

Evertidings Patreon by Thomas Bell

(01/January/2024 - 24/March/2025)

[Update 143.](#)

[Yesterday.](#)

March 17th-23rd.

Hi! So, productive week. I will say that I fell asleep too early some nights and got zero writing done that day, which is great for my sleep schedule but not so great for my word count, but I'm still happy with what I produced overall.

Anyway, remember what I said last week with the chosen seatmate flavour text? How my goal was to finish it? Yeah... I got distracted. I only managed to finish Blane's and [A]'s before I bounced back to the end of the chapter—I really want to get that written out. Partially for peace of mind, but also because it'll be nice to have the entire story wrapped up and the only things left is for me to fill in the gaps. Again, as I said last week, I know how I'm going to end things so it's not too much of a concern for me, but hopefully, this happens sooner than later. Depending on what I feel like doing this week, I might do that, or I might write N's, K's and Rylan's flavour text—or maybe something else entirely. Who really knows? I'm honestly so all over the place with my writing. It's a style that works for me (especially to refresh my brain from writing the same stuff twenty times over), but unfortunately, it's not the easiest to explain. I'm just hoping you get the idea.

At this point, there's little to say about the chapter that I haven't already spoken about. I guess to mention the mundane, I'm currently incorporating the information learned in Blane's and K/Rylan's branches from Chapter 11 so that everyone is up to speed. If you learned about the locked files from Blane's route, for example, you'll learn about it at the end of Chapter 12. The same goes for the war between Mirai and Siaka. Of course, there will be flavour text depending on what you already knew and didn't. Characters like [A] will comment on your lack of surprise if you already knew about something, just to spice things up, but honestly, it's just a regular information exchange. Though Eliana was the one who brought it up initially, it doesn't actually involve her, so this isn't a scene where she's speaking much. But that doesn't mean she's not watching intently.

Chapter 12 is definitely bigger than I expected. I always knew it would be longer than Chapter 11, at least, which only reached about 40k words, but I have a feeling it'll push for 57-58k. Possibly over 60k. And while a good chunk of this gets cut out in edits, it's still a lot. Chapter 6 is my biggest so far, with most of it due to the routes. Maybe this will take the top spot, who knows? I know I said on Tumblr that I

was aiming for an April release, but after writing comes a lotttt of editing and testing, so I'm thinking more in early May. Late April at the earliest, but most likely May. I'm really sorry about the wait but I promise, it's coming!

I know this is a shorter update than previous ones, so I hope that's alright. I'll have more to say when I actually finish things. In terms of posting, since I didn't post a sneak peek last week, I'll be sure to have one up this week. Otherwise, take care of yourselves and drink lots of water! <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~51,392 words (+3241)
- Game Total: ~562,824 words

Sneak Peek.

My role is to sit on the sidelines and watch the world go up in flames.

[Hopelessly. \[K de Vries\]](#)

[3 days ago](#)

Synopsis: Even K gets scared of relationships, sometimes.

Note: I really like this one. I hope you guys do too.

The first time K kissed your cheek on the way out the door, you went so still they thought they did something wrong. They knew it was weird—they had been overthinking whether to even do it for at least five minutes prior and, for a scary moment, they worried that they made the wrong call—but it was already done.

They remember waiting for the backlash. They thought you were going to rub their kiss off, or make a face, or tease them about how out of character it was. Natural that you would think that, considering how aloof K was leading up to the relationship, but really, K is a romantic at heart.

You've come to learn that since that day.

They had longed to incorporate more subtle gestures of affection in your relationship, but they didn't know how to approach it. They figured working up to it would be the best way to make sure they didn't somehow scare you off—waiting for your reaction the first time was the most scared K had been in a while.

Hold your breath. They'll be okay with it, right? They're your partner. They chose you.

I chose them too.

After a long beat of silence, you smiled so wide, K was concerned for your facial muscles. It took a minute for them to get out of the door after that (you smothered them with so many compliments and kisses that they were taken aback).

When you were done, K asked: "You didn't think it was weird?"

"Weird? Why would I ever think that?"

K remembers feeling confused. It's not often that they're unsure of themselves, and it's even less common that they look so lost. It must have been why you smiled so gently, taking their hand and squeezing it to bring them back down to earth.

"All I want is for you to be comfortable. You don't ever have to push yourself to do more than you can, but if you want, I wouldn't mind a few more kisses on the cheek in the future."

For a while afterwards, K moved through the world in a daze. It wasn't too different from how they acted when you first got together. A part of them couldn't believe it was real, while the other part was much too aware of how real it was and was horrified by it.

The days leading up to your first kiss were similar, though much worse. This was at a point where K had barely accepted their feelings for you, or rather, they did, but they were convinced that they could just shove them down. They saw the way you looked at them—the subtle admiration, the attraction, the longing. It made them want to throw up. Not because it was revolting, but because they knew it would be ten times harder losing feelings for you if it ran both ways.

If it was just K that fell for you, they knew they could get over it. They'd gotten over a handful of other crushes in the decades between their last partner and you, their current one. They saw attractive people on the street and begrudgingly made conversation at bars. They avoided human contact at all costs, but love still sought them out. It was a curse that they suffered over and over again. No matter how hard they tried to be apathetic, the universe knew that they were weak for romance. It tested them over and over again, until it presented them with you.

A doomed fate.

They had two great loves before you and it shattered them to pieces. They knew you were going to be the third that pushed them beyond recovery, except, rather than tearing them apart even further, you're teaching them how to heal. Starting with this. Baby steps.

Kisses on cheeks before K leaves the apartment. Brushing fingertips under the table at dinner. Nuzzling necks when cuddling in bed. Sometimes, it's only one out of the three. Other times, all three of these occurrences happen in a single day, like today.

It should scare them, how much they're giving you. And maybe, in another life, it would. But when they see you take it all so willingly, so happily, all they can think about is how badly they want to keep that bright-eyed look on your face.

K sighs and buries their face in your stomach. It had been a long day but knowing that you were at home waiting for them made it all worth it.

You laugh. "What's wrong?"

"Ntng." K's voice comes out muffled.

"Hmm? You have to lift your face so I can hear you properly."

They huff but comply. "You understood me perfectly fine."

"You don't know that."

"I absolutely do."

"I have no idea what you said."

K rolls their eyes and flicks your nose. Your eyes widen, caught off guard. They relish the expression for the brief moment that it remains like that, before it morphs into indignation.

"Rude."

"You already knew that about me." K buries their face back into your stomach, this time trailing kisses on the soft skin. Your response dies on your lip, a shiver rolling through your body. They grin and lick a strip up towards your chest.

"Mmph— K, you devil."

"Hmm? What's wrong?" K nips at your skin. They're not high enough for this to be considered inappropriate, but they could get there if you wanted to take it in that direction. They're perfectly content where they are though. They have the feeling you are too.

"You know I asked you that first, right?"

"Yes, I know." Another nip. They look up just in time to see your eyelids flutter.

"You never answered."

K hums. "I know. I thought that was answer enough, was it not?"

Because nothing's wrong, silly. Nothing could ever be wrong when I'm with you.

They don't say the words aloud, but somehow, you understand. You always do.

[Update 142.](#)

[March 18](#)

March 10th-16th.

So, remember how last week I said “I think” we’re close to the end of the chapter? Well, this week, I know for sure that we’re nearly there. In fact, we’re so close that I can see myself writing the final line of the chapter already—it helps that I know where I’m leaving off. To reiterate, just because I’m nearly at the end of the chapter doesn’t mean it’s actually complete. I still have a lot of blank scenes I have to write. Entirely my fault that I skipped over them in the first place, but necessary with how bad the writer’s block was at the time.

I actually made some decent progress this week. I started going back and writing scenes that I planned on adding but didn’t do at the time, including some “check-ins” with the ROs during Eliana’s meeting. I mentioned this previously, but, as I’ve done a few times throughout the book now, you’ll be able to choose who sits next to you. I already included a scene where you can discuss (and overthink, for some) why the RO sat next to you and how you feel about it, so the “check-ins” will be a little different.

Unlike the initial choosing scene, these will be scattered throughout the meeting. [A]’s and [N]’s, for example, are at the beginning of the scene, whereas Blane’s is at the very end. K’s and Rylan’s are somewhere in between. This is the first time I’m doing personalized scenes at different times, but I’m really enjoying the decision. For one, it breaks away from my usual structure, which makes things more interesting. And two, I feel like this makes more sense. Some ROs are more comfortable sitting next to the Hunter than others, so of course, they’ll speak up quicker.

In a way, though, these check-ins are for the RO’s benefit as much as they are the Hunter’s. I would honestly say all of them start off as the RO needing reassurance before switching to the Hunter—if that even happens. Some ROs, for example, need the comfort too much for them to notice the Hunter’s needs immediately. They make up for it after though. It’s not malicious—the stress of the situation is just a lot to take in. Because of that, though, these scenes truly bring the (chosen) RO and Hunter closer together. I suppose you could call it a form of trauma-bonding. The fact that the RO chose to sit next to the Hunter already says a lot, but on top of that, they’re paying attention to the Hunter and looking to them for a grounding point too? It’s meaningful. Especially to colder ROs like Blane and K. I might even go as far as to say it’s a turning point that sets the stage for the romance lock.

So far, I've only written half of Blane's (their check-in just happened to be in the scene I was writing at the time), but I'm hoping to go back into the chapter and write the other ROs' soon. I already allocated spots for everyone, so it's just a matter of actually writing it. Thank God. On top of that, they're very brief scenes, so the goal is to get them all done by next week. Fingers crossed.

In other news, I started making more spreadsheets for the book to keep track of various variables and statistics, and it's kind of fun? Who was going to tell me that Excel spreadsheets aren't always torture? I'm hoping that this makes things run a little smoother in the future, especially since a lot of stats will become important very soon. I think eventually, it would be fun to share what it looks like and give a little sneak peek at how I organize things internally, but that's for another day. Patreon-wise, a new drabble will be up over the weekend as usual with a new sneak peek (possibly) again this week, depending on how much new content I write.

Thank you for reading! Take care <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~48,151 words (+3058)
- Game Total: ~559,583 words

Sneak Peek.

I watch Blane's masks go up one by one, the immediate loss of their vulnerability replaced by a fixed nonchalance that I've seen all too often. It doesn't matter that Eliana can watch it happen—for Blane, they're back in safe territory again.

CHAPTER 12.

She tilts her head. "It is an odd thing, to trust people you do not know, is it not? Faces that you cannot picture, names that give you only speculations to theorize from—if you're given names at all. You trust that IAOS will catch you when you fall, hoping that they're not the ones widening the chasm."

I don't think I like how she phrased that. "Do you believe they are?"

"I believe that any amount of suspicion is healthy," Eliana supplies. "IAOS has been alive nearly as long as I have. I have watched trials crash and burn, attempted laws and agreements cause irreparable rifts. It was hardly a smooth start and though it may seem well oiled now, there are still moving parts that are hidden to the naked eye."

[March 15](#)

[Update 141.](#)

[March 10](#)

March 3rd-9th.

I don't want to say it for fear of jinxing things, but I think maybe, just maybe, I'm getting close to the end of the chapter. Mind you, even if I reach the end of the chapter, I still have a lottt to write, namely all the stuff I skipped over because I "wasn't in the mood for writing it" at the time, so yeah. There's a ton to be done. Still, having a complete beginning and end to the chapter is sure to make me feel a lot better. Once the direction of the chapter has a more concrete base, filling in the blanks will come to me much easier. Or, at least, I hope that's how that works.

Mirai's meeting is slowly coming to a close. She's brought up a lot of topics—not all of them entirely comfortable—and it's starting to wear the Hunter out. They want to go home. As beautiful as the Fae Realm is, they really, *really* don't want to be there anymore. Not that I can blame them (you?). What Mirai reveals (and doesn't) is a lot to think about. I don't know if this chapter is as heavy as the conversation with Mirai or the interrogation of Ciel, but I will say that while those are comparable to a sucker punch to the gut, this feels more like a slow poison racing through your veins. Dramatic, perhaps, but you get the gist: the effect of Eliana's meeting is more gradual.

Last week, I integrated the topics of IAOS and Caine into the conversation. An inevitable thing to bring up, considering how important they are to the overall story, but it's hardly easy. Eliana has quite a few opinions on the matter. Though she's been keeping neutral, with IAOS, she lets a bit of that mask slip. Considering what IAOS is to the supernatural population, it makes sense that they're not very popular, but Eliana's thoughts are not that one-dimensional. Unlike Mirai, who hates the organization with a passion without any remorse, Eliana can agree that it does some good. But agreeing that IAOS can be useful in some ways doesn't mean she necessarily likes them either.

The thing that is most interesting about Eliana is how she speaks. Despite being the one who called the meeting, she doesn't seem entirely interested. She puts more weight on the Hunter's reactions or responses, rather than the facts they're speaking. Is that more intimidating than Mirai? I don't know. Mirai was a scare tactic, but that's not Eliana's goal. She is... curious. This is why she asks the Hunter's thoughts on who could be behind the drug and why Caine has not been found yet. She stirs the pot and is fully aware of it—but all the Hunter can do is sit there and answer her questions.

Another reason for me to add more interactions with the Hunter and their (your? I get so confused with this) chosen seatmate. It's something I know I need to go back and write, but I'm worried about breaking my flow with the actual meeting, so I'm saving it for when the "end" of the chapter is written and done. That's another thing I have to do when I go back into the chapter. I'm still very excited to be so close to the end though, despite all the work ahead of me.

Anyway, that's all I have for this week. I hope that was informative and understandable through the rambling haha. Take care of yourselves, everyone! <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~45,093 words (+3468)
- Game Total: ~556,525 words

Sneak Peek.

How different would my life be if Rylan was caught the first time and [A] and I didn't go out that night to find them Or would it not have mattered at all?

[Update 140.](#)

[March 4](#)

February 24th-March 2nd.

Yeah, so, I told you that this update wasn't going to be very eventful, didn't I? I had a lot going on this week—I extended my birthday for a few extra days haha, because why not?—so I didn't write during that period. What you're seeing is what I managed to get down at the beginning of the week and even then, I know it's scarce. I apologize. I know it doesn't make for a very exciting post, but it is what it is.

I'll elaborate a bit on what I was discussing last week, which is that this chapter feels never-ending. I managed to finally, finally touch on a topic during Eliana's meeting that I originally planned on when I first wrote my chapter outline. Somehow, I rambled so much that I only got to it now. Never mind that it was supposed to happen 5000 words ago. I guess it's better late than never? Agh. I can't tell if that's impressive or if I'm annoyed with myself. As I said last week, it's not like any of these are unimportant, but it can feel a little exhausting (?) when I'm adding more and more content that I didn't plan for. A part of me just wants this chapter to be done already, but I know I'm far from completion. There's still a lot to be done. It's a lot for someone who's become a slow writer (I feel so old when I say this, but ah, I do

miss when I could bust out 8000 words in one week). But! 40,000 words is still something to be proud of, if I do say so myself, so I'll try not to beat myself up too much.

We're getting to the juicy part of Eliana's meeting now and I'm currently deciding how much information to reveal to the audience through this meeting. This is not the culmination of it all—there are still more secrets to be revealed later—but a lot of things will be confirmed and/or denied through Eliana. The perks of talking to someone who's been alive since, well, forever. She has a lot of history to share, but that also makes you wonder why she's telling you at all. It could simply be because she finds the Hunter's reaction interesting, or because she's aiming to get something out of this. Who knows? (I know, but I won't say).

I'm hoping to power through more of the chapter this week, but I feel like I'm hitting a bit of a stalemate so, again, I apologize if the next few updates are also sparse. What I'm currently writing both feels refreshing but also dull (?) to me, which makes it harder to find motivation to write. This is not to say that the actual chapter is boring, but I think sitting with the same words for weeks now can feel a little... flat, so I'm struggling a little. Nevertheless, things always work themselves out, so I'll be alright.

Hopefully posting a new drabble will help clear my mind. Like always, you can expect it later in the week. Take care, everyone <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~41,625 words (+1442)
- Game Total: ~553,057 words

Sneak Peek.

I wonder how many years it took her to practice these expressions before she could pull them out as easily as she does.

CHAPTER 12.

"No. Bounties tend to be one of two emotions: confident or scared. There's usually a hatred mixed in there too, but I couldn't pinpoint any of those on Altan."

Eliana hums. Despite being the one asking the questions, she looks neither happy with the answers nor very interested. "This hatred, you mention it so casually. Does it not surprise you?"

"No."

I blink in surprise. That word didn't come out of mine or [A]'s mouths, but Blane's. I glance over at them, but, even though I'm sure they feel the sudden shift in attention from everyone, they don't look up.

A faint smile plays at the edge of Eliana's lips. "I see."

Blane doesn't reply. I'm not sure if they even wanted to be part of the conversation, or if their mouth moved faster than their brain when they initially said "yes."



[Watch What You Say...](#)

[February 26](#)

Yikes Blane

[Update 139.](#)

[February 25](#)

February 10th-23rd.

Ahh! Hello! I know it's been a while since my last (full) update but I'm doing alright now—I hope you all are as well. That said, I guess because of all the events happening in my life, I didn't touch much of Chapter 12, so this update still might be sparse. Most of the writing was done before or after I recovered, so to speak. It's a much smaller word count than I'd like to admit—and next week's will probably be along the same numbers, as I am busy with my birthday this weekend—but it is what it is.

I'm going to be completely honest: this chapter feels like it's both getting near the end but never-ending. I don't know how else to explain it. Every time I think Eliana has said all she wants to say, the conversation naturally segues into another topic. One that I want to talk about, of course, but one that inevitably makes the chapter (and the current conversation) longer. That said, I did spend a lot of time

setting up Eliana's meeting, so part of this comes from just... exhaustion, I guess. If I cut out all the "before," I'm sure I'll find that the actual conversation isn't that long—my mind is simply playing tricks on me.

Not that I think any of this is unimportant, though. IAOS is a weird organization. Like, very strange. Not just because of the stuff they handle, but internally, their hierarchy and secrets are a lot to unravel. We're truly only scratching the surface. Like any big corporate organization, there is—spoiler alert—a lot of corruption. Some of the people you think are clean are not, but also, some of the people you think are dirty are clean. There's a lot to talk about here, and because Eliana has been alive since, well, the beginning of time? She knows a lot. She also knows a lot about general history, which is information she may or may not be dropping. She has her reasons for doing so. And she also has her reasons for asking what she does.

If you didn't gather from that very long ramble, there will be a lot covered in this conversation. As with Ciel, it'll be up to you to decide how you feel on what is brought up, and what you believe and don't. The best part about writing this is that, unlike with Mirai, everyone is in the room this time. You get to watch everyone's reactions and comfort some ROs, or question why they're sitting so still. It's a lot of flavour text and coding, but I think that makes it more fun.

Unfortunately, that also means that dividing the speaking lines gets a little difficult, but some ROs also just don't want to talk. Blane, as you can guess, is content to just watch and judge, whereas Rylan, interestingly enough, decides (for the most part) to sit this one out. A new side for them, but considering they don't really know much about the actual content of the meeting, it's understandable.

Phew. Sorry for the ramble. I hope that was interesting to read though and gives some insight into what I'm doing (even if it didn't talk about the specifics of what is currently being written). A new sneak peek will be up shortly after this or tomorrow. Otherwise, I'll see you all next week. Thank you again for your understanding regarding my brief break. Take care of yourselves !! <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~40,183 words (+3143)
- Game Total: ~551,615 words

Sneak Peek.

K's eyebrows furrow. They seem against answering, but eventually decide that it might prove more beneficial if they do.

[Cure All. \[A Devereux\]](#)

Synopsis: [A]'s cure and favourite person.

Note: I'll be moving last week's update (Feb 10-16) into a combined update with this week (Feb 17-23) to be released next week. 1) Because I did not write enough to talk about last week, and 2) I don't think I will this week either. Thank you to those who commented on the last update. I'm feeling a lot better now, but things are still weird. Slowly but surely.

[A] doesn't get panic attacks as easily as they used to, but try as they might, it's never completely gone away. Sometimes, they wonder if maybe, despite all the therapists they've run through and the medication they've tried, their anxiety has actually gotten worse.

Sure, their job is a large contributor. The largest, really, if they had to blame something. Some might look at them and wonder how they'd ever feel insecure when they've only ever had one failure—"you're IAOS's perfect hunter, how can you be stressed?"—but most people don't know that [A] hinges themselves on these wins.

As much as they hate to admit it, [A] and Blane are two sides of the same coin. Both work tirelessly to maintain their spot and get better. Both depend on their victories as a form of self-worth. But the difference between them is [A] has the advantage of time and fewer failures, whereas Blane came too late and has a lower ratio of wins to losses.

Perhaps if someone held a gun to their head, [A] would admit that Blane doesn't deserve this. The entire Rankings system is screwed over—Blane is already a good hunter as it is. But in times when Blane's attitude is acting up, [A] can't deny that they like throwing it in their face. It's cruel, but not as cruel as the system is to the both of them.

Not that [A] can do anything about it, though. That scares them. The impending pressure of their perfect record (minus Rylan) is something they feel every day. Sometimes, they can ignore it. Push it to the back of their head and pretend it doesn't exist. Other times, it's not so easy. They feel their breathing grow shallow and the pain in their chest multiply. Their arms instinctively wrap around their legs as they curl into a ball—the smallest position that allows them to still find a bit of air.

They've had panic attacks for enough of their life to know how to survive them. They know the procedures. The therapists gave them the same techniques, the same exercises to get air back into their lungs and their heart rate back to an acceptable speed. But they never found a cure quite like you.

Now, in the aftermath of their most recent one, they're sat in your arms, tracing figure eights into your skin while you rub circles into their back with your thumbs. They know this is the last thing you were expecting when you planned a date at your house, but you've taken it in stride.

"Doing better?" you ask.

[A] nods against your chest. They don't trust themselves to speak yet, but you're aware that they go quiet after a panic attack. They trace a few more figure eights, but their movements are slowing down the hazier their thoughts get. Your skin is soft.

"I heard there's a new coffee shop opening up."

"Mmm."

"We should try it. Opening week will probably be packed, but I'm sure it'll die down after that. We still haven't found you the best iced latte in New York—maybe this will be the place."

[A]'s reply comes muffled. "I don't think I'll ever find it."

They can feel your smile even without seeing it. "Sure you will. There are a million different coffee shops in the city."

"I'm going to go bankrupt before I can."

"You won't. I'll make sure of it."

[A] doesn't say anything. They shift their position, but before they can get too comfortable, you grab their chin and tilt it up to look at them. They blink blearily. The exhaustion is starting to hit them.

"Baby."

"Hmm?"

You look positively delighted with that answer. [A] doesn't quite know why. They nearly fell asleep in your arms and they want to go back to it. But you look so happy with them that they don't want to look away. Ah, you're cute. Very cute. They're so lucky.

"Are you sleepy, baby?"

[A]'s head dips. "Isn't it obvious?"

"I know. You're halfway there already, aren't you?"

"Mmm. Sorry. I know we said we'd do a few things tonight."

You shake your head. The look in your eyes is fond; [A] feels like putty in your arms. "It's alright. It's probably better that you sleep things off anyway. Besides, we have all day tomorrow—it'll be Saturday, remember? We can do everything then."

"You're sure?"

"Positive." You lean forward and kiss their forehead. [A]'s eyes flutter shut at the sensation; they almost protest when you pull away. They're not above asking for more though.

"Again. Please."

You laugh. "So needy."

Still, despite the tease, you comply, kissing their forehead in the same spot. They sigh softly and practically fall back against your chest. They wouldn't mind if you kept your lips there the entire time, at least until they fell asleep, but they know they'd be asking for too much.

"Sleep, my angel. I'll be here when you wake up," you whisper.

[A] wraps their arms around you. "Promise?"

"Where else would I go?"

And though it's clearly a joke, they can tell some part of you is serious. There is nowhere you'd rather be than here, even if it means being used as a pillow. [A] smiles and snuggles into you more. They don't know what they did to deserve someone like you, but they'll be damned if they ever ruin it.

You're their cure—they can only hope they are something just as meaningful to you.

[Update 138.5](#)

[February 15](#)

Not really an update but (is this oversharing?) I'm currently going through a breakup, so as you can imagine, writing a fluffy drabble is kinda the last thing I want to be doing right now.

As such, all upcoming posts will be delayed (bi-weekly drabble, the weekly update) for a few days each until I'm in a better headspace. Hopefully you're all doing better than I am lol. Thanks for understanding <3

[Update 138.](#)

[February 11](#)

February 3rd-9th.

Finally, I don't have a super pessimistic update for you all. I don't think I've cured my writer's block entirely, but I definitely have hell of a lot more motivation than I did last week. Or, well, aside from the stuff that's going on in my personal life that deters me from doing anything at all, but that's beside the point! What matters is that the lack of inspiration that was hitting me last week has been banished into the abyss, and (mostly) I'm back at it.

My only regret is that I don't think I'll be able to release the chapter in March anymore like I wanted. If I do, I'll have to drastically pick up the writing speed (which could happen) or become a faster editor (which has less of a chance of happening). And I know, I know that no one is pressuring me to get this out as much as I am, but I'm my worst critic and even then, sometimes, I think I'm too lenient with myself. I'll keep trying though. I do think I'm (sorta) getting close to the end of this chapter. Once I barrel through the content that needs to be talked about, it's only a matter of time. So perhaps, soon. I can only hope.

In terms of what I did, I focused on the bits with Eliana and avoided the branches entirely, hoping that it would help me write. And you know what? It did. Before, I was unable to write a single word but recently, I've been writing a few hundred per day. I'm still not at the level I could be, but progress is progress. I think it helps that what I'm writing is actually like, new stuff.

Eliana is an interesting character, to say the least. I mentioned the other week that I was still trying to nail down her characterization, and I think I'll be doing that even through the editing process. I want her to come off a certain way, but it's proving to be a little difficult. Characters like Mirai, who are outright hostile, are (kinda) two-dimensional. Writing someone who is cold and annoyed all the time (hey Blane), is pretty easy when all you have to do is come up with insults and insert a bunch of glaring. Of course, unless your character quite literally has no other personality trait, there are other factors to be considered and you therefore have to write accordingly, but, in general, because their initial trait is so surface level, they're fairly easy to write. For example, in Chapter 7, my sole goal was for Mirai to come off as intimidating. And because there was no need for the Hunter to know her beyond that, her conversation was written relatively quickly.

Eliana, on the other hand, has a few motives for this conversation. None of which I'm going to reveal, of course, but because she wants to get something out of the Hunter, she... acts a certain way. On top of that, there's her natural personality that shines through, and then the personality that she uses to hide that. In other words, the Eliana that you're speaking with in this meeting is fake. Through and through. But it's hard to tell what's real and what's not with her, since she's had since, well, the beginning of time to perfect it. You might think you understand what she's trying to do when, really, that's what she wants you to believe. That's the part I'm struggling with: trying to keep her mysterious but also giving just enough to guide your thoughts in a certain direction. I'm not so sure I'm nailing it, but it's still fun.

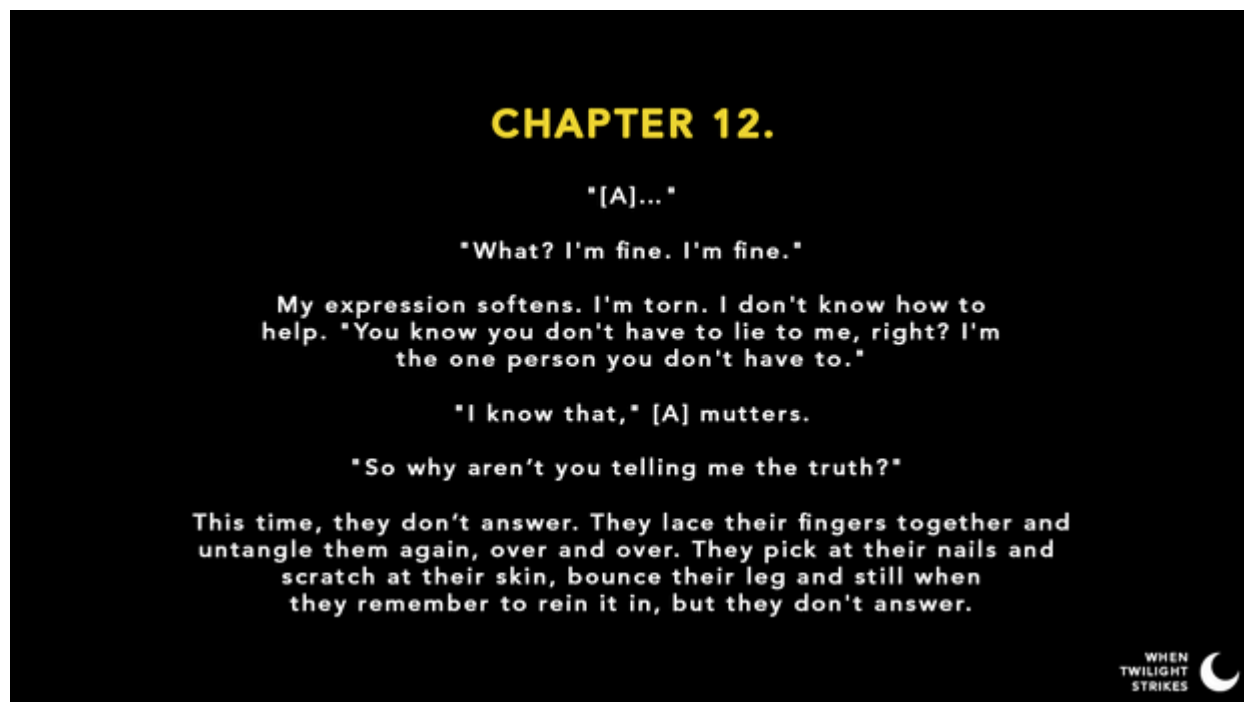
Anyway, that's all for this week. I hope you're all doing well. As I said, I'm currently at a weird point in my personal life dealing with stuff (emotions yay!) but I'll hopefully have a new drabble up this week. I'll talk to you soon <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~37,040 words (+2517)
- Game Total: ~548,472 words

Sneak Peek.

Maybe that's the game itself. The fact that she's pulling the strings but acts like a player.



[Soothe My Nerves.](#)

[February 6](#)

[Update 137.](#)

[February 4](#)

January 27th-February 2nd.

So, um, bad news: that writer's block I talked about? Still there. Except—new development—it's turning into like, lack of inspiration? Which scares me more than anything because writer's block usually cures itself, but this... this is harder. I hate writing back to back pessimistic updates, so I hope it's alright that I'm talking about this, but yeah. I'm not excited about this phase I'm going through.

I will say, however, that I'm trying my best to solve it. I decided to say 'fuck it' to the branches I was working on and move on entirely. As of yesterday, I started working on Eliana's meeting, which is basically this giant political discussion that I hope will be a change from the romantic (if applicable) tension between the Hunter and the chosen RO. Still, I'm not so sure how this will work out.

Don't get me wrong, I love WTS. I always will and I don't think I will ever abandon the project. Not anytime soon, anyway. But sometimes, I think I could benefit from taking a break from the universe. I've been toying with the idea of writing something completely new, but I tried in the past and opened the document every three months so I'm not sure. Maybe I just need to write a novel. Something that isn't interactive fiction. Ah, I'm still figuring it all out.

I am going through a weird phase in my life right now, so that could also be what's affecting my slump. Again, apologies for sounding so down, but I'm not quite sure what I can say here. Let's just hope that inspiration will strike me tonight and I suddenly write 5000 words in one go. Unlikely, but hey, it could happen!

I do think that moving away from the branches completely will help though. If I can, I want to work on Chapter 12 in some capacity so that it won't be another 9 month wait for new content. That's why I'm trying so hard to work this out. But if all else fails, I'll resort to making a new universe. Who knows? Maybe I'll actually stick with it this time.

Apologies for the terrible update (for the second week in a row). I know it was mainly me thinking out loud and talking about how awful this feels (because it is awful! I'm supposed to be good at writing so why am I suddenly at a loss for words?), but I hope that's okay. I guess it goes to show that not everything is sunshine and rainbows.

Take care of yourselves. Thank you for all your support despite how negative I sound right now. I know I sound less than hopeful, but I do think things will resolve themselves. If not now then later <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~34,523 words (+2474)
- Game Total: ~545,955 words

Sneak Peek.

"You know you don't have to lie to me, right? I'm the one person you don't have to."

[February 3](#)

Synopsis: Who Rylan runs to when they have a bad day.

Note: Again, I don't know why the first half of this came out sorta angsty. I swear the next one will be pure fluff (if I can manage it). Also, I'm not sure if I'm happy with the ending of this one, but I keep staring at it and rubbing my forehead so I guess it's time to call it a day haha. Hopefully it's better than I think it is <3

Rylan knows people find it odd when they're not happy-go-lucky. That's the problem with creating a persona for yourself: the moment you stray away from it, people are confused. You're not what they expected. They wanted a flirty, upbeat, loud character, not this solemn, bitter version of themselves.

But, sometimes, they can't help it.

Even they have a breaking point. Times when that plastered smile feels like it's slipping off their face, down, down, until it crumbles completely. And then, they can't bring it back. It's fallen onto the ground, shattered into pieces, and they've yet to figure out how to make a new one. They know they should figure it out quicker. Find a way to get back to their 'usual' self so they're not so off-putting to everyone around them, but it's hard when all they want to do is curl up in their bed and cry.

They suppose this is a good thing. Having emotions, that is. K thought the opposite for a while.

Initially, Rylan watched it from a distance. Not a distance they created, but one that K built between them. It only made Rylan more determined. They saw the lack of feeling behind those eyes and vowed to themselves to bring it back, even if for a moment. Because, despite Rylan's façade, they never wanted to get to the point K was at.

They were a shell of a person, someone who had sealed themselves off completely from the wonders of actually being human. The furrow of their brow in annoyance was the only emotion K seemed to feel. Frustration, irritation—but never anything more. There was no joy and, scarily enough, no anger either. Nothing on either end of the spectrum.

It was frightening.

Luckily, K eventually opened up. First with Rylan and then with the group. Rylan found themselves taking a similar journey, but theirs started with you.

Flirting to get a reaction. Laughing loudly to cover up how scared they were. Brushing your arm, swinging an arm around your shoulders. They liked it. They liked you. And when they figured that out, they were horrified. They were doing everything they usually did, but it backfired on them. They weren't supposed to catch feelings. And though they were prepared to sprint, you didn't let them run away. For that, they're forever grateful.

Because in times like these, they have someone to call.

"Hi! What's up?" you answered.

Rylan was in their bed, their head under the covers and their legs pressed into their chest. "Can you come over?"

They could never hide anything from you. The moment they spoke, they knew you figured out something was wrong. "I'll be there in twenty."

You hung up—they've been waiting for you ever since. It felt like an eternity. It felt like a second. Eventually, they hear you unlock the door and make your way to the bedroom. They feel your weight sink the bed as you sit down and the soft stroke of your hand on their head over the blankets. It feels nice. It always does.

"Baby."

"Mmph."

"Rylan, baby. Come out. Let me see you."

When Rylan lets out another muffled noise, you gently pull the blankets off them, revealing their face. One of their cheeks is pressed into their pillow, but otherwise, the rest of their face is visible. You kiss them on the forehead, then the cheek, then peck them all over, kissing any span of skin you can find.

"Wait— Hunter—"

You ignore their protests, kissing them softly and quickly. Rylan laughs as the kisses grow ticklish, turning their face in the process, coincidentally giving you more to kiss. You laugh with them, kissing both their cheeks now that you have the chance, travelling to their nose and the space between their brows.

"Hunter! Hunter, I get it, I get it. Let me breathe—"

"No. Not until you're smiling again."

"I am, I am!"

They know they could very well push you away, but despite laughing so hard that it hurts, Rylan finds that they don't want to. Eventually, you relent, pulling away with a smile. You're so beautiful it takes their

breath away. You cup their face and they lean into your touch.

"Feel better?" you ask.

They nod, eyes closed. "Yeah."

"Promise?"

"You know I hate lying to you, Hunter. I promise."

Your shoulders relax. You're positioned above them, braced on your knees and one hand. They don't know when you did that. Perhaps to have a better angle to kiss them. To anyone else, it would look like a provocative position. To Rylan, they just feel safe.

"Good. Do you want to talk about it?"

"No." Rylan sighs. "It's just the usual."

"That doesn't mean it's not worth talking about."

"I know, I know. It's just... Can you hold me? For a bit?"

Your expression softens. "Of course."

You crawl off them and lie down, pulling Rylan into your chest. It's been a while since they were the small spoon. If they were in a better mood, they'd joke about their long limbs and how they're better suited for the big spoon. This time, they simply sigh and nuzzle you, breathing in your scent and letting your body heat seep into their bones.

"Thank you."

"You don't have to thank me."

"I know. But I wanted to."

And it's the truth. They hope you know how much you mean to them. They would thank you every day if they could. For being so kind to them, for being there in their darkest times, for being the only person who ever saw Rylan as more than what they presented themselves as. Beyond the surface level, beyond the façade.

You saw them when no one else did. They don't know where they'd be if you hadn't.

[Update 136.](#)

[January 28](#)

January 20th-26th.

So, it happened. I felt it coming on me slowly, but I was convinced that maybe I could ward it off before it could happen. Nope. I hate to say it, but I have writer's block. To the point where, in the latter half of the week, I opened my document, stared at it and closed it again after a few minutes because I didn't know how to put what I wanted to say into words. Which is ridiculous because I have so much I want to say—I just couldn't piece them together into coherent sentences.

I haven't had a case of writer's block this bad for a while. Usually, when it happens, I can still write but just not very fast. I move at a tortoise pace, to the point where I feel like an elderly person figuring out how a keyboard works. This time is awful. I can't write more than ten words without having a headache and then I get so frustrated with myself that I give up. I'm hoping a change in route will help things. So, even though I'm not done with Blane or K, maybe if I write someone more familiar like A, things will work out. Fingers crossed. It's my only solution at this point, so I'm kinda desperate. I am, fortunately or not, quite busy with in real life things this week though, so I'm not sure how much time I'll have to test that theory.

While I'm on the topic, I have to say, this is one of my least favourite parts of writing. I hate having all this creativity and desire to write but being unable to do it. This is supposed to be something I'm good at. I'm supposed to have (at least some) talent here, so why can't I? And I know I'm not alone here and that this happens to any artist (whether it's about writing or creating visual art), but man, does it upset me.

Since I can't write, however, I decided to shift gears a bit and try my hand at brainstorming for when I do have the motivation. I have this notebook where I basically just spit out all my thoughts, which I've been using it a lot more frequently, writing down plot points, character arcs and reminding myself of what happened in the previous chapters that link to the current events. With so many moving parts to this story, you'd think I'd have a better system for keeping track of things. And while I usually am a very organized person, there's just so much chaos in this story (both inside and out) that I only recently decided I should rein it all in. It's a tedious process, but it's also extremely satisfying watching things come together.

The thing about writing a story that updates publicly is that I can't really go back and change things, not anything too big, anyway, so I'm a little stressed out hoping that things fall into place the way I wanted it to in my head, but that's for another day. Right now, I need to tackle that writer's block of mine. Argh.

Sorry for the pessimistic (and rather short) update. I know I went on a bit of a tangent there, but I don't feel like there's much I can talk about when I made so little progress. Hopefully, I'll be back to normal soon, or, at least, a little better than I am now. Take care of yourselves everyone <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~32,049 words (+2545)
- Game Total: ~543,481 words

Sneak Peek.

Blane doesn't move. I knew they wouldn't and they did too—their bluff is something we both know too well.

CHAPTER 12.

Only, I've never seen [K] do something on a whim. Every action, every word they speak and every facial expression they make is deliberate. They've had decades to perfect their act, going from not being able to hide their reactions to twitching every time something cracked their façade to being able to maintain complete stoicism without even blinking.

They're a masterclass that IAOS would've loved to use as an example. Someone with a perfect poker face. Any information you glean from them would be something they let slip—never anything more, never anything less.

It's a talent that can be both good and bad. Sometimes, I think it's neither. As impressive as it is, in terms of wanting to get close to [K], I feel like I'm exactly where I started.

WHEN
TWILIGHT
STRIKES 

[Impulsivity Killed the Cat.](#)

[January 22](#)

[Update 135.](#)

[January 21](#)

January 13th-19th.

Hi! How's everyone doing? It's been disgustingly cold where I live (I can't believe I have to leave my house when it feels like -20 degrees Celsius) so I hope you're all faring better than I am! (Surely none of you are experiencing worse right? I hope not). I made a decent amount of progress in this update, which I'm happy about. I can't say I'll keep it up (I'm not in the right headspace this week, unfortunately) but let's focus on the positives, shall we?

I'm sure most of you saw it coming, but that "small branch" turned out to be a lot bigger than I anticipated. The good news? It's only high in word count because I was yapping away in the general text. I hope this makes sense, but I tend to get stuck/feel frustrated when choices are the bulk of my word count, mostly because I have to find 5 different ways to write the same exact thing. As you can imagine, it gets boring pretty quick. It's also quite draining, which is why my writing speed also slows when this happens. Luckily, this is not one of those cases. When I was writing Rylan's path, I wrote so much about their thoughts and the Hunter's analysis of them that it ended up being over 500 words in the blink of an eye. Then, Eliana chatted with them, the Hunter spoke to them and, well... The branch is at 2000 words again. Ha. Who would've guessed...

Still, I don't see this being as big of a problem as the first branch, considering a quarter of each branch allows me to yap and give you (sorta) an in-depth glimpse of each RO's character. So I guess I should count this as a win? Kinda funny how I keep delaying the writing of the actual meeting with Eliana though. It'll come in due time. Possibly. Cough.

Anyway, I finished Rylan's branch this week and started on K's. Quite honestly, it came out way different than I intended it to but I'm not mad at it. I meant for it to be fluffy but I guess I was in an angsty mood because it definitely went in that direction rather than the former. The more I think about it, the more I think it's for the better. Because, you see, it sets the tone for their route perfectly. Though K can be kind (Chapter 9 anyone?) their first priority will always be blocking out all emotions. They don't want to feel. They don't want to hurt anymore. But, of course, despite being immortal, they're still human like anyone else, which means it's not always possible to be unemotional. So if they do something irrational like, say, sit next to the Hunter the moment they hear Eliana call the Hunter to sit with her, forgive them if they act coldly—they're too busy being mad at themselves for being impulsive when they're supposed to be trained not to.

I understand K's characterization a lot more than I do Rylan's, so it's been a lot of fun writing this portion. To finally tease what the (initial) romance arc will be with them... Ooh. It's so juicy. Not that I necessarily agree with K's actions, but you can't deny that it's fun to play. Like, had this been a real-life scenario, I'd be running for the hills. But in a game? Give me more. Haha.

Alright, that's all I have this week! After finishing K's route, I'm going to jump to Blane's and get the angsty ROs out of the way. Fingers crossed it goes well. Also, regarding Patreon stuff, a new sneak peek will be coming your way either tonight or tomorrow. And finally, in case you missed it, I posted about an anniversary event (February 24th) that I'll be hosting on my Tumblr which you can check out [here](#). Take care! <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~29,504 words (+4346)
- Game Total: ~540,936 words

Sneak Peek.

I lift my gaze from the table and glance at them. Rylan's already looking at me with that same soft expression.

[Stuck by the Glue.](#) [\[Blane Rekner\]](#)

[January 19](#)

Synopsis: Forehead kisses (and more) with Blane

Note: The "Types of Kisses" series ended up winning the poll by a small margin so this will be the drabbles you'll be getting for the next little while. In apology to the angst lovers, I threw in a bit today <3

Blane never thought they'd be the clingy type. It's embarrassing, really. The fact that they follow you around like a lost puppy is bad enough—what's worse is sometimes, they'll catch themselves doing it and seek you out anyway. They yearn for your presence, for your touch and your kisses.

They suppose it makes sense. After being deprived of affection for their entire life, it's not strange that the moment they got into a relationship, they began to crave that from you.

Still, it wasn't instant. They had to open themselves up to the idea first. But you were patient and kind. You reassured them time and time again, promised that you wouldn't leave. You never recoiled when Blane lashed out, unsure and confused by what was happening—you simply doubled your efforts. It was two steps forward and one step back.

Blane never understood how you dealt with it. They were a handful, a mess that wasn't worth the time. They were ragged around the edges and someone who had a vehement hatred for themselves and the world. You hated hearing Blane speak about themselves like this, but at the beginning of your relationship, they had such low self-esteem that hearing you defend them made them angry.

"Why won't you just admit that I'm a terrible person?" Blane shouted once.

You stood there, gaze unwavering and hands clenched into fists at your side. They couldn't decipher your expression at the time and mistook it for pity. It was only a few weeks later did they realize you

were upset at yourself. That was the day you vowed to make them change their mind about themselves—and, eventually, they did.

"Because you're not," you insisted. "You make yourself out to be some sort of monster, but I know that you don't mean half the stuff you say. I can see it in your eyes."

"Oh? You know me so well then, don't you?"

Your eyes had turned sad here. It hurt Blane's heart. "Yes. I do."

You were right, of course, but at the time, Blane was too blindsided by their frustration to see it. It's surprising that you managed to get past that. Even if you thought Blane wasn't a bad person, they'd still hurt you. They'd been rude, insulted you dozens of times and [A] dozens more. It's part of why they didn't want to get into a relationship with you—they didn't deserve you. But if you were sure that you wanted them, they'd become someone that was worth having.

So, they softened up. They stopped listening to irrational thoughts and started being more affectionate. They ignored the urges to isolate themselves and give you the silent treatment, if only because they wanted the world to be silent, and let themselves lean into your touch. They kissed you more. They held their arms open for hugs and held your hand in public, interlaced fingers swinging your arms back and forth on the sidewalk.

Simply put, this is where they became clingy. So clingy that [A] mocked them for it. And while *that* nearly made them want to curl into themselves and stop, the look of pure joy on your face every time they reached out for you made the embarrassment worth it.

"[Hunter]..." Blane whined. God, they'd never been a whiner either. You were doing something to them.

You hum and stroke their hair. The TV is playing in the background. You picked the movie a few hours ago and let the streaming service autoplay something afterward—it didn't matter, considering neither of you were truly paying attention.

They'd been more distracted with the taste of your lips and your skin, while you had been fascinated by the various noises you could draw from Blane's mouth when you touched them in certain places.

"Hmm? What is it? You know I need to go soon."

"No, you don't."

You laugh gently. The sound vibrates through Blane's body. They're practically sprawled on top of you, long limbs and all. Their face is pressed into your stomach, their arms wrapped around your waist. They really don't want you to leave. They'll prevent it by force if they can.

"Yes, I do. I can't stay forever. Besides, we've been in your bed for way too long."

"Not long enough," Blane mumbles.

Another laugh. "God, you're cute."

Blane lifts their head. Your eyes are softened with affection, lips curved into a smile that they want to kiss right off. They wonder how they're looking at you right now. Probably with so much adoration that [A] would throw up, but they don't care.

"Stay," they tell you. "Stay the night. It's Sunday tomorrow, we don't have work."

"Blane..."

"I know you want to."

You sigh. You've always had a hard time resisting Blane, especially since they became more affectionate. Unfortunately for them, it works the other way around as well. One 'please' from you and they're a complete mess. Fallen to their knees and everything.

"You drive a hard bargain, you know?" you tease.

Blane perks up. "Does that mean you'll stay?"

Another sigh, this one fonder than the last. "You're lucky I like you."

Without giving them a chance to reply, you lean forward and press a kiss to their forehead. Blane's eyes flutter shut at the sensation, feeling a smile form on their lips to mirror yours. It's more than enough, this small gesture of love, but they're greedy.

Before you can pull away completely, they tilt their chin up and capture your lips with theirs. You don't end up leaving the bed half an hour later, after a few more marks are littered on your skin and you've mentally recorded a few more places that leave Blane breathless.

[Update 134.](#)

[January 14](#)

January 6th-12th.

Hello!! I had a much better writing week than last week, thank goodness, so I'm happy to say that I have a lot more to say in this update—which, is honestly such a relief because I hate floundering around for

something to say. Even if I manage to make it not sound awkward, I *feel* awkward typing it out lol.

Onto more important things: this week I hit another (hopefully small) branch where you get to choose who sits next to you as Eliana holds her meeting. Or, perhaps "choose" is the wrong word. It's not so much of a "I want X to sit next to me" than a "Oh, apparently, X wants to sit next to me and I have no say in the matter." But the latter makes for much better entertainment than the Hunter physically choosing someone, so that's what we're going for.

So far, I started writing Rylan's route and I can already tell that it's going to be a blast. Of course, Rylan is one of the ROs where the action would be more deliberate (Blane would be someone who acted out of impulse and is confused as to why they did it, for example), but even so, there's still the element of "Why did I want to sit next to [The Hunter] so badly?????" that's inescapable. In fact, despite all the flirting Rylan does, they're one of the most confused characters when it comes to how they feel about the Hunter. [A] is in denial about the Hunter possibly liking them back, Blane and K are in denial about liking the Hunter at all, and Rylan is just plain confused. Why do they flirt and not mean it? Or do they actually mean it? Why does their heart beat faster when it's supposed to be all just for fun?

I've mentioned this before, but Rylan's characterization is one that I find a bit harder than everyone else's. Just as the Hunter doesn't understand what's going on in their head, sometimes, I don't either. And maybe that's just the way it is. To write a confusing character perhaps means being confused myself. It doesn't help that most of Rylan's actions are driven by emotion. This scenario is one of them. Yes, it's deliberate. Yes, they chose to sit next to the Hunter for a reason, but that reason is because they feel something they can't pinpoint. They don't know why they moved so quickly to "protect" someone they're supposed to not care about. And while the answer is on the tip of their tongue, honestly, they'd rather not think about it. They'd rather continue flirting and joking around until everything resolves itself.

I didn't mean to write an essay about Rylan's character haha, but I get carried away with stuff like this a lot. Apologies about that (or not?). Anyway, the point I was trying to make was I started Rylan's branch and I'll be moving on to someone else's shortly. Probably K's since they've also been on my mind, but things change pretty quickly depending on my mood, so who knows? Really, any of the ROs would be fun to write about in this scenario, so I think I'm going to have a really fun time writing for the next two-three weeks.

Hopefully my writing speed continues to pick up next week! Fingers crossed that I'll have another packed update for you guys, but until then, take care of yourselves <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~25,158 words (+3310)
- Game Total: ~536,590 words

Sneak Peek.

In the next moment, two things happen in rapid succession. One, I make it to my seat and grip onto the back bar for dear life. I contemplate how terribly things would be if I threw up on the table. Two, at Eliana's invitation, someone moves past and deliberately chooses the seat beside me.

[Next Drabble Series.](#)

[January 13](#)

It's been a while since I've done a poll and actually asked what you all wanted to read, so I thought I'd make up for it now. A new drabble will be up over the weekend so whatever is winning by then will be the new series I start on.

The *Types of Kisses* series would involve various drabbles of forehead kisses, cheek kisses, neck kisses—that sort of thing. As usual, one per RO.

The *Love Languages* series would feature the ROs portraying each of the five love languages: physical touch, quality time, gift giving, words of affirmation and acts of service.

Lastly, the *Minor Inconveniences* series would feature the ROs getting into some sort of fight/argument with the Hunter and how they process/deal with it. It's a very minor fight as the name suggests, but still angsty all the same.

I will eventually get around to the other series that don't win, so don't stress too much if the one you want is losing <3

Types of Kisses (Fluffy)

Love Languages (Fluffy)

Minor Inconveniences (Angst)

69 votes total

CHAPTER 12.

Eliana rounds the corner and I freeze.

My first thought is that she is beautiful. It's not a subjective beauty either—no, Eliana is the type of beautiful that cannot be contested. A rival to Aphrodite herself, a contestant that far surpasses any other person I've ever met. She's the kind of person you wonder is real. A photo you'd see on the internet and sigh over, because you'd want to look as perfect as that.

[...]

I feel both welcomed and scared in her presence. Both in awe and in fear. She's a walking contradiction, the embodiment of the realm we've entered in every shape and form. I suddenly see why everything looks the way it does—it feels like Eliana in every touch.

She is the Realm. The Realm is her.



[Eliana's Intro.](#)

[January 9](#)

[Update 133.](#)

[January 6](#)

December 30th-January 5th.

No one, and I mean no one, comment on the stats this week. What can I say? I was still enjoying the holiday spirit. Okay, fine, I guess that's not really a good excuse, but genuinely, I was busy with other stuff in my life (job applications are scary) so I prioritized that over writing Chapter 12. Which sucks, because I hate writing updates when, well, I have nothing to update on, but it is what it is. It's not like I can go back in time.

That said, I will fully admit that I only started mapping out Eliana's meeting scene today. While it's not going terribly, it's not going as smoothly as I thought it would either. I think it's just taking me some time to get my headspace out of the Mistletoe Short and back to Chapter 12. Once I sit down and start writing, though, I know the words will flow out of me. What caused Chapter 11 to take so long was my

lack of enthusiasm and overall burnout. But because I don't feel that with Chapter 12, I think things will be alright.

With the new year, I've been doing a lot of reflecting on this project. We're coming up on the 4 year anniversary now, which is crazy because my naive self initially thought I'd be able to write Book 1 in 2 years. While I do have some regrets about how slow of a writer I am, I'm still proud that I've stuck with it for so long. Rest assured, I have no plans of abandonment anytime soon.

With that reflection, I've been going back into older chapters and fixing up some stats, while also fixing small bugs that have been pointed out to me. Most of them are resolved on my file, but I've yet to upload it, so if you're wondering why you keep seeing the same typo over and over again, there's a chance that I've already caught it—I just haven't publically fixed it. I've mentioned this before, but this is mostly because I'm gearing up for the romance lock. I'm finalizing stats so that when it's time, everything will be accurate when you choose (or not choose) who you want to romance. Not every route will be available depending on some of the choices you've made, so I want to make sure that everything is in working order.

I know this update was a lot of rambling and explaining (in other words, too much yapping and not enough work), but I hope it was still alright! I definitely plan on writing more for next week (call it a New Year's resolution of mine), so I'll have more to say. I know I said that last week, but this time I swear it's true. Anyway, take care everyone!

(Please no one look at the stats).

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~21,850 words (+475)
- Game Total: ~533,280 words

Sneak Peek.

You could argue that they are different types of beauty, that the Fae have the advantage of unnatural beauty whereas humans are flawed by nature, but even with that in mind, I can't deny that the Court is breathtaking.

[The Waiting Game. \[Rylan Villanueva\]](#)

[January 5](#)

Synopsis: (An attempt at) cuddles with Rylan.

"Don't leave," Rylan whispers. Their hand wraps around your wrist, their eyes half open as they watch you hesitate at the edge of the bed. They know, they know it's late. They know they shouldn't be here, shouldn't have even bothered texting you in the first place.

They know there are a lot of things they shouldn't have done tonight. But when it comes to you, they can't help themselves. It's wrong but it's right. It's impulsive even though they usually aren't.

"Rylan..."

They swallow. Their hand tightens around your wrist. Not enough to hurt, but to tug you back to bed. You go willingly, sitting back down compared to how you were hovering over the mattress before.

"Please? You don't have to go."

You hesitate. There's a fine line that you walk with them. You hesitated to pass the line of professionalism with them, but Rylan managed to convince you to cross that months ago. After that, it was the debate of how friendly the two of you should be, considering the circumstances of Rylan's bounty. But you've since crossed that too.

This is different. It's more.

This is Rylan sleeping over in your bed, curled up against your side. This is the ghost of your lips brushing against theirs, neither of you daring to lean in any further out of fear that it'll ruin the balance. This is them asking you to stay and hoping you'll say yes.

"I should sleep on the couch," you whisper.

"Why? The bed is big enough for the two of us."

Your smile is sad. "I know, but..."

Their heart sinks. It only ever hurts this much with you. But, at the same time, when they're happy, you're the only one that makes them feel that much.

"I'll move. I can keep to one side the entire night," Rylan says.

"Rylan..."

"Please?"

They're practically begging at this point, they know, but it's the only way to get through to you.

You've always been pragmatic when it comes to them, and they've always been emotional. You're always the one putting up boundaries and Rylan's the one chasing you. They don't know why that is. Perhaps you have a better hold of your emotions than they do. Or maybe they just feel like they can't control themselves around you. It's an accurate description sometimes.

There are so many things they aren't allowed to have, including you. Why won't you let them have this? It'd be different if it wasn't reciprocated, but they know you feel something for them too.

You wouldn't be so torn otherwise.

"We can build a pillow wall if you want," Rylan adds.

You laugh quietly. "You always end up breaking it. And then you steal the blanket so I wake up freezing. We've been over this, Rylan. You say you won't every time but then you do it anyway."

So cuddle me if you're cold, Rylan wants to say. But, of course, there's still that balance. They've poked and prodded at it for months now, tested its limits, went too far in some cases and not far enough in others. It's an art that they're slowly perfecting. They're still figuring it out, but they know saying what that would ruin things.

So instead, they ask: "What if I promise this time?"

"It won't change anything. You'll end up doing it subconsciously."

"And if I wake up before you to drape the blanket back on you?"

You sigh. Rylan feels their heart sinking again. "It still wouldn't work. We shouldn't."

They glance down. They took their rings off to sleep, so they're left to toy with the stray thread hanging off the corner of the blanket instead. Pull. Straighten. Twist. They should be accustomed to the rejection, but it never gets any easier.

"No one's here to tell you no," Rylan whispers.

You look conflicted. Their words struck a nerve. "I know."

"So?"

Your throat bobs. At least they know you're just as upset about this as they are. Slowly, hesitantly, you reach out for them. Rylan watches your hand approach theirs, forcing you to make the decision on whether or not to pull away at the last minute.

You don't. Your hand makes contact, folding over theirs. They resist a shiver at the contact, having been starved for so long. They want to pull you in, take you away from the edge of the bed and back to the middle. They want to hold you and be held, want to kiss you senseless and leave you gasping for air. Their chest hurts. They want too much. They've never been a greedy person, but with you, they want the world. They'd give the world to you too, if you asked, but you're too scared to even consider it.

They hate this.

"Rylan."

Your eyes are glassy. It hurts. Everything hurts. Rylan holds your gaze and places a hand on top of yours, sandwiching it between two of theirs. They squeeze, hoping that the action conveys how much they want this. Please.

You sigh. "Fine. I'll stay."

They light up.

In another life, they would've tackled you with glee, pinning you to the bed as the two of you laughed. They would've hovered over you, admiring the colour of your eyes and the warmth of your body. This would've been an opportunity for a kiss, to lead somewhere further or simply just to cuddle if you asked.

Because in that other life, the two of you wouldn't have to tiptoe around each other. There would be no begging and heartbreak, no pained denials or longing stares. You'd be together happily, out in the open.

Maybe one day, that other life will become this life. Rylan isn't sure. For now, they have to ask and persuade and convince. But it's okay, because you said yes. It's all they can ever ask for.

They tug you closer and smile. They can play the waiting game.

[Update 132.](#)

[January 1](#)

December 23rd-29th.

Happy New Year!! How is everyone? I hope your holidays were filled with joy and that you all had fun. We had a semi-white Christmas here where I live (does it count if it snowed two days before and it hadn't melted away by the 25th?) so it was very exciting. I don't think we've had one for a few years now.

Anyway, I'll fully admit that I didn't do much this week. After finishing up the holiday special (which I hope you all enjoyed?), I took a break from Chapter 12 to focus on other things going on in my life. I opened the document the other day and had to read back on what I wrote because it had been that long since I last looked at it. Oops. Probably not a great sign, but I'm hoping to come back to it later this week.

I last left off at the first branch of the chapter and the group was about to meet Eliana. I think I mentioned that I'm going to have to do some brainstorming, because while I have a good idea of what I want to go down, sometimes having it written on paper beforehand helps me map things out. Plus, I suspect it'll be a pretty big scene, so making an outline is probably a good idea. I recently got a

notebook dedicated specifically for this (what I did previously, I have no idea; I have dozens of scrap papers with my ideas written on them), so I'm excited to continue to fill it up.

Sorry for the lacking update this week. I promise I'll have more to talk about next time. To make up for it, I'll be posting a drabble towards the end of the week (most likely the weekend) and a sneak peek early next week, when I actually have content to tease haha. Happy New Year again, everybody! Take care of yourselves and here's to a wonderful 2025 <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~21,330 words (=)
- Game Total: ~532,806 words

Sneak Peek.

"Eliana's Court is at the end of the hallway. All guests are required to visit there upon arrival. If you could follow me, I'll take you to it."

under the mistletoe

[Holiday Special: Release.](#)

[Dec 29, 2024](#)

It's here!! Enjoy the (late, sorry) [holiday special](#) out **now**. Since it's not technically a new chapter, it'll be available as an early release on the Midnight tier for 3 days, the Twilight tier for 1 day and then be released to the public on January 1st.

The password this time around is "A (Late) Present" (all words capitalized, no quotation marks).

The new content totals out to be about 12,000 words, with about 2000 on each branch. For reference, the drabbles I post on here are around 700-800 words, but keep in mind that those stories are not limited to branches, so the content might feel shorter because you're only picking 1 of the 3 options available.

Regardless, I hope you all have fun. Thank you for such a wonderful year <3

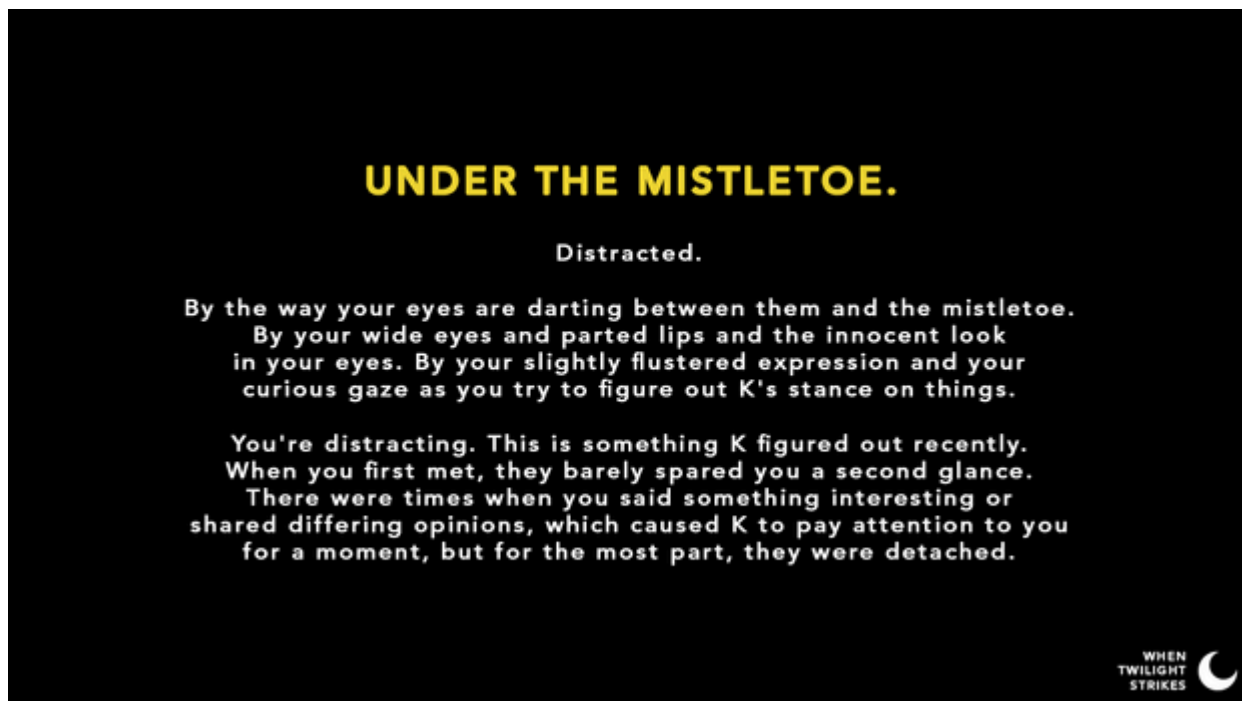
[Merry Christmas/Happy Holidays!](#)

[Dec 25, 2024](#)

A hilarious title considering I have half an hour left before December 25th is over, but I thought I'd pop in and update you all since I have yet to write my post this week.

Long story short, I'm onto the final stages of the holiday special (editing and coding) and am hoping to get it out within the next 1-3 days. I've been focusing on that recently, which is why I've been so scatterbrained with posting on here (sorry!) but hopefully, even though it's late, it'll be worth it.

I'll most likely skip the update this week since I'm so close to posting the new story anyway, but afterwards, they will be weekly once more. Hope you're all doing well! Take care <3



[Dis-Distracting. Yeah.](#)

[Dec 23, 2024](#)

I meant to post this last week but it slipped my mind. Full apologies for that!

[Update 131.](#)

[Dec 18, 2024](#)

December 9th-15th.

Let's start off by saying that I'm very much feeling the pressure of the holiday special right now. That and holiday shopping, but that's a story for another day (my wallet has been suffering so far; getting gifts for people is hard). Despite my words, however, I think it's going decently well. Granted, I did have a bit of a brain fart this week and completely malfunctioned writing N's scene (words? Don't know them), but all things aside, things are still moving along so I can't complain.

I'll start off by talking about [A]'s scene, since it's what I wrote at the beginning of the week. Similar to Blane's, this came so naturally to me. It truly felt like I was just writing another drabble for Patreon, so it was no trouble at all. Or, I guess it was a little trouble. I struggled a little bit with how similar I wanted all the branches to be. Do I give [A]'s branch the same choices as Blane's? Or do I switch it up entirely? Obviously, their inner thoughts and physical dialogue will be different—they're very different characters—but I was 50/50 on how identical the plot lines should be. The end result is kind of a mix of the two. Yes they're similar, but not to the point where you'll feel like you're playing the same thing five times.

As usual, [A] is a bit messy. That's what makes them charming, to me. They're freaking out about the situation and wondering how much they should push things since they think they're still very much in the friend zone. And maybe in some playthroughs, that's all you are. Friends. If you choose that option, [A]'s inner panic will be toned down and certain sentences will be changed to be more platonic. Otherwise, they're fully having a meltdown in their scene. I love it.

N's is a lot calmer, as they tend to be, but they're still nervous. Who wouldn't be standing under a mistletoe with a coworker. Friend? Some of their people-pleasing tendencies also come out in this scene. They wonder if the hunter is liking the party, if the decorations are nice, if the food is to their liking—all while trying not to look up. Is the hunter uncomfortable with the mistletoe? How should they react to it? Should they brush it off? Or acknowledge it? So yeah, I guess you could say they're panicking in their own way.

I still need to finish up N's scene, but after that, I'm jumping straight into K's and Rylan's. Knowing that I still need to code all of this is not helping either. But hopefully, I finish it by sometime next week. I'll still be doing early release on here, so the new special will probably miss Christmas for the public by a few days, but that's alright.

No new drabble this week because I'll be putting all my time and effort into the special instead, but I will post a sneak peek soon. Take care!!

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~21,476 words (+146)
- Holiday Special Total: 5424 words (+3626)
- Game Total: ~532,806 words

Sneak Peek.

It's not because it's you. If [A] had to pick anyone to be caught under this damn plant with, it would of course be you.

[Update 130.](#)

[Dec 10, 2024](#)

December 2nd-December 8th.

Can you believe there are only three weeks left of the year? I have a feeling I'll be saying that a lot as the days go by, but it's crazy that 2025 is already on the horizon. Also crazy to think that I had such intense writer's block that I was only able to get out one chapter this year, but that's less pleasant to talk about so let's not, shall we?

Speaking of chapters, I wrote the last bit of Blane's branch this week, as stated in the previous update. It ended up being a decent chunk, which brings the total word count of the chapter to a nice, big(ger) number. What's funny is that time-wise, we have not moved an inch in the chapter, but I can now confidently say that Chapter 12 will be a hefty one. Definitely longer than Chapter 11 in word count. If you play multiple routes, it'll also be longer content-wise, but otherwise, it might feel the same. That's the strange thing about branches and choices.

Moving on to what I actually worked on this week: the holiday special! I was unsure if it was actually happening for a while, but yes, I am actively writing it and yes, it will be out before the end of the year. Will it be done before Christmas? Unsure. But I'm working as hard as I can and already have 1 out of 5 branches done, so it's possible. If I speed things along, it might. If not, I'll still catch the tail-end of the season so it'll be fine. Content is content, right?

I ended Chapter 12 with Blane and picked up the holiday special with them as well, just because I was already in their headspace. Writing the special is much easier than the actual game, however. If you haven't noticed, I write most (if not all) my drabbles and specials from the RO's point of view. Since they already have set personalities, I can shape their thoughts into words much easier than the Hunter, who is (kinda) a blank canvas. I also think because the special is a romantic based one, the words come much easier to me. It's not nearly as stress inducing as what's been happening in the main game.

Or, well, being caught under the mistletoe with the Hunter is pretty stressful for Blane, but that's mostly because they get nervous in any situation with the Hunter. They might now show it, but once they start sorting through their feelings, they're a wreck. I had so much fun writing their branch—I can't wait for everyone to read it. I'm going to work on [A]'s next, who will also be a nervous wreck. Kinda keeping it in the same ballpark. I'm hoping to get their branch and possibly one more done this week (just keeping in mind my time crunch) so I'll update you all next week who I end up picking.

That's all I have for now!! Take care of yourselves <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~21,330 words (+1119)
- Holiday Special Total: 1798 words (NEW)
- (Other) Special Total: 1324 words (=)
- Game Total: ~532,806 words

Sneak Peek.

Just a plant. Right. It's just a plant. Isn't that what Blane has been telling themselves? So why is it not getting through to them?

[Sweet Dreams. \[Blane Rekner\]](#)

[Dec 8, 2024](#)

Synopsis: Cuddles (and nightmares) with Blane

Note: I've been listening to "No One Noticed" by The Marías lately, which is probably where this drabble spawned from. A music suggestion for when you read this :)

Blane struggles with sleeping. It's been an issue they've struggled with for years now, since childhood—they don't think that problem is being solved anytime soon. But it's better with you. When they jolt awake

from nightmares and their bed isn't cold but instead, occupied by a warm form curled up beside them.

They're reminded, then, that they're not alone. That despite the fact that their nightmares are about everyone leaving them, you're someone who chose to stay. Chose to because you like them. *Them*. Out of all the people you could have, you chose them.

It still baffles them. But not as much as it used to. They grew accustomed to it, over time.

Why do they want me? What do they even see in me? This is a joke, right? And a dozen more thoughts like that used to run through their head. Every kiss left them wanting more, but also confused that you weren't disgusted. Every hug made them want to pull you back in, but also ask why you enjoyed doing that at all.

It's a learning process. Sometimes they take a few steps backwards and dive back into those insecurities, but, for the most part, they've learned to move past them. They know that you like them. You tell them how much every day and your being in their bed is proof of that, but healing isn't a linear process.

Tonight, they don't wake up screaming. It's the usual. A startle awake. Sitting straight in their bed. Glancing around, gripping their sheets. Feeling for something tangible, something to ground them.

Sometimes you wake, sometimes you don't. Tonight, it's the former.

"Blane..."

You're drowsy. Your eyes are barely opened.

"Go back to sleep. It's okay," Blane says. Their hands shake but they hide it. Sit on them so that you don't see. Besides, it's getting better. They're awake now. As long as they're not back in that hellish nightmare, they're okay. It's fine.

"No, it's not."

Oh.

You sit up and rub your eyes. You look so cute when you do that.

"[Hunter]..."

"It's not okay and stop trying to tell me that it is." You narrow your eyes at them, both adjusting to the sensations of waking up and studying what kind of nightmare it is. You know them well enough that you can tell by simply staring at them now. "It was bad, wasn't it? The usual?"

Blane winces. They hate that they have a usual. "Yes."

Your expression softens. "Don't try to brush me off."

"...I feel bad."

"There's nothing to feel bad about."

"But..." There is. They didn't say yes to a relationship to burden you with all their problems. Doesn't that turn you off from them? They could go on for hours about all the issues they have. Isn't that a bad thing? You're losing so much sleep from this. It's—

"Stop it. I can already see in your eyes that you're going to try to fight with me." You frown, studying them again. Eventually, the crease in your brow evens out and you sigh. "Just... Please. I'm your partner. Talk to me."

Blane looks away. "It's just the same stuff as usual."

The usual.

"...Do you want to be touched?"

They hesitate. Touched? No. By you? Always. Slowly, they nod. It happens quickly but slowly. They feel your arms enveloping them as you scooch closer. Your thigh presses against theirs. You pull them towards your chest and Blane goes willingly, falling into your arms.

You smell good. Always do. Even though you're sleeping in Blane's sheets, you always carry a distinct scent that is yours. It might be Blane's favourite scent in the world. They nuzzle their nose into your neck, eyes pressing close as they breathe you in.

"Okay?"

Blane nods, unable to speak. You're warm too. They wrap their arms around your waist and settle more comfortably. You get the hint and lean the both of you back onto the pillows, laying you down so that Blane is curled into your side, face in the crook of your neck.

"Are you sure this is fine?" they whisper.

A huff. "The answer is the same as the last dozen times."

Yes. *You don't even need to ask.* Of course, they do anyway, but you're never mad.

Blane sighs and you turn your head, pressing a short kiss to their forehead. They practically melt in your arms at the gesture. They feel your lips curve into a smile against their skin as you do it again. Your thumb rubs against their back soothingly. It's not enough to rid the shakiness of their memory, but it's enough.

"Thank you." Another whisper.

"Anytime." Another repeated answer.

Blane peers up at you. Your smile is even better like this.

It takes time. Healing is not a linear process and Blane will likely struggle with sleeping for many more months, possibly years. But when their lips press against yours, when your tongue dances with theirs and you hum with pleasure, they think that maybe things will be okay in the end.

You taste so sweet. Maybe they'll eventually have sweet dreams too.

CHAPTER 12.

Blane isn't much help. The look in their eyes is dead.
There's a saying that describes a person as "the lights are on
but nobody is home," but I don't even see a light in Blane's eyes.
They look like all their lights blew out months ago and
they haven't been bothered to change them since.

It's strange, seeing them like this. I've only ever known
Blane to be someone with passion, whether it be about fighting with
[A] or competing with us on The Rankings. Seeing the life drain out of
them recently has been... No, I don't even have words to describe it.

Perhaps confusing is the best word, but even then,
I don't think it encompasses *how* confused I really am.

I'm lost, but Blane doesn't have a map.

WHEN
TWILIGHT
STRIKES 

[Everything Alright?](#)

[Dec 5, 2024](#)

:(

[update 129.](#)

[Dec 4, 2024](#)

November 25th-December 1st.

I'm going to be completely honest with you, the reason this update is late is because I only managed to finish Blane's branch last night. That word count will be reflected in next week's update, but I didn't want to come here and lie and say that I finished, when I really hadn't. Blane's branch was a tough one for me, okay? I often say that characters have a mind of their own, and this was especially true for Blane.

I originally thought their arc wouldn't start until book two, but after Chapter 11, I can't ignore how much they've already grown. Of course, they're still as snarky and rude as ever, but they've been showing a more gentle and caring side that I can't ignore anymore. It was one thing when Blane was picking fights with the Hunter, it's another that they're *attempting* (key word there) to be... civil. It's not a bad thing, obviously, but it becomes especially difficult to write flavour text for anyone who is actively Blane's rival. How do you navigate a situation where you suddenly feel bad?? for your rival? What do you do when they're suddenly not insulting you anymore, but choosing to walk beside you while looking upset? It took me a while to write that scene and in full honesty, I'm still not sure that it came out the way I wanted it to. But that's what editing is for, right?

Now that I'm done with all my branches, I can finally (finally) move on to Eliana. I have a rough idea of how I want her scene to go, but I don't have all the details planned out yet, so I'll likely have to do some brainstorming this week.

That said, I do really want to put out a Christmas/Holiday special this year, since I haven't for a while, so I'm going to put Chapter 12 on hold while I quickly write that. I'm hoping I don't go too overboard and write a short, cute little story that will (fingers crossed) be released right in time for Christmas/New Year's. I'm planning on calling it "Under the Mistletoe" (I know! So original!), which probably gives you a good idea of what it's going to be about. It'll be fairly romanced-based (apologies for anyone not interested in that!) but I hope it's fun either way.

As usual, you'll be getting a short story and new sneak peek this week and I'll keep you updated on the progress for the holiday short. I will not go overboard. It will be short and quick and cute. It will be short. If I repeat it enough, maybe it'll become true.

Have a good week everyone! <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~20,211 words (+3176)
- (New) Special Total: 1324 words (=)
- Game Total: ~531,687 words

Sneak Peek.

Blane looks like they've been shot—hit with another question they don't know how to answer.

[Update 128.](#)

[Nov 27, 2024](#)

November 18th-27th.

Hello hello!! How's everyone doing? It's getting so cold here in Canada; I envy anyone who lives in the southern hemisphere right now (or anyone who lives in a warm place really). Please share some warmth.

Onto writing related items: I'm finally (finally) on the last branch of the first section of chapter twelve. What a mouthful. I honestly didn't think it would take so long to write what will end up being seen by so few people, but as I said before, it is what it is. Funnily enough, I've saved Blane for last, who I usually do first. They've just been very difficult for me lately. I used to find them the easiest to write—and in some ways I still do—but as they grow closer to the hunter, suddenly the quick remarks and the scowling isn't coming to me as easily. Probably because they're not doing it as much anymore. But! I still think they'll be very fun to write and I'm excited to finish off this branch for good.

In general, I'm really happy with how the branch has shaped out. I truly think it's the beginning of a lot of character and developmental arcs for the ros—Blane, N and K specifically. Rylan's starts more prominently in book two, and [A], well, their arc is very subtle and kinda ongoing. They're really the only character that doesn't have a big revelation story; it's more akin to an identity crisis, but again, this one also happens more in book two.

N's branch, which I just wrote, has been particularly fun for me because I feel like they're finally cracking that "nice persona" that they're known for. This isn't to say that they're suddenly mean or anything, but up until recently, I feel like they've only been known for being this kind and compassionate person. And that's great and all, but there's a lot more to them—they just don't share it. With recent event though, it's getting harder and harder to mask those emotions, so I'm really excited to delve into their arc.

The next time I talk to you all, I will (not hopefully, I *will*) be done with all the branches and be moving onto Eliana's meeting. Very exciting stuff!! There isn't really a goal beyond that, aside from possibly figuring out some holiday things? How would we feel about some mistletoe stuff...?

Take care of yourselves <3

Stats.

- Chapter Total: ~17,035 words (+2500)
- (New) Special Total: 1324 words (=)
- Game Total: ~528,511 words

Sneak Peek.

Whether or not their laugh actually reflects how N feels is unclear, but if that's the case, I envy them for being able to fake their emotions better than mine.

CHAPTER 12.

Maybe we're just distracting each other.

But N is so much better at it than I am. They look completely calm. They've already reassured [A] and now I feel like this is their attempt of soothing me, except, who's going to take care of them?

Do they think that burying themselves in helping others will alleviate their own issues? Do they even leave time to focus on themselves?

It pains me to think that they don't.

WHEN
TWILIGHT
STRIKES 

[a good distraction.](#)

[Nov 24, 2024](#)

two N posts in a row???

[So So Pretty. \[N Alves\]](#)

[Nov 23, 2024](#)

Synopsis: Cuddles with N.

"You're staring."

"Is that bad?"

"You tell me."

N smiles as their fingers brush your cheek. The two of you are lying in their bed, facing each other with the lights off and one of N's vinyls playing in the background. It's a soft jazz track, a record N likes to put on to wind down for the night.

Radar is somewhere in the living room, having passed out after your walk. He'd chased dozens of squirrels in the park, but all N can remember is the sound of your laughter when the stick they'd been throwing bounced on Radar's forehead. He was fine, of course, but the face he made was enough to send you in a fit of laughter for minutes.

"I don't think it's a bad thing," N muses. "Maybe I'm just admiring you."

"Admiring by staring?"

"Why do you sound so accusatory?"

You laugh and N beams. They always feel so accomplished when they're the cause of your happiness.

"It's not accusatory. You've just been staring at me for a while now. What's going on in your head?" Your lips tug into a smirk. "I don't have anything on my face, do I?"

"No. Would you rather me say you did though?" N asks.

"It would give you a better excuse for why you've been staring so intently."

N shakes their head and cups your cheek. So soft. So warm. They could touch you a thousand times and never get sick of it. They could hold you for hours and still be left wanting more. Maybe it's an addiction, maybe you're a craving that cannot be satiated, or maybe it's just love.

Is it wrong that N adores you so much?

"Do I need to have an excuse to look at my lover?"

Your eyes widen at the word. Parted lips. A slight hitch in your breath. You once told N that they're too brazen with their declarations. They simply smiled and told you that they'd waited enough to be your partner—they weren't going to beat around the bush. You'd get used to it eventually, but for now, N enjoyed seeing how flustered it made you.

"I- No. You don't."

"You make it sound like I do," N teases.

"You know that's not it."

"Then?"

You huff, though there's little you can do to look annoyed when N is cupping your face like this. "It's just — you were staring without saying anything. It made me feel like I had something on my face."

"Ah, so I should save that for when you're asleep then. Got it."

"What? You— No! That wasn't the point."

N laughs. It's hardly a cruel laugh. You know that they'd never mock you, especially not in such a vulnerable state, but the look on your face was too amusing for them to hold back. They smile at how flustered you've become. Even though you can be quite bold sometimes, they relish the fact that they can still reduce you to a mess if they want.

"I know. I'm messing with you."

Another huff. "You're awful."

"And you're not fooling me by calling me that," N answers. Their smile softens. "I'm sorry if I made you uncomfortable. You just make me really happy, you know that?"

Your expression melts. The cool demeanour you were attempting (and failing) to put up shatters into pieces. "I know. You make me really happy too. You can stare if you want. It's just... Sometimes you stare at me with so much affection in your eyes I wonder if I measure up."

"What? Of course you do. Hey, look at me." N holds your face in their hands. "I feel adored when I'm with you. You make me feel so wanted. It's all I could ever ask for, okay? So don't go doubting yourself."

You crack a smile. "Promise?"

"Promise."

N leans forward and kisses the corner of your mouth. You turn and capture their lips at the last second. It's a move you've pulled on them multiple times, but it never fails to catch them off guard. They let out a small noise of surprise before kissing you back.

One of their hands falls from your cheek to your waist, pulling you closer. Your tongue grazes their lips, asking for entrance that they gladly give. You lick inside their mouth and N nearly makes another noise. It might have slipped anyway, judging by your hum of satisfaction.

They won't let you one-up them like that.

Tightening grips. Kisses down your neck and small marks against your skin. You pushing N back and crawling on top of them. N doing the same thing to you a few minutes later. They don't know how long the two of you go on for, but they know that their thoughts are hazy.

All they can think of is you. How you taste, how you feel, how you sound when N sucks at *that* specific spot that makes your toes curl. They adore you. If this went on forever, they wouldn't complain.

Because, after all, the only thing prettier than you was you with your lips swollen from kisses and your neck littered with bites.

Absolutely gorgeous.

[update 127.](#)

[Nov 19, 2024](#)

november 11th-17th.

i think i should stop setting a weekly goal for myself, because every time i do, i never achieve it. in my defense, i had a very busy week. i spent most of the week working, took a day off from writing to see taylor swift (!! for her eras tour, and then took an extra day to recover from my post-concert depression. i still have it, if you were wondering. i don't think i'll ever recover from that one.

but! that doesn't mean work wasn't done. though my word count is (a little) embarrassing, i spent a lot of time doing administrative stuff, namely fixing up more stats in preparation for, you guessed it, the romance lock. though i'm still keeping my lips sealed on when the lock is exactly, i think it's getting pretty obvious when it is. any guesses?

it might seem excessive to be doing this now when chapter eleven isn't out, but i want to get it all done now so that when it happens, all my stats are correct and flavour text can be triggered properly. and so, for the past week or so, i've been going back into older chapters, adding (or fixing) hidden trackers and jotting these down so i have a rough estimate of how many "points" you need to reach to prompt a certain path/flavour text. if you can't tell, it's very tedious. so tedious that you're probably wondering why i didn't keep track of these points from the beginning. great question! i wondering that too. i mean, i did have a count of everything somewhere, but i figured starting from scratch would mean i have a more accurate number.

to touch on chapter eleven, i'm down three branches, two more to go! this week, i finished up [A]'s branch and while i know i mentioned that i was trying to slim them down, well, it ended up being 3000 words as well. the fact that one small branch is 15,000 words is insane to me. most readers won't even bother going through all five ros (let alone all the choices), but that's just the nature of having a choice-based game. unfortunately, a lot of my word goes unread. it doesn't really make me upset, though. it's just how it is!

all i have left is Blane's and N's branches, which i'm (fingers crossed) going to finish by the end of next week. after that, i'm home free and will start on the main event: meeting Eliana. still no estimate on

when this chapter will come out, since i'm still very far from the end, but it's still very exciting.

since i keep failing my goals, i'm going to stop disappointing myself by not making one this week and just hoping that i get as much work done as possible, whether it's more writing or stat-fixing stuff. in terms of patreon stuff, be on the lookout for a new drabble and sneak peek (from the newly finished [A] branch) this week. i also just published a new update of the game with a chapter selector, so if you were in the mood for replaying a specific chapter, you can do that now! as always, take care of yourselves everyone <3

stats.

- chapter total: ~14,535 words (+2299)
- (new) special total: 1324 words (=)
- game total: ~526,011 words

sneak peek.

[A] always puts so much weight in my words, but if there was ever a time I wanted them to believe me, it would be now.

[update 126.](#)

[Nov 12, 2024](#)

november 4th-10th.

hello hello!! i'm starting to think i should make my update days tuesday/wednesday, because i'm never able to find to write these on mondays anymore. but i digress. how is everyone doing? it's getting super cold here in Canada and i'm not having it. truly a curse to live in these winters.

but, onto writing: i didn't reach my goal lol. in my defense (!!), i was relatively busy and passed out in my bed instead of staying up to write like i usually do. most of the writing i got done was over two-three days, actually. but regardless, i'm still happy that progress is being made. around this time last year, i had such bad burnout from writing that i couldn't even manage one hundred words a day. so in comparison, i'm doing much better.

once again though, i'm writing way more than i intended to. i was hoping that K's scene (which is who i worked on after Rylan) would be less, but it actually ended up being about a hundred or two hundred words more. go figure. i'm going to (hopefully) be more mindful when writing A's, Blane's and N's

scenes, however, because as much as i like this, it almost feels excessive to write fifteen thousand words for a small branch, especially since Eliana's scene will already be massive. i just want to be a little more cautious so i 1) don't overwork myself and 2) don't keep you all waiting ten months for another update. if you're worried that this means you may be missing out on character interactions: don't be! the main interactions will be during the Eliana scene; this is mostly just a small teaser/gift beforehand.

to touch on K's scene though, i will admit that it was harder to write than Rylan's. they're also a bit of a tricky character to me, but i struggled with this a lot because while i knew what i wanted to do for Rylan right away, K i had to think about. i fully wrote it out on a notebook beforehand haha. it turned out pretty well, though i definitely will need to make some adjustments during the editing stage. if you haven't noticed (or done their route!), K has been getting more and more comfortable with the hunter and letting that mask slip ever so slightly. they're starting to care a bit more than just the surface level, but they're very much trying to hide that because, well, they're scared of course. i think this scene encapsulates that stoicism of theirs but also subtle emotion for the hunter quite well. i'm excited for you all to read it one day.

this week, i'm moving onto A's scene (fitting, since i just wrote them a drabble). i have a feeling theirs will be much easier than K's. they've always been a fairly easy character to write for me, mostly because i relate to them in many ways, so let's hope i breeze through it! i'm hoping to hit 15k next week (which should be an easy goal, fingers crossed).

talk to you all soon! take care of yourselves <3

stats.

- chapter total: ~12,236 words (+2931)
- (new) special total: 1324 words (+299)
- game total: ~523,712 words

sneak peek.

Sometimes, it feels like habit. Other times, I wonder if K is doing it out of care. Checking for injuries. Checking for dark circles and sallowness. For nervous ticks and twitching fingers.

CHAPTER 12.

[K] doesn't even bother disguising the concern in their words. Their tone might be neutral, but there's nothing hiding the worry in those words. Even if I have to dig past layers to get to it, I can see it. Hear it.

I've noticed that [K] will try to mask emotions behind a general point. They try to pretend that it's not a personal concern by using a statement that can be backed by fact. It gives them the illusion of being aloof, while still allowing them to express their worries.

It'd be smart if I hadn't caught on.



[got you figured out.](#)

[Nov 10, 2024](#)

[What Wouldn't I Do For You. \[A Devereux\]](#)

[Nov 8, 2024](#)

Synopsis: Cuddles with [A]

"Stay?"

The words are out of their mouth before they even realize it. [A] braces themselves for the confused noise, the shake of your head and the apologetic smile. They brace themselves for rejection, even though you haven't said no to them the past ten times they asked.

But it comes naturally. They don't want to impose, after all.

The two of you might not have work tomorrow, but maybe you have things to do. Things that involve you heading back to your place and not staying over for cuddles. Maybe their clinginess is distracting, the way they ask for more kisses and wrap themselves around your body like a koala. Maybe they're asking for too much. Staying over ten times in a row is a lot, isn't it? You're not even dating yet.

Yet. God, they want to ask. They hope you'll say yes. But they're scared of rejection. Scared that these cuddles and kisses and silent moments together will disappear in the blink of an eye because of a single question. You're not that cruel, of course. If you were to say no, you'd let them down gently and your friendship would continue like normal. You wouldn't let something like this get in the way of what the two of you have had for years.

But [A] is still scared. Which is why when they ask that singular word, there's a slight shake to their voice.

Stay?

"You know you don't have to ask," you reply. "You know what my answer will be."

"I don't."

"Yes, you do. You're just overthinking it. I know you."

Of course they are. [A] is an overthinker, after all, and being in such a precarious situation like this isn't going to help with that anxiety. They stare at you, lying across from them in their bed. You look relaxed, almost like this is your own bed. You've slept in it enough that it could probably pass as yours.

[A] would give it to you easily.

"I want to hear you say it," [A] whispers. Again with the shaky voice.

You smile and brush your fingers over their cheek. Their breath shudders at your touch. They can't help but want to lean in, to press against your hand until you're cupping their face. But they stay where they are and wait for your answer.

"Of course I'll stay. I always want to stay."

[A] feels their body relax. They sink further into the bed, not realizing that in their worry, their posture had tensed up to the point that they were hovering right above their cushions. You smile again and pull them into your shoulder. [A] goes willingly, pressing their face into the crook of your neck.

"Really? You mean that?" they ask.

They feel you nod. "Always."

"You're not lying to me?"

"Now, why would I do that?"

[A] doesn't know. They're being irrational, but they need the reassurance. They're more insecure than most people think. Only a few know how much they truly doubt themselves, you included. Maybe that's why you're so patient with them. They can't imagine how annoying it must be, but you never complain.

"I really like you, you know?" [A] whispers.

You pull away just enough to look them in the eyes. Your smile is soft, your eyes shining with undeniable affection. You look like you're holding the most precious thing in the world in your hands. It takes them a second to realize that you're holding *them*.

"I know. And I really like you too," you respond. "You always sound so nervous when you ask me to stay, but I don't think you realize that I've already settled on staying over. I want to be here. I want to wake up to you like I have the last ten times—and I want ten more times, if you'll have me."

"And if I ask for a hundred?"

"Then I'll take it and ask for double."

[A]'s expression goes slack. You... will? They swallow hard. This time, they do lean into your touch, letting their eyes flutter shut as you stroke their cheeks. Your touch is feather-light, almost like you're scared to hurt them. But they know that's not entirely it. You treat them like they're fragile not because they're easy to break, but because they mean so much to you that you don't want to harm them.

Their heart stutters in their chest. You're so sweet. So kind. They couldn't have asked for a better partner. Was it fate that led to your pairing? Or mere coincidence?

They don't care. They have you now. That's enough.

They forget what happens after that. It all becomes a blur. How quickly you press your lips against theirs—how urgently they respond. The playing of their hair between your fingers, the slight tugging that causes a small gasp to escape from their throat.

Your hands are hot. Underneath their shirt, gripping their waist with one and their face with the other. Your mouth feels like hell itself, trailing down their throat and sucking a mark on their collarbone. The sounds [A] lets out are noises they don't want to repeat. Even thinking about it turns them bright red, but in the moment, all they could focus on was how good they felt. Not just because you were kissing them and using your tongue like *that*, but because they finally realized how much you also wanted them.

They weren't alone in this. In the pining and the desire. Honestly, though, they should've realized that sooner. You're partners, after all.

With you, they're never alone.

[Nov 6, 2024](#)

october 28th-november 3rd.

okay well. take two. what the hell patreon??? i had this whole post written up about what i did throughout the week and it decided to save none of it and post... an empty template??? which i had up for 8 hours??? i might simply bury myself in a hole and never come out. if you saw that post, please don't comment lmao. i'm actually so embarrassed right now.

anyway!! what i meant to say was hi. how is everyone? i know this update is way later than it should be but i blame patreon, okay? you do too? wonderful.

quite honestly i don't remember what i originally wrote, but i'll try my best to summarize it. basically, i didn't reach my 10,000 word goal for the week. boo tomato tomato. i know, i know. but i'm still really proud of the 3200 words i managed to write. i actually felt very productive throughout the week. even if i wasn't writing crazy amounts, i wrote (almost) every day, which is rare for me. sometimes it's hard for me to find the motivation. other times, i do have the motivation but i'm battling writer's block. and sometimes, i'm simply too tired to write and pass out in my bed. this week though, i really pulled out the stops.

my only issue is that even though i was actively writing, the percentage that i managed to get through in terms of the overall chapter is... slim. why, you ask? what a great question. it's because i did what i always do: make branches ten times longer than i originally planned for them to be. Rylan's branch, for example, was only supposed to be 1500 words or so. what did it end up being? a casual 3000 words. i actually managed to double it. and the worst (best?) part is, that's likely going to be the length of the other ros' branches too. so this one branch alone (five routes total) will likely be close to 15,000 words for no reason other than i cannot control myself. is this a good thing? i guess in some ways,. it gives you more content and i highly doubt you're complaining about more one-on-one time. but it's also just... aghhh. this chapter is going to be a big one if i continue doing that.

speaking of, i recently made the decision to cut down on some planned content in this chapter and condense it. not that you'll even notice, but originally, when meeting Eliana, i was going to structure it similarly to how you met Mirai, in which you chose a ro and spoke with her with them. i realized, however, that because this meeting will be much longer, doing this will be way too tedious and result in me writing much more than i need. it would also take me five times the time to write this all. as someone who's already a bit of a slow writer, that would've meant an even greater delay in the chapter, probably by one to two months. what i'm planning to do instead still allows you to choose a ro, but rather than going off in a room with only them, they're going to be sat next to you during the meeting. this means that rather than carrying the entire conversation between the hunter and one ro, requiring me to write five different branches, i can write the conversation to happen between everyone, and only need to write flavour text for whoever you chose.

i'm not sure if any of that made sense, but long story short, i've made life easier for my future self. again, this isn't really something you'll notice, since you would've never experienced this hypothetical first plan of mine, but i thought it would be fun to talk about it anyway.

the goal for this week is to (hopefully) hit 13,000 words and to *not* post another blank template when i write my next weekly update. sorry about that, by the way. i swear i had it all written out and didn't purposely post emptiness. i'm so glad i checked, haha. hope you're all taking care of yourselves <3

stats.

- chapter total: ~9305 words (+3261)
- (new) special total: 1025 words (=)
- game total: ~520,781 words

sneak peek.

The Realm of the Fae might have increased the vibrancy in everything, but Rylan's eyes remain the same.

CHAPTER 11.

I'll admit, though, at a time like this, it's welcomed. For a moment, it's just me and Rylan. This exact scenario has happened so many times.

In my apartment, at K's penthouse—I've lost count of the flirtations Rylan's thrown my way. I don't know how much they mean them, but it's almost become something I can count on.

Even in the Realm of the Fae, Rylan still finds time to flirt with me.

In a strange way, it brings a sense of normalcy to the situation.

I'm reminded that no matter how scary the situation is, it's still palpable. It's just us here.

WHEN
TWILIGHT
STRIKES



[something you can count on.](#)

[Oct 31, 2024](#)

[update 124.](#)

[Oct 28, 2024](#)

october 21st-27th.

what's that? i'm posting an update on time? on a monday? it feels like the world is ending. the last time i made a weekly update on the actual day it's supposed to come out, well... let's just say it's been a hot minute. but i'm trying, i'm really trying.

this week i focused more on the new chapter rather than the special. it wasn't so much of a deliberate choice as me deciding to not open the file. i'm not sure what it was exactly. i had a burst of inspiration for it last week and this week, i felt less of it. besides, since i decided on releasing it after the romance lock, it's not like i'm in a time crunch. i do really want to go back to it though. i've shelved a lot of things for *when twilight strikes* over the years and i'm determined to have this project see the light of day.

but back to chapter twelve. funnily enough, i thought i wrote a lot more before i calculated it. of course, 2.6k is nothing to laugh at, but it's so deceiving when you think you made a lot of progress only to see that it was practically nothing in the grand scheme of things. but that's just how this stuff works!

last night i reached the first major branch of the chapter. as you might be able to guess, the branch allows you to choose between the five ros (or randomize it, if you're still undecided on who you want to spend time with). it's a relatively short choice, but when accounting for all the routes, it'll probably come out to be close to 10k words. maybe that should scare me—and i guess it does, in some ways—but having it split five ways makes it feel much shorter than it actually is. i'd rather write a 10k word branch than a 10k word linear scene.

usually, when it comes to ro branches, i start with Blane since i find them the easiest to write, but i went for Rylan this time, hence why they're featured in the sneak peek. as we get closer to the romance lock (ha, i bet you're sick of me saying that), i'm really trying to flesh out the characters' developments as best as possible to give myself (and you) an idea of the arc they'll go through in the upcoming books. unfortunately, Rylan is the hardest ro to do this for. they're such a confusing character that sometimes even i don't know what's going on. they're generally a very loud character, but recently, they've been a lot quieter. there's a lot less teasing and a lot more vulnerability, which is quite contradicting, but also very fitting at the same time? ah. i don't know. they're such a mixed bag of things that it's hard to find words to convey their personality sometimes. but you'll learn a lot more about them if you're on their route, so hopefully by then, i've figured out exactly what i want to say.

goals for next week include finishing up two or three of the routes for this branch, including Rylan's. i also really want to hit 10k total words, so we'll see if i can get that done. it's definitely optimistic, but not impossible. fingers crossed.

as always, take care of yourselves. i'll talk to you soon <3

stats.

- chapter total: ~6044 words (+2614)
- (new) special total: 1025 words (=)
- game total: ~517,520 words

sneak peek.

Rylan stops walking for a moment before quickly catching themselves. If I hadn't been facing them, I likely wouldn't have noticed. "You think I'm here to satiate my curiosity?"

[My Love Is Mine All Mine. \[K de Vries\]](#)

[Oct 27, 2024](#)

Synopsis: Cuddles with K

K is a light sleeper. A slight rustle of the wind will wake them up. The sound of someone padding down a hallway. The soft snoring of someone beside them. It took a while for them to adapt to the sleep habits of their previous lovers, and even longer when they were no longer together.

Because although K is a light sleeper, they enjoy sharing a bed with their partner. It doesn't matter that they'll spend the first few weeks staring at the ceiling, drifting off before shaking away a few minutes later because of their partner's movement, eventually, they learn. Their body relaxes and they realize how comforting those small sounds can be. Soft snores and mumbling are endearing. Movement serves as a reminder that they're with the person they love.

They're not at that stage yet with you. Even if their mind knows it, their body doesn't. Your habits are different than their previous lovers. You shift around more but make less noise. Occasionally, you'll take a deep breath, startling K out of their sleep more than once.

But they're never upset with you for it. It's not your fault that they're a light sleeper. Nor is it your fault that you don't sleep completely still. It's merely something they need to get used to.

On this particular night, you woke K up by shifting around. Their eyes flutter open to find you facing them. Your features are so much softer like this. Your cheek is squished against the pillow, your lips parted as you breathe. There was no furrow between your eyebrows, as K so often saw.

You were at peace. Peace with them.

The thought takes their breath away sometimes. That you could love them enough to let your guard down, in spite of how cold they were to you initially, is a foreign idea. They spent decades after their last love building their walls, pushing everyone away and convincing themselves that they'd live the rest of their immortal life in a loveless relationship with themselves, all for a damn hunter to cause their knees to buckle from a damn smile.

However long you think it took to get through to them? It was much shorter than that. The only reason it took the two of you so long to get together was K's stubbornness. Despite the feelings that grew for you each day, they convinced themselves that it would go away. They felt like their insides were burning every time they were near you, but eventually, that fire would subside and be extinguished.

Oh, how wrong they were.

They continue to stare at you, eyes sweeping over your face countless times. It's become a habit of theirs to study you on nights like these. Rather than attempting to go back to sleep, they'll try to commit your face to memory. They count the beauty marks and the exact curve of your eyebrows. They measure the distance between your eyes and the shape of your lips.

Beautiful. Absolutely beautiful.

There are no words in the universe that could describe how in awe K is of you. They're completely head over heels, so smitten that you could smile and their chest would feel like it's caving in on itself.

You shift again, snuggling closer to them. K laughs softly and pulls you closer. They wrap an arm around your waist and tuck themselves in the crook of your neck. "Are you awake, darling?"

"Mmmm. Sleep."

K laughs again. "Not awake, hmm? That's alright."

You press in closer, stealing their warmth. They can feel your bare legs brushing up against their own. Their thumb brushes against your hipbone. A few hours ago, their hands were in a similar place, pressing you against their kitchen countertop as their tongue licked in your mouth.

The thought makes them hot.

"Go back to sleep. I'll be here when you wake up," K whispers. They press a soft kiss to your neck.

You mumble something incoherent.

"You'll have to speak up, love."

You mumble something again, but this time, it's just clear enough that K is able to pick up on it.

"What about me?" K repeats. "I'm staying right here. I told you."

A frustrated huff. You lift your head out from the pillows. "You sleep?"

Ah. So that's it. They smile and press another kiss to your neck, coaxing you back into your previous position. Their lips linger against your pulse long enough to feel the soft *thump* of your heartbeat. "I'll go to sleep in a bit, love. I just want to stay like this with you a little longer."

That seems to satisfy you. You settle back down willingly, wrapping your legs around K as you slowly drift back to sleep. K's thumb continues to rub your waist until they feel your breathing even out—and even past that. They sigh contently and let their gaze sweep over you once more before their eyes flutter shut.

True to their word, they fall asleep shortly after you.

They dream of you that night. They usually do. Of kisses and hugs and laughter. Of baking cookies in their kitchen or grabbing takeout at midnight because you were peckish. Of cuddles on the couch and you petting dogs that always seem to get so excited at seeing you.

They can relate. They get like that too. But in the end, they're the only one that gets to keep you.

[update 123.](#)

[Oct 23, 2024](#)

october 14th-20th.

i know, i know—I'm horrible at writing these. i used to write a lot of my updates on mondays and then it shifted to tuesdays and well, now we're at wednesday. sue me. i procrastinate writing these so bad even though they're not hard. but!! but i have not been procrastinating writing the new chapter this week (which you'll learn about in the next update).

last week was a little slow in writing, i'll admit, but i finally got a start on that new special! i basically was up at 2AM unable to sleep one night, pulled out a new document and started writing. i started with Blane (of course, i'm predictable) but of course, the special isn't going to focus exclusively on them. to give you a bit of a synopsis of what it's about, it describes the ros' first impression of the hunter when meeting them versus their opinion of them now, as they're starting to get closer (and possibly catching feelings??). Blane's scene, for example, recounts their first meeting with the hunter and explains why they're jealous of the hunter. i plan on doing this lore drop in chapter thirteen anyway, so i'm unsure of whether i should wait to drop the special after that comes out or if it's fine to release it before, assuming that it'll be done. oh well. this just means i have to hurry up writing chapter twelve, am i right?

at the moment, the special is mostly something for me to do while i'm a) not in the mood to write chapter twelve, b) procrastinating it but still wanting to feel like i'm doing something, or c) having writer's block. it's also been a hot minute since i've released a special, so i kinda just want to provide some content.

back to chapter twelve, i managed to get rid of my writer's block last week, but i think i'm still working through the kinks because i still found myself a bit stuck. i'm currently writing the scene where the group is about to enter the portal to the land of the Fae, so not much is happening right now which explains why i feel a bit stagnant. it won't be like that forever, though. this chapter has plenty of opportunities to bond with the ros (final opportunities, might i add) so it'll definitely get better as i progress. fortunately or not, exposition is necessary, so i'll simply have to bear with it.

alright, that's all i got. as always, i hope you're all doing well!! i'll post a drabble sometime this week (possibly friday or saturday?) as well as another sneak peek if i manage to write enough content. sending all my love <3

stats.

- chapter total: ~3430 words (+1385)
- (new) special total: 1025 words
- game total: ~514,910 words

sneak peek.

Even if there isn't a one-way glass, even if my hands are free from cuffs and my back isn't against those cold, steel, metal chairs we provide, I can't help but feel like the roles are reversed.

CHAPTER 12.

"Eliana will be different from any other supernatural you've met. Mirai was child's play in comparison. Eliana is a thousand times trickier.

"You should flatter her, but not to the point where it's false. You should be meek, but not so quiet that she thinks you're weak. You should let her wield power over you, but never enough that she thinks you don't have something to offer.

"I'm sure you're aware how rare this invitation is. She hardly invites others to the Faerie Realm, let alone those from IAOS. In many ways, it's an honour. She'll treat the meeting as such. You shouldn't look confused by why you're there, but grateful. Be too grateful, however, and she'll think you're not serious about why she requested you."

[eliana, the queen of the faeries.](#)

[Oct 17, 2024](#)

[update 122.](#)

[Oct 15, 2024](#)

october 7th-13th.

before i start this i want to say please no one comment on my word count because i'll cry and it won't be pretty tysm. i know i said i wanted to get a good word count in and i swear, i tried, i really did, but i was hit with writer's block pretty much the first day of the week and, well, it all went downhill from there. i've solved it though! i basically had some logistic issues with how K and Rylan were going to show up, but i've figured it out and it's smooth sailing now.

hopefully.

anyway, as long as that doesn't happen again, this week should be a lot better. while i was having my writer's block, i tried to write some of the special i mentioned last week, but i also got stuck there. it's like the universe was cursing me. a large part of it has to do with the fact that i first wrote bits of this special back in February. yep, you read that right. so it's been a very very long time and quite frankly, i don't know what's going on. i really do like the concept of it though, and since i didn't bind it to a specific holiday, it's very versatile and i don't feel pressed for a deadline (yet). so i don't know. i'm thinking of scrapping what i wrote (it was only about a thousand words or so) and starting new.

but of course, my priority is still and always will be the current chapter. i think i might have jinxed myself when i said my goals aloud last week, so maybe this week i'll pretend i don't want progress made and it'll happen. cough.

since this update is a bit on the shorter side, i'll reveal that i chose two possible chapter names that weren't on the initial list: "from the poisoned cup" or "touch of a poisoned hand." i'm still undecided on which one will be the final title, but maybe the poison will give you a hint as to what's to come? (it's metaphorical poison, by the way; no one is dying this chapter).

but yeah, as always, i hope you all are well. i'll see you soon <3

stats.

- chapter total: ~2045 words (+1595)
- game total: ~513,525 words

sneak peek.

"Then I'm safe. My biggest threat is you, after all."

[On N and The Hunter.](#)

[Oct 12, 2024](#)

Synopsis: N's relationship with the Hunter, from [A]'s POV.

There's still a lot [A] doesn't know about N. That's the thing about making friends with someone new—it takes time to understand them. All the stuff you knew about them before you were close? They're still valid, but now there are layers to it.

Like the smile N gives when people approach them in the lab. At first glance, you'll think it's the most genuine smile in the world. [A] has seen dozens of people melt when N turns that expression on them and honestly, they can't blame them. And it's not like N doesn't mean their smile—the thing about N is that they're too kind for their own good—but that it's not always true.

It took a few months for [A] to understand that.

There's a slight tightness in N's eyes. Pain that lurks beneath the happiness that N is so good at pushing forward. Watch closely and you'll notice the slight wobble of their smile when they turn their face. The bob of their throat when someone asks them another favour.

Another one? Is that all I'm good for?

In many ways, N is as much of a mystery to [A] as Blane is. N might seem open, and sure, they can be, but [A] knows there's also a lot that they hide. But who doesn't have secrets? [A] doesn't expect N to tell them everything immediately. It takes time to form a friendship and [A] is more than happy to wait.

It's different for you.

The first time [A] noticed it, they almost ruined it by getting too excited. They ended up texting Rylan, who replied with: "huh, guess you're not as oblivious as I thought." Which led to another conversation about how [A] was in fact, not oblivious, thank you very much.

They never ended up getting back to the main point, but once [A] noticed how differently N acted with you, they were determined to catch it again. And catch it they did.

Over and over.

There was something about you that drew N in. Each time the two of you interacted, it was like they let themselves be entirely and unapologetically themselves. There was no lurking misery, no hidden pain to any of their words. Every laugh was free and every smile looked like it could shatter barriers.

[A] didn't know how you survived being on the receiving end of those looks.

N was comfortable with you in a way that [A] couldn't replicate. It was even different from their interactions with Blane. With Blane, it was a quiet understanding. The two of them could sit in silence for hours, only communicating through hums and gestures, and still work fine. N didn't have that same bond with you, not yet, but you were always on the same wavelength. The weight of the conversation was balanced between you, never tipping to one side for more than a few minutes. Blane received soft smiles and huffs of laughter. You were met with sparkling eyes and uncontrollable giggles. Blane was a familiar comfort. You were a new thrill.

At least, that's how [A] understood it. They didn't say anything though, and, if you noticed, you didn't mention it either. Weeks went by after [A]'s revelation, their theories growing in strength each time they saw the two of you together.

An invitation to spar. Extra time spent talking after the work day ended. Heads close together as N showed you something on their phone. A croissant dropped off at your desk in the morning. (They also got [A] an iced latte, which, though would've felt like a courtesy drink from anyone else, felt like a genuine 'I thought of you' from N).

And maybe it was a normal progression. Caine's disappearance had brought the six of you closer and the four hunters even more, despite Blane's persistent rough edges. But [A] swore that N was drawn to you in a way they weren't anyone else.

Another few weeks.

More spars. More talking after work. Heads close together when N shows you something on their phone, which [A] learns is mostly videos of their dog. More pastries at your desk, though sometimes, you'd meet N at the bakery and walk over. (No matter who it is, [A] still gets an iced latte).

[A] doesn't talk about it. You don't mention it. Maybe you're scared that if you say it out loud, it'll ruin everything. [A] knows that feeling all too well. Maybe you're keeping it to your chest because you don't want it to end. [A] is familiar with that too.

But with how N looks at you when you're not paying attention, they don't think that's going to happen.

[A] cracks a smile at the sight before them. N watching you like you hold the universe in your hands and you scrolling through your phone, trying to find a video that you found funny last night. It's so endearing that [A] nearly snaps a picture to send to Rylan, but they manage to restrain themselves, if only barely.

They might not have N figured out yet, but one thing's for sure: N cares for you. More than anyone could ever imagine. And really, that's all [A] needs to know.

[update 121.](#)

[Oct 8, 2024](#)

september 30th-october 6th.

hello helloooo! how's everyone doing? i recently had a kick of inspiration for this project and i started writing chapter twelve so i'd say that i'm doing pretty good on my end.

you know when you re-fall in love with something? i feel like i had that moment for a bit. i think i mentioned this, but i was a bit scared to start chapter twelve because starting chapters is always a difficult task for me. i doubt myself a lot when i'm starting out, wondering if it flows well or if things grammatically make sense. only when i'm a few thousand words in do i feel comfortable again. and it's silly, i know, because i've written over half a million words for this story now and i'm still worried about things not sounding right. as if i haven't dreamt and planned out everything over and over again. maybe i'm just an insecure person in general. i don't know. but when i opened my fresh document and wrote down those first few words for chapter twelve, i felt... good, for once. clearly i haven't written much, but i'm really excited for what's going to happen.

we're so so close to the romance lock now. it won't be this chapter, but i know exactly when it's happening and i'm so hyped to write that. for now though, i need to focus on chapter twelve. i know. but that doesn't mean i'm not excited. (and you should be too!!)

in terms of plans for this week, i'm hoping to get out a decent word count for chapter twelve. i'm still taking my sweet time with it and not forcing myself to write unless i really want to, but i might try and get more serious about it soon. either that, or i'm going to start writing a new special? i don't know. i've been in a mood lately and taking a break from the main story (while also still giving you guys content!!) is looking more and more appealing to me lately.

either way, the goal is to write. if not chapter twelve, then something lol. i do plan on writing another drabble this week, so there's that as well. in a similar vein, i hope to get enough content for chapter twelve to post a sneak peek soon, so you also have that to look forward to.

anyway, that's all i have this week. i hope you're all doing well and staying healthy <3

stats.

- chapter total: ~450 words (=)
- game total: ~511,930 words

sneak peek.

I knew [A] was awake, but I didn't contact them. They didn't reach out either.

[update 120.](#)

[Oct 2, 2024](#)

september 23-29th.

happy october everyone!

i'm writing this mainly as a "what Kristi plans to do this month and for chapter twelve" more so than me telling you all the progress i've made. because, well, i haven't. i usually take a 1-2 week break after publishing a chapter to give myself some time and refresh my head before diving back in. so that's what i've been doing. no chapter twelve work yet, just sitting in my bed and playing games.

i'm not fully ignoring wts work though. social media-wise, i'm (slowly) getting through asks (tumblr) and comments ([itch.io](#)) about chapter eleven. i'm still pretty terrible at answering on time though, so if it takes a while, bear with me. i'm also making some adjustments to the game's stats on my personal file. this way, when the romance lock comes around, i can make a post that clearly outlines the requirements for each branch. i get a lot of questions about relationship points too, so hopefully (when i do fix everything) this will help clarify things.

the goal for the month is to eventually start writing. it might be tonight or it could be next week. starting a chapter is always difficult for me because i have no base—I have to create that first. some people find the blank page to be a breath of fresh air, others find it daunting. i hate to say it, but i'm definitely the latter. so if i avoid chapter twelve a little longer, forgive me.

to give you a sneak peek, chapter twelve is a lot more psychological. think Mirai and Ciel levels. since the hunter is also going through some (ha) mental stress, the meeting with Eliana feels even more heightened. chapter twelve is also a very crucial point for the hunter's relationship with the ros, if you know what i mean. so yeah, lots of things happening and lots of things to come. writing it might be a

challenge, but i'm excited to get started. good (bad?) news is, it'll either be very easy for me to write or very difficult—I'm really hoping it's the former. i can't stand another long wait for the next chapter. trust me, it was as hard on me as it was on you.

that's the update! hopefully i'll have more to say next week if (when?) i get started, but for now, you're stuck with me talking about hypotheticals. i hope you're all doing well <3

[On K and The Hunter.](#)

[Sep 29, 2024](#)

Synopsis: K's relationship with the Hunter, from Blane's POV.

When Blane first met K, they didn't know what to think of them. No, that's a lie. They knew exactly what to think of them—they just hated thinking about it because they knew everything would remind them too much of themselves. The way K cut everyone out, kept everyone at arm's length, and pretended to be cold despite the fact that it was killing them inside.

Blane knew how damaging the effects were on themselves, but to see it reflected in another was cruel. In some ways, it served as a wake-up call to how they needed to change themselves. Sometimes they wonder if they did the same for K.

It wasn't instant. In many ways, K changed slower than Blane did. They suppose it's because they're much older. Habits are already hard to break at Blane's twenty-something age—breaking them at over a century old must be even more difficult. Still, regardless of pace, Blane noticed.

It began with the expressions. Unlike Blane, K had a very monotone voice, with an even less expressive face. The expression they were most fond of seemed to be irritation, though it was more out of exasperation than Blane's frustration.

In conversations, K would chime in to add various facts or correct Rylan on something. They were always very matter-of-fact. They didn't crack jokes or smiles at the various banter the group had, only sighed at how often they got off track and clicked their tongue if it went on too long.

But whenever you spoke, K would listen. If for whatever reason they didn't want to face you, they'd tilt their head, straining their ears to hear you better. But most of the time, they'd look at you. They'd turn their body and watch you so intently that it was like you were carrying life-shattering news. Sometimes, that news would be nothing more than you complaining about work that day, but K listened. And when

they did, their expression would soften. It was subtle enough that most people wouldn't catch it, but for someone like Blane, it was clear.

The crease between their eyebrows would smooth out, their lips would relax from the thin line K had pressed them into. Their hands would stop gripping each other so tightly, loosening their grip.

And their eyes. If there was anything to notice, it was K's eyes. They were a beautiful hazel colour, or, they would be if they weren't so dull. When they looked at you though, that colour brightened. Just barely, but the first time Blane saw it, they were surprised enough that they raised an eyebrow.

After the expressions came the words. K has never been one to shy away from the truth, even if it was harsh. Like Blane, they hated saying anything that expressed their true feelings, but that didn't mean they never did it.

You'd never catch K saying: "Please, take care of yourself," but there was often: "When was the last time you got a full night's sleep?" or "Here, drink this. You look dehydrated."

Mixing an insult into the concern was a clever way of hiding it, but Blane didn't know how many people they were fooling anymore. There were so many variations of these. Buying a sandwich for you was passed off as "You eat too unhealthy. It pains me." Getting injured at work resulted in a "You're too reckless." The best was when K was struggling to give you a compliment, which often included the words decent, presentable or passable.

"You look decent." "It's presentable." "Your creation is passable."

Of course, you'd beam each time you were given these compliments, as bare as they were, and each time, K's expression would flicker with that hint of affection again. The softened brows, the lack of pressure on their lips, the loosening of their hands.

And those eyes again.

Blane has never seen K give that look to anyone else. They're not sure if even K realizes this, but if that's the case, Blane doesn't want to be the person to point that out. No, better they figure out their feelings on their own and see what they want to do with it.

They're immortal, after all, and you're human. K knows better than anyone how that relationship will end.

Still, something like this can't stay buried forever. If you ask Blane, they think you're well-suited. It's strange, considering how off-putting K can be at times, but you balance them. Just like how Rylan can bring out a more youthful side of them, you manage to draw out everything that they long to keep hidden.

All those emotions, all those human reactions—you remind them that it's okay to feel. Maybe not yet, but Blane can see it happening.

But it's not their place to say anything. For now, they'll stand at their position on the wall, arms crossed with their eyes staring out the window, as they pretend not to listen to your conversation. They'll pretend not to notice how K looks at you when you're not paying attention; how K's eyes focus on your hand when it's lying between the two of you; how the edges of K's lips twitch when you tell them something that excites you; and ignore it.

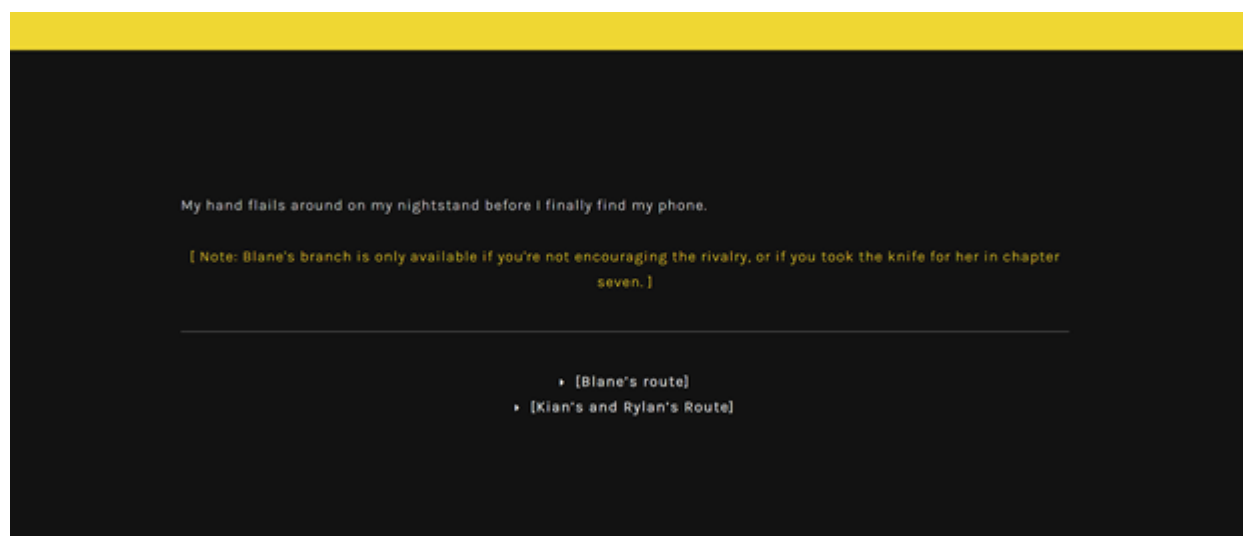
They'll stay out of it. K will find their way one day.

[possible chapter twelve names.](#)

[Sep 27, 2024](#)

i can't decide how i feel on any of these yet; we'll see. there's a few on here that might make the cut. i haven't started writing chapter twelve yet but hopefully i will soon. i've been down with the flu the last few days and i wouldn't wish it upon my worst enemy guys. it's so bad. i hate fevers :///

on that note, if i feel better tomorrow i'll write a new drabble so (potentially) look forward to that !!



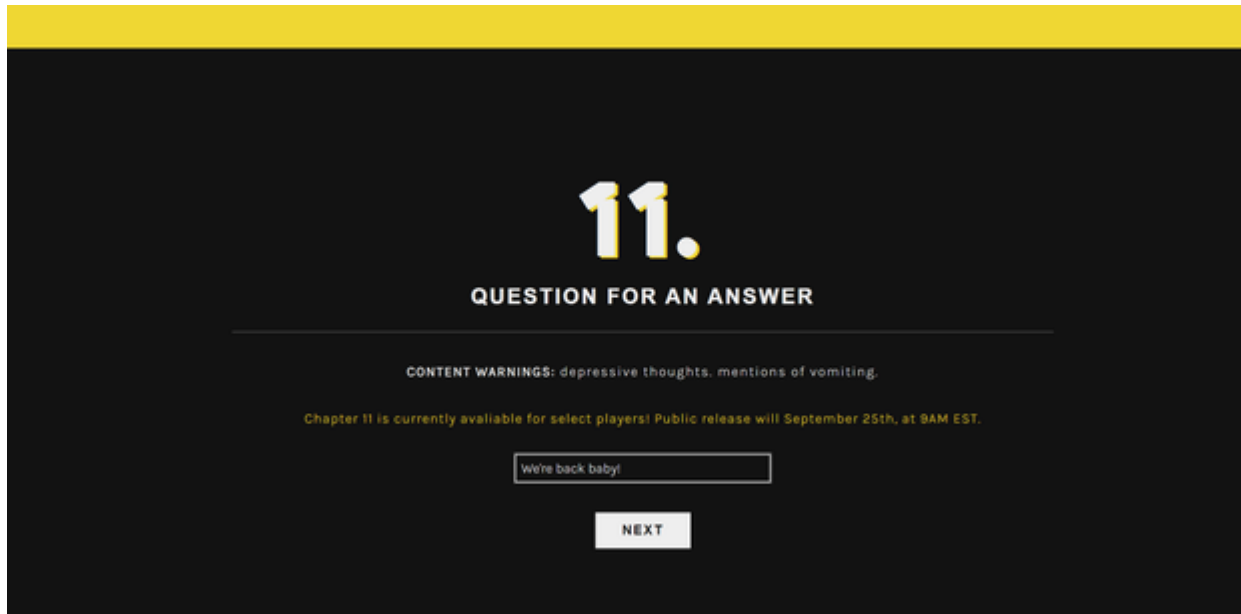
[changes to chapter eleven.](#)

[Sep 24, 2024](#)

hi! public update is tomorrow (yippee!!) so i wanted to pop by and talk about the changes you might see reflected, namely the Blane/ K&Rylan branch. once i update the file, you will no longer be automatically kicked to Blane's route if you've met the requirements, but the game will now give you the option of choosing. if you haven't earned Blane's trust, nothing changes: the choice will be greyed out.

as much as i liked the original idea, it doesn't make sense when i think about it, especially if you plan on romancing K or Rylan and simply happened to be nice to Blane—I want you to spend as much time with your favourite ro as possible!

so yeah, minor change but hopefully a positive one. thanks for understanding!



[chapter eleven: early access.](#)

[Sep 20, 2024](#)

it's here!! enjoy [chapter eleven](#) early, exclusively on patreon. the password is "We're back baby!", also displayed in the photo above. type it exactly like that (with the capital W and the exclamation mark) and you should be in!!

as always, please let me know what you think. i know it's been a very long and hefty wait for this chapter, but i hope it was worth it. there are some really sweet moments for all the ros in this chapter (especially Blane, K and Rylan) so i think you're in for a treat. [A] also has a super cute bonding moment (!!) and of course, N is a sweetheart like usual (and my favourite underdog; if you don't already like them, i assure you, they're going to creep up on you one day).

i could repeat my sappy speech of "thank you for sticking with me!" again, but i know i've said that a lot lately, so i 'll spare all of you. still, i hope it's clear how much this means to me. it's been nearly a year since my last update and i still have people (you!!) waiting and cheering me on. my heart aches thinking about it, honestly. so yeah, thank you. seriously. i appreciate you all so much. this is me giving back to you.

enjoy <3

EDIT: i want to clarify that while you are able to meet all the ros in the new chapter, it is not possible on one route. if you earned enough trust with Blane (took the knife for them or reached a stat requirement where you are rude to them less than a certain number of times) you'll automatically get the text message from them in the morning. otherwise, you'll receive a call from Rylan.

[release date: chapter 11.](#)

[Sep 18, 2024](#)

We're back!! Chapter 11 officially releases for the Midnight tier this **Friday, September 20th** and for the Twilight tier on **Monday, September 23rd**!! EDIT: Both will be posted at 9AM EST!

If you've never experienced a Patreon release chapter, you should expect a post with the password to drop on your tier date. Input that on the title page of Chapter 11 (you will also be prompted) and you'll be let in.

What to Expect:

- A bit of a mental breakdown. Just a bit...
- An opportunity to get closer to Blane and K & Rylan and break down their walls
- Some lighthearted (?) fun with A and N
- Did I mention the mental breakdown?
- One hell of a shock

Stats:

- 514,500 words (+42,500)

Whether you joined at the first demo or yesterday, I want to express my gratitude to those who've waited and stuck by me. It's been a while since my last update so I'm a bit of a nervous wreck concerning this one. I truly hope you all like it!

Not long to go now <3

[a rough timeline.](#)

[Sep 11, 2024](#)

i guess this doesn't technically qualify as behind the scenes content, but this was me about a week ago trying to figure out the rough timeline of the story. there's no exact year or date that it takes place in, only the season, so i randomly placed it at the beginnng of october and went from there.

it can be difficult to keep up with the multiple timeskips, so if anyone was wondering approximately where we are (like i was, lmao) here you go. it's not official or anything, which is why it's not public, but for now, this is my estimate. when the book is done, i'll likely publish something like this (except more polished) on tumblr.

ignore the somewhat messy handwriting haha. i didn't actually think i'd be posting this oops!

[update 119.](#)

[Sep 10, 2024](#)

september 2nd-8th.

hi!! i'm about to go to bed, but i wanted to pop by and say the editing/coding process is going well! or, as well as it can be when you hate rereading your work as much as i do.

you might have seen on my tumblr, but i'm pushing back the release date a few days to "end of september." i still don't have a set date yet, but i'm hoping to figure that out in the next two to three days. for now, you can expect to see chapter eleven on the twilight and midnight tiers, sometime next week, more so toward the middle/end of the week. public release will follow a few days after that. anyone who applied to the beta-tester form should be hearing back from me in the next five to seven days.

when it comes to editing, i'm trying out something new where i edit and code simultaneously. usually, i'll edit my entire document twice and then code, but right now, i'm coding a section and then coding it immediately after. i'm not sure if this is any quicker, but it's definitely helping on a personal level. i get so frustrated when i'm just editing for hours on end (and eventually, i start to avoid it because i hate it that much), so going back and forth between the two is helpful.

i'm hoping to get everything fully coded in the next few days. after that, i'll likely send things off to beta testers. even after that, though, my work isn't done. i plan to go through and count some stats so i can fix up the ro friendship/relationship bars and increase the difficulty to unlock some of the flavour text. when i say "increase the difficulty," by the way, it's not actually as bad as it sounds. take, for example, Blane's rival route. some of the flavour text is locked behind a minimum requirement of being rude to

them seven times, but in reality, the game has had fifty chances to be rude to them up to this point. i'm making up these numbers, but i'm just fixing things up so they're more accurate. hopefully, this creates a better playing experience for everyone!

in terms of other admin stuff, i'm going to post something showing my bts/thought process for previous chapters soon. the only reason i didn't do it last week was because i was avoiding getting out my printer; since i write my thoughts down on paper, i need to scan the sheets to upload. but it'll be coming soon! possibly tomorrow.

otherwise, i hope everyone has a great week! i will see you very very soon <33

sneak peek.

"Awake suggests I was sleeping. You know me better than that."

[update 118.](#)

[Sep 4, 2024](#)

august 26th-september 1st.

i think it's quite laughable that i want to become an editor because i feel like banging my head against my desk right now. maybe editing other people's works is different, but editing your own? god. that is not something i'd wish upon anyone, even my worst enemy. i knew editing this chapter would be the hardest yet—some of this i wrote all the way back in january/february, of course it's going to be shit—but i don't think i was fully prepared for *how* hard it would be.

so yeah. if you don't hear me for the next week or so it's because i'm furiously holed up in my room muttering under my breath about how shit my writing is.

but we'll get there. like every other chapter, i'll eventually get to a place that i'm happy with and i will hit publish. so don't be too concerned. just... keep me in your best wishes. please.

ahem. i'm hoping to finish my first round of edits sometime tomorrow, with the second (hopefully) being a lot quicker. if i'm lucky, i'll be done sometime during the beginning of next week. coding will take a couple of days on top of that, but as i've been repeating lately, we're very very close everybody! i still have to create and post the form for beta-testers, but keep an eye out for that soon if you're interested.

there's little i can post for sneak peeks at this point in the chapter, so you'll either get another drabble this weekend or some behind-the-scenes content of previous chapters. i know i haven't posted a

deleted scene in a while, but it's mainly because, well, i kinda ran out? i have tons of stuff regarding my planning process for older chapters though, so let me know if you want to see that!

until next week !! <33

sneak peek.

Like a fuse that's reached the end of its life, my anger fades.

CHAPTER 11.

Sebastian shakes his head. "This is different. It's abnormal. I would usually pass this responsibility off to someone else, but she specifically asked for you two, [A] and [The Hunter]."

"She?" N asks.

Something plummets in my chest. I don't know who Sebastian is referring to, or why he's being so cryptic and hesitant, but it scares me. This is it, isn't it? The thing that will decide how far forward or behind this puts us.

Should I hope for the best or prepare for the worst?

WHEN
TWILIGHT
STRIKES 

[she?](#)

[Aug 31, 2024](#)

i think this is the most spoilery thing i could've chosen from the chapter but have it as a treat. you deserve it <3

[On Rylan and The Hunter.](#)

[Aug 28, 2024](#)

Synopsis: Rylan's relationship with the Hunter, from K's POV.

The thing about Rylan is that they rarely ever show their true emotions. K noticed this the first time they met. It had been at a bar, Rylan leaning towards K with that signature smirk of theirs, twirling their hand around as they narrowly missed knocking over their glass dozens of times. The atmosphere gave them the excuse to act the way they did. They played it off by being a little tipsy, slurring their words here and there to keep up the image.

K let them have it. At the time, all they wanted to do was go home. They hated that someone approached them and hated it even more that Rylan wouldn't leave them alone, no matter how many glares they shot their now friend.

When Rylan kept showing up, however, K began to notice things. They've never been a people person, but K can read others quite well. Having over a century of experience dealing with people, it would be surprising if they couldn't.

Rylan, while appearing complicated, is much simpler than anyone thinks. They're lonely. K saw it the moment Rylan approached them at the bar and confirmed it on their second meeting. Their wide plastered smile, placed there to distract you from the empty look in their eyes. The constant blabbering to hide the fact that they've said nothing about themselves and have only asked about you all night. The loud voice, used to fill up a space they're missing in their chest; the constant flirtations, used to exaggerate a personality that is actually quite insecure.

K knows a lonely person when they see one. After all, they are too. They may not have the same coping mechanisms as Rylan, but there's no denying that Rylan is the same as them.

At least, that was before they met you.

Seeing Rylan interact with you was nothing out of the ordinary, at first. K chided Rylan for playing with your feelings, flirting around again. Rylan countered that they were just having fun—after the whole Caine ordeal, you were never going to see each other again anyway.

But then, the situation changed. Caine's situation wasn't as simple as it appeared to be, and K and Rylan ended up sticking around longer than they initially thought.

Rylan's mindset began to change. Even though they told K that things were temporary, K could see in their eyes that they weren't sure anymore. Each moment spent with you, they were questioning themselves. Rylan was losing their hold on the situation; you were gaining control, whether you knew it or not.

But Rylan didn't want to relinquish power. They continued to flirt. They pushed people away and revealed little about themselves. They laughed and joked and made fun of dark situations, trying to hide how much pain they were truly in.

Earlier on, before Rylan started dating you, K had a conversation with [A], who vented frustration on how little they knew Rylan. It wasn't a matter of trust, [A] said, but a genuine desire to get to know them. When K told Rylan this, Rylan disappeared until the next morning.

No one mentioned the bags under their eyes.

If it wasn't for you, K isn't sure if Rylan would've ever changed. The effect you had on them was unlike anything K had ever seen. It was hardly an instant process, but it happened.

Without even knowing it, you chipped at Rylan's walls. You knocked on their door and when they rejected you, you came back. Over and over again until Rylan felt compelled to let you in. Eventually, that compulsion turned into a genuine desire.

When Rylan smiled around you, their eyes brightened and they got crinkles around their eyes. There was no longer an empty look in their brown irises, but an affection that K felt even from afar.

When Rylan laughed, it was usually with you. They never quite broke the habit of laughing at other people, or worse, laughing at themselves, but it wasn't the dark deprecating sound anymore. It was a light airy thing, something that made K smile whenever they heard it.

When Rylan flirted, it was now paired with a blush. K caught you brushing your fingers against their cheeks once. Rylan looked like they were about to combust. To think someone so confident could be reduced to a trembling mess by a mere touch... It made K inexplicably happy. Not because they thought it was amusing, though, it definitely is in some ways, but because K could tell they genuinely liked you.

For the longest time, Rylan only had themselves to rely on. K became the first person in a long time that Rylan learned to trust. But Rylan has never been one for solitude, so despite telling themselves that one was already too much, they wanted more.

You came into their life and told them that was okay.

So even though [A] might roll their eyes at your displays of affection, when K sees the two of you sitting with each other, you playing with Rylan's hair and Rylan smiling at you like you're the most precious thing in the world, K merely smiles and looks away.

[update 117.](#)

[Aug 28, 2024](#)

august 19th-27th.

WE MADE IT!!!!!! i'm (kinda) free!! once again, sorry for the late update. i know i said i'd have this done last week but i was a little slower than i thought so i only managed to finish up last night. i didn't see the point in making an update on monday when i was so close, so here we are.

honestly though, you have no idea how relieved i am that i've finished writing this. ten months of wrestling with it and i finally managed to get it done. compared to the last few chapters, it's definitely on the shorter side, but i couldn't care less about that right now when, at some point, i thought that this chapter would be the end of the entire game. the fact that i'm able to type any of this right now makes me want to cry in relief.

as for next steps, i'm sure most of you already know the drill, but before i can publish the chapter, i'll go through two rounds of editing, code it, and then send it off to the beta-testers. it's been a hot minute since i reached out to them so i'll likely do another open request form on tumblr asking for new ones. feel free to sign up if you'd like! to be quite honest, i usually pick based on people who seem like they want it the most, so don't worry if you don't have any skills in writing or anything.

in the past, i've been able to edit in one week, but that usually leaves me stressed out, so i'm going to say i'll probably be done by early september? i'm looking at next friday, but that's very optimistic. coding also takes a good couple of days as well, if not a week, so the overall release date i'm thinking maybe september 20th? i know that's almost another month, but if you have early access, it'll be a couple of days earlier than that. this is just me thinking out loud, anyway. things very well could progress quicker than predicted, but rest assured that september is our month !!

in terms of other admin stuff, i'm going to write up and post another drabble tonight. a new sneak peek will be up over the weekend, though with how close the chapter release is, i'm starting to run out of things i can share. forgive me if it's on the shorter side.

but thank you so much for your support! it's been really hard but knowing that i still have people waiting for an update, even if it's been nearly a year, makes me feel so beyond grateful. i truly cannot say enough. please take care of yourselves and ily <3

stats.

- chapter total: ~45,016 words (+5536)
- game total: ~511,480 words

sneak peek.

To see Blane in the early morning light was a treat I won't forget, even if they will.

CHAPTER 11.

My heart swells. I'm happy. Even if for a brief second, I feel joy wash through me again. [A] has that effect on me, I've realized. On most people, really, but mainly on me. They're always the first to notice that I'm feeling off and the last to ensure I'm *really* okay.

And even then, they'll keep asking, over and over again until I'm swatting at them to leave me alone. But I appreciate it. More than \$athey'll ever know, despite the fact that I actually think they do know—they just have just enough compassion to not tease me about it.

I take their pinky and squeeze. [A] smiles at me, eyes lighting up with fondness and relief, before squeezing back once and dropping our hands. The moment is brief, fleeting really, but I feel a weight lifted off my shoulder by the end of it.

WHEN
TWILIGHT
STRIKES 

[we take that pinky promise shit seriously.](#)

[Aug 21, 2024](#)

[update 116.](#)

[Aug 20, 2024](#)

august 12th-19th.

erm, so yeah. busy week. i'll keep this update short because, well, there's not much to say.

everything i said last week still stands: i'm at the end of the chapter and am closing in on the final few thousand words. as of today, august 20th, all i have left is Blane's scene and chapter eleven will be done. finished. completed! here's to hoping that scene doesn't give me a hard time, but considering how much grief it gave me back in february and march... well. i don't have high hopes. but i'm staying optimistic! i can do it! (please)

if i manage to finish before monday, i'll likely pop by here to do another update post detailing next steps and a potential release date. otherwise, i'll have a sneak peek up sometime tomorrow or even tonight (if i remember) and possibly a new drabble, though i might push that back to try and finish writing chapter eleven.

sorry for the lack of communication here for the past week but i hope you've all been well! i think i've (mostly) fixed my sleep schedule so yay! small victories <3

stats.

- chapter total: 39,480 words (+840)
- game total: ~511,480 words

sneak peek.

Maybe I'll learn why curiosity killed the cat.

[update 115.](#)

[Aug 13, 2024](#)

august 5th-11th.

hellloooooo. how is everyone? i've been really busy (and will continue to be busy until next monday; rip my sleep), so all i can hope is that you're all faring better than me. despite the lower word count, i feel like i accomplished so much with this chapter. i genuinely think i can have it completely written in the next two weeks, which, like, oh my god?? finally?? but i'm not going to get my hopes up until i can scroll through my document and see everything filled out. but eeeek! that's the main point of this update.

to speak on a few more details, last week, i chipped away at the closing scene of the chapter. it follows [A]'s and N's scene so i don't think it's spoilery to say that they're both in it again. it's relatively short, with only three choices total. i told myself that it would be that length and honestly, i'm impressed that i didn't find a way to drag it out. if you've been with me for a while, you'd know i have a habit of saying "oh, this scene will only be two thousand words" and then it'll end up being five thousand instead. i definitely didn't do that recently... nope. cough.

but yeah. while we're speaking of the final scene, i wrote the final sentence of the chapter the other day and i lowkey wanted to start jumping around my room because of how well it tied everything together. i think i revealed the name of chapter eleven last year, or at least a list of potential names? but let's just say that the one i ended up choosing really embodies the theme. most of my chapter names do relate to what's happening to some degree, but i've never felt it as strongly as i do with this one. i'm very proud of it.

for finishing tasks, all that's left is to fill in some blanks i left here and there and finish up Blane's scene. the latter will definitely be the harder task of the two, but i'm not nearly as intimidated by it as i was last

month, so i imagine this will wrap up pretty soon. like i said, within the next two weeks or so, you might get an update of me yelling that i've finished. i'm aiming for mid-september, so who knows? you might get new content within a month.

that's all i got for this week. please remember to take care of yourselves !! <3

stats.

- chapter total: 38,640 words (+2754)
- game total: ~510,640 words

sneak peek.

Maybe I'll learn why curiosity killed the cat.

[On Blane and The Hunter.](#)

[Aug 10, 2024](#)

Synopsis: Blane's relationship with the Hunter, from N's POV.

Before [N], no one had ever believed in Blane. A sad statement, but unfortunately true. After [N], though, came a few others. Some that were there to begin with, but didn't yet have the privilege of knowing Blane to be able to believe in them.

[N] says privilege, because it truly is a privilege to be friends with Blane. Both in their eyes and [N]'s. People have told them that they're too nice for considering their friendships as such, but [N] doesn't think so; having such strong bonds is rare. They intend to keep them.

It's because of this that you'd assume they're worried about being replaced. As Blane's group of friends grow from one to two to three and possibly four, will [N] be left behind?

If it was anyone but Blane, then sure. But Blane is Blane, and their loyalty is unwavering, even if it doesn't seem like that at first glance. So [N] watches with fondness as you push your way into their life. At first maybe without knowing, but as the months go on, definitely on purpose.

You shove. You kick down doors and knock down walls that Blane keeps building. And sometimes, Blane grows enough to let you in personally, make you another copy of the key that [N] already has themselves. Other times, you have to resort to knocking them upside the head. It doesn't work all the time, of course, but Blane has come to learn that they don't really have a choice.

[N] can admire that.

It's strange to watch someone go through the exact trials [N] did. Strange but also interesting. Because while [N] settled for being Blane's friend, sometimes, [N] thinks that you want more. And so does Blane. Whether this is on purpose or simply just how your actions come across, [N] wasn't sure at first.

They watched your relationship grow from going at each other's throats to Blane grunting in acknowledgement when you sat down to Blane leaning into your touch when you patted their cheek.

They saw the two of you go from Blane rolling their eyes every time you spoke to Blane gritting their teeth on the occasion that your words still grated them to Blane watching you shyly, eyes following your every movement as they soaked in whatever story you were telling.

They were there when Blane picking fights with you every time you crossed paths changed to flushed cheeks when they made eye contact with you across the room changed to seeking you out when they wanted company, alternating with [N].

And sure, it was a little hurtful at first. [N] went from being Blane's only outlet to one of two. But at the same time, [N] was delighted for their friend. Especially because you were so reciprocative.

What's best about your relationship is that it was a product of time. Had it been any faster, Blane would've shut it down immediately. But because it was so gradual, it let Blane get used to it, which only worked to your benefit. [N] always predicted that Blane was a slow burner and they have yet to be wrong.

They're not entirely sure that Blane knows what you have yet. [N]'s quite sure that you're pushing for something beyond friendship—and if that's the case, [N] will be your loudest supporter—but Blane is so oblivious in the romance department that [N] thinks you'd have to kiss them to let them know you're into them.

Or maybe Blane is more seasoned in that department than [N] gives them credit for. They don't know. Blane hasn't exactly mentioned anything about it.

If [N] was more cruel, maybe they'd tease their friend about it. Do that wink-nudge thing that Rylan loves to do so much. But they're content enough to sit back and see how this plays out.

They like the light flush you bring to Blane's cheeks or the small smile that tugs at the end of their lips when they look at you and think no one is watching. They like seeing Blane play with their fingers underneath the table when they talk to you and hearing Blane's grumble, soft grumble, when [N] brings you up.

They like sneaking pictures of Blane being flustered around you and sending them to [A], who almost always sounds exasperated about how oblivious Blane is. [A] berates Blane sometimes, complaining about how they're the "least romantic person they know" and "the Hunter really knows how to pick 'em," but [N] knows they're as fond of this developing relationship as much as they are.

Because [A] sends pictures too. And while half of them look like nothing on the outside, [A] and [N] know better. Slowly but surely, Blane is opening up.

One day, they're going to realize how much they like you.

[update 114.](#)

[Aug 6, 2024](#)

july 29th-august 4th.

hellooooo!! i hope everyone is doing well! i've been so tired the past few days even getting out of bed has been a chore; someone tell me to stop making plans with people on my days off from work 3

but right, down to business. chapter eleven. i wrote less this week (again) because i had a couple of family issues, but as long as this week goes smoothly i think i can bust out 5000 more words by the next update. if you have a good mindset, then you increase the chances of it happening, right? in terms of public release, i'm pretty certain that i'll have the entire chapter written by this month and can get it out in september. that'll make almost a year since the last update (which stresses me out haha no one comment on it or i'll cry).

moving on, this week i focused more on completing A&N's scene and like usual, it had a mind of it's own and went in a completely different direction than i thought. remember when i said it would be a fluffy scene? well, i take that back. it's fluffy for the *most* part. it was always coming though. the chapter itself is very intense and i'm trying to develop the hunter's feelings on the whole Caine-Crimson-Ciel (C3?) situation. this is likely a theme that will continue into book two so bringing it up in book one isn't harmful to anyone. anyone but the hunter that is.

for next week, i think i'm going to try and finish the A&N scene? it connects to a closing scene that will (hopefully) be only one-two choices long so once that's done, i've outlined the entire chapter, yippee! of course i have to go back to fill in whatever i left for myself (thanks past me), but we're really close now guys. i can't stress it enough.

thank you so much for all your patience. until next week <3

stats.

- chapter total: 35,886 words (+2247)
- game total: ~507,890 words

sneak peek.

[N]'s smirk softens into a smile. "Then I'm glad."

[update 113.](#)

[Jul 30, 2024](#)

july 22nd-28th.

so, i got a bit of writer's block. it's not nearly as bad as it usually is, but she's there and she's apparently very stubborn. i know exactly what the problem is though, so it shouldn't be so much of a long-term problem as much as it is a little pest at the moment.

i started reworking Blane's scene this week. for what reason you ask? well, i hit a point with A&N's scene that i wasn't in the mood to write and switched over. genius right? wrong. i realized that because i wrote Blane's scene so early on, i had changed a lot of plot points that i now needed to rewrite. because this is a parallel scene to K&R's, it has to reveal (kinda) the same information. at the very least, it has to follow the same plot points, which is absolutely was not doing.

it also was just... very disjointed? i left a lot of gaps that i had to bridge, which was a struggle and a half. it was to the point where i sat myself down and made a little mindmap to figure out how everything was going to go, which i only do if i'm really really stuck on something. so i guess that says a lot. honestly though, for a task i was dreading, it's not that bad. i've figured it out for the most part and now it's a matter of writing it. arguably the hardest part, but hey, i got past the road block. now for the second hurdle...

truly though, i think i have it down. editing this chapter will probably be the worst out of any other chapter i've written, but this will be done. trust me on that. as bad as everything is now, i've genuinely made a lot of progress. for the longest time, i thought this chapter actually might be my downfall and i'd have to cancel everything right there. but i'm still here baby! we're still thriving (suffering).

as for next week, i want to be optimistic and say i'll finish Blane's scene? or at least the outline of it and then i'll go back and fill in the blanks later. either that or i'll finish the outline for A&N's scene. either way, i'm going to dream big and hope that i can pull it off.

wish me luck! i hope everyone has a wonderful week <3

stats.

- chapter total: 33,449 words (+2219)
- game total: ~505,450 words

sneak peek.

Just how Rylan deflects to avoid divulging information about themselves, Blane's attitude acts as a front that prevents people from asking further questions.

[On \[A\] and The Hunter.](#)

[Jul 27, 2024](#)

Synopsis: [A]'s relationship with the Hunter, from Rylan's POV.

If there's anyone who would understand that things aren't always what they seem like on the outside, it's Rylan. That said, when they look at your relationship with [A] they wonder if, for once, it really is just as easy as it looks.

They first met the two of you on the battlefield. While it was not the most ideal situation, it gave them a first-hand look at how well you worked together. If you were lacking in one area, [A] would pick it up. Likewise, if [A] was weaker in a certain skill, you made up for it with your strength.

You were a perfect match.

That night, Rylan understood why you were on the top of the leaderboard. Everyone in the supernatural world knew that if you and [A] were assigned to their case, there would be no escaping. They'd always thought it was a bluff, but even they barely escaped by the skin of their teeth. It's only pure luck that it ended the way it did.

... and magic, of course. K would never let them hear the end of it if Rylan discounted their help.

But that was only the first instance. Since working with the two of you, Rylan's gotten to know you both better. You see, they're used to cataloguing things. Especially since their time as a bounty, they've begun noting every small detail, honing in on little things that most people wouldn't catch. It's mostly for safety reasons, but with you and [A], they find it has become something of curiosity instead.

It fascinates them, how your relationship works. They want something like it of their own.

If [A] doesn't like something in their salad, they'll pass it off to you to finish. At a bubble tea place, you'll both order different things and try each other's drinks. You usually keep your original orders, but

occasionally, Rylan's seen you switch. The same goes for ice cream.

[A] is loud. They're energetic and bubbly and jump around when they get excited. It's part of the reason Rylan likes them so much. They have an infectious energy that is inescapable. Sometimes, you match that energy. Other times, you're more mellow. Regardless, it doesn't affect how well you work with [A].

You both understand each other to an extent that no one else can. Rylan thought about the possibility of reading minds once, but even for someone who needs to drink blood to stay alive, they knew they were being ridiculous.

Still, if anyone knows telepathy, it's you two.

Take this, for example. As happy as [A] can be sometimes, they too, can be affected by bad moods. Sometimes, they're so bad that no one can pull them out of it. No one except you, of course. It's baffling. Some encouragement from you and suddenly, the light is back in their eyes.

Rylan once waved an ice latte in front of [A]'s face, hoping to coax them out of their funk, but nothing. When you showed up a couple of minutes later, you sat with them under the table in silence and boom, [A] was talking again.

It didn't bother Rylan as much as it did interest them. Why you? Why did [A] respond in this manner to only you?

The answer was both simple and complicated. Simple because it was glaringly obvious. Complicated because it wasn't their place to comment on such things. Rylan may be nosy, but they also know when to let two people figure things out themselves. Even if those two people are the most oblivious people on the planet.

Seriously.

There have been plenty of instances with Rylan present where they've thought the lines between you crossed platonic territory, but neither of you acknowledged it. They used to think maybe [A] was ignoring it on purpose, trying not to get their hopes up, but they've come to learn that no, [A] is just that dumb.

The same goes for you. They know touching each other happens regularly with your jobs, especially when fighting, but for the love of God, it's not platonic to have your heart beat *that* fast when it happens.

It makes Rylan want to rip their hair out.

They're this close to doing it right now, staring at the two of you napping on [A]'s couch. [A] is practically sleeping on your shoulder and is dangerously close to falling on top of you. You're breathing softly, puffs of air tickling the hair by [A]'s ear.

The sight is amusing enough that Rylan took a picture and sent it to [N], who fondly replies: "They're actually stupid."

They bet when you wake up, [A] will jump and apologize, while you'll tell them not to worry about it. The both of you will be flushed with heat, butterflies in your stomachs and hearts racing like you're trying to beat Usain Bolt. And all Rylan will do is sit there and crack a joke, hoping that they'll be relieved from this torture one day.

They're rooting for you guys though. Truly.

CHAPTER 11.

[A] intertwines their pinky with my own and squeezes.
A second later, they let go. "Now, come on.
We should go before N thinks we're conspiring against \$nthem."

"You better not be," N calls out.
They're still at the mats, glancing down as they stretch their right leg.

[A] balks. "How did you even hear that?"

"I have my ways." N finally glances up, a smile playing on \$ntheir lips.
I swear, they've picked up some bad habits from Rylan.
There was no way they were this playful when we first met.
"So, are you two done yet? Or are you forfeiting?"

"You know, you're pretty funny, N," [A] says.

There's a brief flicker of surprise in N's expression, which is quickly hidden by another smile. "Thanks. I take it you're not giving up then?"

WHEN
TWILIGHT
STRIKES 

[rylan's influence.](#)

[Jul 26, 2024](#)

also, for those on the midnight tier waiting for the [A] drabble, it should be up by sunday! i'm having a bit of writer's block when it comes to it but i promise it'll be soon <3

[update 112.](#)

[Jul 22, 2024](#)

july 15th-21st.

we reached 500k total words woووو!!! what a crazy milestone. i remember when i thought this book would be no longer than 300k and i'd be done by the end of 2022... oh what a naive little thing i was.

but i'm happy to say that progress is moving much smoother than last week. i'll admit, i had very little faith that i'd be able to write at all, but i'm glad to have been proven wrong. i will say, however, that this doesn't necessarily mean i'm super confident in the scene i'm writing, but at the very least, i have a better grasp on it than i did last week.

strangely enough, when it comes to worries, i feel like the way i'm writing [A] and N is out of character. i know that i created them and anything i write will technically be canon, but (and this may be controversial) i do think that in some instances, authors can misunderstand their characters. a large part of this comes from the fact that one, i haven't written [A] and N in the main story for a while now, and two, i'm not used to writing happy scenes anymore. that sounds so depressing, but i swear it's true. on top of that, [A] and N are my two least angsty characters, so doing a 180° flip from Blane, K and Rylan is really throwing me for a loop.

best case scenario, i get over my problems this week and by my next update, it'll all be in the past. worst case scenario, i'll continue as is and fix it all up in edits when i finish the first draft of the chapter. in any case, i think it'll work itself out. i have a tendency to overthink things, so maybe they're not even as ooc as i think—maybe they're not even at all.

as i write [A] and N's scene, i'm also chipping away at Blane's. working on two scenes at once will, hopefully, speed along the process and help me out of a slump when i get stuck in one branch. because of this, i truly think we're nearing the end of the chapter. not in terms of writing (i still have thousands to go i fear), but content-wise, i can see the light at the end of the tunnel. i know exactly what scenes and choices i need to write to make it to the finish line.

that said, i'm starting to get a better estimate on when i'll be able to get this done, but i'll keep it to myself for one more week and then share it with you in the next update. not because i want to keep you on your toes (i feel like i've done that long enough now), but just to make sure my prediction is right.

anyway, that's all from me! i hope you're all taking care of yourselves <3

stats.

- chapter total: 31,230 words (+4189)
- game total: ~503,230 words

sneak peek.

[A] pokes my cheek. "Hey, what did I just say?"

[drabble poll.](#)

[Jul 21, 2024](#)

who do we want next? i'm thinking of writing drabbles from the ro's perspective speaking on the hunter's relationship with another ro, if that makes sense? it'll make more sense when the first one comes out haha.

A Devereux

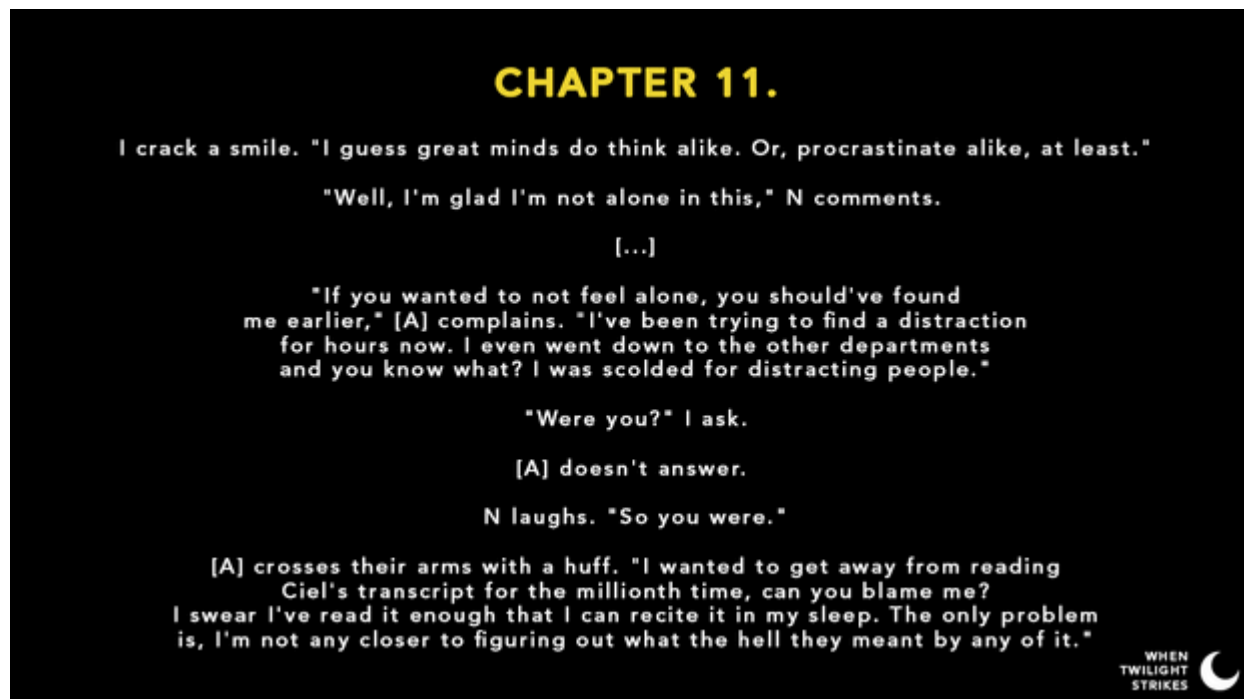
Blane Rekner

N Alves

K de Vries

Rylan Villanueva

55 votes total



[back to fluff.](#)

[Jul 18, 2024](#)

[update 111.](#)

[Jul 16, 2024](#)

july 8th-15th.

there are two things i discovered after i went camping. one, mosquitos like me. like, they like me so much that my legs looked like i had chickenpox for a while. two, i don't like hiking when i am being eaten alive and sweaty. aside from those two points, the camping trip went well! (kinda). at any rate, i'm back home now and i don't ever want to step into the wild again.

but enough of that. as you can tell by the word count, i didn't manage to write much this week. half of it was because of camping but, to be completely honest, the other reason has to do with starting the new scene. i thought it'd be refreshing for me, but not having any sort of outline kinda threw me for a loop. at least with K&R's scene, i knew the gist of what i wanted to write about. A&N's scene is mostly fluff (to balance out the heaviness of the first half of the chapter) and it's honestly so strange. i don't remember the last time i wrote something so light. granted, it still has its heavy moments, but i'm trying not to veer too much into that territory.

i say all of this, but i know i'll be able to overcome whatever temporary stupor i'm in by next week. i have to. i'll be so upset with myself if i can't. i'm so close (or, closer than i ever have been) to finishing this chapter and to get stuck behind a road block now would be so devastating to me. so send your best wishes everyone. i got this, right?

cough. if i don't manage to figure out what the hell is going on with A&N's scene, i might switch over to Blane for a bit. hilarious, isn't it? considering i've been avoiding that scene for months now and i said last week that i'm scared to touch it. well well, how the tables turn.

no matter what i end up doing, i'll get some more progress done for next week. it's a promise i'm making to myself and to you all.

as always, please take care of yourselves. i will be itching my mosquito bites away and hoping that [A] and N show some mercy on me.

stats.

- chapter total: 27,041 words (+1028)
- game total: ~499,040 words

sneak peek.

[N] snorts. "Brawl? Why do you make it sound like we're all just going to tackle each other?"

[Dig. \[N Alves\]](#)

[Jul 13, 2024](#)

Synopsis: Most of the time, N is just someone to be used.

Note: I ended things on a happy note. You're welcome. (I did it to put myself out of my misery).

Everything you hear about being a middle child? All true. There are always exceptions, of course, but it's always true to a degree.

The eldest child is loved because they're first, though get significantly less attention as the years go on. The youngest is coddled and can get away with the most; no matter how old they are, they're still seen as the baby of the family. And then there's the middle child. They somehow get both treatments and none at all. They're expected to be independent but also reliant. They're loved but aren't. Remembered but forgotten.

None of this has ever particularly bothered N. They don't complain about it nearly as much as other people. Rather, they've simply accepted that's how things are. Their needs are secondary to their siblings and that's fine. Painful? Sure. But fine.

They suppose that's why they're so attentive to other people. Having been neglected for most of their life, the last thing they'd want to do is make others feel that way.

Someone's not talking as much in the group? Ask them something to include them in the conversation. Someone's lagging behind? Fall back and see how they're doing. Someone's.... Well, you get the idea.

It's how N has always been. Sometimes, they think that even if they hadn't grown up the middle child, they'd still act this way. It's not a bad trait to have. No, quite the opposite actually. However it came about, it's one of the things that N is most proud about themselves.

Only... Only sometimes, maybe it would be nice to have that energy reciprocated. People notice if they're acting different, of course, but it only ever reaches the "are you okay?" stage and never the "if you want someone to talk to, I'm here" stage. And if it does, it's only said out of courtesy.

It frustrates them, sometimes. All the time. Makes them want to shout in people's faces and accuse them of not caring enough. Break down into tears and ask why everyone else is important enough to get this treatment but not them. Shut down until someone notices that they're fucking human too.

But no. This is the role they've allocated themselves. They're the caring friend. The listener, the therapist. The friend you go to for all your problems but never the one you invite out to the club, because God, how boring would that be? They're the one you text when you've broken up with your ex, not the one you message because you're bored.

They've done this to themselves. And each time they expose this side of them, they dig the hole deeper. Deeper and deeper until they can't even see the sunlight anymore. It's just constant shovelling. No climbing out now. There's no rope coming to save you. Just keep going. Keep digging.

Maybe things could've been different. Had their parents actually remembered they existed, maybe N wouldn't have turned up like this. If they actually spoke to their siblings, rather than cutting off communications at the ripe age of 18, maybe N wouldn't feel so secretly bitter.

But they did and they are.

Maybe it's just the people who they surround themselves with. If so, then damn, N really knows how to pick 'em. It's not that they do it on purpose, of course, but it just always happens that way. They get their hopes up every time they make a new friend. Praying, begging that they won't use N like everyone else.

The only time their wishes ever came true was Blane, though it took a while to get there.

They know how it looks. People see Blane and N and wrinkle their noses, wondering why such an odd pair works. They think Blane is the one latching onto N, using them, but in reality, it's the other way around. N is the one that can't survive without Blane.

With Blane, N is treated as an equal. They aren't tossed to the side when their use is over, nor ignored when they want to talk about themselves. It might've taken them a while to become friends, but from the beginning, Blane always respected N.

It was all N ever wanted. All they ever needed.

They're seen. Almost too seen, really. When they first met, Blane was constantly aware of N's presence or what they were doing. It made things significantly more difficult when N was trying to break down their walls, but it was better than being invisible. With Blane, N was always valued. Maybe overvalued in some senses, but valued all the same.

And then, of course, after Blane came you. Came [A] and K and Rylan. Came this group of friends that N never thought they'd get.

N is still as attentive as ever, but it's never taken for granted. People notice when they're at their limit. With this group, they're allowed to shout and break into tears and shut down. And if they ever do, someone will be there to get them through it. You will be there.

So, yes. Everything is a work in progress. They're still insecure. They're still wary of being used and not being able to say no. They're still worried about being stuck in Blane's shadow, which is an entirely

different conversation, but a relevant one regardless. But, slowly but surely, they're working on it.

That hole they dug themselves? If someone won't throw them a rope, they'll carve out stairs.

[update 110.](#)

[Jul 8, 2024](#)

july 1st-7th.

hi everyone! i'm keeping this on the shorter side because i'm actually on my way to go camping right now, so i'll be a little mia this week when it comes to writing and the short story (at latest, it'll be up sunday morning).

but writing for this week went really well, if you couldn't tell by the stats. i definitely lied when i said finishing K's and Rylan's scene would be another thousand words though because, phew, i would say it took another four thousand until i was done. never ever believe me when i say things like that. the way i underestimate how much writing there is in choices... every single time man.

i did manage to write a bit for A's and N's scene though. and by "a bit," i really do mean it. but it was really nice creating dialogue for them again. the two of them don't really have a scene together (unless you count the brief interaction in chapter two) so it'll be good to explore this dynamic. in general, i'm always happy to write N scenes that don't involve Blane. despite Blane being a huge part of their character, i really don't want them to be defined by someone else, so writing scenes where they're with other people really helps flesh them out. A is also the complete opposite of Blane, so it'll be fun to show you how N reacts to that kind of thing.

because i won't have much time to write, the goals for this week are smaller, but generally, i'm hoping to do more work on the A&N scene. i don't really have a detailed plan for it now and am sort of going with the flow, so the quicker i nail that down the better.

that's all from me. please take care everyone! <3

stats.

- chapter total: 26,013 words (+4840)
- game total: ~498,010 words

sneak peek.

Now it's Rylan's turn to shake their head. There's a slight flush to their cheeks.

CHAPTER 11.

Rylan sighs. They brace their hands against the counter. "You push yourself too hard, Hunter."

"It's part of the job."

"I don't think so. But if you want to talk today, we'll talk. I'm not going to try to convince you out of it."

"You really think it's a bad idea, huh?" I ask.

Rylan glances at me. There's a hint of amusement in their eyes.

"I think a lot of things are bad ideas. Funnily enough, you're involved in a lot of them, Hunter."

"That doesn't answer the question."

"But it does. You're a bad idea, Hunter, and the decision you're making right now is a bad one too. I might be a bounty, but I'm not so terrible that I'm going to ignore what you're going through."

WHEN
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[it's the little things.](#)

[Jul 6, 2024](#)

[update 109.](#)

[Jul 1, 2024](#)

june 24th-30th.

hi everyone! happy july!

you might notice that i didn't write as much as i did last week, but i'm feeling really really good about where i am in the chapter. as i said last week, K's and Rylan's scene is completely outlined. i had hoped to write the entire thing this week, but life got in the way and, well, it seems like i'll be spending a little longer on it. i'm certain, however, that by the next update, i'll officially have it done. i likely only have a thousand or so words left on it, so it's doable. if it's not, i might rip my hair out but let's not talk about that.

with that said, i think i'll be moving onto A's and N's scene next. if we're going chronologically, i should be writing Blane's, but theirs needs so much reworking that i'm almost afraid to touch it. that's an issue for future Kristi. i won't be saying that when i get there, but for now, let's ignore that too.

another reason i have for avoiding Blane is that this chapter is, content-wise, becoming quite heavy. if it all goes according to plan, A's and N's scene should be a nice break. it's still going to talk about Ciel and Caine—that topic is unavoidable this late in the game—but in general, it should be a lot lighter to read. i also haven't written A and N in the main game in so long and ugh, i miss them. as much as i love Blane, K and Rylan, exclusively writing three of my angstiest characters for months on end has taken a bit of a toll. wait a second, maybe they were the reason for my writer's block...

so yeah, those are my plans. if i'm feeling up for it, i might jump back and forth between Blane and A/N, just so i'm not completely overwhelmed when i get there. statistic-wise, i'd say i'm a little over 1/3 done with the chapter. it's definitely not close to finished yet, but if i keep up the pace, i doubt the wait will be much longer <3

stats.

- chapter total: 21,173 words (+3517)
- game total: ~493,170 words

sneak peek.

My eyes dart to Rylan's hands. They keep reaching for a particular ring, twisting it over and over again.

[Court Jester. \[Rylan Villanueva\]](#)

[Jun 29, 2024](#)

Synopsis: Master manipulator / God you're so good at what you do.

Note: I'm lowkey starting to regret writing an angsty series because man, this sucks. Ouch my heart. Also i'm not entirely sure I'm happy with how this came out so apologies if it's not the best!

Rylan laughs. They smile. They giggle at things that shouldn't be funny. They crack jokes at awkward times and lighten the mood when they feel tension falling over a group. They make fun of others, though never maliciously. They give nicknames and refuse to call people by their real name; it never fails as a distraction.

Because, you see, all those smiles and laughs, that determination to keep the mood light, the jokes at people's expenses—they're all to keep the attention off Rylan. Does their attitude draw a lot of people to them? Sure. But no one ever looks past the surface.

And that's the point.

The more they build this jokester persona, the less people bother to see Rylan as anything else.

They have no serious bone in their body. They care for nothing and no one. All they want is a good laugh. All couldn't be further from the truth, of course, but that's what Rylan wants people to think of them. If anyone realized otherwise, they might start to care.

They're a lot like K, in that way. Both of them push people away to protect themselves, but they're on completely opposite ends of the spectrum. While K hopes their stoicism and brisk attitude will keep people away, Rylan banks on sarcasm to do the job.

K actively pushes people away; Rylan simply doesn't let anyone in.

So it's funny that they'd become friends. Rylan still doesn't know all of K's past—and K doesn't know theirs. They don't need to. The moment they saw through each other's disguises, they came to an understanding. Both of them will leave each other one day. That's just how it is.

Just like Rylan's parents. Like their friends. Like their clan who abandoned them to shoulder the blame for a murder all on their own.

Rylan sighs. They flip their pillow, hoping that the cooler side will help them sleep. It's just the heat, they tell themselves. Other nights, they blame it on the traffic outside their window. Or that they took a nap mid-day and are too full of energy to attempt to sleep. Or caffeine. Or the excitement of the next day.

Not that there have been many exciting days since their conviction.

They sigh again. Flip over. Their phone is on the bed with them, plugged into the wall by a shitty cord that's nearly fallen apart. It's four in the morning. It would be rude to call anyone. They're used to being alone anyway. Why should they need to talk to someone?

The bed. It's too stiff. That's what it is.

"For fuck's sake," Rylan curses. They toss their pillow across the room.

Insomnia. They don't want to say it aloud, but that's what this is. They don't remember the last time they got a full eight hours of sleep. The closest they've gotten recently is when they fell asleep in K's bed. For some reason, the warlock didn't kick them out. It was the kindest thing someone's done for them in a while.

Toss and turn. Over and over.

If they ever do fall asleep, it's only ever for a few hours. After that, they'll startle away from a memory or a nightmare. Sometimes, the universe will take pity on them and they'll wake peacefully, but apparently, being framed isn't punishment enough, because it doesn't happen that often.

Rylan rips their phone out of the charger. They stare at themselves on the black screen. They forgot to draw the curtains last night. Not that they would've done much to keep the light out.

Rylan tilts their head. The person on the phone copies their action. They tilt their head in the opposite direction and the reflection follows.

How is it that they can manipulate everyone's perception of themselves but theirs? All they see in their phone is someone who hates themselves. Rylan blames themselves for everything. For what happens to their parents. For getting framed. For not being able to change K's mind about pushing people away.

What a hypocrite, right?

(Tell them you agree. It won't hurt their feelings.)

Rylan goes over to their sorry excuse of a closet. It's not so much changing as it is pulling on some pants and throwing on their leather jacket. They pocket their phone and head to the balcony. It only takes them a second to make the decision.

As they make the trek to K's place, running on rooftops and climbing down fire escapes, the only thing that keeps them from breaking down into tears is the thought of the persona they created.

If that crumbles, they'll have nothing left.

[update 108.](#)

[Jun 25, 2024](#)

june 16th-23rd.

hi everyone! i hope you're doing well! i got a good chunk of writing done this week and i'm very proud of myself. round of applause! it's mostly because i forced myself to sit down and write, but, well, you do what you need to. i had fun with it so, really, it's a win-win situation.

i'm very very close to finishing K's and Rylan's scene. i'm hoping to pound the rest of that out this week and wrap it up before moving on. i will admit, however, that i am at a little roadblock, but i should be able to push past it. hopefully. i don't know. it's always Ciel. that bastard. for some reason, writing about the

aftermath of the interrogation feels so awkward. i feel at a loss when i mention what they said, especially the 'Nalani' namedrop. it's a huge part of chapter eleven, that is, discussing who (or what?) that could possibly be, but it's a very sensitive topic, so i'm really trying to be careful with how i write it.

once that's over with, though, the scene is basically done. i do have to go back and fill in a couple of the choices and flavour text that i left blank, but we're finally at the end!

you'll also be happy to know that i squeezed in a small one-on-one scene with K or Rylan. i figured that because Blane gets the whole scene to themselves, it would be unfair to make K and Rylan share the whole thing, so there's a brief discussion you can have with one of them toward the end of the branch. it'll be your choice, of course, but i also gave a randomize option in case you can't decide.

though it's on the shorter side, i think it does a great job of character and relationship development, so if you're planning on romancing either K or Rylan, i'd definitely choose your romantic prospect over the other. if you're not, then there's still plenty for you to explore. i'm still writing Rylan's, so i'm not entirely sure how it'll work yet, but for K at least, the scene hints at how they've grown more fond of the hunter since they met. they're hesitant to admit it, but they also can't deny it. i almost wish i wrote the scene from their pov, though, because the number of thoughts racing through their head during that conversation is so. god. they're a complicated one.

but yeah, that's all i got for this week! i didn't get to my goal of 20k words but i think 17.5k is still quite good. for next week, i'm hoping to reach 22-23k, so fingers crossed! as always, take care of yourselves and stay hydrated <33

stats.

- chapter total: 17,656 words (+4203)
- game total: ~489,650 words

sneak peek.

For the first time since I've known them, K hesitates.

CHAPTER 11.

They nod. The silence should be uncomfortable, considering I'm eating and they're, well, just standing there, but it's not. Though I can feel K's eyes on me from time to time, for the most part, they just stare at my cupboard.

Too bad it doesn't last.

"I hope you know I'm not going to let you waste my time," K says.

I stiffen. "What do you mean?"

"Exactly what I said. I came here to discuss what we found out about Atheron and I won't let you prevent that from happening." They pause. "But, I also acknowledge you're not in the right mindset for the conversation. If you want to do this another day, I won't argue with you."

WHEN
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[growth?](#)

[Jun 22, 2024](#)

K's definition of "nice" is a little different than most...

[update 107.](#)

[Jun 17, 2024](#)

june 10th-16th.

hi hi!! how is everyone?

i had such a good writing session last night and i'm so so happy about it. i don't think i've had that happen for a few months now; i'm really hoping i can keep the streak. i think a large part of it had to do with me going through my [itch.io](#) comments earlier in the day. reading various theories and thoughts on characters had me realizing how much i love this world.

i've spoken a lot about how i've felt that, sometimes, when the pressure gets to me, this feels less like a passion project and more like something i'm obligated to do. but if that really were the case, i would've quit ages ago. of course, i don't actually think this way, but when i'm feeling down about my work or am

reminded of how long ago i last opened my word document, it hits me. it's why i appreciate your kind words so much. once in a while, i just need that little reminder of how this came to be and why i'm still here, and boy, did i get it last night.

so yeah, that's my little rant. on the topic of chapter eleven, i'm hoping to have K's and Rylan's scene completely finished by the next update. or, at the very least, i want to have everything outlined. occasionally, i'll do this thing where i write in the scene with one choice out of five filled in, and then go back and write in the flavour text for the other four. it's just quicker for me, especially if i have a good flow; writing five different variants of the same response tends to kill that. if i can at least have that done, i'll practically have finished what i need to. considering how much writer's block this has given me, it's a huge win. cross your fingers everyone.

after that, i have the choice of moving onto Blane's scene or A/N's, which closes out the chapter. i still haven't figured out what i'm doing yet, but i'll decide when i get there. logically, Blane's makes the most sense because it ties into K's and Rylan's, but that's also the scene that made me stop writing for a month so... do i really want to risk that? i'll see how i feel.

that's all i got for you this week! take care of yourselves <3

(oh, and i'm also adding stats back into my updates. they were gone for a while as i reconfigured my old chapter eleven document with the new one, but i think i've got my bearings enough that i can have them in without getting confused now. a little optimistic, but i'm hoping to get to 20k words by next week. wish me luck!)

stats.

- chapter total: 13,453 words
- game total: ~485,450 words

sneak peek.

The image of Sebastian holding us together, a glue bottle in hand as he tries to fix all the cracks, comes to mind.

[Numb. \[Blane Rekner\]](#)

[Jun 16, 2024](#)

Synopsis: Giant Blane lore drop????

Blane doesn't need a reminder. They're aware of every single misfortune that has befallen them. That their past is an explanation for who they are and it's impossible to change. That, realistically, it's not possible that everyone will betray them and it's okay to open up to people.

Still, they don't want to risk it.

The adoption system will do that to you. No parents, no relatives of any sort, just a few dozen other kids that are around your age, wondering why they weren't loved enough to stay with their birth family.

Blane got used to the crying and the fights. The sullen attitudes and the occasional optimistic kid rallying up the group, telling them that it will be their turn soon. The workers who encouraged this behaviour, despite knowing it was a lie. It was a soft cruelty, Blane called it. Not kind, by any means, but soft. It was as if they believed a cushioned landing would make it hurt less. Perhaps in theory, it would work, but reality always had something different to say.

Blane knew that better than most.

When they think back on their experience in the system, there is little to say. For the several years Blane was there, they ran away from at least a dozen foster homes and spoke no more than a few sentences per day. They knew from the beginning they were different from the other children, but they never quite understood until they were a teenager. Quite late to understand who they were, *what* they were, but that was the downside of growing up the way they did—there was no one to guide them.

It would've been worse if they were anything else. Half-Fae were newly gifted with brighter senses, nothing more. They learned to take advantage of that. Their sensitive hearing. The way they could distinguish footsteps from one another and detect another person coming from double the distance the other children could. The comfortable weight of a lie on their tongue.

Still, none of those skills could get them out of the system until they were legal. They tried, but each time they ran away, they'd merely be caught and thrown back. This is where they learned a valuable lesson: children couldn't keep a secret. Not that they could blame them. Loyalty meant nothing when you wanted love and affection—why protect Blane when they could get those instead? Those... rewards. People were so easily bought over. Better to trust yourself instead.

And they did. Over and over again, throughout the years, they trusted less and less people and began to rely only on themselves. It wasn't so much a choice as it was a necessity.

Still, despite being for the good, it was lonely. *They* were lonely. There was the rare occasion where someone, usually a fellow foster child, tried to befriend them, but Blane always pushed them away. So they couldn't be abandoned like they had by everyone else in their life. After all, foster homes were only temporary. The chance of them seeing these kids again was slim to none.

There is more to it, of course. If Blane's past was merely being raised in the system, it would be easier to heal. No, it was what happened that fatal night that broke them beyond repair.

All that caution just for one night to rip them to shreds.

Blane sucks in a breath. They press a hand against the wall, hoping to steady themselves. It hurts. That one damn night. Why? Why would she do this? They feel themselves begin to slide and let gravity take them, following it down until they're sitting on the floor. Each breath is a struggle. They gasp for air.

It wasn't supposed to be this way. They're not supposed to feel. It worked so well before, but ever since that night, every lie, every insult that falls off their tongue, no matter how easy it is, creates a pang in their chest. Their stomach bottoms out each time they snarl at someone and storm off; their eyes threaten to water over when someone snaps at them for being so heartless.

That's the thing. The irony of it all. While people call Blane numb, call them callous, it couldn't be farther from the truth. Because if they were as cold as everyone said, this wouldn't be happening.

[update 106.](#)

[Jun 12, 2024](#)

june 3rd-9th.

hi! sorry about the lateness again; i've had such a hectic couple of days. i graduated on monday and got my diploma and jugsjkfskjkfskfsk it's so weird. and then yesterday i had the headache of all headaches so here i am, writing the monday update on wednesday. again.

i'm happy to say, however, that things are going well on my side! writing wise, i mean. i'm hoping to set up a more rigid writing schedule so i can get more done (and get this out to you quicker, because honestly having chapter eleven in the drafts for this long is also making ME anxious). i want to go back to my peak of writing like, 5000 words a week so we will see. that's the goal. theoretically, i should be able to do it, considering i'm unemployed right now and out of school. i love it here <3

i think i mentioned it in my monthly update on tumblr, but the other week i wrote a scene where Rylan blushes (!!) and i was this close to giggling and kicking my feet. it made me think about Blane, since they're the other branch i'm currently working on, and how i'm going to develop their romance with the hunter.

i'm going to think out loud, so bear with me, but, recently, my mind has been drifting to their first kiss scene and how it'll happen. i mostly have everyone else figured out (a sneak peek, in no particular order: heartfelt confessions, blurting out feelings, hands on cheeks, maybe a few tears?) but because Blane has a rivals-to-lovers route AND a coworkers (one-sided rivalry) to lovers route, i'm torn. i initially

wanted the former to be this intense confession where the two yell at each other before impulsively kissing and the latter to be a little softer, but now i'm like, hmm maybe i should swap them? or maybe make like, four routes? where you can do an intense and soft confession on both routes? gah. i don't know. this is very much in the future (or, i guess it's not anymore) so i have time to think about it, but i thought i'd ramble on about it now just to give you an idea of my headspace.

in some ways, this also applies to Rylan. i mean, their rivalry (if you continuously choose to be mean to them) with the hunter isn't as vicious as Blane's, but it's still there in some capacity. so yeah. to yell or not, i guess is the question. or maybe i'll come up with something completely different later on. who knows?

anyway, that's the update. a lot of this was hypothetical and focused on the romantic aspect of the game, so i apologize if you're not into that, but i actually think writing this down has helped. feel free to leave any thoughts below <3 take care!!

sneak peek.

K's expression is blank, cold, but, for a moment, as their head tilts to the side, I catch a glimpse of curiosity in their eyes.

CHAPTER 11.

A crease appears between K's eyebrows.
"Time? Does it really matter when it's inevitable?"

"You're only saying that because you're old," Rylan says, rolling their eyes.
They turn to me. "But if you're planning on trying to stop it,
Hunter, K's right—there's no point. Delaying it won't either. It
really depends on how quickly things progress."

"But if we delayed it, there would be more time for negotiations."

K shakes their head. "Those two don't do negotiations.
It's better to have them fight it out. Forcing them
into agreements won't make it any better."

I sink back into my chair. "So, then..."

"At earliest, it'll be within a few weeks," Rylan says.
"At most, we have a month or two. Either way, it's
happening and IAOS won't be able to do anything about it."

WHEN
TWILIGHT
STRIKES 

[tensions tensions.](#)

[Jun 8, 2024](#)

who do we think they're talking about?

[update 105.](#)

[Jun 4, 2024](#)

hi!! once again, sorry for the late update! or, i guess this isn't so much of an update than it is just me popping by again. jetlag really did its thing with me. i only came back from my europe trip a couple of days ago, so i'm still adjusting, but it was so so lovely. copenhagen was definitely my favourite city that i visited and for those who haven't been, i highly recommend it!

story-wise, i haven't gotten rid of my brain fog enough to work on it yet, but i will say that i opened the document the other day and just, ugh. i felt a wave of nostalgia wash over me. it feels so so good to be back. my fingers itched to write, but i was too tired that day to think about doing so. i'll get to it soon though. hopefully tomorrow.

i don't really have much to say other than that, but i hope everyone's been well! i don't want to say anything on the release date yet because i feel like i only keep pushing it back (i'm too ambitious for my own good, apparently), so for now, i'll just work on it quietly. i really appreciate your patience. like, so much. more than half a year without an update is a lot to me (to the point where it kinda makes me nauseous) but so many of you, if not all of you, are being very kind about the wait. i can only hope that it lives up to it.

a new sneak peek should be up later this week as i jump back into chapter eleven. on that note, i hope the drabbles were enjoyable! or, as enjoyable as they could be considering the content. the next one will be up next week with a possibility of early release this weekend.

muah. love you all <3

[Lung Capacity. \[A Devereux\]](#)

[May 29, 2024](#)

Synopsis: Sometimes, [A] feels like shit.

Note: Sorry if this is kinda choppy. I wrote it all in sections on different days (and then it didn't save), because I'm currently travelling. Weekly updates will resume next week though!

Breathe. It hurts. Breathe. When will it stop? Breathe.

[A] feels like their head is underwater. Each puff of air creates bubbles, taunting them as they float to the surface, unlike them, who's anchored to the bottom. Anchored by gravity. Anchored by metal chains. Anchored by the desperation of their own thoughts, their panicked feelings and hatred for themselves.

They gasp.

Hatred. What a strong word. [A] doesn't have the capacity for that emotion. Even Blane, who lives to irritate them, isn't at that level. [A] despises Rekner at most. Just like they despise hot coffee and animal breeders. Like how they despise sardines and cheetah print clothing.

But hate. Oh, do they hate themselves sometimes.

It's a hard pill to swallow, that one. Because who would've thought [A] Devereux, the human embodiment of sunshine, could hate themselves so much. Every problem is shaken off with a smile. Every issue is brushed off with an optimistic remark. And the times where their anxiety does get to them? Well, no one ever knows. They don't *let* anyone know.

They hide in closets, in bathroom stalls and under desks. They make excuses that they need to go do something or look for a certain file. They'll be damned if anyone ever found out that those moments were merely just them excusing themselves to go cry.

(It hurts. When will it stop?)

You're the only one who's ever witnessed their panic attacks. You're the only person who has ever saw through that false smile and honed in on the shaky hands, trembling legs and bile stuck in their throat, making their words come out staggered and halting. You're the only person [A] trusts during these times.

At first, it was accidental. They never meant for you to see them at such a weak point. But eventually, it became too hard to hide. They leaned on you as you provided your shoulder. They gripped your hands for support as they struggled to stand.

Except, you're not here right now.

It's not like anything's happened to you. You just can't be there every time [A] needs you. It's fine. They burden you enough. They don't want you to have to deal with them even when you're in your separate apartments. That would be unnecessary.

(But wouldn't it be nice?)

[A] clenches their hands into fists. Swim. Swim back up to the surface. Break free of those chains that wrap around your ankle and kick your way upwards. Show everyone you're exactly who you show yourself to be. That you're strong and capable and someone who deserves this position. That despite your panicky disposition, you're meant to be here.

But what if they're not good enough?

Their swimming falters. Breathe. They feel the gravity begin to take over again. Breathe.

They're not good enough. They can't even save themselves. How are they supposed to do anything more?

(It hurts. When will it stop?)

They're not even sure what triggered this attack. Sometimes, it's because they see you injured after a hunt. (But the two of you hadn't have a hunt for three days now). Other times, it's because they're overwhelmed by their workload, anxiety stemming from the idea that they've tackled too much. (But there's only one case on your plates right now, which is more manageable than it's been for months now).

A voice slivers through their ears. *It's because they're weak.*

They want to scream. Want to yell. What did they do to deserve this? Why is it always them that gets so stressed out over mundane things? No one else around them ever deals with this kind of stuff. No one ever seems to worry as much as [A] does. For all their ambition, [A] is nothing. Nothing but overwhelmed and tired and overworked and sick of the sinking pit in their stomach that tells them something is wrong when in fact, everything is going perfectly fine.

Breathe.

It's hard. It's always hard. They know they're not the only one who struggles, but sometimes, that's what it feels like. Perhaps everyone puts on a mask just as they do, but either they're much better at it or their problems aren't as bad, because they don't break down. Not like [A] does.

These thoughts are irrational. Breathe.

(But it hurts).

Look on the bright side. Think about all you have. [A]'s mind drifts to the positives in their life and wonder if they outweighs this negative. The panic attacks aren't nearly as bad as they used to be, they'll admit. That's a bonus. They've learned to calm themselves down over time, learned what triggers them and how to avoid it (when possible).

Their family is fine. They have a stable job and friends who care about them. They have a roof over their head and food is never a worry. They have a coveted position that... No. They do deserve it. Even if it's unbelievable sometimes.

They swallow and continue counting their blessings. The most obvious one is next: you. Even when you're not with them right now, they have you.

The thought soothes them. You're just a phone call away. That's right. Even though [A] won't dare dial those numbers and bother you, you're still there. (And if you hear about this instance later, you'll scold them for not calling you, but it's fine. At the moment, their worry about disturbing you is winning out).

And... Well, they'll get over this. It'll pass. It has to. Because then they won't be able to go to Norway. They won't be able to get that puppy they always wanted or see the end of their favourite series that's been going on for God knows how long.

And they won't be able to confess to you. That smile of yours. That signature eye roll when they do something stupid paired with a fond look. The lips they so badly want to kiss. The body they so badly want to hold and cuddle to sleep.

So yeah. It'll pass. It'll pass because [A] needs it to. They might not think they're good enough sometimes, but they got here somehow. That has to count for something.

Breathe. They feel the weight on their chest lighten. The surface is near. Their lungs no longer have to hold on.

[Logical. \[K de Vries\]](#)

[May 20, 2024](#)

Synopsis: To be immortal is to be haunted.

K used to wake up screaming. They used to startle awake, eyes wide, scanning the room for possible threats when in fact, their worst fear was in their head. They used to have to unclench their fingers from their bed sheets, ignoring how there were splotches of sweat on the fabric, some of the beads still stuck to their skin. They used to force themselves out of their bed and into the bathroom, deliberately looking down at the sink as they washed their face, terrified of what they'd see in the mirror.

Used to, they say, as if this is all in the past. As if this was some temporary illness they have since gotten over. Perhaps, in another life, this would be true. Months of daily torment would have turned into nightmares once a week, then once a month, then never again. It was all they asked for. Every shooting star, every candle on birthday cakes, they wished for the torture to end.

And it would, but it was only ever for a short while. After a period of time, they'd come back in full force.

K de Vries is not a weak person. They are the strongest warlock in New York City and one of the strongest in America. They are a prodigy, having picked up magic at the tender age of five. They are well sought after, someone who parts the crowd when they walk through a room.

So why can't they conquer their own fears? Why is it that a mere nightmare, visuals that their own brain conjures, something that someone as powerful as them should be able to control, can bring them to their knees?

It's been a while since they'd had a dream this bad.

K picks up the pieces of their shattered self and goes through the motions again. Scan the room. Unclench their fingers. Head to the bathroom and wash their face.

Their hands are shaking. Their knees tremble. They brace themselves against the sink for support, despising themselves for it. They want to tell themselves they'll be fine, they want to hear from someone else that everything will be okay, but their pride doesn't allow it.

After all, relying on others will only make this problem worse.

When they think they can stand on their own, K heads over to their bed. They ignore the crumpled sheets and grab their phone, bringing it with them to the kitchen. For work purposes, they tell themselves. It's four in the morning, too early for any clients to contact them, but not too early that they can start getting prepared.

They have two missed calls. One from someone they don't recognize—spam, most likely—and a second from Rylan. Their finger hovers over the notification for a second longer than it should. It wouldn't be uncommon for the half-vampire to be awake at this hour, but the idea of contacting them because K is afraid to be *alone* is ridiculous.

They've had these nightmares long before they met Rylan. They've been dealing with them for decades now, nearly a century, even. Just because Rylan shoved their way into K's life doesn't mean they suddenly *need* them now.

Relying on others will only make it worse. But—

They swallow the lump in their throat and turn on the kettle.

They try to tell themselves that Rylan isn't any different from the other people K has met in their life. Immortality has consequences. They know this all too well: to befriend or fall in love with a mortal is to bear a pain unlike no other. They've tried to shake Rylan for this very reason, but they're like a barb that K can't pull out.

That doesn't mean Rylan won't leave.

The kettle finishes. K pours a cup of tea.

And then there's you. You're worse than a barb. Worse than anything K has ever encountered. Because without even trying to worm your way into K's head, you've succeeded. You could insult them and they'd be thinking about it for the rest of the day. Or, consequently, you could ignore them and they'd want to find out how to grab your attention again.

It's frustrating. It's an error in their calculations.

They're not naïve to not know what this means. It's happened before, precisely twice, in fact. They know the signs. But to have it happen with you, out of all people, is infuriating. You're nothing special. (You are). You're just a hunter. (But not just that).

No matter. At the end of the day, you're not going to solve their problem. They'll still wake up screaming. They'll still have to go through their routine of getting themselves back into a functioning state after convincing themselves their fears are only in their head.

K downs their tea fast enough to burn their throat. Developing anything further with you will only cause them pain.

[update 104.](#)

[May 14, 2024](#)

may 6th-12th.

hi! how's everyone doing? i'm going to make this a shorter update because i'm planning on working on chapter eleven throughout the night today. or, as long as i can stay up, at least. i won't be able to work on it for the next two weeks because i'm going to europe (!!), so this is my way of trying to catch up.

speaking of, since i won't be writing, there isn't a point in doing weekly updates for the time that i'm gone. as compensation, i'll post two drabbles (one that will be available on all tiers, and a second that will be available for the twilight and midnight tiers only). in addition, i'll try my best to get a sneak peek up with the content i write tonight and tomorrow, but it really depends on what i write tonight. if not, i hope the drabbles are a good enough trade.

chapter-wise, i'm still chipping away at K's and Rylan's scene. as usual, the plot has started to run away from me a little and is now developing in a way i hadn't planned—but i like it? i initially thought that Blane's scene would be the exact same as this one (i think i mentioned this last week), but K's and Rylan's whole 'not being part of IAOS' thing has made me reconsider some things. there's a lot that Blane discusses that don't make sense for K and Rylan, so we're touching on topics i didn't think i'd be

able to address. i'm happy with it, though. it gives more variety to branches and (hopefully) convinces you to go back and play both.

alright, i'm going to go grind now! as always, thank you so much for supporting me and i hope you and your loved ones are all doing well. i'll speak to you again in two weeks <333

sneak peek.

[Rylan's] the anomaly I never thought I'd see. The acquaintance—friend?—I didn't think was possible to make.

CHAPTER 11.

"Well, the first reason is that we need to talk. I know you've been busy with your—" They wave their hand "—hunter things, lately, but we need to find a way to make progress with Caine's case—and getting my name cleared."

"And the second?"

Rylan shifts in their seat. They go quiet but if they're hoping [K] will save them, it's a lost cause. Eventually, they sigh and admit, "You sounded like shit. Over the phone, I mean. I thought I should check up on you."

Oh.

It's funny, hearing those words. Seeing it is even more absurd. Because Rylan, six foot tall, sporting a leather jacket, eyes rimmed with black eyeliner, nails painted black and a damn half-vampire at that, is telling me they're here because I sounded off on the phone. That they're checking up on me.

WHEN
TWILIGHT
STRIKES 

[the eyeliner is canon, btw.](#)

[May 12, 2024](#)

[Have Your Cake \(And Eat It Too\). \[A Devereux\]](#)

[May 11, 2024](#)

Synopsis: The sense of taste

Note: Sorry for the delay! I meant to get this up earlier but I had writer's block on this drabble for a bit :(I'm very happy with how it turned out, however. Enjoy the fluff because the next series will be another angst one hehehehe.

The thing about [A] is that they can be quite oblivious. And by quite, they mean *very* oblivious.

No, those butterflies each time you brushed against each other weren't just 'friend' things. No, feeling like the world was ending each time you got hurt on a hunt was not just them caring for their best friend. No, wanting to spend every hour and every second of the day with you was not platonic (at least, not for them; their thoughts weren't exactly in that realm).

So yeah, they were a little clueless. Sue them.

Still, there are a few particular moments where they feel like banging their head on a table because of how stupid they were. When they think back on it, it couldn't be more obvious how head over heels they were. At the time, however, it didn't even occur to them that that was an option.

Like that one time. Fuck, it's embarrassing to think about now.

The two of you had been at a café, catching up on a Saturday despite having seen each other fifteen or so hours ago. They didn't care. Seeing you made them happy, even if they couldn't really explain it. It was just... safe. Comfortable. They never felt like they needed to recharge when they were with you.

"—shouldn't be that hard."

"Yeah? Speak for yourself."

[A] rolled their eyes. The two of you were talking about your current case—a werewolf who had been involved in several contacts with the human police. It was a more complicated case, seeing as you had to get clearance from the NYPD to transfer the files to IAOS (which they had not been happy with), but [A] had confidence that you'd solve it soon. You guys always did.

"We'll deal with it on Monday. I don't want to talk about work anymore," [A] said, waving their hand.

You raised an eyebrow. "You were the one who brought it up."

"And I'm also the one changing the subject now." They pointed to your slice of cake with their fork. "How is it?"

"Hmm? Oh. It's good, I— Wait." You narrowed your eyes. [A]'s arm was already inching towards your plate. You swatted their hand away without a second glance. "You're only asking because you want some, don't you? I already gave you two bites!"

[A] grinned. "Care if I take a third?"

"Yes!"

"Can I just take some of the icing?"

You swatted their hand again. "If you want it so bad, buy your own."

And here's the thing, they could've, had they wanted to. It wasn't like you had the last slice and, even if you did, the café you chose had plenty of other flavours—many that [A] wanted to try one day, when they came back. So why didn't they just buy their own?

It wasn't like they couldn't finish it either. Though they weren't hungry, they certainly weren't full enough to not eat a piece of cake (and if they were, they'd find room).

At the time, they thought that maybe, they just wanted to nag you. That the look on your face each time [A] inched their fork forward was so hilarious that they didn't want to stop. They thought that the entire situation was just *that* amusing. And sure, it was, to an extent, but really, and they realized this only later, it was because they liked you.

They liked the little scrunch in your eyebrows when you noticed [A] was up to something. They liked the curve of your mouth, staring at your lips formed more playful insults. They liked the shiver that raced up their spine when you shot them a stern look and the butterflies that knocked at their insides.

Most of all, they liked how much sweeter the cake tasted when they knew it was yours.

Was that cheesy? Absolutely. But psychologically, that's how their brain thought.

"One tiny bite? A crumb?" [A] asked.

Though they were teasing, you sighed and pushed your plate to the center of the table. "You're buying me something else today, got it? I can't believe I'm doing this."

[A] grinned. "You got it."

As they grabbed a piece for themselves, their fork hit yours. You laughed and shook your head. Of course, the cake probably tasted the same as every other time they stole from you, but hearing that sound, watching you smile, they think that that bite of cake was the best they ever had.

[update 103.](#)

[May 6, 2024](#)

april 22nd-may 5th.

oh hi. how is everyone? it's starting to turn into summer here and it's improving my mood so much you don't even know. once i stop getting out of bed at noon and start writing 2k words a day it's over for you all!

on a more serious note, writing is going well hehe. K and Rylan are, as usual, super fun to write. getting to add in that scene where the hunter gives Rylan a packet of Pocky was just, ugh. cherry on the top. i remember a while back i had a few anons ask me if there would ever be a scene where the hunter would be able to feed Rylan. my answer at the time was up in the air. well, lo and behold, i've done it now. it was completely on a whim, but it fit the scene and well, the fact that K is there is even funnier. the fact that you can (kinda?) flirt with Rylan with K just sitting there is hilarious to me. i haven't yet, but i'll probably do an interaction where it's the other way around, just to make things fair.

my goal is to get this scene mapped out as soon as possible so i can apply the structure to Blane's. both scenes deal with the same content, it's just a matter of who you're talking to. once i have one figured out, the other should (hopefully) fall into place. Blane's scene is what gave me months of writer's block though, so i can only hope it doesn't do it again.

the more i power through this, the faster i can get to the romance lock. at least, that's what i'm telling myself. the next few chapters have been ones i've been anticipating since the beginning (literally, since i planned out this book), so i'm using this as motivation as i work through the rest of the week.

a new drabble should be posted this week (the final part in the senses series) and (hopefully) a sneak peek if i can find some content for it. depends what i'm writing and whether i think it's something you haven't seen before lol. thank you for being so patient everyone! you're all amazing <3

sneak peek.

"Are you thinking of stealing breakfast off me too?"

"Hmm? Oh, no. I'm pawning that off of [K] later."

CHAPTER 11.

I don't bother waiting for Rylan's reaction, but I still catch the pleased, if not slightly surprised, hum that escapes their mouth. Once I find what I'm looking for, I head back to the living room and toss the box at Rylan, who's now settled on my couch. They catch it easily.

It's a packet of...

"Pocky?" Rylan asks. There's a look of awe on their face, a soft expression that I don't think I've seen them make before. It's... cute. I feel my body flush with heat.

"You mentioned you liked it once."

[K] arches an eyebrow at that, but my attention is on Rylan. For a brief second, they seem flustered, but that embarrassment is quickly wiped away. Rather than a cheeky smile, however, this one is genuine.

"Thanks, Hunter."

Rylan holds the Pocky like they've been given something precious, rather than a \$2 snack. They thumb the packaging of the box, stroking down the edges that are threatening to come off.

WHEN
TWILIGHT
STRIKES 

[the little things.](#)

[May 2, 2024](#)

note: sorry for being mia! i've been dealing with moving back from uni and readjusting, so i'll be skipping the weekly update. a more detailed one will be up this weekend/the coming monday <3

[Mine. \[n alves\]](#)

[Apr 26, 2024](#)

Synopsis: The sense of sight

Note: Slightly spicy hehe. Also, sorry for the delay! I meant to write this yesterday but I woke up feeling so shitty and only had time to get around to it tonight. Hope that's okay!

N remembers the first time they laid their sights on you. Some might say it was love at first sight with how fascinated N became of you. Others might claim it to be a small fancy.

Maybe it was a little bit of both. But despite being a hopeless romantic, N has never believed in that kind of stuff. If you asked them, they'd say they were simply curious.

But it was close.

They're the kind of person who finds personality more important than physical beauty, who finds laughter more important than materialistic goods. But there was something about the way you held yourself that night, the ease with which you glided through the crowd—if you were uncomfortable by the large number of people who'd shown up, it didn't show.

Of course, it goes without saying that they thought you were attractive. You always swat them playfully at this part of the story, but N makes sure it's included for a reason. It didn't matter if you'd shown up in a suit or a dress, in sweatpants or a blouse—for a second, they could've sworn they felt something close to starstruck.

When the two of you started dating, the feeling continued. Over and over. They thought you were the prettiest person to ever walk the planet and wouldn't back down from telling you so. They showered you in compliments, hugged you from behind and whispered in your ear how gorgeous you looked, raked their eyes up and down you appreciatively when you came out of the shower in only a towel.

The last one is often more playful than anything, but sometimes, it leads somewhere. To makeouts and roaming hands and hot kisses on necks. To butterflies in N's stomach, to cuddles into the morning, to soft mumbles of "I love you."

Although every moment with you is precious, those are N's favourite.

Times like now, though, make them want to reconsider.

"So?" You turn around, catching other angles of yourself in the mirror. "What do you think?"

N arches an eyebrow. "You know what I'm going to say, right?"

They'd already told you a dozen times when you first walked out of the washroom.

Beautiful. Pretty. Otherworldly.

Mine.

N is not a possessive person by any means, but sometimes, it rolls off their tongue. They think of the few times they've blurted it out in bed, when they're kissing down your body and you're calling their name, and flush with heat. Not the time for those thoughts. Nope.

"Right, but I want your real opinion." You pause, then add, "Please."

"You do realize that is my real opinion."

You roll your eyes. "Fine. I need your critical opinion then. I need to fill out a form to give back to Sebastian. And so do you, by the way."

N gives you a sheepish smile. "I know."

The two of you, along with [A] and Blane, were given a preview of IAOS's newest hunting gear with the intention of giving them feedback. N found little problems with their set, but because you were given a different one, you recruited them in hopes of getting a second opinion.

They like to think they've been good, especially with how much restraint they've been showing—leather looks really good against your body, what can they say—but apparently, they've been getting more distracted than you'd like. They get up from the bed.

"The lack of zippers could be a problem. And the hook here seems unnecessary."

They tug at it for emphasis, getting closer to you in the process. They're only a step away from you now. They're close enough to smell your shampoo, yet still too far to kiss. They rein the thought in with a light scolding. They already told themselves they'd keep their thoughts PG-13.

"Really? I kind of like it."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. It's like those loops on carpenter pants you use to hang hammers. Also—" You smirk and take a step closer; N can feel your breath on their skin, "—it comes in handy when someone you're dating wants to pull you closer. Don't you think?"

N flushes. PG-13 out the window. The urge to push you onto the bed grows stronger. A four-letter word dances on their tongue. They're so lucky. Incredibly lucky. Still, they try to play it cool.

"Now who's getting distracted?" they ask.

You lean forward. Your lips ghost theirs and N sucks in a breath. "Does it really matter?"

When their mouth meets yours, they find that no, it really doesn't.

[update 102.](#)

[Apr 24, 2024](#)

april 15th-22nd.

hiiii. i hope everyone is doing well !! what has everyone been up to lately? i, for one, discovered that april is *not* a camping month in canada. so if anyone was wondering where that sneak peek was over the weekend, it wasn't posted because i was too busy bundled up under five blankets trying not to get hypothermia to type anything.

on that note, i'll get a sneak peek up within the next couple of days, as well as a new drabble posted today or tomorrow.

now, onto chapter eleven, progress has been good! i don't know if i'll ever reach the writing speed i was at last year, but for now, i'm just happy that i want to write. i've set a soft goal for myself to write 3/4 of the chapter by the end of may (i'm also going on vacation at the end of that month, so it's even more of a time crunch), but i'm not going to be too hard on myself if it doesn't happen. a lot of you have told me that i need to be nicer to myself, so, for once, i'm going to take your advice. a harder goal will be to get the chapter out sometime in june. it's been a lot longer of a wait than i anticipated, so i appreciate everyone being so patient.

as i said last week, i shifted gears from writing Blane's scene to K's and Rylan's and gosh, it's actually such a breath of fresh air. Blane is so awkward and Rylan is just... not. their developments couldn't be further from each other, so it's been nice to look at things from a different perspective. i have, however, been trying to showcase Rylan as a more complicated character as the story goes on. chapter ten revealed that they were still wary of the hunter, but couldn't stay away from them. chapter eleven follows a similar pattern, but with K here, it becomes even more crucial to them to keep their walls up; K is exactly the buffer they need. does this end up working for them though? ehhhh not really.

K is a similar case. they're dragged to the hunter's apartment per Rylan's request and, for most of the scene, are confused as to why they let it happen. why are they not protesting to this like they usually do? why is it important to them to check on the hunter after Rylan mentioned they might not be doing so hot? it's a tumble of emotions for everyone, and boy is it fun to write about.

hopefully, i'll be able to speak on it more next week when i get some more writing in. thanks for reading <33

sneak peek.

I'm not surprised to see [K] staring back at me.

[update 101.](#)

[Apr 17, 2024](#)

march 8th-14th.

sorry for this incredibly late update. i was grinding all of monday to get my final assignment finished, but i am happy to say that i handed it in and am officially done with my undergrad!! it's crazy because i started *when twilight strikes* in my first year, so that i'm still here in my fourth is like woah. weird. i don't think it'll sink in until i'm on that stage, grabbing my diploma, but yeah. go me?

with that out of the way though, i can finally, finally shift all my focus to chapter eleven. best believe i will be grinding my ass off to get this out to you as quickly as possible. i've been working on Blane's scene lately (have been for the past few months, really, whoops) but i think i'll switch over to K's and Rylan's soon to give you guys some variety in the sneak peeks. i feel bad constantly showing you one character when four others haven't had screen time for a hot minute.

i might have mentioned it in another update, but A and N will be showing up in the latter half of the chapter. i'm calling it back to something that occurred in the earlier chapters, so i'm really excited to get there. i'm still on the fence about whether i should make it a choice scene, or if they both should be there together, so let me know if you have any thoughts. i'm leaning towards the latter right now, if only because they haven't had many scenes together. i also have this fun idea for if you're romancing either of them, where the other will tease you about it or send you a knowing look. i might add the same in K's and Rylan's scene. my only issue with this is i wonder if it's too early? like, should i save this for after the romance lock? or is it okay to do before? again, if anyone has some input, i'd love to hear it!

because i only just finished school on monday, i haven't had too much time to deep-dive into this, but best believe that will be my priority from now on. depending on how much i write tonight, there will be a (scheduled) sneak peek for the weekend, as i will be out in the woods camping hehe. i'll talk to you all very soon. much love <3

sneak peek.

I meet [Blane's] eyes, bearing the weight of their blank stare as a reward.

CHAPTER 11.

Blane's face drops. It's strange, seeing them like this. Every harsh line in their expression is smoothed out. The look in their eyes is curious—surprised? ... In awe? I don't know if I'll ever be able to describe it properly. They look younger.

It makes me think they're pretty. It makes me wish our relationship was different so they wouldn't doubt me, though I know it has more to do with them than it does me.

"You can't say that kind of stuff, [surname]."

I shrug. "Why not?"

Blane's eyebrows scrunch together. "Forget it." A pause. Their facial features smooth out, but there's still a slight downward tug to their lips.

"Thank you for coming. I... You didn't have to, but you did."

WHEN
TWILIGHT
STRIKES 

[soft\(er\).](#)

[Apr 16, 2024](#)

last Blane sneak peek for a bit, i promise! i know i've been giving a lot of Blane content for months now haha

[Seventy-Two Hours. \[K de Vries\]](#)

[Apr 11, 2024](#)

Synopsis: The sense of hearing

Despite being over a century old, there were a lot of things K didn't understand until they met you. Affection, for one. They never quite understood why couples were all over each other, and still don't, really, but it's a little clearer to them now that the two of you are dating.

The second was love languages. They remember the first time Rylan brought it up to them. They proceeded to analyze K after that, which ended up in an argument over whether K was an 'acts of service' person or if Rylan was simply making all this up.

"Just because it's on the internet doesn't mean it's real," K argued.

"And just because you're a boomer who disagrees with everything doesn't mean it's *not* real," Rylan countered.

The discussion died quickly after that.

The third and final thing that K learned is something they still have difficulty admitting. Because, you see, if affection is still something they're struggling with, having the confidence to admit that they miss you is on another level entirely.

But they do. They miss you dearly. The two of you are busy people, but you always find time to meet. Sometimes, you'll stay over at their penthouse for the night; there's a drawer in their bedroom that's quickly filling up with your stuff. Other times, they'll make the trek to yours, busying themselves in the kitchen so that you have a warm meal to come home to after your shift.

When you're halfway across the world, however, this isn't possible.

And that's fine. It's fine. K has spent decades being alone. They've faced heartbreak and grief and hundreds of other misfortunes that most don't experience in their lifetime. They can handle a week without you. They can deal with staring at your face through a screen instead of being able to touch you in person. Hold your hand. Kiss you. Push you onto the bed and—

No. Don't go there.

K swallows. Stands and goes into their bedroom.

Had it been a couple of months ago, they would have shoved their feelings into the gutter and gone on a long walk. Had it been a few weeks ago, they would have hesitated to press that call button, finger lingering over their screen for longer than they'd like to admit. Today, it only takes them a few seconds to make up their mind.

The dial tone drones as they wait for you to pick up. They sit. Stand. Resist the urge to pace around the room. They stare at their bed, one side made and the other untouched from how they slept. It bothers them.

"Hello?"

K's shoulders slump. "Hi."

"Hi." They can hear the smile in your voice.

"Is it late for you? I can call back tomorrow."

A rustle of sheets. "No, it's only midnight here. I was going to head to bed in half an hour or so. Besides, I wanted to talk to you before I went to sleep."

"Me too," K replies, fighting a blush. They settle into their half of the bed, phone still pressed to their ear. "How was your day? They're not overworking you, are they?"

You laugh. "They always are. But today was fine. It's been mostly meetings, so it's more mental work and boredom than anything else. [A] makes them more interesting, at least. How about you? Did you have any clients today?"

And so, the conversation went on. The two of you talked about the mundane: about your daily lives and what's been happening since you left for your trip. You mention that it's only three more days until your flight home, and K quietly mumbles that they know, having been keeping track. They tell you they'll be waiting for you at the airport, and you teasingly answer if they'll write a 'Welcome Home' sign for them.

They won't, but Rylan will.

It's a relatively short phone call, lasting no longer than ten minutes before K tells you to hang up because they heard you yawn. But it's calm. It's soothing, to hear your voice—something they didn't realize they could feel. They could listen to you talk for hours on end, whether it be you telling a story or ranting about some new coworker that you didn't like. It could be soft mumbling or joyful shouts—they'd still listen.

There's that saying: "I'll go anywhere you go." It used to terrify them. K used to argue that it was mindless to do something like that, to follow someone without any plans on your own, to trust them completely. It was never something that K would consider themselves. That's changed, lately. Perhaps they're not fully there yet, but for the time being, they'll listen to anything you say.

[update 100!!!](#)

[Apr 8, 2024](#)

happy eclipse day!! for those of us who live in north america, at least. i hope everyone who was in the area for the eclipse got to experience it! unfortunately, it was super cloudy where i was so i didn't get to see the actual sun, but it was super cool watching the sky get dark. it felt like night at 3pm.

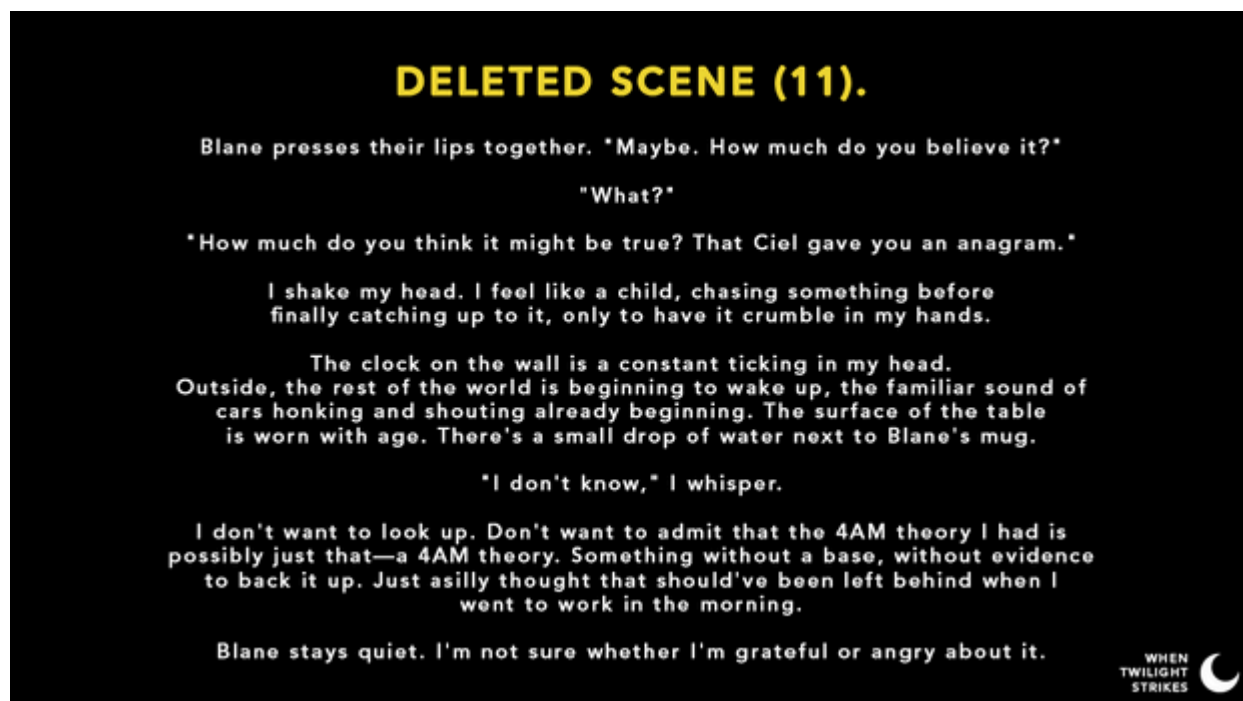
anyway, back to the main point: hi. this is my weekly reminder to everyone that yes, i am very much still working on this story and yes, progress is being made. it's slow, but i managed to find time to open my word document this week, so that's improvement, at least. in terms of my personal life, i currently have three more assignments until i'm done with school (hopefully forever) so once i bust those out, i'll have all the time in the world to write. pinky promise and everything.

but when i cracked open the word document this week, it really made me realize how much i love writing this story. sure, there have been some points where it's felt more like work than leisure, but at the end of the day, i keep coming back because i really do love it. i love the characters and the plot and i am eternally grateful so many people care for it the same way i do. interactive fiction was never something i knew i could create—I didn't even know it was an option. i'm so glad that i joined this community and made a home in it with you guys.

this isn't so much of an update than it is an appreciation post—I hope that's okay. i'll have more to say when i (finally) finish uni.

other housekeeping notes: i'll have a drabble posted sometime this week, hopefully within the next two days. i'm also planning on doing a sneak peek over the weekend; two of my assignments are due wednesday so after that, i'll be able to find more time to write.

once again, i appreciate you all so much! thank you for all the kind words on my previous update as well. please take care of yourselves <3



[deleted scene \(chapter eleven\).](#)

[Apr 6, 2024](#)

this is from my first draft of chapter eleven (the horrendous one with the Nalani acronym, yes) before the big cut. it's a scene that showcases Blane being (surprisingly) understanding and kind about the situation, with the Hunter having a mental breakdown on the side. these two plot points still happen in the new draft, though differently, so i figured this would be okay to share.

as silly as the acronym idea was, i liked how it demonstrated that the stress has gotten to the Hunter. of course, i do realize that not everyone is going to play their main character as someone stressed out by everything (who knows, maybe your hunter is doing perfectly fine!), but it was fun to explore nonetheless.

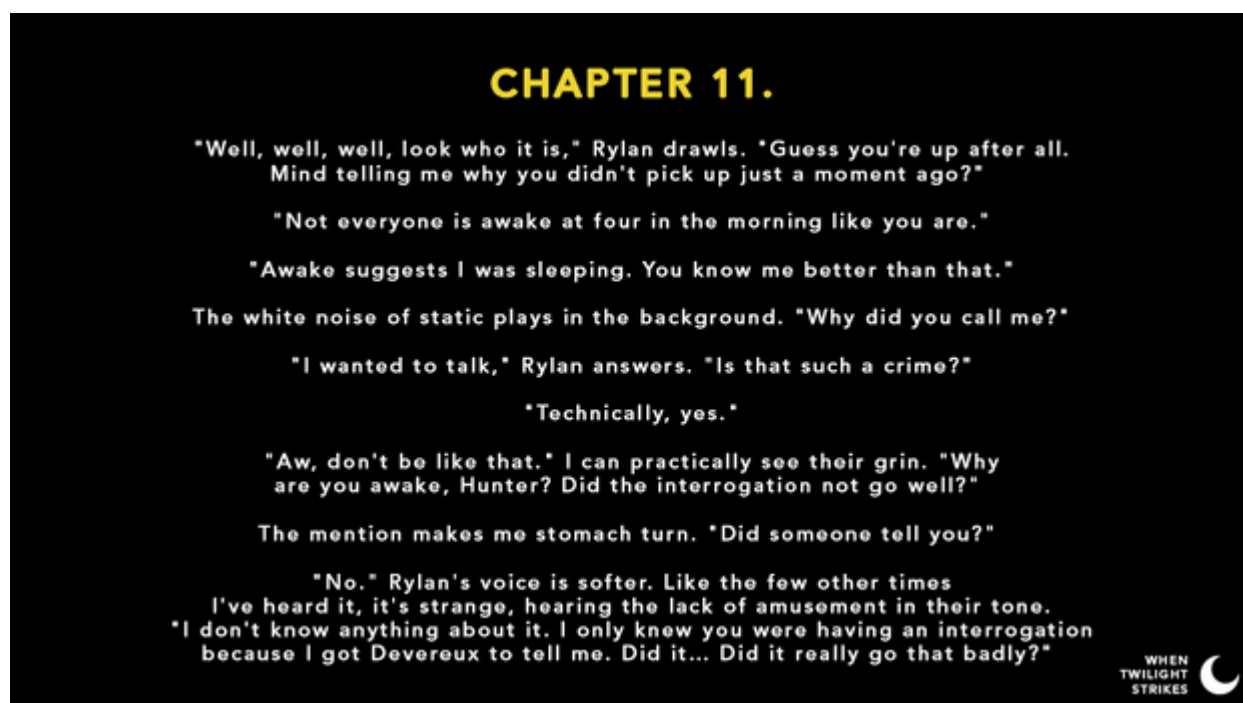
but, if you liked reading this, you'll likely see something similar in the final version of chapter eleven so don't fret. remember, i'm still working out different kinks and whatnot :)

[update 99.5.](#)

[Apr 2, 2024](#)

i'm going to save my 100th update for when i have content to talk about, so i'm cheating by calling this update "99.5." i know you're tired of hearing the same explanation of "i've been so busy with school lately that i haven't been able to write," and i apologize. quite frankly, i'm sick of it too. i promise that things are still moving forward with when twilight strikes and that i *am* actively thinking about it, even if i'm not typing in my document.

i appreciate you all more than you know. the fact that so many of you are still subscribed to my patreon and continue to cheer me on means so fucking much. i swear i'll make things worth it for you <3



[oh. so they do care.](#)

[Mar 28, 2024](#)

[update 99.](#)

[Mar 27, 2024](#)

march 18-24th.

update 99. that's kind of insane. that means the next one will be my 100th. will i have chapter eleven done by then? no. but it would've been very fun if i did.

to speak on the new chapter, progress has been going. has it been slow? yes. but it's going. i'll admit, i haven't touched the word document in a few days, but that's more because of life things than me not wanting to write. it's annoying when things like this happen, especially since i've been making such good mental progress on it lately. i know i've made you wait a very long time for this chapter, so hearing that it's moving slowly is probably more frustrating than anything—believe me, it is for me too—but i really appreciate everyone sticking by!

to move things along faster, i think i might take a break from Blane's branch and switch over to K's and Rylan's for a bit. i'm hoping they give me the refresher i need—especially since Rylan is such an eccentric character. writing their drabble the other day reminded me how much i adore them. even though their arc is, arguably, as heavy as Blane's or K's, their personality is much lighter and easier to write. plus, having K there is always fun. their dynamic is up there with A's and Blane's for me.

but yeah, i don't have much to say this week, i apologize! i haven't been able to write a lot but trust me, i've been thinking about when twilight strikes a lottttt. i'm at home this week so hopefully i can manage a few thousand words over the next couple of days. fingers crossed!

sneak peek.

I meet [Blane's] eyes, bearing the weight of their blank stare as a reward. "If you already have an idea, why do you need to hear mine?"

[Intoxicated. \[Rylan Villanueva\]](#)

[Mar 22, 2024](#)

Synopsis: The sense of smell.

It took a while for Rylan to trust you. It took even longer for them to accept that they liked you. But once those obstacles were tackled, there was nothing stopping them from showing up at your doorstep every night, seeking warmth and cuddles.

There were a few occasions where they showed up in the daytime, catching you right before you were about to head out. They'd apologize and say they'd come back, but you'd override that, pushing them inside and telling them an approximate time you'd come back.

Like today.

But like most things in your relationship, Rylan had gotten used to it. Used to the kisses, which came for free instead of at a price like they'd been taught. Used to the cuddles at night, your body keeping them grounded. Used to the gifts that you'd hand out like party favours, expecting nothing in return.

They adored you. There was no other way to say it. So much that when you were gone, they liked to take advantage of the situation by raiding your closet. Sometimes, they liked to play dress-up and surprise you when you came back. This time, however, they just wanted something familiar. Something that reminded them of you.

They steal a hoodie and tug it over their head. It smells like you. They barely refrain from lifting the fabric to their nose and inhaling it. God, your scent is intoxicating. It's one of the things they first noticed when coming to your house. How the smell would follow them home, taunt them in corners of the city, telling them not to ruin this. Rylan has no description of it. It's just—you. Inconsequentially you.

Content, Rylan hops into your bed, snuggling into the blankets. It smells like your shampoo here. Once, you let Rylan take a shower in your bathroom and use your products. Their hair came out smelling like yours, so much that they were almost upset when they had to wash it with their shampoo the next time.

God, they're whipped. It should bother them more than it does, but they love you too much to see it as a problem. Emotions aren't the manipulative tool they once thought they were.

"Rylan?"

Oh, speaking of. They hear you take off your shoes and put down your stuff but make no move to get out of bed. Instead, they switch sides, shifting positions so that they're laying on their left instead of the right. They think they've unconsciously moved to 'their' side of the bed, but they ignore that thought. Like they said, they're whipped.

"Oh, there you are."

Rylan pokes their head out of the covers. "Hi."

"Hi." They want to melt at the soft tone of your voice. "Cold?"

"Without you? Of course."

You roll your eyes. "You say that every time."

"Doesn't make it any less true."

You turn away, but not before they can see how flustered you've become. Rylan grins. Aside from raiding your wardrobe, flirting with you remains their favourite thing. They know they don't technically need to anymore, since you're dating, but it's a habit they can't break. It's worth it, at any rate.

"Where'd you go?" they ask.

Your voice echoes from the bathroom. "The grocery store. I picked up some of those chips you like. We can do a movie night soon if you want."

"Is it my pick?"

"You know very well that you picked last time."

"Just checking."

"I'm sure you are."

You emerge from the bathroom in a new set of clothes. Rylan opens their mouth to speak—they were planning on coaxing you into bed with a bad pickup line—but the words die on their tongue when they see the look on your face.

"You're wearing my hoodie," you state.

Oh. That's what it is.

Rylan feels themselves flush. "Yeah. Is that okay?"

You shake your head. Your eyes are glued to their chest. "No, that's— It's fine. It's just— You look good in it."

God. Never have they felt so hot, even when the two of you are pressed against each other in bed, their lips on your neck and a hand around your waist. Okay, maybe that's a lie. But for someone who isn't making out with you right now, they're *warm*.

"I... " Rylan swallows. They force a smile. "That's how I felt when you wore my leather jacket for the first time."

You scowl. "Shut up."

"No. It's cute."

You walk over and lean over the bed. Rylan stares up at you, memorizing your features like it's the first time again. They want to pull you down, but they refrain themselves, waiting to see what you'll do next. It turns out to be worth it because a split second later, you're kissing them. They gasp into your mouth—then again when they feel your hand tilting their chin up. It's short, lasting no more than a couple of seconds, but it leaves them breathless.

When you pull apart, they chase you for more.

You laugh. "That's what you get. But you should wear my stuff more often. It looks good on you."

Rylan thinks they'd wear anything if it means doing this again. Do anything. They tell you as much and you smile. When they lean in for another kiss, this time, you let it happen.

[update 98.](#)

[Mar 18, 2024](#)

march 11th-17th.

i find it so strange that we're halfway through march. a while back, i thought i would've been able to release chapter eleven by now. clearly, things don't always work out according to plan but hey, at least i'm making progress! even though i'm in the thick of end-of-semester work, my profs seem to be taking pity on me, because most of my assignments aren't due until april. does this mean i should still be working on them? absolutely. will i though? no.

to talk about when twilight strikes, however, i will say that my attitude towards chapter eleven has been much better lately. before, i used to dread writing it; now, i look forward to sitting down and cracking open my word document. the other night, i even managed to lay out the entirety of the chapter's plot, which i'd been struggling with for months now. i always knew what i wanted to write for the first scene, but after that? phew. i was planning on just winging it. i've done that for a couple of chapters before eleven and it's gone relatively well, but still, the idea of just flinging myself into the abyss is a little scary. so knowing what i want to do now makes me just that much more excited.

you will, of course, be able to meet and talk to all the ros in this chapter. as we get closer to the romance lock, i'm squeezing in every opportunity i can to help build up the relationship. the lock should

kick in around chapter thirteen or fourteen, depending on how the plot progresses. i got so many *juicy* scenes waiting to be written for those and i'm very very excited.

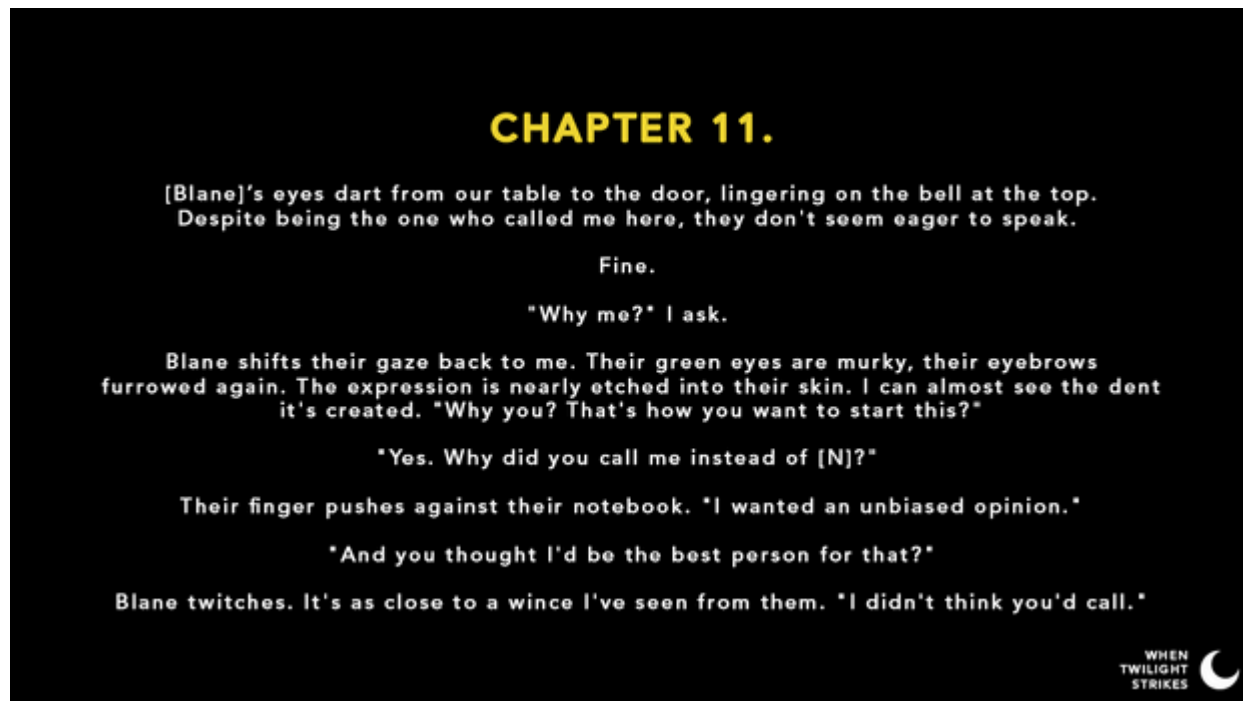
for now though, i'm focusing on what's ahead of me. as many of you may know (i've only been repeating it for a thousand updates now), the chapter opens with a choice of a Blane or K and Rylan scene. the latter half, as i've recently decided, will have interactions with A and N, with a cameo from our favourite over-worked manager, Sebastian. we'll also be revisiting the training room, with an opportunity to let out some stress on the iaos dummies. i've been wanting to explore the iaos facilities again and this is the perfect time for it. i haven't decided if i'm going to give the option of going to the laboratory or media room too, based on what you chose in chapter three; it really depends on how much work i want to give myself.

that's all i have for this week! hope you're all doing well and are taking care of yourselves <3333

sneak peek.

I feel myself getting restless in bed. "Is there an actual reason you called me? Or did you just want to piss me off?"

"Not necessarily, but it's a good bonus," Rylan answers. "Is it such a crime to want to talk?"



[you came, you called \(Blane's version\).](#)

[Mar 14, 2024](#)

as i said in my recent progress update, i've been rewriting a good chunk of chapter eleven so we're back to (though, i guess we never left) Blane sneak peeks for the time being! i'm much happier with how it's been progressing lately though, so hopefully, i should be able to provide sneak peeks of other things soon <3

[update 97.](#)

[Mar 11, 2024](#)

march 4th-10th.

so, i did something. a reasonably big something that both pushes the chapter forward in development and backwards. forward because (and i know i've said this a lot) i feel like by doing this, i finally am happy with where chapter eleven is heading and think i will run into less bumps in the road this way. but backwards because a lot of what i wrote needs to be scrapped. if you haven't guessed it already, i'm starting chapter eleven over. well, not completely over, but i'm rewriting at least half of what i already have.

i'll spoil what i had in my original draft, but i had an idea to have nalani as some sort of anagram. strange, i know. you don't have to tell me. for some reason, i thought it was too easy that i revealed the name at the end of the last chapter and needed to complicate it. you could say that backfired. badly. i complicated it so much that nothing made sense anymore. i mean, an anagram? really? where was i even coming up with that idea? i must have been as stressed as the hunter to come up with such a theory.

my new draft simply has the hunter trying to figure out who nalani is. that's the biggest part i'm rewriting—the rest is pretty much the same. i'm keeping the structure of the original chapter, that is, having a Blane and K & Rylan scene at the opening, with a chance to see A and N in the latter half. because a lot of the first conversation with Blane revolved around the possibility of an anagram (this sounds more ridiculous the more times i type it), however, it's been a lot of work reworking what parts i need to cut and what i can keep.

as hard as the decision was, i'm glad i made it though. everything flows much smoother this way. for the first time in a long time, i truly think i have a grasp on what's happening. i know i've said that before, but i truly mean it now. things are moving much quicker than before and i'm really excited to finally, finally, get things going. that said, i won't be providing a word count for the next couple of updates as i get this sorted, since it's kind of all over the place. once i figure things out, i'll add it back in my weekly updates.

in terms of other news, i've put the anniversary special on a backburner. my main priority is chapter eleven right now; i feel like i've made people wait long enough for it. i still see it coming out sometime in the future, but just maybe after the new chapter. it's still very much a project i want to put out into the world, it's only a matter of not having enough time right now.

as always, i hope everyone is doing well. sorry if this update is discouraging in a way, but i promise you, cutting the first draft is good news. thank you for trusting me <3

sneak peek.

I have a good idea of who's texting me, but rather than checking, when I reach for my phone, I merely flip it over. I don't want to deal with them. I don't want to deal with anything at fuck o'clock in the morning.

[I Can Be \(Intimate With You\).](#) [Blane Rekner]

[Mar 4, 2024](#)

Synopsis: The sense of touch

Note: Part of a new series I'm deeming "The Five Senses" (such a creative name wowowowow). I'll be doing a different sense for each RO, starting with touch for Blane <3 Also, this drabble will be free on all tiers as a thank you for sticking by me on my break :)

Blane doesn't do touch. It's not a thing they're known for. In addition to their many other problems, this was one of the things they worried about most when the two of you started dating. It took them a while to admit it, of course, but once you got it out of them, Blane broke down and told you how much they feared you leaving them because they weren't, and wouldn't be able to, give you what you deserved. That you'd ask for too much and, as much as they want to provide, they wouldn't be able to live up to those expectations.

You shook your head at that. Blane could tell you wanted to cup their face, to brush away the stray tears that had somehow escaped the corners of their eyes, but you held back. It made them feel all that much worse.

"I like you just the way you are," you said.

"That's not good enough."

"For who? Me, or you?"

Blane didn't have an answer for that. In response, you asked to hold them.

They said yes.

That night, they laid in your arms until they fell asleep. The close contact was almost too much for them. It was almost too little. Because as much as your touch scared them, it also soothed them. It was such a strange feeling, to be afraid of the very thing that also made them feel at ease, but they suppose that summed up your relationship. So, even though every bone in their body was telling them to run, they stayed until the morning, waking up to the soft puffs of your breathing and your fingers intertwined.

Things got better from there. You made a vow never to sneak up on them or embrace them from behind. In return, Blane grew to ask for hugs. Sometimes, this happened when they were panicked, having been triggered by something they saw. Othertimes, it was merely because they wanted to be close to you.

You accepted each time.

You also gave them time to reject your touch, visibly reaching out with slow movements. In response, they started initiating touch on their own. They followed the same pattern you did, audibly voicing that they wanted to hold your hand or, at the very least, making sure you saw that they were going to caress your thigh.

You understood Blane needed time before they would be fully comfortable—if they would ever be, they'd argue, but you always countered them on this—and were happy to give them that time. And each time Blane thought you ran out of patience, you simply seemed to gain more.

Second to only your kisses, it was Blane's favourite thing about you.

When Blane started touching you unconsciously, it was six months since the two of you had officially gotten together. It was a mundane action, something as simple as brushing away sauce from the corner of your mouth, but you noticed it anyway.

You had to wait for them to.

And when they did, they hid their face in their hands. They felt hot—hot, hot, like they could heat something up from just the heat of their cheeks. They remember you prying their hands apart, your laughter ringing through the air. Because you were laughing with them and not at them, however, they let it happen.

You met their eyes, glimmering with affection—they would only realize this later and blush again at the idea of you looking at them with such love—before reaching out yourself, taking your thumb and brushing it against the sauce smeared on their lips.

"There," you declared. "Now we're even."

Blane groaned again. They would've buried their face in their arms again, had your other hand not been holding theirs. "That's so corny. I can't believe I did that."

"I thought it was cute."

"Of course you did."

"I'm serious. You should do it again."

Blane looked at you skeptically, but it only took a second to know you were being serious. They wanted to lean across the table and kiss you breathless. They wanted to run

[i'm back \(soon\) !!](#)

[Feb 26, 2024](#)

hi. it's been a bit, hasn't it? writing this feels like coming home, in a way. i've missed writing updates, i've missed the world of *the midnight hours—*i miss it a lot.

to say that february has been busy for me would be an understatement. i feel like my professors collectively decided to make every assignment on the syllabus due—and then some. if i wasn't doing homework, i was sleeping. you might have seen on my tumblr, but chapter eleven has remained untouched for some time. my fingers itch to get back to it, but, well, if i couldn't graduate because of bad grades, what would be the point, right? so it stayed in my onedrive, collecting dust until i could (can) finally get back to it.

on the bright side, the break gave me lots of time to regain my motivation. i mentioned in many updates before that i was confused with the direction of the chapter and whether i was happy with the result. being forced to take a step back means i can look at it with fresh eyes and (hopefully) write faster than ever. my professors still seem to hate me, glancing at my march calendar, but i hope that i can balance the two anyway. i've done it before, i can do it again. the main reason i took my february break was because i was suffering from writer's block, so i think we should be good to go for march.

i'll be back to my regular posts on friday (march 1st) and should post a new drabble sometime this weekend. i apologize for my long silence. i know i said i'd pop in from time to time or try to post extra content, but honestly, i was so stressed with everything that i couldn't; the idea of opening patreon was unnerving to me.

regardless, i'm back now and i hope everyone has been well in my absence. excited to get back into the world of *the midnight hours* with you <3

[announcement.](#)

[Jan 28, 2024](#)

hi everyone ! hope you're all doing okay.

i'm sure you've noticed over the past two months but i've really been struggling with writing lately. i've felt guilty about the lacking updates for a while now, so i've made the decision to pause billing for a month. that is, until february 28th, you won't be billed.

that said, i'll still try and post a few things. i'm using this time to catch up and come back with more content, but i also want to make up for the shortage that was in december and january. i'm still hoping on the anniversary special being posted publicly on the 24th, with a potential for it being a few days earlier here. this time, it'll be available for all tiers.

thank you for being so understanding recently. your support means everything <3

[update 96.](#)

[Jan 23, 2024](#)

january 8th-21st.

i've found out that the only way i can get any writing done is if i sit my ass down and force myself to do it. not because i don't want to, but because i'm constantly telling myself i'll do it later, or i have no time and need to do something else instead—something school related and thus productive. other times, i'm not in the mood or would rather just go to sleep (no comment on this one). but once i sit down and really get into it, i find that it's not nearly as bad as i thought it'd be. that my writer's block is actually working with me for once, that i actually have ideas and am excited to get there.

i just have to do it.

this week, i switched gears and moved on to K's and Rylan's scene. well, Rylan's scene i guess, considering that K made an appearance only as a distant voice in the background of the Hunter's and Rylan's call. they'll show up in person soon enough. as of now though, i'm focused on getting Rylan's character right.

from chapters one to five, they were extremely closed off, laughing off comments and putting up a facade. only from chapter six onward did that begin to change, but they were still wary. chapter ten changed that. they shouldn't have met the hunter, but they did. they shouldn't have wanted to see if they were okay, but they did. so in chapter eleven, when the hunter calls them at four in the morning, they can't hide the worry in their voice. they try, of course, but it's not as successful as it would've been a month before. even without doing the scene in chapter ten, you can see the change. they've hung out with the hunter too much to not grow fond of them. it's a really interesting change that i'm trying to perfect right now. since we don't get their pov, it's a little difficult to show, but i'm up for the challenge.

regarding the special, i haven't started it. oops. i'm going to force myself to start it tonight though, so if i have nothing for next week you're allowed to yell at me. again, it's not that i don't want to write it, it's more that i just choose sleep over writing sometimes (every time). so, yell at me please !

in terms of housekeeping, a poll will be up for those on the midnight tier this week to vote for the next round of drabbles. a new sneak peek should be up towards the latter end of the week.

as always, i hope you're all doing well <3

stats.

481,666 words (+1801)

sneak peek.

Considering how many secrets I know [Rylan is] still keeping from me, it's only fair.

[Tropes. \[N Alves\]](#)

[Jan 20, 2024](#)

Synopsis: Character A saves Character B from an awkward situation

Note: Originally, this was going to be the iconic (sorta jealous) "are they bothering you" trope but N is just too nice for it. So, instead, it's a mixture of things. Set before the first book, at a time when Blane and N are newer to the agency

IAOS knew how to host a party, N will give them that. It makes them wonder why the budget was spent on extravagant cakes that look like they could be used in a wedding, when it could be used to update the technology in the lab, but whatever.

(You didn't hear that from them).

Unfortunately, the thing with these events was that N never knew where to be. They hopped from group to group, mingling with coworkers from other departments and asking how things were. They checked up on Blane, who'd situated themselves in the corner at the beginning of the party and hasn't moved since. They made rounds at the food table, helped restring some of the garland that was falling off and whacking people in the face, offered to refill the punch bowl—anything and everything.

Fallon asked them why they felt the need to do so much. It was a party that celebrated them too. Why were they not enjoying themselves?

The truth was that this was N's version of that.

They're not someone who constantly has to keep themselves busy like [A], but events like this spiked their anxiety. If they stayed in one place too long, they'd be trapped. Better to keep moving around, better to play hopscotch with the conversation circles than be caught in a situation where there's no escape.

Besides, they felt better when they got to greet multiple people. It's been a while since they've had time to properly talk to some of their coworkers—N wanted to say hi to them all.

Of course, there was one person that they wanted to see most, but with the craziness of the night, N hasn't had the chance to talk to you yet.

Emphasis on yet.

"[They're] alone," Blane comments.

"Hmm?" N asks.

"[Surname]? [They're] alone right now. If you wanted to talk to [them], now's your chance."

"I don't—" Blane shoots N a look, cutting them off. They clear their throat, ignoring the heat rising to their cheeks. "Fine. Maybe I do. I just don't want to look like I'm signalling [them] out."

Blane doesn't reply for a moment, watching something in the distance. N busies themselves with picking at a crumb on the table. The sounds of the party are getting louder. They wonder how long it'll run for. The silence spans a minute before Blane speaks again.

"Looks like you got your wish."

N turns. Whereas you were alone before, you're now accompanied by someone new. An intern, if N recalls correctly. Alexander. He was brought in for inquiries before being transferred to the ambassadors

after IAOS discovered his charm. Those were only rumours, of course, but from the look on your face, it seems to be true.

"Blane, really—"

"No."

"What?"

"No. I'm kicking you out. Go talk to [Surname] or don't—I don't care. I'm not letting you sulk at my table any longer."

N hasn't known Blane for that long, but they know enough to figure out that this is Blane's way of showing encouragement. Granted, it's a bit of a roundabout way to do it, but they can't say it doesn't work. Sighing, N gets up and heads in your direction, completely ignoring the slight quirk of Blane's lips.

In the short time that they've gathered up the courage to approach you, however, something seems to have changed. What looked like smooth talking has now turned into flirting, and, judging by the look on your face, you're not having it. N watches you wrinkle your nose as you lean away, trying to create space for yourself.

Their pace quickens. The world focuses just on you.

"Hey," N greets. They slide into the conversation easily, cutting off whatever Alexander was talking about. You flash N a grateful smile, the complete opposite of the dirty look Alexander gives them. "I haven't seen you all night, [Name]. Is this where you've been hiding?"

You let out a short laugh. "I thought you were the one hiding. I've been here the whole time."

N grins, relishing in the thought that they made you laugh. They turn to Alexander. If jealousy was a person, N is sure Alexander would be the top-running candidate. "Alexander, right? I think you're new. How are you liking IAOS so far?"

"Fine. Better than I thought," Alexander answers. His smile comes out like a grimace. "I think I'm going to grab another drink. It was nice talking to you, [Name]."

"You too."

You and N watch as Alexander recedes into the background. After a moment, the two of you burst into laughter.

"Oh my God, I thought he'd never leave me alone. He was nice at first, until I realized the only reason he came up to me was because he wanted to flirt." You clear your throat and straighten in your seat.

"Are you from Tennessee? 'Cus you're the only ten I see."

"He said that?"

You smirk. "Tried to."

N laughs again and takes a seat. They end up staying there for the rest of the night. A flurry of people come in and out, including [A], your partner, but they're the only one who remains constant. Alexander doesn't try to flirt with you again, but N can feel the glare boring into the back of their head throughout the night.

They don't really care. After all, you'd much rather speak to them.

CHAPTER 11.

I focus my eyes on Blane, not wanting to look at the state of my [food] anymore.
If Blane feels the weight of my gaze, they don't comment.
It gives me a chance to admire at them—an embarrassing fact that I'd never admit.
Because while I could convince myself I'm merely staring, admire is much more fitting.
The curve of their lips, the shape of their cheekbones. Bold, thick eyebrows; startling,
enchanted eyes. Dainty fingers decorated with rings. Hair that looks so soft
I once heard someone ask for their brand of shampoo.
And surprisingly, they'd given it.
The more time we spend together, the more I realize Blane's sharp edges can
be dulled. Their smirk, a sharp tug at the edge of their lips until it melts into
a warm smile. Their eyes, hardened and narrowed until they find an ounce
of sympathy within themselves and turn that gaze into something kind.

WHEN
TWILIGHT
STRIKES 

[soft edges.](#)

[Jan 17, 2024](#)

(i promise the next sneak peek won't be Blane centric lol. it's only because i'm writing their scene (and have been for 500 years)).

[update 95.](#)

[Jan 15, 2024](#)

just popping by to say that i, unexpectedly, had a whopping four assignments due this week (it's the first week of the semester? come on now) so i (surprise surprise) got very little writing done. that said, i'll be

pushing a full complete update to next week.

i still plan for a new drabble and sneak peek to be posted in the coming days, so be on the lookout for those. hope everyone's well <33

[update 94.](#)

[Jan 8, 2024](#)

january 1st-7th.

before i start, let me say this: ignore the word count, i'm still getting into the groove of things (clearly).

i left a lot of unfinished things in december and told myself 'that's a problem for future Kristi.' well, it's the future now and current me is facepalming over the mess i made of my document. all the blank bits i left empty now need to be filled, which is what i've been focusing on lately—I don't want too get ahead of myself again. i've said before that this is tedious work, but because i'm currently in the midst of it, i will take the chance to say it again: it's tedious. it's tiring and it's repetitive and far from my favourite thing to do (though editing still takes the top spot for my most hated aspect of writing). not that it can't be enjoyable, but in a novel, one question leads to one answer. in interactive fiction, that answer could be one of five and you have to write all of them. i'm hoping to power through all my unfinished work this week and then get into the new stuff. when i do, you'll finally stop hearing about the same thing over and over again (apologies for that).

on another note, i've begun finalizing what's happening for the anniversary special. i should probably start that soon (the sooner it's finished, the less stressed i'll be), but i'll worry about that next week (future me i hope you're ready). for now, i'm just getting an idea of the exact contents of what i'm writing. in the least elegant way possible, the special will showcase what the ros heads think of the hunter. since this is such a broad topic, i've narrowed it down to three timestamps: first impressions, current thoughts and post-friendship/post-relationship thoughts. these will be canon stories and match up with the events of the books. it'll reference book one in most detail and tease vague possibilities for the latter two, since i'm not set on what those will look like yet. i'm limiting myself to 2000 words for each ro, but knowing me, i'll accidentally go over and give myself a lot of trouble editing. regardless, it'll be more content, so it's not like everyone will complain haha.

hopefully next week i'll have a more exciting update. i feel like i've been doing a lot of apologizing for the past month so i thank you all for your patience while i get my shit together. as always, i hope you're all well <3

stats.

479,865 words (+1023)

sneak peek.

Blane stays silent, letting me decide for myself. But I'd already come to a conclusion before we even had this conversation.

[Tropes. \[Rylan Villanueva\]](#)

[Jan 5, 2024](#)

Synopsis: Character A helps Character B put on a necklace or bracelet.

Note: Why did this end up angsty, I'm sorry-

Rylan collects a lot of things. They also misplace a lot of things.

So when you gift them a ring—silver to compliment their undertone, wide enough that it could be considered dainty but still thick enough that it was durable, and embellished with nothing but a ruby rhinestone subtly punctured in the middle—they know they have to keep it safe.

Because while they may have convinced [A] to believe their constantly rotating set of rings is deliberate, it's really because they lose them so often. How something supposedly stuck to their fingers gets lost is a mystery that they've yet to solve. Until they do, they need to keep their valuables locked up.

But this is a gift they don't want to hide. The moment you pull it out, their eyes light up, dark brown glimmering with a thousand gold fireworks.

"It's beautiful," Rylan breathes.

And it is. Just like you. Not just your looks, but your heart for trusting them with something that was clearly an expensive purchase. Not that money matters. It could be worth one dollar or one thousand—Rylan will treasure it like it's worth a million.

"You like it then?" Your voice has a lilt of amusement to it, the kind that Rylan likes. They usually chase that thrill, keep the jokes going until they're leading the conversation and guiding you through hoops and circles, but this time, they're too distracted by the ring to think about doing so.

"Of course I do."

"Yeah?"

Rylan forces themselves to smirk before they accidentally blurt out a love confession. They hold the ring up to their eyes, the ruby facing forward. "Yeah. Matches my eyes, don't you think? Did you pick the red because I'm a vampire, Hunter?"

"You know that's not it."

"I don't know. You can be quite funny sometimes."

You roll your eyes. "Like I said, you know that's not it. I know you like red."

Rylan hums appreciatively. They do like red. In fact, they'd go as far as to say it's their favourite colour, though they're so indecisive sometimes they don't want to make a permanent decision.

"Can I?"

You nod, passing the ring over. Rylan fiddles with their necklace for a second before taking the clasp off. Two rings are strung on the cord, but tonight, they want to add one more. It's the only way they can keep the ring on their person without losing it.

They slide your gift on, admiring how it looks with the other two. Those have their own story. One day you'll ask about it, they're sure, but tonight, you stay silent, watching as Rylan pulls the cord back up to fit around their neck.

"Do you mind?"

There's a slight hitch in your breath that Rylan tries to ignore. It's easier to tell themselves that it was the wind or maybe you choking on your spit for a second than what they want it to be.

Your fingers grip the clasp, cold against the back of Rylan's neck. They repress a shiver as you brush against their skin. Better to pretend it was accidental. Better to ignore the way your heart is beating faster than it usually does than get their hopes up over something.

Rylan hears the moment the necklace clips together, but for a moment, you don't move. Instead, you stand there, trying to control your breathing as your fingers touch the nape of Rylan's neck. Rylan forces themselves to swallow, tells themselves to get it together lest they turn around and kiss you senseless.

"Hunter?"

"Hmm?"

Rylan forces a swallow again. "Did you get it?"

"Oh, yeah. Sorry."

Rylan takes a step forward and away from you. The space is both a relief and an excruciating pain. Because they want to get further, but they also want to be closer. They want to tell you that they like you but they know it'll only cause the both of you pain.

That's why when they turn to face you again, the grin that's stretched across their face is so false they nearly cringe. The façade they put up has quadrupled despite their desire against it. It's not fair to either of you, but they tell themselves it's what's needed. It's what's needed and they know it.

Unfortunately, that doesn't erase their feelings.

"So? What do you think?" they ask.

Your eyes roam their collarbone, down to their neck and the new ring that's hanging on the cord. Your smile is forced, but Rylan has no right to call you out on it when they're doing the same.

"I'm glad you like it."

"It's from you," Rylan answers. Their expression turns sad, turning away before you can see the change. Already, the mask is breaking. Already, one glance at you and they feel like falling to their knees. "I would've liked it no matter what it was."

This time, they can't ignore your soft "oh." It makes them hate themselves so much more.

CHAPTER 11.

I remember dreaming about Ciel. They were just as nasty in my dreams as they were in real life. But rather than targeting [A] with their taunts, they turned to me, calling out all of my insecurities. Since it was my mind making this up, they hit home with each and every one.

The script was mostly the same. They'd asked about whether I wanted to hear about their alleged conversation with Caine, about their drug dealing and their reasoning for going into the profession.

Their spit was even more gruesome in my dream, a glistening substance that seemed to multiply each time I looked at it.

When I got to the part where they were screaming at me, things took a change. Everything sounded garbled, like I was underwater or lost my hearing. Their voice was robotic, their mouth shaping every syllable like they were saying it for the first time.

When Ciel said Nalani's name, it came out in a series of phonetic sounds. They repeated it twice, the second time backwards. Immediately after I startled awake, gears in my mind turning.

Jan 1, 2024