard for Bêdeng, as he amassed riches at the expense of everything else.

The people of Arsur struggled to make ends meet while the nobles reveled in opulence. Bêdeng's extravagance knew no bounds, and his insensitivity to the suffering of his subjects fueled discontent across the provinces. The stark contrast between the lavish lifestyles of the nobility and the hardships faced by the commoners sowed the seeds of dissent.

As Bêdeng's avarice reached new heights, whispers of rebellion began to circulate. The disgruntled commoners found an unexpected ally in Crown Bêdeng's designated successor, Kanî. Recognizing the unsustainable path that Bêdeng was steering the empire towards, Kanî decided to take matters into his own hands. His sense of justice remained intact despite Bêdeng's best efforts to corrupt him, and as his predecessor's greed proved insatiable, Kanî became more and more disgusted by his mentor's corruption.

At the very young age of sixteen years old, Kanî, backed by a coalition of like-minded nobles and sympathetic military commanders, orchestrated a carefully planned coup to oust Bêdeng. The commoners, tired of their exploitation, silently supported this covert rebellion, hoping for a change in leadership that would bring about a more just and equitable rule.

In a swift and unexpected turn of events, Kanî confronted Bêdeng, presenting evidence of his excessive greed and the widespread discontent among the population. With the support of key figures within the Empire and the Imperial Court, including influential nobles who had grown disillusioned with Bêdeng's favoritism, Kanî compelled Bêdeng to abdicate power. When Bêdeng protested, the words Kanî spoke to him were subsequently immortalized in history: "Die in disgrace, or embrace the mercy of disappearing into oblivion. This is my last kindness to you, my dear teacher."

Bêdeng, faced with the possibility of execution and the loss of support from those who had once benefited from his policies, reluctantly relinquished power. Tradition dictates that the successor cannot formally take the throne so long as their predecessor is alive, but in essence, Kanî came to rule as regent, while Bêdeng was imprisoned in the dungeons of the Royal Palace. He remained the Crown in name only.

Stripped of all the opulence he so adored, Bêdeng eventually died in confinement, silent and forgotten.

**\*\*The Sixteenth Crown: Silver-Tongued Xebat**

**\*\*Crown Xebat** assumed the throne of Arsur during a period of simmering discontent in the province of Şevan. Born in the heart of the capital, Xebat brought with them a reputation for their silver-tongued finesse and charisma. Their reign would be defined by the art of negotiation, and a resolute stance against those who sought to sow discord within the empire.

Şevan, a province known for its rich cultural tapestry and history that preceded even the old Kingdom of Ardia, had become a hotbed of dissatisfaction among the populace. Unrest festered due to perceived neglect from Crowns past, letting nobles run rampant with exploitation, coupled with the machinations of discontented nobles themselves who harbored ambitions of secession and independence to rule over Şevan themselves. When Xebat ascended to the throne, they inherited a province on the brink of rebellion.

Rather than resorting to force, Xebat embraced the path of dialogue. They initiated a series of comprehensive negotiations with representatives from Şevan, inviting both nobles and common folk to voice their grievances. On the surface, this appeared to be token attempts at mediation, but the true purpose of these negotiations were to stall for time. While Xebat distracted and diverted attention through charismatic addresses and gracious meetings with nobles and commoners alike, they used spies to identify the nobles fomenting the brewing rebellion, uncovering that even the Mîr and the military commander of Şevan had been corrupted, and planned to aid the nobles in a military coup.

Overnight, to the eyes of the unwitting public, Xebat's opponents all seemed to either change their tune or vanish entirely. As ostensibly tolerant as Xebat appeared, they were in fact one of the more ruthless Crowns in history: dissent was not tolerated, rebellion even less so. Especially when this rebellion would only cost Şevan's citizens dearly; the commoners would be the foremost victims in this thinly-veiled grab for power. They had not asked for something so extreme as secession, only for their concerns to be listened to.

Though the negotiations were not *all* for show: Xebat managed to uncover the nuanced grievances of Şevan's residents in the process. Economic disparities, neglect, and a perceived lack of representation were at the forefront. Xebat knew well that the best way to quell the concerns of the populace was to tend to their needs, and redirected the Empire's resources to Şevan's languishing infrastructure.

Still, Xebat could not stamp out the idea of Şevan's independence among its ruling class, despite their best efforts. While effective in preventing a revolt in the short term, eventually, it became known what had happened to the dissenters among the nobility. The subsequent generations of nobles, in turn, harbored resentment for many decades after Xebat's rule... and would continue to cause problems into the reign of even the Twenty-First Crown of Arsur.

**\*\*The Seventeenth Crown: Gulreng the Explorer**

**\*\*Crown Gulreng** ascended to the throne of Arsur with a fervent curiosity that set her apart from her predecessors. Born in a small coastal village in Avdin, Gulreng's early years were shaped by the rhythmic ebb and flow of the sea. Her fascination with distant lands and diverse cultures became the guiding force of her reign, earning her the epithet she is now known by.

From the outset, Gulreng prioritized international relations, recognizing that the prosperity of Arsur could be amplified through global connections. Her court was a melting pot of diplomats, linguists, and cartographers, all working tirelessly to establish bridges with nations far beyond the Empire's borders. Gulreng's vision extended beyond conventional alliances, as she sought to weave a tapestry of friendships with civilizations yet unknown.

One of Gulreng's most notable initiatives was the dispatch of diplomatic missions to the far reaches of the earth. Explorers, well-versed in the art of diplomacy, were sent to uncharted territories and distant nations, bearing gifts and extending invitations for cultural exchange--and, of course, beneficial trading agreements.

One such expedition reached the islands of Balatik to the far east, across the treacherous waters of the Seafarer's End, where the people lived in harmony within vibrant jungles that stretched for miles. The Arsurian diplomats were welcomed with curiosity, and the ensuing cultural exchange enriched both societies; Balatik formed an entry to the rest of the far eastern continent, enriching Arsur's trade tremendously. A great example of the mutually beneficial relationship between both nations is Balatikan artisans sharing their mastery of unique natural dyes produced from their native flora, which became highly sought after in Arsur, while Arsurian magi introduced innovative irrigation techniques that bolstered Balatik's agriculture.

Gulreng's commitment to exploration was not limited to diplomacy alone. She commissioned ambitious voyages of discovery, equipping fleets to navigate the seas and uncover new lands. These journeys, documented by skilled cartographers, expanded Arsur's understanding of the world.

Her dedication to fostering connections with foreign nations was not without challenges. Traditionalists within Arsur questioned the need for such extensive outreach, arguing that the Empire should focus on consolidating its own lands. Yet, Gulreng remained steadfast in her belief that the strength of Arsur lay not only in its military might but also in the bonds forged with nations far and wide.

Keybanû, who was her successor, often cited Gulreng as a source of great inspiration for the ideals she subsequently reigned with. Gulreng's emphasis on building relations with other nations is often seen as the reason for Keybanû's treaty with Ivia. Her intentions were to protect the territory from being conquered by Thalloi city-states, yet, one might wonder if claiming it as a vassal state was the right decision in the long term.

That was it for this lore post!! Special shout-out to my bff, Regine (AKA atemaarte, author of the interactive fiction game [Eye of the Moon](#)) who came up with Balatik and let me include it in Arsur's world ✨

[R's Character Snippet: Chapter Eleven Reunion \(high romance\)](#)

[Nov 12, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

Back with another character snippet, and this one is just... I don't know how else to describe it but "🥹🥹🥹🥹🥹". R romancers who have already played through this specific variation will understand what I mean.

[Here's the link](#)!! I also updated the tier 2/3 files with it, check the pinned post for the links to those.

Enjoy!! 💖

## [Voting for Character Q&A](#)

[Nov 12, 2023](#)

New round of voting for the Q&As!!

D already had their turn last month, so you can only vote between A, X and R this time.

You can use the link below to vote on who you want to see first, and submit any possible questions you might want to see answered. Even if the LI you voted for doesn't win the poll, I'll save your question to answer it when they do get their turn ✨

The Q&A itself will be posted on Wednesday/Thursday.

## [X's Character Q&A, Part III](#)

[Nov 18, 2023](#)

### [Part I](#) / [Part II](#)

Hey all! The voting for the poll came in, and nearly half of you voted for X! There were also several questions sent in that will be answered for this Q&A as well as for A's and R's ✨

#### **What kind of animal would you say you most resemble?**

"That's easy, a lion. I like having my own pride."

\*\*What would other people say, do you think?

\*\*\*"Azad/Ashti would call me a peacock. I know this because they have called me a peacock in the past. Can't even deny it, really; I do like showing off. Dara/Delal would probably call me an ass."

#### **Like, a donkey?**

"Sure, that too."

#### **What's one skill that you'd like to learn if you had unlimited time and resources?**

"Learning other languages. I know several dialects from Rojan and can hold my own in other provinces very well, but whenever we travel south of Zeratun I have to rely on Tûjo and Heval to talk to people

there. I struggle with Penawar's dialects too, since they've been mixed with the old tongue from the peris who live there.

"And don't even get me started on Şevan, they have an *entirely* different language with a completely different system of writing! Whenever Tûjo starts speaking Hathurian I can't understand a single word that comes out of his mouth. Sometimes he does it solely to bully me, I think."

**Do you know any languages from places outside of Arsur?**

"I know exactly one Thallosian phrase. βάλλε εις κόρακας."

**What does that mean?**

"I don't remember, but I'm pretty sure it's a curse of some sort. The last person who said it to me was very angry."

**Was it because you slept with someone's parent again?**

"No! It was their grandparent! Get your facts right."

**In terms of promising yourself to someone else, what do you envision the ceremony would look like for you if you would have one at all?**

**(For context, such ceremonies involve binding two or more people's magic together; they can either be performed in temples by priests or in natural places with high concentrations of spirits/magic, called Sacred Sites).**

"Of course, I'd like to celebrate with my closest friends and the Blades, so I'd like them to be present. Other than that, I would want it to be performed by spirits in Sacred Sites rather than in a temple by some priest I don't even know. It's an intimate affair, after all.

"If my promised one didn't have any preferences, I would choose a site in the Armas Mountains; it's almost an obligation to have it there, as someone born in Rojan!"

**What would be your ideal vacation?**

"Throwing a month-long celebration in a big city, with festivities and banquets from morning til night. Really being able to let loose and have fun with friends and loved ones without worrying about anything else."

**Wouldn't that get exhausting after, uh, the first week?**

"Of course it wouldn't be *every* single day! You'd have to have days to recover from all the debauchery. Even I can't keep that up for a straight month (though I have tried)."

\*\*Would you ever want to travel outside of Arsur?

\*\*\*"Sure, why not? I don't have a particular desire for it, but it would be interesting to visit other regions for a little while. Not too long, though. I have a feeling I would get homesick very quickly."

**What's your favorite province to visit outside of Rojan?**

"Avdin, without a doubt, though I may be biased since aside from Zerat, that is also the place I've spent

the most time outside of Rojan. Azad/Ashti showed me around their mother's hometown once where I met [their] grandparents, and a few of [their] mother's siblings and [their] cousins. They're very warm people, and it's a beautiful place with breathtaking beaches.

"There's a sense of peacefulness in the smaller towns and villages that you can't find anywhere else, and the bustle of the big cities is my favorite. There are so many interesting people you can meet there from faraway places."

**Do you wish you'd met the Crown before they were the Crown?**

"Never thought about that before, but now that you mention it, I absolutely do. I could've helped to protect [them] and [their] family."

**You wouldn't have been that much older than [them] when [their] eyes first turned gold.**

"I'm not saying I would've been completely successful. You never know how things in a hypothetical scenario like that would've ended up, if things would've been better or worse... and maybe this is my own arrogance, or wishful thinking, but I'd like to think I could've made things better for [them]. At the very least, [they] would have had another person [they] could rely on. That would've counted for something, right?"

**If you were caught stealing from a (modern) store, what would you have taken?**

"I would never get *caught* stealing, first of all. Second of all, probably food or medicine. If I'm stealing from a store it would be out of necessity, not to get some kind of kick out of it. That's just sad."

**What kind of nerd would you have been in (modern) school?**

"A gym nerd. A fitness freak. A jock is what I'm saying."

**That's not really what a 'nerd' is, in the popular definition of the word.**

"Says who? I am very serious and passionate about athletics. Do you think these muscles grew themselves out of thin air?" [Flexes their arms].

**What about theoretical subjects, would you have any favorites?**

"History. I think it's one of the most important things you could ever learn about."

**Oh, Dara/Delal said the same thing about history.**

"I take it back. Math. I'd absolutely be into math.  $1 + 1 = 2$ , great stuff. A real classic."

[X's Romance Snippet: Sharing A Bed](#)

[Nov 19, 2023](#)

Time for another romance snippet!!



I meant to make this a bit more spicy but it ended up getting more sweet than anything haha. A *little bit* of tension, but it's an established romance scenario, so they don't dance around with it too much. I gotta save the best of the sexual tension for the actual story, after all ✨

[Here's the link!!](#)

Enjoy 💖

[A's Character Snippet: Chapter 11 Reunion \(high romance\)](#)

[Nov 30, 2023](#)

Hiya, sorry for the late upload!!

This one makes A's set for CH11 complete as well, with both their high and low romance scenes out. Reading them right after each other to see the difference in POV was actually fun for me to do as well; A and the Crown are in such WILDLY different places in their relationship depending on what you chose in CH11, damn.

At least this one's the good romantic variant 💖

[Here's the link!!](#) I also updated the tier 3 file with it, check the pinned post for the link to that one.

Enjoy ✨

[Schedule for December](#)

[Dec 1, 2023](#)

Hi!!

Can't believe we're already at the end of the year, 2023 feels like it went by so fast!! Since it's the holiday season, I've decided to release an extra romance snippet for A this month as well that will be released for all tiers ✨

It'll replace the Development Sneak Peek that tier 2+ usually gets on the first Wednesday of the month; this time, you'll get the romance snippet instead. For the Character Q&A there will be another round of voting, deciding between A, and R!

I also hope to give some actual updates on CH12 progress soon, but I'm not gonna lie, October and November kicked my ass and my writing has been a very slow trickle day by day. Personal issues and stressful events in my family + my proneness for winter depression have left me flailing for a bit. I'm frankly relieved I'm able to keep up on Patreon content at all, but I'm going to do my best to get back in the rhythm of working on the game as well!!

Anyways, as for the snippets, these are the themes I have planned:

- **For tier 1/On the Run**, it will feature X's character snippet of their CH11 scene with the Crown in the *low romance* variant, at the city gates.
- **For tier 2/Successor**, additionally, you will get D's character snippet of their CH11 scene, also with the Crown in the *low romance* variant, after D has returned to Marabad.
- **For tier 3/Crown**, the romantic snippet will feature R and the Crown in an established relationship bathing together after a long day of work (it'll include a choice to specify your Crown's body type). Very *mildly* spicy, but more so it's about the intimacy 💕
- **For the bonus snippet for all tiers**, the romantic snippet will feature A and the Crown caught up in some very cold weather, and it turns out that having a sun affinity makes for being a very convenient human heater. Bit of cuddling for warmth? 💕

As always, thanks for your patience and support 🙏

[A's Bonus Romantic Snippet: Warming Up](#)

[Dec 9, 2023](#)

Ayyy, a nicely themed bonus snippet for the wintertime ✨

This one also has some mildly spicy implications, as well as a slight variation where you can choose between your Crown having inner magic and outer magic, so that changes exactly how they warm A up a little!!

No new links here since this snippet is for all tiers, you can use the links from the previous month to access it in whichever file you want ([tier 1](#) / [tier 2](#) / [tier 3](#)).

Enjoy!! 💕

## [Voting For Character Q&A](#)

[Dec 10, 2023](#)

New round of voting for the Q&A!!

X had their turn last month, so you can only vote between A and R this time. The LI that doesn't win this month will automatically get theirs in January!

You can use the link below to vote on who you want to see first, and submit any possible questions you might want to see answered. Even if the LI you voted for doesn't win the poll, I'll save your question to answer it when they do get their turn ✨

The Q&A itself will be posted on Wednesday/Thursday.

[X's Character Snippet: Chapter 11 Reunion \(low romance\)](#)

[Dec 18, 2023](#)

Sorry for the late upload, 'tis the holiday season so things are BUSY busy around here. Speaking of which, hope it's all going well for you!!

**Also note for everyone tier 2 and above:** I ended up accidentally doing the voting for the Character Q&A a week earlier than usual lol? So I've just let it rock, you'll be getting the actual Q&A this Wednesday!! (It's for A btw)

This snippet ended up angsty in a character study type of way. It's a bit of a peek beneath all the layers of layers of pretense that X likes to wear, and should give a better insight on what it is they really want from the Crown--though really, it's nothing complicated to figure out. Just very basic human needs 😭😭

[Here's the link!!](#) The tier 2/3 files have also been updated with it, check their links in the pinned post for those.

Enjoy!!

[A's Character Q&A, Part III](#)

[Dec 24, 2023](#)

[Part I](#) / [Part II](#)

Hey all! Sorry for this late one, holiday chaos kinda messed up my schedule this week lol. The voting for the poll came in, and most of you voted for A! There were also several questions sent in that will be answered for this Q&A as well as for R's next month ✨

**What kind of animal would you say you most resemble?**

"A cat."

**What would other people say, do you think?**

"A cat."

**That simple, huh.**

"I have a very obvious type."

**What's one skill that you'd like to learn if you had unlimited time and resources?**

"I'd like to learn how to paint. I had some lessons as a child, but it has been a long time since I've found an opportunity to practice anything of the sort, especially with how much I've had to travel while we searched for the Crown. Now that we're settled in the Royal Palace, it might be a nice hobby to take up again."

**Do you know any languages from places outside of Arsur?**

"Of course. I can hold conversations in the most common dialects of Thallosian, in Ivian, in the Qatheshi common tongue, and some basic vocabulary from the Sacati language. Though that last one is admittedly very rusty, and most of it consists of 'go away' or 'leave me be' or 'I do not wish to fight'. You don't have to guess why, considering. "

**In terms of promising yourself to someone else, what do you envision the ceremony would look like for you if you would have one at all?**

**(For context, such ceremonies involve binding two or more people's magic together; they can either be performed in temples by priests or in natural places with high concentrations of spirits/magic, called Sacred Sites).**

"I don't care to have any kind of ceremony, personally. I'd be content with establishing our bond with just me and my promised one, in the presence of the spirits. I'm sure my family and friends would be a little disappointed, but I'd like it to be a strictly private affair--it's about *our* bond, after all, and no one else's. We can always celebrate with our loved ones afterwards, if my promised one would like to."

**What would be your ideal vacation?**

"Somewhere secluded with my loved ones, where we can enjoy the environment. My preference would always go to the seaside, but I'd like to explore other places as well. Perhaps the marshes in Penawar;

that is the only place in Arsur I haven't traveled extensively, and from what I saw last time, the nature there is beautiful."

**What's your favorite province to visit outside of Avdin?**

"Probably Rojan. Aside from Avdin, most of my closest friends are from there, so I always receive a warm welcome whenever I return there. [R] and [X] always know the best places to visit in Marabad, especially."

**Do you wish you'd met the Crown before they were the Crown?**

"I would. I don't know what I could've done, considering I would've been a child... and maybe it still would've put [them] and [their] family in more danger. But I think they could have used a friend. I certainly wish I had one, back then."

**What's the best part about having found the Crown?**

[Non-romance answer:] "Knowing we can finally start fixing things, make up for all the damage and all the suffering that has been done in these past ten years. It will not be easy, it'll be hard work and a long road, but better late than never."

[(High) Romance answer:] "Being able to start fixing things and helping people in need, first and foremost, but... personally speaking, I've also been... pleasantly surprised. I was cautious when they first appeared, but they aren't like I feared they might be. It makes me feel hopeful. I used the position of Royal Protector for my own selfish ends at first, when there wasn't a Crown to protect, but for this Crown... I will do my utmost to keep them safe."

**What was your favorite subject to study as a child?**

"Literature and poetry. Old myths and legends, folk tales, epics--my parents would often catch me with a book in bed, trying to read when I should be sleeping. I would always try to hide them beneath my pillow, but my parents would always catch me. My dear sister, though, was mischievous enough to smuggle me books from her room whenever they got taken away."

If you were caught stealing from a (modern) store, what would you have taken?

"I don't know. Something useful? I've never thought about stealing from a store before. A sign of my own fortune, I suppose."

**But if you *had* to steal something, what would you most likely choose?**

"...An apple?"

**Why an apple???**

"You told me to pick something and it was the first thing that came to mind? I don't know. I like apples. Seems like a good enough thing to steal as anything else."

[Dec 24, 2023](#)

I know I said this snippet was gonna be mostly about the intimacy, and it certainly still is, but I'm definitely starting to flirt with the bounds of Spice Content that's safe for 16 and over lol.

Also, as promised, a small choice to specify (part of) your Crown's body type for this snippet.

[Here's the link!!](#)

Enjoy 💖

[Holiday Drop: Public Release Character Snippets](#)

[Dec 25, 2023](#)

Lots of free members following the page, so in case you all haven't seen it on the Patreon page or the itch.io store page yet, I've released 4 character snippets for each LI to the public!

These snippets have also been made available to tier 1 patrons in their snippet files, but for free members and the public, you can download the file in this post to read it. The scenes included for each LI are:

- Meeting the Crown for the first time
- Comforting the Crown after the nightmare in CH3
- Seeing the Crown dressed up for the first time in CH4
- Seeing the Crown's coronation vision in CH7

I've also included snippets showing how the Crown's parents met each other, how X met Tûjo and Heval, and how Perjin met R told from Perjin's perspective.

You can download the file from the attachment in this post. It's a zip file, so you'll have to unzip it ("extract all" option after right-clicking it), then open up the index.html file in any browser of your choice. Just make sure **not to move any of the files outside of its folder**, or you'll break the images/fonts!

If you enjoy these snippets and you're considering whether or not to (re-)pledge, you can view the total list of currently available snippets for each tier in [this Google doc](#). It'll be updated as I add more stories each month, so you can check in periodically to see which new snippets have been added!

Thanks so much for all your support over these years, hope you enjoy these bonus snippets.

Happy holidays!! 💖

[D's Character Snippet: Chapter 11 Reunion \(low romance\)](#).

[Dec 30, 2023](#)

It's the end of the year!!

And what better way to close it off than with an angsty D snippet haha. Honestly D's low/high variations aren't that bad yet compared to the other LIs, especially R and A, and I'd say it's probably the most low key one yet. But if your Crown continues to go down this path, well... it's not gonna be a fun time 😊

[Here's the link](#)!! The tier 3 file has also been updated with it, see the pinned post for the link to that one.

Happy New Year's in advance!!

Here's to hoping 2024 will be a better year for all of us 💖

[Schedule for January](#)

[Dec 30, 2023](#)

Heya!!

Wow, it's literally about to be 2024 on Monday. I don't know about the rest of you, but this year went by SO fast for me, it's crazy.

For January, I'll be operating a bit on a different schedule as I'm taking the first week off, so there **will be no Development Sneak Peek for this month**. There also won't be any voting for the Character Q&A as R is the only LI left who has yet to get one, so they'll automatically be the chosen LI for this month ✨

As for the snippets, we're done with canon POV scenes for a while!! Which means I'll be writing miscellaneous scenarios for the character snippets. These are the themes I have planned:

- **For tier 1/On the Run**, it will feature **a special romantic snippet** featuring A/X in a pairing. I remembered a while back that I wrote snippets for A/R and D/X but *completely* forgot to write one for A/X, so I'm doing that this month!
- **For tier 2/Successor**, additionally, you will get R's character snippet featuring an alternate universe scenario where the Crown was found as a child and raised together with R at the Royal Palace.
- **For tier 3/Crown**, the romantic snippet will feature an alternate universe scenario of X and the Crown meeting for the first time during a masquerade (for the purposes of this snippet and for good old fun we are pretending those are a thing in Arsur when they actually aren't) and they spend the whole night flirting.

As always, thanks for your patience and support 🙏