

Hpowellsmith Patreon by Thomas Bell

(01/January/2024 - 20/May/2025)

[January Bonus Supplement Vote](#)

[Jan 1, 2024](#)

Here is your chance to vote for this month's Bonus Supplement short story from the perspective of a character from the Creme de la Creme universe. The story of your choice will go up on January 16th!

Fabien/President Faraci, 1756 (rivalry smut, the year before Royal Affairs)

Miss Dalca/Mr Blanchard/Mr Griffith, 1754 (cute smut, the summer at the end of Creme)

Raffi and new friends, 1759 (new horizons, two years before Honor Bound)

Savarel and family, 1760 (post-traumatic, one year before Honor Bound)

6 votes total

[January Q&A Post](#)

[Jan 1, 2024](#)

Hello everyone!

[Here's the link to the anonymous exclusive Q&A form.](#) Ask as many questions as you like, in the comments here or on the form, and I'll add the answers on this post. I look forward to hearing from you!

[Upcoming Plans: January](#)

[Jan 1, 2024](#)

Hello and welcome to 2024! I hope the new year treats you well. My goals for this year include releasing Honor Bound and the Royal Affairs update, starting a new project (or maybe two), donating blood, and getting outside as much as I can.

For January, this is what I've got planned for Patreon...

January 1st: [Poll to vote on the bonus story for the month](#) (Raffi, Savarel, Fabien/Faraci, Miss Dalca/Mr Griffith/Mr Blanchard) (£11+)

January 1st: [January Q&A post](#) (£6+)

January 2nd: [Alpha readable excerpt from Honor Bound Chapter 5](#) (£6+)

January 5th: [Newsflash update](#) (all paid subscribers)

January 16th: [January's bonus short story](#) (£11+)

January 19th: [Newsflash update with details and excerpts from what I'm working on](#) (all paid subscribers)

[Honor Bound Chapter 5: alpha preview](#)

[Jan 2, 2024](#)

Here's the readable Chapter 5 excerpt! It's a little less than half of what you can play through. The starred options are the choices that the randomiser "chose" for this playthrough. I hope you enjoy having a sneak peek at what will be happening in February's playable update!

[Chapter 5 alpha preview.pdf](#)

[January Newsflash #1](#)

[Jan 5, 2024](#)

Less of a fortnightly update and more of an update from the last two days, one of which was spent working on Honor Bound and the other was spent working on a mystery thing that I can't talk about at this point, so there's not a tremendous amount to say about what I've been writing. But! I hope you're having a good first week of January.

I forgot my traditional song link last time, so here's one for [Honor Bound](#) and here's one for [the mystery thing](#).

I planned Honor Bound Chapter 8! I was having real trouble tying myself in knots over the intertwining plotlines so I'm really pleased to have it in shape and ready to code. I started coding the opening scene, so I'll be ready to jump in next week.

And I was really happy to put Chapter 4 up! It's always a bit nerve-racking putting things out there but it was great to do.

Honor Bound current wordcount: 282685

Honor Bound's fortnight wordcount: 622

Honor Bound current average playthrough: 69536

I will have more to share in two weeks' time - in the meantime, I'm wishing you warmth and comfort, and a happy new year!

[January Side Story: Savarel Lopes, 1760](#)

[Jan 16, 2024](#)

[In this bonus short story, Savarel Lopes is having a hard time enjoying leave.](#)

The most ridiculous part is that the nightmares should be about drowning. A line drawn from one experience to the mind, or the gods sifting through your life and bringing something to the surface. That would make sense.

Password: amatothecat

[The Bonus Supplement master post with the rest of the bonus stories is here.](#)

[January Newsflash #2](#)

[Jan 19, 2024](#)

This fortnight's been a big one, full of a variety of real-life dramas (leaking pipes! rats! curtain rails falling down! ...among other things) but I'm pleased to have been able to make progress despite the disruptions.

I've been working on Chapter 8 of Honor Bound this fortnight, and in the last newsflash I'd just started coding; I'm now about 40% through writing it, and it's going well.

[Here's a new addition to my playlist](#) that I'm listening to right now!

Chapter 5 is going up here for Sneak Preview subscribers on 6th February, but in the meantime [here is an alpha preview](#) of the first part of the chapter. And there is [a sad Savarel story](#) up for Bonus Supplement subscribers too.

Honor Bound current wordcount: 304471 (past 300K! Bigger than Blood Money!!)

Honor Bound fortnight wordcount: 21786

Honor Bound current average playthrough: 74904 (getting into real novel-length territory now!)

Behind the Scenes:

I've been reading so much over the holidays! I loved Monstrous Regiment by Terry Pratchett and Mexican Gothic by Silvia Moreno-Garcia in particular. I highly recommend both.

My favourite bit:

I wrote a lot about Matia today, and some of my favourite parts were about them and Korzha interacting. I'm going to give a sneak peek of one of the bits, but another favourite one was writing Matia's responses to the MC and Korzha being in a romance, or Korzha's responses to the MC and Matia. I really enjoyed showing how they act, and how warm they are to each other (even if you happened to dump one of them for the other).

Sneak peek:

This is one of the branches I wrote today when talking to Korzha and Matia:

`#{varenn}` looks faintly alarmed, and tentatively pats Matia on the shoulder. Matia looks up at `#{var_them}` incredulously.

"That's how you act comforting?" $\text{\$}\{\text{mat_they}\} \text{\$}\{\text{mat_say}\}$, but $\text{\$}\{\text{mat_they}\} @\{\text{mat_pl}$ look|looks} a lot more cheerful even so. "I guess I shouldn't expect anything else after all these years."

*fake_choice

#"How did you become friends in the first place?"

Matia starts to launch into an improbable story about a daring horse rescue, but $\text{\$}\{\text{varenn}\}$ shakes $\text{\$}\{\text{var_their}\}$ head.

"It was after my parents died," $\text{\$}\{\text{var_they}\} \text{\$}\{\text{var_say}\}$. "Matia wanted to make sure I was all right, and kept insisting on bringing me coffee and such. So I let $\text{\$}\{\text{mat_them}\}$ stay and talk at me."

"Wow," Matia says, but $\text{\$}\{\text{mat_they}\} @\{\text{mat_pl}$ look|looks} entirely pleased with $\text{\$}\{\text{mat_themselves}\}$.

#" $\text{\$}\{\text{varenn}\}$ just has that manner, I guess."

Matia pats $\text{\$}\{\text{varenn}\}$'s arm. "And we wouldn't have you any other way."

#"You really don't like expressing yourself, do you?"

$\text{\$}\{\text{varenn}\}$ inclines $\text{\$}\{\text{var_their}\}$ head. "I do what I prefer."

"And we wouldn't have you any other way," Matia says, patting $\text{\$}\{\text{var_their}\}$ arm.

#"Don't tease $\text{\$}\{\text{var_them}\}$ too much, Matia."

Matia grins. "But it's so fun. I couldn't give it up. Well, maybe I'll do it in moderation."

[February Q&A Post](#)

[Feb 1, 2024](#)

Hello everyone!

[Here's the link to the anonymous exclusive Q&A form.](#) Ask as many questions as you like, in the comments here or on the form, and I'll add the answers on this post. I look forward to hearing from you!

[February Bonus Supplement Vote](#)

[Feb 1, 2024](#)

Here is your chance to vote for this month's Bonus Supplement short story from the perspective of a character from the Creme de la Creme universe. The story of your choice will go up on February 21st!

Fabien/President Faraci, 1756 (rivalry smut, the year before Royal Affairs)

Miss Dalca/Mr Blanchard/Mr Griffith, 1754 (cute smut, the summer at the end of Creme)

Raffi and new friends, 1759 (new horizons, two years before Honor Bound)

4 votes total

[Upcoming Plans: February](#)

[Feb 1, 2024](#)

I'm so pleased that the [Royal Affairs expansion is out in the world!](#) Do have a look if you haven't yet and would like to return to your royal's life again!

This is what's lined up for February here:

February 1st: [poll to vote on the bonus story for the month](#) (Raffi, Miss Dalca/Mr Griffith/Mr Blanchard, Fabien/Faraci) (£11+)

February 1st: [February Q&A post](#) (£6+)

February 2nd: [Newsflash update](#) (all paid subscribers)

February 6th: [Chapter 5 of Honor Bound early access](#) (£6+)

February 16: [Newsflash update](#) (all paid subscribers)

February 21: [February's bonus short story](#) (£11+)

[February Newsflash #1](#)

[Feb 2, 2024](#)

The biggest thing this fortnight has been that the [Royal Affairs epilogue coming out!](#) I'm so thrilled that people have been enjoying it. It was a lot of fun returning to the characters and figuring out how they might have changed a bit in the year between the previous ending and the epilogue, and I'm just pleased to bits.

I've been working on Chapter 8 of Honor Bound this fortnight, and am so very close to the end of the draft. A couple of blips related to some frustrating real-life issues meant that I didn't quite finish it in January, which I'd hoped to, but I hope to get it done and play it through next week. There are quite a few bits which are complicated and I want to make sure they flow properly before I send the chapters off to my editor.

I straight-up added all the Roadwarden soundtrack to my playlist, and [here's a song](#) I'm listening to right now.

Chapter 5 will be going up for Sneak Preview subscribers next week! If I manage to do it before then, I'm going to add a few more references to what happened in the Royal Affairs epilogue, as some of it will be publicly known by ordinary people. If not, I'm planning to add it sometime later.

Honor Bound current wordcount: 320948

Honor Bound fortnight wordcount: 16477

Honor Bound current average playthrough: errr, something longer than 75000 words. Chapter 8 is not passing RandomTest at the moment so I don't know for sure!

Behind the Scenes:

I've been on a real Silvia Moreno-Garcia kick, and enjoyed Untamed Shore a bunch! I've also been hiking and cycling a lot. It really helps my mental and physical health - the times when my shoulders or hips get in a bad state are when I'm at the computer too much and not doing physio or getting out - and has skyrocketed my energy levels.

My favourite bit:

I've been exploring a bit of how Matia and Korzha are behaving during the early days of a polyamorous relationship and I really like feeling out how they feel and act. They've been friends for a long time and wouldn't have considered getting romantic if it wasn't for the PC, so it's been fun to think about that in

ways that I didn't when I was writing Max/Delacroix/PC and Beaumont/Trevelyan/PC where the other two in the triads can get romantic as a couple if they're not with the PC.

Sneak peek:

A little bit of Catarina and Viola drama here:

Matia's still recovering from $\{mat_their\}$ fractured wrist and is busy in Elene's Prospect today, and Raffi's stuck in bed thanks to ongoing pain from $\{raf_their\}$ bruised ribs. But you're out and about in the cornfields with the rest of them, supervising Catarina as usual.

$\{varenn\}$ is over with Simone's group, keeping an eye on her, while Savarel's with Henriette and Diego, not working with any particular skill but putting in a decent effort regardless.

In theory, Catarina and Viola are working in a team, but they're more interested in chatting than in picking corn.

"My mother wrote and asked how my showjumping was going," Viola complains, twisting off a corn ear with cross energy, "just because that's what she did when she was at school, but I can't stand going fast on horses. They're too high up. I've told Maddalena I want to switch to Art lessons instead but my mother apparently called and said it's not allowed."

"You could just do it anyway," Catarina says. "Swap and pretend."

Viola's jaw clenches as she tosses corn into the pile. "She wouldn't like that. She'd find out."

"Not if you were smart about it," Catarina says.

Viola's scowl deepens. She shoves Catarina's shoulder roughly; Catarina squeaks in indignation, but Viola ignores it. "I don't care what you think is smart," Viola snaps.

Best of wishes for February, everyone! I hope you have a good weekend!

[Honor Bound Early Access: Chapter 5](#)

[Feb 6, 2024](#)

**HONOR BOUND
PATREON UPDATE**

I'm so pleased to share Honor Bound Chapter 5 today - you can [play it here!](#) As before, you can skip to the start of Chapter 5 if you'd like.

If you have the time and energy, I always love to [hear what you think](#) - I read through everything that comes through and I often make edits to the demo and to later chapters based on your feedback.

The early access demo is now around 225,000 words - just over 50,000 words added! Things you may encounter in this chapter:

- drama among students, town, and families
- locking gazes over a desk
- holding someone's hand very intensely
- kisses, if you want them
- a road trip
- some really nice food
- a breakup, if you play your cards right (or wrong)

I've made minor tweaks to earlier chapters, including adding a couple of dogs to the school. [Here is the face cast for Bramble](#) and [here is the face cast for Lulu](#).

I hope you enjoy!

[Honor Bound has a Steam page!](#)

[Feb 9, 2024](#)

[Honor Bound now has a Steam page](#) - please wishlist if you have a moment as it really helps! It's all feeling a bit more real now as I get into the last third of writing the draft...

And of course, please feast your eyes on the beautiful full cover art by Adrien Valdes:



[A bug question about Chapter 5](#)

[Feb 12, 2024](#)

I've had a bug report where a couple of choices produced the message "5-return line 732: It is illegal to fall out of a *choice statement; you must *goto or *finish before the end of the indented block" and I haven't managed to reproduce it yet.

If others have played Chapter 5, it's when Raffi asks about going on the trip to Cattlehead, and the player tried to choose "We can cancel the trip. I need to help Captain Korzha anyway." or "I'm relieved. "We can cancel the trip. I need to help Captain Korzha anyway." I've tried playing through manually via the chapter-skip and using RandomTest, but it's not playing ball. If anyone's played through that bit and managed to pick one of those options without the bug happening - or had the bug happen - please can you leave a comment? Thank you so much!

And thank you to the anonymous player too - I greatly appreciate the report and the rest of the feedback, which I'm mulling over as we speak!

Edit: I think it was a Dashingdon issue as it kept on working fine on my local copy no matter how much I tried to break it - but it should be fixed now!

[February Newsflash #2](#)

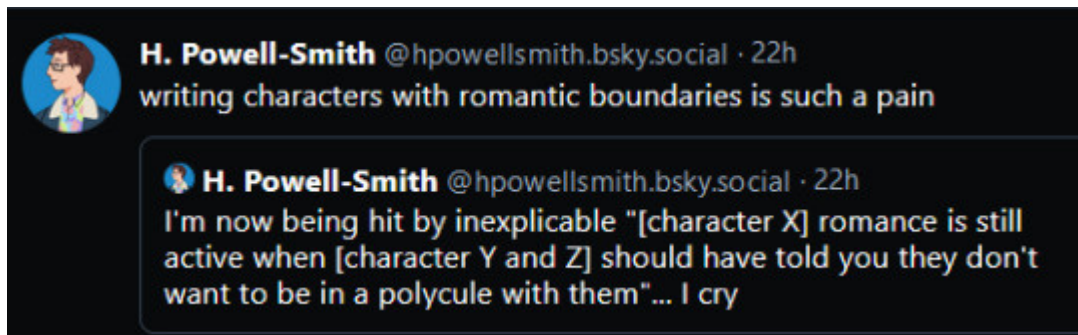
[Feb 16, 2024](#)

In the wake of the Royal Affairs epilogue coming out I did a few bits and bobs of bugfixing, but overall it's been very smooth sailing!

Honor Bound has its lovely [Steam page](#) and beautiful cover art by Adrien Valdes which I frankly cannot and will not stop talking about.

I'm listening to [Grand Ceremony](#) from the Pyre soundtrack right now, which is on my Honor Bound playlist. It always gets me in the mood for writing something bombastic!

...although "bombastic" is not necessarily the word for what I've been doing this fortnight. I finished drafting Chapter 8 and submitted it to my editor, which I was so pleased about, and it was also lovely to playtest Chapters 7 and 8 and realise "oh these are actually hanging together pretty well!" During a lot of the fortnight, though, I've been combing over the game to find incompatible romance routes and writing and coding conversations with characters where they'd rather you weren't dating certain other people.



It took a LONG time to cover all my bases and make sure I wasn't writing in continuity errors. I don't mind PC's cheating on the person they're dating, but if the NPC knows something's going on and it matters to them, they need to mention it or it feels weird!

But once I had all that done, it was surprisingly quick to code Chapter 9 - which is what I've finished up this last hour. Next week it'll be time to write it! The PC gets a holiday with some of their colleagues and can rest, chill out, and do a lot of romancing if that's their interest.

Honor Bound current wordcount: 338596 words

Honor Bound fortnight wordcount: 17648 words

Honor Bound average playthrough: 76869 words

Behind the Scenes:

I went to see the Strictly Come Dancing live tour! This show is called Dancing with the Stars in other countries. I was never into it at all until last year, and now my whole family are fans!

My favourite bit:

So much of this fortnight was planning and coding, so I'm tempted to say "the moment RandomTest passed 25K seeds" but I think what I'm proud of is planning out the activities the PC can do with people during their trip in Chapter 9. I would love to be there in real life, it sounds gorgeous!

Sneak peek:

(apologies for the lack of indents but hopefully it'll still be readable! It's one of many, many jealousy/incompatibility conversations that I wrote this week which was also how I spent Valentine's Day, heh)

Savarel looks determined to be relaxed, while `#{varenn}` is making no such effort; `#{var_their}` broad shoulders are even stiffer than usual.

"It's simply best that everyone is behaving in ways that befit—" `#{varenn}`'s saying, and Savarel's relaxed pose goes out of the window as `#{sav_they}` `@{sav_pl sit|sits}` up very straight.

"I think you're just jealous," $\text{\$}\{\text{sav_they}\}$ $\text{\$}\{\text{sav_say}\}$, and you're concerned that your

*if hb_age = 1

[i]far[i] younger

*elseif hb_age = 2

subordinate

colleague is—"

$\text{\$}\{\text{sav_they}\}$ $\text{\@}\{\text{sav_pl break|breaks}\}$ off as you approach, and $\text{\@}\{\text{sav_pl smooth|smooths}\}$ $\text{\$}\{\text{sav_their}\}$ sage-green linen robe.

"Savarel clearly has concerns about the nature of our relationship," $\text{\$}\{\text{varenn}\}$ says, barely opening $\text{\$}\{\text{var_their}\}$ mouth. "Please could you clarify the situation."

Happy weekend, everyone!

[February Side Story: Cezara Dalca, 1754](#)

[Feb 21, 2024](#)

[The Gallatin teachers meet up in the summer holidays after a tumultuous year.](#)

Raphael smiles properly now, his lovely eyes crinkling and making butterflies flutter in her stomach. *Alvir's blessing*, she thinks, *you're so beautiful*, and she could absolutely lean down to pet his curly hair, and she thinks about how it felt running her fingers through it that one time; she shifts her weight forward a little, almost reaching out, and then there's a knock at the door.

Sinclair.

Note: F/M/M threesome, very explicit

Password: amatothecat

[The Bonus Supplement master post with the rest of the bonus stories is here.](#)

[March Q&A Post](#)

[Mar 1, 2024](#)

[Here's the link to the anonymous exclusive Q&A form.](#) Ask as many questions as you like, in the comments here or on the form, and I'll add the answers on this post. I look forward to hearing from you!

[March Bonus Supplement Vote](#)

[Mar 1, 2024](#)

Here is your chance to vote for this month's Bonus Supplement short story from the perspective of a character from the Creme de la Creme universe. The story of your choice will go up on March 20th!

A little about the stories:

Fabien/President Faraci: some hot and heavy rivalry - I wouldn't say "rivals to lovers" because there isn't really a "to lovers" part - in which Fabien's irritated about being in Teran when he misses home, and especially irritated by the President being annoying

Raffi and new friends: a backstory story from Raffi's point of view in which Raffi's not having a great time in the city but trying to get through it

Westerlin/Zaledo War AU: an experiment! This is an AU story in which Florin (and maybe some other characters...?) are involved in trench warfare thanks to tensions boiling over between Westerlin and Zaledo. In this story, things are quiet right now

Fabien/President Faraci, 1756 (rivalry smut, the year before Royal Affairs)

Raffi and new friends, 1759 (new horizons, two years before Honor Bound)

Westerlin/Zaledo War AU, Florin (intro, life in the trenches four years after Creme)

2 votes total

[March Newsflash #1](#)

[Mar 1, 2024](#)

The first week of this fortnight, I didn't write much at all: it was a school holiday, and me and the rest of my household were sick (not anything serious, but it knocked us out). But this week I returned to writing afresh to write Honor Bound Chapter 9 and have ended up writing more in one week than I often would in two - or even in a month!

Right now I'm listening to [There For You by Pearce Roswell](#) from my Honor Bound playlist. I have quite a few folky, gentle instrumentals that put me in the mood for writing this project.

Chapter 9 has been proving to be a ton of fun! The first half is unashamedly a hotsprings episode - the reason why I nicknamed this "Project Hotsprings" when I was first talking about it - and so far it's 31000 words devoted to chilling out, starting slow-burn romances, discussing how serious each others' romances are, cementing friendships, having some deeper chats, and soaking up the sun. Plus some nice descriptions of characters in their holidaywear, some of which are more conventionally attractive than others (Fiore, Raffi) and others are basically what they wear normally (Savarel).

I'll talk more about the second half in the next newsflash but after two frantic chapters full of drama it's a nice change of pace, a calm before the storm that'll be ramping up again next chapter!

Honor Bound current wordcount: 365313 words

Honor Bound fortnight wordcount: 26717 words

Honor Bound average playthrough: 78903 words

Behind the Scenes:

I watched How To Have Sex and it was an amazing film - check content notes, though, as it's quite a tough watch. If you're in the mood for it, I highly recommend it. And I also saw The Green Knight which I mostly really enjoyed, but wasn't a fan of the last 5 seconds: it jarred me and put me off the rest. But the actors, especially Dev Patel, were stunning and I have a lot of mythic inspiration rolling around in my head, also thanks to reading the awesome Spear by Nicola Griffith.

My favourite bit:

There are some lovely bits where polyamorous relationships can start or be developed that I'm really pleased with. I'm happy about giving plenty of space for them - sometimes I've felt a little squeezed when writing them. But I feel really good about these ones.

Sneak peak:

This morning, you've been served apricots and delicate Zaledoan pastries with pomegranate juice. Matia has spread honey on thick slices of bread and is munching happily while $\text{\$}\{\text{mat_they}\}$ and $\text{\$}\{\text{varenn}\}$ quietly discuss what to do today. Matia's dressed in casual clothing—loose flannel pants and a slate-gray shirt, $\text{\$}\{\text{mat_their}\}$ golden hoops still gleaming in $\text{\$}\{\text{mat_their}\}$ ears. It's unusual to see $\text{\$}\{\text{varenn}\}$ out of uniform: $\text{\$}\{\text{var_theyre}\}$ in sand-colored linen pants and a short-sleeved green shirt: crisp lapels, but no tie.

Raffi seems to be enjoying the casual dress: $\text{\$}\{\text{raf_theyre}\}$ wearing

$\text{\$}\{\text{if raf_gender} = 2$

a pale, figure-hugging dress reaching $\text{\$}\{\text{raf_their}\}$ mid-thighs that would look a little like a tennis dress if it wasn't clearly not made with practicality in mind.

$\text{\$}\{\text{else}$

pale, figure-hugging shorts reaching $\text{\$}\{\text{raf_their}\}$ mid-thighs and a turquoise shirt with a deep neckline that shows a great deal of $\text{\$}\{\text{raf_their}\}$ muscular chest. It would look like an athletic outfit if it wasn't clearly not made with practicality in mind.

[Upcoming Plans: March](#)

[Mar 1, 2024](#)

Hello everyone and I hope March is treating you well so far! Here's what I've got planned for March:

March 1st: [Newsflash #1](#) - detailed progress update with a little excerpt of what I've been doing (all paid subscribers)

March 1st: [March Q&A post](#) (£6+)

March 1st: [poll for March's bonus story](#) (Raffi background POV, Fabien/President Faraci having a rivalry tryst, and a Westerlin-Zaledo war AU about Florin) (£11+)

March 5th: [Honor Bound Chapter 5 up](#) (public)

March 5th: [readable Honor Bound Chapter 6 preview](#) (£6+)

March 15th: Newsflash #2 - detailed progress update with a little excerpt of what I've been doing (all paid subscribers)

March 20th: March's bonus short story (£11+)

March 29th: Newsflash #3 - detailed progress update with a little excerpt of what I've been doing (all paid subscribers)

[Honor Bound Chapter 6: alpha preview](#)

[Mar 5, 2024](#)

Here's the readable Chapter 6 excerpt!

A few notes about what the randomiser chose for this excerpt:

- The MC is called Helen
- Fiore is nonbinary, Korzha is male, and Matia and Raffi are female

The starred options are the choices that the randomiser "chose" for this playthrough. I hope you enjoy having a sneak peek at what will be happening in April's playable update!

[Chapter 6 alpha preview.pdf](#)

[March Newsflash #2](#)

[Mar 15, 2024](#)

Last fortnight involved a stupendous amount of writing in the second week, and this fortnight has been... less so thanks to some medical stuff and general disruption of my usual routines. (Still, I managed to go to a city I've never visited before for a boring admin reason which happened to also be useful for some research for a potential upcoming game, so that was good!)

This Monday I discovered [After This by July Talk](#) and it promptly became an excellent theme song for the game.

I'm so excited by the reception for Chapter 5! I've had such a lot of feedback and bug reports, and it's really amazing to be able to go and make those changes - which was a lot of what I did during the first week of this fortnight.

Anyway, I am getting towards the end of Chapter 9: it's a huge chapter, and a lot of that is because of eight(!) very steamy sex scenes that took a lot of time to write. I'm realising that those scenes take about four times as long as writing anything else because of how much responsivity and branching I want to put in them! I keep wondering about writing a whole post on the subject because I've learned a ton about writing that stuff through making Honor Bound.

Intimate scenes aside, I have been really enjoying showing characters chilling out for a change.

Honor Bound current wordcount: 379376 words

Honor Bound fortnight wordcount: 14063 words

Honor Bound average playthrough: 79218 words

Behind the Scenes:

I read Rien Gray's book *Love Kills Twice*, a high-heat F/NBi romantic suspense book, last week. It was the queer thriller/romance I'd been looking for! The characters were hot and appealing, with a lot of substance and groundedness to them along with it. The plot was tight and I devoured the whole thing at top speed. Much recommended, especially if you enjoyed *If It Please the Court* from Heart's Choice, which is by the same author.

My favourite bit:

There is a point where you can have a talk with Catarina and Fiore about romancing Fiore, and if Catarina approves it's incredibly adorable. I absolutely loved writing it.

Sneak peek:

Relatedly, here is an excerpt from a similar scene in which the MC is romancing Fiore and Savarel in a polyamorous relationship:

You continue eating; Savarel asks how Catarina's vacation with her grandparents went, and Catarina settles into a series of good-natured complaints about her small cousins.

"Although," she says, "my grandparents let me sleep on the roof garden one night, which was fun. You can see all the constellations."

Fiore laughs. "They never let me do that."

"I'm more mature and responsible than you were, obviously," Catarina @{(cat_fio > cat_fio_mid) says, jostling \${fio_their} shoulder,|says flatly,} and Fiore nods.

"Honestly, you are," \${fio_they} \${fio_say}. "Or my parents have softened over the years."

"So are you moving in together, or something?" Catarina says, waving in your and Savarel's general direction.

Both Fiore and Savarel look startled. @{{fio_romance_start < 9}} "We've not really talked about that,"|"It's not been long,"} Fiore says, faltering a little.

"I have the vicarage," \${sav_they} \${sav_say}, "and, well, obviously Fiore's in New Belmir..."

Happy Ides of March to everyone reading! Thank you as ever for all your support and feedback.

[March Side Story: Florin Kraemer, 1757 - Westerlin-Zaledo War AU](#)

[Mar 20, 2024](#)

[Florin welcomes a newcomer to the trench.](#)

Florin never used to be this sentimental, but people change.

Content note: trench warfare, references to death; just everyone having a bad time

Password: amatothecat

[The Bonus Supplement master list with the rest of the bonus stories is here!](#)

[Honor Bound Early Access: Chapter 6](#)

[Apr 2, 2024](#)

HONOR BOUND PATREON UPDATE

Here's Honor Bound Chapter 6! As before, you can skip any number of the earlier chapters to start with the chapter you'd like. [You can play it over here.](#)

If you have the time and energy, it's always great to [hear what you think!](#) There has some feedback (mostly to do with engaging with/thinking about previous colleagues, and with exchanging letters/phone calls with Fiore) that I'm sitting on until I've completed more of the draft so that I've got a better sense of scope and pacing, but please do know that I'm taking it all in and giving it all careful consideration.

This chapter adds around 39,000 words to the demo, putting it at around 263,000 words!

Things you may encounter during this chapter:

- a number of visitors - you're very popular, it turns out!
- some kissing (optional)
- some crying (optional for the MC, but not for others)
- flagrant misuse of a church
- an opportunity that might be good to take (or not)
- a number of familiar faces

I hope you have fun!

[April Newsflash-ish #1](#)

[Apr 2, 2024](#)

Hello! Just a little short post today, due to the last couple of weeks having been a lot. I'm sorry I missed Friday's usual news slot - a variety of life things ran away with me a bit.

I finished drafting Chapter 9 and started on Chapter 10 this fortnight! I haven't done as much writing as I'd have liked to, but I have been planning and coding which is a good feeling, and I anticipate I'll get more of that done by the end of this week.

Current wordcount: 386510 words

Fortnight wordcount: 7134 words

I think I am going to forego the Bonus Supplement vote this month and put up Raffi's background story on the 17th as it came joint first last month. I may then pause that tier during or after May, depending on subscription numbers - I'll see how things go towards the end of this month.

Thank you for your patience and I hope April is treating you well!

[April Newsflash #2](#)

[Apr 12, 2024](#)

So! April continues to be quite a lot between life and medical stuff going on. I have been making more progress with writing Chapter 10, though, which I'm really pleased about. It's a lot of fun putting together these dramatic points, and also drawing out the climactic plot a bit more than in Creme or Royal Affairs - the climax is more like two chapters than one, and I'm doing part 1 at the moment.

I really enjoy writing PCs and NPCs as they're put under more strain and seeing how they respond to more pressure. Delicious!

Current wordcount: 398594 words

Fortnight wordcount: 12084 words

Thank you as ever for all your support, and for the feedback on [Chapter 6!](#) I really appreciate all of it, and hope you all have a good weekend.

[April Side Story: Raffi Claudian, 1759](#)

[Apr 17, 2024](#)

In this character study set two years before Honor Bound, [Raffi encounters some new friends.](#)

Content note: alcohol

Password: amatothecat

[The Bonus Supplement master list with the rest of the bonus stories is here!](#)

Important Note: On 30th April, I will put the Bonus Supplement tier on hiatus as I want to build up a larger back catalogue of stories to share, but need to focus on getting Honor Bound complete. I would recommend dropping your membership to Sneak Preview before 1st May until I reinstate the tier, so that you're not paying a higher amount unnecessarily. I'll post more reminders about this before the next payments start going out on 1st May.

[April Newsflash #3](#)

[Apr 26, 2024](#)

I'm being a bit of a broken record on this at the moment, but April has been a lot! I'm getting back into my rhythm but the first week of this fortnight involved back pain that meant I couldn't write for most of the week, which was not great (for writing or for general comfort and happiness).

I really appreciated everyone's warm wishes about my name change - I'd been nervous about it but it really means a lot to know that I didn't have to be.

I'm continuing to work on Chapter 10, and it's going pretty well, even if it's slower than I'd have liked. I broke 400,000 words which is incredible! And today I did send off the second draft of an outline for a secret project which I've been sitting on and angsty over for a couple of months.

Current wordcount: 405309

Fortnight wordcount: 6715

I hope to carry on getting into a more consistent, productive groove next week - and to continue doing all the various yoga and stretches I need to do in order to get that chapter drafted sometime soon. Fingers crossed!

Most of Chapter 10 is so spoilery about plot that I can't share much without context, but I really loved writing a scene with Korzha in which the PC can confess that you're worried about something that's going on, and Korzha comforts them.

I've had a couple of bug reports for Chapter 5 where talking to Raffi at the canteen and asking about their friends in New Belmir City repeats but though I've investigated, I've had trouble replicating it myself - if that's happened to you too, please could you let me know?

I hope you're having a nice Friday, and have a great weekend!

[Bonus Supplement Reminder](#)

[Apr 30, 2024](#)

Happy April, everyone! Just a reminder that I won't be adding new stories to the [Bonus Supplement archive](#) until further notice as I'm focusing my writing time on finishing the Honor Bound first draft.

If you want to access the stories, I recommend making a one-off subscription and then downgrading to a lower tier so you're not paying extra on an ongoing basis without receiving new stories (unless you specifically want to give extra support, which is of course wonderful!)

In the meantime, I'm back working on Honor Bound Chapter 10 - see you soon!

[Honor Bound Chapter 7: alpha preview](#)

[May 7, 2024](#)

Here's the readable Chapter 7 excerpt!

A few notes about what the randomiser chose for this excerpt:

- The MC is called Specialist Tanse
- I think the MC is romancing Korzha, or hinting at it, based on one of the interactions they have (the randomiser must have been feeling romantic!)
- Korzha is nonbinary, Savarel is female, Raffi and Matia are male

The starred options are the choices that the randomiser has "chosen" for this playthrough. I hope you have fun getting a sneak peek at what will be coming up in June's playable update!

[Chapter 7 alpha preview.pdf](#)

[May Newsflash #1 - Chapter 10 is in the bag!](#)

[May 10, 2024](#)

I'm so pleased that this is the first newsflash in quite some time where I've not been saying something like "I've not done as much as I'd have liked..."

I've had improvements in energy, focus, and back pain - hooray! Yesterday I finished drafting Chapter 10 of Honor Bound - double hooray! And today I playtested Chapters 8-10 more times than I can count -

triple hooray!

I've been listening to the [Disco Elysium soundtrack](#) a lot while writing this fortnight. Not because it makes me think of Honor Bound particularly, but it's a lovely album.

Sometimes I skip doing an in-depth playtest once I've finished a chapter (I did for Chapter 8), and I always regret it. You just can't get a real sense of how a game feels until you playtest: the flow and feel are so different to reading through on the page. Among other things, I found a bunch of bugs and transitions between scenes not reading smoothly, tweaked a whooole lot of wording and paragraph spacing, and added an extra scene to a Raffi storyline where one branch didn't feel satisfying enough when failing (I failed when playtesting. A lot).

The outline for the secret project has come back with feedback which isn't too hard to get done - I think that'll be sorted early next week. Then I need to plan and start coding Chapter 11! My goal is to get a decent headway on the code before the last week of May, in which things become busy again as it's a school holiday. Fingers crossed!

Current wordcount: 418667 words

Fortnight wordcount: 13358 words

Average playthrough wordcount: 84827 words

The playthrough length is not only a novel, now, but is also getting to be a chunky novel! It's a longer playthrough than Royal Affairs at this point, which is exciting...

Other business:

Royal Affairs [now has the ability to save at the end!](#) It's starting to feel more real as I get closer towards the end of Honor Bound... I hope it won't be too long before the official full beta test begins!

Honor Bound is also going to have a cheat and hint add-on, in the same way Creme de la Creme, Royal Affairs, and Blood Money do!

Thank you as ever for your support and feedback. I hope you have a lovely weekend!

Sneak peek:

This is from a little communal hangout scene from late in the game. I enjoy writing the characters just chilling out and shooting the breeze every so often, between the various dramas!

Matia grins broadly. "Well, what you want, you get," he says. "I'll tell you a few more another time."

"I was always impressed with the Exploration Service," Raffi says wistfully. "I thought I wanted to go into it but Sergeant Lombardi said I didn't have a good enough head for navigation."

"Lombardi," Korzha says, looking up. "Ravella City, yes?"

"Yeah," Raffi says. "I moved there to train, because Espinante's too small for anything like that."

Korzha tops up his crystal glass of water. "They're good," Korzha says. "You were in good hands."

Raffi shakes their head. "I should have known you knew them. They drove us so hard."

"As is appropriate for raw recruits," Korzha says.

<input checked="" type="radio"/> "It's important to be strict where it's needed."
<input type="radio"/> "Poor Raffi. That must have been horrible."
<input type="radio"/> "I've had drill sergeants who were nasty pieces of work too."
<input type="radio"/> I just listen to the conversation.
<input type="radio"/> "All I know is I don't think I'd have the patience to deal with recruits."

[May Newsflash #2](#)

[May 24, 2024](#)

I can't believe it's just over a year since I announced Honor Bound!

And we're getting towards the end!

Sort of.

In a roundabout kind of way.

This fortnight I got my Chapter 10 notes back from my editor and did my revisions, some of which involved tweaking things so that [certain plot things] are more accessible to a wider number of players. In the meantime I started planning and coding Chapter 12.

Yes that's right, I coded Chapter 12 before the detailed plan for Chapter 11, like a madlad. Chapter 11 is where a lot of fiddly plotty pieces fit together, and I decided to plan Chapter 12 first so that I knew where I was heading. It's been pretty good! I've coded all of Chapter 12 and am deep in all those fiddly plotty Chapter 11 pieces now.

My goal is to make sure these last chapters feel rich and completed, with plenty of breathing room for resolution. I'll be seeing how that goes!

This week, I've been busy with some other freelance work but I'm still plugging away at all that planning. I also sent a revised outline for [a secret potential project] and have no idea what will happen with that - or when - but will keep you posted! (and if it's allowed to become less secret, I'll share more details of course)

Current wordcount: 431127 words

Fortnight wordcount: 12460 words

Average playthrough wordcount: 85008 words

It's a school holiday next week so I won't be doing much writing then, but the week starting 3rd June is when I'll be back at work. And on 4th June, **Honor Bound Chapter 7** will be going up for Sneak Preview subscribers!

I hope you all have a lovely weekend!

Sneak peek:

Here is a slightly risque Denario excerpt and a hint of where Denario is at during a later point in the game:

Denario kisses you back with increasing desperation, sending heat through your chest as his tongue parts your lips. His mouth tastes coppery, but his cuts and bruises don't put him off: he slides his hands down your back, drawing you tight against him.

"I really need to wash before we do anything else or I fall asleep," he whispers against your cheek. "You can join me if you want."

[Honor Bound Early Access: Chapter 7](#)

[Jun 4, 2024](#)

I'm delighted to share Honor Bound Chapter 7! You can skip any number of chapters to start at the chapter of your choice, or you can play through the whole thing. You can try loading an old save, but you may need to start a fresh one.

If you have a minute, I'd love to [hear your feedback!](#) As before, there is some feedback that I'm waiting until later to implement, and a minor character who hasn't been added in yet, but I always pay attention to all feedback being sent in.

This new demo is around 294,000 words, with Chapter 7 and various edits adding around 31,000 words to the whole thing!

In this chapter you will encounter:

- a lot of bad things

[Play here!](#)

A little reminder - you can ask (almost) any questions you like about my games, setting, characters, writing process, or whatever comes to mind on the [Q&A form](#) - once I have some questions, I'll set up a post with the answers.

Depending on how quickly I write the final two chapters, this may be the last demo update until the official beta test, but I will keep you up to date with progress as usual and will of course let you know when the full beta test starts. I'm hopeful that it won't be too far away.

Chapter 7 content notes below:

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- Earthquake, quicksand, fire, building collapse, potential severe injuries to the PC and others

[June Newsflash #1](#)

[Jun 10, 2024](#)

It's been a funny, busy couple of weeks. I'm sorry for the lateness of this progress update - the end of last week was a bit hectic.

I'm moving towards the finish line. Not sprinting, yet, because I was on holiday in Portugal for one of the weeks this fortnight, but I've coded Chapter 12 and have almost finished coding Chapter 11. My freelance client has asked me for some extra work over the next few days so I'll be prioritising that, but I hope to finish that pesky Chapter 11 section and start writing this week.

Among other things, I've been doing a few small edits to Chapter 9 and done some quiz fixes - it won't have been visible, but there were some bugs related to the Royal Affairs PC and their romance life/engagement/marriage that would have had nasty consequences for referring to the events of that game. On my radar is adding a Denario scene to Chapter 7 which will trigger when appropriate, and possibly putting back a Denario branch that I cut when writing, but that will probably get done later rather than earlier - I want to keep momentum going on the final chapters!

Current wordcount: 441645 words (longer than Creme de la Creme!!)

Average playthrough wordcount: 87114 words (much longer than Creme de la Creme, and longer than Royal Affairs!)

Fortnight(ish) wordcount: 10518 words

I've caught up with some games recently that I wanted to recommend! I really liked [Love Undying: A Kiss Before Dawn](#) by Lauren O'Donoghue, which is about being a Victorian vampire in a Cornish village, dealing with human and vampire politics, and finding love. The characters and PC felt very grounded - it helps that I'm very fond of the part of the world in which it's set! And I enjoyed [Silverworld](#) by Kyle Marquis, having played the demo when it first came out and entirely failed to finish it at the time. It's a

pulpy alternate-history time-travel romp, full of action and bizarre characters. The very end felt a little bit abrupt, but overall it was a great ride.

-

I'm writing a prize for the [Interactive Fiction Raffle for Palestine](#) - there are 50+ authors and artists creating prizes and you can enter until 21st June by donating 5USD/5€ to one of five verified fundraising campaigns.

If you win my prize, I will write you:

An interactive playable date scene with an RO or polyamorous duo of your choice from one of my released games or WIP. Non-explicit - please specify if you'd like a kiss and/or fade-to-black included in the scene.

More information about the fundraising [here](#) and the other prize contributors [here!](#)

I hope you have a lovely week!

[A sneaky Honor Bound Chapters 4-7 update](#)

[Jun 26, 2024](#)

Hello all, I hope you're having a good week! I have been deep in a combination of busy writing, a heatwave, and some unpleasantly dramatic insomnia, so didn't end up doing a news update last Friday - but I have been doing a lot of edits on Chapters 4-7, and thought I'd share it here before the public update goes up on the 2nd.

[Here's the most up-to-date early access demo!](#) It's now around 306,000 words long.

You will probably need to restart or skip to a chapter rather than reloading a saved game with this one, as I've added a bunch of variables which won't play well with an older save.

Almost all these edits are in response to various old and new player feedback - thank you as always for all the comments you send, it's really helpful for helping polish up the game and make it better!

I hope you have a great rest of the week, and that it's not too hot where you are.

Revisions in this update:

Overall:

- More references to trauma responses when PC's health is low, more reference to cane use, a bit more flavour text about the injury, more flavour text referring to health improvements to reflect the PC looking after themselves
- Chapters 5, 6, 8: added talk with Denario about the PC being trans if it didn't happen in Chapter 3

**

Chapter 4**

- expanded a branch of the late-chapter Korzha scene for more breathing room

Chapter 5

- added option to medically assess Korzha when they're sick
- minor expansion of conversation with Catarina about what she thinks about the trip
- minor expansion of letter-writing with Fiore

**

Chapter 6**

- tweaked Alva's assignment offer, with clearer information about potential disadvantages of taking it
- expanded end of Savarel's one-on-one scene
- fixed an error making end of Korzha's goodnight scene shorter than intended
- added a choice to enable an amorous PC and Raffi to hide what's going on from Simone
- added optional Denario scene, including optional sex scene

**

Chapter 7**

- expanded pre-town dialogue and added chance to increase some skills
- added minor interaction with Korzha about looking after the lab in the immediate aftermath
- added optional phone call with Fiore-added opportunity to talk to Savarel about MC/Fiore/Savarel
- expanded all one-on-one scenes with befriendable/romanceable characters

[Mini June #2 Newsflash](#)

[Jun 28, 2024](#)

Happy Pride, everyone!

As you've probably gathered, I'm having a bit of a busy time of it but here is a very small, belated progress update...

I've finished drafting Chapter 11! It's been a long haul and some of it has definitely had me reminding myself "perfection is the enemy of done", but it's down on the page which I'm delighted about.

July will be my time to get on with writing Chapter 12... and then, bizarrely, I'll be done until I get my editorial notes back!

Current wordcount: 476651 words

Average playthrough wordcount: 89817 words

Three-week-ish wordcount: 35,006 words

Will this end up being my first game that breaks 500,000 words? I think it might.

Thank you for your patience as I'm a bit haphazard this month - I hope to be more on the ball during July.

I hope you have a lovely weekend!

[Last-Chapter Push NaNo Newsflash #1](#)

[Jul 5, 2024](#)

I'm doing a little NaNoWriMo to keep my momentum, so I'm going to do these public posts weekly until I've finished my draft.

I've been working on the Chapter 12 first draft, which I'd already coded. I'm pleased I did it that way - it's the first time I've done it - as it meant that I could sweep from Chapter 11 to 12 and continue the writing mood.

It's mostly gone really well. The amount of words I've got down on the page is great: I tend to get excited and write a lot more when I'm getting towards the end of a game. On Thursday, though, I had a lot of bugs to fix because I wrote so much on Wednesday, and today I hit a stumbling block today in which I spent almost the whole day which branches in *so many* different ways. It's literally over 2000 words on what players will see as a short paragraph of text. I was starting to get antsy about it because it's not

something super plot-dependent but it's something I think players will enjoy a lot, and was almost going to cut it before figuring out how I could write the rest of the scene without driving myself up the wall.

Right now, because of that, I'm a little bit behind where I really wanted to be, but I'm pretty confident that I'll catch up on Sunday and beyond.

And in the meantime, I'm keeping an eye on [feedback for the current public demo](#) which got updated with Chapter 7 on Tuesday, and doing any fixes that need doing.

Monday: 4119

Tuesday: 1457

Wednesday: 5928

Thursday: 3675

Friday: 2264

Current wordcount: 494124 words

Average playthrough wordcount: 90527 words

Week's wordcount: 17473 words

Hope you have a good weekend!

[Last Chapter Push NaNo Newsflash #2](#)

[Jul 12, 2024](#)

Chapter 12 is nearly done. It's nearly done!! This week I was mostly drafting that part of the game, though I also moved some things around - there's a scene I was going to have in the final chapter and then moved elsewhere because it worked better there.

Right now I'm ahead of where I wanted to be - which is great for obvious reasons, and also because every so often I realise there's something I need to edit, either earlier in the chapter or earlier in the game. And I've got an ongoing list of things to go back and do once the draft is down.

Sunday: 1606 (regained where I wanted to be at the previous Friday!)

Monday: 7186 (a lot of this was code - I very much don't usually write that many words in a day!)

Tuesday: 3238

Wednesday: 3384

Thursday: 3228 (I spent a long time that day on bugfixing, and despite the large wordcount, lost a bit of ground in where I wanted to be)

Friday: 4535 (regained the lost ground!)

Current wordcount: 517301 words

Average playthrough wordcount: 92931 words

Week's wordcount: 23177 words

I'm feeling the intensity as I'm reaching towards the end - this sprint-writing approach is good for getting the words down but isn't sustainable for the long term, so I'll be pleased to return to a more measured pace once the draft is done.

Happy weekend, everyone!

[Good news for Honor Bound!](#)

[Jul 15, 2024](#)

Well... my initial first Honor Bound draft is done!

That's 525000 words that I've written for Honor Bound in 15 months.

The work isn't over yet though by any means.

Tomorrow I'm going to start playtesting... a lot. I've already playtested the first two-thirds fairly thoroughly, and have done some work on Chapters 9 and 10, but I very much need to test Chapters 11 and 12 because they branch a lot and there's bound to be some wonky continuity going on there that I need to find.

And I'll be taking a look at the difficulty balancing as well - the option to show what's being tested makes it much easier, but I need to make sure it's reasonably possible to reach the desired thresholds.

Thank you so much for all your support and feedback in helping me make this game. It would have been a much, much harder road without you.

If you haven't played [the Chapter 7 update](#) yet and are curious about what's in it, please do! Although it's been 11 days since I last updated the public demo (and there's something funky going on with the compiled version I originally put up on itch, so that one is now downloadable rather than playable in the browser), I'm still implementing player feedback and will be until the Choice of Games beta testing starts.

Thank you again. I really appreciate all that you do, especially if you've been in a position to subscribe - it really has made a difference in being able to spend so much of my work time on this gigantic game!

[Revision Push NaNo Newsflash #3](#)

[Jul 21, 2024](#)

This week was brilliant because [I finished the first Honor Bound draft](#), and also challenging because everyone in my household except me had various stomach bugs. So it was a tiring one for a number of reasons.

I've done a bunch of playtesting, and my wife played through the whole game which was immensely helpful and flagged up a lot of things I hadn't realised.

She is a big Savarel fan:

SAVAREL MY BABY I had missed him so much ;_;

I don't know how I can
romance anyone but
Savarel

She also discovered that if you play an emotionally-repressed enough character and then start a romance with Savarel at the last possible point, there was a bug where the game mostly didn't recognise that there was a romance at all. It also turned out that this happened for the other solo-romanceable characters too.

There was also a scene that just... stopped on most branches because I'd forgotten to fill out the rest of those branches. And a starting-a-romance scene that broke off and didn't really finish too. Not my finest hour.

However, she had lots of good things to say about it which was incredibly helpful as well.

So, I've been editing, finalising the saving system I'm using, and also doing the cheats, hints, and achievement guide that will be available as an IAP (the same way the other Creme games and Blood Money have them).

Sunday: 2537

Monday: 5312 (which was when I finished the first draft!)

Tuesday: 796 (playtesting revisions)

Wednesday: 1500 (playtesting revisions)

Thursday-Saturday: 1990 (playtesting revisions, plus 6557 on the cheats/hints/guides)

Sunday: 559 (playtesting revisions)

Current wordcount: 529995 words

Average playthrough wordcount: 93653 words

Week's wordcount: 12694 words

I've still got some revisions to do - the biggest one is related to one of the branches of the climax which I need to change a bit, and also fleshing out some conversations with friends and loved ones about making plans for the future (as my wife said, it felt weird to make a big decision about your plans without chatting with a partner about them, which is totally true!).

But I'm hoping to get all that done sometime next week.

[Revision Push NaNo Newsflash #4](#)

[Jul 26, 2024](#)

I'm absolutely delighted to let you know that I've finished the Honor Bound draft and sent it off!

The next thing I need to do is finish off the cheats and hints, then sort through any editorial notes that come in, and then beta testing.

[The public Chapter 1-7 demo is still up](#) until the beta testing begins when I'll be taking it down. (I've made quite a few changes since it went up at the start of July that aren't playable yet, so it'll be fun to see what people think of those changes once the testing period starts!) So if you would still like to share any feedback, please send it here, on the forum, on Tumblr, or [on the anonymous feedback form](#).

I was extra pleased because although it's the school holidays now, I still got a ton done:

Monday: 361

Tuesday-Wednesday: 4680

Thursday: 4926

Friday: 1707

Current wordcount: 541784 words

Average playthrough wordcount: 94811 words

Week's wordcount: 11789 words

[No-longer-NaNo Draft Revision Progress Update](#)

[Aug 5, 2024](#)

I guess it doesn't really count as NaNoWriMo if the month's finished, does it?

Anyway, since the 26th July when I finished the Honor Bound draft, I've been doing some various edits in response to playtester feedback - some expansions and tweaks, and some fixes. I've also pretty much done the cheats and hints, though I'll be checking through them again after beta testing and any other revisions are done in case the achievement guides are out of date.

Here's some of what I did:

- added a lot more achievements
- fixed various scenes that were cut off on some branches
- added more guidance about stats on the stat page
- added options to reveal some secret stuff about late-game storylines to various characters

- expanded a branch of one of the sex scenes; corrected a couple of branches that cut off if fade-to-black options were picked
- expanded some bits related to the Catarina and Simone relationship in the latter part of the game
- added some more opportunities to allow a PC to let NPCs make the first move romantically late on
- lots of typo fixes and other small corrections

The game is so complicated that I imagine there will still be lots to fix and tweak during playtesting, but every little helps.

I've sent off the current draft so it really is close to the time when the public demo will come down and closed beta testing will begin - I'm a broken record about it, I know, but the [anonymous feedback form](#) is still open and I'm keeping an eye on what comes in!

Current wordcount: 547236 words

Average playthrough wordcount: 94854 words

Week-ish's wordcount: 5452 words

[Honor Bound beta testing has begun!](#)

[Aug 14, 2024](#)

Drumroll... it's that time... time for beta testing!

For almost a week, I've been going through feedback from six randomised playthroughs from continuity readers, fixing many typos and sorting out little (and medium-sized) errors. And now the full game is ready for private testing!

If you'd like, you can sign up to test the whole game [here](#).

In the meantime: I've taken down the Chapter 1-7 public demo, and have put up an up-to-date [Chapter 1-3 demo](#). Because the current version isn't compatible with Dashingdon, it's only available to play from the above link on itch.io. During beta testing, I'll do my best to keep it updated.

For Sneak Preview subscribers, I've left up the early access Chapter 1-7 to play before release (this version is somewhat out of date, but I figure if you would like an Honor Bound fix in the meantime it will be a little preview of what's to come later). I'm not sure when that will come down, but it will be up at least until the end of beta testing. Sneak Preview subscribers can go to [this post](#) to get the link.

I'm going to be saying this a lot, but I'm so grateful for your feedback, cheerleading, and support while making this game. Thank you so much.



[A sort of fortnightly, almost-end-of-August progress report](#)

[Aug 30, 2024](#)

I've been on holiday for the last couple of weeks and had a truly lovely time with family in the countryside. That two weeks coincided with the first fortnight of beta testing, for which [you can see here the changes and fixes I've been making](#). So far I've been getting really thoughtful, helpful feedback and I appreciate it hugely!

The changes I've been making have been relatively small scale so far, though they make a big difference (and there are a LOT of changes now since the public demo).

In the middle of next week, I'll be back to my usual work routine. So, after Tuesday I'm hoping to take a look at some of the following: more lead-in to the Fiore/Savarel polyamorous relationship, some tweaks to [various redacted spoilery stuff relating to less successful endings to make them more satisfying], expanding PC responses to [some other spoilery late-game stuff], tweaking the pacing of some leisure-time scenes, and more conversation between nonbinary PCs and NPCs about the fact that you're both nonbinary.

...plus anything else that comes up. What's interesting is that (so far) there hasn't been anything really majorly complicated to add, unlike with my other games, so it's going a bit more straightforwardly than it has done on other occasions. I hope to use this time to do some more playtesting myself as well, because I always spot more things to edit when I do that.

The other thing I've been doing is writing a short interactive story about something from the MC's childhood with Denario. That's not far away from being done, so I'll hope to put that on here for Sneak Preview subscribers sometime early in September, and then it'll go up publicly a little while after that.

On 3rd September, I'm meeting for a chat with some other IF authors - we meet semi-regularly to shoot the breeze. If you have a question for anyone, or for the group, let me know in a comment and we'll be posting the answers in public later on in the week.

The group is:

- Jim Dattilo: Zombie Exodus, A Wise Use of Time, VTM: Out for Blood
- Malin Rydén: Fallen Hero, comic book writer
- Zach Sergi: Heroes Rise, Versus
- M. K. England: book writer, now with an upcoming game, Dragon Rider Academy, from CoG

[Early access to Honor Bound mini prequel: Recruitment Day](#)

[Sep 20, 2024](#)

Afternoon, everyone! I hope you're doing well. September is flying by for me, and I'll be putting up more of a detailed update about what I've been up to later today, but for now...

Here's early access to a Honor Bound mini prequel game! It's called Recruitment Day, and in it the Honor Bound PC is 17 years old. It's around 8000 words long.

Link to play: [Honor Bound: Recruitment Day](#)

Password: denario

I hope you enjoy!

[September update](#)

[Sep 20, 2024](#)

Hello all, and happy September! At this stage of a project, things start getting a bit all over the place, and so I've been less disciplined about letting you know what's going on than I'd have liked - apologies for that, and I hope to keep on track better!

I've spent the month so far responding to beta tester feedback, which has been extraordinarily helpful. Every time I go through this process, I'm floored again by how thoughtful and detailed the notes I get are. So I've been busy! [This is the list of fixes and changes I've made so far](#), and there are more to come - today I've been going through and personalising lots of compliments the NPCs give to the PC so that they reflect the PC's appearance and/or personality. It's like sending lots of Valentine's gifts...

I'm getting closer towards the end of playtesting now, so my mind is turning towards what I might like to make next. At the moment I have two ideas, one of which is in the Creme de la Creme setting, but am leaning more towards the non-Creme one at the moment. Gasp! I've been writing in this setting for six years now, so I'm feeling like a break and then probably a revisit are in order. But I'll see how I feel...

For Sneak Preview subscribers, I've put up a mini prequel game which is a day in the life of the Honor Bound PC, aged 17. It's called Recruitment Day, and you can [play it here!](#)

For everyone, I've also re-uploaded the Honor Bound prologue that I made last year before I released the demo. [Play it here!](#)

And finally, I've updated the Chapter 1-3 public demo with all the various fixes/tweaks/polishes that I've been doing in beta. You can [play it here!](#)

Current wordcount: 589448 words

Current average playthrough length: 98518

Monthly progress: uh, I'm not sure as I've lost track a bit. But the beta started on 14th August, and it was about 547,000 words then.

[Honor Bound is with the copyeditor!](#)

[Oct 1, 2024](#)

I'm delighted to let you know that I've sent the full draft of Honor Bound to my editor Abby!



Beta testing started in mid-August and since then I've added around 50,000 words to the game. Some of this was expanding things throughout the game, and most of it was expanding the epilogue sequence to include LOTS more detail about where the PC is living at the end, their career choices, who they're living with if anyone, letters from friends and loved ones if they're living in different places, and rundowns of what major characters are up to if the PC's living in the same town/location as them but not living in the same house.

That whole section ended up incredibly branchy and complicated, but I'm really proud of it - I think it caps off the game nicely. Yesterday I played through several of the ending scenes and felt really good about them, which is a nice feeling to have.

Honor Bound is now going to copyedit, and it's looking like the release should be somewhere in early December, depending how long the copyediting takes. Copyediting is certainly a big job, because right now the game stats are:

Total wordcount: 592898 words

Average playthrough: 98553 words

So each playthrough sees about 16% of what's there, which means a ton of variety from playthrough to playthrough... and there's a huge amount there to see even on one playthrough.

I'm incredibly grateful to all the testers from start to finish and everyone who has cheered, supported, and given feedback that's helped get this game into shape. I massively appreciate everyone here who subscribed which gave me a real helping hand, and who gave feedback on early versions of the drafts.

I've learned a huge amount from making this project, and have stretched out of my comfort zone in a variety of ways. It's interesting seeing what writing-process-mistakes I didn't do because of learning from Royal Affairs, and where I committed whole new coding crimes. (Next project, I am going to go easier on the nested *gosubs so it's easier to troubleshoot and read. I am sure I will do something else that makes the code horrid to read.)

It's the largest and most ambitious of my CoG games, and I'm proud of how the plot's paced and pulls together. I'm incredibly fond of the characters - even if I put them through horrible things. It was so different writing characters who were older and more mature in various ways than the teenagers in Creme and Royal Affairs (and the young adults in Noblesse Oblige, who are all going through... a lot), but still with plenty of flaws, foibles, and hangups. I was delighted when characters surprised me, as

well as when I could feel “oh, this is classic [character]” and their dialogue came naturally. There are some personality nuances that I’m not sure anyone will end up noticing, but felt lovely to put in because I had such a strong sense of who the characters were.

I’m also really pleased with how much I’ve personalised the PC’s dialogue and internal voice. When the PC speaks in the text (and often in the dialogue options), their tone and vibe is almost always informed by how their personality has been expressed by the player, which works with the choices the player’s making to make the PC feel their own. I really wanted to make the PC feel like an adult who’s gone through Some Major Stuff and is in a position of figuring out their principles and purpose because of it: there are a ton of different ways in which they can respond to what’s happened to them and to what happens throughout the game.

I’ve really loved exploring a new part of the Creme de la Creme setting and show such a different culture to Westerlin. I hope you all enjoy Honor Bound once it’s out!



(and... [please wishlist on Steam](#) if you haven’t already - it really helps!)

[iOS and Billing](#)

[Oct 9, 2024](#)

You may already have heard about the [price increase on Patreon's iOS app](#) and the switch to first-of-the-month payments only.

Patreon recommends that I increase prices on the iOS app which I'm not going to do. Instead, I'm delaying the switch for the foreseeable future (Patreon says it'll force the switch at the end of 2025).

This means if you're an iOS user interested in subscribing for the first time after 1st November, or are resubscribing, you'll need to subscribe using your browser rather than the app.

If I get lots of iOS people saying they're keen to subscribe using the app, I might change how I do this - but right now using the browser seems like a good workaround for a deeply annoying situation.

Thank you!

[Blog post: Building Your Honor Bound Character](#)

[Oct 14, 2024](#)

If you'd like to have a sneak peek at a blog post a couple of days before everyone else gets to see, please take a look! It's about how you can shape your Honor Bound character, in terms of personality, appearance, and skills, and my thoughts about the writing process for all of them.

I hope you enjoy!

<https://hpowellsmith.com/building-your-honor-bound-character/>

Released 7 days early for members.

[Blog Post: Writing Fiore Roldan](#)

[Oct 17, 2024](#)

In the lead-up to the release of Honor Bound I'm sharing posts about some of the Honor Bound characters, my thoughts when I was starting to create them, and the writing process.

[Here's the first one, a week before everyone else gets to see it. I hope you enjoy!](#)

Released 7 days early for members.

[Blog Post: Writing Denario Vecoli](#)

[Oct 24, 2024](#)

In the lead-up to the release of Honor Bound I'm sharing posts about some of the Honor Bound characters, my thoughts when I was starting to create them, and the writing process.

[Here's the one for Denario Vecoli a week before it goes public.](#) I hope you enjoy!

[Project Amble Devlog #1: from general vibes to more specific vibes](#)

[Oct 30, 2024](#)

Here is a post about what how I was starting to put together my new outline last week. It's not technically a new game announcement - it doesn't go into detail about what the outline actually is and what the story/setting is about, and I'll be sharing more about that here once the game is greenlit - but I enjoyed recording it, as this kind of thing tends to get lost in the shuffle when it comes to formal retrospectives.

<https://hpowellsmith.com/project-amble-devlog-from-vibes-to-story-1/>

Released 7 days early for members.

[Blog Post: Writing Matia Frasada](#)

[Oct 31, 2024](#)

In the lead-up to the release of Honor Bound I'm sharing posts about some of the characters, my thoughts when I was starting to create them, and the writing process.

[Here's the one for Matia Frasada a week before it goes public.](#) I hope you enjoy!

Released 7 days early for members.

[Blog Post: Writing Raffi Claudian](#)

[Nov 7, 2024](#)

In the lead-up to the release of Honor Bound I'm sharing posts about some of the characters, my thoughts when I was starting to create them, and the writing process.

[Here's the one for Raffi Claudian a week before it goes public. I hope you enjoy!](#)

Released 6 days early for members.

[Blog Post: Writing Savarel Lopes](#)

[Nov 15, 2024](#)

In the lead-up to the release of Honor Bound I'm sharing posts about some of the characters, my thoughts when I was starting to create them, and the writing process.

[Here's the one for Savarel Lopes](#) - a bit late this time, apologies! I hope you enjoy!

Released 7 days early for members.

[Blog Post: Writing Varenn Korzha](#)

[Nov 21, 2024](#)

In the lead-up to the release of Honor Bound I'm sharing posts about some of the characters, my thoughts when I was starting to create them, and the writing process.

[Here's the one for Varenn Korzha](#) - I hope you enjoy!

[Honor Bound is out!](#)

[Dec 5, 2024](#)

I can't believe today's the day!

From warmth and coziness to anxiety and peril, from bashful glances to high-heat hookups, from steadfast duty to wild rebelliousness or even burning down your career... there's just so much in this game for everyone to explore and I can't wait to hear what everyone thinks!

Thank you so much for your support throughout it all. (You will see a special thank-you in the author's note, but I'm not going to miss out on saying thank you more times, haha!) I'm so pleased for more people to encounter the world and characters of Honor Bound!

[Steam](#) | [Google Play Store](#) | [Choice of Games on Android](#) | [Choice of Games on iOS](#) | [Choice of Games on Amazon](#) | [Webstore](#)



[Seasons Greetings](#)

[Dec 20, 2024](#)

Well! What a year it's been. I hope you're all doing OK at a time which can have a lot of intensity, not to mention SAD for those living in grey places (each year I get surprised by it, which is annoying).

I have a couple of posts to share: Honor Bound development journal [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) which go over the process of figuring out the story I was going to write, and writing the first half of the game.

[There's also a post about Project Amble](#) (my codename for my new project) and figuring out names.

A quick book recommendation: [From the Belly](#) by Emmett Nahil. It's a horror novel about whaling, body horror, and inexorable doom, and is a nice addition to the "people at sea have a terrible time" genre which I rather enjoy. (I am, after all, a big fan of The Terror.)

I think I'd like to get back into recording what I'm doing more: I *have* been outlining - I submitted my third Project Amble outline draft on 3rd December, and it was greenlit on 11th December - and doing a lot of writing. But [the sudden passing-away of a friend from the writing community](#) made me lose some momentum in keeping track of things; posting about Honor Bound also took priority.

Anyway: this week I coded the first Project Amble chapter, figured out some geographical stuff, and today I started writing. It is so very different establishing a narrative voice for a new setting, but also very exciting.

So without further ado, here are The Numbers:

Project Amble current wordcount: 9617 words

As Christmas is nearly here, I don't think I'll have time for much writing over the next fortnight, but I'm pleased to have made a start.

I'm incredibly thrilled with how Honor Bound has been received. There's a lot of things I want to say and do about it, but there's so much else going on that it can be a bit tricky. I always feel behind when it comes to marketing and sharing behind-the-scenes things and extras. But the most important thing is that I'm really grateful for all of your support while I made it. Thank you so much!

And if I don't end up posting before a fortnight from now, I hope you have a comfortable festive season and new year.

[Bonus Supplement announcement](#)

January 7

I'm formally reinstating the Bonus Supplement tier!

Currently by subscribing to this tier, you can access [the archive of twelve Twine, ink, and linear stories](#).

From January 14th 2025 onwards, I will be writing a short story every two weeks based on randomly* chosen prompts and characters.

The first story, coming up on January 14th, is:

✨ **Hartmann & Cooking** ✨

I'll post a second one on 28th January, and so on!

*if a character or prompt comes up more than once before I've gone through all of them, I'll roll again; I'm also planning to pick from different pools of characters for each story so it's not from the same game every time. I'll also be putting up polls for subscribers to vote on story themes or characters once I've got into the rhythm of it!

[Bonus Supplement story: Hartmann & Cooking](#)

January 14

Hello and welcome to the new bonus supplement storytime! I'm going to be posting a short story every two weeks based on a randomly-chosen* character and prompt.

This time the theme is: [Hartmann & Cooking!](#)

The password is: prompts_q1_2025

And in [this post](#) you can access the archive of all 13 short stories.

I hope you enjoy!

*mostly random - if there are repeats I'll reroll.

[Writing trans characters in Honor Bound and future projects](#)

[January 22](#)

Back in November, I wrote a post about writing trans characters that became much larger than I anticipated. On my blog, I've expanded and formalised it.

So, a week before putting it out publicly, here's how I went about writing trans NPCs and PCs in Honor Bound, and some notes about what's felt good (and less good) when playing. [Enjoy!](#)

[Project Amble Newsflash](#)

[January 24](#)

Well, it's been brilliant getting back to work after the holidays. I wrote Chapter 1 of Project Amble, sent it off to my editor, and got it back in record time, giving me the chance to dig into revisions. I've also been coding Chapter 2, which is much larger and branchier than Chapter 1, and involved various bits of research around travel and geography (which I think is going to be an ongoing theme for this project!)

It is such a challenge writing in a new setting! I hadn't realised just how much it would be - I'm so familiar with the Creme de la Creme world, even as I explored different parts of it, that it's become second nature. Writing the new setting definitely isn't! I've also been having some dark nights of the soul about personality stats, and have actually changed a couple of them around after starting writing as I realised they weren't quite working.

But with all that, it's an absolute delight to be exploring a completely new place and characters. It's a bit like getting to travel myself!

Here's a nice teaser image from [Pixabay](#):



Most of the fortnight has been very positive, writing wise, although today I had a horrible night's sleep and have had to spend my workday on moodboards and romanceable-character-intro-posts instead - which is still productive, even if it's not what I'd have preferred to be doing.

Total Project Amble Wordcount: 38363 words

Project Amble average playthrough wordcount: 13505 words

Next up on Project Amble: I'll be continuing work on Chapter 2. I'm about two thirds of the way through the draft, which is currently rather rough so once I've finished the first draft I'll take a little time to polish it up and reveal the shiny diamond beneath.

Next up on Patreon:

- On 28th January, the next bonus supplement story will be going up! It's a cute one about Raffi and the MC, and it went in a direction I didn't quite plan when I started - it was nice to be led by the story.

Since I didn't manage to do so at the end of last year, I want to share some IF I enjoyed playing in 2024, as they're all ones that I haven't seen talked about a huge amount:

[Don't Wake Me Up by Baudelaire Welch](#): an amnesiac's journey through multiple worlds both wacky and heartwrenching, this game is best enjoyed without knowing too much going in.

[Haunted Hearts Hotel by Elle Grace](#): a cute female-locked romance game about inheriting your aunt's old hotel, renovating it, and getting to know the human and ghostly inhabitants around it. Part dating

game and part management, the game handles both elements well, with vivid characters and sexy setpieces. (I had an F/F/Nbi threesome with my assistant and their FWB ghost pal; much recommended!)

[Love Undying: A Kiss Before Dawn by Lauren O'Donoghue](#): you're a Victorian vampire who's just moved into a small Cornish village with your human servant, and must navigate human and vampire politics and connections in order to avoid getting chased down with pitchforks. This has a lovely atmospheric tone and a fantastic sense of place (I grew up near to the place in which it's set). I loved the characters in this game, and the ways in which my eccentric vampire could connect with them. I'm eager to replay when it's less fresh in my mind to get to know some of the others better.

[Stars Arisen by Abigail C. Trevor](#): you're the child of a deposed immortal queen who she's been raising to take back the throne. You travel to the big city to do that...or perhaps you'd like to rebel in various directions? I very much enjoyed the sense of history in this game, and the sheer breadth and variety of decisions I could make (even contradictory ones, as I did, to make a twisty-turny story that still hung together great).

[Bonus Supplement story: Raffi & Stargazing](#)

[January 28](#)

Hello and welcome to the bonus supplement storytime! I'm going to be posting a story every two weeks based on a randomly-chosen* character and prompt.

This time the theme is: [Raffi & Stargazing!](#) In this slowburn friends-to-lovers story, the MC spends an evening on the beach with Raffi.

The password is: prompts_q1_2025

And in [this post](#) you can access the archive of all 14 stories.

I hope you enjoy!

*mostly random - if there are repeats I'll reroll.

[Patreon Plans: February](#)

[February 1](#)

Here's what's coming up on Patreon for February!

- **5th Feb (all paid tiers):** Project Amble title and concept announcement
- **7th Feb (all paid tiers):** Newsflash with detailed progress report and wordcounts
- **11th Feb (bonus supplement):** Beaumont story
- **12th Feb (sneak preview):** First Project Amble RO reveal
- **19th Feb (sneak preview):** Second Project Amble RO reveal
- **21st Feb (all paid tiers):** Newsflash with detailed progress report and wordcounts
- **25th Feb (bonus supplement):** Fiore/Savarel story
- **26th Feb (sneak preview):** Third Project Amble RO reveal

I'm very much looking forward to sharing more about Project Amble this month!

Released 7 days early for members.

[Project Amble Announcement and Title Reveal!](#)

[February 5](#)

I'm thrilled to announce more details about my new project! As you may already know, it's a fantasy game in a new setting and I've been working on it since December.

[Here's one of the songs from my writing playlist](#) if you want to get in the mood while you read about it!



A century ago, the tiger god Vastan fought a risen demon over the steppes and mountains that are your home, battling for mastery over the earth below. Their war poisoned the land, causing magical storms that twist the mind and the elements alike.

At the moment of Vastan's eventual triumph she was grievously wounded, retreating beneath the mountains to be cared for by a sect of worshippers known as the Guardians of Tulara.

You are one of those Guardians: a scout who ventures from the secretive monastery to hunt, gather, and trade with those living on the plains. Protected from the storms by Vastan's power even as she sleeps, you care for your wounded god in your small, safe community.

Until today.

After an attack on your monastery that leaves your comrades dead and scattered, you cut a piece of your god to preserve her in a weakened, half-alive state and run. Scraping together a living as a hunter-gatherer and courier on the dangerous steppes, you must survive the gathering storms while searching for a way to bring your god back to life.

In this dark fantasy of tragedy and survival, will you rebuild your order or forge a new path of your own, align with Vastan or rebel against her? Will you bring back your god and protect your lands, or take this chance to seize power for yourself?

- Play as male, female, or non-binary; cis or trans; gay, straight, or bisexual; asexual and/or aromantic; allosexual and/or alloromantic; monogamous or polyamorous

- Befriend, romance, clash with, or destroy an ambitious, stubborn magic enthusiast with a lot to prove; a hard-bitten courier determined to be self-reliant while looking after their own; a haughty, visionary herbalist obsessed with preserving knowledge for future generations; an outgoing, no-nonsense guard with a strong protective streak; a fast-talking witch-turned-con-artist who might have a heart of gold somewhere.
- Survive the storms: use your skills and knowledge to help the communities on the steppes—or only yourself
- Unearth dark secrets on the steppes: will you share them with the world, or bury them once more?
- Build your relationship with your dying god and rebuild her power, or use it for your own ends
- Give of yourself or others for the greater good, persuade your god to different paths, or rebel against her entirely

When the storm hits, what will you sacrifice for survival?

The MC of The Earth Has Teeth

You've lived in the Tulara monastery all your life, along with a group of around fifty Guardians of Vastan. After your parents died in a storm when you were in your mid-teens, you were cared for by the other Guardians and have lived a comfortable, if hard-working, life.

You're now 25 and an experienced scout, adept at travelling alone and surviving in the wilderness. Thanks to Vastan's power and protection, you've rarely wanted for food and even if some of your trips outside were harder than others, the safe haven of the monastery walls was always waiting for you.

Vastan the tiger god

In your holy texts, Vastan is described as a tiger larger than the sky who moves faster than the eye can see and has all-powerful influence. As you know her, she appears as a tiger striped black-and-gold the size of a house, who sleeps in a huge underground chamber deep in the Tulara monastery.

While the demon Nerekay had influence over and could warp the elements, Vastan's power is entwined with nature, protection, and growth. She made unearthly plants grow and flourish in the monastery, and her presence improved the health of her Guardians. She can also provide protection from the hypnotic, mind-altering storm sickness and, before the attack, she shielded the monastery from storms hitting it at all.

You carry a part of Vastan with you now, and although her powers are diminished, she can still lend you help when you're in need.

Magic in Amikya

In Amikya, the land in which you live, priests draw magical power from Vastan through time-honoured religious ritual, whereas witches do so through practices more like folk medicine and superstition

passed down through generations of folklore. Not all witches consider their power to come from Vastan: some see it as drawing magic from the earth.

There are blurred lines between the practices, though not every witch or priest would like to admit such a thing.

Major Befrienable and Romanceable Characters

All the romanceable characters are gender-flippable. All characters can be romanced monogamously; some can be romanced polyamorously in various configurations - more on that later!

Armell Bassar (23): the only child of a town leader, Armell is passionate about learning more magic to protect and expand their home. With a keen mind and more intensity than they know what to do with, Armell is eager to prove themselves to their community and to their mother. (cis man/cis woman/agender)

Elisei/Elena/Elis Kiriya (32): an expert herbalist and potion-maker, Dr. Kiriya is near-obsessive about their collection of seeds and potions and the knowledge they've amassed. Some might call them arrogant; Kiriya would say that's irrelevant. (trans man/trans woman/genderqueer)

Nikita Leu (25): a courier carrying items and messages as well as escorting people, Nikita is an excellent survivalist and has endured a dangerous itinerant life on the plains despite experiencing tragedy. Nikita is generally withdrawn and self-reliant to a fault. (cis man/cis woman/transfem)

Serhi/Sara/Saba Roschin (39): the leader of a town guard, Roschin is boisterous and cheerful, and likes to be the first to dive in to fix a problem. Roschin is a bold fighter and protector who may go too far when joking around but will stand up for others when it matters. (cis man/cis woman/transmasc)

Valeria/Valerio Chernenko (26): a flamboyant witch who guides travellers through storms and sells magical charms, Val's trinkets aren't always as effective as they claim. Living a transient life, Val relies on their wits to avoid trouble - not always successfully. (trans man/trans woman/nonbinary transfem)

[Project Amble Newsflash](#)

[February 7](#)

This fortnight, I've mostly been working on Chapter 3! I finished drafting Chapter 2 on the first Monday of the fortnight, and this week I had the editorial notes back for it.

Here's a track from my writing playlist to get you in a The Earth Has Teeth mood: [No Rest For These Bones by Inon Zur](#) from the Fallout New Vegas OST.

Not that, er, I've done very much revising yet because a) I need to have a bit more of a think about some stats (I need to streamline them a bit) and b) I've been really busy planning Chapter 3. It's the biggest chapter so far and I can tell it's going to be one of those ballooning type ones: the PC is meeting new characters, exploring a new place, and developing some relationships with characters they already know. There's a lot going on!

Writing Progress

This week was a bit of a weird one because I've been a bit ill and have had poor sleep, and because I was doing a lot of planning by hand (plus writing queueing up lots of social media posts), my progress spreadsheet looks rather empty in the first half of the week.

Then today I was coding most of the day and suddenly broke 50,000 words!

Excerpt

The river grows wider as you walk. Then, slowly, the distant landscape shifts as you approach a vast lake: beneath the bright, sunny sky, it's a shock of blue ahead. As you approach the edge, the smell and taste of salt hits you, stinging your eyes.

"Ugh!" Issi says, squinting. "We're not going there, are we?"

Nikita folds `{nik_their}` arms, `{nik_their}` mouth a thin line. "If we don't want to spend more time and supplies going around Lake Hasri, we'll cross the river," `{nik_they}` `{nik_say}`.

"Which is faster. But dangerous."

- "Best to cross the river—it'll mean there's less time exposed to storms."
- "Cross the river. Getting there quicker means we can gather more."
- "We should go around Lake Hasri—I don't want to risk the crossing."
- "Let's go around the lake. We might find something useful on our way."

Oh, and there's this:



hpowellsmith
3h ago

the question is whether anyone would play through a branch where you have a one-off hook up with a romanceable character's ex-husband, cos I know it'd be fun to write but... scope creep...

I haven't made a firm decision yet, but by the time it's the next newflash I will need to!

Wordcounts

- **Total The Earth Has Teeth wordcount:** 52525 words

- **Average The Earth Has Teeth playthrough:** 19096 words
- **Fortnight progress:** 13889 words

Next writing

Chapter 3 all the way! I'll still be working on it next time I post one of these because I must emphasise: it is Large.

Recap

This fortnight the [Raffi & Stargazing friends-to-lovers story](#) went up, as well as the lovely [The Earth Has Teeth intro reveal!](#) I was so pleased to show it off!

Next up on Patreon

- **11th Feb (bonus supplement):** Beaumont story
- **12th Feb (sneak preview):** First Project Amble RO reveal (Armell)
- **19th Feb (sneak preview):** Second Project Amble RO reveal (Dr Kiriya)

Oh, another thing is that I've resurrected my long-dormant Tumblr sideblog, [IF Seal](#), in which I answer questions about interactive fiction via the voice of an adorable seal. I'm going to try to post an answer each Monday: next one is on 10th February.

Have a good weekend!

[Bonus Supplement story: Beaumont & Waking Up Together](#)

[February 11](#)

Hello and welcome to the bonus supplement storytime! I'm going to be posting a story every two weeks based on a randomly-chosen* character and prompt.

This time the theme is: [Beaumont & Waking Up Together!](#) In this sweet story, it's an early winter morning with Beaumont.

The password is: prompts_q1_2025

And in [this post](#) you can access the archive of all 15 stories.

I hope you enjoy!

*mostly random - if there are repeats I'll reroll.

Released 7 days early for members.

[The Earth Has Teeth romanceable character intro: Armell Bassar](#)

[February 12](#)



Full name: Armell Bassar

Age: 23

Gender:** selectable between cis man (he/him), cis woman (she/her), and agender (they/them)

Background: as the only child of the head of their town who is also a religious leader, Armell is conscious of having big shoes to fill. They're intensely curious about what makes the storms tick and the use of magic to protect people from them: both because of their drive to help their community, and

because they want to prove themselves to their mother, who believes that only traditional methods are appropriate.

Personality: passionate, impetuous, inquisitive, enthusiastic

Appearance: tall and rangy, with dark skin and eyes, and black springy hair

Style: Armell wears their hair in locs with a few beads here and there; regardless of gender, their hair is about shoulder length. They wear a long rust-coloured waxed hemp coat with fur trim whose pockets are often filled with charms, chalk, quills, and scroll cases. What they can't fit in their pockets, they'll stuff into their satchel. Male and agender Armell sometimes have a bit of stubble, but are usually clean-shaven.

At their best: determined, loyal, inspired

At their worst: oblivious, naive, tunnel-visioned

You'll like Armell if you like... someone with a keen interest in magic who wants to use it for good, who is willing to jump into danger when it matters, who may sometimes be a bit of a gremlin, who's eager to help those around them.

You'll like romancing Armell if you like... intensity, fervent ambition, being appreciated and admired, being in charge (if you're into that), feeling like the most important person in the room when they're around.

A song from Armell's playlist: [How Big](#), [How Blue](#), [How Beautiful by Florence and the Machine](#)

Face cast ideas: (bear in mind that this isn't the be-all-and-end-all - feel free to imagine as you like) Alfred Enoch, Amandla Stenberg, this one model called Sylvan who seems to have dropped off the internet after I found a photoshoot of them

[The Earth Has Teeth Romanceable Character Intro: Dr. Kiriya](#)

[February 19](#)



Full name: Elisei/Elena/Elis Kiriya

Age: 32

Gender: selectable between trans man (he/him), trans woman (she/her), and genderqueer (they/them)

Background: Dr. Kiriya has been a herbalist for most of their life. They're very strongly attached to their work, seeing it as an integral part of their community's health (correctly) and the most important aspect of the town (perhaps incorrectly). Their life's work is a seed bank preserving herbs and documenting them for future generations. They were married for some time to the mayor of their town, which ended last year.

Personality: direct, precise, visionary, haughty

Appearance: tall and imposing, with thick black hair, light brown skin, and hooded grey eyes. Strides about in a way that suggests they're always busy with something very important.

Style: Dr. Kiriya wears stylish, somewhat dandyish clothes: fine linen shirts with a long, swishy skirt or trousers and embroidered tunics over the top. They have a few accessories, such as copper brooches or gold torque necklaces. When it's cold, they wear a long, robe-like coat made of wool, a scarf, and a

fur-lined cloak over the top with a nicely-worked clasp. Male KiriyaK wears their hair long and tied back, female KiriyaK has hers in a bob, and genderqueer KiriyaK wears theirs short. None have facial hair.

At their best: incisive, pragmatic, forthright

At their worst: arrogant, hard-hearted, uncompromising

You'll like KiriyaK if you like... an intellectual who speaks bluntly, who has a vision for the future, who is very certain of their place in the world, who will work with you to change the world, who is passionate about their obsessions.

You'll like romancing KiriyaK if you like... melting or flustering an ice monarch (or being ice monarchs together), being bossed around (if you're into that), direct communication, an unexpected connection.

A song from KiriyaK's playlist: [Love Is Blindness cover by Jack White](#)

Face cast ideas: (bear in mind that this isn't the be-all-and-end-all - feel free to imagine as you like)
Martin Sensmeier, Julia Jones, Cherokee Jack

[The Earth Has Teeth Newsflash: Feb #2](#)

[February 21](#)

I've been busily working on Chapter 3 of The Earth Has Teeth this fortnight! And I did do my Chapter 2 revisions, including streamlining some stats. I feel like every time I make a new game, I end up removing some stats early on - I always realise that there's more complexity than I need. In the case of The Earth Has Teeth, I've cut at least four of the things, and there are still a very decent number remaining.

Here's a track from my writing playlist to get you in a mood for The Earth Has Teeth: [Last Heat, Last Exertions XXV](#). by Marcus Fjellström.

Writing Progress

This fortnight has been peculiar because the second week's been a school holiday, so I was out of my usual routine. I've also been ill. (I have chronic stomach cramps that have been flaring up more often the last few months, going from once or twice a month to once or twice a week, which puts me out of commission for a day or two each time. Grim.)

BUT for this final Friday I've been alone in the house which has meant I've got much more done! So my numbers and progress have actually grown by a huge amount... in fact I've done an amount in these two weeks that I'd be very pleased with for a whole month!

As for the [ex-husband-hookup business](#)... I actually haven't decided yet. There are pros and cons... so I need to wait until I reach the actual point where I've coded it and then make the decision!

Excerpt

Parents and an elderly grandfather and farmhands and dogs erupt from inside. A young man a few years younger than you with long braids hangs back quietly while Issi's parents catch her and give hugs and hair-ruffles. A pair of sheepdogs jump and bark about, adding to the chaos.

You're swept along by the little crowd into a flagstone-floored dining room with a low ceiling, a roaring fire, and a sturdy table laden with food. It's warm and snug; the air is close. One of the dogs settles on a rag rug in front of the fire while the other takes up a position beneath the table, ready to catch scraps.

Wordcounts

- **Total The Earth Has Teeth wordcount:** 82598 words (!!)
- **Average The Earth Has Teeth playthrough:** 26991 words
- **Fortnight progress:** 30073 words (!!!)

Next writing

More Chapter 3! I'm hoping to have finished drafting it by the next newflash - let's see how it goes. Certainly it remains Very Large. Bigger than the Chapter 3s of Noblesse Oblige, Blood Money, or Creme de la Creme!

Recap

This fortnight I showed off [The Earth Has Teeth title and concept](#) to the world at large which was tremendously exciting, as well as the [Armell intro!](#) For subscribers here, the [Kiriya intro](#) and the cosy [Beaumont romance story](#) about waking up together went up too.

Next up on Patreon

- **25th Feb (bonus supplement):** Fiore/MC/Savarel story
- **26th Feb (sneak preview):** Third Earth Has Teeth RO reveal
- **1st March (sneak preview):** Q&A question post
- **5th March: (sneak preview):** The Earth Has Teeth Chapters 1-2

Thank you for reading and your support. I hope you have a good weekend!

[Bonus Supplement story: Fiore/MC/Savarel & Too Hot](#)

[February 25](#)

Hello and welcome to the bonus supplement storytime! I'm posting a story every two weeks based on a randomly-chosen* character and prompt.

This time the theme is: [Fiore/MC/Savarel & Too Hot!](#) The MC spends a dreamy morning with Fiore and Savarel, postgame.

The password is: prompts_q1_2025

And in [this post](#) you can access the archive of all 15 stories.

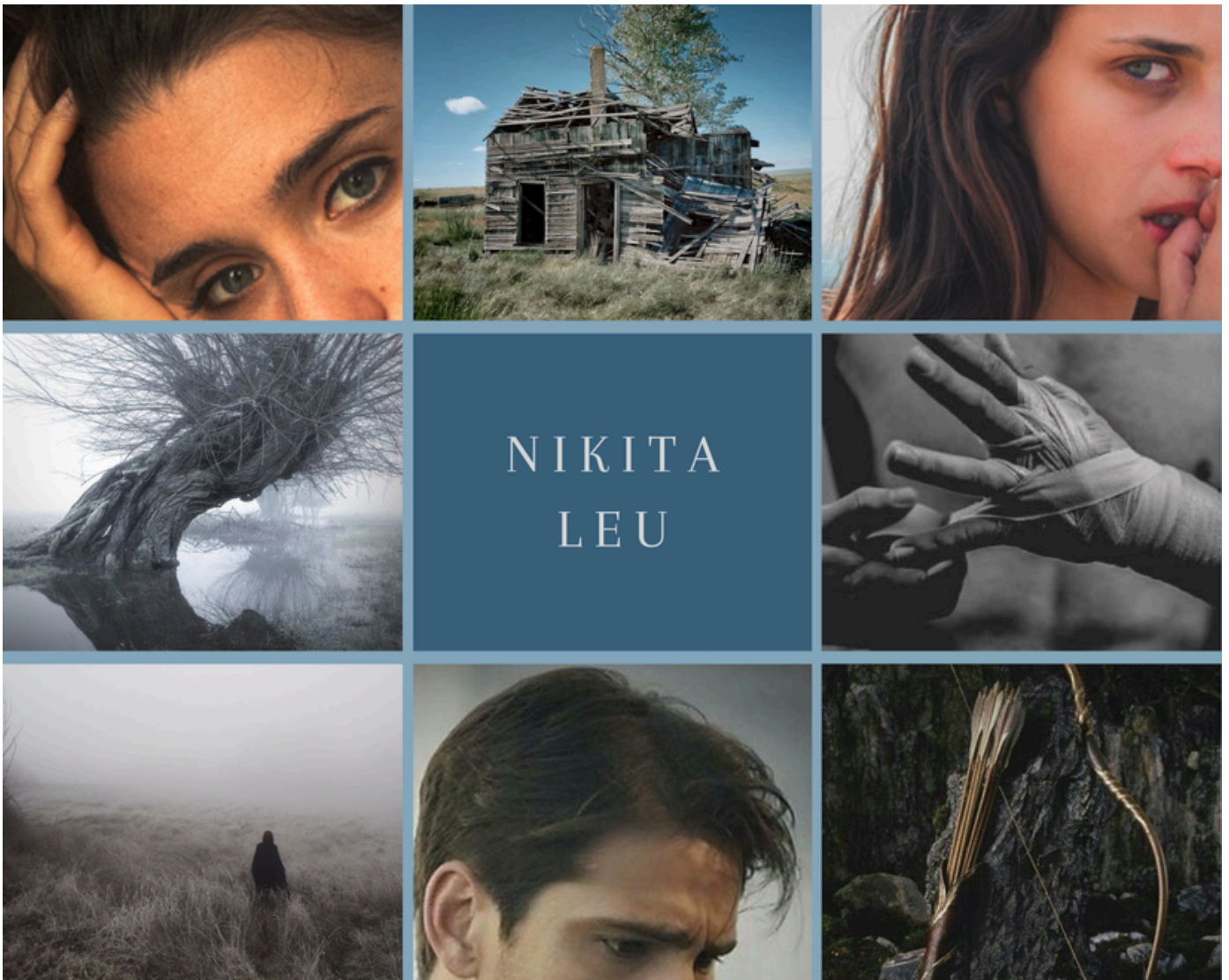
I hope you enjoy!

*mostly random - if there are repeats I'll reroll.

Released 14 days early for members.

[The Earth Has Teeth RO intro: Nikita Leu](#)

[February 26](#)



Full name: Nikita Leu

Age: 25

Gender: selectable between cis man (he/him), cis woman (she/her), and transfem (they/them)

Background: Nikita is a courier like you, fetching and carrying items, messages, and sometimes people from settlement to settlement. They're a survivalist, having a great deal of experience handling life on the plains even in emergencies, and are fiercely independent. Nikita doesn't talk much about themselves or their past: hard to tell whether that's because they have a withdrawn personality (which they do) or because there's something they don't want to say.

Personality: watchful, quiet, terse, toughened

Appearance: mid-height and rangy, but holds themselves tensely so they often look a little hunched. They have olive skin and wide green eyes.

Style: Male Nikita shaves his head and has a scruffy beard; a non-male Nikita wears their hair longer, with a ponytail. Nikita's clothes are practical and durable. They wear thick linen shirts, woolen trousers,

sturdy boots, and a charcoal-coloured woolen coat with fleece lining. In colder weather they wear a cloak, but mostly they use it as a blanket.

At their best: generous, prepared, attentive

At their worst: brusque, withdrawn, despairing

You'll like Nikita if you like... a withdrawn, melancholy person who's nevertheless very competent in a pinch, who will give their all to those in need while being intensely ruthless in certain situations, who takes a while to warm up but will be an attack dog if necessary

You'll like romancing Nikita if you like... teasing someone and flustering them or slowly building a serious connection, opening up vulnerabilities, trauma-bonding, hot-and-cold emotional rollercoasters

A song from Nikita's playlist: [Break Me Gently by Doves](#)

Face cast ideas: (bear in mind that this isn't the be-all-and-end-all - feel free to imagine as you like)
Luke Pasqualino, Benedetta Porcaroli, Paola Buratto

[Bonus Supplement public master post](#)

[February 27](#)

Here's the list of the stories currently accessible from the Bonus Supplement tier! If you're subscribed to this tier, [go here for the links and passwords.](#)

Interactive stories

- Grey Jacket (Javi del Quiros: readying to leave Zaledo)
- Shiny Shoes (Hartmann, MC POV: stress at Gessner, friendship or romance)
- Silk Handkerchief (Asher Garnett POV: a terrible afternoon tea)
- Tizari Square (Auguste Renaltdt, MC POV: a visit to Jezhan, friendship or romance)

Background POV stories

- Tomi Danelak, 1755: meeting Pascha for the first time
- Fiore Roldan, 1752: a holiday with Jaime gone wrong
- Matia Frasada, 1748: an ill-fated expedition
- Raffi Claudian, 1759: meeting exciting new friends

- Savarel Lopes, 1760: a bad time on leave
- Varenn Korzha, 1754: an unwanted letter

MC POV Drabbles

- Auguste/MC & Holding Hands
- Beaumont/MC & Waking Up Together
- Danelak/MC/Pascha & Flowers
- Denario/MC/Savarel & Eyes Meet
- Fiore/MC/Savarel & Too Hot
- Hartmann/MC & Cooking
- Hyacinthe/MC & Bathing
- Raffi/MC & Stargazing
- Rys/MC and Coffee Shop

Other Stories

- Fabien/President Faraci, 1756 (M/Nbi, rivalry, explicit); Fabien & President Faraci, 1756 - Fabien is having an annoying time in Teran away from his loved ones
- Florin Kraemer, 1757 - Wartime AU: a new arrival in the trenches
- Cezara Dalca, 1754 - Gallatin teacher triad story (F/M/M, first-time, explicit)

[Patreon Plans: March](#)

[March 1](#)

Here's what's coming up on Patreon for March!

- **1st March (sneak preview):** Q&A questions
- **5th March (sneak preview):** The Earth Has Teeth Chapter 1-2 up
- **7th March (all paid tiers):** Newsflash with detailed progress report and wordcounts
- **11th March (bonus supplement):** Rys story
- **12th March (sneak preview):** Fourth The Earth Has Teeth RO reveal
- **19th March (sneak preview):** Fifth The Earth Has Teeth RO reveal
- **21st March (all paid tiers):** Newsflash with detailed progress report and wordcounts
- **25th March (bonus supplement):** Denario/MC/Savarel story
- **31st March (sneak preview):** Q&A answers

[March Q&A Post](#)

[March 1](#)

[Here's this month's question form!](#) Feel free to ask questions on the form or in comments here. I'll post up the answers at the end of the month!

I will probably not answer questions about: graphic NSFW stuff about the Creme de la Creme or Royal Affairs characters. But depending on the question, I may answer such things about Blood Money, Noblesse Oblige, Honor Bound, or The Earth Has Teeth characters.

I won't answer questions about: pregnancy, self-harm/suicide, very graphic or sexual violence, teacher/student relationships, incest, or minor/adult relationships.

[THE EARTH HAS TEETH Chapter 1 and 2!](#)

[March 5](#)



Lose everything. Piece it back together, if you can.

Welcome to the steppes of Amikya. Good luck surviving the storms.

-

Play the demo on [cogdemos](#) or [itch](#)! The content of both is the same, and you can save anytime with both, but on cogdemos you can view the code, and on itch you can close your browser tab/window and it will autosave where you are. I'd recommend playing on itch and looking up the code on cogdemos if you want, but of course do whichever method feels best!

If you look at the code of the stats page, you'll see major spoilers in the "story so far" section so if spoilers matter to you, keep away from that part of the page!

And finally if there are any oddities with saving and loading on itch please let me know; it's slightly experimental and although I've tested it, I'm not entirely sure that the saving plugin and the checkpoints fully play ball together.

Please note that the game is darker throughout than the Creme de la Creme series and lingers on various descriptions more than Blood Money; if this is of concern, do check the content notes before playing.

Password for the itch version: **TEHT_milestone_1**

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I'd be immensely grateful for any and all feedback you'd like to share, whether here, on Tumblr, or [on this feedback form](#).

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Try listening to this song from my writing playlist while you play: [You Aren't Welcome Here by Mushroomer](#)

-

Thank you so much for your support. I hope you enjoy playing!

[Newsflash: March #1](#)

[March 7](#)

A lot of planning, outlining and coding this fortnight for The Earth Has Teeth, with a hefty side order of revising. I drafted Chapter 3 - but it turned out it isn't actually completed, more of that in a minute. I've outlined and coded Chapter 4, and am pretty confident about it: lots of drama and tough choices for the PC in this one.

Here's a track from my writing playlist to get you in the mood: [The Reckoning by UNSECRET](#). You'll recognise this if, like me, you've watched How To Get Away With Murder or Killjoys.

Writing Progress

After the gigantic wordcount last fortnight I was raring to go with Chapter 4! The coding has gone great, but I hit some problems when playtesting Chapter 3; today, after trying to rework a scene, I realised that I needed to cut it altogether as it just didn't feel right.

It's not a disaster - I'd actually departed from the outline in writing it in the first place, thinking it would be fun to include - but it's never fun to cut 7000 words of hard work.

The good thing is that I can use almost all of that writing later in the game - so it'll still be there, just in a couple of chapters' time.

Excerpt

The sun is bright and warm over Ven Lake, sparkling on the ripples made by the gentle breeze. It's not as huge a body of water as Lake Hasri, but it's still hard to see to the other

side. A little jetty sits a short distance away, with rowboats moored to it and bobbing on the water.

Issi leads you and Nikita along the water's edge to a garden bordered with thick hedging that's taller than you and impossible to see through. Following the hedge leads you to a thatched cottage whose front garden is filled with bright summer flowers: scarlet wild peonies, white and pink poppies, and a thicket of purple lavender whose scent billows up as you brush past.

Wordcount

- **Total The Earth Has Teeth wordcount:** 100323 words
- **Average The Earth Has Teeth playthrough:** 31793 words (this is very nearly as long as it takes to play Noblesse Oblige!)
- **Fortnight progress:** 17725 words

When I look at it like that, it really is a lot of progress, so I'll try to focus on that rather than on the things that are tricky. It's still been a downer having to cut so much, though.

Next writing

I'll finish sorting out the Chapter 3 scene and do any Chapter 1-2 revisions that are needed in response to player feedback. Then I'll be writing Chapter 4 - let's see how far I get through it over the next two weeks.

Recap

The [Fiore/MC/Savarel bonus story](#) went up, as did the [Nikita intro](#) and the [March Q&A post](#).

The biggest thing was [the first two chapters of The Earth Has Teeth!](#) I'm tremendously excited to have been able to share them.

Today, I updated those early access chapters with an increase of 1000 words and a number of tweaks and improvements. The chapters are now 51.5K words! There are a lot of minor clarifications and tweaks, expanded details, and added options, as well as making all the skill tests significantly less harsh (there's plenty of time to get harsher later on but my intention isn't to make it feel like banging your head against a wall at the beginning). I think you'll need to restart your game for it to behave correctly.

Next up on Patreon

- **11th March (bonus supplement):** Rys story
- **12th March (sneak preview):** Fourth Earth Has Teeth RO reveal
- **19th March (sneak preview):** Fifth Earth Has Teeth RO reveal

Thank you for all your support and for reading this progress report. Have a lovely weekend!

[Bonus Supplement: Rys & Coffee Shop](#)

[March 11](#)

Hello and welcome to the bonus supplement storytime! I'm posting a story every two weeks based on a randomly-chosen* character and prompt.

This time the theme is: [Rys & Coffee Shop!](#) The MC visits somewhere special with Rys.

The password is: prompts_q1_2025

And in [this post](#) you can access the archive of all the stories.

I hope you enjoy!

*mostly random - if there are repeats I'll reroll.

Released 7 days early for members.

[The Earth Has Teeth RO intro: Commander Roschin](#)

[March 12](#)



Full name: Serhii/Sara/Saba Roschin

Age: 39

Gender: selectable between cis man (he/him), cis woman (she/her), and transmasculine (they/them)

Background: Roschin has lived in Rizhala all their life, apprenticing to the town guard in the footsteps of their now-older parents. Working their way up the ranks, they gained the attention of Warden Chura and impressed them enough to become one of the commanders of the guard. Nowadays they travel a lot, helping with local problems and recruiting people to join them in Rizhala.

Personality: outgoing, loyal, jovial, resilient

Appearance: mid-height, striking, and muscular, with smile-lines around their eyes and mouth. Loose and limber. Deep brown skin, curly black hair, and brown eyes.

Style: Male and female Roschin wear their hair long; transmasculine Roschin wears it shorter and cropped. Transmasculine and male Roschin have heavy beards. Their clothing is practical and attractive, with good quality linen shirts dyed with strong bright colours, a padded leather jerkin studded with metal

reinforcement, and reinforced waxed-canvas trousers. Their cloak is lined with fur, and its clasp is embossed with the Rizhala town guard insignia.

At their best: warm, inspiring, courageous

At their worst: needling, careless, stubborn

You'll like Roschin if you like... someone who'll look out for you, who doesn't take themselves seriously while taking their job and missions very seriously, who's settled in their role in life (for the moment), who's a good leader

You'll like romancing Roschin if you like... someone flirtatious, who will have your back and provide protection, who will boss you around if you're into it, who may become staunchly loyal to you, with whom you can move fast if you want, who will always make it clear how they feel about you

A song from Roschin's playlist: [Make Me Feel by Janelle Monae](#)

Face cast ideas: (bear in mind that this isn't the be-all-and-end-all - feel free to imagine as you like) Uli Latufeku, Simone Kessell, Alex Tarrant

-

By the way, if you have any questions on your mind about my writing, don't forget [the March Q&A!](#) I've only had two questions so far, so I've got plenty of room for more. I'll be posting the answers on 31st March!

Released 7 days early for members.

[The Earth Has Teeth RO intro: Val Chernenko](#)

[March 19](#)



Full name: Valerio/Valeria Chernenko (known by their full name in-game, but for ease I'll refer to them as Val when talking about them generally)

Age: 26

Gender: selectable between trans man (he/him), trans woman (she/her), and nonbinary transfem (they/them)

Background: Val lived in Rizhala with their elderly grandmother who was a cunning witch. Under her tutelage they learned magic but little discretion; after their grandmother died in their early twenties, they became increasingly reckless, selling illegal remedies and charms within the town's bounds. After one too many run-ins with Rizhala law, they thought it prudent to leave, and now live a transient life.

Personality: cynical, artful, shrewd, adventurous

Appearance: short and slender, with pale skin, straight black hair, and bright brown eyes.

Style: Val wears their hair long, usually partially tied back. Male Val has a moustache and beard. Val usually wears thick linen trousers, brightly-coloured shirts, and a deep orange-coloured leather coat, some of it embossed with decorative floral patterns. This coat is clearly expensive and well-kept,

containing lots of pockets, and is reversible. Their cloak clasp is decorated with glass gems and they have a number of hairpieces, rings, and necklaces.

At their best: bright, self-reliant, smooth

At their worst: bitter, reckless, self-indulgent

You'll like Val if you like... someone fun-loving, who will see through those who try to mess you around, who might learn to trust in time, who enjoys the finer things in life, who can persuade others to your side

You'll like romancing Val if you like... someone who'll flatter you, who will be a partner in crime (or who could perhaps be persuaded to a less criminal way of life), who will give you space when you need it, who will be canny about what you need

A song from Val's playlist: [Big Exit by PJ Harvey](#)

Face cast ideas: (bear in mind that this isn't the be-all-and-end-all - feel free to imagine as you like)
Ayanga, Gana Bayarsaikhan, Wang Likun

[Newsflash: March #2](#)

[March 21](#)

This has not been a very forward-moving fortnight thanks to a number of things which culminated in a seized-up shoulder today - so I will be brief as I can't be at the computer too long.

From my writing playlist: [Twyrine by Mushroomer](#) from the Pathologic 2 OST.

Writing Progress

I sorted out the revisions for Chapter 1, 2, and 3 that I mentioned from last fortnight and I'm now halfway through writing Chapter 4.

Excerpt

"Let's get to the town hall," `{nik_they}` `{nik_say}`. "See how the others are doing."

The wind has risen, buffeting against you hard and throwing dust so hard at your face that your skin stings. The pair of you stagger through it, pushing against the air itself, until you reach the

center of town. Simeon and Roschin are hurrying people into the town hall; you can see from the people's expressions that some are growing dazed from exposure. Nikita pulls out a charm and wraps it around `{nik_their}` wrist, face set.

Wordcount

- **Total The Earth Has Teeth wordcount:** 105074 words
- **Average The Earth Has Teeth playthrough:** 32810 words
- **Fortnight progress:** 4751 words

Next writing

Shoulder allowing, I'll be moving on with writing Chapter 4.

Recap

The [Rys/MC bonus story](#) went up, as did the [Roschin](#) and [Val](#) intros.

Next up on Patreon

- 25th March: Denario/MC/Savarel bonus story
- 26th March: polyamory rundown for The Earth Has Teeth
- 31st March: Q&A answers - get your questions in!

I was keen to share how good Wanderstop and the Pathologic 3 demo are and how much I've fallen in love with both of them, but alas, my shoulder's not allowing it at the moment. I hope you have a good weekend - and that if you're dealing with illness or pain that it eases! I'm going to try to rest up over the next couple of days and hopefully will be back in action on Monday.

[Bonus Supplement: Denario/MC/Savarel & Eyes Meet](#)

[March 25](#)

Hello and welcome to the bonus supplement storytime! I'm going to be posting a story every two weeks based on a randomly-chosen* character and prompt.

This time the theme is: [Denario/MC/Savarel & Eyes Meet!](#) The trio come home after a storm, and something shifts in their relationship.

The password is: prompts_q1_2025

And in [this post](#) you can access the archive of all the bonus stories.

I hope you enjoy!

*mostly random - if there are repeats I'll reroll.

Released 13 days early for members.

[Non-monogamy in The Earth Has Teeth](#)

[March 26](#)

Some of the romanceable characters in THE EARTH HAS TEETH can be romanced non-monogamously. This is the most complicated non-monogamy setup I've done so far in a game, so I'm looking forward to seeing how it plays out once I get there!

- **Armell** is monogamous and they're happy to romance someone who doesn't want to sleep with them; if they are sleeping together, they want to have an emotional connection.
- **Kiriyak** is happy to romance someone who doesn't want to sleep with them; they're also happy to sleep with someone non-romantically. Although they enjoy sex, they're not particularly motivated by it. They don't require a strong romantic or emotional connection, but they do require a mutually respectful one. Kiriyak can be romanced monogamously or non-monogamously.
- In most cases **Nikita** is monogamous and they don't want to be in an open relationship or in a V relationship, although they can be non-mongamous under some circumstances. Currently they're avoiding romance, but can grow close with a PC over the course of the game. They're happy to romance someone who doesn't want to sleep with them, but it would be important to them to be physically close with their partner.
- **Roschin** can be romanced monogamously or non-mongamously. They're happy sleeping with someone outside of a romantic relationship; sex is important to them, but if they're close with a PC who doesn't want to sleep with them, they'll romance them if the PC's happy with them sleeping with other people.
- **Val** can be romanced monogamously or non-monogamously and they're happy with a casual or romantic relationship. In general their default approach is non-monogamous, but they'll happily be monogamous with a PC with whom they've formed a strong connection.

Possible non-monogamous connections:

- **Nikita/MC/Val** can happen under pretty specific circumstances that I'm keeping under wraps for now. They're romanceable as a triad, romancing each other as well as the PC.

- **Kiriyak/MC/Roschin** can happen, either as a V or a triad. In the case of a triad, they'll romance each other as well as the PC.
- **Kiriyak/MC/Val** can happen as a V: Kiriyak and Val aren't interested in each other.
- **Roschin/MC/Val** can happen, either as a V or triad. In the case of a triad, they'll sleep together with or without the PC, but aren't particularly romantically connected.
- **Kiriyak/MC/Roschin/Val** can therefore happen as a polycule; Kiriyak/Val don't romance each other or sleep together, and Roschin/Val may sleep together but don't romance each other, but the PC is romancing and/or sleeping with all three.

All these relationships are of course contingent on the PC's actions within the plot! There are lots of chances for the PC to break romances, or for the PC's actions to mean that the NPCs aren't on good terms, with varying levels of drama surrounding the situation.

And when I say "drama", I mean "the PC will be able to become enemies with some of these characters, ruin the life of and/or kill at least one of them, and all of them will be at risk of death by the end of the game".

At the moment I don't have plans for NPCs getting together if the PC doesn't romance them, or for the PC matchmaking. I'll see how that feels down the line, though: it might be that it feels like the characters have a lot of chemistry if the PC gives them a nudge.

[March Q&A Answer Post](#)

[April 2](#)

Apologies for the lateness of this - I will try to make sure I post the April one in better time, and I hope you enjoy!

As someone who polyed with Max and Delacroix but got engaged to Blaise, what does that mean for the 4 of us by the time of Honor Bound?

That's something where I'm happy to leave it open for players to headcanon. The specifics on that particular branch were unfortunately too complex to include references to in the Honor Bound scene - there was so much to account for there!

The other element is that while I could maybe see Max and Delacroix being fairly chill about it, I could also see Blaise having some difficulties in adapting to a polyamorous romance, and while it could be possible for it to be resolved in some way, that's something that would be complicated and emotional enough that I wouldn't want to summarise it without the player getting to play through it onscreen.

So, please feel free to imagine what feels right for your MC and relationship! It could be that Blaise moves to Teran and was too busy to come to Elene's Prospect; it could be that they have a different kind of living arrangement; I wouldn't break up the PC's romance offscreen, so you can be assured that they could all be together in some way, but it's open for your own interpretation that's right for you.

If Honor Bound ROs played TEHT, who would they romance?

This was such an interesting one to think about, and I'm still not totally sure on it. It'll be interesting to revisit once I've written more of the TEHT characters! I'm answering this with a haphazard combination of the Honor Bound ROs self-inserting and going for people they generally think are interesting.

Denario: Nikita

Fiore: Armell

Matia: Val

Raffi: Roschin

Savarel: Kiriya

Korzha: Armell

Okay one of most memorable play throughs of Royal Affairs was where the MC had not quite polyamorous relationships with Javi and Dominique. The relationship with Javi was platonic while the relationship with Dominique was physical. For roleplay purposes, Javi and Dominique are cuddle buddies. I thought that Zaledo would be the better place for them. But how does the Royal court in Zaledo treat them? Are they accepted? I'm kind of curious how it plays out ..

Aw, that's a nice dynamic! I think that in Zaledo that would be considered within the area of scandal - there would be whispers about the fact that the MC had a physical relationship with Dominique while being with Javi, and there might be some concern from Javi's parents about how Javi felt about it. But certainly Javi's parents would be OK with that if they were sure that Javi was, and that Dominique wouldn't be a political liability. Dominique wouldn't have an official consort title, and nor could they get married as a trio, although the MC and Javi could award them a Zaledoan title if they wanted to.

I am fascinated by the concept of illegal charms and remedies, why Rizhala might ban them, what the concept of Rizhala law means in terms of the town's jurisdiction, are there conflicts between people like Roschin and people who live near Rizhala but are not necessarily a part of that community? Are the charms and remedies illegal because they don't work? Or because they do work and undercut a monopoly held by some powerful interest in the town? Or because there is something ethically and legally dubious about how they are created?

is Val breaking an unjust set of laws? Why? Do they have no other good options for generating income, or do they do it to rage against the machine? Who benefits from outlawing their charms

and remedies? Are the laws old or new? If old, did they originally have a good reason that is now forgotten? Or a bad reason that is now forgotten? If new, was Val specifically targeted?

Rizhala's law technically stretches within its bounds and a bit of territory around it, but it's very loosey-goosey because there's a lot of non-owned/unclaimed land that's far away from towns or isn't claimed by farmsteads, etc. So: yes there can be conflicts between people like Roschin and people living nearby, and sometimes fights over unclaimed resources.

Charms and remedies of the kind Val uses are assumed not to work by the Rizhala leadership (whether they do or not) and there's not really a way of regulating them, so it's a general rule that it's fine to make and use them yourself - but selling them isn't allowed. Jan, the leader, does provide protective materials and instructions, some based on the priestly rituals of Vastan (the PC would recognise some of it from their experiences) and some less familiar.

Jan and the other leaders of Rizhala benefit from having greater control and awareness of who's moving in and out - not everyone would come to them for protection if they were going out to travel, but a lot of people would - and from Jan's perspective, they know for sure that their protections work so it's putting people less at risk.

I think that there were problems before this with people in Rizhala knowingly selling desperate people trash, resulting in deaths from storms - perhaps an organised group that was stamped out - though I'm not sure on the timing of it. It would have been within the last 40-50 years, I think (there are some elements I need to pin down to know exactly when it was, which I haven't done yet!) so it's a familiar state of affairs to the citizens there.

But other places aren't so bothered about it, so people from, say, Ven Lake where Issi's from might be like "umm? what?" or "yeah, I suppose when you've got such a big settlement you have to be strict" or "that's wild and I'm glad I live here" or "yep I wish our leaders were strong in that way, good to be tough on this stuff"... or whatever other opinions. Basically it's not something everyone would agree with. Val is raging against the machine, is handling grief about their grandmother badly, angered people a few too many times, and has an allergy to keeping their head down and out of trouble.

That's such an interesting setup where the theocratic leadership is the entrenched interest and yeah they do kind of have a point about whatever they've banned for safety reasons ... But they also have a monopoly. And it's a religious monopoly. And we are walking into this situation as a member of a monastic order of that religion who just happens to have God in their pocket. And how has the religion sort of grown and created institutions and what does Vashtan have to say about all this, and how are the Rizhalan leaders abusing their power and their monopoly? Did they maybe make it illegal to leave town at all without seeking protection/permission?

I think the thing I keep coming back to in everything I am reading/watching these days is "How will the people who currently have power use their resources to protect the status quo even when the status quo is objectively terrible for everyone?"

Vastan has a variety of opinions about how different places have interpreted the religion! I've enjoyed writing varied cultures and how their rituals and beliefs have diverged over the years. It's not as formal as split denominations but over a longer time period (and if there was more infrastructure and easier travel) it would likely settle into something like that.

Some of the stuff about what's going on in Rizhala, and indeed the other towns, is a bit spoilery and I need to pin down some things about how it's presented and how the leaders are seen, so I won't share too much in advance of it being seen onscreen. The PC isn't going to see Rizhala itself for a little while as it's a fairly long distance from them, but they'll see some ripples of its culture and leadership before they see the place for themselves. In general Rizhala presents itself as very prosperous, healthy, safe, and generous. NPCs have different opinions about that; the PC/players can decide how they feel about it!

Ven Lake is a bit less traditional, with rituals and festivals that are unfamiliar to the PC - and Yarigana, which is where Armell is from, has a different culture and religious practices, some of which are more traditional and the PC would recognise as being closer to what they experienced in Tulara. Yarigana has its own... let's say imperfect governmental structures and decision-making.

[The Earth Has Teeth: Chapter 1 and 2](#)

[April 2](#)



Now up for everyone, [Chapters 1 and 2 are ready to play!](#)

Welcome to the steppes of Amikya. Good luck surviving the storms.

-

Try listening to this song from my writing playlist while you play: [Plague Awake Here by Mushroomer](#)

-

| [Forum Thread](#) | [cogdemos link](#) | [itch link](#) | [Feedback Form](#)

-

I would love to hear what you think of it, whether you liked it or didn't (and why), how the setting and MC feel, and how it felt to play!

-

For those who played the Patreon version that went up in March, there are various updates:

- many, many instances of tweaks, polish, and expanding of things
- corrected some setting of gendered terms
- raised the threshold slightly for Nikita to stare at you in Chapter 2, so that it's a correct level of unnerving rather than unintentionally so

-

Content notes

By the nature of the below notes, some story elements will be spoiled. Not all the content notes below apply to the current demo.

Paths through the game can include cruelty and violence to humans and magical animals, including blood, gore, injury, and death; dead bodies; duststorms; floods; dysphoria; earthquakes; landslides and avalanches; recreational alcohol and drug use; starvation; ritual skin-cutting; trauma responses; wildfires; various other environmental hazards and disasters.

Some paths will contain optional sexually explicit scenes. These can be played through in detail, or played as fade-to-black.

[Newsflash: April #1](#)

[April 4](#)

This fortnight has been a lot more pleasant than the previous one: my shoulder recovered after a few days, and I was able to take a couple of days away from home to work intensively on getting The Earth Has Teeth work done.

From my writing playlist: [Stress Hug by Mushroomer](#) from the Pathologic 2 OST. (yes, that album is a large proportion of the playlist)

Writing Progress

I finished drafting Chapter 4 and I sent all four chapters off to my editor! Hooray! [I also put up Chapters 1 and 2 for everyone to play](#). It's been absolutely delightful hearing what people think and I've been busily working on improvements. I put up an update yesterday with a lot of corrections and additions as well.

Excerpt of the PC and Roschin going drinking (not for sober PCs, obviously)

```

Roschin drinks with you for a couple more hours, and you end up stumbling out of the inn with ${ros_them} laughing and singing at the top of ${ros_their} voice, ${ros_their} arm slung companionably around your shoulders.

"Here. Here, let me walk you to the barn, or you'll get lost," Roschin says, steering you. "What's the point in...you know, what's the point being in a town if you end up sleeping outside anyway?"

You concentrate on moving one foot in front of the other.
*if ros_interest
    Roschin's strong arm supports you as you go, allowing you to sag against ${ros_them}. ${ros_they} ${ros_feel} very warm along your side.
    You're not sure how long the walk is, but at some point Roschin nudges the barn door open and waves you in.
*fake_choice
    # "This was so fun."
    Your voice is louder than you meant, and a little blurry. Roschin @({ros_kiss > 0}) catches you in a hug and thumps you affectionately on the back.[laughs.] "Let's do it again another time."

    # "Let me give you a hug. I really appreciate it."
    Your voice is louder than you meant, and a little blurry. You're overcome, suddenly, with great affection for Roschin, who laughs and catches you in a hug, thumping you on the back.
    "Nothing to thank me for," ${ros_they} @({ros_kiss > 0}) ${ros_say} against your ear[${ros_say}].

    # I feel dreadfully empty and sad, suddenly.
    "I should get to bed," you say, and Roschin makes a sympathetic noise.

    "Hey," ${ros_they} ${ros_say}, "you look after yourself, yeah? See you tomorrow."

    # I head inside. I'm exhausted.
    Roschin laughs. "Goodnight," ${ros_they} ${ros_call} out.

    *if (ros_kiss > 0) # I lean @({height up|in|down|down|BUG}) to kiss ${ros_them}.
    It's sloppy and clumsy, and you feel Roschin smile against your lips. ${ros_they} @({ros_pl kiss|kisses}) you back, ${ros_their} tongue parting your lips, and then ${ros_draw} away.
    "Let's do this again another time."

```

Wordcount

- **Total The Earth Has Teeth wordcount:** 116867 words
- **Average The Earth Has Teeth playthrough:** 35832 words
- **Fortnight progress:** 11793 words

Next writing

April is a quieter month for me, writing wise, due to childcare and a holiday later in the month. However, I'm planning to work on revisions to Chapter 1 and 2 in response to player feedback, and the latter two chapters once my editor's notes come in.

Some Chapter 1 and 2 revisions that I'm planning include:

- Expanding a section of Chapter 1 to increase sense of drama and suspense
- Revising the Chapter 2 intro again: I like the change I made but it helped me clarify that the timeskip doesn't work the way I wanted it to. So I'm going to add a longer, real-time section here.
- Some smaller revisions including expanding PC's awareness about what might be best to do with [the thing you find at the end of Chapter 2]

My goal is to release the revised Chapter 1-2 during May on Patreon with the above changes along with anything else that I decide to include. I'm not sure of the exact date yet, but I'll keep you posted.

Next up on Patreon

5th April: Q&A post (Sneak Preview and above)

8th April: Auguste story (Bonus Supplement)

Other thoughts

For Royal Affairs and Honor Bound, I made character posts about what it was like to write them, my intentions with them, how they changed as I wrote them, etc. It occurred to me that I never did that for

the Creme de la Creme major characters: would you be interested in me doing them here? Let me know!

[Bonus Supplement: Auguste/MC and Holding Hands](#)

[April 8](#)

Hello and welcome to the bonus supplement storytime! I'm going to be posting a story every two weeks based on a randomly-chosen* character and prompt.

This time the theme is: [Auguste/MC and Holding Hands!](#) Auguste returns from a difficult meeting, six months after the end of Creme de la Creme. This one contains major spoilers for the game!

The password is: prompts_q2_2025

And in [this post](#) you can access the archive of all the bonus stories.

I hope you enjoy!

*mostly random - if there are repeats I'll reroll.

[Newsflash: April #2](#)

[April 18](#)

This fortnight has been quite the ride and has involved a great deal of going through feedback from players and from my editor. There's been a lot to do, which, I'll be honest, combined with not having very much work time available hasn't always the most comfortable way of working.

Besides which, it's especially hard being trans in the UK after the last few days and I'd be dishonest if I said it hasn't had an impact on work.

Still. I'm continuing to make my queer games and hopefully they'll bring people fun and satisfaction.

-

From my writing playlist: [Beware the Freelancer by Justin E. Bell from The Outer Worlds OST](#)

Writing Progress

I'm partway through revisions at the moment. I currently have a 14-page document of feedback which is INCREDIBLY useful to have, in which I've ordered feedback in order of priority. Some comments are simple to address - "I'd like to say X or Y during Z scene". Others are more complex - "I'm confused by X" or "I don't feel like I've sufficiently got to know Y". And of my revisions have involved Chapters 1 and 2, whereas others are reworking Chapters 3 and 4 with commentary from my editor.

So there's been a lot to do! Although the wordcount looks small, I've ended up doing a lot - more, really, than I'd hoped as I got a bit behind before the school holiday.

Wordcount

- **The Earth Has Teeth total wordcount:** 122832 words
- **Average The Earth Has Teeth playthrough wordcount:** 36270 words
- **Fortnight progress:** 5965 words

Next writing

I'm taking a break from the 23rd until the end of the month, and I'm aiming to finish my revision and maybe get the chunky expansion to Chapter 2 drafted before then. Fingers crossed for getting over the finish line with that!

Also, I wrote a couple of posts about [what I like about playing as a nonbinary character in games](#), and a follow-up about [erotica about nonbinary MCs](#). The latter is NSFW as you'd expect from the subject matter! Take a look if you're interested - I'd like to edit them and put them up here and on my own blog when I have a moment.

[Bonus Supplement: Danelak/MC/Pascha and Flowers](#)

[April 22](#)

Hello and welcome to the bonus supplement storytime! I'm going to be posting a story every two weeks based on a randomly-chosen* character and prompt.

This time the theme is: [Danelak/MC/Pascha and Flowers](#), and a moment with the trio a year after fleeing Teteriuk.

The password is: prompts_q2_2025

And in [this post](#) you can access the archive of all the bonus stories.

I hope you enjoy!

*mostly random - if there are repeats I'll reroll.

[Bonus Supplement: Hyacinthe/MC & Bathing](#)

[May 6](#)

Hello and welcome to the bonus supplement storytime! I'm going to be posting a story every two weeks based on a randomly-chosen* character and prompt.

This time the theme is: [Hyacinthe/MC](#), and a sweet healing and bonding moment for them both.

The password is: prompts_q2_2025

And in [this post](#) you can access the archive of all the bonus stories.

I hope you enjoy!

*mostly random - if there are repeats I'll reroll.

[The Earth Has Teeth Chapter 1-2 Update](#)

[May 13](#)

Hello! I've been head down working on this for some time and am pleased to share that I've revised Chapters 1 and 2 of The Earth Has Teeth in response to lots of fantastic feedback.

This update adds 13000 words to the demo and an average demo playthrough is now around 17000 words! You'll see about a quarter of the total text on each playthrough.

You'll need to restart your game to play through this update. You can skip to Chapter 2 if you'd like, although you'll miss some extra scenes that have been added in the first chapter.

Play on [itch.io](#) or [cogdemos.ink](#)! The itch password is **TEHT_milestone_1b**.

Changelog:

- Expansion to Chapter 1 tunnel sequence and new item added to pick up
- Major expansion and rework to the start of Chapter 2 and large reduction of timeskip; you can now meet Issi and Nikita for the first time onscreen
- Expanded first library scene to clarify the sense of numbers of people living in Tulara
- Instead of Vastan's tooth boosting Discover, you can now take her ear for the same effect
- Moved medical transition character customisation to follow directly from the gender/pronouns section for flow reasons; gave hormone-stimulating herbs names; added option for once-blessed characters to have had surgery or be on hormones
- Restored Chapter 2 opportunity to ogle Nikita; it felt more appropriate now that they've had more screentime earlier in the chapter!
- Lots of polish tweaks throughout, including more clarifying detail when deciding what to do with what's found in the woods in Chapter 2, the Ven Lake festival name being a little more different, additional options for playing as nonbinary, wording changes, etc
- Corrected bug in which choosing not to specify body details still led to questions about hormones/surgery in some cases

Stats/supplies/equipment:

- Added stat guide to the stats page and expanded glossary to include uses of herbs
- Idealistic stat is now named Compassionate, and the wording of a number of choices that increase that stat, and tests involving it, has been tweaked. There was some muddying of the waters about what Idealistic meant due to the stat going through a couple of different iterations; this should be clearer and more consistent now
- Obedient stat is now named Dutiful
- Stat changes when you take a part of Vastan's body are now always visible, as they're not as intuitive as doing something like training a skill and are very large changes
- The first stat change is now always visible as it's the first one players will encounter and includes large changes
- Changed how supplies are tracked so you can add or reduce supplies by "half a day's worth" to make rationing choices more flexible

[Newsflash: May](#)

[May 16](#)

Apologies for missing the previous newsflash! I had a 7 hour train journey that day and lost track of things. But I'm back now!

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From my writing playlist: [Church of the Pines by Sun Kil Moon](#)

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Writing Progress

A great deal of editing and adding new stuff! This has involved later chapters too, and mostly Chapters 1 and 2, for which [I put up an update this week](#). The update adds 13000 words to the demo and you'll see about a quarter of the total text on each playthrough. I'm really excited about it! It explores more about the first encounter between the PC and Nikita and Issi, adds some more tension into the first chapter, and I think it flows more evenly.

I also have some news. For a very long time, I've been working on an outline for a secret project. I've finally started work on the project this month!

It's going to be taking priority over The Earth Has Teeth drafting, so I'm going to spend some time figuring out what I can share when about the two projects. This new one is under NDA so I can't say anything more at the moment, but I'm very proud to be doing it and when the time comes to share more I hope you like the sound of it!

-

Wordcount Tracker

- **The Earth Has Teeth total wordcount:** 133563 words
- **Average The Earth Has Teeth playthrough wordcount:** 40552 words
- **May progress:** around 13000 words

(For perspective, it's looking similar to the length of Creme de la Creme when I was at the same stage of the draft!)

- **Secret thing total wordcount:** 13112 words
- **Average secret thing playthrough wordcount:** 5382 words
- **May progress:** 13112 words

(I have no idea how long it's going to end up being, it's anyone's guess at this point!)

-

Thank you so much for your patience and support. I greatly appreciate it, and I hope you have a good weekend!

[Bonus Supplement: Fabien & President Faraci stories](#)

[5 days ago](#)

Hello and welcome to the bonus supplement storytime! Here I'm posting a drabble or short story every two weeks.

This time we have a longer story set the year before Royal Affairs, about Fabien having a miserable time in Teran while his loved ones are celebrating Hearthlight at home. He has an encounter with Nicola Faraci, the Teranese President.

I wrote the NSFW version first, and then realised that an SFW version also works perfectly well for those who are less into middle-aged politician rivalsex but who would enjoy some irritable Fabien POV goodness.

- [Fabien/President Faraci, 1756 \(M/Nbi, NSFW\)](#) (5 pages)
- [Fabien & President Faraci, 1756 \(SFW\)](#) (4 pages)

These stories make a good pairing with Fabien's Gessner graduation night story over [here](#) if you would like more Fabien in your life!

The password for both stories is: prompts_q2_2025

And in [this post](#) you can access the archive of all the bonus stories.

I hope you enjoy!