

Qeresî Patreon by Thomas Bell

(22/January/2024 - 30/March/2025)

[A's Romance Snippet: Chapter Twelve, Part Two](#)

[2 days ago](#)

I would have posted this earlier but the snippet somehow ended up going from the planned 500 words to doubling to 1k words lol. No idea how that happened, it's like I love writing romance scenes or something 🤪

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

Enjoy 💖

[A's Character Snippet: Chapter Twelve, Part 1](#)

[5 days ago](#)

As promised, here's part one for A's POV of CH12! Much like with R, this assumes the high romance version of their route on that chapter. I might go back and do the low romance version as well, but I'll have to think about it 🤔

[Here's the link!](#) The tier 3 file has also been updated with it, check the pinned post for the right link to that one.

Enjoy, and you can expect part 2 on Saturday 💖

[Chapter 13 Preview, Part 4 \(R and D\).](#)

[March 23](#)

I've been working on more LI specific scenes over the past week, so these two seemed good ones to share! The R one is specifically for their romance route, while D's is a scene that is plot-dependent (you'll see what I mean), but of course D romancers get a special variation of it as well 🙄

"This is a pressing matter," the official insists. "As we all well know, \$rtitle \$rname never received a formal education at a distinguished school. Instead, all \$rtheir tutelage came only from Lady Zerya and the teachers she chose—"

"What is wrong with that?" the Voice of the Crown demands. "Lady Zerya was a wise Sorcerer —"

"She failed to find the Crown, and Crown Ferzan was assassinated under her watch!"

"The Crown's Sorcerer is an advisor, not a guard!"

"That does not change the fact that it casts doubt on her competence, let alone whether she was capable of producing a worthy successor." The official redirects their gaze back to you—not that you have been watching them in turn.

No, your eyes have been focused on \$rname, \$rtheir posture frozen in place and \$rtheir expression entirely blank as \$rthey has silently followed the debate with one side casually disparaging \$rthem as well as \$rtheir mentor. One \$rthey now has a complicated relationship with, after all that was revealed.

Your heart aches at the sight: you can't imagine what must be going through \$rtheir head having to listen to all of this. If only you could reach out your hand to \$rthem, to comfort \$rthem in some way, but such a display would not be taken well by the court. In the end, the best thing you can do in such circumstances is to put a stop to this ridiculous argument.

"\$rname's skill in magic is irrefutable," you interject, silencing the court. "I am certain there are many respectable magi and scholars who would attest to that."

"Of course, Your Imperial Majesty," the official responds. "\$rtheir skill in magic was not in question, but the Crown's Sorcerer is a position of import to the governance of the Empire. For \$rthem to be absent, without any justification given to the Imperial Court—"

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"Do you know how many I have lost under my command over the years?" \$dname says, and you fall silent. "Hundreds. Some directly, some indirectly, but ones I bear responsibility for all the same."

"Because of choices you've made?"

"Of course." \$dname's eyes briefly lower to the ground, hands folding behind \$dtheir back. "Countless families have had to grieve the loss of their loved ones because of mistakes that I have made. Because of errors in my judgment."

"How do you keep going?" you say, even while you're afraid to hear the answer. "Knowing that?"

"To do otherwise would be to betray the trust they placed in me." \$dname looks at you, \$dtheir gaze an aged one. "It would be to abandon my duty, to give up on Arsur, and to admit that all the lives lost were ones lost in vain. Does that sound right to you?"

It doesn't, but neither does it sound right to you that others should die because of you.

"Those soldiers chose to follow me," \$dname continues when you remain silent. "Just as Yekbûn chose to place her faith in you. They were not puppets who lived and died only by our decisions. As much as we must strive to do better, the their deaths should be for their murderers to bear. Do not absolve them of their guilt by taking it upon yourself."

Something about those words finally gets through to you: here you are tormenting yourself for Yekbûn's death, but while you carry responsibility for it, you were not the one who took up your blade and drove it through her chest.

Rather than wallowing in remorse, isn't it better to focus on finding the one who killed her, and who even used another person as a tool to do it? It might not be enough to earn her family's forgiveness, but at least then, you can prevent others from meeting the same fate.

IF D IS ROMANCED

As you ponder this, feeling a metaphorical weight lightening from your shoulder, you feel a physical one bearing down upon it as \$dname's hand gently—tentatively—settles on top of it.

"If the weight of it becomes too much for you to carry alone, then share it with me," \$dname murmurs, your eyes widening in surprise, even that softest of touches enough to make your heart hammer against your chest. "Your sins are my sins. We shall carry them together."

Both of A's character snippets should be uploaded sometime this coming week 💖

[Personality Cheat Sheet for the Crown](#)

[March 15](#)

I don't think anyone actually asked for this, but considering how many people replay the game to try out different routes and Crowns, I have now added a cheat sheet functionality that shows you which choices get you points for which personality trait! Should make it easier to customize your Crown on repeat playthroughs, though of course, for first time players I recommend they play it with the cheat sheet off.

Restart the game from the starting screen, and you should get an option to turn it on or off from the beginning ✨

Also corrected various bugs and typos that people sent in, you can read the specifics on that on the [itch.io](#) page where I also posted this update!

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

[March 11](#)

Making this one a freebie since I couldn't write any proper updates for February 🙄

I've finished the opening scene with Bazo and am almost done with the court scene as well! I'm still writing more slowly than I would like, but I feel more energetic and productive now that Spring is nearing, so hopefully I will be able to finish up the chapter between this month and April 🙏

This chapter is a big one for set-up, which is probably why it's taking me more effort than usual. It's going to give some more details regarding Şevan, which is going to be the focus of the next arc.

Also, I'm gonna write it down here so I remember to include a scene for it: the people who chose to investigate the corpse of the assassin in CH9 using divination will get a little tidbit extra pointing them towards another lead they can follow. You all got that emotional letter from the assassin/victim's father in CH10, but other than that it wasn't really a clue on what else you could follow up on to track down the Followers of Vidarna, so CH13 will offer that for you!

Honestly, trying to keep all these plot threads straight in my head is basically impossible, but thankfully I've written it all down now. But once the Kham issue is fully resolved, it'll be a huge load off my back lmao. I really want the story to go into the Şevan arc with a clear goal for the main character, because the political situation there is already going to be complicated enough 😭

Here's a tiny little preview of the scene with Bazo, I struggled to pick anything because a lot of it is a bit too spoiler-y for my tastes. But it'll give you an impression of Bazo's character for now, as well as how tricky it will be to approach the situation in Şevan:

"I mean no offense, Your Imperial Majesty," Bazo amends. "Nor would I ever suggest taking the Imperial Army into Şevan and going on a hunt. It would cause chaos and upheaval. What I was going to say was that it would not be an invasion if you ordered Şevan's own army to do so."

You take a moment to consider the steward's words. "A clever way to circumvent accusations of tyranny, perhaps, but an act of aggression all the same. Is that what you are hoping for, steward?"

"My only hope is for the conflict to end sooner rather than later." Bazo clears his throat before adding, "With as little bloodshed as possible."

"So you don't think I should execute them?" You arch a brow. "Then why suggest it?"

"Merely to know your thoughts on the matter, Your Imperial Majesty." He inclines his head once more. "Forgive me if I have frustrated you with my ambiguity."

He's trying to ascertain your intentions. Perhaps in order to avoid positioning himself against you, or in order to be forewarned if he *does* plan on doing so.

Bazo is clearly treading carefully around the Crown, but you'll be able to decide whether to make an enemy or a (temporary) ally out of him. Your Crown's attitude towards Bazo and Bazo's own attitude towards your Crown will also differ at the beginning depending on whether you chose to condemn him, forgive him, or neither for missing your coronation back in CH7!

I do really love writing characters who all have their own competing agendas and motivations, but while it makes the story more interesting, it also makes it more complicated to write 😊 I have full faith that it'll be worth it in the end, though!

For this month, I'm planning on dropping some previews for R and D's scenes in CH13, and will be writing character/romance snippets for A, viewing their CH12 scenes through their POV ✨

[Chapter 13 Preview, Part 3 \(X Romance\)](#)

[February 28](#)

Like promised, the continuation of the X preview 🙄

As expected, \$xname anticipates your move and leaps easily to the side. A tap of \$xtheir wooden sword against your spine tells you \$xthey has already won--yet neither of you stop.

It's expected, perhaps, that this was how it would go. Usually you stop sparring once your partner wins, but knowing how outmatched you are, the both of you continue on.

For every misstep, you get a tap of \$xname's sword somewhere else it would have been lethal. Your chest, your gut, your back, the side of your neck. \$xname does not gloat about it, \$xthey doesn't taunt you, \$xthey doesn't say a single word. You don't take it personally. Instead, you start to pay attention.

Learning to guard your weak points is, you realize, what \$xname is teaching you with this.

"Good," \$xname says as you take a break to catch your breath after several rounds of it, feeling sweat upon your brow as you pant heavily. \$xname, meanwhile, doesn't have a hair out of place. "You're getting better. I like a quick learner."

You exhale a laugh, shaking your head. "Are you trying to distract me?"

"Of course not." \$xname smirks, resting the flat of \$xtheir straight sword atop \$xtheir shoulder. "I'm using praise as motivation. Is it working?"

"Maybe." You take another breath, straightening your posture again and re-taking your stance. "Let's keep going."

\$xname's smirk sharpens, and this time, \$xthey is the first to attack. It is a telegraphed and straightforward swing, one you have learned how to deflect, and you're certain \$xthey holds back on \$xtheir usual strength and speed--but not by much. You feel the force of \$xtheir hit rattle up your arms as you block and redirect it, then grit your teeth as you go in for a counterattack.

\$xname sidesteps it fluidly, but rather than the tap you expect from \$xtheir sword somewhere on your body, you instead feel a tug on your garments that has you staggering sideways. Right into \$xname.

\$cxthey catches you, the blunted wooden edge of \$xtheir sword poised against the front of your neck, pressed against your skin. \$cxtheir face is much closer than it needs to be, the width of \$xtheir blade the only thing keeping the two of you apart, and suddenly your heart pounds for an entirely different reason than the exertion.

"Is this part of the motivation?" you say, your voice low, and \$xname's smirk sharpens.

"No," \$xthey murmurs back, eyes lowering to your lips. "This is just for me."

[February 27](#)

My Patreon charges everyone on the 1st of every month, so if you pledged in the past week and don't want to get charged again remember to cancel! Or if you miss the boat, send me a DM after the 1st and I'll refund you 🙏

Also for those of you waiting on the 2nd X preview, I'll be uploading that one tomorrow for all tiers 🙄

[D's Romance Snippet: Chapter 12, Part 2](#)

[February 27](#)

This is a direct continuation of the first half of the snippet I released for tier 2+ last week, so they've both been merged into the same scene. Basically, I just pasted part 2 onto the end of part 1, as you are meant to read it all in one go.

With both parts together it's about ~1.6k words and it includes a minor flavor text option choosing between assertive and passive Crowns!

[Here's the link.](#)

Enjoy 💖

[D's Character Snippet: Chapter 12, Part 1](#)

[February 23](#)

Man I struggled to find a stopping point for this snippet since D's romance scene is a continuous one. I had to chop it in half, essentially. The second half will be for tier 3!

[Here's the link.](#)

Enjoy 💖

[Chapter 13 Preview, Part 2 \(X Romance\)](#)

[February 21](#)

This one's just a little snippet since I'm making it a freebie, I'll post a bigger one for paid members some time next week 💖 And D's first snippet of their CH12 POV will be posted this Sunday as well!

"Come on, show me," \$xname taunts, the two of you circling each other. \$cxthey smirks at you, eyes glimmering in challenge. "Don't worry, I'll go easy on you."

"Oh, will you?" You briefly readjust your grip on your wooden dagger, every muscle in your body poised to lunge—you only need to find the best moment for it.

"I wouldn't want to risk hurting that pretty face."

You huff a laugh. "You should worry more about your own."

It is not as if you're under any illusion that you stand a chance against \$xname as you are, but you want to show \$xthem that at the very least, you can hold your own against a common bandit. Perhaps you might even impress \$xthem a little in the process.

Keeping focused on finding a good moment to attack is more difficult when faced with an opponent who far outclasses you, however, and your need to impress \$xthem also unsettles your nerves. What if you make a mistake and embarrass yourself?

'Just pick a moment,' you tell yourself while \$xname watches you like a hawk. Despite \$xtheir teasing, there is no amusement in \$xtheir face:

xtheylooksatyouwithseriousassessment.'cxthey'll see all of it coming, anyway.**

Taking a breath, your prepare yourself, and then you lunge.

[Chapter 13 Preview, Part 1 \(A Romance\)](#)

[February 13](#)

Hey all, hope your February has been going well!!

I've been a bit busy the past couple weeks as I took on some writing commissions (not related to AToC and solely a one time thing for some irl acquaintances) for some extra cash, but I didn't think it'd take me this long to take care of 😞

I did chip away a little bit more at CH13 in between though- not enough for a proper progress report, but definitely enough to share a fun preview with some Crown lore/backstory!!

The other character in this preview is A since I wrote that one first, but in the actual scene it will be whoever your Crown's main LI is. It's not strictly a romance scene, but it *is* a bonding moment for the two of them 🍷

You gather all your courage, knowing that if you are ever to find the truth of who killed your parents, you have to confront your past.

No more running and hiding.

"I don't like to think about it," you start, unable to meet the gaze that feels weighted upon you. "I'd like to talk about it even less, but... I have a suspicion. Perhaps it's all in my head, completely imagined, but I can't know that with certainty unless I see it for myself."

[...removed for spoilers...]

You nod, exhaling a heavy breath. "That's why I need to go back to my hometown. It has been so many years, and perhaps there is nothing left to find, but I need to know."

"You've never spoken of it before," \$aname says, a subtle invitation. "Your hometown, that is."

It draws a smile from you, albeit a faint one. "I have little memory of it. I was seven... no, I think eight years old when we had to run." Your brows furrow as you try to recall life back then. "I struggle to recall their faces, but I remember having friends I used to play with. The other children in the village. I wonder what became of them—I wonder if they'll remember me."

"If they do, I'm sure they would be shocked to find out where you ended up," \$aname notes, and you huff a laugh.

"More than shocked." Your gaze grows distant as you reminisce. "One of the children there, I recall we were playing at a riverbank... there was a snake, and we must have startled it as it tried to bite his sister. He grabbed a rock as if to kill it, and I shoved him to the ground. I recalled the stories about Şahmaran, and I thought she would surely want revenge if we killed a snake. The few times my parents mentioned her, she always seemed terrifying. Now I know why."

\$aname hums with thought. "It *is* forbidden to harm serpents in Rojan, so at the very least, he would have gotten in trouble for that." \$atheir tone turns a bit more playful. "He should have thanked you for it."

"He did not." You cast \$aname a wry look. "He went to tell on me to his parents, who then went to *my* parents, and after that our families held a grudge against each other. My mother refused to greet them during village festivals."

"So would I," \$aname agrees. "You did nothing wrong."

"I did shove another child, rather violently."

\$cathey brushes it aside. "In defense of an innocent creature. I'm sure he barely scraped his knee."

You snort, shaking your head, though another thought occurs to you. "Funny to think we both have a story about a serpent from our childhood."

"They're good judges of character, clearly."

Smiling back at \$aname in amusement, you nudge \$athem with an elbow. "No need to be modest, now."

\$aname grins back at you, hooking an arm around yours before you can retract it and smoothly slipping his fingers between yours. "I'm sharing the praise, aren't I?"

You can't seem to stop smiling, squeezing \$atheir hand back, your heart thumping warmly in your chest. "And so generous, too!" Although, the thought of meeting Şahmaran—if you even get that far—has your good mood faltering a little. "I certainly hope Şahmaran will share the judgment of her serpents."

You can think of nothing more damning than if she were to find you unworthy as a Crown.

I can't wait to get started on the expedition to the mountains, the courtly intrigue and the politics have been great, but the change of pace will be refreshing!!

For this month, I'm also planning to write character snippets for D's CH12 POV romance scenes in the coming two weeks, one for tier 2 and an additional one for tier 3. And, of course, more progress updates and previews as I continue writing.

Thank you for your patience! 💖

[R's Romance Snippet: Chapter 12, Part 2](#)

[January 31](#)

For some reason I thought the end of the month was on Sunday, so I got a little bit of a scare when I noticed the end of the month is actually *today* lol. Thankfully I already planned for some time to write the snippet today, so I managed it!

This is part two of R's POV scene, specifically the make-out at the end of the chapter 🙄 I think I'm starting to get a feel for how sexually suggestive future romance scenes will get without crossing the line, too, so that has been helpful practice!

[Here's the link.](#)

Enjoy 💕

[CH13 Update For Free Members](#)

[January 27](#)

Heya!! I just posted a progress update on [my Tumblr blog](#) and on [itch.io](#) regarding Chapter 13 for those of you following the page as free members, check it out 🙏

[Weekly Progress Update \[27/JAN\]](#)

[January 26](#)

Somehow January has both felt like it has taken ages to pass and also as if it went by in the blink of an eye lol

I've still been plugging away at the court scenes, which is possibly why January has felt so damn long for me! The thing is, I had a whole outline planned that was very straightforward, but then my IF dev brain was like "wouldn't it be soooo cool if we added more variations" lol.

Specifically, for R and A! I think I mentioned maybe that they would also get a little court scene variation since X and D had theirs in a previous chapter, but in classic me-fashion, I am doing Too Much for it lmao. We're still early in the process, however, so if I notice that it's dragging on too much I can edit things out or shorten them considerably while going over the final draft, so we'll see.

Here's a little more details for each route:

A Route

A romancers, so, you may or may not have had a fight with A after that fire that destroyed an entire city district. Since all that has seemingly been resolved, it's all good now, right?

Wellllll, the Imperial Court has a thing or two to say about that.

I mean, a city district did get burned down, and the court will want to know what the suspected cause of it was (not that the Crown can reveal it to them lol). And some of the officials definitely noticed when A was absent right as that whole disaster took place. Sooo, there might be a bit of an interrogation going on.

How pressuring the court officials end up being depends on the Crown's standing in court: if they managed to get rid of the Office of Law, or have an alliance with Minister Awir, or have Lady Naza on their side, it will be easier to come out on top. If none of the above 3 conditions are met, however, the Crown will come out looking worse for it 😬

It's a good thing that even a Crown who had that argument with A and was in a low romance state made up with A at the end of CH12, because imagine having to deal with the political headache while A is still mad at you 😭 That would be too cruel, even for me.

R Route

R's variation won't be as dramatic as A's, since there wasn't a whole city district set ablaze, but it'll still cause a similar amount of stress. Namely, aimed at R *directly*.

The court will want to know why R was out of commission as the Crown's Sorcerer for several days while recovering from their coma. Especially antagonistic characters within the court (such as Welat and/or Besna) will take advantage to try and tear down one of the Crown's most important allies. In a way, it's not really about R at all- they just want to undermine the Crown's support structure.

But it will feel very personal for R all the same. Their entire character arc revolves around their self-confidence, their insecurities, and issues of self-worth. With the entire court questioning whether they are fit to be the Sorcerer, it's going to hit all those vulnerabilities for them- even worse for an R that's in a low romance state, where their confidence is even shakier and their state of mind more fragile.

I feel so bad for doing this because R is like the precious baby of the group, but also no I don't because I live for the angst 🙄 It'll be up to the Crown to protect R from this. Exactly like with A, it will be easier if the Crown has an ally, but if they don't... well, it's going to be rough on R is all I'm saying 💔

How extensive these R&A court variations end up being entirely depends on how much self-control I have. But since A and R are the only two to get a divergence for the court scene (since X and D already had theirs), it'll be less work compared to usual at least!

But I do want to limit it to some extent so that I can actually finish this chapter within the reasonable timeframe of 3-4 months instead of 1.5 year again 🤯 So I'll be keeping that in mind as well: if I notice

that writing it turns into too much of a timesink, I'll just edit down parts so I can finish it more quickly.

It's a WIP story after all. I can always revisit it at a later date to edit it if I feel like it or if you guys give me feedback for it.

I'll be uploading the 2nd part of R's CH12 character snippet for tier 3 sometime within the next few days, and that'll be it for January!!

See ya next month 💖

[R's Character Snippet: Chapter 12, Part 1](#)

[January 20](#)

Well, this turned out to be more work than I had planned, as I forgot to consider that R's scenes have variations for reserved/flirtatious and assertive/passive Crowns. So I had to revisit those as well to write this snippet.

But it's done now, and it was fun to write from their perspective! This part is the cheek kiss (high romance variation) that happens before they and the Crown go their separate ways for the day. Part 2 (which is tier 3 only) will include the make-out sesh that happens at the end of the chapter.

[Here's the link!](#)

Enjoy 💖

[Development Sneak Peek](#)

[January 18](#)

I meant to get this one out yesterday but I needed some time to actually write more for the chapter before picking out little preview snippets to show off haha.

If you've read the previous two progress updates for this month, you'll know I've been working on the big court scene that's going to happen in the first half of the chapter, and I've been chipping away at it over the past week.

Honestly, coming up with the public petitions was super fun, and while they deal mostly with serious subject matter, I did enjoy throwing in one that was a little bit more lighthearted and humorous. In a ridiculous kind of way lol. It wouldn't be AToC if everything was constantly serious and dreary!!

"The wolves are causing a commotion in the corridor," the guard whispers over your shoulder, and your brows arch nearly to your hairline as you gaze down at the owner.

"You brought them to the palace?"

"To display their training," she argues. "I assure you, they have been perfectly well-behaved."

You stare at her. "They are *wolves*." You murmur to your invisible guard as an aside, "Please tell me they are caged or kept on leashes."

"Of course," the guard says, and you release a sigh of relief. "They have been properly contained by wards, and thus far, they have not been hostile towards anyone. Still, the servants are understandably nervous."

Rubbing your forehead with your fingers, you take a moment to resign yourself to the absurdity of the situation before you finally address the owner again. "Surely you understand why travelers might be unnerved by the pack of wolves freely roaming around your estate, right by a busy road?"

"They haven't attacked anyone," the owner argues. You start to think you're talking to a wall.

"Yes," you say slowly, "not yet. We should take precautions to avoid such an outcome, should we not?"

She frowns. "But containing them would be cruel."

You lower your head into your hands.

[...]

You find \$xname out in the hall, standing before the large, warded barrier that contains three massive wolves. \$xname appears to be admiring them, standing a few steps away from the barrier and observing them with contemplation.

"Don't," \$aname says from beside you as you approach, \$atheir warning tone drawing \$xname's eyes away from the wolves towards you.

"What?" \$xname looks perfectly innocent. "I wasn't doing anything!"

"You were thinking it."

"How would you know what I was thinking?"

"You cannot befriend wild animals, \$xname."

\$xname huffs, crossing \$xtheir arms, though the exaggerated petulance of it all tells you \$xthey are merely playing around. You can almost see \$xtheir lips curve with the urge to grin. "Says you."

You narrow your eyes at \$xname, trying to look exasperated, though a hint of humor cracks through your tone. "Please don't tell me you're taking the owner's side."

"Of course not, she's an idiot." \$xname looks at the wolves. "I, on the other hand, could handle them just fine. You should give them to the Crescent Blades! Just imagine—"

"You travel around too much and too far," \$rname says. "The wolves need territory where they can roam and make their dens. They would not be happy being unable to settle."

\$xname's expression falls, and then \$xthey sighs. "You're right. It wouldn't be good for them." \$cxthey gazes through the barrier at the wolves with a forlorn stare—the wolves in question appear entirely apathetic, one of them yawning and laying down to nap. "Farewell, my friends! May we meet when you are free... preferably without you trying to eat me. I would hate to have to kill you."

No wolf pet for X, alas 🙄

Generally I think the choices you get with each public petition will be three-fold: one option will get you points with the elites, one with the public, and one will be a middle-of-the-road option that does not net you any points with either faction.

For now, you'll still get a 3rd option that is neutral, but eventually, your Crown *will* be forced to pick a side or else face disaster. If you've ever seen this Disco Elysium snippet that's been used as a meme, this is pretty much how the game will handle it lmao:

No centrism for the Crown!!

Tomorrow I'll be uploading the first character snippet (I've decided on an R POV scene of CH12), so check back in then 💖

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

[January 12](#)

I'm free of being horribly ill!

It only took a week but god it's so nice not to feel like shit again. I'm still a bit fatigued from it all so I didn't do as much as I wanted- I got started on writing CH13 with **a modest 3k words**, and have started to chip away at the court scene for this chapter.

I hope you all remember how you chose to handle Bazo's absence from your Crown's coronation, because depending on your previous choice, there will be *very explicit* consequences.

For example, someone who chose to **forgive** Bazo in CH7 and now suddenly flips and decides to treat him with hostility (which will be possible) might find other characters scratching their heads at your Crown.

So, rather than there being the "right" choice in this situation, it's more about **consistency**. Any decision the Crown makes can be rationalized through reasoning, the only caveat is that it has to make sense. The last thing the Imperial Court and the public want to see is a ruler who makes erratic choices or who decides things based on their whims.

Those of you whose Crowns chose to wait before judging Bazo, for example, will find more freedom to decide either way since they didn't explicitly choose a side before. While those who chose either condemning/forgiving Bazo and now go for the opposite choice will have to do a bit more work to convince others why they changed their minds. But it will be possible to make that case!

That aside, I'm also dabbling with **the public petitions** right now, and I'm having fun with the fictional political debates that are happening in this chapter. To give you a little preview for one of the cases your Crown has to decide on: they will get a petition from the imperial army who want to summon spirits into battle to use offensively, and some of the priests in Marabad heavily disagree with that proposal.

My challenge as a writer is to make sure it all comes across in clear terms to the reader, which can be difficult when messing around with made-up scenarios. Especially what with all the minor, nameless NPCs that are involved in these scenes lol.

Most of all, I'm trying to make it so that the love interests keep their opinions to themselves (for now) and kinda watch and wait to see where the Crown's political inclinations are. Of course, this isn't completely possible for all of them: D, for example, is directly involved in the army's request to use spirits in battle.

So, yeah, this is part of the story where you might start to see disagreements happening between the Crown and the love interests- for right now, that won't be a deal-breaker to any of them. I think there's a *lot* of potential grey area to play with, since I want to avoid a situation where "Agree With The LI or Else" becomes the way how people play the game. It will be fully possible to diverge from the LIs politically quite a bit while still maintaining the romance. It all depends on how your Crown handles it.

Honestly, more than siding with the nobility, the love interests will be more annoyed if the Crown shows incompetence rather than anything else. At least when the Crown is siding with the elite, they do so

consciously and get their agenda done, and the LIs can debate them about it.

A Crown that just fumbles around and lets the Imperial Court walk all over them, however? Majorrrr turn-off for them.

I'm going to continue chipping away at CH13, and get that dev sneak peek out hopefully around Thursday/Friday? There's also the tier 2+ character snippet that will be released for this month: I'm starting the new year with R, though I haven't decided on a scenario yet.

Maybe I'll do an R POV for their CH12 romance scene 🙄 No promises though!

See you then 💖

[Weekly Progress Report \[05/JAN\]](#)

[January 5](#)

Hey all! Hope the new year has been treating you well so far 💖

Or at least, better than mine lol. In case you didn't see my post about it on Tumblr, I've spent half the week horribly sick, so it wasn't the most productive start for me on CH13 unfortunately.

Mostly what I managed to do this week is put together an outline for CH13. If you've read previous progress updates/seen previous previews for CH12, you might remember that in the original draft, CH12 included a court scene with the Crown taking public petitions and dealing with more politics. I decided it would be too much to include in CH12, however, since the chapter is already quite expansive at 76k words.

Putting it at the start of CH13 gives it much more room to breathe and will allow me to delve in deep with all the different variations and make it a bigger scene. And that's kind of necessary considering all the different decisions the player has made that will feature into it:

- How you decided to handle Steward Bazo's absence from your coronation back in CH7 (condemning him, forgiving him, or waiting before making a decision)
- Whether you fired the Office of Law/Minister Besna, and if you did, whether you chose Noble Nûdem to be her replacement
- Whether you have Lady Naza as your Minister of Defense
- Whether you have an alliance with the Office of Imperial Decrees/Minister Awir

- Additional variations for those romancing R and A, like how X and D's routes got extra court scenes back in CH11

Yeah, it's... a lot 🤖

On top of that, as I mentioned before, the Crown will be able to make some decisions on petitions from the public. This will be the scene where you'll be able to gain the most increase to your relationship with the public (or the nobility, if you choose to go that route)! So if you fumbled it before with the Office of Law, this scene will allow you to recover from that (or not).

That aside, the route regarding the peri trader will also be resolved in this chapter. If you have played both the peri trader route and the Kham meeting route, you may have noticed that the route where the Crown goes to meet the peri trader doesn't have all the exposition that the Kham route does--this will be saved for CH13, with some revelations that you won't get in the Kham route. It's a trade-off in that way!

And, of course, more romantic developments with your chosen love interest, but to a lesser extent compared to CH12. In CH13 is where we're wrapping everything up in Marabad, and setting off to the expedition to the mountains 🙏

I'm looking forward to actually starting to write it once I get better, hopefully in the next couple of days! If all goes well I should have a development sneak peek ready for tier 2+ by the third week of January, and sprinkle some previews here and there for all tiers throughout the month.

Until then 💖

[Revamped Patreon Tiers & Content](#)

[Dec 29, 2024](#)

Hey all, hope you're doing well in these last days running up to the end of the year!

I've been doing a lot of thinking of what direction to go into with the Patreon after the complete burn-out I had focusing on constantly putting out bonus content, and I've decided I need to re-prioritize. Work on CH12 went so much smoother after I put a temporary pause on writing the character snippets, and I think that says a lot about how much it's been hampering my productivity regarding the actual game.

Basically, I'm dialing it back to releasing a single monthly character snippet that will be ~1k words a month for the Crown tier, ~500 words for the Successor tier, and infrequent (once every couple of months or so) character snippets added for the On the Run tier. The Crown tier will also receive

occasional romantic scenarios whenever it strikes my fancy to work on it, but it's not guaranteed to be on a monthly basis.

In exchange I think I'll be able to work better on the main game, and post a lot more consistent previews and progress updates for it instead of having to break my head open about which new LI scenarios I need to write this month lol. I've started to feel like a salesman trying to get people to buy my products, which is not what I want my Patreon to turn into, because that's a quick way to start resenting it. I want people to pledge to it because they want to support me as a writer, not just to get their hands on what I'm "selling".

I realize this will turn some people off from pledging to me, but that's something I'm willing to deal with if it means less stress for me on a monthly basis. All the previous released character snippets will remain available for each tier, to be clear! I'm just cutting down on releasing new ones.

I've updated the membership descriptions with the exact details for what you can expect going forward.

Thank you for your support and understanding! Here's to many more AToC updates to come in 2025 and beyond 💖

[Early Access for Tier 1](#)

[Dec 26, 2024](#)

Hey all, I just unlocked [the post for CH12 early access](#) for tier 1! As I said before, the only thing missing from the chapter at the moment is A's low romance route, but other than that it's complete. I'm expecting I'll be able to add it tomorrow or the day of the public release.

If you notice any bugs, like coding errors or typos or pronoun mistakes etc, please report it through [this form](#)!!

Happy holidays! 💖

[Early Access for Tier 2](#)

[Dec 24, 2024](#)

Hey all, I just unlocked [the post for CH12 early access](#) for tier 2! As I said before, the only thing missing from the chapter at the moment is A's low romance route, but other than that it's complete. I'm expecting

I'll be able to add it some time this week.

Happy holidays! 💖

[Bug Update](#)

[Dec 22, 2024](#)

TY to the people who submitted the coding typo in R's route in CH11!! It's fixed now and you should be able to continue the route 💖

Based on another report I also fixed some errors regarding the conversation with Siham and Ishrah, as well as a mishap that had R show up at the end of A's route 🙏

[Early Access Update](#)

[Dec 20, 2024](#)

Hellooo, hope you all have been enjoying CH12 💖

I updated the file as I finished adding X's low romance variations (they're pretty minor though), and also finally added A's high romance route! All that's left now is to add A's low romance route which is a pretty big variation, similar to R's low romance, and then CH12 will be fully completed 😊

Also, huge thank you to those who have been submitting [bug reports](#) in this process! Here's some of the fixes I implemented:

- fixed the two plot routes (meeting the peri trader alone vs meeting with Kham) being swapped
- fixed a blank screen when you choose to cast a spell on the peri trader route
- fixed missing text for A and R romancers on route, where after the battle it would only show a single paragraph and nothing else
- fixed repeating text about the Crown being praised after the Big Climax Scene on the peri trader route
- fixed various typos, paragraph spacing issues

That was all I had to announce, hopefully I'll have A's low romance route finished and added in the next couple days. Thank you as always for your support ✨

[Chapter 12: Early Access](#)

[Dec 20, 2024](#)

Good god I actually pulled an all-nighter for this and still didn't finish the chapter completely.

It's a whopping 74k words at the moment (I overshoot my estimate by about 14k words lmao, sobs), and it's about 97% finished. The only thing that's missing at the moment is A's low romance route 🙄

I'll finish it up after I catch some rest and update it before public release.

Anyways, [here's the link](#)!! Hope you enjoy 💖

[ETA...](#)

[Dec 19, 2024](#)

I may have gone a teeny tiny bit overboard with all the romance content in this chapter, so for those of you waiting, the early access is gonna take me several more hours to finish 🤪

It'll probably be done by the time it's technically December 20th in my timezone haha. Apologies to those in Europe, I know it's already really late over there!! But at least you can look forward to it in the morning 💖

[Looking forward to Thursday](#)

[Dec 15, 2024](#)

Sorry for the lack of previews lately, I've been full steam ahead on CH12 the past week and am writing the final scenes to complete it before early access release for tier 3 on Thursday!

I'm estimating that the final product will be around 60k words, which is way more than I initially planned for this chapter... but all the plot and romance variations are really stacking up haha. The friendship scene with all the LI variations alone is 16k words 😅

I haven't done a beta reading round for this chapter either (leaving that for next time), so there's a possibility for bugs and typos and such during the early access phase, but I will do my best to proofread it before release.

Hope you're all as excited as I am 💖

[Chapter 12 Preview, Part 11: D's Romance](#)

[Dec 5, 2024](#)

Man, I wanna post more/longer previews but we're inching into real spoiler territory now with where I'm at with the chapter, so... you're all gonna have to subsist on these little snacks until the chapter drops.

Which is in 3 weeks from now!!! I'm so excited, we're almost at the finish line 🙌

Here's a little sneak peek of D's romance scene to tide you over until then:

“How are you feeling?” you ask, your gaze flitting down to \$dname’s side where \$dtheir wound is hidden beneath \$dtheir robes.

“There is no need for worry,” \$dname replies, not meeting your stare.

“It doesn’t hurt anymore?”

\$dname’s brows twitch, \$dtheir eyes remaining firmly aimed on the statue. “It does not impede me in performing my duties.”

“That’s not an answer.” Your frustration grows, pushing you to step in front of \$dname and stand between \$dthem and the statue. “I am asking after *you*, \$dname Sîdar. Not the general of the army.”

Finally, \$dname looks at you, though \$dtheir attention lingers for mere moments before \$dthey turns \$dtheir face away. “The general of the army is the only one you need concern yourself with.”

You scoff, your words turning sharper in an attempt to evoke a reaction—looking for anything, the slightest hint that what you have sensed between the two of you has not been a conjuring of your mind. “Are you that afraid of me?”

\$dname regards your accusatory look, \$dtheir own expression becoming incredulous, cracking through \$dtheir composure.

“Afraid of you?” Something in \$dtheir face shifts as \$dthey steps closer to you, the soft sunlight that falls into the chamber catching within \$dtheir eyes and casting a glimmer of warmth into their black pools. A deep, dark and lovely brown. “Would that I feared you and spared us both the misery.”

Your heart pounds against your chest at the glimpse \$dthey offers you, standing closer than is appropriate, gazing at you in a manner so terribly affected that you wonder how \$dthey has managed to hide it at all. How is it that the entirety of Marabad does not know, when the way \$dthey looks at you is so bare, so loud, so inescapable?

Much like X, D's romance scene in this chapter won't have a major difference between high/low yet. The only difference that will come up is if you managed to successfully get through the court's attempt to try and find a replacement of them the last time 🙄

For now, D romancers, you're spared... but you should really get those romance points up soon, is all I'm gonna say. Or not, if you enjoy the angst!!

[Chapter 12 Release Dates](#)

[Nov 25, 2024](#)

Hiya, I hope everyone's been doing well ✨

Here are the estimated release dates for Chapter 12:

- **Public release:** December 28
- **Patreon tier 1 early access:** December 26
- **Patreon tier 2 early access:** December 24
- **Patreon tier 3 early access:** December 19 💕

If anything changes, I'll let you know, but if delays are necessary then **those will only affect the Patreon early access**. The public release is definitively on the 28th, so it will drop then no matter what!!

For now, thanks so much for your patience!! 💕

[Nov 20, 2024](#)

X's romance is such a spicy one this chapter, and people on the low romance route are in luck because they get the same scene as the people on the high romance route!!

Well... with some very subtle, very minor differences... but I'm sure those will be nothing to worry about



Here's some snippets:

You narrow your eyes at them. “What aren’t you telling me?”

Shifting their weight around from one foot to the other, Ziryan’s cheeks turn slightly redder beneath their helmet, coughing into their fist—poorly concealing the laugh that spreads their mouth. “\$cxthey did pass on a message.”

Judging by Ziryan’s increasingly sheepish yet amused expression, you can already imagine what it might be.

Clearing their throat, Ziryan recites: “*Come and catch me, if you can.*”

IF THE CROWN IS RESERVED

Your own face heats, left floundering for a response as Ziryan politely looks away again and pretends not to notice. Eventually, the words you land on come out disjointed, broken apart by your flustered countenance: “\$cxthey did *not*- oh, \$xname, you’re such a—”

A shameless tease, an absolute menace, a ridiculous flirt, and a hazard to your health. Yet, the effectiveness of it cannot be denied: your heart pounds not with embarrassment, but with anticipation and excitement.

IF THE CROWN IS FLIRTATIOUS

You cannot help it: you throw your head back and laugh, charmed by the utter *audacity*. No one else would be so bold to dare you to go after them, let alone manage to rope one of your guards into it to play a willing messenger.

And it’s working, which is the most ridiculous part of it all. Your heart pounds with anticipation and excitement, more than eager to take \$xname up on \$xtheir challenge and see where it

leads you. Of all the things you expected, and with how guarded \$xname has been with you before, the Pale Sword wishing to be chased is a pleasant surprise.

IF THE CROWN IS ASSERTIVE

You exhale a sigh, and a smile lifts to your mouth before you address Ziryan again. “Thank you for passing on the message. I will take it from here.”

A tactful way of telling them to keep their distance for whatever you and \$xname may get up to. Your guards might be oath-bound to remain near for your protection, but the last thing you want is an audience while you take \$xname up on this daring little game of \$xtheirs.

IF THE CROWN IS PASSIVE

You exhale a sigh, hiding the smile that lifts to your mouth behind your fingers as you try to calm yourself.

It is impossible for you to even look Ziryan in the eyes as you speak. “Thank you, for... well.”

You dare not even say it, suppressing the impulse to hide your face from your personal guard who \$xname roped into this little dance—chasing others, in the romantic sense, is not in your nature, which flusters you all the more.

Skies above, one of these days \$xname is going to cause your heart to give out.

[...]

“You’re really having fun with this, aren’t you?” you call down the maze of corridors, thinking you ought to feel betrayed that your own palace is aiding \$xname in this game. Perhaps you would be, if it wasn’t so thrilling.

\$xname’s voice echoes against the walls, and you try to listen for a direction. “Now where’s the fun in me just telling you?”

It’s coming from the hallway on your left.

You try and keep your footsteps quiet, for all the good that it will do you. \$xname should easily be able to sense you coming, but you still feel an urge to try your best. You were issued a challenge, after all, and it wouldn’t be becoming of you to give up so easily.

As you head down the hallway, you hear \$xname chuckle.

“Closer...”

The taunting words spur you onwards, walking faster.

“Almost there...”

You reach the end of the corridor into another intersection of hallways, but you're certain you know where \$xname is now. You turn the corner to your right, your pulse pounding hot in your neck, and...

[[...X catches you.]]

[[...You catch X.]]

CHOOSING X CATCHING THE CROWN

Arms wrap around your waist as you collide into \$xthem, a low laugh against your ear that sends shivers down your spine as you grab onto \$xtheir shoulders for balance.

“Look who ended up caught,” \$xname murmurs, lips brushing against your cheek in a soft kiss before \$xthey draws \$xtheir head back to look at you, grinning with delight. “Lucky me.”

X's route is definitely moving the fastest physically speaking, but emotionally... well, it might take a while to get there. But at least you're getting fun little make-out sessions in the meantime!

The Crown really needs it to de-stress with everything that happens in this chapter lol

[Chapter 12 Preview, Part 9: R Low Romance](#)

[Nov 14, 2024](#)

I've started working on the dedicated romance scenes, yay!!

Today I finished up the low romance variants for R, and posted a little sneak peek for it on my Tumblr, but of course you guys get a bigger preview for it here. The low romance variant for R as well as the other LIs will have 1 scene that will give your Crown 2 choices, one of which will help you recover the low romance, and the other which will, uh, make it worse 🤔

You know, if you wanted *even more* angst. Or if you needed a leg up to get out of the dog house with R lol

Here's some snippets. Sorry for the name/pronoun variables here! I'm too lazy to edit it all out haha:

Finally, \$name meets your eyes, \$rtheir impassive features painted over with a remorseful look. “Forgive me. I didn’t mean to... I’m sorry.”

You frown at \$rthem. “What are you apologizing for?”

“You have enough problems without me adding to them.” \$rname sighs, hands folding on \$rtheir lap. “I’m always making things worse for you. Even during that very first meeting with the nobility, arguing with Lady Naza—”

“Don’t tell me you’ve been chastizing yourself over that this entire time?” You can’t keep the disbelief from your voice, stunned that it has still been bothering \$rname even a month later. “I forgot all about it. Besides, you’ve proven yourself many times over since then.”

IF YOUR CROWN INTERVENED ON R’S BEHALF IN CH9

“Have I?” \$rname looks down at \$rtheir lap, where \$rthey begins to fiddle with the decorative coins hanging from \$rtheir belt. “I could not even be trusted to handle the nobles during your first official court meeting.”

It takes a moment for you to remember what \$rthey speaks of. When one of the officials was trying to make an issue of court procedure to undermine \$rname’s authority, you intervened on \$rname’s behalf instead of letting \$rthem handle it on \$rtheir own. You thought you were doing \$rname a favor, though it was also true that you did it out of concern that \$rname would not be able to maintain \$rtheir composure.

“You’re still learning,” you insist. “Same as I am. Neither of us have been in this position before.”

\$rname gives you a wan smile. “Yet you seem so much better at it than I am.”

“I’m really not—”

IF YOUR CROWN LET R HANDLE THE COURT THEMSELVES IN CH9

“Have I?” \$rname looks down at \$rtheir lap, where \$rthey begins to fiddle with the decorative coins hanging from \$rtheir belt. “I thought myself clever enough to study the Void, yet I failed even in that. All I ended up accomplishing was to leave you to deal with the court on your own while I was forced to recover from the consequences of my own hubris.”

“You’re far too hard on yourself,” you say, trying not to sound disapproving since you know scolding \$rthem will only make things worse. “You were only trying to help.”

\$rthey gives you a wan smile. “And look where it got me.”

“No one could have anticipated—”

Poor baby 🥺 I feel so bad for R while writing their low romance scenes, just wanna give them a hug and tell them it's okay 😭

[Progress Update](#)

[Nov 6, 2024](#)

I've posted an extensive progress update for CH12 on [itch.io](#) and on [Tumblr](#), but it doesn't contain anything new that patrons don't already know aside from a new preview for an A Romance/R Friendship scene! So I decided not to just lazily copy/paste it on here and instead just link to it haha.

The most important takeaway from it, however, is that Chapter 12 will be releasing **sometime in December!** I'll let you know the exact dates on a later occasion 💖

[Progress Update/Chapter 12 Preview, Part 8: Scholar Yekbûn](#)

[Oct 31, 2024](#)

Happy Halloween 🎃

This one's a shorter preview since I'm finding that I'm struggling to post anything that doesn't constitute major spoilers as the chapters progress lol. I've also been writing a *lot* of variants of the same scenes, and I don't want to post all of those either! Gotta give you guys a reason to replay the game multiple times haha

I'm overall happy with what I was able to accomplish in the past two weeks, though, as I've finished the opening scene variations of the chapter, finished the peri trader meeting route, am halfway through with the Kham meeting route, and have started on the court meeting variations 👁️

I'm gonna tentatively place **the expected release for CH12 in December**, either midway through or at the end of it depending on how progress goes in November!

And to close the month off with, here's a preview for those who (spoilers for CH9) didn't get Scholar Yekbûn killed in their playthrough:

"I suppose you would not be joining us on this expedition?"

Scholar Yekbûn averts her gaze, brows furrowing with conflict. "I feel as if I owe it to your parents to try, yet... I was hardly spry two decades ago, and my health has not improved with

age. I fear I could not make it up the mountains.”

“I understand.” It might be better this way, you consider, as Yekbûn’s absence would surely be noticed.

Whenever she visits the palace to see you, she does so in secret, smuggled through the tunnels by your personal guards. Usually, Perjin accompanies her, having taking a liking to her company. Sometimes, like now, Yekbûn visits you by herself, and you spend time speaking of your parents, or asking her what she thinks they might have thought of the decisions you’ve made.

Today is one such occasion, as you venture to ask, “What do you think my mother and father would have thought of me following in their footsteps?”

“I take it you still speak of the expedition.” Yekbûn’s gaze turns distant as she peers out the window, seeming lost in thought for several moments, until she finally answers. “I can only guess, but I’m sure a part of them would be horrified. Fearful of what might befall you, and wracked with remorse that this burden came to fall upon your shoulders.”

You’re certain she’s right. They went out of their way to shield you from danger, selfish in their desire to keep you safe and thereby robbing you of the chance to flourish on your own. You struggle to hold it against them, even as frustrated as you are—you might resent them for their secrets, but how could you resent them for loving you as deeply as they did?

“But I am also certain,” Yekbûn adds, pulling you from your thoughts, “that they would be so very proud of you.”

You swallow thickly, the motion half-aborted with the lump in your throat, turning your eyes toward the window and blinking several times to try and soothe the sudden stinging.

“I hope so,” you speak softly, wishing as you have done so many times before that you could ask them yourself. That they could give you advice, guide you, like they always used to. But now you only have yourself, and your own judgment to rely on, with the weight of an empire bearing onto the scales.

“You have your father’s wit and your mother’s strength,” Yekbûn says, placing a hand upon your shoulder. “You have survived challenges that would have those of lesser will giving out at the knees, and you have grown so remarkably in a single month’s time. Arsur could not ask for a more stalwart Crown.”

So, what happens to people who *did* get Scholar Yekbûn killed? 🙄

Well, those people get a **completely** different scene instead of this one, and unlike this one, it absolutely has no warm fuzzy feelings to speak of... but you’ll have to play that variation to find out! If you can stomach it 🤢

Thank you for your patience and support!! See you in November 💖

[Chapter 12 Preview, Part 7: X Friendship/A Romance, City Shenanigans](#)

[Oct 17, 2024](#)

I finished writing the insane amounts of variants on the opening scene!!! 🤪

I won't post all of them (obviously lol), but the contrasts between A's low and high romance routes, especially if you choose the friendship scene with X, really tickled me. And I haven't posted the variation showing A's high romance route yet, so that seemed a good one to pick for the preview this time:

At the mention of the Imperial Guards, you cannot stop your thoughts from drifting towards their captain. A is within the palace, discussing matters of security with city officials in the aftermath of the fire. You haven't seen them since breakfast, and find yourself listlessly wondering when A will come seek you out again.

As if able to read it from your face—or perhaps whatever emotions X can sense from your magic, feeling restless beneath your skin—your companion immediately remarks upon it.

“So, where's your shadow?”

You frown at X, and then look away, feigning ignorance even as your heart begins to beat a little quicker—at the mere *mention* of A, no less. “Which one? There's several dozen of them, if you hadn't noticed.”

“Really?” X snorts. “Playing coy at this stage? Your heartbeat tells a different story.”

You stiffen, then sigh, knowing you've been caught. “What do you want me to say?”

“Nothing,” X lies, which lasts for all of three seconds, before they say, “Are the two of you courting? No, no, that's far too early for A... getting to know each other, then?”

(If Crown is reserved) You feel warmth begin to crawl up your neck at the topic being brought up, having never been one to discuss such matters so openly. / (If Crown is flirtatious) You snort, torn between exasperation and amusement at X's nosiness. “If you're looking for gossip —”

“I'm not one to spread rumors about other people,” X replies with a grin. “I'd much rather spread rumors about myself. But fine, if it makes you that uneasy, I won't pry.”

"Thank you," you say, and you mean it. "The last thing I want is for A to get teased about something like this. A's a bit..."

"Delicate?"

You exhale a laugh. "Maybe not the first word I would've chosen, but yes. A's the reserved sort, so I assumed they value their privacy."

"You assumed right." X looks at you with approval, which suddenly makes you reconsider your entire exchange about the topic and see it in a different light.

"X..." You squint at them with suspicion. "Were you *testing* me? To see if I would gossip about A?"

X merely grins and shrugs their shoulders, reclining back into the couch. "The important thing is that you passed, no?"

"What if I failed?"

The look in their eyes sharpens. "Let's be glad that you didn't, and think no more of it."

And now for some humor to lighten the mood since all the stuff that went down in the past couple of chapters, this one exclusive to the route where the Crown goes to see the peri trader themselves:

Soon enough, the three of you emerge from the tunnel into the alleyways of one of the more mercantile parts of the city. The Peacock District is right beside one of the gates of Marabad's walls that see a regular stream of traders coming and going with the seasons.

"I assume one of you knows where we can find the peri trader?" you ask as you step out onto the streets, blending in with the afternoon crowd that roams the marketplace stretched out before you.

The stalls are filled with various wares, their owners calling out to the perusing customers and bartering with their sales. Pottery, handmade beaded jewelry, embroidered cloth and homespun fabrics, sandals and foot covers—you've arrived at a very particular section of the market.

You even see someone try to haggle the price of a finely decorated incense burner down by offering a continuously increasing number of eggs.

"What do you not understand?" the stall owner says impatiently. "I only accept trades made in coin!"

"This is better than coin!" the customer replies, waving an egg in the stall owner's face. "Unlike your fickle, bastard-made currency, these eggs are a gift from nature. They are not soiled by human hands, and they do not lose their value. An egg's worth is forever an egg's worth!"

You don't think that's accurate, to put it politely, based on the very basic lessons in economy you've enjoyed from your tutor. A flood of eggs on the market would most certainly depreciate their value. Though, you cannot begrudge the customer for trying to haggle their way into a deal, even if it's by spouting complete nonsense.

"Who has put you in charge to decide what a thrice-damned egg is worth?" The stall owner gestures wildly at the marketplace. "Do you think I'm in the business of giving things away for a pittance? Does this look like Zam's temple to you? I am telling you, your stupid eggs are not enough!"

"Fine, fine," the customer says placatingly. "Forty eggs."

"The amount of eggs is not the problem, you fool!" The stall owner turns red in the face as they yell at their customer, spittle flying from their mouth. "What am I supposed to do with forty eggs?"

The customer looks supremely unbothered. "Shove one up your ass and hatch a chicken for all I care."

X snorts behind you. "Should've brought more eggs."

Forty eggs for an incense burner? In *this* economy?

[Public Release: CH12 Preview](#)

[Oct 9, 2024](#)

A CH12 preview [from last month](#) has been released for the public 💖

I won't be releasing all the previews for the public, but this one seemed a cute one to share with you guys. I will probably pick one for this month to be released publicly as well, we'll see!

[Chapter 12 Preview, Part 6: The Crown's Hometown](#)

[Oct 7, 2024](#)

I think posting these previews was really the Best idea because I'm finding myself writing daily again!! Not in huge numbers, but we're ~25k words into the chapter, which is double the amount I had like 2 weeks ago lol.

This preview is also one of my favs as this section of the chapter is providing pretty big Set-Up for the expedition to the mountains 🙄🙄

It's a relatively big spoiler in that it signposts what you can expect to see in CH13/14 as well, but it's also a major component of the Crown's backstory and their personal character arc, so... if you're curious to get some sneak peeks for that, read on!

“Where are you from, my Crown?”

You part your lips reflexively to reply, but then pause when you realize you don't know how to answer. “What do you mean?”

Ishrah gives you a confused look as she fluffs up one of your pillows. “I mean your hometown. Where are you from? I'm from Çenare, I don't know if you've heard of it- you probably wouldn't have, it's quite small. It's on the border with Zerat, south of Marabad.”

You suddenly realize you don't know its name.

“Your Imperial Majesty?” Ishrah stops her work. “Are you alright?”

Her words hardly get through to you as you stand there and stare off into the distance, frozen in time and place.

You don't know the name of your hometown. You don't know the name of the place where you were born. Where your mother is from, where your father is from. You never learned the names.

“Ishrah, do we have a map of Rojan?” you ask, frowning as you wonder why it never occurred to you before.

You suppose by the time you were old enough to ask such questions, starting from eight years old, you gradually became accustomed to being on the run. Perhaps you asked your parents once, but you do not remember if they ever answered. Everything of your memory from around the time you and your parents first left your hometown is blurry and difficult to recall. You only remember the chaos of it all, the fear in your parents' faces...

Ishrah looks at you with concern, then quickly turns to one of the many bookcases in your room. She takes a thick scroll from among a small stack sorted neatly beside some books, and moves it to your desk in front of the windows. You follow her as she spreads the scroll out across the polished wooden surface, revealing a detailed map of Rojan drawn in black ink.

You start from Marabad, marked with a notable dot on the map, and retrace the steps of your journey, trying to reorient yourself. You know, vaguely, where the place of it should be. Among the hills that are situated at the base of the Armas Mountains, near the mountain pass that opens up to the Sacati Steppes in the north of Arsur.

The maps your mother owned, which you used to travel, always had it marked plainly with a simple diagonal cross. It didn't list its name, but you knew that it was your home.

When you look at this map, made for a Crown, you don't see it.

"It's not here," you say, eyes flitting across the ink with your frown deepening. "Why isn't it on the map?"

"Most smaller villages aren't," Ishrah says from beside you. She points to an empty spot beneath Marabad. "See? Çenare isn't on the map either. I think the cartographer who made this only mapped out the larger cities."

When you remain silent, eyes fixed on the map as if staring long enough would spontaneously make your village appear, Ishrah gently touches your shoulder.

"Crown \$name, what's wrong?" She finally voices her puzzlement at your behavior, though it isn't a judgmental one. "We can have someone draw a new map for you with your hometown on it if it would please you."

You exhale a long, weary sigh. "I don't know its name."

"I'm sorry?"

"I don't know what my village is called." You push away from the map. It shouldn't matter, it doesn't change anything, but how could you not know?

You feel suddenly, and terribly, adrift. When you traveled by yourself before, you thought the lack of companionship was what weighed heaviest on you, but now that you're surrounded by people, you realize that might not have been its only cause.

This, this not knowing, is a loneliness you cannot put into words. An otherness that has severed you from something as essential as breathing: belonging.

"We can ask someone," Ishrah says, smiling at you in an effort to cheer you up as you slowly sit down on the edge of your bed. "Surely a well-traveled cartographer could tell you the name. Or we could send one to your hometown! It would only take a week to travel, and—"

[...]

You instruct Ishrah to go find R and tell them to come see you as soon as they have the time. Thankfully, you do not have to wait long for your Sorcerer to appear, knocking at your door a short half hour later.

"Is something wrong, \$name?" they ask, frowning with worry. "Ishrah said it might be urgent."

"Not urgent, strictly speaking." You point to the map on your desk, having poured over it while waiting as you tried to remember the exact location of your hometown. "It's related to the Armas Mountains. Since we have started planning the expedition, I thought it would best for you to know as soon as possible."

R moves forward to join you by your desk, casting a curious glance at the map. "Is it regarding the route?"

"If possible," you say, "I would like to visit my hometown on the way to the mountains."

While R looks mildly surprised by the request, they don't question it, simply nodding as they return to looking at the map. "Whereabouts is it?"

You point to the small smattering of hills drawn beneath the eastern part of the mountain range. "Somewhere near here is my best guess."

"That's on the other side of the mountain pass," R notes, pointing out the passageway to the steppes to the north of Rojan, the territory of nomadic Sacati tribes. They hum in thought. "It would be quite a detour to head for the eastern ranges, four days 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.

R thinks on it a moment longer, and 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. Only a few times have you caught sight of shirdals being used as mounts before, carrying messengers quickly through the air.

"As far as they are allowed to go by Şahmaran, in any case." R taps on the edge of the map, staring at the circle drawn around Peak Asha. "Shirdals do not have as much endurance as horses, so we could not ride them from here to the mountains or to your hometown. They are not beasts of burden. But a trip from your hometown to the mountains would be just about doable, especially if we send some soldiers ahead of us with supplies and travel light."

You do know that shirdals are mainly used in emergencies since they are quite temperamental as mounts and very difficult to tame, so horses are the preferred choice. For short journeys, usually a day or two at most in short bursts, they would be sufficient, but for anything longer than that would be a challenge—not to mention that flying through the air is much more perilous for the rider. Still, the thought of being able to fly through the air on the back of one makes you almost forget about the danger.

Added the sections with Ishrah lore and shirdal lore just for funsies 💕

[Chapter 12 Preview, Part 5: Dealing with Kham and D Romance](#)

[Sep 26, 2024](#)

Finallyyyyyy I've made some headway into the other major story branch for this chapter, the one where the Crown has gone to Kham and asked her to arrange a meeting with the peri trader.

This preview also includes a snippet for folks romancing D, since they're the only one so far that hasn't gotten anything yet, and one that is unique to this specific branch with Kham:

"There is one thing I have been wondering, princess," you say as you stare back into her eyes, watching the way the orange orbs of light flicker like flames. "When you first arrived here, you were accompanied by a retinue of guards. Whatever happened to them?"

Kham does not raise her brows at you, exactly, but something similar to the motion as the wood above her eyes arches upwards with a stiff creaking sound. "They are not merely my guards, they are my servants first and foremost. Naturally, they run errands for me."

"What kinds of errands?"

"Surely you do not think I would fetch all I require by myself?" She appears amused by the line of questioning rather than offended. "They trade with the peri merchants in your city on my behalf. Although, calling it *trade* is perhaps not accurate, as I hold the right to lay claim on their supplies whenever I so please. They are representatives of my mother, after all."

You consider the explanation, but nothing about it seems notable or inconsistent so far. "So you have never dealt with this peri trader I wish to meet with yourself?"

"Of course not." She smiles, her wooden mouth briefly pressing together. "That would be beneath me."

"A shame," X muses casually from beside you, contrasting the sharp look in their eyes. "We had hoped you might have some insight to share."

"As much insight as you are willing to offer me regarding this flower you seek," Kham returns, her smile still in place. "The blue siren, yes? A rather strange fixation..."

You feel the urge to tense, but withhold yourself from it by taking a slow, relaxed breath. All the rigorous physical training you have underwent over the course of the past month is already showing its benefits: you feel more aware and in control over your body, able to maintain your composure. A necessary skill when dealing with someone like Kham, as conversing with her feels like a dance of sorts. The two of you are watching each other's steps, waiting for the other to slip.

The conversation quiets for a short while, neither you nor X willing to divulge anything regarding your interest in the blue siren to Kham until it's absolutely necessary. [[If your Crown trusts Kham]] Regardless of how much you're personally inclined to trust her, she is still a foreign dignitary, and one you cannot carelessly spill secrets to.

Not long after, the silence is broken by a knocking on the door. You call them inside, and find D entering the room first, followed by a stranger—in human form—you presume to be the peri trader. From behind the both them, you catch a glimpse of A standing guard in the hallway, watching the peri trader closely.

IF ROMANCING D

"General, what a delight!" Kham perks up at the sight of them, and you suddenly recall what D told you about her before. How she sees them as nothing more than an amusing novelty. "I did not know you would be joining our discussion."

Now that D has clarified how Kham truly sees them, you can detect the hint of condescension to her tone. The exaggerated cheer, the way her eyes narrow. *Like how a noble might condescend to a farmer*, D said to you.

"Is that a problem?" you interject before D can even speak, the remark escaping you before you can help it. From beside you, you feel X subtly grip your wrist underneath the table, as if to warn you, and you realize you need to tread very carefully so as to not betray anything of your feelings for D to the princess.

"Not at all," Kham says, looking back towards you, her smile somehow seeming sharper. "In fact, I should thank you for allowing me to spend more time with them. They always try to escape me whenever they see me!"

You try to control your face, keeping yourself from scowling like you wish to, what with the way she speaks of D as if they were a *pet*. Luckily, X chimes in to cover for you, no doubt able to sense your rising indignation.

“I wonder why,” they say, words dripping with mocking sarcasm, and Kham’s brows lower as the smile disappears from her face. At once, you are thankful for X’s presence: their antagonism with Kham has come in useful.

“Shall we return to the matter at hand?” you say before Kham can reply.

Kham gives you a long look, and you worry if she has noticed after all. You can feel D’s eyes on you as well, but you know that if you met their gaze now, you would all but betray the tension between the two of you to Kham.

You wonder if D will scold you for your defense of them once the meeting is over. Somehow, the thought almost makes you smile.

“Of course,” Kham finally says, straightening a little in her seat. “Onto business then, shall we? Allow me to make introductions.”

People who want to be friends with Kham while romancing D will probably find it a more difficult task, considering the way she treats them 🤨

I'm still working on the beginning scene with all the friendship variants as well, but I'm making pretty good progress!! It helps that I can switch gears to a different scene whenever I get tired of working on a specific branch haha.

[Chapter 12 Preview, Part 4: R Friendship/A Romance, D Friendship/X Romance](#)

[Sep 16, 2024](#)

More friendship scene previews!! With romance variations!!

I'm having a lot of fun writing this scene even though the branching is a nightmare. For each Friend LI they discuss the Crown's main romance, including variations accounting for an unsteady/low romance or a steady/high romance. That's, uh... quite a lot.

At least the scenes are all pretty short!! So I've got that going for me lol.

Anyways, here's the first preview for if the player chooses R's friendship scene while romancing A, specifically on A's low romance route:

"Do you think I was in the wrong?" you ask, and R gives you a long look.

After what feels like hours of silence, but what must have only been a few tense seconds, they say, "It doesn't matter what I think. What does your conscience tell you?"

R refuses to absolve you or condemn you, at least for the time being—perhaps able to see in your face what you already feel.

You look down at your lap and try to ignore the way your stomach lurches.

"I was careless." You remember the look on the children's faces as they were carried out of the burning building. Silent and wide-eyed with terror. "All I could think about was A, whether they were safe. I gambled with the lives of others because I forgot, for a moment, my responsibility."

"Becoming the Crown so suddenly is a great change, especially for the life you've lived," R muses. "Most Crowns have years of tutelage from their predecessor to prepare, and you had none of that. As true as that is, however, it does not change the fact that you *must* adapt. There is too much at stake."

Innocents, who could end up collateral damage to your impulses and whims. The masses of people you spent your entire life avoiding suddenly seem so fragile to you now, so easily taken with the power you wield.

"I know," you finally say, letting out a sigh. "I should write a letter to apologize to them, the family from that fire. I would invite them to the palace, but..."

"It would draw too much attention." R nods. "A letter is the wisest course of action."

Another brief silence falls between you.

"Do you think A hates me now?"

R's gaze softens, and you can't stand to look at it, so you avert your eyes. "No, I don't think so. They are disappointed, I would say."

You wince. "That's almost worse."

"It may take some time to win their trust back," R reassures you, "but I've never known them to hold onto grudges, so long as your intentions are earnest. Give them time."

You sincerely hope time will be enough.

Man I really love writing angst lmao. I promise the high romance variation of this is much sweeter.

And here's a preview for D's friendship scene while on X's romance:

"Have you ever seen X in a relationship before?"

"No," D says immediately. You think it is an answer to your question at first, but then they continue vehemently, "No, we're not doing this."

"Not doing what?"

D looks exasperated. "I am not giving you courtship advice, least of all for X."

You sputter. "I wasn't asking for courtship advice, we're not even courting anyway! I was only curious about... you know, how they usually act when they like someone."

The long-suffering look on D's face only increases with intensity. "If you are seeking reassurance about their interest in you, why not simply ask them? Playing guessing games with past behavior will get you nowhere."

Shifting a little on the couch, you cast D a questioning look. "You think they'll answer me without getting... skittish?"

"It may be different with you," D considers, eyes wandering in thought. "From what I've learned about their past lovers—all against my will, I assure you—X has always been open and honest about their intentions. With the Crown, however..."

D casts you a meaningful look. They must be aware of what happened to X's village as well, and how that affects them even now.

"How do I navigate that?" you ask, reclining into your seat. "I don't want to say the wrong thing or accidentally cross any boundaries, but it's not as if I wanted to become the Crown. I don't know what could set them off, or make them feel smothered, or..."

D stares at you, and you trail off halfway through your ramblings.

"What?"

"Why don't you just *ask them*?"

Your brows furrow. "That's... hmm. That's actually a fair point."

D sighs, looking like they aged ten years during the conversation.

That was it for this time!! See you on the next one 💖💫

[Sep 13, 2024](#)

Back for another one!!

Note that **this spoils the opening scene of the chapter**, which I've been leaving blank for a while since I couldn't come up with a good way to continue from all the deliberations and plot-heavy planning from the previous chapter. In the end, I decided to give the Crown a little friendship moment with a chosen character!

Technically this snippet involves X, but they're talking to the Crown about R on R's romance route, so... yeah lol.

It has become rare for you find time to yourself, nowadays.

Between all your responsibilities as the Crown, the plans and preparations for the expedition to the mountains, everything that happened with [R], and now this whole ordeal with Kham you have had scarcely any time to simply sit with yourself alone. Or, as alone you can be with invisible guards near you at all times.

You asked them to grant you some space to yourself as you decided to take refuge in a gazebo in the royal gardens, though you're certain the guards still keep you within their line of sight even if they keep their distance now. The knowledge is not as disturbing to you as it once was: you have grown accustomed to it, and the guards do their best to be as unobtrusive as possible. In a way, it's a sense of safety you have sorely missed during all your years on the run, to know there are people nearby who would risk their lives to protect you at the slightest sign of danger.

The roof of the gazebo casts a soft shadow over you, protecting against the sun's overbearing warmth. Even near the end of the season, a wave of heat clings to Marabad as if summer itself were reluctant to bid its goodbyes.

Your mind is blissfully empty as you watch a butterfly hover around one of the rosebushes surrounding your gazebo. Its brilliantly blue wings flicker and reflect light with every beat, flashing so brightly it's almost blinding to look at. Eventually, it settles down on top of a pale white rose, allowing you to think of nothing as you simply admire its wings.

You'd almost forgotten what it was like to have silence in your head. A sense of much needed peace settles over you as you inhale a breath, then slowly exhale, knowing how fortunate you

are to be able to enjoy this. A year ago you would have been constantly glancing over your shoulder, hidden somewhere quiet and dark in the hopes of escaping attention.

How unfathomably far you've come.

Footsteps approach from the stone path to break your solitude, drawing your attention, though you are not upset by the intrusion when you see who it is:

[Azad/Ashti]

[Dara/Delal]

>>[Xelara/Xelef]

[...]

"I didn't get to ask before, with everything going on, but how are you feeling about this expedition we're planning?"

X tilts their head slightly at you in consideration. "Well, you're paying us good coin. The Blades certainly aren't complaining."

"I am?" you say, more as a confirmation than out of surprise. You know it has been handled by the others.

"R and I haggled over it." \$xname's lips lift with amusement. "They drive a tough bargain, your little Sorcerer."

"Don't call R little, they'll skin you alive if they hear that."

IF R ROMANCE IS STEADY

"*You* look like you want to skin me alive already," X says with a laugh, and you lift your brows from the scowl you hadn't even noticed you were making.

"I only want you to show them the respect they deserve," you defend, but it only makes X grin wider.

"Oh, I respect them plenty." Mischief gleams in their eyes. "Not quite like you do, of course, but..."

"What is that supposed to mean?"

"Don't pretend," X teases, reaching across the couch to elbow you in the side. "We've all seen how the two of you act around each other. A Crown and their Sorcerer, how scandalous!"

"Shut up," you say reflexively, embarrassed at being so easily caught out, but then you frown.

"Wait. Is it? Scandalous, I mean?"

“Not really.” X shrugs. “I don’t think anyone would care if you decided to court each other. Unless the two of you decide to desecrate the throne room together, that is.”

“Skies above, X, shut your mouth!”

IF R ROMANCE IS UNSTEADY

For some reason, your remark has X sobering, their gaze weighted with something more serious. “Actually, I wanted to talk to you about that.”

Your brows furrow with some confusion, though you can’t help your wry remark. “About R skinning you alive?”

X rolls their eyes. “Funny. No, be serious for a moment—I meant about R in general. Don’t you think they have been behaving a little oddly?”

“Not that I’ve noticed,” you say slowly, trying to think back to all of R’s behaviors ever since awakening from their coma. “Why? What have *you* noticed?”

X’s lips tense into a thin line for a moment. “It might be nothing—”

“X.”

In the end, they blurt it out...

Yeah, I'm not spoiling the low romance route *that* much yet. Sorry for the cliffhanger lol!

I think I'll post another variation of this for A's romance route and D's romance route in the weekend as well with different 'friend' characters, so you'll have that to look forward to in a few days!

[CH12 Preview, Part 2: X Snippet](#)

[Sep 8, 2024](#)

Today's preview is specifically a little tidbit featuring X, including a romantic variation!!

I'm aiming to show off little LI tidbits once a week next to more generalized previews, so we're starting off with the Pale Sword this time. Again, this one takes place on the route where the Crown has chosen to talk to the peri trader directly, but players who chose to speak to Kham will also have a little moment with X in that one!!

I've taken out the coding terms and have shortened the names to the initials and the pronouns to they/them for this one:

"Forget the cloaks and the eye glamor," R says to the servant, seeming to confuse the poor worker even further. "Ask Master Keko to fetch a body glamor instead, the one in the red jar."

D's jaw tenses. "I'd rather have a cloak."

"A cloak is not going to hide your armor," R replies. "A full-body disguise works better. I know you dislike magic, but I promise, you won't even feel it."

"When did you get a body glamor?" you ask. "I thought we only had eye glamors."

"I figured you would want to head out into the city eventually," R reasons. "You can't be expected to be cooped up in the palace forever. So, I asked Perjin to brew some just in case. It'll hide your eye color as well, of course."

"Thank you, R," you say, appreciative of their forethought.

It doesn't take the servant long to fetch it, quickly returning with a glass jar of a thick, deep red powder, glittering gold when angled towards the light.

Using the body glamor is surprisingly less fanfare than you expected it would be. In front of the entrance to the tunnels, R sprinkles some of the glittery powder over your face and body. You don't understand the effect until they do the same to X and D, who appear to morph into different people before your very eyes.

[[Continue]]

You blink at X standing beside you, now dressed in cheap, simple layers of rugged cotton, wearing frayed woven sandals. Some things are the same, like their stature and the shades of their eyes and skin, but everything else is completely different. Their facial features have morphed to make them look much older than they are, their complexion deepened and aged with wrinkles and age spots, and most of their hair turned gray. Their body seems to have softened around the edges as well.

IF X IS A FRIEND

"X, you look... old?" You can hardly reconcile the notable crow's feet and laugh lines to X's true face.

X grins, not seeming to take offense. "So do you!"

IF X IS THE MAIN LI

Is this what X will look like, decades from now? You take a moment to really look at them; the sight is a strange one for how out of place it is, but they still look as pretty as ever. Just in a different way.

X notices your staring, giving you a sly smile, as if \$xthey can tell exactly what you're thinking.

"[Name], don't tell me you're weak to a silver fox?" X's gaze trails over your form, leaving heat in its wake wherever it touches you as mischief curls in the corner of their mouth. "I think / certainly am."

I know in CH10 it was mentioned that A and R were going to accompany the Crown to meet the peri trader, but with D and X back in the picture, they took on that role instead! Had to make up for some of the screentime they missed out on in CH10, after all.

Hope your weekend went/is going well, see you next week!!

[CH12 Preview, Part 1](#)

[Sep 4, 2024](#)

First preview of September, yay!!

This is a snippet from the route for Crowns who chose to go directly to the peri trader in CH10, with a little flavor text depending on your Crown's intuitive/intelligence trait:

You manage to make it through the marketplace, finally arriving at a large building with an open front, wrapping around the corner of the street. Tables and shelves are lined with various flowers and plants, perused by a few passing customers.

This appears to be the peri trader's shop, signaled by the sign at the front that reads *Eshkar's Garden*. Eshkar being the name of the peri trader in question. Most of the flora on display you recognize, if not by the labeled names then by sight alone, but several look entirely new to you.

Pale white flowers whose hanging bulbs pulse with light when a customer brushes against its leaves; bleeding vines wrapped around a miniature roofed trellis atop a tall table, its crimson flowers slowly dripping down pink juice caught by bowls below; a tall flower with only two black petals, large and pointed, that nearly startle you when they snap together several times in sharp, cracking sounds, almost as if the flower were clapping.

IF CROWN IS INTELLIGENT

Momentarily forgetting about your intended purpose in being here, you approach the clapping flower with curiosity, wondering what set it off. Sure enough, you see dead and decomposing flies of various sorts collected at the center of its bulb as you lean over to peer inside, taking care to avoid leaning in too close lest your nose get caught between the aggressive petals.

Does it catch and eat small insects? How fascinating. You glance at the labeling of the flower, its name fittingly given as 'black ovation'.

IF CROWN IS INTUITIVE

Eyes drawn by the visual spectacle of the white flowers, you find yourself wandering over to its shelf, glancing at the labeling that reads 'stardrops'. The bulbs look ordinary at first glance, but sure enough, when you reach out to touch its petals, the flower begins to glow like you saw before. A ring of light travels up its stem, through the petals to the very ends, where it erupts into tiny little golden sparks. Hence the name, you suppose.

Unable to stop yourself, you touch the flower again, mesmerized by the light show, until you notice a shop attendee frowning at you from nearby. Feeling scolded, you quickly pull your hand away and offer an apologetic smile.

It was fun expanding a little more on Arsur's world with little details like this, of how magic affects plants and flowers as well.

I also took way too long to pick Eshkar's name: the peris in the story take influence from ancient Mesopotamian cultures for their names/language, especially Sumerian, due to how long their lifespans are. At least, the peris in Rojan. Peris in Penawar, on the other hand, are much more mixed in with the humans, so the older peri culture and the newer human culture have blended together in a mix over the centuries.

I'll get you another preview somewhere during the weekend! 💕

[D's Romance Snippet: Protecting the Crown](#)

[Aug 30, 2024](#)

Whew, this is gonna be my last snippet uploaded for a while!!

This one features a scenario where D has to protect the Crown from some danger, as a reversal of an earlier snippet where the Crown protected D ✨

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

Enjoy 💖

[A's Character Snippet: On the Beach](#)

[Aug 27, 2024](#)

Dunno if I can call this a real beach date since there's a bunch of other people around (Imperial Guards, but like, visibly present), but it's still definitely got romantic tones!! A tiny bit more A lore and their love for sea serpents too.

[Here's the link](#), I also updated the tier 3 file with it.

Enjoy 💖

[Important Announcement For September \(And Possibly Beyond\)!!!!](#)

[Aug 25, 2024](#)

Did the extra exclamation marks help communicate the urgency lol

Anyway seriously, I do actually have something important to say: work on CH12 has been absolutely *tormenting me* for the past year and I think, aside from personal circumstances, part of the reason is because I'm having Patreon Content Fatigue. You know, in case the increasingly erratic uploads and me running out of ideas for snippets weren't making that obvious 😭

So I've decided September (and potentially also October/November depending on how long it takes for CH12 to get finished) I'm going to focus solely on working on CH12. **Instead of new character or romance snippets, you will be receiving previews and sneak peeks for CH12 every couple of days as I work on writing for it*.** I'll be aiming to post 1-2 previews every week.

After CH12 has been finished I may need to reassess how I'm handling the bonus snippet thing. I will still be writing them, of course, but at a certain point it's starting to feel like I'm just forcing it, and I want to avoid falling into that type of burnout as much as possible.

Of course, you'll still have access to the existing snippets, that won't change! You just won't see any new ones for a while and in exchange will get CH12 previews instead. Possibly even for CH13/14 as well, since sometimes I write a scene and decide it doesn't fit in the current chapter, and save it for a future chapter instead.

I'm hoping this will take off some of the pressure that's causing my writer's block. Totally understand if you don't want to (renew your) pledge in September because of this, of course!!

I'll still be uploading the tier 2 and tier 3 snippets for August before the month is over, so you'll have that to look forward to as well.

I apologize for what a long wait it has been, and I thank you so much for all your patience, your support, and your understanding while I try and defeat CH12 💖

[R's Character Snippet: Magic Shenanigans \(With the Gang\)](#)

[Aug 24, 2024](#)

Got some suggestions for R showing off some magic, together with the Crown as well, so I ended up writing this little snippet!

I missed writing the group dynamics of the main LIs + the Crown so here's a scene of them hanging out together, with R showing off their magic skill *and* an advanced sneak peek at what kinds of magical abilities your Crown will be able to perform in the future! I will very likely include some alternate version of this scene in the story at some point, so it's like an unofficial preview almost haha

[Here's the link!](#) The tier 2/3 files have also been updated with it, check the pinned post for the most recent links to those.

Enjoy! 💖

[Heads up](#)

[Aug 12, 2024](#)

I just received an email from Patreon stating that any new members who want to pledge to a creator after November this year through the iOS app will be subject to an additional 30% fee from Apple!

Hey,

Apple is requiring that Patreon use their in-app purchasing system and remove all other billing systems from the Patreon iOS app by November 2024. **This means that starting in November, new memberships purchased in the iOS app will be subject to Apple's 30% App Store fee.**

You're currently on a first-of-the-month billing model, but Apple's in-app purchase system only supports subscription billing. Apple has made clear that if creators on Patreon continue to use unsupported billing models or disable transactions in the iOS app, **we will be at risk of having the entire app removed from their App Store.**

So, starting in November, **your fans in the iOS app won't be able to purchase subscriptions to your membership until you switch to subscription billing.** And, as a result of Apple's mandates and in order to make sure that you can continue getting new members in the iOS app, we've started a 16-month-long migration process to bring all creators onto subscription billing by November 2025. This means that your current billing model will be discontinued in November 2025.

This will force creators to increase their prices on the iOS app in order to adjust for the Apple fee, because otherwise creators will have to pay for the cost ourselves. What I recommend is that you DO NOT use the iOS app to pledge to any creators, not just to me, to avoid the unnecessary price increase! Use Android or desktop only.

I've decided to stick with the first-of-the-month model for my Patreon (where you pay upfront and then get billed the first of every month after that) for as long as I can because it's just much easier for me to make my monthly budgets that way. But basically, starting from November, **you won't be able to pledge to my Patreon using the iOS app until November 2025.**

It's actually crazy how they managed to bully Patreon into this.

Anyway! Make sure to avoid using the iOS app for pledging and sign up using Android/desktop instead!

[Give me suggestions!](#)

[Aug 8, 2024](#)

Maybe I should just make this a regular feature. You get to potentially see your fav scenario written out, I get to no longer break my head open coming up with ideas, it's a win-win!

From last month I still have these suggestions as options as well if you wanna second them:

- A/D/R meeting the Crown in an alternate timeline where the Crown is a mercenary like mom (the X version of this has already been written)
- The LIs spending a holiday together
- For D a scenario where they save the Crown
- For D a scenario where the Crown brings home a pet
- For X a scenario where they're cooking together with the Crown
- The Crown showing off their magic/combat skills
- Crescent Blades POV snippets

For reference, the love interests up this month are R (tier 1/On the Run), A (tier 2/Successor), and D (tier 3/Crown). If you've got any scenarios you wanna see for either of these three, let me know in the comments!

[R's Romantic Snippet: Beach Date](#)

[Jul 31, 2024](#)

Credit to Nya McAllister for the idea!

Fun little beach date for our local overworked monarch and their resident sorcerer 💕 There was a D version of this scene as well, but in this one the Crown gets to have some more water-related fun. The benefits of having a partner who has prodigious magic talent 🤪

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

[D's Character Snippet: Resolving An Argument](#)

[Jul 29, 2024](#)

Credit to Jaiden Woods for the prompt!

This one has a romantic angle as it assumes an established relationship between D and the Crown, and takes place sometime in the future. Basically, the Crown and D had an argument right before D left on a mission, and now are reuniting again after spending that time apart!

It was interesting to write, since I haven't really gotten to overt conflicts between D and the Crown yet in their game routes, so it allowed me to dip a toe in it in this one.

[Here's the link!](#) The tier 3 file has also been updated with it.

Enjoy 💖

[X's Character Snippet: Fight with A in CH2](#)

[Jul 20, 2024](#)

Credit to Rue for the suggestion!!

Exactly what it says on the tin, this is a glimpse into that fight X and A had in CH2 while the Crown was off trying to find R. You'll find it listed beneath X's category!! It's about ~1k words because I had fun with writing this little scene, I almost forgot it was one of those things the reader didn't get to witness because it happened off-screen lmao

[Here's the link!!](#) The tier 2/3 files have also been updated with it, check the pinned post for the links to those.

Enjoy!

[Give me snippet suggestions!](#)

[Jul 3, 2024](#)

Usually, I've got snippets for the month already planned out by now, but this month I'm struggling to think of any scenarios in particular 🙄

For reference, the love interests up this month are X (tier 1/On the Run), D (tier 2/Successor), and R (tier 3/Crown). If you've got any scenarios you wanna see for either of these three, let me know in the comments!

[Development Sneak Peak: CH12, Part 2](#)

[Jul 3, 2024](#)

[Part 1](#)

Omg it's been forever since I had anything of note to post about CH12 so I'm very happy about being able to make this post!! Since it's been so long, I've decided to unlock this post for tier 1 as well 💖

In part of what's taking me so long is that a lot of different plot threads continue to converge in this chapter and the chapters following it, so I've been agonizing a lot over different variations and what purpose they will serve in the story at large. I've written up SO many plans regarding the structure of this chapter and ended up constantly scrapping and tweaking most of them.

It wasn't until one of my friends gave me a (proverbial) slap upside the head and reminded me the game is a work in progress and I can always go back to edit things after publishing it that some of that anxiety went away. I'm still fighting myself about it in my head because of my incurable perfectionism, but I've decided, Fuck It let's just get something written down and edit it later if necessary.

CH 12 Edits

So, anyways! You may remember I mentioned in the previous dev sneak peak: "Those who chose to approach the peri trader directly should know that they will not be able to gain an alliance with Kham for the rest of the game." **This is no longer the case!**

It's the first major change I've made from my initial idea. If you choose the peri trader, you will still be able to approach Kham for an alliance later on. The nature of the alliance will just be different, since you *did* go behind her back to deal with the peri trader directly, so that's something she will be aware of and a consideration you will also have to keep in mind when dealing with her going forward.

Another potential edit I'm toying with is Bazo, the guy from Şevan who didn't show up for your Crown's coronation and only just arrives in CH12. He's a very relevant character for Future Happenings, but for the time being, his arrival is a bit of foreshadowing with what your Crown will have to deal with regarding Şevan. At first, his scene was going to be quite extensive with some more lore regarding the province, but now I'm thinking- Şevan isn't going to be relevant for the next several chapters, it seems unnecessary to lore dump about it *now*.

So, as a mercy to myself, I might end up limiting his scene, especially as the Crown has more pressing matters to tend to in their immediate environment. Not to mention their planned expedition to the mountains. Sorry Bazo!

One change I have added to the chapter, however, is some background regarding your Crown that will continue their personal character arc, especially in relation to their unresolved grief. The expedition to the mountains involves traveling across Rojan, after all, and while the Crown was on the run for much of their life, they *did* have a hometown they were born in and grew up in until the age of 8.

So, CH12 is reminding the Crown of that, and if they're going to be traveling anyway, then what's a little detour to go on a personal quest? Who knows, their parents might have even left some clues in their old house...

As you can see, lots of cutting things up and adding things while working on this chapter lol.

Preview

Aside from chapter and story-wide considerations, I've been writing some of the variations in different branches, and people who chose the peri trader will get to make a decision that further influences their branch. Depending on what they choose, they might end up seeing a little bit of fighting happen 🙄

Mind that there's some blocked out text here to prevent spoilers, and the Twine coding for the love interests.

Eye-holes form along every side of ██████'s head, keeping watch of the guards surrounding [them] from each direction simultaneously. Were you not trying to arrest [them], you would be impressed at the versatility of the peri form.

"Your left!" \$xname calls out, and \$dname reacts with perfect timing to dodge a large root that unearths to try and pierce through \$dname's legs.

\$dname clutches their mace and smashes it into the root, its wood snapping under the force and the sharpened tip of it breaking off entirely. Meanwhile, \$xname evades and dances around the attacking roots without even looking, seeming to know where they will be in advance.

It takes very little effort for \$xname to close the distance to ██████'s main body, a smirk curving \$xtheir lips as the muscles of \$xtheir arms tense, and \$xthey swings \$xtheir sword. Its curved blade cuts through the air in the arc of a crescent, with a heat so intense that it distorts the air around it, slicing across ██████'s chest like a knife through butter.

██████, unable to defend [themselves] with [their] attention focused on commanding [their] roots, has no choice but to endure the hit. ██████ lets out a scream of frustration as [they] retracts an arm to try and deal with \$xname, wooden hand sharpening like the tip of a spear to lash out.

\$xname sidesteps the attack even *before* ██████ is halfway through the motion, as if \$xthey knew exactly what [they] intended to do. Immediately after, \$xname counters with another

singing slash of \$xtheir blade that cuts [REDACTED]'s weaponized arm nearly clean off. "You are very easy to read."

I'm currently writing out different variations for how the Crown deals with this as well: you'll get the option to choose between using magic or using your chosen weapon, so that's a bit of fun for flavor!

Players who didn't choose the peri trader option and instead went to Kham don't have to worry about missing out: the expedition to the mountains will over more action oriented scenes like this with your Crown as well. Instead, your route with Kham will get a very tense conversation that is essentially a battle in words: Peak Courtly Intrigue, to put it shortly. Hopefully I'll have some previews to show you of that next month 🙏

Thank you as always for your patience and support!!

[X's Romance Snippet: Bathing Together](#)

[Jun 30, 2024](#)

The set is complete!!!!

I have very little context to give about this, it's just X being incorrigibly thirsty and the Crown going along with it (AKA pretending as if they aren't just as thirsty). Like the others, it's established relationship, and hints to spicy content.

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

Enjoy 💖

[D's Character Snippet: Meeting the Imperial Soldiers](#)

[Jun 29, 2024](#)

I knew I was gonna end up late on one of these Imao

This one can be read as both platonic as well as romantic if you squint. I was going to write it in a more comedic tone, but then it ended up becoming a sweet moment where D reassures the Crown about some of their insecurities, and now here we are!

You can read this as taking place sometime early in the Crown's reign during a moment where things are a bit calmer and no immediate crisis situation is taking place lol. Poor Crown.

[Here's the link!!](#) The tier 3 file has also been updated with it.

Enjoy 💖

[A's Character Snippet: Protected by the Crown](#)

[Jun 16, 2024](#)

Omg I'm actually on time... the power of Pride Month

This snippet has a bit of a romantic slant but pre-established relationship, so there's some pining and suggestiveness but they haven't figured out their deal yet!!

I set up a pretty bad scenario for poor A here, suffering from being overworked... it was the only real way I could imagine anyone getting the drop on them (similar to X needing to be poisoned and D outnumbered in the other snippets). But the Crown saves the day of course ✨

[Here's the link!!](#) The tier 2 and 3 files have also been updated with it, check the pinned post for the links to those.

Enjoy 💖

[Schedule For June](#)

[Jun 6, 2024](#)

Happy Pride Month 🌈

Here are the snippets I have planned for this month:

- **For tier 1/On the Run**, A's character snippet, as a spin-off with snippets that R/X/D have already gotten, will have A in a dangerous situation that the Crown protects them from. This time the Royal Protector can be protected 🙏

- **For tier 2/Successor**, D's character snippet will feature them and the Crown hanging out with some of the soldiers of the Imperial Army (and with hanging out I mean the Crown wanted to meet the soldiers who are fangirling about it and D is just kinda there, suffering). It won't be overtly romantic, but definitely some "if you squint" type vibes.
- **For tier 3/Crown**, X's romance snippet is hinting at spicy content in a scenario where the two are bathing together, finishing up this particular set of snippets 💕

Fun lineup, hope you'll like it ✨

[A's Romance Snippet: Bathing Together](#)

[May 31, 2024](#)

Another one!!!

I'm honestly just glad I managed to finish this one in time lol 😭

This one has a very slight variation for flirtatious vs reserved but it's literally just 1 sentence that changes, so I wouldn't bother reading both. Next month is X's version!!

[Here's the link](#), enjoy 💕

[R's Character Snippet: Visiting the Orphanage](#)

[May 26, 2024](#)

Another extra long one at 1.2k words, can be read as either platonic or romantic ✨

Really just an excuse to have a happy R interacting with children while the Crown is flailing around a bit, since they're not used to interacting with kids lol. It's really cute!!

And definitely some fuel for R romancers since it shows how attached R is to the kids, a long-term relationship with them will definitely end up with them adopting kids together, even if having them biologically is also an option 💕

[Here's the link](#)!! The tier 3 file has also been updated with it.

Enjoy!

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

[May 19, 2024](#)

Heya, sorry for the late upload!! The start of May was pretty hectic, but I've got an extra long snippet for you at around ~1.4k words to make up for it ✨

It also contains a little bit of D lore, so anyone who hasn't played CH11 yet, be warned that it contains **MAJOR SPOILERS** for their route!!

This one is a pre-established relationship vibe where they're still in the yearning stages, in some undefined period in the near future. Not overtly romantic, but maybe I'll follow up on it next time and write a more romantic part 2 (there is a mention of Only One Bed, and it takes place in the desert where it gets pretty cold at night, so....)

[Here's the link!!](#) The tier 2 and 3 files have also been updated with it, check the pinned post for the links to those.

Enjoy 💖

[Schedule for May](#)

[May 8, 2024](#)

Heya, hope May has been good to you so far 💖

Here are the snippets I have planned for this month:

- **For tier 1/On the Run**, D's character snippet, as a spin-off with snippets that R and X have already gotten, will have D in a dangerous situation that the Crown protects them from. Since canon already has the reverse hurt/comfort angle 🥹
- **For tier 2/Successor**, R's character snippet will feature them and the Crown visiting a local orphanage in Marabad to spend time with the children. It won't be overtly romantic, but definitely some "if you squint" type vibes.
- **For tier 3/Crown**, A's romance snippet is hinting at spicy content in a scenario where the two are bathing together. Yep, I'm committed to completing the collection now, next month will feature X's version of this!

Fun lineup, hope you'll like it ✨

[D's Romantic Snippet: Bathing Together](#)

[Apr 30, 2024](#)

Exactly what it says on the tin 🤪

This one has a considerable variation where you can choose whether your Crown sits on D's lap or whether D sits on your Crown's lap--with one caveat.

D would refuse to sit on the lap of a short or a very short Crown, so... I'm sorry to say, you're going to have to set their height to average or above, else the scene will default to the Crown sitting on D's lap



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

Enjoy ✨

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

New

[Apr 30, 2024](#)

Another character snippet that's kinda sorta basically a romantic snippet lol.

This one has a *slight* variation for whether your Crown is an inner magic type or an outer magic type as well. But mostly it's about freaking the Crown out a little with some hurt/comfort from X 🙄

[Here's the link!!](#) It has also been added to the tier 3 file, check the pinned post for the link to that one.

Enjoy ✨

[R's Character Snippet: Masquerade Ball](#)

[Apr 14, 2024](#)

Wheeeee I'm on time for once!!

This was a cute one to write. Like I said in my schedule for April, it's *basically* just a bonus romantic snippet, I'm afraid I'm incapable of imagining the Crown and R crossing gazes at a masquerade ball and it somehow staying platonic LOL. Giving a mild case of love at first sight for R tbh.

[Here's the link!!](#) The tier 2/3 files have also been updated with it.

Enjoy!

[Weekly Progress Report \[08/APR\]](#)

[Apr 7, 2024](#)

Heyaaa!!

It's been a while since I've done one of these so I figured I should release this one to the public as well. This progress report focuses on a specific section of what I'm working on regarding CH12 and, more specifically, Kham.

About Kham

This one is turning out to be a bigger branching route than I expected. For those not in the know, I described in my dev sneak peek from last month how the opening scene of CH12 will involve the Crown dealing (or not dealing?) with Kham. It will be a bit of a culmination of all the choices you've made regarding Kham so far: did you inform her of the assassins in CH5, did you decide to trust her/were you honest with her in CH6, and did you choose to ask her to mediate for you in CH10?

Particularly that last decision will lead to the biggest difference in scenery: if you asked for Kham's help, you will get a scene at the palace involving her and the peri trader. If you decided not to ask her, however, the story will instead see you investigating the peri trader personally.

Initially, these were both two very clear branching paths with two very clear-cut consequences, *but* I decided it made more sense to offer additional variation. Choosing not to ask for her help with the peri trader will NOT lock you out of being able to ally with her... *but* the circumstances of it will be quite different compared to a player who has trusted Kham from the start and asked for her help.

You can, of course, decide not to ally with her on either branch as well, if you don't think she can be trusted. In which case, you should be prepared to make an enemy out of her: there's no fence-sitting on this one, and there won't be any chances to make an ally of her later on in the story. Similarly, if she

turns out to be untrustworthy, and you make an ally out of her now, there won't be any takebacksies later... so you might end up stabbed in the back.

This is your one and only shot, so choose wisely.

About D and X

I'm currently working on the branch of the Crown dealing with the peri trader without Kham's involvement, and it's a pretty fun variation. There are some undercover detective vibes going on, and it's nice to write a scene set in the city as opposed to the palace for some variety. Though I've also dabbled in the route with Kham's help, and the Crown *really* flexes their royal authority in that one. Can go no wrong with either option in terms of entertainment, imo!

What's also been fun to explore further is how the main LI's subplot is starting to affect things in the story. I do have to note that for the branching sequence with the Kham choice, there's a bit of a spotlight on D and X since those two were gone for a whole chapter, so they get to spend some special time with the Crown in the first half of CH12. But R and A will be back for the rest of it!

I'll give you some D and X route crumbs this week since I've been chipping away at that one first, and hopefully I'll also have some on R and A next time:

For people who aren't on D's route, they'll get to find out something special about D that D romancers became privy to in CH11. It doesn't change much for the Crown on those routes, just some D lore you may enjoy and an opportunity to grow your friendship further.

As for D romancers, you all may or may not get a potentially devastating sequence depending on how your Crown handled their little court scene in CH11. If you managed to protect D, then all the better, but if you couldn't stamp out the court's protests... well, let's just say your Crown is going to have to be the one to inform D of any bad news.

Plus there's that damned letter to worry about. I'm sure that won't become any kind of problem at all.

For people who aren't on X's route, things are peachy! Honestly, all of the drama that happens for X romancers is not a big deal for everyone else, since X's romance with the Crown is the thing that causes them to act out. X friendship players are coasting in that regard, you just enjoy seeing X get to be their usual menace self.

For people who *are* romancing X, people on their low route might start noticing something different about them. Their actions in the high and low romances will be the exact same, but the vibes on the low route will be off, to say the least. You can still recover to a high route! But it will require having to pierce through that mask X is so fond of wearing...

High romancers: kick back, relax, and enjoy your upcoming romance content guilt-free LMAO

That was it for this week!! I wish I could give you an estimated release window, but I've been wrestling with this chapter, and I'm frankly deeply afraid I won't be able to finish it before summer rolls in 🤖

Please keep your local struggling writer in your thoughts and prayers, and as always thank you for your patience and support 🙏

[Schedule for April](#)

[Apr 7, 2024](#)

Heya, hope April has been good to you so far 💖

Here are the snippets I have planned for this month:

- **For tier 1/On the Run**, R's character snippet will feature a scenario where they and the Crown meet for the first time during a masquerade ball--remember X's romantic snippet a while back? Same as that one. Even though this is a character snippet, it's really basically a freebie romantic snippet lol
- **For tier 2/Successor**, X's character snippet, as a bit of a spin-off with regard to last month's snippet, will have X in a dangerous situation that the Crown protects them from. The roles switch up for a change!
- **For tier 3/Crown**, D's romance snippet is hinting at spicy content in a scenario where the two are bathing together (R has also had this scenario before btw). What can I say, the beach date from last time inspired me!

Fun lineup, hope you'll like it ✨

[A's Romance Snippet: The Morning After](#)

[Mar 31, 2024](#)

Probably the snippet with the most spicy implications I've written so far while keeping it implicit because I don't wanna venture into 18+ territory on my Patreon (yet)

It's pretty much literally the morning after A and the Crown [redacted for violating community guidelines] and they have a cute little pillow talk in bed before they [go to horny jail immediately] again.

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

Enjoy 💖

[D's Character Snippet: Beach Date](#)

[Mar 31, 2024](#)

Honestly this may as well be a romantic snippet lmao.

It pretty much assumes an established relationship because there's simply no way my romantic ass could write D and the Crown on the beach together stripped down to their undies and NOT insert some kind of romantic/spicy undertones (the spicy ones are very mild though don't get too excited).

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

Enjoy 💖

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

[Mar 27, 2024](#)

So sorry for the late upload!! Running behind schedule this month unfortunately, but I thankfully have enough time to finish the tier 2/3 snippets before the end of the week.

This one has a bit of a romantic slant so you can almost call it a bonus romantic snippet, double the usual length with some delicious hurt/comfort for X and the Crown 💖 Plus seeing healing magic in action for the lore and worldbuilding nerds among us!

[Here's the link!](#) I've also added it to the tier 2/3 files.

Enjoy ✨

[Development Sneak Peek: CH12 \(And Beyond\)](#)

[Mar 10, 2024](#)

Finally back with some actual progress to report on for the next chapter!! My winter depression is fading at last 🌻

I think I've already given a very brief look at what I planned for CH12 in [this old progress report](#), but now that I'm finally booking some progress on it I decided to do a little bit of a deeper dive into it!! I can't give any estimates about release dates at the moment, I want to ensure I'm actually back into the groove and have most of the chapter finished before I start making promises, so I'll be asking for your patience for the time being 🙏

Anyways, onto CH12!!

In General

CH12 is a mostly plot-focused chapter, and it's really about wrapping up the most pressing, immediate issues and putting a pause on others, so that CH13 and beyond can be dedicated to the expedition to the mountains.

With that, we're very close to the end of Act 1! The entirety of Act 1 really has been the beginning of the Crown's reign as a ruler, becoming accustomed to their new life, and (eventually) finding their footing. At the end of this act, and at the climax of the upcoming expedition, is where you will be able to decide what kind of ruler you want your Crown to be going forward.

You've already gotten a preview with this with the alliances you can build and the people you can appoint to specific court positions: your favorability with the public and with the nobles, based on choices you make during your Crown's reign, will affect which direction your Crown will take as a ruler.

You cannot choose both.**** I want to be extra clear about this since I've gotten questions about this in the past: choices that unlock perks gained through favor with the nobles are in *direct opposition* to perks gained through favor with the public. You cannot, for example, dismiss the Office of Law in CH9 (requiring public favor) and also gain an alliance with the historians in CH10 (requiring noble favor) - it's either one or the other.

However, you can certainly *attempt* to pander to both sides or try to refuse to take sides. Whether that will end well for your Crown, though, is a completely separate question ;)

But don't worry, you won't be "locked in" to any specific plot route for a *long* while yet. The end of Act 1 is basically a Vibe Check where you have to make your first decision to what your Crown wants to strive for and what they prioritize on a personal level. Is it the welfare of their subjects? Is it to amass as much power as possible? Or simply to survive?

Things to ponder!

Chapter 12 Specific

Onto CH12, like I mentioned in my old progress report, there's going to be a big focus on Kham this chapter and what your Crown decided to do with them in CH10, as well as the trust you've built with her

so far. Either you chose to approach the peri trader without her involvement, or you decided to ask her help with arranging a meeting in order to learn more about the blue siren.

I think this is fairly obvious, but I'll state it for clarity's sake: those who chose to approach the peri trader directly should know that they will not be able to gain an alliance with Kham for the rest of the game. In exchange, though, you will find out **separate** information that those who decided to trust Kham enough to arrange a meeting (or otherwise simply didn't wish to antagonize her) will not be privy to, and gain different choices on how to deal with Kham later on. That's all I can say without giving out spoilers!

This branch also includes a cute scene out in the city streets, and extra (nonessential) lore that fantasy and worldbuilding nerds will appreciate!

On the other hand, if you chose to let Kham arrange the meeting for you and are keeping it all above board, you'll open up a route for the plot that includes a potential alliance with Kham. You're not locked into it as you can fully choose *not* to ally with her even if you take this route, but the possibility will be there for those who like Kham and want to stay on her good side or just think she'll be a useful ally in the future.

No scene out in the city, *but* the Crown gets to throw a bit of their royal weight around and interrogate the peri trader, so that's a fun bit off showing off for them.

The second half of the chapter will bring up another subplot that will become more relevant in Act 2: remember Steward Bazo? The guy from Şevan who failed to show up for your Crown's coronation, at which point you had to choose whether to condemn him, forgive him, or wait?

Yeah, that choice is about to become *very* relevant in this chapter. It won't lock you into a route, but it'll certainly affect how your Crown is being viewed, and the subsequent choice you get in CH12 will have important ripple effects in terms of your Crown's reputation for the rest of the game where Şevan is concerned.

You can only make a first impression once, as they say. But again, nothing is set in stone. Even if you mess up in CH12 with regard to Bazo, your Crown will have chances to recover in the future later on!

Plotwise, the rest of the chapter will be setup for the expedition that the Crown and their companions will embark on starting from CH13, which I'm *super* excited to write to explore the rest of Rojan's environments more!! The court intrigue is great and all, but who doesn't love a fantasy adventure roadtrip?

Love Interest Specific

All romance routes are going to start showing significant variations depending on if you have your love interest's high romance or low romance route. I want to add a reminder that you can always recover from a low romance to a high one if you make the correct future choices! Or maybe you're in it for the angst, haha.

For R, the contrast is going to start showing in small, but pronounced ways. A high romance will really lean into the friends-to-lovers relationship that has been cooking with R and the Crown this entire time, as the two function as each other's closest confidantes. Lots of short but sweet interactions and casual affection between them.

A low romance, however, will have the Crown start noticing some rather odd behavior that you likely already picked up on in CH11. Such as R acting particularly detached. Not quite apathetic, but it will start becoming obvious that there's something concerning going on with R's mental state... the Crown might want to pay close attention to their behavior this chapter.

For A, the contrast is quite possibly the very strongest out of all the LIs. A high romance Crown is going to enjoy the slow burn with A, which is especially starting to *burn* this chapter as the two of them are in a great place for more romance to develop!!

A low romance, on the other hand, essentially has the Crown metaphorically in the doghouse lol. This chapter, the Crown will have to make amends for the choice they made in CH11 towards the citizens they put at risk. Depending on how sincere the Crown is about their mistake, they'll be able to recover from their low romance route, or will stay on it.

For X, there will be minimal differences. On the surface, at least. X is a really interesting one for me to write this chapter, because their romance interactions with the Crown will be the *exact same* in both the low romance and the high romance routes, but the way they go about it and the general vibe around it will be very different.

The best way I can word it is: a high romance X will be pulling out all the stops to court the Crown earnestly and with a genuine desire to be near them. A low romance X, however, will merely be putting on a performance. Wearing something of a mask to act the way the Crown *wants* them to act. If your Crown on a low romance route is able to cut through that, they'll have a shot at recovering. If not, well... then you stay on the low romance route lol.

For D, the high and low romance routes actually are related to whether your Crown was able to successfully deny the Imperial Court their request to temporarily transfer D's title, or if you merely only managed to delay them.

If you managed to only *delay* them... then I'm afraid to say, even in a high romance, D will not be happy in CH12. And I don't mean in an angry way. I mean in an "Am I About To Lose My Only Life's Purpose" kind of way - though they won't blame the Crown for it regardless. If you're in a high romance with D, you might even find them seeking comfort from your Crown. A low romance D, however, will more so shut themselves off from your Crown.

If you successfully denied the court's request, however, all is well! You know, except for that missing letter. And D still pretending as if they're not blatantly pining for the Crown lmao. These two are SO BAD at keeping their feelings for each other under wraps it's actually hilarious.

That was it for this dev sneak peek, but I'll be posting actual previews from the chapter throughout the month for all tiers as well! So you have that to look forward to in March.

Until next time!!

[Schedule for March](#)

[Mar 5, 2024](#)

Hiya, hope March started off well for you!!

I'm glad to say I can finallyyyyyy release a Development Sneak Peek on CH12 within the next couple of days, as well as general progress reports that will give a more condensed version and previews on the chapter so far 🙏

Aside from that, for March, these are the themes I have planned:

- **For tier 1/On the Run**, X's character snippet will feature a scenario where the Crown gets injured during an ambush and X loses their ever-loving shit- I mean, handles it very calmly.
- **For tier 2/Successor**, D's character snippet will feature a scenario where they and the Crown visit the beach while in Avdin, and the Crown discovers D's love for swimming.
- **For tier 3/Crown**, A's romance snippet is hinting at spicy content in a Morning After scenario where A and the Crown wake up after spending a long night together. A bit of domestic fluff!

As always, thanks for your patience and support 🙏

[FYI](#)

[Mar 1, 2024](#)

Just a reminder, if you pledged right before the end of the month and got double-charged again today, just let me know and I'll refund you for February!

[R's Romantic Snippet: \(Not\) Studying Together](#)

[Feb 29, 2024](#)

Heya!!

A cute study date with R to close the month off with, yay! Though there actually isn't much studying happening at all lol. This one's just sweet and fluffy for the most part with a hint of steaminess at the end. It has an added flirtatious and reserved variation for some dialogue for the Crown, so you can choose between those two in the file as well ✨

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

Enjoy 💖

[A's Character Snippet: Alternate Timeline](#)

[Feb 25, 2024](#)

I have no idea why this one ended up so lengthy, but I guess I felt inspired!! Also, my finger isn't stiffening up as much anymore so I was able to write for longer 🙏

This alternate timeline is very similar to D's, with A being recently appointed as the MC's personal bodyguard at around 19 years old and the MC being around 18 years old having started to take over some of Crown Ferzan's duties, being raised as his successor. It started a bit more humorous than I thought it would but ended on a very sweet note 💖

[Here's the link!!](#) The tier 3 file has also been updated with it.

Enjoy ✨

[D's Character Snippet: Alternate Timeline](#)

[Feb 23, 2024](#)

Sorry for the super late upload gang!!

It appears I'm at the stage of my life where I get random body aches for no discernible reason. I have no idea why, but last week one of my fingers started randomly swelling up and hurting bad, so I was hampered from writing for a while. I didn't jam it or hit it anywhere either. It still feels stiff but the swelling has gone down, and it doesn't hurt anymore (until I type for too long), so there's that!! 🧠

Anyways, I managed to write this snippet well enough, so hopefully with another week, it'll be fully healed. In the meantime: the snippet for D as promised!! I planned it to be a bit more romantic with the Crown at first, but then it unexpectedly featured a very sweet moment with their mother that I think you'll also appreciate.

[Here's the link!!](#) The tier 2/3 files have also been updated with it, checked the pinned post for the links to those.

I'll do my best to put out A's character snippet this weekend, and then R's romantic snippet either on Tuesday or Wednesday 💖

[Schedule for February](#)

[Feb 7, 2024](#)

Hello hellooo, hope 2024 has been going well for you so far!!

I wish I had better news on progress about CH12, but while I'm still chipping away at it, it's going much slower than I hoped. Might be I'm still in a bit of a winter funk, but I really hope in February I'll at least be able to finish one of the major branching scenes so I can have some good news for you soon 🙏

Also a small note, it just hit me that I never posted R's character Q&A last month, so I'll post it at some point this month instead 🧠

For February, these are the themes I have planned:

- **For tier 1/On the Run**, D's character snippet will be an alternate timeline scenario where the Crown was found by Ferzan and raised as his successor, and D's mother was never disgraced as the general (so D serves as her lieutenant). It'll give a look at what D and the Crown's relationship would have been like under those circumstances
- **For tier 2/Successor**, A's character snippet will be the same alternate timeline scenario as D's, except with A being newly appointed as their Protector, and how their relationship with the Crown would have developed spending their late teens together

- **For tier 3/Crown**, R's romance snippet will feature a studying date between them and the Crown, and some flirty library shenanigans (make-outs between the bookshelves may or may not be included)

As always, thanks for your patience and support 🙏

[X's Romantic Snippet: Masquerade Ball](#)

[Jan 31, 2024](#)

We are going to pretend that masquerades are a thing in this alternate timeline (they are not, but I'm ignoring worldbuilding for fun because I can lol).

Basically what is says on the tin! Similar to the R snippet from yesterday, the Crown was found by Ferzan and raised in the palace, and while they've seen each other before, their first proper meeting and interaction with X happens during a masquerade ball.

It's a bit of a whirlwind romance trope as well since circumstances are so different here and X probably doesn't have the same qualms about being with the Crown as they do in canon. Assume they're in their early 20s here, or thereabouts.

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

Enjoy 💕

[R's Character Snippet: Alternate Timeline](#)

[Jan 29, 2024](#)

It seems I'm doomed to upload late this month lmao

But we're pumping all these out before the end of the month!!! This one is a cute alternate timeline scenario where everything went "right" unlike in canon: the Crown was found, their parents weren't assassinated, and they're being mentored by Ferzan as they should have been. Basically, R and the Crown were childhood best friends, it's super cute ✨

The snippet takes place with the Crown and R in their late teens, and it also has a bit of a romantic slant to it just so you know!!

[Here's the link](#). The tier 3 file has also been updated with it, check the pinned post for the correct link to that one.

Enjoy 💖

[A/X Romantic Snippet: Hiding Together](#)

[Jan 22, 2024](#)

Hey all, I'm so sorry for the wait!!

This snippet turned out *much* lengthier than I thought it would, around ~2k words, so I hope that makes up for it haha. I'll be uploading R's character Q&A tomorrow as well, and R's character snippet somewhere later in the week together with the X/Crown romantic snippet in the weekend!!

The premise for this one is pretty much in the title. A/X on a covert mission together, and what do you know, to avoid getting caught they have to hide somewhere rather cramped 🤪

You can find the snippet under X's section!!

[Here's the link](#)!! The tier 2/3 files have also been updated with it, check the pinned post for the most recent links to those.

Enjoy!! 💖