

Diva Rumina Games Patreon by Thomas Bell

(24/January/2022 - 29/December/2022)

[The Bath](#)

[Jan 24, 2022](#)

The bath house is nice and quiet. The water might be questionable in its quality, but the men here know not to bother me by now. One or two tried to approach me, thinking I was a courtesan looking for clients. It wasn't difficult to prove them deadly wrong and after a short and blade-sharp discussion, they ended up scattering like the scared little boys they were.

Tinsae used to wonder why I insisted on bathing here; it's always a real danger that Gaius would pester me if I stayed at home. He thinks I need to hear about his worries or that I need to share mine with him. Still he thinks that. Even after I've given him nothing but dirty looks and an occasional snarl. He treats me as his wild mare who's in need of taming. He yearns to give me his comfort and love, he aches to talk about his dear, dead wife.

Ridiculous old man. He should join his wife in the afterlife. He should let me return to Rome and my family. Every day I need to spend my time away from them, I will remind him that I detest the fact and despise him.

Hesitant steps approach my pool, disturbing my thoughts.

Oh. It's you from before. The boy who can't use the right shoes.

I let you sink into the pool. Your proximity is curious, I don't remember the last time I shared a pool with someone. No one has dared to get this close to me since... Since what? Since Tinsae, I suppose. Even Gaius doesn't dare to touch me, he looks as though he fears that I might bite his head off. And he is absolutely right. I would if he tried to touch me with his wrinkled hands.

You move and the water moves lazily with it. It makes my heart race quicker, just so that is barely noticeable, but it's not difficult to keep the fact from showing on my features. The tips of my fingers tingle due to you, you foolish man. You're gruff. And graceless. Dirty and disgusting. Where did you crawl out of? But, for some reason, I let you sit there.

Your cluelessness is like a breath of fresh air. Is that the reason why I won't tackle you for intruding on my bathing time? You don't know who I am, you don't take me for a courtesan, you're just sharing a pool with me.

There's something that halts my thoughts. Your eyes. There's familiarity in them.

Are you far away from home, soldier? You are, that much is clear. Dragged into a foreign land without your will, don't we all know what it's like.

Run back where you came from, boy. There will be more suffering. There are still remnants of joy in your eyes; it will all disappear if you stay here.

But, as I watch your proud features, I know you won't leave. You need to be here. And that will be your downfall.

That makes the two of us.

[The Shoe](#)

[Jan 24, 2022](#)

The leather in my shoe was impeccably comfortable. It was elastic, velvety. It hugged my toes with its softness, it didn't gnaw at my skin when I had to walk to the Forum. No calluses appeared to molest my feet, no blisters vexed me when I wore them.

That shoe is now in Robus's drooling mouth.

She gives me back the half-eaten boot accompanied with a happy bark, as if she made it somehow better. She looks me in the eyes and smiles that goofy beam only dogs can. There's not a trace of understanding that this might be a bad thing to do.

I sigh. What else can I do?

"You're a bad dog," I say but she just continues to smile. She doesn't believe me. She knows they are just words, that I still love her just the same.

I quickly check if she's eaten anything else. No. The herbs and ointments are intact; she's too smart to devour them. Well, once she did eat a whole jar of crocodile feces. It must have been too tasty of a snack for a dog to resist. It was partly my fault, I shouldn't have stored it so low on the shelf. The thought still stings my heart; it was an expensive jar, hard to find. I had to bury any dreams of my luxurious face mask that I was planning for months.

With a shake of my head I turn back to Robus. She doesn't chew on anyone else's shoes. A worrying thought pops into my mind, a frown following it in its tail: What if Marcus teaches her to do that?

Honestly? It wouldn't surprise me. I love him but sometimes I think I shouldn't. Especially now that there's a half-eaten corpse in my hand, devoured by his dog. He will tell me that he's going to buy me a new one. He always does. It's not the same. This was a good shoe.

No, the best shoe.

Sigh. Fine. I will get this out of the way and make him buy me a new one.

I open the door; that same, creaking door he refuses to fix. It gnaws at my ears. It's really starting to irritate me. Maybe I should just repair it for him, he's probably waiting for that to happen, anyway.

But, what I find inside is a most curious sight: You stand slouched like a cornered wolf in his office. The atmosphere in the office is heavy and hostile, there's a foul smell of intent to kill underneath it all. You turn to me as if I was the one trying to end your life, as if you should attack me instead of him. The sight sinks my stomach, rips open my old scars I didn't even remember were there.

Don't look at me like that. I won't hurt you.

Marcus. Why do you smile as if you've found a new plaything? What have you done this time?

[The Child](#)

[Jan 24, 2022](#)

The wind carries a pitiful scream with it, making me quicken my step. Caleb pushes people from blocking our way, there's an elderly woman who almost falls due to the impact. Just as I'm about to ask Caleb to be more gentle with the shoving, I halt myself. This is not the time for pleasantries.

There. The boy lies on the ground with a freshly hit red mark on his small arm. The sight ignites anger within me. I turn to look at the man who did this. Isis, lend me strength and tranquility to deal with this... person. Anger makes one blind and reckless. It eats you from the inside, starting from the stomach and continuing into your brain, corroding everything in its path. Thankfully, the burning sensation subsides and my mind clears.

"Let the boy go," I say. My voice rings lower in my ears than usual. I look him in the eyes. I know he will obey. He, however, doesn't seem to think that. Who is this foreign woman to tell me what to do, he thinks. It's written all over his face: it's his right to discipline his property.

Finally the realization over his dire situation quickly wipes the familiar pride off his face. All too quickly he frees the child, as he well should. He knows what will happen if he doesn't obey.

The child is now safe. He hugs my thigh with such ferocity that it almost hurts. But it's the good kind of hurt. The type of hurt I would gladly hold closely in my heart if it meant that the child would be safe. I would bear the pain readily, content with the knowledge that the pain is not his to endure.

The most unfortunate children are helpless, hoping not to attract the attention of the bad ones. They don't get to act like children should, they don't receive the love they need. I can't save them all. Even as his innocent eyes look at me with such gratitude, there's the feeling of not doing enough. It gnaws my insides, corrodes the pit of my stomach.

I bend down to whisper into his ear that I will save his mother, too. He won't be alone in this world.

However, I need to hurry. The man is in need of punishing someone because his authority was undermined.

But, before I can leave, my mind wakes up to a realization that we're not alone: A young soldier's eyes scrutinize me.

You. You're not from here. Not many townspeople would dare to stare at me like you do. You wonder why I did what I did. You've seen how cruel the world can be.

But there's something else in your gaze. Something that I've seen many, many times before. It almost makes me want to run from you. You're dangerous. I can see it clearly and there's enough sense in me to fear it.

But what's beneath that gaze is what makes me stay in place.

You've been hurt. Many times.

Do you... need help?

[The Eyes](#)

[Jan 24, 2022](#)

Bored.

So bored.

This is the same road I've walked a thousand times. Its stones are the same; gray, their edges smoothed by the years of people walking on them. Dull. The noise my boots make is the same, the speed I walk is the same. Brisk, as if I had somewhere important to go.

Some soldiers pass me by, not many at this hour. They all wear the same expression when they see me, the reverence aimed at me is almost ridiculous. Look away, you fools, I'm in a hurry to fall flat on my empty bed.

The trip to the North did nothing to this sensation. If anything, it only made it worse. How, I don't know. Perhaps North made me forget about everything. There was no need to think about anything unnecessary. But now that it's done, what is there? The same, foul stone underneath my boots.

Wait.

I halt my pace.

There's a posture I can't quite place.

Curious.

But, as you turn to face me, everything comes back to me. It wakes the senses up, it flares the memories aflame.

It's you.

You flinch as you see me. No need to hide the fact that you did, I saw it clearly. Your eyes. They're just as I remember. Your eyes are filled with such resentment and anger. There's a need to destroy. It almost made me flinch the first time I saw them. What a wonder that you came all the way here.

Your eyes tell me of your need: You need to tear *me* apart. Is that why you're here? To kill me?

The tingles deep below my ribs almost make me give you a smile. It almost forces its way to my features.

Could you do it? Yes. I do believe so. You could do it with your bare hands.

But, as I watch you, as you tremble under my gaze, there's something else. I almost frown at the sight of it. There's something clouding your gaze, shrouding it in something foreign. It wasn't there the last time I saw you.

Something happened to you. What could it be?

I take a step towards you, and you react by fleeing.

As you should.

I did kill everyone you hold dear. Something in me almost makes me frown, but it's nothing a little chuckle wouldn't smother underneath.

What a delightful turn of events! What an interesting way to disturb the dull routines. I welcome you, you hateful little creature from up North, I welcome you with open arms.

“What’s your name, soldier?”

“Hati.”

Ha! Of course you would call yourself that. It’s written on your face. The hatred taints your proud features, the underlying fear tarnishes your voice.

Banish the fear away, dear Hati. It doesn’t suit you. Look at me like you want to destroy me. Feed on that energy. Let me be a part of your resurrection. Or downfall.

Fear is beneath your worth. You made it this far. I need to see where the road leads you.

[The Painting](#)

[Jan 24, 2022](#)

I wish Gaia would cease off with the birthday parties. She thinks the cake is a surprise, but I smelled her intentions, and her cake, the moment she peeked her head through the door opening, announcing her arrival from Rome. The date checks, it’s all too obvious.

“Come on, Marcus. You look like you swallowed a jug of lemon juice,” Hilaria says. Mother gave her a fitting name. Even as an infant, Hilaria looked like she was about to say something funny, at least in her own mind. She’s had a permanent smirk on her face since she didn’t know how to speak.

I shake my head. “I’m just tired.”

“You’re always tired. Are you getting old?” She’s 10 years younger than me and she really likes to remind me of the fact. In normal circumstances, I would oblige. Maybe take a jab at her unimpressive poetry career. But this day. This day irks me.

Antonia’s high-pitched voice reaches me from behind her mother who’s holding the unsurprising cake filled with ricotta-filling and jam. “Uncle. Are you an old fart?”

“Yes. I am.” It’s better to yield to her. She’s too sharp for her own good. She’s a child, yet she looks at me like she knows everything about me.

Then, she smiles. It’s a suspicious smile. One that makes me wonder what her end goal is. It’s not to delight me, that much is certain.

"I made you a gift. Will you promise to cherish it forever?" She squints her beady little eyes. This is a trap of some sort. I know that look, I know it too well. She's fooled me too many times before, I know not to trust anything she says.

Gaia gives me a sharp look. 'Say that you will', she says without words. She gazes pointedly at the cake, as if I would care if I didn't get any. She thinks her child is filled with compassion for others. Not for me, I've found out.

I sigh. "Sure."

"Splendid!" Antonia shrieks and proceeds to present me with a flat, wrapped up gift.

Gaia places the cake on my table and starts to slice it in pieces. "Open it, Marcus. She spent a lot of time making it."

And so I do. Inside there's a painting on a wooden plank. There are multicolored oval-shaped stains on it. It's not as bad as I feared.

Antonia beams at me. "Will you promise to hang it on your wall?"

"What is this?"

"Will you promise?"

"Fine. I will." I shouldn't promise anything, but she's driven me into a corner.

"I made it with my butt!"

My mind numbs. I stare at the painting. Now the shapes make sense.

Gaia gives me a small, apologetic smile. "I tried to make her do it with her palms but she insisted."

Of course she did.

"Will you hang it on your wall, Uncle?"

"You made a promise." Gaia continues to smile. It's hard to know if she's in on the joke or just proud of her daughter's butt-painting. I can swear I hear Hilaria snickering in the background.

"...Fine."

[The Great Sea](#)

[Jan 24, 2022](#)

I've never crossed the Great Sea. The thought is peculiar in itself but it carries sorrow with it. If things were different, I would never have even thought about this. Why would I? My home is there, in the North. The South disgusts me. The people are soft, the smell of weak characteristics linger on them as I pass them by.

But I need to be here. You need me.

You. I need to help you.

"Where are you going, stranger?"

It takes a moment to realize someone is aiming their pointless, worthless words at me. With my brows slightly furrowed I turn to see who did it. Not because I have any desire to answer, just to see who would disturb me.

It's an ordinary woman, probably looking for a friend. Or a 'friend'. She's smiling, awaiting for my answer that she will never receive.

The smile doesn't last for long.

She starts to squirm under my gaze but it does nothing to inspire an answer from me. She starts self-soothing gestures, rubbing her neck, biting her lip. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to bother you." Finally she almost runs away, stumbling on her feet and nearly landing on her face.

I turn back to look at the Sea. It's the only thing separating me from you.

Then, it's time to dock.

My feet finally feel the foreign land beneath them. With my nose dull with the smell of fish and salt, I gaze at the Great Sea, now hiding my home behind its masses of water. A flicker of grief tries to ignite my heart but I quickly refocus my gaze to the unknown line of trees. The laughter of seagulls follows me as I start to make my way towards the forest, ignoring the buzzing town.

There's always a home in the forest.

But before I can reach the forest line, a shout reaches me first: "Hey you!" The sound is rough, coarse in its tone, like they've had too much beer and wine and they need money for more.

A disgusted sigh escapes me; I didn't even try to stop it from fleeing my lips. One thing is always the same: brutes preying on the weak. Sometimes, however, the brutes make mistakes. That usually costs them everything. I close my eyes and try to find a trace of generosity within me. There's none. The fact that I even bothered to try is evidence enough of my benevolent soul. There's only one way this will end.

"Give me yer money." His fingers dig deep into my shoulder. The fingers alone smell of filth and decay, of rotten morals and abhorrent character. A shudder runs through me.

"Off with you."

"Why would I listen to a little cockroach like—"

He falls silent before hastily letting me go, almost shoving me away from him. I keep walking.

Screams of agony follow me.

The road to you is long. Your life is in danger.

I need to hurry.

[About the future short story topics](#)

[Jan 25, 2022](#)

What sort of topics would you be interested in reading more about? Both in terms of background and POV shifts. Is there a specific scene you would like to experience from someone else's POV? Are you interested in, I don't know, the Legate's past love life? (/jk?)

[Who's your fav RO?](#)

[Jan 26, 2022](#)

I would like to see if Marcus's reign of terror has changed at all. So, please let me know who your favorite RO is.

Marcus

Niall

Camilla

Tinsae

Quinn

146 votes total

[Short story topic poll \(background\).](#)

[Jan 27, 2022](#)

Whose past are you interested to learn more about?

How Niall and Marcus met (Niall's POV)

4

How Camilla and Tinsae met (Camilla's POV)

6

Poll ended Jan 31, 2022 · 10 votes total

[Short story topic poll \(POV\).](#)

[Jan 27, 2022](#)

Which scene would you like to read from another POV?

The bath scene with Marcus (Marcus's POV)

8

Coffee scene with Tinsae and Camilla (Camilla's POV)

3

Defiling Marcus's scrolls with Antonia (Niall's POV)

4

Poll ended Jan 31, 2022 · 15 votes total

[Bloopers from chapter 1](#)

[Jan 28, 2022](#)

Here is a deleted (and unfinished) scene from the 1st chapter. It was meant to hint at the upcoming love triangle, but I decided to delete it and leave the LT stuff for later. Mostly because the 1st chapter was so full of stuff already.

This was meant to be placed where the fight with Marcus occurred, the final test thing.

Niall is here, too, looking from the side-lines. His eyes find mine before he gives me a smile with a curt nod.

*fake_choice

#Give him a smile back.

I smile back at him, making his smile grow even wider.

*fake_choice

#He's nice enough. For a traitor.

Nice enough for a man who sold his identity to the Romans. A frown threatens to take over me, but I keep the smile glued to my face.

#I will need to keep him close. He might prove useful.

*set manipulative +5

It pays to have friends in high places, especially if you plan on infiltrating the said high places.

#I don't know what to think of him.

Why is he even waving at me with such enthusiasm?

With these thoughts I turn to Marcus glaring at me. He follows my gaze to Niall as his eyes squint.

That man has apparently taken to his business as to whom I'm smiling at.

*fake_choice

#Glare at him.

#Mouth "fuck you".

#Ignore him.

Let him watch all he wants to, I don't care.

[Sneak peeks](#)

[Jan 31, 2022](#)

Here are some sneak peeks of the night sentry scenes I'm working on:

Here is Camilla cursing her heart out:

A series of curses draws my attention back to Camilla who is trying to hoist herself to the platform. The words she's shooting into the air are wholly unfit for a woman of her stature, yet I doubt she cares. She seems to be having trouble with her layers of dresses.

"Are you going to help me or not?" She finally snaps.

You can save Tinsae's dress from staining (this is a highly important choice lol). I really need to remember use the fashion hobby more.

"May I?" She gestures to the chair next to me. I nod.

#Clean the seat a bit before she sits.

"Just a moment." I quickly sweep the chair clean before she sits down.

*if hobby_fashion

Her dress is clearly made of pure silk! It won't be stained, not if I can help it.

*if not(hobby_fashion)

Her dress must cost a fortune, at least it looks like it. Wouldn't want her to stain it.

Here is Niall popping his head where he's not wanted:

Niall's worried face pops up from the ladder. The first words he spatters are filled with seemingly warm concern: "It's a cold evening. Do you have enough clothes to keep you warm?"

The worry and care his words seep is almost starting to get annoying. Why would I believe that he cares for my well-being? He gives me an oblivious smile and a spare cape he brought with him. His golden embellished belt peeks from under a pure-white cloak trimmed with fur. It looks much warmer than mine.

Then, the Centurion:

"I know what you're thinking."

I almost sigh—

"You're wondering how I have time for a lowly recruit such as yourself."

"Could you climb back where you came from, Lord Centurion?"

"Ha! I'm not going anywhere before I have a word with you."

That's a pity.

[Some changes coming up for the next month?](#)

[Feb 8, 2022](#)

This Patreon of mine is definitely still a work-in-progress. I'm feeling up what you people would want to see and what doesn't interest that much. So, I'm making a poll about these new changes. One of the biggest changes would be a whole new tier: a monthly Marcus minigame. It would be made in Twine because I'd feel more comfortable about using that instead of ChoiceScript. I'm not sure if it matters that much but that's what I'm going for. Since Marcus is hands down the most popular RO at this moment, it would make sense that the tier was dedicated to him.

The history rambling is still up for debate, I'm not sure if anyone would be interested in that lol.

Discord benefits might be coming up, I'll put that one in the poll, too.

One other thing that I had in mind was the background side story. Would you be more interested in character/author Q&As? Or should I keep the background stuff?

So, poll time! (You can choose multiple answers)

Keep the background stories instead of character/author QnAs

Change the background story into character/author QnAs

Yes to Marcus mini game (pricing 17.5 euros)

History ramblings sound so interesting and I'm not even being sarcastic

Yes to Discord, woop!

Something else you'd like to see, comment below

56 votes total

[A bunch of worldbuilding stuff for you](#)

[Feb 12, 2022](#)

I have a bunch of worldbuilding stuff for you. Why? So, umm, I realized that the polls should be about this month's short story topic, not the next month's. This was my brainfart and I will create a poll for the next month's short story topic early next month. In exchange, I bring you a pile of worldbuilding stuff I've used to create the political and cultural climate of my ancient world. I hope it's a suitable compensation for this month's lost poll.

Below, there is a map of Scotland. Venicones is the name of MC's tribe. They have clashed with the Romans before, a hundred or so years ago. Historically speaking, the Romans tried to invade Scotland in 70(ish) AD. They were quite succesful. The whole of Scotland wasn't invaded but a good chunk was. That time the Romans had to fight with a Pictish navy (in my lore the navy was of the Venicones).

The MC's tribe has the unfortune of being placed in quite a strategic location where the Romans like to try and get a foothold of Scotland. So, not the first time the MC's tribe has had to deal with the Romans. They've been forced to be quite a hostile tribe since they're the buffer against the Romans. They've been waiting for an attack for a hundred years but, unfortunately, Romans hit too hard this time. The damn Romans are trying to invade Scotland again.

When it comes to the Twins, I took a lot of liberty in designing their characters. I took some inspiration from a couple actual deities. The Twins *were* known for being relatively peaceful forest deities who ruled over animals and woodlands. Aoibheann is the name of the sister, Ardghal the name of the brother. They're also known as the Horned Gods. Stags and ravens are their sacred animals, and their sacred ground was the burnt grove.

This week has been partly a worldbuilding week for me. I've been changing some stuff in the light of this previously stated stuff. I knew of everything I just said but I didn't really have it on any document I could get back and check. Yes, I sound like a chaos incarnate as a writer and, umm, I'm not arguing you if you think that. So, some changes coming up for the next update (eg. I mentioned that the MC is from south

of the Antonine Wall, when in reality it's north). I will also change the hunting scene according to that tidbit about the sacred animal being stag. It creates more tension, that's great.

There are also the map of Mogontiacum (the town where the MC is located at the moment) and Germania (it shows the town and the MC might be going on a trip to Augusta Treverorum).

I hope this was somewhat interesting to you!

[Sneak peek of Ch4](#)

[Feb 13, 2022](#)

This is a little peek of the rough draft I've been working on. The Legate is asking what sort of entertainment the MC would like to watch while eating.

"When I realized you were going to join us, I wanted to have a couple of gladiators to fight each other while eating. Or would you have preferred dancers?"

Why would he hire anyone for my honor? Does he know? Is he planning on feedin me before killing me?

He, at least, is expecting for an answer.

"Gladiators."

"The fights are thrilling, for sure. However, it's its own danger to eat while watching something so excite-inducing. I remember one time when I almost choked on an olive." He turns to Camilla. "Remember the time, honey? When you were so thrilled by the show you didn't even notice me choking?"

Camilla's expression doesn't change as she inspects the olive in her hand. "Your bodyguards were quick enough to answer your call." She pops it into her mouth. Then, without changing the tone of her voice she adds: "Darling."

The Legate turns back to me with a nod, seemingly not minding that she sounds like she planned his demise.

"Yes, they're good lads. Gave me a good smack on the back."

"That's... great."

"Dancers."

"Such a relaxing way to eat, watching the dancers. Almost boring, depending on the dancers. You dance, my boy?"

#"Yes, Lord Legate."

"What exquisite news! Would you care to dance to us?"

"Huh?"

He roars in laughter. "Just joking, just joking!"

#"No, Lord Legate."

"What a pity."

#"Neither."

"Neither? My boy, you don't mean that you want something even more physical? I'll have you know that I won't tolerate that kind in the fort. You will have to go to the town to exercise such activities."

"Huh?"

"He means whores, my dear," Camilla says.

"I'm sure Hati doesn't mean he prefers prostitutes," Niall adds quickly.

#"I do, actually."

Niall chokes on his wine and starts coughing. Camilla lets out a little snicker. Legate nods at me with a thoughtful look.

"I do appreciate a man who knows what he likes."

#"No, I don't."

Please let this topic change into something else. Judging by Niall's wandering eyes, he thinks the same.

[The Cock \(POV shift\)](#)

[Feb 26, 2022](#)

(I'm sorry, I couldn't resist the title.)

Father makes my head hurt. Everytime he opens his mouth nothing comes out but utter stupidity. His latest one about the marriage was—

“Lord Centurion—” Someone stops me. Not even in the bath am I safe from these idiots following me around. “I was thinking about tomorrow’s drills.”

Drills! He’s bothering me about drills! In the bath!

He’s either willfully ignorant of my stare, or he’s a fool. He continues talking: “Do you think—”

“You. Do you see my cock?”

“Err.” He looks away with his cheeks slightly reddened. Bah! I have no time for bashfulness. “Well? Do you?”

“Err.” Then, with the rest of his face blanched he takes a quick peek at my pelvic area. “Yes. Yes, I do. There it is. Lord Centurion.”

“Do you usually see me prancing about the office with my cock hanging freely?”

“No, Lord Centurion,” he says. His gaze is back on the ground and the redness is spreading all the way to his ears.

“Do I make myself clear?”

He bobs his head in a quick succession. I give him a strained smile. ‘I will have you flogged if you bother me in the baths again’, it says. He knows this. He nods again and gives me room to pass him by.

Headache is starting to gather behind my eyes. I will have to ask Niall for more damn remedies. I need to sink in to the hot bath, I need to—

Oh. A peculiar sight makes me stop on my track. It’s you. With my head feeling a bit lighter I look at you. You’re taking a bath with your little buddies. A smile tugs the corner of my mouth. You’re looking mighty dirty, you barbarians, the water is muddied around your filthy lot. Zoilus must have worked you to the bone. (I make a mental note of going to another pool.)

And you’re talking about me and Zoilus. He’s a jealous little boy. He knows there is something about you. Something that makes you so interesting. Your whole contubernium got promoted, after all. He knows it’s not about them, it’s about you.

It will prove to be a problem.

“My, my, a pool filled with little fools.”

My voice makes them stand up so fast one of them almost falls back on his ass. I never get tired of seeing these flustered fools.

*if clueless

And who among them is the biggest flustered fool! I almost burst out laughing as you try to look anywhere but my dick. You're acting like a little virgin! This is joyous, there is not a trace of a headache left. It's gone and in its place there is only joy over you.

"Eyes up front when I'm talking." Hehe! The way you drag your gaze back to the one thing you're avoiding to look at is hilarious. It takes everything to keep myself collected. I almost thank you for lighting up my evening.

*if bold

But, there is one who isn't flustered at all. If anything, you look like you're judging the size of my cock. Why do you look so unimpressed by it? Your gaze makes me take a double-take at it. It's there. It's the same size it always was.

Then, irritation flashes through me. I *know* it's there. How can your gaze make me so insecure? I don't like this at all.

You little shit. You win this round.

[Bruises](#)

[Feb 26, 2022](#)

(TW aftermath of domestic violence)

Everything aches.

Not my face. He knows not to hit my face. It would be prudish. Only plebeian men hit their wives on the face.

He's *classy*.

A muted laughter escapes me. It's just a breath of air but the intent was there. No one can tell me that I didn't try.

You can't tell me this isn't funny.

Isn't it funny that I'm lying here half-dead? Isn't this everything I ever wanted from my marriage?

He's handsome and relatively young. He's one of the most promising politicians in the whole of Rome. That's why father needs his family as our allies. This is what I need to do.

It's starting to get more difficult to hide the bruises from my family. Father would probably tear dear husband's neck open if he knew what was happening.

This is what I need to do.

Someone opening the door halts my thoughts. Hold my breath.

Is it him?

No. Exhale. Thank the gods. It's not him.

It's the merchant.

I remain still on the ground as I watch her, my eyes squinting due to the bright light assaulting my vision. Her hair is flowing free, like a cloud. With the opening of the door she brings a breath of fresh air with her.

Has it been that long since I've been outside? For some reason the air smells even sweeter than I remembered.

With a gasp of pain I try to get up. It's not proper to be seen like this. She almost rushes to my help but I halt her movement with a raise of my hand. I can manage, I think and fall back to the ground.

"My lady? Am I... interrupting?" She takes a worried look around her. Just a peek, searching for the man who did this to me.

I shake my head. She takes a note of my wincing features as I try to get up from the floor. Again. I can't. This is ridiculous. Fresh tears start to gather in the corners of my eyes.

Pathetic.

Pathetic!

A shriek of fear almost forces itself out of me as the merchant takes my hand. I want to recoil from her touch but her grip is strong, yet gentle. It won't let me leave.

Finally I'm standing. I straighten my posture, my dress, and uncoil my hair. I need to do something with my hands. To remain in control.

The merchant looks at me. Her gaze is soft. I almost fear it's mocking me. Why would a stranger give me her sympathy?

"What is your name, my lady?" Her voice is beautiful. It's soft and delicate. But there's strength behind it.

"Camilla."

"Camilla." Her mouth opens just a little as she says my name. My name fits into her mouth, for some reason. Something about the way she says it lifts a weight off my stomach. It makes me take a breath of the air she brought with her.

"Camilla... Do you need help?"

My eyes widen at the words. I have no reason to believe this woman would help me. She could be someone he's paying to spy on me.

But there's something about her that makes me trust her. For some reason I believe she will help me.

I need to take matters into my own hands before he kills me.

"Yes. Yes, I do."

[Bloopers](#)

[Feb 27, 2022](#)

I made this months ago, when I thought that the sentry scene would occur a lot later. Robus was just "a dog" then, she wasn't yet a character. I still think I might use the 'horny_RO' (lol) as a way to determine if MC has expressed physical interest in the RO. Of course that wouldn't mean that they're ready to jump into bed with them, more like they appreciate the view.

Anyway, here is a little blooper that got left out of the Marcus's sentry scene for things moving way too fast. Perhaps it would've happened if MC wasn't such a gremlin and Marcus didn't just recently, you know, kill their dad:

#I... don't know what to think of him.

How could I ever forget what he did? I don't know what to do.

*if horny_marcus

My eyes wander to his face, hoping he doesn't notice. His jawline is so sharp it's a distraction.

*if not

I peek at him. To see what? I don't know.

"Admiring the view?" He asks with a teasing grin.

*if brazen <50

My cheeks warm up. It's a troublesome nervous habit which annoyingly pleases him.

*if brazen >=50

I glare at him. He likes to make others squirm, but I won't give in. He will have to do with that.

His eyes squint in delight. He likes the competition.

*if stoic >=60

My expressionless features silence him.

"You're a hard one to please."

(here was something about meeting his dog?) Just as the words exit my mouth I almost slap my hand on it for its sheer idiocy. He'd just take that as an invitation to continue the conversation. I... don't want that.

Right?

He smiles as our gaze locks. His eyes are still black, the same predator leering at me as before. But this time the danger makes me feel almost... curious?

"That can be arranged." He says in a low voice, implying that the conversation has shifted away from the possible dog meeting scenarios to a whole other level.

Shit.

*fake_choice

#"I was talking about dogs!"

"Me, too! Whatever gave you the idea we were not talking about them?" He feigns shocked, eyeing me as if I'm the one misinterpreting the conversation.

#"Oh, and what did you have in mind?"

"Soldier, if I didn't know any better, I'd think you're flirting with me."

"Oh?"

"That would be scandalous. Please refrain from doing that."

"You started it—!"

"I beg your pardon, I have no idea what you're talking about! I'm talking about my precious dog."

#Blush.

Why do I always blush. He just likes it. Maybe I should punch him while I'm at it.

#Punch him.

In a spur of a moment I try to punch his arm. However, he's faster than me, and he grasps the fist on his hand. His grip is surprisingly tender, even if I just tried to assault him.

"Tch tch tch. Assaulting your Centurion... I ought to have your head for that." He grins before letting me go.

#Just keep blushing.

"Are you feeling ill, soldier?" He smirks. "Your cheeks... You must have a fever."

"You know I don't."

[Announcement](#)

[Feb 28, 2022](#)

Hi there,

so, since the poll's results were quite even, I decided that the Penguin tier will alternate between Q&A and background story. Next month will still be a background story month.

And, as promised, that new minigame tier will be published tomorrow (the 1st of March). The first RO is Marcus but I thought that there could be a poll to see if people would like to see other ROs, too. (Unlikely, at least for now, but no one can say that I didn't try lol.)

I will have to plan where to put the history rambling and what to do with it. However, it's coming. If not next month, then perhaps the month after that.

Thank you for being here, please stay safe.

[Topic suggestions for the next short stories](#)

[Mar 5, 2022](#)

It's me again, hoping to know what you'd want to read about. (You're awesome, btw, thanks for being here!) So, what scene would you like to read from a different POV? Whose POV? And, what sort of background story would you be interested to read about? You can also PM me, if you'd prefer that. I will be gathering your suggestions next week, then I'll put up a poll.

Thank you, I hope to hear from you. Otherwise, it's the story about the Legate's old flames. And, umm, the tavern scene through his POV. (Just kidding. Or am I.... Yes, yes I am.)

[Short story_poll](#)

[Mar 14, 2022](#)

This is a poll for both the POV and background story topics. You can pick multiple answers. If you wonder where Quinn is, pretty much any scene from their POV would be super spoilery. D: Perhaps their POV could come up at a later point but for now, they shall remain in obscurity.

MC dragging their feet on the street (Niall's POV, POV shift)

3

Health inspection (Marcus's POV, POV shift)

7

Trial in the Forum (Tinsae's POV, POV shift)

0

Marcus spending time with his mother (background fluff)

1

How Niall and Marcus met (background angst/fluff)

5

Tinsae's childhood (background angst)

2

Legate's and Camilla's first meeting (background angst)

3

Poll ended Mar 20, 2022 · 21 votes total

[Marcus scenario/mini game poll](#)

[Mar 14, 2022](#)

I hope these are sufficient and you'll find something you'd like to read about! <3 You can pick multiple answers if you can't decide hehe.

MC expressing homesickness to Marcus, beach walk (slightly angsty fluff)

5

Niall's lecture on cosmetics for Marcus and the MC (early love triangle stuff)

1

Distracting Marcus from his work (fluff/smut)

6

Forced to sleep next to Marcus due to crappy sleeping arrangements (smut)

4

Poll ended Mar 20, 2022 · 16 votes total

[Bloopers](#)

[Mar 27, 2022](#)

Here is a scene that got cut off from the dinner. It broke my heart to cut it off but the dinner got so big that it needed to be done. Perhaps I could stuff it in later but for now, it will remain in the blooper category. I'm sorry, Antonia. (MC would've been able to snoop around the villa with Antonia. Otherwise they snoop around with one of the ROs. Or maybe they don't snoop around at all and get some other one-on-one scene with the chosen ROs. Anyways, some snooping around stuff coming up. But not with Antonia...)

Then, a flash of a white tunic catches my attention. Someone ran past the doorway.

#Investigate.

*goto ch4_antonia

#Remain seated.

I won't be chasing anyone. I'm staying put.

*goto ch4_emperor_gossip

*label ch4_antonia

"Antonia? What are you—"

"Hush!" She smashes her lips with her index finger before beckoning me to follow her. She's clearly plotting something. Do I want to get involved?

#Yes. I follow her.

She leads me to a small room next to kitchen. A storage of sorts. She makes sure no one followed us before turning to me. "Are you ready?"

"Ready for what? What are you doing here? This is not the place for children."

"Yes, yes, I know." She waves my words away as if they were an annoying fly. "I'm on a mission."

Do I even dare to ask? Evidently, she expects me to: she's staring at me with anticipation. "Fine. What mission?"

"I'm uncovering secrets."

"What sorts of secrets?"

"Oh. you know." I'm not sure if she knows herself, but she squints her eyes in a conspiratory manner. "You know," she repeats and winks, squinting her eye tightly so I won't miss the gesture.

"Um. Government secrets?"

"Yes!" She whisper-yells and bobs her head.

This seems to be a game. I wonder where she got the idea? This could, however, prove to be useful for me. Perhaps I should join her game?

#Yes. I doubt they would punish the kid if they wound her snooping around. They would, however, kill me. Besides, she looks like she would do this with or without my involvement.

"Fine, let's work together. But this is a secret, right?"

She nods. "Of course it is! I should be the one to remind you of that. But you don't look like a rat." She gives me a calculating look. "Yes. This could work."

She squints her eyes at a slave passing by. "You should return to the party so they won't think twice about this."

I nod. She's awfully serious about this. It's a good thing for me.

She gives me a solemn nod. "We will meet after the desserts."

*goto ch4_senator_munching

#No. I don't want to endanger the kid. She shouldn't be playing these sorts of games.

I give her a serious look. She reads the expression correctly, she's a smart kid, and gives me a pout.

"You're going to tell on me?"

"Not if you stop this. What if you find something actually dangerous?"

"That's exactly why I'm doing this!"

I shake my head. She sighs. "Fine."

*goto ch4_senator_munching

#No. Her involvement sounds more of a hassle than anything that would benefit me.

#Stay put. "You shouldn't be here." Isn't it time for children to be at bed already? I should tell someone.

*set antonia_ratter true

"Don't tell me you're about to—"

Before she can continue her thought, I'm already on my way to Marcus.

"Your niece is plotting something near the kitchen."

Marcus sighs and rubs the back of his neck. "Of course she is." With these words he takes off to the kitchen.

*goto ch4_emperor_gossip

#I'm not getting involved. "I'm going back to the party."

She pouts after me. "You're boring."

Guilty as charged.

*goto ch4_emperor_gossip

[I will take care of you now](#)

[Mar 28, 2022](#)

Ma. I had to leave you, Ma. You screamed so loud when they came to get me it pierced my ears. It still hurts.

Da. You didn't say anything. When I screamed and asked you to save me. You looked away. It hurts.

My eyes are already too swollen. It's as if there are no tears left in me. I'm dry and empty. There's nothing left.

But when I think of you, Ma, how I want to feel your arms around me, to hear you whisper that everything is alright, that the monsters won't ever get me, that you will always protect me.

To smell your scent. It's the scent of the garden. Of soil and flowers.

To hear you hum that song you always did when I needed it. To see you last when I fall asleep.

Tears flow freely across my cheeks. There was some left, after all.

I want my Ma. I want my Ma.

My chest is so tight it's hard to breathe. My stomach is burning. I can't walk anymore.

I don't even know where I'm going, I can't even see. I've heard that the Romans feed their prisoners to lions.

Will they do that to children? Will they do that to me? It's all so blurry. I'm making this too easy on them.

I rub my eyes. I need to see where I'm going. I can't fight lions with my eyes so blurry.

When I finally see, there's a man smiling at me. He looks like the rest of the men I saw. He's wearing that white fabric, it's wrapped around his body.

There's a woman next to him. She gives me a smile that almost melts away some of the terror. At least a little bit.

A group of girls run toward me. I take a step back. They greet me with giggles that feel out of place. My mind is too numb to understand how anyone could laugh at a time like this.

Where are the lions? Would I recognize them if I saw one? Will these people lead me to them? Will they giggle when I'm eaten?

A lone boy follows the others. He's older than the rest.

He looks at me with a dull gaze before his apparent mother mutters something in his ear. Then, he nods and walks to me. He looks me up and down.

"You will be my brother."

What? I blink.

"I have always wanted a brother. I have so many sisters."

"I will be?"

"Yes." He nods with such determination that it makes me believe him. "What is your name?"

"...Niall."

Then, he takes my hand. The grasp is firm and something in me believes that I could trust him to pull me from water if I'm drowning.

I don't flinch when he wipes a tear off my cheek. I just look at him.

He looks me in the eyes with such intensity it's as if there's no one else in this world but him.

"My name is Marcus. I will take care of you now."

[Head on a pike](#)

[Mar 29, 2022](#)

I rub my temples as the memory of what father said crosses my mind. Everything he says brings me a headache. That fool of a man. If only mother was here, she would talk sense into that thick head of his.

Just as I'm about to retreat for my office (with a headache, might I add), the wind carries with it a distinct chatter of soldiers not supposed to do what they're doing. It has an unmistakable sound: it's like listening to a swarm of babbling idiots. What is the meaning of the commotion? Can't you even have a health inspection without looking like a herd of morons?

There's someone standing in the middle of it all. The cause.

It's you. Of course it is.

It doesn't surprise me to see you there, almost naked, all alone, ready to be fed to the wolves. I knew this would happen. As soon as I saw your little face I knew that you would die. Didn't even bother to kill you myself.

Of course I would've killed you otherwise. It would be a mercy killing, of sorts.

Should I just let you die? It would be easier. You shouldn't be here. You and I both know that you will die here one way or another, sooner or later.

I could just leave. I could just leave you to die.

So, I turn around. Your head will be on a pike for a couple of weeks to serve as a warning. Barbaric? Perhaps. One gets used to the severed heads. I much prefer them over walking past someone hanging from a cross, dying slowly in agony. A shudder runs through me. At least the heads are dead and gone. One should just kill those who need to die and be done with it, not leave them to suffer needlessly. That's just disgusting.

But as my mind is filled with visions of your severed head, you dangling from a cross, you being fed to the beasts, I take a note of something peculiar: there's something weird happening in my stomach.

I halt my steps and squint at the sensation, trying to make sense of it. There's a knot of sorts. It tightens when the cold wind assaults the skin of my face, knowing fully well that you are shivering because of it.

No. I shake my head. That must be the onion sauce I ate yesterday.

It's the sauce, not the thought of you quivering in this weather. Waiting for them to end you. Like we did to your whole clan. They fought bravely, your father fought like a mighty beast. I imagine you would kill some of the spectators waiting to see you die, perhaps even Zoilus would meet his demise. You would fight like your father.

The reason why I turn around towards you is because I would be bored without you. That's right!

What else would make my daily life more interesting than someone after my own life?

Exciting! With my step a little lighter I almost run to you. I will save you, you moron.

[Check your emails](#)

[Mar 30, 2022](#)

I just sent you a little something-something <3

[About next month](#)

[Mar 30, 2022](#)

So, here are some changes I mentioned last month that will be put to fruition next month:

Minigame's chosen RO will still be Marcus. I have a huge (a massive) hunch that this is something that you people still want to see so that's what I'm going with.

There will be a character Q&A for the next month's Penguin tier instead of a background short story. If you have questions you'd like answered, it's time to put them down and ready yourselves! I won't be picking a specific RO for each month: they will all be available for answering the questions. It doesn't even have to be an RO, you can ask the Legate what sort of socks he likes to wear.

If everything goes well, I will probably make a history rambling (available for every tier). If I'm completely exhausted and nearing to perish, perhaps not. I'll let you know. Sorry for being vague.

Thank you for being here and, you're awesome and I send all of you a bunch of virtual hugs.

[Q&A questions and POV short story topic suggestion](#)

[Apr 7, 2022](#)

Hi there!

If you have any (I dearly hope you have lol) questions to the cast, please feel free to post them here or PM me. If no one asks about the Legate's socks, I will be sorely disappointed. (I'm just kidding, please don't ask about his socks.) Also, if you have a POV short story suggestion, that would be great, too.

I'm off to write the rest of the dinner scene, the chapter is already 35k long...

[New tier benefit!](#)

[Apr 11, 2022](#)

For whatever reason I just now realized that the early access to the alpha demo could be a tier thing. I was even suggested that a while ago and I was like yeah that could work but just kinda didn't do anything with it. So, sorry about that lol. It will be available for all tiers.

I will post the link to the alpha build here when it's kinda sorta ready, there are still some smuttier scenes that needs to be polished.

[Introduction post](#)

[Apr 12, 2022](#)

Hello and thank you so much for being here! You are awesome, you're the reason these chapters keep coming.

If you are new here, you might be interested to know that there are short stories for you to enjoy regardless of your tier. I published them when I first launched this Patreon, so they have been buried underneath my rambling posts. They are tagged as short stories, you can limit the search that way.

Also, Discord! discord.gg/t8gmjZW8b

Thank you again, you rock.

[Marcus scenario/mini game poll](#)

[Apr 15, 2022](#)

I added some new options and included the last month's options, too. I hope there's something you'd like to read about (and I hope the last month's scenario was a good read for you all).

I removed the tone indicators since apparently if I aim to write smut, just a load of puns and licking one's hand aggressively appears. That's how my brain works, I'm not sure what to think of it.

MC expressing homesickness to Marcus, beach walk

1

Niall's lecture on cosmetics for Marcus and the MC

2

Forced to sleep next to Marcus due to crappy sleeping arrangements

8

Fun times with Robus and Marcus

4

An impromptu dance competition at a tavern

1

Poll ended Apr 21, 2022 · 16 votes total

[Short story poll](#)

[Apr 15, 2022](#)

Here's the short story poll. I hope there's something you'd like to read about. I added some of the previous months' options and a bunch of others. You can pick multiple options.

There's also Quinn. If they win, we'll see how I manage to keep it spoiler free. It would be a challenge lol, please don't pick that.

I'm sure the Legate will take the cake with this one. I'm rooting for him!

Coffee scene with Tinsae and Camilla (Tinsae's POV)

1

Defiling Marcus's scrolls with Antonia (Niall's POV)

3

MC saving Camilla from falling (Camilla's POV)

4

Meeting the Legate (Legate's POV)

2

Introduction scene with Quinn (Quinn's POV)

2

Forest scene (Marcus's POV)

9

Poll ended Apr 21, 2022 · 21 votes total

[Welp, here it is.](#)

[Apr 22, 2022](#)

<https://dashingdon.com/play/haleym/defiled-hearts-the-barbarian-alpha/mygame/>

It's 37k words long and it doesn't even have the bath shenanigans and the wrestling match. I'm properly exhausted lol. Everything I coded during Easter got erased in some bug but now it's finally in a presentable state. Niall's flower-crown scene is a stub at the moment, there are also scenes that end

abruptly. If you have any feedback on character or plot stuff or anything of the sort, please don't hesitate to PM me either here, on the forum, on Tumblr, wherever you feel like. You can email me, too. And if you have no feedback, that's alright, too ofc. I dearly hope there are no bugs.

If you don't mind, I'll skip the rambling this week. I'll see if there are any bugs that need my attention, then I'm planning on spending the weekend planting my chilis. They are about to die lol. I haven't had time to attend to them.

Thank you for being here! <3

[I'm obliged to ask, even if I think we all know the answer](#)

[Apr 25, 2022](#)

So, is next month going to be another Marcus month? (minigame)

Yes, please.

No more Marcus, please.

17 votes total

[The smile \(the forest scene/Marcus's POV\).](#)

[Apr 28, 2022](#)

I don't know why Niall would ask that cretin friend of yours to join us; I really need to have a word with him later. Mark my words, Niall: I will get back at you.

Your footsteps echo behind me. Your steps sound normal: the tread is light, like you're used to walking in the forest, but they still sound like the sound of two normal feet. But your friend's... Even their footstep sound outlandish and unpleasant. It's almost like they don't touch the ground when they walk. Everything about them is making my skin crawl. I'm not afraid of them, of course, they are just a scrawny cretin but...

I take a peek at you two walking behind me. Their eyes dart to me in a flash of a lighting, slashing at me like a ceremony knife. It takes everything to not look away. With a tightly clenched jaw I keep my eyes peeled on you two.

I don't know why I chose to turn my back on you. I could do it to you, of course, just to see what you'd do about it. You'd try to kill me, it would be all fun and games.

But them...

There's something in their eyes. It's like they're coated with something beastly. It's like there's an enraged animal trying to rip their way through their jail. It wants to open my throat and bathe in the shower of my blood.

A shudder runs through me as the same eyes now pierce through me. Still they do. Their hollow gaze keeps following my every movement. It's like they know everything about me. It's like they can see me naked and—

I frown and look away, almost stumbling on some roots on the ground. Shit. I'm not afraid of them. That's not the reason why I turned my gaze away.

I merely need to look where I'm going. And the shudder happened because of the stupid wind.

Anger flashes through me. Why would you even have friends like that?

I take another peek. They are whispering something in your ear. Why do your eyes look so glassy when you're listening to them? I don't like this at all.

Robus retreats back to my side from her chase. She knows something is wrong, too. Her cold snout nuzzles on my hand, asking me what we should do.

I don't know, girl. I don't know. I'm planning to find out.

So, once something catches your attention and you turn from us, I ask your little friend:

"Why are you here?"

However, they don't answer. Instead, their gaze locks onto me.

A visage of me hanging from a tree with guts hanging from my opened stomach assaults my mind. Three ravens quarrel over my bowels.

"What?" It's the only coherent thing leaving my dry lips. Just now I realize that I've stopped walking.

They, however, keep walking like nothing happened. They hasten their step to catch up to you.

You give them a little smile and they smile back.

[Apr 28, 2022](#)

This got super long, sorry about that. And if it's cringy, then call me cringy, it was fun to write haha.

X: "Thank you so much for joining our Q&A session with the cast of Defiled Hearts. So, our first question is aimed at you, Antonia."

Antonia perks up. "Wow! Ask away!"

X: "What do you like about your uncles Niall and Marcus?"

Her face falls. "A question about those two dimwits?"

Both of the men frown at the statement.

A: "What do I like about them?" She takes a look at her uncles, her nose wrinkled as she ponders on her options. "I suppose they both smell good."

Niall gives her a smile and a nod. "Thank you kindly, Antonia."

A: "Unless there's any poop involved in their morning ritual." She looks pointedly at Niall.

X: "Good, good. What do you think they could work on?"

A: "Well, that's a long list. Do I have to choose just one?"

X: "Preferably, yes."

A: "Uncle Marcus should work on his sense of humor." She shakes her head. "He would live longer. Thank Minerva I'm here to help him with that."

Marcus mutters something under his breath.

A: "I'm not sure who wants him to live longer but that's the job I was given by the gods themselves."

X: "Yes, good. What about Niall?"

A: "He should learn to speak for himself."

Niall raises his brows. "What are you talking about? I do speak for myself."

A: "Uncle, you're a bit of a doormat, to be honest. You lie in order to avoid conflict and sometimes you smell like poop."

N: "What—"

X: "Yes, that much was established already. Let's move on to you, lady Camilla."

Camilla gives a small nod, readying herself.

X: "Is there anything you like about your current husband?"

She sneers. "Do I really need to answer?"

X: "Yes, please. People are eager to know."

C: "Ugh. Well..." She takes a look at the Legate, her nose as wrinkled as Antonia's was. "He's... tidy."

X: "Tidy?"

C: "Yes. He cleans after himself. Both in terms of personal hygiene and around the house."

The Legate smiles proudly.

X: "Moving on: On a scale from 1 - 10, (1 being 'couldn't care less if they dropped dead in front of me' and 10 being 'the most precious thing ever, can do no wrong') where would you rank Marcus?"

C: "1."

Marcus nods in understanding.

X: "What about Tinsae?"

C: "10."

Tinsae gives her a smile.

X: "Niall?"

She ponders for a moment. "It's a... 6."

Niall beams at her. "I'll take that."

X: "Antonia?"

C: "Hm. 10."

Antonia gives her a wide smile. "I love you, Auntie."

C: "I love you, too, sweetheart."

X: "What about the Legate?"

C: "2."

The Legate nods and smiles "It's better than 1!"

X: "Legate, sir, I have a question for you too."

The Legate perks up. "I didn't expect this. When I was invited, I thought it was a prank."

X: "No pranks here, sir. The audience is dying to know: how do you feel about toe socks?"

L: "Toe socks? I don't think I'm familiar with the concept."

X: "They are socks that have been knitted so that each toe is individually encased the same way as fingers within a glove."

The Legate nods slowly. "I see... That sounds like a wonderful idea! I would like one of those immediately. Someone will have to knit—"

X: "Sir, knitting hasn't been invented yet."

L: "Oh." He pouts.

X: "Moving on to you, Marcus."

Marcus nods. "Took you long enough."

X: "How well have you read 'The Art of Love'?"

M: "I've read it once before. It's a decent piece of writing but mainly I keep it on my shelf to get reactions out of people."

X: "So, you're a troll, basically."

M: "What? What does that Northern mythology creature have to do with me?"

X: "Never mind. Then there's another question: If you could decide, what would you do instead of being in the military?"

M: "Hm. I would... be a..."

A long moment of silence.

X: "We are on the clock here, Marcus. Do you want me to repeat the ques—"

M: "...A poet."

Camilla bursts out laughing.

X: "Thank you, Marcus. Please, no fighting. Now, Niall."

Niall perks up.

X: "What is your favorite plant/herb?"

N: "That's a tough one... I think it's a... black pepper. It's wonderful. We didn't have those in Hibernia. I put it everywhere."

X: "I think I saw you putting some in your wine earlier."

N: "Yes. It packs a great punch."

X: "Indeed. Then, returning to the previous topic: the poop. Where did you learn to put it in your face? Also, to quote the concerned person in question: 'WHY would you even agree to put poop on your face, NIALL PLEASE'?"

Niall's face falls. "It's not that weird. It's actually really expensive and it's only crocodile poop. I don't just go around randomly picking up poop to put on my face."

X: "No one has accused you of that, Niall. Where did you learn that poop is great for your... skin? I presume that's why you do that."

N: "Why else would I do it?" He pouts. "I learned it from Marcus's mother. She taught me everything about cosmetic use of herbs and stuff."

Marcus nods. "They both ran about the house wearing poop on their faces."

N: "No, we—"

X: "Moving on. Tinsae: What moment made you go, and excuse my language: 'These fucking Romans, I SWEAR...'?"

T: "Not a lot of things would make me think that. But if you want me to answer that question, I'm sorry but I have to bring the mood down a little."

X: "Of course."

T: "I... hate how the Romans treat their little ones. The children and animals. That's when I have resorted to cursing them into the deepest depths of the Underworld."

Camilla nods. "We would deserve that."

X: "I see. Then, what would you do if someone poured milk in that 'liquid acid' of yours?"

Tinsae's shoulders relax before she looks up as if in thought. "I haven't thought about that. That sounds quaint. I love that."

X: "You wouldn't mind?"

T: "I haven't tried that, so I couldn't say. It's always good to try new things."

X: "Indeed. Now, I think we have Quinn here somewhere."

Quinn steps into view.

X: "Yes, good. Now tell us: what was your favorite place in your old home and why?"

Q: "The grove. The MC loves it."

X: "Yes, but we were talking about your favorite—"

Q: "The grove."

X: "Um. Yes. Er. Thank you. That will do. Here is the final question, and it's aimed at you all: would you rather fight one horse-sized duck or a hundred duck-sized horses?"

M: "What kind of a question is that?"

X: "Just answer the question to the best of your abilities."

Niall frowns at the thought. "Have you even seen ducks? They have razor-teeth. I would fight the duck-sized horses."

T: "But there are a hundred of them. They bite, too."

N: "Yeah, but ducks are terrifying. I would punch the miniature horses."

X: "Thank you, Niall. This is a good place to end the session: the mental image of Niall punching little horses."

N: "I wouldn't actually—"

X: "The question didn't specify that they are attacking you."

N: "I thought it was a given—"

X: "Alas, the thought of Niall's animal abuse is where we end this. Thank you all for coming."

[Bloopers](#)

[Apr 30, 2022](#)

There was a time when I thought that the MC could have their own dog. Quinn would've brought him with them. Seeing the remnants of his scenes still makes me want to put him back into the story haha.

I just notice that \${dog_name} has waited for me to get off my armor. Now that I'm out, he jogs to me with a wagging tail.

"Yes, hello \${dog_name}. Have you been a good boy?"

"Somewhat good," Quinn answers instead.

"Quinn is clearly lying, of course you're good boy!" \${dog_name} jumps against me in agreement as I...

*fake_choice

#tell him to not jump on people.

"Down, boy."

He whimpers but obeys.

"Good boy." I tousle his head.

#pet the top of his head.

His ears lean against his head as his eyes stare straight into mine.

"Such a beautiful boy you are."

#pet his chest.

"You're such a handsome boy, the best boy there is."

#pet his fluffy butt.

"Who's got a big fluffy hairy butt? You have!"

A snort can be heard from Quinn's vicinity.

"What?"

"You're both adorable."

[Short story_poll](#)

[May 13, 2022](#)

Here it is! Hopefully there's something piquing your interest. And, as always, you can choose multiple options.

Wreath scene with Niall and Marcus (Niall's POV)

11

Cockpunch (Antonia's POV)

5

Introduction scene with Quinn (Quinn's POV)

7

Tapestry scene (Tinsae's POV)

0

Tapestry scene (Niall's POV)

4

Tinsae giving MC head massage (Camilla's POV)

0

Niall settling into his new home in Rome (backstory)

2

How Legate and Camilla met (backstory)

2

Marcus's mother dies (backstory)

3

Tinsae leaving her home for Rome (backstory)

2

Antonia's biggest prank on Marcus and Niall (backstory)

9

Poll ended May 20, 2022 · 45 votes total

[Marcus scenario poll](#)

[May 13, 2022](#)

This time I added someone else to star with Marcus (or the whole contubernium) to spice things up. I'm not sure how some of these will end up but we'll just see if it comes to that lol.

An impromptu dance competition with MC's contubernium and Marcus

1

Shopping spree with Antonia and Marcus

8

A forest walk with Robus and Marcus

5

Bathing time with Legate and Marcus

6

Testing out cosmetics with Niall and Marcus

5

Poll ended May 20, 2022 · 25 votes total

[About the mini game RO](#)

[May 23, 2022](#)

I wasn't sure if I should ask all of the patrons or just you who are on this tier. Then, I thought that your opinion is the one that matters the most at this moment. I'm an incurable overthinker, thank you for bearing with me haha.

So, about next month... more Marcus?

More Marcus, please.

10

No more Marcus, please.

4

I am absolutely fed up with Marcus and I am starting to hope that he would perish.

2

The Marcus + someone else combo works well, for now.

2

Poll ended May 30, 2022 · 18 votes total

[Bloopers](#)

[May 25, 2022](#)

Sorry I took my time with the bloopers and sneak peeks. I've been in a creative slump and trying to get out of that one. That's why I came up with the closed alpha testing phase, it might help me with any future slumps.

Slumps suck.

Anyways, this is a somewhat spoilery blooper. This scene won't happen in this form but this person is someone noteworthy and perhaps they will make an appearance later.

A door opens and a white-haired stranger appears with it. Their eyes skim the room with silent confidence until they find mine. They start walking towards me until someone blocks their way.

"This is a private party." A soldier has taken a hold of their shoulder. The stranger glances at the hand seemingly holding them in place, and returns to gaze at the soldier. The soldier lets go of their shoulder and moves away with unusual control, as if in trance. Everyone in the room turn their attention back to what they were doing, as if nothing happened. No one seems to question the stranger's presence, even if their aura demands it.

"Greetings," they say to me with an emotionless smile.

#"Hello."

A hint of warmth appears on their face, just for a moment and I'm not sure if I imagined it.

"Hello to you, too."

#"Who are you?"

"Just a passer-by," they say, and I don't believe them. They are someone you're almost sure you know, but can't quite remember.

#"What did you to him?"

I look after the man who's now looking at a ceiling with saliva dripping from the corner of his mouth.

"Do you truly care?"

Their piercing gaze halts my breathing. It reminds me of a dream. It's as if I shouldn't look at them.

#Lower my gaze.

They take a firm grasp of my chin and make me look at them. I flinch both due to the forceful gesture and to the sight of their eyes. No one turns to look at our conversation. It's as if we're not in the same room.

"You don't need to look away from me." Their words are soft, unlike their grasp. I wince as their fingers dig deep into my skin.

They take a note of my wince and with a hint of puzzlement coating their gaze they let go of me. "I apologize. I... sometimes forget."

[May 25, 2022](#)

Here is the beginning of Samhain, the MC is in for a pickle:

I hasten my steps. It's one thing to stretch the days worth of celebrations for one night only, it's entirely another thing to spend the half of that time with stupid Romans. I'm not sure what the gods will think of this.

As the thought crosses my mind, I halt my step. The darkness of the forest almost devours me. Does it matter what the gods think? I haven't felt their presence for months now.

Can the gods... die? Have I lost them, too?

No. That can't be true.

With a frown I continue, in my mind thinking that the men must have had the dinner by now. Have they shared mead with the Dead, as they should? Have the Dead already talked to them?

Is... father here?

No. Why would his spirit come here? He's better off in our home, even if there's nothing left. But... would the Dead stay there, if there's no one to remember them? Will they just fade away? Perhaps they followed me because there was no one there at home. Perhaps the gods did the same.

Ugh! This is just speculation. I don't know anything. It makes the knot in my stomach tighten.

It doesn't take long to find the designated spot for the festivities; I just follow the drunken noises. Every shout makes me more worried.

I arrive in a scene of absolute mayhem:

Pec lies on the ground with a dark area on his trousers indicating that he's pissed himself. He's wearing a dark green cloak and there's a beard of sorts glued on his chin.

Brick is punching a poorly made wicker man.

Floyd is being squeezed by a sobbing Kegan.

Quinn is nowhere to be seen.

This is definitely unlike any Samhain I've ever had.

Floyd seems like the most coherent person in this situation.

"Ah! You came!" He sighs in clear relief as his eyes find mine.

"I did..." However, now I wish I didn't. "What is going on here?"

Floyd flinches when our gazes meet; I don't know what he saw but the sight makes him turn his eyes away from mine. "The celebration of Samhain." He takes a look around and adds: "I suppose."

There's still the question of Quinn. Where is $\{q_he\}$? $\{q_he\}$ told me $\{q_he\}$ 'd be celebrating Samhain with these people.

"Your friend built an altar in the forest. $\{q_he\}$ wanted to be left alone," Floyd says, as if anticipating that I would ask about $\{q_him\}$.

"Ah." Of course $\{q_he\}$ did. I wouldn't want these people to sully my altar, either. "Did you remember to give mead to the Dead?"

"Pec said that the Dead can drink from the ground. So we just poured some mead there."

The corner of my eye twitches. "You made the Dead drink from the ground?"

"Uh... Pec was very convincing. He said that's how it's done."

I make a mental note of punching Pec in his abdomen once he wakes up. The forest sighs in freezing disappointment as I tighten the cloak around me. This is not good at all. These fools have angered the spirits. No wonder Kegan saw someone wandering about.

"I need to fix this. How come Quinn didn't stop you?"

" $\{q_he\}$'s been elsewhere this whole time." He rubs his neck in clear embarrassment. He should be embarrassed! I have never in my life seen such defilement of ancient rituals.

First, I need to pour mead to the Dead. Then, I need to light candles to guide the spirits. Then, I need to build a fire. It seems that there was one but it's died out by now. Even the embers have sizzled out, something was poured on them. By the biting smell of it, it's been pissed on.

I rub my face. These idiots are even worse than Romans.

Here is a bonus sneak peek, lol. Marcus's weak spot:

"There's the village."

Marcus squints his eyes. He reminds me of a mole, blinded by the sun.

"You have bad eyesight?"

He doesn't even look at me. "Shut up."

[The Prank of all Pranks \(Antonia/backstory\)](#)

[May 30, 2022](#)

Aunt Camilla hands me another cookie and I take it with a stern nod.

I ask: "What do you think about the plan?"

"I think it's deliciously evil. I will help you to execute it."

I knew I could count on her. She dislikes these two fools as much as I do. I'll show them what it means to anger Lollia Antonia Claudia Phoebe Piso.

Camilla smiles. "How are you going to get them to undress?"

"I will shove them into a mud pond."

"Both of them? They are quite heavy."

"I will figure out something."

She nods. "Gaius ends the meeting before noon. Can you get those two ready and undressed by that time?"

"Yes. You should slam the door with everything you've got. The impact should send one of them flying."

"Could you make sure that the one behind the door is Marcus? I would slam the door even harder if I knew that it's him."

"I like the way you think."

We give each other another nod and share a smile. It's show time.

Uncles Marcus and Niall stand beside the mud pond just as I planned. They have no idea what is going to happen to them.

I take up running and clash my shoulder with uncle Marcus's butt.

However, he doesn't budge. He is too heavy. Gods dammit!

"Antonia? What are you doing?"

This is not working. I need to get these fools dirty so they have no other option but to undress. If I can't do that, everything will be ruined.

I take some mud in my hands, experimenting with its texture. I could make balls out of these and throw them at them. It's just a game, I'd say. Fun little game, nothing heinous behind it at all.

So, I throw one at uncle Marcus. It hits him right in his shin.

"What the—"

"Haha!" I make another one and throw it at uncle Niall.

He laughs, too, unknowing of my plans. He makes one, himself, and throws it at uncle Marcus.

"Are you ganging up on me?!"

In the end, both uncles end up with mud on their clothes. I'm drenched, too, but it was necessary.

"Oh no," I say, hopefully convincingly. "We should change our clothes."

Uncle Marcus squints his eyes at me. "What are you planning?"

"Nothing, uncle. Don't you want to change? Your clothes are awfully muddied."

"Hm."

Once the uncles are both fully unclothed and ready to head for the bath, I need to stop them from leaving the changing room. And make them stand just in the right spots.

Uncle Marcus will be a problem. He's suspecting something.

"But, uncle Marcus. You should stand right here. In this spot." I show him the space in front of the door. It's just a matter of moments before aunt Camilla arrives. I can't waste any more time.

Uncle Marcus, however, doesn't play nice. When does he ever! That idiot! He squints his eyes at me and crosses his arms. "Why would I? This smells like a trap."

"It is not a trap!" I blurt out.

Niall sighs and shakes his head. "Why do you want us to stand here? Is this a game?"

"Yes. It is a game." I nod. I knew uncle Marcus would be too suspicious. He's always been difficult. I need to time this right. Do I hear footsteps? Is that Camilla?

It's time!

I take the scroll out of my tunic and watch as uncle Marcus's eyes widen in horror. "It's a game of 'let's not let Antonia sully uncle Marcus's 1st edition of Martial's Epigrams'."

I throw it towards the door, watching as uncle Marcus flies by me.

He manages to take the scroll and sighs in relief. Then, he turns to me with eyes blazing in anger.

Yes. Be angry. But don't move.

The footsteps stop behind the door.

The door slams uncle Marcus on his butt and sends him flying straight on top of uncle Niall.

Camilla leads an entourage of toga-clad men to the room, now showing a scene of uncles Marcus and Niall lying on each other naked. Uncle Marcus's butt is aimed straight at the toga-men.

Camilla gives me a quick, triumphant smile before shrugging at the shocked men behind her. "I didn't realize we were disturbing a tender meeting between brothers."

"NO!" Both of the uncles shout at them. They are a mess of naked limbs, struggling to break free. Uncle Niall is redder than a pomegranate.

Ha! It's too late for denials! The rumors will start spreading like wild fire.

It's done.

With my muddied dress still on, I clap my hands and give the uncles a little smile. I bend over to whisper in uncle Marcus's ear: "Next time, take care not to eat the last piece of my cheesecake."

"What?" He yelps but I turn my back on them and leave them to sort their mess.

Victory.

[Love Triangle wreath scene \(Niall's POV\).](#)

[May 30, 2022](#)

I don't know why Marcus always moans that he doesn't want to attend these parties. He gives me a look of disdain every time someone laughs a little too pitchy to his liking. And I always give him a smile. When he's in the worst of moods, it manages to even deepen his frown.

A woman walks past me and flashes me a smile. Once the wine starts to flow, the guests are jollier. The music makes my muscles itch as a demand to start dancing. A slave passes me another bowl of pudding with dried figs.

What's not to love? Sometimes I don't understand Marcus at all.

I wiggle my toes inside my new boots.

However, just as I'm about to let the music take me with it, I feel your gaze on me.

Ah, yes. This is a special night. I don't know why father invited you here but it was a nice surprise to see your face peek behind the curtain. I always want to smack you on your arm and tousle your hair when I see you. You would probably flee if I tried that. Most likely.

You're looking at the flower crown on my head. Are you wondering about its purpose?

All these Roman customs must be exhaustingly new for you. I give you a little smile, trying to make you feel that I can relate. I've been there.

But, you look away with a frown. I shake my head but don't let it sway me. I'm used to the reaction. At times, I feel like I'm surrounded by nothing but grumpy people.

I'm not sure if you've enjoyed your evening so far, but what I am sure about is that the wreath and its scents will make you more relaxed.

I reach for the wreath, only to realize that Marcus's hand is reaching for it, too.

I look at Marcus, just now realizing that I must be wearing the same frown he is. What does he think he's doing?

His gaze darts to you. He meant to give it to you.

A flash of worry runs through me. I've seen how your body tenses when he's around. Is this another way of his to bully you? Bullied by flower-crowns?

"I was going to put this on Hati," I say, a bit more forcefully than I thought I would. I want to make you feel better about being here. I don't know what Marcus wants. I'm not sure if he even knows that.

Marcus quickly lets go of the wreath with a seemingly noncommittal shrug.

"Whatever, I hope he likes it."

What is he implying? Heat rises to my cheeks, he knows how easy it is.

"I hope so, too. The wreath, I mean." I don't know why I added that last bit. What else would I mean?

Marcus smiles. It's one of his cruel smiles, ones that he wears when he enjoys torture. "I meant that I hope he likes to feel your hands on his scalp. Perhaps you will lightly graze the lobe of his ear as you put the wreath on. Perhaps your delicate finger tips will send a light shudder through his quivering body, as a breath of hot air leaves his lips and he starts fantasizing about you touching him even lower."

Heat shoots across my body as I tense up. I inhale, too quickly, and start coughing. Why would he think that, let alone say that?!

Marcus puffs his chest, as if he won.

[Mini game coming up tomorrow!](#)

[May 31, 2022](#)

I got a bit carried away with the choices and all, I just finished writing and I really want to polish the text before sending the scenario your way. Sorry about that, they will be delivered tomorrow! Thank you for your patience ♥

[Hit me up with some topic suggestions! \(if you want to\)](#)

[Jun 8, 2022](#)

As is customary, the polls are coming. If you have any topic suggestions for the POV scenes or Marcus scenarios, please let me know. (It helps me out a lot!)

Also, please send me your character Q&A questions (what you'd like to know about the characters, it doesn't have to be just the ROs) here, via email, or in the Forum, Tumblr, or you can PM here on Patreon. You can also send me carrier pigeons or hit me up with a telegraph.

As always, I welcome any sock-related questions with open arms.

Thank you! ♥

[Fox tier RO poll](#)

[Jun 13, 2022](#)

I'd like to have your opinion on this pressing matter. If you'd like to read someone else's scenario, who would it be?

Niall

6

Camilla

3

Tinsae

3

Quinn

2

I want more Marcus!

2

Poll ended Jun 30, 2022 · 16 votes total

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Jun 13, 2022](#)

Another good writing week. Yay!

I've felt really inspired and excited about the whole Samhain stuff. New plot threads emerged and all that jam. There's a new Celtic god in town. 🙄 You can cheat the Twins! Hehe. I also came up with a

new stat that will help with the relationships. There's a 'trust' meter. It makes sense, there's a lot of manipulation going on and all. Then, there's the sexual attraction meter, most likely. That's how I will probably juggle between different relationship types. That's the best type of coding system I came up with for this story. I will still have to sit on it, though.

I've been informed that people apparently can feel "cheated" if the author retcons something in their WIP. I laughed. I'm so chaotic with my writing that I've already changed Quinn's whole appearance (twice!), I will delete the whole non-believer option for the MC because it makes no sense after I wrote a ritual scene in Samhain etc. etc. There's so much stuff that will be altered. It's really common in writing, there's a lot of edits, some things go poof and some things will be added. That's just how it is.

This whole rambling posting is actually quite interesting to me. You get to see my creative process. I'm still new to this, myself. I've written a thesis, for sure, but it's not this big. Nor was the Love and Duty novella. They helped, sure, but this is... quite something. But I really like the process, all in all. I think the most difficult part is to remember every kind of MC there is. I don't have a clear "if you're high in this stat, you'll say this" system, I just basically wing everything when I'm writing. What feels good for the flow of things, then I forget to get back to it and write the other MCs. At least I know that's something I could improve on.

Also, I just remembered that I've been talking about the Discord server for a while now. I will, er, get on with it.

I hope you have a wonderful new week ahead! Stay safe, stay awesome, you rock!

[Short story poll](#)

[Jun 15, 2022](#)

Backstory stuff will be up for voting next month <3

Remember to hit me up with any Q&A questions you might have (either aimed at me or the characters).

Thank you! <3

(I'm counting on you to vote for the Legate!)

Introduction scene with Quinn (Quinn's POV)

4

Legate noticing that Marcus is peeing on his mulberry tree (Legate's POV)

10

Garden scene (Camilla's POV)

2

Foraging during the 4th chapter (Quinn's POV)

5

Garden scene (Tinsae's POV)

0

Garden scene (Niall's POV)

4

Poll ended Jun 22, 2022 · 25 votes total

[Marcus scenario poll](#)

[Jun 15, 2022](#)

These need no introduction.

Also I'm just kidding, no one is peeing in anyone's soup. (Or are they...)

Bathing time with Legate and Marcus

5

Testing out cosmetics with Niall and Marcus

2

An impromptu dance competition with Camilla and Marcus

1

A forest walk with Robus and Marcus

4

Marcus has a flu. Give him either medical attention or pee in his soup.

Poll ended Jun 22, 2022 · 17 votes total

[Sneak peek](#)

[Jun 18, 2022](#)

So, Samhain is nearing its finish line. I will probably share it with you by the time it's finished, even if there's still the bathing scene left for editing and the wrestling scene to top it all off. I think this will take till the end of the month, though. I'm really happy about the Samhain scenes and I'm having a blast writing them.

Here is a scene where Niall barges into the botched festivities:

Something big and fast runs straight at me from the darkness. Just as I'm bracing myself for the impact, it halts its speed to a minimum and I can make sense of his face.

It's Niall. His face is blanched white.

I ask: "What happened? What are you doing here?" I'm almost happy to see his oblivious face.

"I think I was chased by ghosts!"

"Oh."

"Oh? That's not the reaction I was waiting for." He rubs his sweaty face. "I knew it was a bad idea to come here. My torch died, I had no sweets on me. I was defenseless, a walking target."

"They wouldn't have killed you. They would've just lured you to the Otherside."

"Oh, wow, that's a relief, thank you so much for that information!" He's still visibly shaken by the ordeal.

"Well, unless they were the Others, they would've just killed you."

He shakes his head. "Why are you...?" He sighs. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to sound mean. I just... I'm just... just let me catch my breath."

He huffs and puffs with his hands on his knees for a few more moments before Kegan comes to us.

"Did you see a ghost, too?" He asks.

Niall raises his gaze at the kid. "Yes. I mean, no. I didn't see them but they chased me. Something chased me!"

Kegan nods his head. "You're sure they weren't the Others?"

"Oh, dear gods, I don't know! Why do you keep talking about them? They chased me and I'm here. I don't care at all who they were."

*fake_choice

#"They won't come here." Comfort them. Well, they almost just did come here, but the circle of protection will keep them away. For now.

They look uneasily into the darkness. And, as if in cue, a sorrowful wail echoes from the forest.

Niall and Kegan shriek in unison.

I try to reassure them: "I know it sounds bad but I'm sure the banshee is as scared of you as you are of her."

"A banshee?!"

"Shh. I wouldn't shout, even if there's no real danger. Or minimal danger."

"Minimal...", Kegan whispers and looks at the direction where the wail came from.

#"They could still follow you." Tease them.

"They could?!" Both of them shout before covering their mouths. They look uneasily into the darkness. And, as if in cue, a sorrowful wail echoes from the forest.

Niall and Kegan shriek in unison.

I peer at the direction the wail came from. "That sounded like a banshee."

Niall looks at me with widened eyes. "A banshee?!"

"Shh. Don't shout. It will only lure them to us."

Niall and Kegan's faces blanch even whiter than they were before.

Someone's voice cuts through the tension: "Are you bullying the boys?" I turn to Floyd, who looks only slightly amused by the commotion. He looks at Niall, his Tribune, before saying: "Oh. I didn't realize that it was you, Lord Tribune."

Niall takes a few stabilizing breaths, as if to appear that nothing is wrong and he didn't just shriek like his life depended on it. He pats Kegan on his shoulder and says: "Right. Nothing to worry about, son."

Kegan frowns. "You just—"

"Alas!" Niall yelps, making Kegan jump. "What dangers lurk in the shadows, I do not know. It's a good thing they seem to be fearing the light."

#Remain silent.

The spirits won't pose a real problem in a group and I doubt there are any Others lurking about. I can't sense any.

Kegan and Niall look uneasily into the darkness. And, as if in cue, a sorrowful wail echoes from the forest.

They shriek in unison. Then, they turn to me, as if I should reassure them.

*fake_choice

#"Stop acting like you've never been in a dark forest filled with roaming spirits."

"Filled?! There are multiple spirits?"

"It shouldn't come as a surprise. This is the time when the Veil between our world and theirs is thin."

Niall bites his lip. "But I've never felt this many spirits before."

"Ah, it's because these fools botched the Samhain traditions. It's one thing not to do them, it's entirely another to insult the spirits with wrong ones."

Niall turns to look at Kegan with a judging look on his face.

Kegan raises his hands in defense: "It wasn't me! I tried to say that they shouldn't—"

"What is happening here?" Floyd's voice cuts through the tension. Niall turns to him, his face filled with blame aimed at the approaching man.

Floyd slows his pace down once he sees him. "Um. Lord Tribune? What are you doing here?"

"I'm here to condemn you on your failure to deliver a proper Samhain," he says in a weirdly solemn tone.

"Oh. I see." Floyd's face turns bright red. "I'm terribly sorry, Lord Tribune. I take full responsibility for everything that happened."

[Sudden poll appears](#)

[Jun 22, 2022](#)

I had an idea. Would you like to be able to choose Quinn as someone you previously had an affair with? Perhaps an affair that was starting out but didn't quite have time before everything happened.

That would mean extra work for sure, a lot more dialogue, I'd probably add that route once I'll start editing this. I just smelled the sweet scent of additional drama and I liked it.

Yes, please.

No, that sounds like a lot of work.

58 votes total

[Flash poll!](#)

[Jun 23, 2022](#)

Since it was a tie and I don't mind writing either one of those scenarios, a sudden flash poll appears!

Marcus is sick. Physically, that is

4

Bathing time with Marcus and the dilf

7

Poll ended Jun 25, 2022 · 11 votes total

[About the next month's mini game](#)

[Jun 27, 2022](#)

In order to avoid any riots, I think it's time to let old Marcus rest for the next month and let Niall take his place. There can always be a love triangle scenario added into the poll, if you want to. Let me know what you'd like to read about and I'm happy to add it into the next month's poll.

Please always let me know if you don't receive any email from me, I'm usually marked as a spam. I'm a big old spammer.

[Q&A](#)

[Jun 30, 2022](#)

Since I received questions that are also aimed at me, rather than the characters, I decided to answer these author questions this month. I got a bit carried away. Again. Sorry about that in advance. (Outraged Fox stuff is coming up tomorrow!)

Also, the love language stuff is bit spoilery. I hope you don't mind. Please don't read the last part if you don't want little spoilers about the ROs' routes.

Whom of the characters did you come up with first? What were they like in the beginning or were they all fully fleshed out already?

The very first character I came up with was the MC. I was writing another version of this story, it would've been about a Legionary who gets sent to Britain in the Ninth Legion (that one Legion which disappeared, no one knows what happened to it). But their character was so darn boring. They would've been more of a blank slate. I wrote one whole chapter starring them and didn't like it at all. "Innocence lost" would've been the theme. But it was too, too boring. Then, I realized that I'd written a prologue for that story. It was from the POV of a Pict who squeezed their sword on a beach all angry and stuff and swore vengeance at the Romans. That was my MC. I wanted to know the story through their perspective. Great decision, I really like them. That grumpy old grumpster.

Then came Marcus. The murderer. I was debating this a lot with myself, if it was too far, if people would absolutely hate his guts, if everyone would think I was an idiot for making him an RO. But I've played my share of otomes to know that this is a character that would be interesting, it would bring a lot of drama. People love drama. I love drama. So, I went with it.

His character changed somewhat from the start, at first I thought he was more ruthless than he actually was. I found it more interesting that he wouldn't be just a domineering asshole. I mean yeah, he's also that, but not **just** that. Lol.

Then came Quinn. I knew that I wanted someone there who would know the MC from before. I don't usually like the childhood friend trope, to be honest, unless there's something more interesting about them. So, I came up with something more interesting. Hehe. At first, I thought that I wouldn't be so heavy-handed about the hints. I could've been more subtle. But... I didn't want to lead anyone on. So, I threw in a lot of red flags there with the mindset of "if you go with Quinn, you can only blame yourself" lol. Once I start editing, I think that I will improve on Quinn's character the most. Their and Marcus's route will need the most work.

Then came Camilla. I wanted to have a Roman noblewoman as an RO. I don't actually remember how I came up with her being the Legate's wife. Perhaps because it adds more drama. It's all about drama lol. She's the one who has changed the least. I knew she was the tsundere of the story and that's how she's remained. There's been some minor tweaks about her sexuality and backstory, but in the end, not that much has changed.

Then, Tinsae. I knew I wanted to have someone who wasn't Roman, but wasn't Celtic, either. An outsider. If you know Moominvalley, I've always thought of Tinsae as Snufkin. She comes and she goes, helps people when needed, but chooses her own path. Camilla is Moomintroll, stuck in Moominvalley, waiting for Tinsae to come and... Now I'm just rambling about Moomins. Anyway, Tinsae is someone I've had to get to know the most during the process. She wasn't as clear to me, I knew she was really gentle and kind, but I needed to know more. She's still showing me new sides of her, and her early route is something that needs some editing, too, when it comes down to it.

Quinn and Niall have changed the most during the process. Niall was actually two different characters, that's why I didn't mention him before. There was this Legionary called Crispus, a blond guy, very funny, my favorite character whom I loved dearly. But, he didn't have a proper role in the story. He was just there. The ROs need to have an important role, in my humble opinion. Something they teach to the MC, something they represent that is relevant to the MC. There was no reason for him to be there. So, I cut him out (the most difficult decision in this story so far). Then, there was the MC's bodyguard called Landulf. He was a big fellow, a gentle giant. He would've died and it would've been tragic, his death scene is already written lol. But, alas, he was cut before I could kill him (tragic). Landulf and Crispus became Niall. Niall's real life counterpart is Arminius (just throwing this out here). Niall has developed a lot after the merging happened, but it was its own difficulty to see him as his own character, rather than a mash-up. He's really grown on me, though.

They all are. I don't think I have a favorite, since they all have qualities that I really like. I enjoy writing each of their routes, which is really important.

Basically I knew Camilla and Marcus the best before I started writing. The others have developed significantly during the process.

Ok I rambled a LOT about that one question. Sorry about that. I'll answer the love language question and save the rest for the coming months since I rambled a lot. I hope that's alright with you.

What are the ROs' love languages?

This is a difficult question and the answer might change, since I'm still in the process of getting to know the ROs. However, I will answer to the best of my abilities.

Marcus is going to be really difficult to be physical with, at first. He doesn't want to touch the MC. I think it's because he feels guilty. He will develop into someone who is really physical, since that's how he is with Robus and even Antonia. When people aren't looking, he will walk hand in hand with Antonia, he will cuddle with Robus, he's probably giving massages to Niall. His words don't usually match with his actions. At first, he will probably try to give gifts to the MC, since that is something that requires observation. He knows what the MC wants and needs because he's always studying them.

Camilla is not good with words. She doesn't like to tell people how she feels, so instead, she will show her affection by giving gifts. Just as it's with Marcus. However, Camilla will not develop into someone who likes to cuddle. She will tolerate it, she will grow to enjoy it, but she will not be the one to offer her hand and start hugging. They will probably also be a fan of quality time. Yes. That sounds like Camilla. She hates it when people don't listen to her.

Niall is really physical. He has to restrain himself around the MC, since he really likes to mess people's hair, smack their bottoms (yes), cuddle with dogs and cats and everyone. Since he can't be physical with the MC, partly because he's afraid he might scare them away, he resorts to words of affirmation. He's not that good at it, though.

Tinsae is someone who really appreciates acts of service. She likes to show love by helping with menial tasks, she doesn't mind getting physical and doesn't really care how she's perceived. She also loves to give and receive words of affirmation, she's really good at expressing how she feels. She might actually be the only one good at it in this bunch, lol.

Quinn... I think they want to hear and give words of affirmation. They can be physical, but that's not something they necessarily thrive on. Words mean everything to them. And quality time. They give the MC their undivided attention, listen when they speak, they are present.

This was a really helpful question. It made me really think about these things, thus I learned something new. Thank you.

I hope this was a good Q&A for you, it really was one for me. ♥

[Peeing on a Mulberry Tree](#)

[Jun 30, 2022](#)

Legate's POV

As I put the last olive into my mouth (and make sure to swallow it with care), my mind wanders to the new boy. How nice of him to attend the banquet, even if the situation was clearly new to him. He seems like a nice lad. However, there's something about him that makes me wonder...

From time to time, I catch the lad looking at me, choking in his words, as if he was too flustered to continue. There's intensity within his gaze, there's the burning feeling of deep...

Passion!

Oh no...! The boy is clearly in love with me.

It wouldn't be the first time I've gathered passionate gazes of my many admirers. The position of power is to blame, I'm sure of it. I didn't have a reason to notice them before but once Tacita passed away (bless her heart), it seems that they're everywhere.

Oh, but of course there's Camilla. I almost forgot about her. Thank goodness she can't read minds, even if she sometimes makes me think otherwise.

Now, the lad must be informed that it's not proper to—

Oh. Is that Marcus? What is he doing?

The boy is looking around, apparently thinking I can't see him. Then, he raises his tunic's hem and—

Oh no. Not again. I just asked for a new one.

Other sons run for offices, they become Senators, they make a name of themselves. They bring honor to the family name.

This one pees on my potted plants.

I go to him, dodging a few drunk guests on the way. I ignore their smiles, even if a part of me urges me to smile back. This is not the time for 'how are you enjoying the party' talk. I need to confront my dog of a son. They will forget about my rudeness, I hope.

"Marcus. Why?"

He lowers his tunic and turns to me, as if he was waiting for me. He wants me to know that he's the one who's been killing my trees.

"Why?" I repeat, knowing why. "Why are you doing this? What did the poor tree ever do to you?"

"Nothing. You, on the other hand..."

"So you're taking your hatred on innocent trees."

He doesn't answer. He doesn't need to.

"I know you despise me. I just want you to know that—" Our conversation drowns in the laughter of the guests. At least I hope so. Please let it drown. This is too important to ignore, he needs to know that I'm sorry. He needs to know that not a day goes by without me regretting what happened.

"No."

"If you can please just—" I reach for him, as I've done many times before. I try to take his hand, picturing it as it was when he was little. Soft and chubby, reaching back to me.

"Don't." He yanks his hand away, leaving me grasping for nothing. He gives me another look of disdain, one I've grown too familiar with. It stabs at my heart, pain makes me look away.

When he turns his back on me, all I can do is to watch him leave. I've ran after him before. He hates me even more for it. So I just stay there, trying to ignore the pressuring feeling in my chest.

I love you. Please forgive me.

[Bloopers](#)

[Jun 30, 2022](#)

I almost thought that I have no interesting bloopers. Then, I realized that I cut a lot of stuff from the banquet. Thirsty stuff.

Thirsty stuff is quite difficult to code in, since there are people who don't want to see that stuff even as an option. I will probably add a lot more oggling at the ROs (for you ogglers, I see you) once I start editing and figuring out what to do with the code. Anyway, here's some Niall and Tinsae oggling:

Tinsae oggling:

Tinsae steps in: "Of course, Gaius, please attend to your other guests. We will manage."

I sigh as the Legate's steps move further and further away from us. Thank the Twins he left.

"Ugh." She rubs her temples discreetly before looking longingly at the door. "I think I'm going to get some fresh air." Beads of sweat have started to form near her cleavage.

*fake_choice

#I only saw it because she started wiping them off with a cloth.

It is indeed quite warm. Even if it's the late fall, the braziers have done their job at warming the room up. Too much, it seems.

A bead of sweat runs down my forehead. Should I go to get some fresh air, too?

#It seems that I was watching her breasts. It happened by accident. Of course, now that I have noticed my error, I look away.

I don't know what came over me. This is not the time to gawk at her bosom.

No, there's not a good time to gawk at anyone's bosom.

"Are you alright?"

"Oh. Yes. Thank you."

"No need to thank me." She smiles in a way that tells me that I can tell her anything.

#My gaze wanders down to her breasts.

They look soft to the touch. Even if her dress covers them well, it's clear that they're quite big.

*if ((gender = "woman") and (sex = "woman") and (not(bindings_aight)))

I take a breath, growing acutely aware of my restricting bindings.

#I'm almost jealous that she can dress as she likes.

I bite my lip and take another peek at the breasts.

#I'm happy for her. She doesn't have to bear with the bindings.

"Hati?" She has tilted her head to let me know that she can definitely see where my gaze lies.

*fake_choice

#"Can I help with the sweat? I have a cloth with me."

"You want to... wipe the sweat off of my cleavage?"

"Yes."

"That is..." She hesitates. "I don't think I've ever met such a man as yourself."

"Is that a good thing?"

"Hm." She gives me a smallest smile before leaving.

#"Um. Sorry. I was thinking about something else."

"Oh. That happens to me, too, at times." She smiles, but it's hard to say if she believed me. At least she didn't take offense.

Dem Niall's shins

#His said tunic is quite short. I peer at his naked shins.

The garden is freezing during the night time air, yet his shins are wholly exposed. They are extremely muscular; that's probably the reason why he's showing them around without a care during late autumn.

I can't quite bring myself to complain.

"Umm. Hati?" He looks at me, letting me know he knows that I'm gawking at his naked skin.

*fake_choice

#Act cool.

#Feign innocence.

#Oh no.

[Discord is up and running!](#)

[Jul 10, 2022](#)

Yay! If you don't have an account yet, please consider making one so you can chat with me and the others (who wouldn't want that!).

Also, this was me this morning:



[Scenario Poll \(Niall\)](#)

[Jul 15, 2022](#)

Sparring Time (let's get physical. With Niall. Niall might be flustered.)

67%

Spa Day (gator poop is actually really good for your skin, that's what Niall says)

0%

Herbs. Lots of them. (Niall is something of a herbalist himself)

0%

Niall and Marcus lifting weights (who's the strongest of them all (it's Niall))

7%

Being taken care of by Niall whilst having a flu (just lie down and relax, Niall's got you)

27%

Poll ended Jul 22, 2022 · 15 votes total

[Short Story Poll](#)

[Jul 15, 2022](#)

Quinn and MC celebrating previous Samhain together (backstory)

15%

Legate meeting Camilla for the first time (backstory)

5%

Legate comparing Camilla to his first wife (backstory)

5%

Tinsae arriving in Rome (backstory)

5%

Introduction scene with Quinn (Quinn's POV)

15%

Niall and Antonia defiling Marcus's scrolls (Antonia's POV)

5%

Wrecking up Samhain (Floyd's POV)

0%

Optio gets jealous over the MC because they get all of Marcus's attention (Optio's POV)

50%

Poll ended Jul 22, 2022 · 20 votes total

[Mini game poll](#)

[Jul 18, 2022](#)

Please, share your opinion on who should be the next month's mini game RO. I'll have to see what to do with this information later.

Marcus

19%

Niall

13%

Camilla

6%

Tinsae

6%

Quinn

13%

Legate (hehe)

25%

The Emperor who fed Camilla's dad to the lions (huh?)

6%

Brick (...uh-huh)

13%

Poll ended Jul 27, 2022 · 16 votes total

[Feedback pls ♥](#)

[Jul 22, 2022](#)

Here's a little questionnaire, if anyone is feeling like giving a little feedback!

<https://forms.gle/DaeM4o9vnLejdui16>

[A little sneak peek at Saturnalia](#)

[Jul 27, 2022](#)

Fun times ahead 👁️ Costumes and shenanigans!

A man dressed as a cabbage walks by. Or perhaps he's a lettuce?

"A cabbage, I presume," Marcus says, as if reading my mind.

"I wanted to be a carrot," Niall chimes in while looking jealously after the cabbage. Marcus rolls his eyes.

"You're a Tribune, act like it."

Niall mutters something under his breath, not loud enough to hear but its intent clear. He really wanted to be a carrot.

[Quinn and MC celebrating Samhain together \(backstory\)](#)

[Jul 28, 2022](#)

Quinn's POV:

Laughter rings in the air as the bonfire's flames lick my skin. I've laughed and I've danced with many. I've been waiting so eagerly.

The clearing is decorated with the fruits of this summer's harvest. The multiple torches and lanterns make it so that it would be easy to mistake the night for a day. The spirits are pleased.

Ah. There's a familiar figure whom I've been waiting for. The corners of my lips rise against my will. You're here. You're clad in your moss-green cloak, your gaze captured by the darkness of the forest.

Looking as glum as ever.

You're completely ignorant of everything, your barriers are down.

How dare you be so vulnerable? It'll be your downfall.

It's time... to proceed with the plan.

I aim straight onto your head.

"Ouch!" You yelp. You turn to me, rubbing the back of your head. You have a deep frown on your face.

Always so dramatic, it was just a hazel nut.

I give you a little shrug. "I'm casting a spell of fertility on you."

"You what? That's not how—"

Wrong answer! Another nut hits your forehead.

"Ow! What are you—"

"Now! That should do it. You'll have two shit tons of children."

"What? Why would you want me to have children?"

"Don't start with me. They're cute. I've seen how you dote the twins."

Before you can answer, your mother appears, killing your blossoming smile. The poison-green cloak covers her face, yet the piercing eyes still glow from underneath the cloth. A chill runs down my spine. Her posture is proud, as per usual, and she spares me not a glance. I doubt she's ever really looked at me before.

"It's time," she states. "They await."

Your face loses all its color.

I bite the insides of my cheek, squeezing the nuts in my hand. Their edges cut my skin. You shouldn't have to do this. I hate this.

I won't stay silent any longer.

"They don't want to do it." Every word that comes out of my mouth makes my stomach fall further and further down. But I will remain standing. I must. For you.

Your eyes dart to me, your face filled with the same dread that plagues my mind. 'What are you doing?' you ask without words. I don't care. I'm saving you.

I shift my gaze to your mother. Let her kill me, I don't care. It would make you act. It would make you more reluctant.

My death would serve a meaning.

However, she doesn't look at me. Why? Still you refuse? I'm here! I'm defying you. Look at me!

Instead, she sighs.

"The Twins await. Don't make me repeat myself."

You nod and follow her. You don't give me another look.

Someone bumps into me but I barely notice. My gaze is on your receding back. Something squeezes my chest, making it difficult to breathe.

I'm useless.

—

The wind carries a distant scream. Barely anyone makes a note of it but I always hear it.

The corners of my eyes sting. Anger makes me rub the sensation away.

I can never save you.

[The Bath Scene \(Optio's POV\).](#)

[Jul 28, 2022](#)

Lord Centurion stands fully naked with his marvelous package out in the open for everyone to see. A couple of men walk by and I give them a nod. Yes, it is a thing to behold. I know they'd wish to be as close to him as I am: We just had a wondrous bath together, side by side, he even snorted at the little joke I told him. All is as it should be. I puff my chest and can't help but smile.

He's such a good man. Pride makes my chest feel funny. He's such a considerate man. He doesn't have to look at me for me to know that he's listening. He always listens to me.

"Lord Centurion, don't you think it's a good plan?"

He doesn't have to say it is but for some reason I need to hear it. Of course it's a good plan, he sees it, he always does. It's important to keep the troops busy during winter. If they dig ditches throughout the lazy months when there's nothing else to do, they won't get soft, they won't think of anything stupid, they'll stay in shape. Everything would be in order.

Sure, they might be disgruntled but it's barely important. It's for their own good. They don't have to understand it. It's my — our — duty to see what's best for them. We think so they don't have to. That's just how it is.

However, Lord Centurion doesn't say anything.

Hm. Maybe he didn't hear, after all. My smile wavers. Just a little bit.

There are so many noisy soldiers, that must be the reason. Their meaningless prattling grates my ears. Ugh!

"Shut your mouths, you imbeciles!" I command them. They fall silent, as they well should. A few of them move to another pool.

All the better! Let us be alone with the good Lord Centurion.

Still, when I look at him, Lord Centurion's gaze is still elsewhere. My heart sinks.

Oh no! Maybe he's troubled? I need to find out. I will help him, if I can. If there is anyone bothering him, so help me gods...

I will end them. That is my duty as his second-in-command, as his friend.

"Lord Centurion, is there something troubl—"

Then, I realize what he's looking at.

You!

You little shit!

Anger floods my head, making me look for my rod. Shit. I left it in the changing room.

I dart my gaze to good Lord Centurion's face, just to make sure. Surely he can't look at that little cockroach? Surely I'm mistaken. Why is there a little smirk on his face? Is he thinking about something funny?

A joke? Is he thinking of the joke I told him?

"Lord Centurion, it was a funny—"

"Shut up," he says.

I gasp.

He has never talked to me in such a way!

Your stupid face takes shapes in my mind, making my blood boil. You.

It's your fault.

I will end you, you insect.

[Bloopers](#)

[Jul 29, 2022](#)

It's but a small blooper but I thought it was funny. This is from the 4th chapter, it happens during the banquet. I didn't even remember that I wrote it and I just had to share it when I discovered it. It might find its way back to the text.

I approach the duo.

The Legate beams at me. "What a nice surprise, my boy!"

*if ch4_next_to_legate

Then, he winks at me. "Although we've spend quite a lot of time together already, haven't we?"

"Er. Yes." With every part of my body I dearly hope that he won't ever wink at me again.

Seeing his face is grating my eyes. Instinctively, I turn my gaze to Tinsae, who is considerably more pleasant to look at than that old murderer. Tinsae gives me a little nod with a smile.

"What do you think of the party?"

as a sidenote: I might have to start giving the reader more choices on how to react to the Legate. Yes, he's an old murderer, but I've heard rumors that he's also a dilt.

[Just sent the minigame](#)

[Jul 31, 2022](#)

Please check your email (and spam folders). Please let me know if you have any problems! ♥

[Updated the early access demo](#)

[Aug 4, 2022](#)

There's another 4k words added into the early access demo. More Camilla, Tinsae and Marcus banter and dialogue options. (Camilla hugging was left a bit unfinished, I'm tired and will go to sleep now 😞)

Will polish it later some more and deal with any bugs and such if I left something there.

Thank you everyone who already provided me with some overall feedback! (here is the form, if you're interested: <https://forms.gle/DaeM4o9vnLejdui16>)

Also, thank you for your feedback on this update. It's been all so helpful.

Here is the link to the early access demo: <https://dashingdon.com/play/haleym/defiled-hearts-the-barbarian-alpha/mygame/>

Thank you all so much for being here! You. Are. Awesome.

Now I'm off to bed.

[Short story poll](#)

[Aug 15, 2022](#)

A poll appears!

Marcus confrontation about the murder (Marcus's POV)

Introduction scene with Quinn (Quinn's POV)

Meeting the Legate (Legate's POV)

Coffee scene with Tinsae and Camilla (Tinsae's POV)

Niall's tree climbing shenanigans (Niall's POV)

Bonfire scene with Camilla and Tinsae (Camilla's POV)

32 votes total

[Another poll appears!](#)

[Aug 15, 2022](#)

Legate bath scene (you're covering for Camilla's escape and taking one for the team)

Legate being a sugar daddy and trying to impress you with his wealth

Legate taking you to dinner

Legate is sick. Tend to the poor dillf.

20 votes total

[The Poll](#)

[Aug 22, 2022](#)

You know the poll I'm talking about.

The RO poll.

What's with the options? Who knows at this point.

Marcus

Niall

Camilla

Tinsae

Quinn

Cernunnos

Floyd

Optio

22 votes total

[Another RO poll](#)

[Aug 27, 2022](#)

What you people think about me writing the next month's scenario involving a little drama/poly vibes?

Tinsae/Camilla scenario

Niall/Marcus scenario

No. Give me Marcus. 🤔

19 votes total

[Sneak peek](#)

[Aug 28, 2022](#)

Here are some sneak peeks of the date scenes that are to come! They've been a blast to write so far.

Here is a little snippet of Tinsae's scene:

"My lady! Please, could you hold this baby for a while, there's a fight breaking out."

A man shoves a little baby to Tinsae. He then runs to the other room where there are shouts of high-pitched violence, clearly caused by a group of toddlers having a wrestling match. Tinsae looks after the man, seemingly fighting against the instinct to run after him and help. The baby, however, is babbling happily, not minding who's holding them. The baby is having a sermon of a lifetime, it doesn't seem to matter who's listening. Tinsae gives the baby a quick, but no less brilliant, smile before turning to me.

"I'm sorry, I didn't realize it was going to be such a hassle. It's usually quieter this time a day."

"Do you own this place?"

"Ah, yes. I do. I—" But before she can continue, the baby starts pulling her hair with a wide smile. Tinsae's face, on the other hand, is slightly distorted in pain.

Niall's:

Victoria nods at Niall. "My Lord, it's time to try on the tunic. Do you want me to help?"

"Ah, sure." He takes a brief look at me, clearly unsure how he should go on about this. Is he going to undress in front of me or not?

*fake_choice

#Give him a wide grin and a nod. "By all means, Lord Tribune. Please bare your butt."

Marcus's:

He squints at the scroll, reminding me of a little vole.

Can't he see properly?

"What are you reading?"

He almost jumps on his chair, letting out a little yelp. He turns to me with a frown. "What are you doing here, little moron?"

*fake_choice

#"Watching you read like a little vole."

He squints his eyes.

"Uh-huh. Just like that."

A scoff leaves his thin lips. "So, you've been spying on me?" He raises his brow, preparing for a counterattack. "Got a good look of my stunning jawline?"

"You tightened it so forcefully that I couldn't possibly miss it," I retort and look at the scroll. "Small text?"

He sighs. "Yes. But I'll manage."

I hope you liked them! ♥ I'll be back with Camilla's and Quinn's scenes later.

[Marcus confrontation/his POV](#)

[Aug 28, 2022](#)

Your father stands there with his head in his hands. The head I severed.

Your face is distorted by pain. Pain that I caused.

Why does my stomach feel like it's missing something?

I... There's something coarse in my throat. I try to swallow, but find that I can't.

Am I caring about this?

Why should I? There are so many that I've killed. Am I going to brood for every single one of them?

Ridiculous. Utter stupidity.

My gaze escapes from your father. For some reason I can't watch the two of you.

What is he doing here, anyway? Stupid, proud man. He should've kneeled when he had a chance. He knew what would happen.

Just then, he disappears. You're left there, your hand touching air.

The look of utter helplessness makes me wish that I could... help you.

"Was that your—"

I don't know why I'm asking. Of course it was.

Your gaze darts to me, the palm of your hand hovering over your sword.

Of course you'd want to kill me.

That could be for the best.

"I'm... sorry," I finally say, knowing it's expected of me. It's not enough. Both of us know it. Am I even sorry? I did what I had to do. Is that my excuse?

Soft

"I saved you once before," I hear myself saying, trying to justify myself. "When you were hiding. I saw you."

Does it make me a better man?

You shake your head, clearly confused by the information. "But... Why wouldn't you alert the other murderers?"

I look away. Why are you making me explain this? Why don't you just yell at me and let both of us be done with it.

You wait for me to answer.

Finally, I say: "I didn't feel like it."

Silence falls between us. The way you look at me is exactly how I feel, as if you're not sure you heard me correctly. The words sound wrong, like I should say more.

I really didn't feel like killing you. How else could I explain it? What more do you want?

You speak slowly, accusing me: "But you felt like killing my family?"

I take a sharp breath. No. I don't feel like killing families.

I...

"What's going on here?"

Floyd's voice saves me from answering any more of your questions.

Thank Apollo. Thank the gods.

I start to leave but there's something preventing me. As if I should say something more. Do something. You're there and you look like you need something. Do you need me to leave or stay or...?

Finally, I manage to tear myself from you. My step is unusually heavy and I don't feel good at all.

I'm... I wish mom was here.

Harsh

"You're sorry!" You snarl at me.

You don't buy it. Of course you don't. But your tone irritates me more than it probably should. Do you not know how hard I've worked to keep you alive? You've been insolent and disobedient, you should be dead.

"Why do you think you're alive? It's because of me." My words are harsher than I meant them. I don't expect you to be grateful. Right?

"Why didn't you kill me?"

"I wanted to see what you would do." It's the truth. And you've proven to be an excellent source of entertainment.

The explanation is not enough for you. You prepare to kill me. A strange sense of gleefulness flows through me, making me smile.

Do I earn it? Perhaps. You think I do. That's what matters at this moment.

I expose my neck to you, just as I've done since the day you came.

Do what you came here to do. Just be done with it quickly before anyone notices. I can't promise I won't act in reflex and fight back. Let's see which one of us survives. I'll give you a head start.

Let's see what happens.

"What is going on here?" Floyd's voice interrupts the murder that's about to take place.

I let out a deep breath and almost chuckle. We live another day.

[Q&A](#)

[Aug 29, 2022](#)

Another one of these panel style Q&As, I hope you enjoy! They're always a blast to write.

X: "Let's get this interview started. Now, we have Legate and Antonia with us today, as we should. Let's start with a lighter topic: What is your body count? Antonia, do you want to start?"

A: "What does that mean?"

C: "It means how many people have you killed."

A: "I'm 6."

X: "Right, right. 6 people so far. Quite impressive. What about you, Camilla?"

C: "One that I know of."

X: "Marcus?"

M: "What do you think? I was a commanding officer during the invasion of Southern Caledonia."

X: "That means?"

M: "It means that I lost count."

C: "Killing the MC's relatives must've been tiring."

M: "What did you say?"

X: "Now, now. Ah, Quinn, do you want to share us your body count?"

Q: "Many."

X: "No specific number in mind?"

Q: "No." Quinn stares off into the distance.

X: "Right. That was a good way to start this off, thank you. So, what would be a thing you wouldn't be able to forgive your partner?"

M: "Killing a family member."

C: "Aww, how nice of you."

M: "Not you, wench, you can drop dead."

X: "No name-calling! We are civilized people. Tinsae, what about you?"

T: "I could never forgive cruelty."

X: "That's indeed terrible. Niall?"

N: "Umm... Lying."

X: "Yes, that sounds bad. I hope no one in your life is lying to you at this very moment. Lying about something bad. And big. Someone close to you."

N: "Well, yes. I hope so too?"

X: "What would be the perfect date with the MC?"

N: "With the MC?"

X: "Yes. Pretend you're going on a romantic date with the MC."

M: "Are you blushing?"

N: "I'm not! My perfect date... with the MC... would be..."

M: "I would like to celebrate Lupercalia with them." Marcus starts snickering.

N: "Marcus no."

C: "Mine would be feeding ducks at a nearby pond."

M: "What? You can't be serious."

C: "What? I can't enjoy ducks?"

N: "Mine would be..."

T: "I would like to travel with them to see nearby monuments and other curiosities."

C: "That's lovely. I would like to join."

Both women smile at each other and share a nod.

N: "Mine would be..."

M: "I'm coming, too."

C: "You stay away from us."

Q: "I would like to do whatever MC wants to do."

M: "Suck-up..."

N: "Mine would be..."

L: "I would like to shower them with gifts and food, the poor boy looks like they haven't had a good meal in months. Then, I'd take them to the races and to see gladiators and—"

C: "You're going on a date with the MC?"

L: "You just said that you're going, too."

C: "Ugh."

X: "Legate, we have a questions aimed specifically at you."

L: "Oh, interesting!"

X: "What do you think of the MC and the way your son seems overly interested in them?"

M: "Overly—"

L: "I think that it's lovely that my son has finally gotten friends. He doesn't have lot of those."

M: "What—"

L: "Poor boy. So many times I've told him to go and socialize, go and live a little, you're still a young man. Alas, he just reads alone in his room. It's embarrassing. I try to get him to meet potential wives, yet he just sits there alone. He's a Centurion while he could be a Senator, he sits and reads those dirty poems of his, even trying to compose some of his own and—"

C: "Marcus? Do you compose your own poems? How sweet!"

Marcus leaves the room.

X: "Ah, yes. Well, what do you think about the MC?"

L: "Ah, right. They are a nice lad. A good soldier."

X: "Are you aware of your dilfosity?"

L: "My what now?"

X: "Dilfosity. It means that you're a 'dad I'd like to fuck'."

Legate's eyes widen. "Who on earth is saying these things about me?"

X: "You are quite popular among people."

L: "People? Why, I had no idea. Well, I had a hunch, but I'm still getting used to my single life."

N: "You're married."

L: "Oh, right! Pardon me, my dear."

Camilla rolls her eyes.

X: "Tinsae, this one is aimed at you. What's it like being the most beautiful woman in Rome?"

Camilla nods in agreement.

Tinsae giggles. "I had no idea that I was such a thing! If that is indeed true, it's an honor."

C: "It's the truth."

T: "Thank you so much. Please, you're embarrassing me."

X: "What are your hobbies?"

T: "I have only a little free time but I do like to occupy myself with embroidery. It's just nice to be able to do something with my hands."

X: "You're good with your hands?"

T: "Yes! Quite so."

X: "Marvelous. We have time for two more questions. Camilla?"

C: "Hm?"

X: "Would you like the MC to punch Marcus for you?"

C: "Now? Are they backstage? Can I watch?"

X: "No, it was a hypothetical question."

C: "Don't tease me like that..."

X: "Would you support Antonia if she were to rule all of Rome?"

Antonia puffs her little chest. "That's a good question."

C: "Of course. I will put you on that throne, my dear."

X: "Wonderful. Long live Empress Antonia. That's all the time we have now. Thank you all for coming."

[Bloopers](#)

[Aug 31, 2022](#)

I found a blooper! I didn't even realize that I didn't use this scene. I remember cutting it out because I didn't have the energy to start editing it to fit the other scenes. So, here is Marcus giving the MC a head massage during the banquet:

The action is sudden, and unwelcome (of course), and it makes me want to punch him. However, as his fingers run through my scalp, some sort of trickery comes into play: the lids of my eyes almost fall shut.

The oil he's spreading on my head has the distinct scent of herbs. There's thyme, rosemary, everything herbal. The scent is soothing. This is... almost pleasant.

His touch is more gentle than I thought, his—

Wait a moment! He's touching me!

*fake_choice

#"Keep your fingers off me!"

I shout unnecessarily loudly, drawing any and every pair of eyes in the room to us. Marcus yanks his hands off me, his eyes widened.

"Couldn't you just say it normally, like normal people?"

"Well, you just... you brought this on yourself!" I whisper-yell at him.

"I am sorry if that felt so uncomfortable to you."

"I... well. Yes. You should be sorry." I didn't expect an apology.

#Slip away, fast.

Like an eel slipping through a fishing net, I escape his touch.

"You don't want to be oiled?"

"No."

"You could've just said that."

"I didn't expect you to start touching me if I don't say it."

He shrugs. "It seems we were both in the wrong." Then, he grins.

I squint my eyes at him. Stupid Marcus and his stupid wandering hands. They ought to be chopped off.

[Announcement of the Arrival of Sugar Daddy](#)

[Sep 1, 2022](#)

Please check your emails: the Legate just popped in there.

[New Discord link](#)

[Sep 2, 2022](#)

Hi hi! It came to my attention that the Discord link has expired (thank you for informing me). Here's the new one:

<https://discord.gg/amQJbysQDK>

[Sneak peek](#)

[Sep 12, 2022](#)

Here are the sneak peeks of Camilla's and Quinn's date scenes, as promised 😊

Quinn's secrets:

"You know... I think it's high time that we made use of the blessing to help you even more. I've been snooping around. Do you want to hear what secrets the others hide?"

"Oh?"

She gives me a devious smile.

"You've been reading their minds?"

"Of course. As much as I was able. It's not as easy as it sounds." $\{q_he\}$ looks at me expectantly.

Alright then. I want to hear a secret of...

👁️ Secrets!

Camilla's freckles:

I break the silence: "I didn't realize you have ferntickles."

She frowns. "I have what now?"

"Ah." My Latin has failed me. "Fairies' kisses. Um, I mean. Freckles."

"Fairies' kisses?" She touches the skin of her face, as if remembering them herself. "Fairies..." She muses to herself, her hand still resting on her cheek. Then, she shakes her head.

"I usually cover them with makeup."

"Why?"

"It is what's expected." The words are curt, as always.

[LT poll](#)

[Sep 14, 2022](#)

It's here. It is the LT poll.

Marcus and Niall are drunk and you have to tend to the duo

48%

Gathering trip with the lads (bending = butts)

4%

You need more clothes, fashion king(s) to the rescue

4%

Archery training. Let's get physical 🎵

43%

Poll ended Sep 21, 2022 · 23 votes total

[Short story_poll](#)

[Sep 15, 2022](#)

The illness got me. I'm bed-ridden. But I crawled to my computer to put up this poll.

Please, shower me with your sympathy; I probably won't get better otherwise.

I'm kidding.

I also have a fever.

Now I'm off to bed.

Tinsae leaving her home for Rome (backstory)

1

Marcus's mother dies (backstory)

2

How Legate and Camilla met (backstory)

5

Niall settling into his new home in Rome (backstory)

1

Niall and Marcus talking about their past flings (backstory)

6

Camilla and Tinsae talking about their past flings (backstory)

4

Niall's tree climbing shenanigans (Niall's POV)

4

Niall and Antonia defiling Marcus's scrolls (Antonia's POV)

7

Foraging during the 4th chapter (Quinn's POV)

1

Tinsae consoling both Camilla and the MC (Tinsae's POV)

0

Dancing Marcus (Marcus's POV)

17

Introduction scene with Quinn (Quinn's POV)

6

Poll ended Sep 22, 2022 · 54 votes total

[The Boys' Past Flings \(Marcus POV\)](#)

[Sep 27, 2022](#)

Niall sits on a marble bench, tending to his new shoes. He has servants to do that for him, yet here he is, scrubbing them tenderly as if holding a lover.

He wears a wide smile.

"Why do you have such a grin on your face?"

"What's it to you? I'm just happy." He's suspicious, he smells the danger. As he should.

It's time to poke him.

"Did one of your girls come over again?"

"One of my what? They are customers."

"Oh please. You're not that good of a herbalist. They're here because they want a piece of that fancy ass of yours."

Pink creeps onto his cheeks. He knows what's up with the women on his doorstep. Is he truly interested in helping them, too? Perhaps. But equally as much he likes the attention. And does anything in his power to try and deny it.

Classic Niall.

"They're not getting any pieces of me, fancy or not. I—"

"None of them?"

"Well, not every one of them."

"I certainly hope so! That would be a health hazard."

"Marcus! I'm not sleeping with my customers."

"You just admitted that you are."

Ah, splendid. The color of his skin now matches his hair.

He purses his lips and takes a deep breath, preparing for a counter-attack.

"Why won't we talk about your love life, huh?" He tries to rise up to the challenge. Poor boy, still thinking he can best me.

"There's nothing to talk about."

"What about that woman who you made cry?"

"You answered your own question." It wasn't my fault anyway. She misunderstood what I wanted out of that relationship.

"What about that man who—"

"I made him cry, too. Are you just trying to point out that I'm 'a mean, mean man'?" I almost roll my eyes. That's a tired old tactic. He should know better than to think that I care.

He nods and looks at his shoe. Then, he looks at me with a wily smile.

"What about your wife?"

Anger flashes through me. "I have not agreed to anything and I—"

"Have you told Hati?"

What? "No. Why would I?"

"You're agitated. I think you [i]think[/i] you should tell him."

That slimy little...

"I'm not obligated to share information about my personal life with anyone."

He squints his eyes at me. "I think you [i]think[/i] you do. With Hati."

Why are we talking about Hati, anyway? "Have you told him about your many, many flings?"

"I don't have many flings!"

"The women—"

"I don't sleep with them! Not [i]all[/i] of them. And not anymore! Besides, I'm not—"

"Interested in Hati, huh? Why are you so red, then?"

"I'm that way because you keep prodding me with your idiocy. I'm tired." He pouts.

Ha! I won. "Now now," I say. It's time to mend our relationship after my apparent victory. "I believe you." I don't, and neither does he.

But that will be a cause for a delightful little dispute for another day.

[Dancing Queen Marcus \(Bonfire scene/Marcus POV\)](#)

[Sep 27, 2022](#)

The flames of the bonfire lick my skin. For some ungodly reason, you started to dance. That's part of the ritual, huh?

When you talked about rituals, I was preparing myself for being shoved into the fire. Human sacrifices and you Picts go hand in hand, or so I've heard.

However, it was just a dancing ritual. That's a relief, I suppose.

- Hati the bad dancer:

Oh, dear. Apollo bless your little heart, at least you're trying.

If by trying, I mean that you're waving your hand and legs about like you're being possessed by demons.

I quickly shake my head with a little grin. That was mean. I apologize. Good thing you're not looking at me.

Most likely because you know I'm watching, and judging, you.

- Hati the good dancer

How are your movements that effortless?

It's almost intoxicating to watch.

I look away. I'm not sure why. For some reason, I feel uncomfortable.

You take my hand, yanking me to you. To dance? Are you serious?

I don't dance.

You challenge me with your gaze. You smile. You're happy.

It's contagious. I almost find myself smiling back at you.

Fine.

Floyd is drumming the beat. I steel my resolve and try to catch the rhythm, to bend it to my will.

It's not working. It slips through my grasp. I almost stomp my feet in irritation but manage to stop myself in time.

You look at me. However, your gaze is glassy. It's like you're in a trance.

That's good. At least for me.

Ugh. I'm here. I can't just retreat. I have never backed down on a challenge and I will not start doing so now.

I... I suppose I need to work with the beat. To let it guide me.

Or something.

For fuck's sake.

I start swaying my body with my eyes closed. I will dance or I will die trying.

Confidence. That's the key. Remember to look confident.

- Hati the bad dancer

So I won't end up looking like one certain individual twitching near me.

Again, mean. I'm sorry.

I open my eyes to see that you don't care about anyone anymore. You don't care how you look. You just dance.

Seeing that makes me relax.

So I dance.

Smoke fills my lungs when the wind wills it.

I dance with you, almost touching you but not daring to.

I move away when you move near me. I'm not sure why.

Finally, you try to take my hand but your touch burns my skin. I yank my hand away, almost certain my skin is in blisters. You look at me with a questioning gaze, you didn't do it on purpose.

How could you? That wasn't natural.

Then, I feel it: A terrifying force lingering near you. It makes me halt my movements. Whatever it is, it doesn't want me to be here. I can almost hear it snarling at me.

It's attached to you, it's guarding you.

I can almost see its shape: a flash of white hair and ice-blue eyes staring into my soul.

I blink and it's gone.

There's just you: you smiling at me and saying it's alright.

[Antonia Blooper](#)

[Sep 27, 2022](#)

This is from the bathing scene that's to come. Unfortunately, I had to cut Antonia out of this particular scene since people kept barging into Marcus's office in a way that was borderline cartoonish 😊

A child runs into the room. Antonia.

The other Centurion starts rubbing his temples. "What is the meaning of this? There are children running about now, too?"

Marcus grimaces. "Antonia. You need to—"

"I came to tell you about that nasty man! I saw everything."

The Optio shifts and starts to open his mouth. "No, that girl—"

Marcus silences him. He looks at Antonia. "So, you're a witness?"

Shenanigans

"You stay here," Marcus says to me as the others start leaving.

Antonia gives me a quick smile. "Call me if you need anything."

"Antonia. Off." Marcus sighs.

[POV short story poll](#)

[Oct 16, 2022](#)

I popped in here to put up the polls before rushing back to polish the chapter!

Niall's tree climbing shenanigans (Niall's POV)

Introduction scene with Quinn (Quinn's POV)

The forum scene with the lawyer (Tinsae's POV)

Sitting next to Camilla during dinner (Camilla's POV)

Quinn giving the MC their prized possession back during Samhain (Quinn's POV)

34 votes total

[Tinsae/Camilla poll](#)

[Oct 16, 2022](#)

Girls' night out and the MC is invited, some wine may be involved

Reading Sappho over coffee, giggling included

MC needs a makeover. Girls to the rescue!

20 votes total

[Sneak peek](#)

[Oct 25, 2022](#)

This is a part of the new scene that I just recently came up with, MC is going to be in a pickle 🙄:

A few carriages pass me by with their deafeningly creaking wheels. As I walk further and further away from the town, the receding sounds finally mute altogether.

There's an occasional hoot from a nearby owl but nothing else draws my attention. Not even a stray dog barks in the distance. The silence is welcomed. It's been a hectic day.

The stone pavement is a little slippery but I've learned from my mistakes: no more hobnails while visiting the town. The amount of times I've already found myself landing on my behind is laughable.

Then. A rustle.

I halt my steps and strain my ear.

An animal?

I almost shake my head. Of course it's an animal. We're surrounded by forests. Why am I this jumpy all of a sudden? I've walked this road many times before.

The different shades of white reflecting from the tombstones guide me toward the barracks. They greet me with their writings, they tell me how they died, and how they miss those who were left behind. One wishes any passer-by a good day and a better way to die than he did—

*page_break Another rustle.

[Quinn's Head](#)

[Oct 28, 2022](#)

Quinn's gift during Samhain/Quinn's POV

if conflicted/doubtful:

I feel like you've slowly been slipping away from me.

It would be so easy to see why, to read every single thought you have.

But...something bothers me about it. Something in me is telling me I shouldn't. That it's wrong, somehow.

Even if it's so natural.

I want to see. I want to know why you frown when you see me. Why your thoughts are coated with distrust and doubt when I talk to you. When I try to remind you why you're here. There are conflicting emotions in you that logically shouldn't be there and it's... puzzling.

"What are you frowning about?" You ask.

"Nothing." I smile. I love hearing your voice. I embrace every little interaction with you; they remind me of home, when things were how they were supposed to be.

if trusting:

Seeing you so determined to get what you want fills my heart with pride.

You're everything you're supposed to be. You have a trusting smile when you look at me.

Trust that makes me feel something other than happiness. It's as if I don't earn it.

That's absolutely idiotic. Of course I do.

the truth

The truth would make you distracted. This is not the time. I'm protecting you from it all.

...

You don't have to believe me.

There's something that would make you feel better. Something I took with me, to make you remember your cause.

Samhain would be the best time to give it to you. It might draw the spirits to you. I felt your father searching for you in the forest, he might find you easier if you have this.

Your father's essence is strong in this one. Handling it almost sends shivers down my spine. He wants me to remember the promise I gave him. It's unnecessary, I'm doing everything in my power to keep that promise: I'm doing everything I can to protect you.

Well, there have been mishaps. But I was always ready to protect you, even if it would've meant that I needed to forget about the revenge. At least, for now.

That just shows how much I love you.

It's a weird feeling. It makes me feel conflicted, at times. I don't like it that much.

Ah, you're waiting for me. I always get lost in my thoughts. There are so many and they're surprisingly loud.

"I brought you something that will make you feel better."

Your features fill with joy and disbelief and I find myself smiling back at you. Your father was a good man. I was pondering on taking something to remind you of your mother, too, but... I think you wouldn't have liked that too much. You should be more lenient towards her. She had your best interest at heart.

no

She did her best.

...

"This is my prized possession," you say and I realize that I already gave it to you. I blink and smile. I almost missed your happiness because of the unnecessary chatter. Increasingly annoying, that is.

This is my head.

[Woop woop](#)

[Oct 29, 2022](#)

<https://dashingdon.com/play/haleym/defiled-hearts-the-barbarian-early-access/mygame/>

IT'S HERE.

There's over 40k words and it's not even a fully finished chapter. I will release the rest either next week or week after that. This chunk of a chapter will end in a cliffhanger, sorry about that.

There are some bath-related variables that aren't working properly but that shouldn't be a problem. (for example: Camilla will ask you if you want to bathe in her bath even if you've already said that you'll bathe elsewhere.) Also, transition between scenes might feel abrupt, try not to mind too much, I will fix them later. Also also, there will be a Quinn confrontation scene during Samhain and you can act more suspish towards them. Will update Samhain scenes later.

ANYWAY. Thank you for your patience. I hope everything works well (I tested and it should but who knows) and I didn't leave any profanities there or something.

[Bloopers](#)

[Oct 30, 2022](#)

This is a part of the scene that got cut off, it's about Niall and MC talking about MC being a druid. I might use it somewhere else or something, I'm not sure. It needs to be addressed at some point.

Niall rubs the back of his neck. "Do you know any nifty spells?"

"Plenty. You need to be more specific."

"Something. Surprise me."

*if marcus_bald

"I just recently cursed Marcus to become bald."

His eyes widen. "You what?" Then, a wide smile claims his features. "That's amazing! How long does it take for him to go all bald?"

"He should be completely bald by summer. I suspect he's already found a little too many strands of hair in his comb."

"That's brutal." The smile on his face starts to slowly die as his hand wanders to his own hair.

"Umm... please don't do that to me."

#"I won't."

#"If you won't piss me off." I smile at him.

#Remain silent. It's only slightly ominous.

[Q&A](#)

[Oct 31, 2022](#)

Hi! So sorry I took my time with this one, I was kinda exhausted by the update release. ♥ Thank you for your patience! 😊 (These are always a joy to write, such a chaotic bunch they are.)

X: Welcome to the bimonthly session of Q&A. Legate is joining us today, let's start with him. Legate, could you tell me what you really think about your marriage and Camilla?

Legate looks at Camilla.

L: She needed someone to take her away from Rome. I needed someone to keep me company.

M: So, she's your pet?

L: Son, be quiet.

Marcus pouts.

L: She can be a pain in the ass.

Camilla frowns.

L: Erm, but I'm absolutely delighted by her presence.

X: Camilla, could you please describe your perfect date?

C: First, leave your husband at home.

Camilla snorts.

Legate pouts.

T: Cam, Gaius is right there.

C: I said what I said.

N: Oh! I would like to attend a play.

X: And romantically hold hands during suspenseful bits?

Niall nods firmly.

M: I would like to attend a poetry reading. Then, we'd talk about the quality of the piece over a goblet of wine.

C: Pfft.

M: Did I hear something?

X: Now now, no fighting.

T: My dream date would be... attending an execution.

Everyone but Camilla: ...?!

T: Haha, I'm only joking. They are interesting, though. Showcases people's fascination with the dark side of humanity.

X: So, not your idea of an ideal date?

T: No, it would only sour the mood.

Q: My ideal date would be in Caledonia, as far away from here as possible.

X: Doing what?

Q: Whatever the MC likes to do.

M: *coughsuck-upcough*

X: Niall, what do you remember most vividly about your time in Hibernia?

Niall frowns.

N: My family. Family dinners.

Marcus shifts his foot to lean against Niall's.

X: Camilla, what about you? What do you miss most from home?

C: My family.

Camilla and Niall share a little nod.

X: What is your biggest flaw?

T: I've been told that I fear commitment. I'm not so sure, I just like to travel and help people.

C: Tin, I think they're onto something...

T: Hm. I'm not sure if I see it.

Tinsae smiles.

Camilla frowns.

N: Well, I for one think that people-pleasing is not a flaw.

M: It is.

N: But if it helps people?

M: It is if you do it at your own expense.

Niall pouts.

X: What about you, Marcus?

M: I have no flaws.

Camilla scoffs.

M: Well, I have been told that I'm cruel and selfish and... what else?

L: You hold grudges for a long time.

M: Shut up.

T: You're awfully rude at times.

M: Tinsae, you too?

T: I'm sorry, dear.

M: Your best friend here is the rudest of them all.

T: Well, she told me she's working on it.

C: No, I'm not.

Tinsae purses her lips.

C: My biggest flaw is that I care too much for my family. In a sense, I love too much.

Marcus starts laughing.

M: You're rude, condescending, arrogant, cold—

C: I hardly think that—

M: Dad, help me out.

L: You're quite easily angered and hold grudges for a long time.

Camilla squints her eyes at the Legate.

L: Oh, dear.

Q: I hold grudges, too. And care too much.

Quinn and Camilla share a nod.

X: That's great. Finally, Tinsae, what is your favorite part of Roman life?

T: I find the legal system fascinating. And their acceptance of foreign religions and cultures is endearing.

MC: Such acceptance! First, they invade everyone and then they act like they accept them. Second-class citizenship—

X: MC? Shoo! You're not supposed to be here!

MC flees the scene.

[Minigame poll](#)

[Nov 16, 2022](#)

What to do with Quinn? Don't ask me where this snuggly place is, I haven't gotten that far yet in the thought process 😊

Baking

Hiking

Snuggling somewhere nice and snuggly

Tossing cabers

Meeting grandma for milk and cookies

22 votes total

[A Tamed Tiger](#)

[Nov 27, 2022](#)

"We both know you came here to kill me," I say. Mother would be disappointed to learn that I've become friends with a person who wants to kill me.

Friends? I almost chuckle at the thought. Is this friendship?

You would deny it and insult me. Or look as if I've lost my mind. Or both.

I'm most definitely not in my right mind seeing as you are here, roaming free, plotting your little schemes. You're akin to a tamed tiger: I can watch you from afar and be captured by your magnificent nature. I could pet you but I could never be sure when you'd choose to chop off my hand and devour everything I hold dear. There aren't that many, mind you. Niall and my sisters. Don't devour them. You can devour my father, though. I wouldn't mind.

"It's not that simple," you say, drawing my attention back to the conversation. You look sheepishly away. An act?

Hm? Curious. Not that you're not telling me something, but that you'd seemingly admit it.

"Do elaborate."

"I..." You hesitate. You're afraid of something. "I don't remember how I got here."

Hm? Slightly worrying. However, trauma can erase parts of one's memory. Not unheard of.

There's more to this. There must be something more if you're that worried. You're afraid that there's something wrong with you? No... it's not that. You'd manage with yourself without telling me. Unless you trust me, which would be a... peculiar choice.

No. You're afraid of something else.

"Tell me everything you remember."

"Bits and pieces. I remember Quinn telling me to leave."

Quinn. That creepy little shit. I'm willing to bet Niall's ass that whatever is bothering you is because of that shit. But, how could they do that? Erase people's memories and whisper in their ears?

That's not possible. Something more mundane happened. Did they smack you in the head and you forgot everything?

So... you hear voices and lose your memories.

The same worry plaguing your features now starts to take over me. I'm not showing it.

"The voices... Do you think they are connected?" How could they not be? "Have you heard them recently?"

"No. I haven't," you lie. This time the lie is easy to see. Could be an act. For some reason, you don't seem as worried about the voices as you previously were. It's as if you've learned something about them since the last time we spoke. Why would you worry about your lost memory but not the voices in your head?

Highly concerning. I peer at you, fully knowing that you've already shut down about the topic. Your obvious lie told me as much.

What else could it be? You're either going insane, or your creepy shit of a friend smacked you in the head. Or... there's something going on that I can't wrap my head around.

Whatever it is, it's concerning you. And if it's concerning you, it's something serious.

A tiger wouldn't trouble its mind with anything inconsequential.

[Sneak peek](#)

[Nov 29, 2022](#)

This is going to happen during Saturnalia. A fortune-teller will share their vision of your future... 🙄

"I see death. Your friends and lovers rot as the moon illuminates skulls in the river. Running water rinses the fresh flesh off the bones. Eels devour what's left. It's black and white under the cold glow. There are so many." She darts her gaze at me. "I see your doom, my child. Screams. Pain. Broken trust." She takes my arm and squeezes too hard. "Don't do it. Don't follow the path."

#"What are you talking about?"

"Don't listen to the voice!"

if determined:

"Don't tell me what I can or cannot do."

She lets go of my arm as if my skin burned hers to blisters. Horror and cataract dim the light in her eyes. "You [i]want[/i] it to happen! You... you BEAST."

if confused:

"I never wanted any of this."

Pity fills her gaze as her features soften. The pressure on my arm turns into a more tender touch. "Oh, but child... It is already too late. *lacta alea est.*"

[Tata](#)

[Nov 29, 2022](#)

"Father," I say. Scorn drips from my words.

He tries to give me a wide smile. Does he seriously think that I would return it?

"Marcus!" His voice grates my ears, his glistening face infuriatingly happy. "Niall just put some of his facial cremes on me. Do you think I've gotten any young—"

"I will be a Centurion."

He freezes. What a delightful reaction. The horror and disbelief in his eyes warm my soul.

He blinks. He waits for me to say something. To let him know that I was only kidding. That I will follow in his footsteps and become a Senator. He's been pestering me, hoping that I would grow tired of being a soldier and join him and his circle of wankers. Stumble in my toga like an idiot. Debate with the old cocksuckers and think that I'm doing something for the great Empire.

He bursts out laughing. "Ha! A good one! I almost thought you were serious." He's pleading with his gaze. 'Please say you're not serious.'

"I am."

The smile still lingers on his face. Finally, he frowns. "But... Why?"

"I want to lead men on the battlefield." In other words: I want to piss in your soup, father, and watch you eat it.

"You... what? Lead the... When have you ever cared about that?"

"If you knew me, you'd know." I suppose I haven't. There are other dreams... But, even my rebellion has its limits. This is the next best thing.

But wait: there's something more. Something that will boil his blood. A smile forces its way into my lips as I say: "I will lead the Auxiliaries."

His reaction is delightful: he takes a shaky breath and sits down. I half-expect him to squeeze his tunic just over his heart. He has a flair for the dramatic.

"Not even the Legionaries?" He squeezes his eyes shut and takes another deep inhale, his voice wheezing. He's preparing to scold me. My pulse quickens: I prepare myself for the upcoming battle.

However... Instead of an attack, he looks down in defeat. "Is this about your mothe—"

I clench my teeth. "Leave her out of this."

He shuts his mouth. My breathing is shallow. I hate that he has that effect on me. He must know it is so. Trying to speak about what happened, as if he had the right. That excuse of a man.

"Ah! Marcus!" Niall's voice. His wide smile almost takes some of the edges off my nerves. Almost. It's not enough. "Do you want to join tata and—" His smile quickly fades when his gaze meets mine.

Tata. Niall, you idiot.

They're acting as if nothing happened. As if she's not dead and buried in the ground, left for worms to devour her—

I shake my head and banish the intrusive thoughts. Niall doesn't blame him. Does it make me lesser man? Do I care?

No.

I look at 'tata'. "Let's hope your son won't die on the battlefield." I shoot him a little smirk and leave.

[A little announcement](#)

[Dec 2, 2022](#)

Hey there!

I'm going to be offline for a while. I'm in a hurry so I can't send the backlog just yet for you new patrons. I'm sorry and thank you for your patience! I'll send them out your way in a couple of days. ♥♥

[A little Saturnalia questionnaire](#)

[Dec 14, 2022](#)

Hi hi!

If you'd like to, please fill this little questionnaire about the upcoming Saturnalia chapter.

<https://forms.gle/U8zpgnqghaZZs4DEA>

Basically, what would you like to do during Saturnalia and what sort of gifts would you like to give to the ROs? (It was customary to give gifts during Saturnalia.) It can be anything. Pens, pigs, combs, toothpicks, flasks, books, candles, strigils, horse whips(?), birds, vases, furniture... Comb would be kinda cruel if you also cursed Marcus to become bald.

[POV short story poll](#)

[Dec 16, 2022](#)

Hati trying to get themselves killed via martyrdom (Marcus's POV)

Camilla poking her finger in Hati's mouth (Camilla's POV)

Tinsae talking about leaving (Tinsae's POV)

Clothing Niall (Niall's flustered POV)

Hati trying to kiss Quinn (Quinn's POV)

54 votes total

[Two Saints](#)

[Dec 27, 2022](#)

“Flog me, instead,” you say with such determination it makes me want to smack some sense into you.

Apollo, please. Grant me mercy. Give me the strength to deny myself the pleasure of shaking some sense into you.

They would absolutely flog you instead. With pleasure. And when your identity was found out, they would torture you for days. They would revive you, then torture you more. You’d be made an example of what happens to those who try to fool the Empire. You’d die the martyr that you so desperately want to be. But, no one would know what you did. No one would know of your great deed. They’d make sure no one would ever utter your name.

Then, a peculiar thought: Why am I not letting that happen?

You seemingly want it. You want to die. In the most horrific way possible, it seems.

Letting you do whatever you want would make things easier for me. I could wash my hands and start anew.

So, why am I resisting?

“If the boy wants it—,” Lentulus starts to speak sense.

But I will not hear it.

“No.”

Why? I almost ask myself immediately after the denial leaves me like I mean it. You look like you want to ask that, too.

Lentulus looks like it.

Floyd does, too.

I rub my temples. You will be the death of me. I can feel Lentulus’s judging gaze burning holes in my tunic. I know what he’s thinking: ‘Are you fucking him?’

For fuck’s sake.

I can’t even blame him. I’d think that, too. I’ve already heard the others talking. The judging looks. Gossip.

Ah, shit.

You are making this more and more difficult. You absolute moron.

And you have the nerve to look at me as if I'm the problem here.

You squint your eyes at me without others knowing. I can see the muscles around your eyes tighten. I'd squint right back at you, you idiot, if this was the place for it.

"I fucking hate martyrs," I mutter under my breath.

I wish I could say that I hate you. It'd be easier. Instead, I hate your death wish.

Finally, the others leave. It's just me and you. Irritation itches my skin. I want to scratch it away. I want to take a grip on your shoulders and shake you. I want you to understand what an idiot you are.

"That was stupid," I state the obvious. It was the stupidest thing you've done so far, and that's saying something.

"What part, exactly?" You ask.

And I thank the gods for my restraint and patience. You should, too. At this point, I'm a saint.

So, I make it more clear: "You almost got yourself killed because of him." The words leave me through my teeth. Headache hammers against my skull.

"Not as stupid as dragging an innocent man to be flogged," you retort and my headache worsens tenfold.

If I'd known that you were such a saint, I would've left you for dead. It would've saved us both the trouble.

Something in me protests.

Bah! Shut up.

[Sneak peek \(and a blooper/sneak peek\).](#)

[Dec 29, 2022](#)

Here's a bunch of sneak peeks for you to enjoy. This is from the update that's to come (I'm aiming to publish it next month):

Over and over. Finally, a loud thump marks the end of the deed. The bloody log now lies discarded on the ground. The man has lost all of his humane features: his face is but a pile of flesh, shards of bone, pieces of brain.

#Look away.

Frantically, I start rubbing the blood off my face. It's dry and stuck. It won't leave.

Here's a sneak peek that could be a blooper, actually. I was going to write a circus scene but there hasn't been any room for it. So, as a context, Hati is joining the gang to look at the races in a nearby circus. Marcus, oh so helpfully, offers to explain what the colors mean:

"You should pick a color you're rooting for," Marcus says.

"Hm?"

"There are four of them. Green, blue, white, and red."

"I don't even know anything about the teams."

"You really want to hear? Would that make your pick easier?"

#Do tell.

Marcus smiles as if he was waiting for this moment the whole day.

"The Blues and the Greens are the fan favorites. They're the ones the Emperors root for, the populace, everyone."

I peer around me to see the truth in his words. There's a sea of Romans clad in either blue or green and only a few handfuls of white or red.

"WE ARE THE PARTISANS OF THE GREEN!" Someone yells with their voice cracking at the end of the announcement. The man's face is covered in green, his clothes are green, and everything about this man is green. Green men around him shout a chorus of whoos and yeahs.

"Oy, fuck off!" Someone dressed in blue yells at him and a bunch of blue-clad men parrot his statement. Rude gestures ensue.

Marcus draws my attention back to his lecture. "This means they have the most money and resources. Also, they have the most prominent superstars in their ranks."

You could also meet one of these superstars. Possibly. I was really looking forward to this scene but I still want it to serve a purpose, so I'm not sure what to do with it. Oh, well. Wait a moment... I think I

know what I'm going to do. Yes, that could work. So! Instead of a blooper, this will most likely be a sneak peek.

[Christmas Q&A](#)

[Dec 29, 2022](#)

X: Marcus, let's start with you: What is your fondest Saturnalia memory?

M: The time when I chased Niall with a stick I stuck into a pile of shit.

N: That's your favorite Saturnalia memory? What's wrong with you?

M: The way you shrieked... It always makes me smile.

C, *aiming her words at Niall*: Why do you still choose to spend time with him?

N: ...I'm not sure.

X: This question is for all of you. Do you have any embarrassing winter-related stories?

T: I, uh... I was overly excited about the first snowfall. I looked at the sky and almost fell into a well.

C: You should be more aware of your surroundings.

T: Yes. It was a mishap. I didn't realize what beautiful little things snowflakes are. And you can actually catch them with your tongue. Quite lovely.

Camilla shakes her head.

N: Mine is the time I was chased with a stick that was stuck into a pile of crap.

M: Ha!

N: It's not funny. I ran into tata's friends. One of them strained their ankle and had to limp for months.

Camilla and Marcus snicker.

X: When it comes to mistletoes, who would take the target of their affections underneath it? Who would turn it into a mistle-foe?

C: If anyone would drag me underneath one, I'd punch them in the throat.

X: Yes, one vote for mistle-foe.

T: Ah! That peculiar little custom. I would love to take part in it.

X: You wouldn't turn it into a throat-punching event?

T: Heavens, no! Unless it's customary.

N: I would take certain someone underneath it. And...

M: Are you planning on kissing Hati?

N: NO!

M: Ha! Look at your little cheeks. So red.

Marcus pokes Niall. Niall grows increasingly angry.

X: What about you, Marcus?

M: I would love to be dragged underneath any and all mistletoes. My love knows no bounds.

X: Quinn?

Q: Depends on the person.

M: Would you smooch Hati?

Q: Don't talk about them, you disgusting creature.

Marcus grins in contentment.

X: Quinn. How do Saturnalia and Yule compare?

Q: It's not even a competition.

X: Yule is better? Please, elaborate.

Q: Yule is about family. Your loved ones. These idiots run around drunk in costumes and gamble and fornicate like the animals they are.

M&C&N: Hey!

Q: Truth hurts, you disgusting—

X: Yes, thank you, Quinn. Well, do you prefer cocoa with rum or mulled wine?

C: What is this rum?

Everyone is given some rum to taste.

Niall spits it out.

N: BAH! What poison is this?

Camilla smells the rum, then takes a sip. Her eyes squint in thought.

C: It's not terrible.

She takes another sip.

C: Yes. It's quite strong but it's... peculiar.

She hums approvingly.

C: Quite strong. You said we're supposed to drink this with this... 'cocoa'? Another strong beverage?

Everyone is given some cocoa to taste.

Camilla nods.

C: Not strong. But sweet. It's...

She smacks her lips.

C: Sweet. Yes. Excellent.

She fills her cup with rum, then adds some cocoa.

X: So, who prefers cocoa with rum?

M&N: It's disgusting.

T: It is indeed quite strong. But it was a pleasant experience to taste something so new.

Camilla has drunk the whole cup and is pouring another one.

C: This is good.

M: Are you going to drink the whole bottle, mother drunkest?

M: Oops, I mean dearest.

Marcus grins and elbows Niall. Niall rolls his eyes. Camilla enjoys her drink.

Quinn's eyes are fully widened.

X: Quinn? What's wrong?

Q: ...This beverage. This... **cocoa**.

They take a deep breath.

Q in a whispering voice: It's the best thing I've ever tasted.