

Diva Rumina Games Patreon by Thomas Bell

(07/January/2024 - 31/December/2024)

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Jan 7, 2024](#)

So! I've been a little overwhelmed due to sick leaves and Holidays. The amount of work I willingly gave myself for December was a little too much. I didn't finish Camilla's and Tinsae's Holiday special. I'm sorry. I'm trying my best to write something for the ladies this month, too, but I have to prioritize. My priorities for now are: finish the Marcus and Niall December smut, finish up the update, write a shorter smut for Quinn. Then, everything else.

Thank you for your understanding!

Also, I really wish I was joking but I had a fever this week too. Just a couple of days but it took everything in me not to force myself to work despite that. This winter's flu season has been ruthless. Well, I'm feeling better today. Been writing as much as I can with a kidlet at home and tomorrow it's full speed ahead. ...I swear if I wake up with a stomach flu or something I'm going to--

No jinxing lol.

Anyway, as always: Thank you so much for being here! Thank you for your patience!

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Jan 16, 2024](#)

Last week I finished Niall+Marcus Saturnalia smut (pretty happy about the result, too. The scene might come up in the Saturnalia chapter). Also finished the side character and Quinn stuff and am now writing Niall's scenes. I will add some content to Marcus's scenes too but I don't think they're that long. More like more smut. This update's Niall's scenes are like... 80 % finished. So, will finish his scenes this week, add in some Marcus, add in some choices that are still missing, then code those buggers in.

So, things are looking up. I'm trying not to polish things too much because this draft's first priority is to exist (it will be transported into CS anyway so editing too much would be a waste of time). Will have to

focus on the big picture first, the plot development and character arcs. I already laid such a good groundwork for the late book's plot that I feel more confident in the scenes that I'm writing now. I can do it! Positivity! Yes!

Lol also now that the good news are out of the way: my fam's got Covid now. I don't know what I expected because if anything can go wrong, it will (where did that positivity go). However! I don't have it yet (I might have even gotten it first, I had some symptoms earlier, I'm not sure but I'm hopeful). So, I'm writing like my life depended on it just in case I'm going to get it later. If I get it I'm actually going to cry.

Well, I'm in good health now. So, I'm writing. Being positive.

Anyway, thank you so much for being here and for believing in me. You're the best. I will give you this Twins damned content soon.

[Short story_poll](#)

[Jan 22, 2024](#)

Please hit me with Q&A stuff too if you have any!

Niall invades the bath (with towels). Notices Marcus at the door (Niall's POV)

29

Tinsae saves Quinn's and Hati's butts during Samhain (Tinsae's POV)

8

Quinn talking with their cookie shop grandma. About Hati. And stuff.

3

Niall and Camilla talking about Hati and stuff

4

Quinn gives Tinsae bad vibes (Tinsae's POV)

10

Camilla ruminating after killing the Optio for Hati

5

Poll ended Jan 26, 2024 · 59 votes total

[February's Smut RO](#)

[Jan 24, 2024](#)

When you accidentally click publish before you're done (cursed laptop mouse touchpad). Well, another try. Anyway, please let me know if you have any more topic suggestions!

Food play with Niall

18

Bondage with Quinn

21

Tending to Hati's wounds with a totally certified nurse Camilla who's happy to be there

11

Poll ended Jan 31, 2024 · 50 votes total

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Jan 28, 2024](#)

So! I think last time I talked about how dearly hope I won't get Covid?

Well, I got Covid. (I would laugh but I was just so, so frustrated and sad that it was not funny.)

However! I ploughed through the disease and almost finished the update by today. Well, I wanted to publish the update today but I still need to edit some stuff and add in some other stuff. It'll be up tomorrow tho. I'll stay up late today to work so there's not too much to do tomorrow.

I really want to, and need to, start updating regularly. The plot and character arcs are planned out and I feel more comfortable with deadlines now after I've survived the bloody burnout. The flu season should

be behind us (please don't tell me it's still ongoing and could hit me with another surge at any moment) and I have a good writing schedule.


So, monthly updates should be more than reasonable. Mind you, they probably won't be neat. Like, perhaps there's a half of Camilla's bath scenes and a quarter of Tinsae's. I'm so bad at writing everything chronologically, my mind keeps jumping from one scene to another. I'll try to keep myself focused on a logical chunk of an update and we'll see what I'll produce next time. I should probably give you a solid deadline date later when I survive from the stress that's been me living behind the schedule for almost two months lol. But! I survived. The update will be out of the oven tomorrow!

And here's some info about other Patreon stuff: Next month's smut RO will be either Quinn or Niall. The poll is still up and it's a pretty close race.

This month's chosen RO was Marcus and he'll be reciting poetry with Hati once I get that scenario out of the oven. So many stuff in the oven right now after the flu season, so it will probably be pushed till later next week.

This month's short story is from Niall's POV, it's the opening bath scene when he finds out that Marcus is there too.

Other stuff coming soon too. I'm sorry for being late with those, I've been hyperfocusing on the update.

Thank you so much for your patience. You've been too kind and I appreciate you so much. 

[Marcus smut](#)

[Jan 28, 2024](#)

Hi! It's out! Marcus is waiting to read poetry with you!

Thank you so much for your patience!

(I stop shouting now!)

link: <https://haleym.itch.io/defiled-hearts-patreon-smut>

password: woop_patreonsmuttening

[Bloopers](#)

[Jan 31, 2024](#)

Quinn's aggressive sarcasm got cut from the new update (if you haven't read it, please step away from the blooper!). It didn't get cut because they wouldn't say these things (they would) but it just didn't fit into the scene. It might make a comeback, will have to see.

"Well, of course you wouldn't want your dearest friend to die. That's only natural. Of course you'd ask help from another deity. And of course they'd help, a paragon of goodness that they are. And of course you'd trust them, you can sense the good in both people and the gods."

Aggressive sarcasm.

"Why are you so mean?"

"Mean? I'm just recounting what happened."

"You are being a dick about this." (fire response)

"I am," they admit. "You should've waited for the Twins to answer."

"They never did."

"Did you give them enough time?"

[Sneak peek](#)

[Jan 31, 2024](#)

I know you got to spend time with Niall already in the update but he's still going to get his own scenes, too. There's more time for him to adjust to the news. And he's going to crash into things cause ofc he will.

He rushes back with his hands filled with different concoctions. A man that massive is doing all he can to make himself look so small. His bashful demeanor still makes me worried that it's all an act. But, what an actor he'd make if it was all for show. Doubtful.

Not impossible, of course.

A small table goes crashing down as he fumbles down like a bear waking up from its winter slumber. He looks at the table, almost starts to fumble it back up, but decides against it and heads towards the pool.

[Sneakier peek](#)

[Jan 31, 2024](#)

There'll be much more gender talk in Niall's own bath scenes. He can adjust to the news, freak out in peace, talk about his big feels, about his gay awakening, all that stuff.

He will also have his own striptease scene, as is tradition.

(will have to code in Hati's appearance variables!)

“You had no idea I was a woman?”

“How could I know?” He rubs his face. “I just thought you’re a beautiful man.”

[[“You think I’m beautiful?”]]

[[“Did I make you question your sexuality?” Smirk.]]

[A Guardian Dog](#)

[Jan 31, 2024](#)

Niall's towel mission/Niall's POV

I don't like the public baths either, people always stare and judge. It's no wonder you needed a private place to bathe. I just wish you asked sooner. I didn't want to say anything but the smell was getting to me. Sure, your sweaty musk has its allure but...

I mean, no. I... I shouldn't think about your musk.

Paos gives me a tight hug as I pass him by. Seeing him always makes me smile and my step is light as I close in on the baths.

Seeing the door, however, makes me hesitate and I stop in my tracks. Why did I come here? I frown at the towels in my hands. What a weak excuse.

Excuse for what?

No. There's no need for excuses. These are my special towels. They are extra soft and I want to offer some luxury for you.

Because you're... my friend? That is normal. It is normal to offer gifts for your friends and worry about their sensory experiences. That's what friends are for.

Besides, you look like you need it. Your eyes can be haunting.

My thoughts are disturbed when I see Marcus prancing towards me as if he owns the place. I can see it in his eyes, he's here to cause trouble. I love him but he keeps doing that.

"Why are you here?" I ask.

Marcus smirks and tries to walk past me to the baths, as if that's his final answer.

I grab his arm. "You should let them bathe in peace." I've seen the way he looks at you. Always pestering, borderline bullying. I've told him to leave you alone and he always twists it around, claiming that I have feelings for you since I care so much.

I do not. I just don't like hazing soldiers. Especially this kind of hazing, bothering others while they bathe. People might get the wrong idea. Rumors spread, he might get you killed.

Anger stirs in my stomach. He's always so careless about others.

Marcus looks at my hand and rolls his eyes. "I'm merely going to ask if they want company."

"Your company?" I scoff. "I've seen how they flinch when they see you."

"Aren't you observant?" The smirk still lingers but I struck a nerve. "Perhaps they just can't contain their excitement."

"Hardly, I can see discomfort when I—"

"And what are you doing here?" He interrupts and looks at the towels in my hand. "Towels? Really?"

"What?" I let go of him as heat pushes into my cheeks, making me curse them and their redness. And Marcus always knows how to push the right buttons when he wants to. "They need towels."

"Paos is here. They have a bell."

"Don't turn this around. You're here to bully them. I don't like it."

"You're their guardian dog now, huh? And they're your little lamb?"

"No, I... I was here first!" Not my strongest argument but it'll do.

Marcus pushes me aside, trying to get past me, and I push him back. He almost loses his balance and frowns.

"You stood at your own door looking like a lost puppy."

"My door! I can order you to leave!"

"Try me, Tribune!"

[Q&A](#)

[Jan 31, 2024](#)

The ROs' morning routine?

C: Wait for servants to get your hair done while eating cake. Banter with the servant, she's a close friend.

T: Coffee. Meditation. People interrupting the said meditation by barging in with news and work. Get slowly fed up but smile.

M: Fix the bed. Do push ups. Drink water.

N: Groan loudly. Extensive skin care. Braid the hair. Feel cute.

Q: Get up cursing over aching muscles. Grandma brings some cookies. Have a little chat. Granny is nice. Time to work.

Who'd look cutest in a maid outfit?

Niall. Tinsae is a close contender.

The ROs are in a bar, someone spills their drink. What will they do?

C: Shoot them with a deadly stare, they know you could end them.

T: Smile and assure them that it's not a big deal and accidents happen. Oh is that you Josephus? How is the family?

N: Apologize profusely then sigh deeply when they look away. Worry if the stain can be washed.

M: Order them to buy a new drink.

Q: Murder.

Leader, follower, a lone wolf?

M, T: Leader.

N: Follower.

Q, C: Lone wolf.

Allergies:

C: Pollen. Hates spring with passion.

N: Iron.

Q: Romans.

[Sneak peek](#)

[Feb 5, 2024](#)

Camilla's striptease hits a little different with those matron clothes.

While holding an intense eye contact, she starts disrobing herself. Or at least she tries to. She shoots a hateful grimace at the dress she struggles to remove. For a moment it looks like she's fighting a losing battle against a woolen octopus. She tears off a golden brooch and throws it away as if it was mere trash. Finally, the massive pile of expensive cloth along with her wig is removed, discarded on the floor, and only her long undertunic remains. Her brown hair is messy and her gaze is bitter.

[Short story_poll](#)

[Feb 8, 2024](#)

Cernunnos finds the wet little druidling in the forest (Cernunnos' POV)

29

Quinn confronts the wet little druidling at the gate (Quinn's POV)

9

Quinn gives Tinsae bad vibes (Tinsae's POV)

3

Camilla ruminates after killing the Optio for Hati (Camilla's POV)

7

Poll ended Feb 15, 2024 · 48 votes total

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Feb 9, 2024](#)

Hello there!

So! Good news: I've started to work on the next update. Most likely will try to add more content for Camilla/Tinsae and possibly Niall? Or Quinn. Or Marcus? I go where my muses tell me to so I'm bad at sharing my plans lol.

Also, I managed to tackle my biggest coding obstacle that threatened to add a week worth of extra work for me. Nuh-uh, stupid Twine and Tweego, I beat you. Such a relief.

Bad news: Stomach flu. Bad. Marcus's smut publication is postponed till I'm feeling better.

T_T

Hope you're having a better weekend than I am. Thank you so much for being here!

[Weekly rambling](#)


[Feb 16, 2024](#)

Hey there!

Flu came and went, now I'm back on track. Wrote the Marcus smut and the next update is coming up pretty nicely. I made the decision to write both Tinsae's and Camilla's scenes because they will happen jointly and it makes sense. I've been drafting Quinn's scenes on the side, too, so it would be fun to release those all at the same time. Will have to see about that but I'm doing my best. Will post a progress report next week!

Also, as you many of you noticed, I took the Discord server down. I felt that it took too much of my energy to keep up and running. Perhaps in the future I will put up another server but that remains to be

seen. Thank you for understanding! You're still more than welcome to contact me either here or Tumblr (or Forum? email? telepathy?).

Anyway, as always, thank you so much for being here! 

[Sneakier peek](#)

[Feb 21, 2024](#)

Some Camilla sneak peeks. Having fun with these scenes.

“Are you talking about the plan to kill the Emperor?”

She smiles. “Good. You’re not as slow as you look.”

I frown at the backhanded compliment.

[[You’re a cunt, you know that?]]

“Yes,” she fully admits it.

Plotting in the baths! And you'll get to call Camilla a cunt (she kinda is). Fun times!

[[Just one goblet. I don’t have a good tolerance.]]

She looks at the redness spreading across my cheeks.

“Just a couple of sips and your face is already heating up.” A small teasing smirk.

“I can’t help it, I have a low tolerance.”

She nods, as if making a mental note of my weaknesses.

“Don’t look at me like that.”

She merely smiles at the implied accusation.

And it wouldn't be a Camilla scene if you didn't get to set your own alcohol variables lol.

[Smut poll!](#)

[Feb 21, 2024](#)

Camilla ties you up

Cernunnos inspects your puny mortal body

Foodplay with Niall

Tinsae accidentally makes you some aphrodisiac tea

You tie Niall up?

Niall ties you up?

Tinsae tends to your wounds

Niall tends to your wounds

Camilla tends to your wounds

68 votes total

[Little Rabbit \(spoillery!\)](#)

[Feb 23, 2024](#)

Spoilers ahead! Please don't read if you don't want to be spoiled. Please get back to this shortie after the alpha is finished if you'd prefer not to be spoiled.

You. Small. Weak. Desperate. Wet and pathetic.

A puny offering on the altar.

Not mine. The prayers of the small druid reek of anguish and desperation.

Nose twitches, need arises, the need to snatch and devour. Little rabbit, make me chase you. Make me chase you until your feet are sore and your mind is devoid of thoughts.

No. Wait.

The smell is familiar, it burdens the air. The one from before. The night of the dead. The assault of those who hunt. The pack of cannibalistic wolves.

Where is the other one? The one who smells even worse. The smell rots the air, the tainted flesh insults the very nature.

Kill.

Should've let them kill.

No.

A lapse of empathy. A hare forgotten in an abandoned trap, a worm crossing the road after the rain. Too pathetic.

Empathy.

Twitch. Someone else hides nearby.

Look. Hunt.

Someone else. A predator. Wounded. Possessive. Desperate.

A lynx in the hiding. A snake ready to strike. A hawk ready to plunge.

Tainted. The smell of the cold, of the frost, of the Northern winds.

Rot. Taint.

Concealed. Hiding.

Hiding.

Yearning.

Yearning.

But something else. Fear.

Fear of the truth. Afraid to reveal. Afraid that the small one will hate and loathe and leave.

Ha. I will take you from them.

Calm. Calm. Calm.

Ask. Polite. Talk.

Intrigue.

as a bonus if Hati asks help for Quinn:

Help for the tainted one?

Quinn. The name of the one who rots.

The one who's outlived themselves.

Unnatural.

Smell of rot. Tainted flesh. Will rot away soon. Hunted. Devoured.

No way to cure. Unnatural. Shouldn't have happened. Should've let them devour.

Crime against nature.

Help? Yes.

Kill. Make it painless, make it fast.

Cernunnos' thoughts ended up being kinda fast and they're not prone to thinking with too many words. Unfortunately this meant that I didn't reach the usual 500 word limit. At least there's spoilers a-plenty so hopefully that makes up for it.

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Feb 25, 2024](#)

Hi there!

A small progress update this time. I'm doing well, my plans are clear, and thus writing is going swimmingly.

Thank you so much for being here!

[Quinn smut coming up](#)


[Feb 27, 2024](#)

Hi there!

IT'S FINALLY HERE:

Link: <https://haleym.itch.io/february-smut-and-backlog>

Password: feb-smut-woopwoop

Thank you so much for your patience! 

Q&A

Feb 29, 2024

Did you have any childhood enemies?

- C: My brother. We tried to kill each other.
- N: One-sided enemies but I tried to ignore them. For some reason, they stopped bullying me after a while.
- M: A couple of snobbish children of a few even snobbier senators who bullied Niall.
- T: No, I cannot say that I did.
- Q: Strong dislike towards Hati's mother.

How would you like to die?

- N: Old and surrounded by loved ones.
- M: In combat.
- T: Alone so no one is left to miss me.
- C: If I have to go down anytime soon, I will do so covered in the blood of my enemies.
- Q: If I had to die, I'd prefer that Hati does it. Or that I go down fighting Romans.

Have you ever done something illegal?

- C: Yes. And I've been punished.
- T: Yes. But I've always gotten away with it.
- N: No, I don't think so. Nothing serious at least.
- M: No. But I could if I had to.
- Q: Yes. And I will.

Who were you closest to as a child?

- C: My father.

- T: A couple of close friends who are no longer here.
- N: Marcus.
- M: My mother.
- Q: Hati.

Can you lie easily?

- C: Yes.
- M: Yes.
- N: I don't think I do.
- T: If I need to.
- Q: Absolutely.

When did you feel most alone?

- C: When my father died.
- M: When my mother died.
- N: When I had to leave Hibernia.
- T: When I left Ethiopia.
- Q: Right now.

Author question: if you had to associate the ROs with someone from the Roman or Greek pantheon, who would they be?

- C: Artemis
- T: Aphrodite
- M: Ares
- N: Apollo
- Q: Dionysos

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Mar 3, 2024](#)

Hi there!

So, unfortunately, our family was struck by a family emergency. It will hinder my progress this month. However, I will keep working. I might miss out on a rambling this month but I will keep you posted on the progress. I really want to get this update out this month and I will try my best.

Thank you so much for being here!

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Mar 17, 2024](#)

Hi there!

Well! Things happened, life can be a bitch, but I'm back to work.

I'm in a bit of a hurry to finish the last month's smut and continue to work on the update. However, amidst all the deadlines that made whooshing sounds when they flew by, I'm also mindful of the fact that I'm so lucky that I can write for a living. Now that I think about it, all of my most pressing problems right now are the good kind of problems since they stem from the fact that I do something for a living that I really enjoy doing. Just need to put things in perspective.

I'm also grateful that I really enjoy writing all of my characters. Every one of them has an interesting story for me to write. Now that their arcs are planned out, everything feels so much easier. There's no danger of getting stuck but I still learn new things about them. It's a good place to be in and I'm grateful for it.

I don't know, this was just something that I should probably vocalize for myself more often. How happy I am that I get to do this for a living. It's wonderfully weird and exciting.

Anyway, enough babbling. I'll release the Quinn smut early next week and will release the necessary polls next week too. Busy busy but good kind of busy!

Thank you so so much for being here and thank you for your patience!

[April's smut RO poll](#)

[Mar 21, 2024](#)

So! I know the last two aren't finished yet but I'm doing the best to catch up on my schedule. Thank you so much for your patience T_T It's greatly appreciated.

You tie Niall up?

Niall ties you up?

22

Camilla ties you up

1

Camilla tends to your wounds

3

Tinsae tends to your wounds

2

Tinsae accidentally makes you some aphrodisiac tea

7

Foodplay with Niall

4

Tinsae worships your body (body worshipping)

1

Niall worships your body

11

Poll ended Mar 28, 2024 · 62 votes total

[Short story_poll](#)

[Mar 21, 2024](#)

Agh! I'm late with this one. Thank you for your patience! 😊

Quinn confronts the wet little druidling at the gate (Quinn's POV)

19

Quinn gives Tinsae bad vibes (Tinsae's POV)

4

Camilla ruminates after killing the Optio for Hati (Camilla's POV)

4

Niall celebrates Samhain with Hati (Niall's POV)

21

Poll ended Mar 26, 2024 · 48 votes total

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Mar 26, 2024](#)

Hi there!

I'm finally catching up on things T_T I released the Quinn bondage smut and will now move my full attention to the update and to drafting this month's Cernunnos smut. I was struggling a little to get back to my workflow after this month's horrors but I'm happy to say that I'm feeling fine now.

It was a shitty month.

In the midst of all the 'omg I need to rush to get back on track!!!' I just have to say that you're all so awesome. It's so weird to have so many people who believe in me and like my work. And I won't let you down.

Here's a little banner to celebrate y'all cause you're the best. (I can't take credit for it, it's made by Doriana (the author of The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes - An affair of the heart).) It's a cute little banner and you deserve all the appreciation.

Thank you so much for being here 

[Antler smut coming soon](#)

[Mar 29, 2024](#)

Hi there! As per usual, here's the link and the password just in case you've unpledged and aren't here when I upload the smut. I'm aiming to do that next week. Thank you 🧡🧡

Edit: It's up! There's one branch that requires a specific kind of Hati and there's not many choices in that one but I had too much fun with it not to include it. This one turned out quite long but I had fun so I guess it counts for something. Anyway, thank you for your patience!

<https://haleym.itch.io/march-patreon-smut>

password: march_patreon_smut_woop

[Q&A](#)

[Mar 31, 2024](#)

If the ROs could get any superpower they want, what would it be?

N: Mind reading. Wouldn't have to worry about what people think ever again since he'd know. Of course, that would probably backfire pretty quickly and get him even more anxious.

T: Flying. Would be thrilled to fly to different new places. Also the alone time it provides would be appreciated. But that would be selfish of her and she wouldn't pick it even if she wanted to. Instead, she'd choose healing.

M: Teleporting or super speed. Not only would it save time, it would also make him more efficient.

C: Super strength. No one would mess with her ever again.

Q: Time travel. Would like to change things in the past. Perhaps stay there. Everything was better back then.

What D&D class would the ROs be?

M: Fighter. High strength, dexterity, and semi high constitution and intelligence. Has also put some stats to charisma for persuasion and intimidation checks.

T: Cleric with high charisma, wisdom, and constitution.

C: Rogue with high dexterity, semi high strength, and intelligence.

N: Paladin/barbarian. Knows right from wrong but since he hasn't put that many points in wisdom and not at all in intelligence, can be malleable. High charisma and constitution and strength. Niall's rage ability has yet to be seen by Hati.

Q: Weird rogue person? Warlock (with an eldritch horror patron)? Charisma is pretty high but Quinn mainly uses it for intimidation checks. High dexterity, wisdom, and intelligence. Low strength, low constitution.

Favorite quotes for the ROs?

C: She was beautiful, but she was beautiful in the way a forest fire was beautiful (Neil Gaiman & Terry Pratchett, Good Omens)

M: Let our love be a flame, not an ember / Say it's me that you want to dismember / Blacken my eye / Set fire to my tie (Tom Lehrer - The Masochism Tango)

Q: I loved my friend. / He went away from me. / There's nothing more to say. / The poem ends, / Soft as it began,— / I loved my friend. (Langston Hughes)

N: "The shame of being Seen consumes me." (Cynthia Cruz)

T: "To be free is often to be lonely." (W.H. Auden)

[Home in the darkness](#)

[Mar 31, 2024](#)

Samhain dance scene/Niall's POV

The memory of home wraps me in the bonfire's warm embrace. Your friend plays the drums masterfully and I can't help but to smile at the memories the rhythm brings with it.

Samhain with ma. The food, the love, the joy. Oh, how she loved to dance. She told me to never fear the darkness in my home forest. The darkness holds family within and they would never let anything bad happen to me.

It was a time when the sadness in her eyes was lifted as she danced crazy around the bonfire.

Like you.

Violent happiness guides your steps as you move with the rhythm of the drums, with the crackling of the fire. And I can't help but to smile at the sight of it, despite something saying that I shouldn't.

You belong here in this forest, you're one with the flames, with the darkness. You make your home here among the foreign trees and I long to seek its warmth. The warmth of home. The sight of you traps the air in my throat, it makes me forget that I shouldn't look at you. I shouldn't be here.

And I dance with you, my mind free of worry, free of any uncertainty about the future, about what could become of you if I keep gravitating towards you. How much danger I put you in, how I shouldn't.

You dance like the gods are watching.

I smile as the weight of the world is lifted from my shoulders.

Then, I frown.

The gods aren't watching, are they?

Gods of the old home, the ones I haven't prayed to for years.

I peek over my shoulder despite my mind begging me not to. Not because I expect to see a vengeful god peering at me from the darkness. No, that would be silly.

I chuckle but the delight in my voice is fake, it's a stillborn as it falls from my lips. Something lurks in the shadows. Not just the Dead, nor the Others. No. Something more sinister, more ancient.

More hateful.

No friends reside in these lands.

Darkness worms inside me, it fills me with dread and decay, it denies me of air. I blink as black tendrils oozing of rot slither towards me, whispering the omen of death, death that it will bestow upon me.

I will drown you and watch life flee your eyes, whoreson of the spring.

Something grabs my hand and I almost scream.

You.

Your smile blinds me as you yank me towards the bonfire. You, the fire, it stings my eyes with its violent brightness.

I'm out of breath, primal fear screams at my ear, asking me to flee from this place, from your touch.

The harbinger of doom.

You ask me if I'm alright. The question reminds me to breathe the burning air and to keep holding your hand as if it was my lifeline. Happiness still lights up your face despite the worry I must have caused. Seeing it makes me feel foolish.

I overreacted.

And I smile, despite my wildly beating heart.

“Let’s dance.” I trust you to keep the monsters at bay.

*author's note: The Samhain chapter will be most heavily altered later, just for the mere fact that I will combine Marcus’s and Niall’s scenes together, as well as Tinsae’s and Camilla’s. Honestly, it just makes sense. Also the dance scene will be getting some more meat in it. Despite what was written earlier, Niall is definitely not having a good time lol.

[Sneak peek](#)

[Mar 31, 2024](#)

Lightning flashes and the features change. A bird’s beak grazes my cheek, its texture hard and unforgiving, wet and decaying, the smell of basement and death. Its eyes keep studying me as if nothing happened, as if they’re not small and glowing, as if they’re not monstrous.

- Scream.
- Stare in horror.
- Observe. This feels familiar somehow.

Fun times ahead, as per usual!

[Sneakier peek](#)

[Mar 31, 2024](#)

- “I don’t know why I’m here.” Tell her the truth.

Her brows furrow slightly. She expects me to elaborate.

“I... don’t remember much. One day I was just here and I had this burning pit in my stomach. Anger that didn’t feel mine.”

It still gnaws at me, urges me to lash out.

She gives me another long look. I'm not sure if she believes me. I wouldn't, either.

"Amnesia, you say?" she muses to herself as she keeps adding more oil to her skin.

"Something in me wanted me to avenge my family. Everyone who died. I just—"

"Sensible. I would have my revenge, too."

"But I don't know if I want that," I continue the thought that she interrupted.

In exchange, she gives me another small frown.

This is from a scene with Camilla, you can tell the truth about why you're there. I find it important to emphasize that the anger feels weird to these types of Hatis, the types who aren't there for revenge. It's something that I need to edit a little in the previous chapters.

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Apr 8, 2024](#)

Hi there!

So, I've gotten well back on my writing routine and I feel good about the state of the update. I will start rambling on Mondays, so I can make goals for the upcoming week.

But first, I finally decided how I'm going to show the relationship stats on the stat page. They will be from Quinn's POV and they are mental notes instead of physical ones. In them, Quinn is commenting on the state of the relationships and what they think about the progress. It makes sense, they have a lot of opinions, especially when it comes to other ROs. And they have access to your and the ROs' heads. For example, there might be Marcus's name and Quinn commenting like: 'You did *WHAT* at the baths?!' 😏

Also, I realized that there are some stats that the new personality elements don't cover. I will need to start tracking Hati's kindness/ruthlessness (that will be important for the story), as well as if Hati is a little dense or if they're intelligent. Neither of those are covered by the elements and I think they're important for the role playing aspect, and for the relationships. For example, Tinsae respects kindness (no surprises there). However, this doesn't mean that there will be any relationship locks for ruthless Hatis with Tinsae. She is, after all, friends with Camilla, so it definitely doesn't seem like a deal breaker for her. In addition, your dense Hati might have more in common with Niall (no offense, Niall, we still love you).

If you're interested in other variables I'm already tracking, the important ones are:

- The level of Hati's devotion to the Twins (you can't denounce the Twins, Hati's upbringing doesn't give room to it just yet. However, you can certainly start being pretty pissed at the Twins for all the mixed messages they're sending.)
- If you're using/manipulating the ROs or not (or, when it comes to Marcus, if you're actively trying to kill him or not). There will be a chance for Hati to develop genuine feelings for the ROs despite the relationships starting out as them using them.
- The level of Hati's perversion, or if you aren't interested in sexual stuff at all (this is something I haven't focused on too much yet but it will be there).
- And, of course, the personality elements. Those will replace the childhood personality stats that were set in the 1st chapter. For example, fire will find it more difficult to remain silent when it's needed, earth is slightly emotionally constipated, and water is empathetic and finds it difficult to hide their emotions.

And air is there.

Lol.

Air is like earth but less constipated, silently going with the flow.

I think those are the most important ones. Fine tuning the code is something I will focus on more when I start to edit, since I'll have to rewrite the Twine-coded chapters in CS and all that. And the earlier chapters need a lot of editing. Anyway, just wanted to let you know the big variables.

For this week's goals: Tomorrow, I will likely finish Cernunnos's smut (it's like 70 % ready so that should be easy). And this week, I hope to finish Camilla's bath scenes. They're about 50 % ready so it's more than possible since I'm back to my groove now. I'm not counting the act of coding in that percentage, so the update won't be finished yet this week. And I will most likely get scatterbrained and write other update scenes on the side but that's to be expected. Anyway, will focus on Camilla this week.

As always, thank you so so much for being here! I'm working my arse off to get more content out soon!



[About smut and stuff](#)

[Apr 14, 2024](#)



Hi there!

For those of you who don't follow me on Tumblr, and might want to know, here's the backlog of the smut tier:

- June 2023: Kinda toxic smut with Marcus in a cave
- July: Quinn wakes you up from a nightmare and is pretty weird about it
- August: Niall gets ambushed by Hati in the middle of naked druid rituals (as one does)
- September: Kinda toxic Legate smut
- October: Fooling around with a dom Camilla in her wine cellar
- November: Hati becomes the offering to Tinsae's goddess (another perfectly normal day in the peaceful town of Moguntiacum)
- December: Drinking game with Niall and Marcus
- January 2024: Reading poetry with Marcus
- February: Quinn hogties you. As one does
- March: Monster loving
- April: Bondage with Niall (Niall is the one tying you up)
- May: A trip with Tinsae
- June: Revenge with Camilla (feat. Legate)
- July: A cute little date with Marcus
- August: In a closet with Niall (feat. Marcus and LT vibes)
- September: A (slightly tragic) date with Quinn
- October: How Samhain celebration could've ended with Tinsae and Camilla
- November: Monster loving 🧛‍🦿
- December: A drama-packed scenario with Marcus and Quinn
- January 2025: A sequel to the kinda toxic Legate smut (with male Hati)
- February: Camilla punishes you (pegging included)
- March: Niall is struck with a horny curse (by you)

Thank you!

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Apr 16, 2024](#)


Hi there!

I got quite a bit of writing done last week. However, March's smut turned out to be more challenging to write than I anticipated. I've gotten used to writing smut by now, I've done it for almost a year now, but monster loving was definitely a new one lol. So, I didn't finish all of Camilla's scenes just yet but I did get a lot of the scenes done.

I will start coding now and see to the rest of the unfinished scenes as I go. I will also try to focus on the earlier scenes that were left unfinished and will flesh them out (like Marcus's scenes). I would also like to see where the dumber Hati fits in the scenes that I've written earlier but I'll see if I get to adding them just yet.

Well, we'll see what I end up cooking in the end. My muses are fickle but I'm happy about the progress and the next update will be out this month. This week, I'll be transferring the new scenes into Twine's coding... thing. And I write as I go. I'm happy that I'm entering this phase, cause it means I'm getting closer to publishing the update.


As a sidenote, Camilla and Hati who's a little more on the dumber side ended up being quite a fun pair.

As always, thank you so so much for being here! 

[Short story poll](#)

[Apr 22, 2024](#)

If you have any suggestions for what you want to read next, please let me know (I can add Marcus's scenes to the list too but I didn't come up with anything). Also, Q&A questions would be nice too!

Thank you! 

Quinn gives Tinsae and her cat bad vibes (Tinsae's POV)

4

Tinsae and Camilla both find Hati very sexy and discuss over tea

24

Quinn confronts the little druidling at the gate (Quinn's POV)

14

Camilla ruminates after killing the Optio for Hati

4

Poll ended Apr 25, 2024 · 46 votes total

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Apr 22, 2024](#)

Hi there!

Work is going well, I'm coding and writing both Camilla's scenes and writing the missing Marcus's scenes. I will write Niall's smut this week and publish it on the weekend so the smut should be released on time this month too yay. Things are looking better and better 🧡

I didn't ask for much feedback back when I released Marcus's scenes but what I did gather was that it would be nice to be able to mention to him that the Optio is now possibly a rabbit chased by Cernunnos. Since I'm working on the missing scenes now and cleaning up the code and the mess of choices, I would be more than happy to hear what else you think Marcus's bath scenes possibly needed.

Would also be super interesting to know how many people chose to be super murderous with Marcus. Should probably do a poll at some point.

Anyway, as always, thank you so so much for being here!

[May's smut RO poll](#)

[Apr 24, 2024](#)

I know I've written so much bondage stuff already lol but here we are.

Tinsae accidentally makes you and herself some aphrodisiac tea

24

Camilla worships your body

1

Tinsae ties you up

4

You tie Camilla up

2

In Legate's closet with Camilla

14

Poll ended Apr 30, 2024 · 45 votes total

[Niall smut \(out now!\)](#)

[Apr 29, 2024](#)

Hi there!

I tried my best to get this out this month but unfortunately Niall was being pretty elusive before I got the hang of the scene. It happens, especially with smut.

So, just in case this takes till early next month, here's the link and the password. If you unpledged this month (thank you so so much for your patronage!), please follow my Tumblr or Patreon's posts for free members to see when I release the smut. So, the link doesn't have the game just yet but I will upload it there this week. I'd rather not release anything half-assed. Thank you for your patience!

EDIT: IT'S OUT NOW

link: <https://haleym.itch.io/april-smut>

password: april_patreonsmut

[Girls gossiping about Hati over tea](#)

[Apr 30, 2024](#)

I decided to write this from an omnipotent 3rd person, and focus on Camilla's and Tinsae's different perceptions on Hati depending on different variables. It would be fun to write a similar shortie from the boys' perspective.

***if muscular**

"I do love a person who takes good care of themselves." Tinsae smiles at her tea cup, her gaze grazing Camilla's toned arms. "I heard that they tossed cabers back in the North."

"Cabers?" Camilla's gaze brightens. "How primal of them."

Tinsae sighs. "You can't just call Hati primal. It is quite offensive."

"I already did," she ponders happily at her tea cup, secretly wondering if she'd have the strength to toss cabers, too.

***if lithe**

Camilla takes a hefty sip of the tea she's spiked with wine. "I love how skinny they are. Like a stick waiting to be thrown around."

"Camilla..." Tinsae sighs. "Please don't call Hati a stick."

Camilla smiles, looking quite pleased with herself. Indeed, she already called them a stick and will not take it back.

"Besides, I don't doubt your strength, please don't misunderstand me, but they are a grown adult. To be able to 'throw them around' sounds preposterous."

Camilla straightens her posture, eager to prove her friend wrong. "I will try and report back."

"Of course you will..."

***if beard and fashionable**

"I appreciate their formidable beard," Camilla says.

Tinsae laughs. "I swear, you and beards."

"It's trimmed so nicely, too," Camilla continues, ignoring Tinsae's jab. "Makes me want to braid it."

"You refuse to do your own hair but you would braid Hati's beard."

Camilla nods, affirming the analysis.

***if beautiful**

Tinsae sighs wistfully at the tea cup. "Gods truly granted them beauty. Sometimes I catch myself staring at them for too long. Their beauty matches the most stunning of deities and heroes of—"

"It is indeed a pretty face." Camilla interrupts and looks thoughtfully at the empty tea cup. "Too cute. Makes me want to make them grimace in pain."

A shocked laugh escapes Tinsae as she places her cup on the table in exasperation. "Camilla, please."

***if scar**

"Did you know that they fought a bear?" Tinsae whispers in a conspiratory fashion, hiding her smiling lips behind a tea cup. She's almost ashamed over her pride, she shouldn't encourage that kind of recklessness.

Camilla closes her eyes and nods, carrying a mixture of pride and delight in her gesture. To fight off a bear and to live to tell the tale. That's the kind of foolhardy recklessness she can't help but to appreciate. "I did."

***if chosen one/believer**

Tinsae sips her tea, her thoughts wandering to her own faith. "I can't help but to admire their conviction. There's an aura of certainty about them that I find alluring."

"Of course you'd like that about them," Camilla says with a small smirk.

***if also human sacrifice**

Camilla ponders on her next words carefully. "I think I've seen something peculiar in their gaze."

Tinsae nods. She's noticed it, too. Something you can't quite put your finger on, something that eludes you. Something sinister and wrong.

A smirk sneaks in Camilla's features. "I like it."

Tinsae shifts uncomfortably. "Of course you do, darling."

*if **determined on getting revenge**

“There’s fire in their eyes that makes me… worried, at times,” Tinsae says as she inspects Camilla. She sees the same fire in Camilla’s gaze. It worries her all the same. It almost makes her regret that she ever came back.

“Nonsense,” Camilla says, not picking up on Tinsae’s insinuation, nor her worry. She rarely, if ever, does. “That fire has kept them alive all this time. It’s necessary. It’s admirable,” she repeats the words she firmly believes to be true.

Instead of responding, Tinsae looks at the horizon. The Southern wind carries the scent of spring with it. It makes her breathe out in relief.

[Smut blooper](#)

[Apr 30, 2024](#)

Here's a smut blooper! I had a difficult time with getting the scene right (it happens, especially with smut) and when I finally got the hang of the scene, I had to erase the stuff I'd already written. But at least it'll make for a decent blooper.

“You want me to do what?” Niall’s face distorts in worry.

“Tie me up,” I repeat, knowing fully well he heard me the first time.

Another frown, deeper than the first one.

[[“It’ll be fun, don’t worry!”]]

“What if the rope hurts you? What if I tie it too tightly? What if—”

“I will tell you if they’re too tight. It’s not like my hands will immediately fall off if you aren’t careful.”

“Sure…,” he mutters.

“What do I need hands for anyway? It’ll be worth the orgasm to lose them.”

He frowns at my joke. “This is not funny but I’m willing to do it for you.”

“Thank you kindly.”

"I'm not happy about this."

"Yes, you mentioned."

He takes the rope with a playful frown.

[[“We don’t have to if you don’t want to...” Smile sweetly.]]

I smile sweetly as I dangle the rope in my hands.

"You know I'm going to say yes."

"You're a grown man, Niall, you can tell me no."

He purses his lips. "No, I can't." He takes the rope.

"That's sweet of you."

Faint pink dances on his cheeks.

[[“It's up to you.”]]

"What if the rope hurts you? What if I tie it too tightly? What if—"

"We will communicate."

"I... Yes. We can do that."

He takes the rope with a resigned sigh.

[Sneakier peek but also a blooper](#)

[Apr 30, 2024](#)

This is actually an interesting scene that I regret didn't make it to the new update. I wrote it some time ago, before I even started to work on the bath scenes properly. Here Hati can choose to tell Camilla about their gender. However, things turned out quite different once I started to work on the bath scenes, and unfortunately this conversation didn't fit into the update anymore. For example, as a trans man, you would've had two different approaches to telling about your gender, hesitant or blunt.

blunt:

No need to beat around the bushes, I chose to tell her and I will.

"I am a man. But I was born a girl." When the curt words leave my mouth, it's as if a huge boulder has been lifted from my chest. I exhale and close my eyes.

It's done. I said it.

When I open my eyes, Camilla stands on the edge of the pool. Her brows are creased as she evidently tries to process the meaning behind my words.

"Born a girl?" She repeats the words as if there was a possibility that she misheard me.

"Yes."

- I step up to show her my chest.

It's easier if I just show her. So, with a splashing sound I stand up and look her in the eyes. I can't say if it's to challenge her or to see her reaction more clearly. No matter the reason, I can see her gaze moving lower to my chest area. Her eyes widen when she sees the bindings.

'Oh' is the only thing leaving her slightly open mouth.

I nod. "Yes." I sit back down on the pool.

- I remain seated and give her a stern nod.

I look at her straight into her eyes. Her gaze lowers down my chest area. My upper body is beneath the water level but, due to the clear water and the flickering torches, she must be able to see my bindings. She does, for her eyes widen.

'Oh' is the only thing leaving her slightly open mouth.

I nod. "Yes."

"I see."

hesitant:

I sink deeper into the pool, trying to hide my chest from her view. Why, oh why, did I agree to do this? This was never an issue with my tribe, they knew who I was and that was it. It didn't matter. These past months, however, have been hellish; to be called a man on a regular basis has formed a lump in my throat that never really leaves, no matter how forcefully I try to swallow it gone. At any given moment, they could've found out.

The Optio did.

I inhale the steamy air and close my eyes. Fear takes a grip of my wildly beating heart.

Finally, I say: "I am a man."

"And?" Her question rings confused. Understandable.

"But..." The words seem to get stuck in my throat. Will she accept me?

I shake my head to banish the doubt. I decided to tell her, I will stick by it. I'm tired of hiding the truth. So, I take a breath to calm myself. "I was born a girl."

Silence seems oppressive as she takes her time to evidently process my words. "You... were?"

I nod and do my best to swallow even if my throat feels like it's filled with sand. "Yes," I manage to say. My voice sounds more hesitant and vulnerable than I'd prefer.

Finally, she steps into my view. She stands on the edge of the pool, her gaze confused.

My upper body is beneath the waterline but the water is clearer than in the barracks and the torches light up the room well enough. So, her gaze quickly confirms the truth behind my words.

"I... see," she says with a nod.

[Sneak peek](#)

[Apr 30, 2024](#)

This little variable keeps popping up. Don't worry about it.

Looking at Camilla's pondering face, I just realize that I shared intimate details of my childhood.

"The Twins demanded it," I say quickly, defending my mother's decisions.

"Your gods?"

I nod.

"How do you serve them?"

*if **human_sacrifice**

"With blood," I say without hesitation. "They demand blood."

Camilla's gaze is slow and careful as she inspects me. "I've heard rumors of the folk in the North."

"What kind?"

Half a smile sneaks to her lips. "Interesting things." Her gaze still lingers on my tattoo, her fingers graze the lines. She looks at me, and the smile reveals her white, sharp teeth. "You are interesting."

[Q&A](#)

[Apr 30, 2024](#)

****What is one of the ROs' favorite smells?**

****Q:** Lilacs. They grew in the grove and Hati loved the smell.

N: White waterlily. Something about the floral scent and the smell of water is appealing to him.

M: Marcus's mother smelled like cinnamon and cardamom.

C: The smell of freshly baked sweets (paired with wine).

T: The smell of spring.

****What did the RO dream of being or doing as a child? Did that dream come true?**

****N:** Wanted to be the chieftain of his tribe like his father. Didn't work out.

C: Wanted to become the Empress of Rome. Didn't work out.

M: Looked up to Horace, a poet and a soldier. Became a soldier but has never published his poems.

T: Wanted to heal the world and to travel. Is doing that.

Q: Wanted to save Hati. Is still trying to.

****How does the RO behave around children?**

****C:** Tolerates children, but prefers to communicate with older children because you can actually have a conversation with them.

T: Is a natural with children.

N: Loves to play with children but older children are sometimes too brutally honest and have the potential to hurt his feelings.

M: Doesn't mind them. They're rebellious little souls, willing to take risks and live on the edge, but require too much taking care of.

Q: They are curious little creatures but that's the extent of it. Quinn steers clear of them.

****What are the ROs addicted to?**

****C:** Nothing. (Wine.)

N: Moisturizer. And people pleasing.

Q: Adoration.

M: Is probably developing a gambling problem.

T: Caffeine.


[Weekly rambling](#)

[Apr 30, 2024](#)

So, the decision to go through the old scenes that required tweaking slowed me down. As expected, that's why I never go through the old scenes before I actually start editing. However, it was unfortunately necessary. There were so many missing scenes that I needed to go back, but I couldn't just fill in the missing scenes because the code was a mess. I had forgotten what variables I had used in those scenes, and that's not good lol. The mess of a code would've slowed me down later, so it is what it is. It pays to be organized, even if it pays later down the line. Something I've had to learn the hard way...

So, I'm still working on the update. As good news, I got my office back! It was under renovation. Well it's only kinda my office, it really is a glorified basement where anyone else from this apartment complex could bash in at any given moment. However, it's a good, distractionless place to write. So I'm really glad it's back. It'll make things easier for me.

I'm working my butt off to write quicker and more consistently. I'm picking up the speed every week so that's great.

Thank you so so much for being here! 

[Weekly rambling \(also: Niall smut is out now!\)](#)

[May 8, 2024](#)

Hey there!

Progress is going so well! Yes I'm shouting cause I'm excited. I've been writing consistently and swiftly, been much more organized with my variables so work is going quicker, and the quality is so so much better. I've been careful of not editing too much so I'm not stuck in the eternal perfectionist editing phase, and I think I've struck a good balance.

I'm like 97 % finished with Camilla's scenes (the rest of the text is coded already, although I do need to playtest them too), and I just need to finish tweaking Marcus's scenes' code and add in a few missing scenes (such as a couple of scenes for nonbinary and trans Hatis). Given that I need to playtest and


that I might get too excited with the additions (I always do), I think that it might take me a week to get things done. So, super happy about that!

Some light **spoilers below**:

I already wrote so much of the Camilla's scenes earlier this week, and I will continue to work, just wanted to shout these things at you on my coffee break. The only thing that is left is the outro for the bath scene and an optional sexier scene. Since I'm so used to writing smut by now, that doesn't even seem like a huge obstacle or anything. Just a regular week day lol.

Spoilers ended.

Also! Niall's smut is out. This month's smut RO is Tinsae.

As always, thank you so so much for being here! I'm going back to my writing dungeon (basement)! 

[Weekly rambling \(Camilla update is out now!\)](#)

[May 23, 2024](#)

Hi there!

Camilla's bath scenes are out now! Or they've been here for a couple of days already but I'm just now telling you all about it. For now, I'm holding Marcus's scenes hostage cause they were riddled with coding errors and I need to re-code them and write the missing scenes. I'm aiming to release the full version of his scenes next week.

But Camilla is now there to insult you, so that's nice. I was super happy with how her scenes turned out. Every RO got a lot of new backstory over the months that I spent planning last year. The planning helped out immensely with the writing (it's difficult to be a pantsner with a project this big. You gotta plan ahead, unfortunately!). It feels like I know every character now, which certainly speeds things up in terms of writing, too. There was no point where I felt stuck at all and that's a good feeling.

And the coding! I'm getting better at it! The coding and the planning of the branches requires a lot of planning and a certain level of organization, it can get quite confusing and individual branches might get too big in comparison to others, it can be a drag. But that's one of the areas I notice the most improvement with my writing. (It required the most improvement lmao.) Anyway, super happy about that.

Also, I'm not super tired after releasing new content, which tended happen in the past cause I was speeding through the update like my life depended on it. I did work like a horse but I wasn't as stressed about it. Which is nice. I feel like I have a nicer, healthier work method now. Good for me.

Anyway, feeling good, even if Marcus's code is atrocious (poor past me tried their best).

As always, thank you so so much for being here!

[Short story_poll](#)

[May 23, 2024](#)

Marcus dips into the pool with the obviously murderous Hati

11

Marcus and Niall talk over tea about how hot Hati is

29

Camilla gets bitten

7

Camilla lures Tinsae to the baths while knowing Hati is there

8

Marcus gives Niall the crocodile poop present

2

Quinn tests Hati to see if they'll admit that they saw Cernunnos

3

Quinn watches Marcus leave the bath with Hati

16

Poll ended May 28, 2024 · 76 votes total

[June's smut RO](#)

[May 27, 2024](#)

After next month every RO is back on the menu!

In the Legate's closet with Camilla

6

Legate watches Camilla and Hati have sex

26

Another exhibitionist-like scenario with Camilla in the tavern

2

Camilla voices her appreciation towards you and worships your body (how nice)

2

You're a little sick. Camilla takes care of you.

5

Poll ended May 31, 2024 · 41 votes total

[Sneak peek](#)

[May 27, 2024](#)

Angry Marcus killers can finally calm themselves in the new upcoming scenes. But at what cost lol.

I take another breath, a stabilizing one, and mutter a quick prayer to the Twins. Thinking of the Twins, however, seems to only flare up my anger.

It takes great effort to control it.

I need to control it.

\<<if \$fire is true>>

"Fuck, I hate you," I mutter as I squeeze my eyes shut. "I hate you so much that I want to see your innards float in the pool water. I want to see your blood color the water crimson. I want to

see life leave your eyes. I want to look at your soulless, empty eyes and leave you without a blessing, without a burial, and hide your body so you won't ever get any of those things, so that the wild animals will feast on your pathetic flesh. I want it so bad but I can't do it right now." Saying it out loud helps to control the rage, I can feel the anger slowly subsiding.

When I open my eyes Marcus's face is fittingly aghast. "Alright," he manages to say. "Well, you definitely need to have dreams."

"Yes. Some day I will kill you. I hope you know it."

"Now I definitely do, thank you for sharing."

[Sneakier peek](#)

[May 27, 2024](#)

Niall's solo scenes coming up next!

"Things feel different with you," he says.

"What do you mean?"

"You see the real me and it's weirding me out at times."

"Real you?" Vague words.

"I don't know how to explain it." He rubs the back of his neck. "Let's, uh, talk about something else."

"My real name is \$name."

Niall's whole demeanor relaxes as he exhales in relief. Then, he gives me an easy, warm smile. "Thank you. Your name is as lovely as you are."

[[Blush at the sudden smoothness.]]

[[“Tone down the sweet talk, gancanagh.”]]

It's almost jarring to see him so smooth all of a sudden. It's like he put on a mask and it doesn't fit, his real face still peeks through the edges.

My teasing words forces the familiar pink rise up to his cheeks. “Uh, sorry.”


[Weekly rambling](#)

[May 28, 2024](#)

Hi there!

So, I'm working hard on the Marcus scenes. I try not to overdo them so I can move on to Niall's solo scenes. Can't wait to get these bath scenes out of the way lol. At first, I thought that you could skip them and that they wouldn't be mandatory. But they're so damned long and contain important information that it wouldn't make sense to make them skippable. I think that they will also act as a crossroad for the RO routes. If you chose Tinsae or Camilla, you're locked to the Ladies' route. If you chose Niall or Marcus, you're locked to Esteemed Gentlemen's route. You can, ofc, choose between them but the love triangle and poly stuff can start to take place later too based on the chosen bath ROs. I think it would make sense but will still have to brainstorm.

And, um, it seems that the next month's smut RO is Camilla and her scenario is, *checks notes*, Legate is made to watch as Camilla and Hati have sex. So, Legate the cuck is up next. I don't think any other scenario will top that, it's taken such a lead in the poll.

Anyway, back to work. Aiming to get stuff out later this week so gotta hurry. And as always, thank you so so much for being here! 

[Marcus and Niall smackdown warm up \(short story\)](#)

[May 30, 2024](#)

Niall and Marcus are talking about Hati's hotness. (There are, naturally, more traits that they appreciate about Hati but these are the ones that first came to mind.)

Nialls shifts uncomfortably on his chair. He hasn't seen Marcus since he learned about Hati. Such a strong mix of emotions floods through him that he's having a difficult time to make sense of them. The real identity of Hati, how Marcus knew all along. And even the fact that he knew last, even if feeling bitter about that makes him feel petty and small. It's all too much.

But what he knows right now is that he hates that grin.

“So,” Marcus starts, and Niall knows that whatever he’s going to say isn’t going to be good. “How was the bath?” There’s a sly grin on his face, one that Niall knows all too well.

“Fine,” Niall says reflexively, shielding himself from his mockery. But then Hati’s crying face comes to his mind and he shifts in his chair, ready to make a stand.

“Actually, no, it—”

But Marcus is already talking, interrupting, distracting him:

“You like them, don’t you?”

And Niall is all too easily caught off guard. “What’s that got to do with anything?”

“Why is it, I wonder. What about them strikes your fancy?”

if chosen one or believer

“Is it the fervor in their eyes when they talk about their deities?”

Niall does appreciate that. He doesn’t know which gods he himself should believe in, which ones are his, and the firm faith Hati shows is attractive to him.

“It almost makes them look insane,” Marcus continues, fishing out a response.

“No, it doesn’t. It makes them look like they believe in something with their heart. And it’s enticing.”

Marcus smiles, and Niall regrets. Marcus got exactly what he wanted from him.

if scar

Marcus continues: “The scar makes them look even wilder, doesn’t it?”

It does add to their charm in Niall’s opinion. It makes them look strong, capable. To think that they got that from an encounter with a bear is impressive in itself. “Don’t call them wild.”

“It is wild to wrestle with a bear. But they could also be lying. Maybe they got that from falling into a ditch.”

“Hati wouldn’t lie about that.”

Marcus merely smiles at the apparent naivety of his brother.

if muscular

“Is it their glistening muscles?”

“Glistening? What—” Naturally, Niall knows what he’s talking about. He has found himself looking when Hati trains with the gladius and the pilum. He appreciates their growing talent, it takes a lot to move away from the longsword in such a short period of time, but he can’t deny that the view has been... Nice. And it’s always made him look away in guilt. And Marcus knows it.

“Their body competes with the athletes of the Isthmian games, don’t you think?” There’s a sly grin on his face.

Niall, grown tired of the constant bickering and innuendo, is about to snap back at him. However, Marcus continues, his voice raised:

“Well, if it’s none of that, is it simply two barbarians feeling the kinship?”

Niall didn’t expect that. Marcus never brings up his Otherness, he knows that the feeling of not belonging has always eaten away at him, he’s done everything to make sure that he fits in and it never pays off. He’s still always seen as the Other, not quite belonging. Marcus has always been there for him before, he’s never used it against him because he knows it hurts. But now...

It shows on Marcus’s face, the regret over what he said. But he’s stubborn, he won’t take it back. Not now. Maybe in the future when he’s drunk too much, when he’s feeling the sorrows over everything that he’s done and said. He might even cry the tears of a remorseful drunken man.

“I will go now,” Marcus says abruptly, eager to flee Niall’s disappointment. Niall is left behind, looking at his receding back. Alone.

And angry.

[Q&A](#)

[May 30, 2024](#)

What responsibility do you hate?

N: Looking and acting like a proper Roman man. Sometimes I don’t think I do a good job at it.

T: Dealing with the underbelly of the city. The people make me sick at times.

C: Looking and acting like a proper lady.

M: Responsibilities of a noble son.

Q: My only responsibility is Hati and I could never hate them.

What would you say is your worst physical feature?

N: I don't like my hair. The redness marks me an outsider.

T: I try to accept my body as it is.

C: I hate my scars.

M: I hate the scar that Hati's father made.

Q: I hate myself. I hate everything about my body.

What would you do if someone brought up your biggest insecurity in front of a crowd of strangers?

N: I would shrink to myself and flee.

T: I would laugh it off and leave.

C: I would insult the perpetrator so bad that they'd never insult anyone else ever again.

M: I would laugh it off and insult them back.

Q: Nothing. I don't care about strangers.

When do you feel safe?

N: When the spring comes and I take off to my foraging trips. When I sit by a pond and listen to the birds singing and the sounds of water.

T: When I'm on the road, the wagon is swaying, no one needs me.

C: When I'm alone in the town at night and no one recognizes me, no one requires anything of me.

M: When I spend time with my sisters.

Q: When I'm with Hati.

When did you last cry?

N: Yesterday when I missed home. Even if I'm not sure where the home is.

T: Yesterday when I took care of a baby who had been mistreated. Sometimes I hate people and it makes me feel powerless and bitter.

C: When my father died. He was my only ally.

M: When my mother died. I miss her.

Q: When my sibling was murdered and devoured in front of my eyes. I don't remember much. Well, anyway.

[About Magic](#)

[May 30, 2024](#)

So, I've been seriously overthinking this history rambling thing. For some reason I thought that I should write a massive think piece on my research methodologies or something like that. But you know what? Let's keep it simple. I've been reading Maijastina Kahlos's book about Ancient Greek/Roman magic beliefs (Taikakirja: Magia Antiikin Kreikkassa ja Roomassa). I've been aware of ancient magic beliefs but haven't dwelled deeper into it. And it's got me thinking about Hati and how the others might view their beliefs and if they even believe that they can talk to the gods. Not even talk to them but that the gods actually talk back to Hati. Well that and they're literally arranging meetings with them.

Anyway.

People did believe in magic in Ancient Rome. Quite a lot, in fact.

Sometimes it's difficult to differentiate between religious beliefs and what was seen as magic. For example, it was thought that gods and spirits make people sick. So, sometimes the treatment for malaria was to try and banish the malignant god who caused the fever. Sounds magic but it's tied to religion. People might have also commissioned amulets against illnesses, like migraines. The amulet might have had a little spell written on it, asking for a specific god to shield them from headaches. (And in medieval times the similar spells referred to Jesus.)

Kahlos says that basically Romans thought that their own rituals were religious in nature, while other people's similar rituals were magic. The classic us vs them dichotomy, our way of magic is more legitimate than yours. I wonder if some Hatis share the sentiment? I remember writing that 'my gods are real but theirs clearly aren't' but I might have scrapped that at one point. I will probably explore this theme more. I wonder if Marcus, for example, who keeps implying that Hati is insane, is in fact a little afraid of the things they're saying? I think he might be quite more superstitious than he lets on. Camilla, on the other hand, has said that she naturally believes in the gods but views them as evil little shits. Sounds like her.

But when it comes to the us vs them theme, of course it wasn't just limited to Romans versus others. The elite ridiculed the lower class for believing in 'hogwash magic'. For example, Theophrastos ridiculed a man for rushing to meet with experts who explained the meaning of dreams and told which god you should pray to that day. The common belief among the literary elite was that communal magic is fine and dandy, while magic that only serves the individual themselves is bad and nonsense, even malignant.

When it comes to the other ROs, I think that Tinsae is the most open to the idea that Hati can speak with the gods. She's religious herself and shares a close tie with her own goddess Taweret. Niall respects the religious fervor Hati might have. Quinn is naturally in on it.

Well, anyway. It's been interesting to read about this. During the Saturnalia chapter, you can meet with a fortune teller and it'll be interesting to see how the others react to what she's got to say. I will also have to add in a little more details on the superstitious aspect of Roman life. I could honestly ramble about this all day but maybe I should get back to editing.

I hope this was somewhat interesting! Thank you for being here! 


[A small weekly rambling.\(Tinsae smut coming up next week\).](#)

[Jun 7, 2024](#)

Hi there!

I finished writing and fixing the Marcus update. There should be like 5-10k words worth of new text (it's an estimate, partly because the code actually works now and things show up lol) and a lot of edits. However, there's still a few coding errors popping up now that I'm playtesting so I can't probably release this today, definitely not in this state. I'm aiming to release it this weekend. Also, Tinsae smut will be out next week.

I've had a less than savory week so things took a while longer than I would've liked.

Anyway, thank you for your patience! I hope you all have a lovely weekend. And thank you so so much for being here! 

[May smut out now \(sorry for the delay!\).](#)

[Jun 17, 2024](#)

Hello there!

The smut is not quite done yet and just in case this takes till early next month, here's the link and the password. If you unpledged this month (thank you so so much for your patronage!), please follow my Tumblr or Patreon's posts to see when I release the smut (I'll make sure to mention it in the header). So, the link doesn't have the game just yet. Thank you for your patience!

Edit: It's out now! Thank you for your patience.

Link: <https://haleym.itch.io/may-patreon-smut>

Password: may_patreon_smutwoop

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Jun 17, 2024](#)

Hi there!

Sorry about missing the last week's rambling. I wanted to post this when I finish the Tinsae smut but it got longer and I got frustrated but here we are, it's now released. Yay! Fam's summer vacation has messed up my schedule. Thankfully, things will return to normal next week.

I will draft out different scenes this week (like Camilla's up coming smut and Niall's bath scenes) and release polls and such but I can't write as much as I usually do. It's my semi vacation week. I will probably have to have a full on vacation week some week next month or something T_T It's not that I'm drained or anything but summer vacation weeks are good for the soul.

Anyway! I hope you all have a wonderful week and thank you so much for being here. 

[Short story poll](#)

[Jun 18, 2024](#)

Marcus dips into the pool with the obviously murderous Hati

21

Camilla gets bitten by gremlin Hati

8

Camilla lures Tinsae to the baths while knowing Hati is there

6

Quinn tests Hati to see if they'll admit that they saw Cernunnos

4

Quinn watches Marcus leave the bath with Hati

33

Tinsae saves Quinn's and Hati's butts during Samhain

7

Quinn talking with their cookie shop grandma. About Hati. And stuff.

12

Poll ended Jun 25, 2024 · 91 votes total

[July smut poll](#)

[Jun 24, 2024](#)

Marcus is being nice and sweet with Hati (as sweet as he can). Bordering on fluff.

34

Camilla is being nice and sweet with Hati (as sweet as she can). Bordering on fluff.

8

Marcus gets punished by Hati (for obvious reasons)

12

Marcus gets down on Hati in a closet

20

Niall gets down on Hati in a closet

5

Camilla gets down on Hati in a closet

7

Quinn is sweet and takes care of Hati

7

Quinn blindfolds Hati

3

Niall is drunk and lacks inhibition

6

Tinsae meets Hati in a dream

1

Camilla is being sacrilegious on a Jupiter's shrine

7

Hati gets punished by Camilla

11

Niall gets punished for some reason by Hati (he hasn't done anything wrong, why are you like this)

2

Poll ended Jun 30, 2024 · 123 votes total

[The Wind](#)

[Jun 28, 2024](#)

Quinn is watching Marcus and Hati leave Niall's villa

The wind is cold and it's making me shiver.

And that, in turn, makes me grimace.

There was a time when cold was my second nature, when it didn't gnaw at my bones and pierce my flesh. Now, however, when my body is frail and dying, it bites me harder.

I wonder sometimes.

If it was all worth it.

Of course it was.

It would've been easier to just lie down and die. Wait for to be devoured like—

Movement catches my eye.

You. The weight on my chest feels lighter when I see you. You shine bright in the dim light and I almost run up to you, ask for your forgiveness, declare my love, whatever it takes for you to look at me like you looked at—

But then, something else makes me halt.

- if marcus stayed in the baths

You're with him. You look at him in annoyance but there's almost a layer of playfulness in your tone.

"Were you waiting for me?" you ask him. Your hair is still wet and seeing it forms a knot into my stomach. You could catch a cold and die. Don't you know that?

He says something meaningless and you stifle laughter. You playfully kick his ankle and he laughs and takes a few running steps toward the wagon. Is it still all an act?

I don't need to take a peek into your mind to know. Of course it's an act.

I told you to do that.

I told you you should get closer to them, even if it's him.

I told you it's still too early to kill him, it would raise too much suspicion. There are bigger targets than him.

It's all part of the plan, I remind myself. And you're playing your part well.

However, there's something gnawing at me, something other than the cold. Something inside me, like black ooze, spreading in my stomach, spreading, tainting everything.

It flares up in anger when he looks at you with a smile that I should punch out of him.

How I wish I could.

Not yet.

I will kill him later. First, I will make him wish he was never born.

No, not me.

We.

We will make sure that he suffers.

The thought makes me smile. I'm so proud of you.

- if marcus left the baths

He made you cry. It's all too clear from the darkness of your thoughts, the weight of your step.

He left before you. His thoughts were a mess of things, egoistical and full of self-pity, unimportant.

If I'd realized that he...

Violent thoughts run through my mind and they make me smile. I can't kill him yet but I will remember this. Add it to the list of things that sad excuse of a man has done in this lifetime.

I will hurt him for you. And I will enjoy every moment of it.

Just as I'm about to walk up to you, to comfort you like the friend that I am, the big oaf follows.

Disgust flares up. Annoyance, and something else I can't quite name. Something that ignites when he's looking at you. Like I should be there with you.

But no. Not yet.

You know this. I should remind myself of it, too.

He hurries toward the wagon to open the door for you, stumbling on the way.

Weak, pathetic thing.

I need to remind myself that even he can be important. Even he can fulfill the role of the ally. Even he can prove himself useful to you, to us.

You're the one who understands this, sees through his worthlessness.

And I'm so proud of you.

We can do this.

[Sneak peek](#)

[Jun 28, 2024](#)

Working on Niall's solo scenes, woop. The confused vs determined Hati variables are quite prominent in Niall's and Tinsae's scenes since they're not going to be as happy with the thought of Hati getting their revenge as the others. And they want to help the one who's quite confused.

He frowns. "I'm not afraid of you. I'm afraid for you. And with you."

- if determined on getting revenge

He seems to reconsider his words. "I mean... Sometimes I am afraid of the things I see in your eyes."

"What do you see?"

"Something... dark."

"But you choose to be here. With me."

"I've been called a fool before. Many times." There's a faint smile on his lips. The smile quickly dies as if he remembered something deeply unpleasant. "Especially by your weird little friend."

[Sneakier peek](#)

[Jun 30, 2024](#)

"Actually, it was Marcus who drove me here in the first place."

The corner of Niall's eye twitches. "He—"

"It's a long story. He..." I search for the right words but there are none for what I'm about to tell him. "He killed my father."

Niall shoots up from the pool, anger quickly rushing back to his gaze like a thunder cloud. He breathes heavily, water drips down on his naked body. His whole frame shivers with emotion.

"He killed your father and kept you in danger all this time?" He looks ready to pounce after Marcus.

[["Niall. You're scaring me."]]

He looks at me, anger distorting his face so that he's almost unrecognizable. The snarl quickly melts away as he registers my words.

"Oh. Oh! I'm sorry!" The pitch of his voice gets higher as he slumps back down to the pool with water splashing. He runs his fingers through his wet hair. "I'm truly sorry, I... I'm overreacting. I mean I'm not but I am. I don't know. Forgive me."

"Just... calm down, alright?"

"Yes, I will. Whatever you want." He takes a deep breath to calm himself down. Again. "I just... He knew," he whispers the accusing words at the pool.

"Yes. He did." I look at the water, too.

"And he... he..." The words left unsaid carry the weight of my loss.

[["Sit your sexy butt back down."]]

I order him playfully. Half-playfully.

His eyes widen at my command. Then, he looks at his naked, exposed torso, his pelvic area.

And as quickly as he got up, he sits down with his face red. "Now— No— But what about—"

"Calm yourself. I'm not in danger right now." I'm surprisingly calm myself. Perhaps it's easy to detach myself from what I'm telling him, perhaps he makes it so with his dramatic reactions.

[["He deserves to die for what he did."]]

My words seep of poison as I study his reaction.

There's no immediate push back from him. He doesn't agree with me, which isn't surprising. Of course being angry at Marcus wouldn't mean he wants to kill him.

Instead, he nods. "I understand. I... I understand." He sits back down, slowly, with control, deep in thought.

In his solo scenes, Niall will have more time to freak out about things. Yay!

[Q&A](#)

[Jun 30, 2024](#)

This Q&A is in an interview format cause I think I prefer it over just straight up listing the things they're answering to. It makes for a fun dialogue and I'm all for that. Hope you enjoy it, too!

X: How would you feel after a one night stand?

T: Quite well. And I'd make sure that the other participant(s) feel(s) the same.

Camilla purses her lips in disapproval.

N: I'd feel fine.

Niall's smile is a little strained.

T: Dear? Are you sure you'd feel fine about it?

N: Of course!

C: Why would anyone feel fine about that? It leaves you vulnerable. If you're not killed during the night, you will at least be left utterly disappointed.

Awkward silence lingers.

X: What about you, Marcus?

M: I don't know. Satisfied?

X: Quinn?

Q: I don't care for those.

X: How would you feel?

Q: Dirty.

X: What do other people say is your biggest flaw?

N: Well mine is—

M: People pleasing.

Camilla nods.

T: Forgive me but you do have a habit of bending yourself over backwards for other people's pleasure.

C: What she said.

N: I don't do that! That makes it sound weird. I just prioritize other people's happiness over mine.

M, C, T: ...

N: ...Let's talk about something else.

X: What about you, Marcus?

C: He's a dick.

Niall nods discreetly.

T: Camilla, please. Marcus can be a little inconsiderate when it comes to other people. I'm sure he tries his best. Sure, he fails more times than one can count but he tries.

M: Thanks?

T: You're welcome, dear.

N: I think that his problem is that he's not in touch with his feelings. It makes him act like a... well, a dick.

M: Niall, really? Feelings?

N: You do have those, no matter how hard you try to deny it.

T: You're right, Niall. That's a good observation.

Niall beams.

M: You're both full of it. Let's move on.

X: Tinsae?

C: She flees from her problems.

T: Camilla, I don't run—

C: You literally ran from Rome when I told you that you're my best friend.

Niall gasps in horror.

T: Excuse me but I didn't run. I was expected elsewhere. I have many obligations all across the Empire. And beyond. Many people need me and—

M: You ran from the room when I told you that Antonia considers you as her aunt.

T: I was expected elsewhere! Please, let's talk about something else.

X: Camilla, what about—

M: She's a cunt.

Niall nods discreetly.

Camilla nods, too.

T: Marcus, don't talk like that. She's a... good person. Deep inside.

C: You hesitated.

T: No. No, I did not. You just have a peculiar way of showing it. It might confuse people and make them think you're a... that.

N: She does beat up people for others. Is that considered good?

T: The intention is good, the method is lacking. But I think that she has a similar problem with Marcus. She's not connected with her—

C: If you say feelings, I swear to Jupiter...

Tinsae closes her mouth and throws a meaningful look at Niall.

X: Quinn?

M: Weirdo.

N: Extremely mean and upsetting.

C: Weird.

T: Evil.

Q: Why am I even here? Fuck you.

Quinn leaves.

X: Then to another question. **What do you stand for?**

T: Protecting the vulnerable and helping those in need.

Camilla looks at her with a small, proud smile.

N: Mine is probably helping others, too. It's important.

M: You do that way too much. Both of you.

T: What about you, Marcus?

M: I don't stand for anything.

C: Serving the Empire?

M: You're so funny. Don't you stand for that, too?

C: I stand for punishing those who have wronged me.

Quinn shouts from behind the door: Same!

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Jun 30, 2024](#)

Hi there!

So, I've been writing Niall's scenes and working on the smut, and the other Patreon benefits. I will give a longer progress report next week. Hopefully I've finished the smut by then.

I'm just basically popping in here to say that things are progressing steadily.

As always, thank you so much for being here!

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Jul 5, 2024](#)

Unfortunately, no Camilla's cucking yet! Next week! Other than that, things are going well. My writing schedule is great, I have a daily writing goal I'm managing to hit every day and I'm aiming to get the next update out as quickly as I can. The end of this month, early next? Not sure but I'm doing my best and focusing on writing. I'm drafting Quinn's and Tinsae's scenes as I go, too, so the process with those will hopefully be even swifter.

Some rambling about the branches and coding:

I was writing Niall's scenes and wondered how I'd track his relationship variables. At first, I thought that I'd code in a 'trust' variable for every RO. However, it doesn't fit Niall very much. He's already very

forgiving and trusting as a character, so the variable wouldn't serve its purpose as well as I originally thought. What would serve its purpose for him, however, is a 'confidence' variable. Eg. if you nag at his confidence or not. That would serve as a variable for toxic Niallmancers. (Terrible, I know.)

When it comes to the 'toxic' and 'healthy' routes, it's been a little difficult to think how to code them. With Niall, the 'confidence' would fit the relationship dynamics and his character. There is a similar variable for Marcus, too, which greatly impacts the branching, and that is the 'killer' route. It's more straightforward and doesn't really require as much tracking, other than whether or not you start to doubt your killing ways or not. I think that Tinsae will place a heavy emphasis on Hati's motives on being in Rome in the first place, eg. whether or not you're there to kill people or not. There is one other thing I could track with her but it might be a little spoilery. Will have to see how it turns out. I'm not sure about Camilla... It would make sense to track her trust levels too, though. Also with Quinn trust is key. There will soon become a key point with them which determines if you place your trust in them fully or not. They haven't made it easy lol.

So, this is me basically muttering nonsense and realizing that I can't just treat every RO similarly, they have different arcs and different motives. (Shocking, I know.)

Anyway, the main priority is to keep writing and I'm definitely doing just that. Thank you so so much for being here and supporting me in this massive endeavor. I couldn't do it without you. Thank you! 🧡

[June smut is out now!](#)

[Jul 14, 2024](#)

Hello there!

The smut is released! It takes place further in future and I was way too ambitious and wrote both sub and dom route (for both fem and male Hati) and here we are. Hope you enjoy!

Link: <https://haleym.itch.io/june-smut-and-backlog>

Password: patreonsmut_june_beepboop

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Jul 14, 2024](#)

Hi there!

I've been working hard on the Niall update and I finally managed to release the last month's Camilla smut. It turned out pretty good, even if I was overly ambitious with providing both sub and dom routes for Hati (who can be either male or female). It was a lot. Won't probably do that again unless I hate myself in the future, too (jk). This month's smut RO is Marcus whose fluff smut scenario won the poll. It will definitely take place in the future, he's not the fluffiest of guys just yet.

Remember when last month I said that I might take a week off this month? Haha, no. Can't do that. Bills are piling up and I need to keep pushing the next update out. It is what it is. At least the progress with the update is going well. Might be able to start coding next week.

Anyway, thank you so so much for being here. I wouldn't be able to do this without you. Thank you. 

[Weekly rambling](#)

[Jul 21, 2024](#)

Hi there!

So, I've been writing. I didn't get to the coding part just yet this week but I'm getting there next week.

Both Niall and Marcus have surprised me during this update. But that's one of the good things about being a plotter with major pantsner tendencies (writing IFs forced me to start plotting more lol but I'm still a pantsner at heart); I can let the characters surprise me and go from there. For example, Marcus was supposed to just have a quick pouty meeting with Hati after Niall's baths but things happened. Things that make complete sense for his character, too, of course, but I was still surprised.

So, it's been fun. I love it when things surprise me in the story, it's like I'm just there for the ride. I can plot all I want but if the characters decide otherwise, I'll just have to accept it and see where it goes from there. Of course I have the major plot events planned and the major character arcs in mind. However, relationship pacing is more difficult to anticipate beforehand. That's why I'll probably have to decide on the major relationship variables just until I'm nearing the end of this book and start to edit. I don't know if I even need numeric variables, will have to see where things go from here.

At this point, I'm just looking at the bath drama like it wasn't supposed to be this dramatic lol. The bath scenes were actually supposed to be quite small, just small identity revelation scenes and let's move on. However, when people are naked, sharing secrets, and there are so many relationship dynamics to explore, of course the scenes will explode in size.

I'm just enjoying the ride, I suppose.

Anyway, thank you so so much for being here. I will release polls (short story and smut polls) asap, either today or tomorrow. Thank you! 🧡

[August's smut RO](#)

[Jul 23, 2024](#)

Camilla's first official date with Hati (fluff)

4

Niall's first official date with Hati (fluff)

5

Tinsae's first official date with Hati (fluff)

6

Quinn's first official date with Hati (fluff)

6

Niall gets punished by Hati

4

Tinsae gets punished by Hati

1

Niall gets down on Hati in a closet (while Marcus is around)

21

Camilla gets down on Hati in a closet

2

Niall is drunk and lacks inhibition

13

Camilla is being sacrilegious on a Jupiter's shrine

8

Hati gets punished by Camilla

8

Hati gets punished by Quinn

11

Quinn gets down on Hati in a closet

7

Tinsae gets down on Hati in a closet

1

Poll ended Jul 30, 2024 · 97 votes total

[Short story poll](#)

[Jul 23, 2024](#)

Marcus dips into the pool with the obviously murderous Hati

24

Camilla gets bitten by a gremlin Hati

11

Camilla lures Tinsae to the baths while knowing Hati is there

8

Quinn tests Hati to see if they'll admit that they saw Cernunnos

12

Tinsae saves Quinn's and Hati's butts during Samhain

5

Quinn talking with their cookie shop grandma about Hati and stuff

9

Tinsae ruminating after killing for Hati

3

Poll ended Jul 26, 2024 · 72 votes total

[Q&A](#)

[Jul 29, 2024](#)

What was your most unrealistic purchase?

Camilla is the first to speak, "A tiger. She was a guardian and a friend."

N: What happened to her?

C: I had to leave her in Rome.

T: I'm sorry dear.

Camilla shakes her head and falls silent.

M: Mine is—

N: The ridiculously overpriced scrolls you have in your office?

M: Only an uneducated buffoon would think they are an unrealistic purchase. No, the unrealistic purchase was a gift for my father. That man deserves only misfortune.

Camilla nods. Niall purses his lips in disapproval.

T: I bought a ticket to the end of the world but didn't board the ship.

N: Where would you have gone?

T: Sinae.

C: Why?

T: I needed to leave. But my establishments wouldn't have survived without me.

Camilla remains silent.

N: One time, when I was feeling adventurous and wanted to shade myself from the sun, I bought a pileus. I looked like a lucharachán in it.

T: I think it was a cute look.

N: Let's never talk about that hat again.

X: Quinn?

Q: I don't buy things.

C: Do you need money?

M: Don't offer them—

Q: Thank you. I'll buy Hati ten vials of wolfsbane and nightshade.

C: Who would you poison?

Q: Not me. Hati would. It'd be a surprise to see who dies.

Awkward silence lingers.

What are you kind of snobby about?

M: I don't know if I'm snobby but—

N: You are.

M: Maybe I can judge people when it comes to them not knowing classic literature.

N: You berated me for not knowing who Virgil is.

M: Who the fuck doesn't know who Virgil is?

N: You're doing it again.

X: What about you, Niall?

N: Clothes, maybe. But I try not to judge people for their outfit.

M: You berated Hati for their sacks of clothing.

N: No, I was not berating them. I merely told them that they could do better and I would love to help.

X: Tinsae?

T: I'm not sure...

C: You can get snobby about ethics.

T: I'm not snobby. I'm thinking out loud and expecting people to take part in the conversation.

C: They don't because you sound snobby.

Tinsae purses her lips.

X: Camilla?

C: I don't know.

M: You're snobby about everything.

Camilla thinks for a moment. Then, she nods in an amicable agreement.

X: Quinn?

Q: Well I'm not snobby about anything. My culture is merely superior to yours.

And some modern AU questions:

What is your go-to karaoke song?

N: Lonely by Nathan Wagner.

M: Wish he'd save that for karaoke but he sings it in the shower, too. And the garden.

T: Oh, dear. Do you need a hug?

Niall nods and receives a good old hug from Tinsae.

X: Marcus?

M: Bad Guy by Billie Eilish.

C: Do you even sing that sarcastically?

Marcus merely smirks as an answer.

X: Camilla?

C: My Body is a Cage by Monarchy.

M: Oh, poor you.

C: As if your go-to song wasn't Not Strong Enough by Apocalyptica & Brent Smith, you whiney bitch. I've heard you.

Marcus seethes but remains silent.

X: Tinsae?

T: I'm Not Okay (I Promise) by My Chemical Romance.

N: Are you okay?

T: Of course, dear.

C: It says in the lyrics that someone is wearing you out. Who?

T: No one.

Camilla narrows her eyes at her friend. "Is it me?"

T: Of course not.

Q: Mine is My Demons by STARSET.

M: Literally no one is surprised by that, you demon.

Q: Or maybe If I Had A Heart by Fever Ray.

M: What's wrong with you?

Q: Rich coming from you, you broody bitch. You see Hati and On My Knees (by RÜFÜS DU SOL) starts playing in your head.

Marcus falls in awkward silence.

What emoji do you use the most when texting?

N: 😭

T: 😊

C: 🤡

M: 😊

Q: 😊

[Sneak peek](#)

[Jul 30, 2024](#)

Awkward Hati and Niall pondering on their options.

[[“You can join the bath if you want to...” The thought is awkward.]]

It feels awkward that he’s there fully clothed while I’m naked here. However, the thought of him entering the pool naked feels even more awkward.

And he seems to share the sentiment, since he gives me a quick lookover.

“Are you quite sure? I’d have to get naked.”

“You can’t keep your tunic on?”

“I’m sorry,” he says with a regretful frown. “The cloth would be ruined. It’s my favorite.”

He is wearing a nice, green tunic with little floral embroidery on the hem.

“Well... It is what it is.” He needs to take his clothes off.

We nod in agreement. “So be it.”

[The Water](#)

[Jul 30, 2024](#)

Marcus steps into the pool with the obviously murderous Hati

I shouldn’t step into the water.

But I know I won’t listen to myself.

You're peering at me like a crocodile from the shallow waters. Am I the unsuspecting prey?

I chuckle at the thought.

Don't tell me that you're trying to look more approachable with that smile. It just manages to make you look more deranged than usual. Hatred in your gaze is burning holes in my tunic. It's a good look.

I smirk at the thought and it causes disgust to flash through your gaze. Can't fault you for it.

"Make room, I'm coming," I say, feeling almost giddy.

And you seem as dementedly happy about it. A small, unhinged giggle leaves your lips, a telltale that your mind is filled with blood. My blood.

"That sounded positively psychotic," I let you know and you agree. It's nice to have something to agree on.

You look like you're ready to stab me in my thigh. I can definitely see you doing that, and you'd probably enjoy it. Would you look into my eyes while I'm bleeding dry, drinking the sight of my pain? Or would you spit at me and leave me alone with my pitiful regrets?

Your gaze darts to the pile of clothes you had your dagger in and I'm almost offended by it. The knife is gone, you silly little thing. Of course I wouldn't make this too easy for you. You need to use your hands. Or maybe you'd try to drown me? Honestly, I would prefer a good old strangulation, it feels more intimate.

You, however, would most likely prefer to behead me like I did your father. A head for a head, as they say.

I almost frown at the thought but manage to control myself.

No beheading on the menu tonight.

First, I need to see if the would-be-murderer's cheeks will blush like a maiden's.

It's just an experiment. A battle of wills, if you will.

I make sure you're watching. Then, as a show, I start taking off my clothes. And you...

- **You blush.**

I smirk at the sight of your chubby little cheeks flushing. How predictable, yet so satisfying. And the irritation that invades your gaze when you realize that you lost the battle is irresistible.

Makes me want to squeeze you.

- **You stare.**

Did I expect your chubby little cheeks to flush? Maybe. I had hopes.

But maybe this is even better. The stare you throw at me is intriguing, the stare that you must hope could kill me. It almost sends a shiver down my spine. You could curse someone with that stare. Or, more intriguingly, maybe you're doing it right now!

- **You ignore the show.**

Instead, you ask about the scars. And it irks me more than I thought it would. My previous battles are not important. I'm here, naked, and you should care about that.

Instead, you keep asking. About the one in my stomach, the one wound that should've killed me. But it didn't. I crawled out of my death bed and when I came to, the first thing I saw was my father. And the first thing he said was that I should marry before I die. That if I choose to remain as a Centurion, he chooses to force me to do that.

The memory irks me as much as this failed show does.

This is annoying.

Besides, you don't care about the scars and their stories, you just want to revel in the thought of me almost dying, you sick thing.

"You should be happy he didn't manage to kill me," I say. It means that you can kill me, instead.

And you agree. It's the second thing we agree on tonight.

The water is pleasantly warm as I step in.

[Sneakier peek](#)

[Jul 31, 2024](#)

Niall acting as a fine Quinn-related therapist

"Have you seen your friend around?" The question is hesitant and coated with ill-concealed worry.

- if quinn_angry

"Too many times," I scoff and he raises his brows. "We're not on good terms right now," I explain.

"You can tell me."

Something tries to prevent me from speaking. I ignore it.

"They're... pushy. And get mad at the smallest of things. They haven't been the same after what happened." There's a knot in my stomach tightening when I talk.

//shut up shut up//

"Is it about the trauma you've both experienced?" he offers, all too kindly. They were so rude towards him and still he tries to offer an olive branch.

Say it's the trauma and move on. He shouldn't know. He's an outsider.

"Maybe," I say. It could be that. I don't remember them being like this in the past. Something's changed.

"I just asked because, well..." He seemingly searches for the right words. "I'm just a little worried about you."

Smile! No need to be worried.

- if quinn_friend

"Yes. Why do you ask?"

"No reason," he says too quickly. When I give him a curious look, he sighs. "I'm just worried about you. They seem..." He searches for the right words, the ones who won't insult me.

"Unstable?"

[July smut is out now!](#)

[Aug 2, 2024](#)

As per usual, the smut is not done yet (even though the fluffy Marcus has been a delight to write so far) and it will take till early next month. Here's the link and the password. If you unpledged this month (thank you so so much for your patronage!), please follow my Tumblr or Patreon's posts to see when I release the smut. So, the link doesn't have the game just yet.

Edit: It's here! It was a cute one. Stupid sappy Marcus and Hati.

Thank you for your patience!

Link: <https://haleym.itch.io/july-smut-and-backlog>

Password: july-patreon-smut

[Biweekly rambling](#)

[Aug 2, 2024](#)

Hi there!

Sorry about missing last week's rambling. I realized that around half of my rambles are mostly me saying 'still writing!'. I thought that maybe I should start rambling biweekly, so I have more to say.

Basically, this is me coming here to say, 'Still writing!'. Lol but I am.

I just released the fluffy Marcus smut. It was a fun one to write, it takes place further in the future. It was actually super interesting to explore Marcus when his walls are more down. As well as Hati's walls, of course. It would be interesting to write similar smut for all the ROs but we'll see how long I'll keep writing these scenarios. This month's chosen smut RO is Niall (it'll be featuring Marcus too, but not like in a threesome kind of way).

I hope to release the next update before the mid part of this month. It's looking good, and I've drafted the other bath scenes a lot on the side too, so they shouldn't take as long to write either. We're getting out of the baths sooner rather than later! 😊 Fingers crossed!

Anyway, thank you so so much for being here. I hope you all have a good weekend!

[Biweekly rambling](#)

[Aug 17, 2024](#)

Hi there!

Working my butt off on the update! I wished to get it out this weekend but realistically it isn't doable, there's still too much playtesting and finetuning to do. So, next week! Also, unfortunately, I will leave the Marcus drama for the next month's update, otherwise we'll be here till the end of the month or something. I plan on releasing it next month along with Tinsae's scenes. It will be a challenge but I'm

trying to stop myself from editing too much and just steam ahead. I'm on a roll and just focusing on getting out of the baths haha.

Also, as I've worked on the update, I made sense of Niall's code for the rest of the book. Previously, I mentioned the confidence stat, but I don't think it will be relevant in this book. Next one, perhaps. For now, how into the whole revenge thing Hati is affects a lot of his route. Pro revenge and hella confused variables determine a lot of the bigger branching. I mean, it makes sense, you're either there to kill his family or you're not. It's kind of a big deal lol. Also, things came up about Quinn in this update that I didn't think would come up just yet. But it was interesting and Quinn's 'bath' scenes will definitely have to be mandatory for all Hatis. Even if you hate their guts, something came up and it can't be ignored by any Hati. I mean, some kind of revelation was mandatory, the bath scenes is all about revelations.

Also also, I wasn't sure before how to go about the whole route locking thing. But now, I think that whoever you choose to have as your bath companion, determines that they will come in and help you with the Optio. If you chose Quinn, you will probably still have to go with someone else's bath scenes. I mean it goes with the idea what Quinn has said to you as well, you need to spend time with the others and not them. Quinn sees themselves as this bonus RO who's there no matter what and there's no sense in focusing on them anyway. It would make sense that they'd force a situation where you simply can't find them before they want it to happen. That's kind of their vibe, I'm sorry to all the Quinnmancers though. Your RO can be an ass.

Also, I think I mentioned this last time or I just thought about mentioning it, but whether you choose Tinsae or Camilla, you're locked into the 'girls' route'. I mean that you can pick between them even after the bath scenes, or both of them. In this case, your options are between Camilla and Tinsae. The same goes to Marcus and Niall. It just makes sense since there's this whole poly and LT thing to consider, too. They can be a package deal or maybe the other one is your bestie when you romance the other one. Their stories also intertwine so it just makes the most sense story and code wise.

Anyway! I'm feeling good about the progress. I hope y'all have a great weekend and thank you so so much for being here!

[Blooper](#)

[Aug 19, 2024](#)

I realized I haven't shared a blooper in a while. I found this one in my files and I have no idea when I would even use this one. I mean, I have an idea when it might be fitting but I doubt Marcus would act like this. I mean, yes, he can be dramatic but it's a bit much.

So, it's just a depressed and pouty little Marcus. Perhaps a high school AU scenario where he refuses to go to school? 😊

"Marcus, you need to get up," I say in frustration. He lies beneath the sheets with his head shielded by the sunlight assaulting the room.

No answer.

"Your brother—" I start.

"He can choke on a donkey dick," he grumbles. His voice is small, tired, and angry.

"This is unlike you."

"Go away."

"I'm not going anywhere. I'm here if you need to talk." Silence. "You haven't left the house in 5 days," I remind him, even if it most likely changes nothing.

Silence.

[Sneak peek](#)

[Aug 21, 2024](#)

Different Hatis fighting back the tears (behind a choice ofc). My face when I realized that I still have a few emotional scenes left to write (they always take the most care to write T_T). Well at least it's always fun to experiment with Hatis with different personalities.

fire

I grimace at the tears, try to threaten them to stay away. But it's in vain, they're already falling down my cheeks.

"Hati," he starts, ready to grab me into his wet embrace.

"Don't you dare—"

But it's too late. Roughly, seemingly without a thought, he hugs me.

"You are not alone," he whispers against my hair.

water

Soon enough, I let the emotions win me over. The tears flow freely.

"I've been so alone," I whisper.

"You're not alone anymore," Niall says with a face of determination. Roughly, seemingly without a thought, he grabs me into his embrace. Before I can process what happens, he already places a gentle kiss on top of my head.

"You are not alone," he whispers against my hair.

earth

And with great struggle I succeed, swallowing back the tears triumphantly.

"Hati," Niall says. "You shouldn't fight your emotions"

"I don't," I say in a stern voice, fooling nobody.

"Do you need a—"

"A hug? No."

He nods but still keeps his strong arms wide enough for me to enter.

[[“Fine. Just a small one.” I reluctantly enter the embrace.]]

[[“I said no.”]]

air

I look at nowhere to clear my mind. The beginnings of the teardrops run dry as I stare at the nothingness.

"Hati?"

"Yes?" I ask, my voice absent.

"You look like you need a hug."

I blink and look at him. His arms are wide open as he looks at me with an earnest gaze, inviting me in.

[[Enter the embrace without a word.]]

[[“No, thank you.”]]

[Aug 24, 2024](#)

Quinn tests Hati to see if they'll admit that they saw Cernunnos

Quinn talking with their cookie shop grandma about Hati and stuff

Tinsae ruminating after killing the Optio for Hati

Tinsae saves Quinn's and Hati's butts during Samhain

Camilla gets bitten by a gremlin Hati

65 votes total

[September Smut Poll](#)

[Aug 24, 2024](#)

A lot of potential punishing going on this month. But also fluff!

Quinn is drunk and lacks inhibition

23

Quinn is sweet and takes care of Hati

6

Fluffy smut with (suspiciously) sweet Camilla

9

A nice cozy evening with Tinsae

3

Hati gets punished by Camilla

8

Hati gets punished by Tinsae

5

Hati gets punished by Quinn

12

Quinn gets punished by Hati

10

Poll ended Aug 31, 2024 · 76 votes total

[\(Burn\) the Mill \(Down\)](#)

[Aug 30, 2024](#)

Quinn's POV, talking with the cookie shop grandmother about Hati

Mouse.

Two. Three.

Squeaking, crawling. Scratching. Gnawing.

I release my knees from the hug and shield my ears. Why are they so loud? Is it the hard wooden floor amplifying their ungodly sounds?

Do they resent life in this godsforsaken town, too?

“Or do you want to drive me insane?” I ask the empty mill room. The critters don’t answer.

I smack my head to make it stop. It doesn’t. It just hurts.

//shut up shut up shut up//

My bones yearn to lie in the shade of the trees but it’s not safe. I can’t.

Instead, I’m here. Amidst the mice and the rats and the dirt and the people.

At least you’re here, too. Close. The fort is so close that I can smell you. I can smell the change in your moods, if you’re happy, sad, enraged. Afraid.

It comforts me. I inhale the scent, ignoring the flour in the air.

The noise of the critters cease as the door opens. "Have you eaten today, dear?" the familiar voice asks. I heard her heavy step from afar, her walking cane clunked loud on the stone. Her presence doesn't offend me.

"No." It's a chore. Why do you have to eat so much to stay alive?

The grandmother lets out a heavy sigh. "You are a handful, you know that?"

I don't answer. It doesn't matter what she thinks.

With her bad knees, she bends down to give me a handful of baked goods. Cookies.

It lifts my spirit.

"Thank you," I say. It's easy to act polite with her. I even give her a small smile. She's the only person who manages to make me force a smile in this town. She reminds me of someone I used to know. A long, long time ago.

"Aren't you visiting your friend today?" she asks.

"No. They're busy," I say and perk at the grating sound of my voice. There's something wrong with it. It's almost... bitter.

Why would I be bitter? You're doing your duty. You're making sure our plans work. You're absolutely perfect.

The grandmother smiles at me. It's a weird kind of smile. She's standing above me, smiling like she knows something more than I do.

It makes my skin tingle with annoyance.

"You act so differently with them," she says with a smile that can only be described as warm.

"Of course. They're special."

"I can see that. Do you want to tell me more about them?"

"You've seen them," I remind the old woman. Her eyesight must be failing her if I have to tell her what she already saw. Or maybe her memory is filled with holes. "They're radiant." My dearest friend. Who throws certain kinds of looks at me that I don't appreciate. It makes me feel some... how.

Some kind of way.

Sad? I'd hope to make you look at me like you used to.

"They're the only thing that matters in this world," I add, aiming my words to the wall.

The grandmother shakes her head at my words. I can see it from the corner of my eye.

“What?” I ask, annoyed by her expression of something I can’t understand.

“Maybe you shouldn’t put so much weight on one person’s shoulders alone.” Her tone isn’t careful at all, even if she’s saying the most preposterous things.

‘Maybe you should mind your own business, hag, before I burn your pathetic mill down,’ I want to say. But I don’t. Something in me shuts down, refusing to lash out at the grandma. Instead, I stare at the cookies in my hand.

I crush them into crumbles.

[Q&A](#)

[Aug 31, 2024](#)

X: “Let’s start with something a little different before proceeding to the usual questions. What our audience is dying to know, Niall, is why did you participate in sexual intercourse with Hati in Marcus's route but refused them in your own?”

M: “Yeah, Niall, the audience is *dying*.”

N: “I...”

X: “You were being petty? Hati chose Marcus and not you, but still showed some affection towards you when you showed up?”

M: “When you so graciously brought in the towels?”

N: “No. Of course not. That would be juvenile of me. What happened was a mistake.”

M: “Now you’re calling Hati a mistake?”

N: “No, I’m not!”

X: “Thank you for that non answer, Niall. Back to our regularly scheduled programming. Who are your best friends?”

C: “Tinsae.”

X: “What about others?”

C: "My servant, I suppose. And if you ask if there are any others..."

X: "No, no, thank you."

T: "I suppose Camilla—"

C: "Suppose?"

Tinsae lets out an embarrassed laugh. "I mean you are. But there are others, too. All across Rome and beyond."

C: "Well, aren't you popular?" Camilla looks like she's swallowed a lemon.

N: "I have good friends all across the town."

C: "The women you massage?"

N: "No! Well, I mean..."

C: "How sad to consider hookups your best friends."

N: "No, there are colleagues as well and—"

C: "You hookup with your colleagues?"

N: NO!

M: "Camilla, shut up."

X: "What about Marcus?"

M: "I have friends, mostly other soldiers."

X: "Quinn, I presume you're going to say Hati?"

Quinn nods.

X: "Alright. When and with whom was your first kiss? Quinn, you're going to say Hati?"

Quinn nods.

M: "Mine was a prostitute father took me to see to become a man."

C: "That's sick."

Marcus shrugs. It's how things are done in Rome.

C: "Did that idiot take you to see one, too, Niall?"

N: "I, uh, yes. But I just talked to the lady. I wanted to know if she's comfortable with her career choice and when it came clear that it wasn't a choice, I provided her with funds to do whatever else she wanted. When dad found out that I took the money from him and gave it to the lady, he... Well."

M: "He wasn't happy."

N: "No. Something about me not being able to save every 'damned prostitute in Rome'."

X: "So your first kiss wasn't back then?"

N: "Oh, no. It happened when I was a child. It was with a... a.... Senator boy."

C: "Cute."

N: "He kissed me because I helped him when he had resin stuck in his hair."

C: "I won't share mine."

X: "You are regularly breaking the rules of this game, Camilla."

Camilla gives the interviewer an icy glare.

X: "Uh, Tinsae?"

T: "My first kiss was with a fellow priestess acolyte."

X: "As for modern world AU questions, how would you like to spend Valentine's Day with Hati?"

N: "I'd make it a special day. First, I'd make them breakfast in bed. I'd brew them their favorite tea or coffee, decorate the tray with flowers. I'd take them shopping something nice for the evening restaurant reservation in the best restaurant in town, then—"

C: "The whole day is a commercial scam."

Marcus nods in agreement

N: "No! It's not. It's the day of love. You don't have to buy anything if you don't want to but it's nice to have a day when you can celebrate love."

C: "And what exactly prevents you from celebrating it on any other weekend?"

N: "Nothing... it's just—"

Tinsae cuts in: "There are so many cute little teddy bears on sale. The ones with little hearts on them."

N: "I love them! And the heart-shaped chocolates. You can eat them while watching a romcom."

T: "Perfect."

C: "Ugh."

X: "How would you spend Valentine's day then, Camilla?"

C: "If Hati insisted on celebrating, we would go to an arcade. Or, maybe a match of tennis. The loser would receive their punishment later in the evening. Then, I would feed them."

N: "What does that mean? Feed them with what?"

T: "She means that she'd take them to a restaurant."

N: "Who says it like that?"

T: "I would book a staycation. A little getaway. We'd talk and eat and relax. I'd wash their hair, give them a massage, and take good care of them."

M: "I would write and recite them a poem."

Camilla bursts out laughing.

Marcus remains unbothered. There's only a slight hue of redness in the tips of his ears.

M: "Then, we'd make playlists of songs that remind us of each other."

N: "Marcus, I didn't know you had it in you."

M: "Had what?"

Niall elbows Marcus a little too hard. "That's so romantic!"

Marcus scoffs.

X: "Sorry, Quinn, I almost forgot about you."

M: "They're so quiet, it's creepy."

Q: "I would do whatever Hati wants to do."

X: "What if they can't decide?"

Q: "I suppose we would go to a coffee date."

X: "How nice. Anyway, that's all for now. Thank you for tuning in!"

[Sneakier peek](#)

[Aug 31, 2024](#)

There's something deeply comforting about writing Tinsae's scenes T_T ❤️

I rest my head against the edge of the barrel and rest. The water is just the right temperature.

Suddenly, Tinsae's touches my hair. She starts massaging my scalp.

She starts humming a song. It's comforting, clearly a lullaby meant for babies.

"Am I a child?" I ask.

She lets out a giggle that almost sounds like a song itself. "No, but your inner child might need to hear it."

My inner child. The scar on my chest tickles.

"Mother never sang me lullabies," I say, only half aware that I'm talking out loud.

"Mine didn't either."

"What was she like?"

Her touch becomes more rigid as she seemingly ponders on the question. Finally, she says, "A stern woman. Dedicated to her cause."

"Mine, too."

She doesn't ask further questions and I'm relieved. Neither of us seem keen on exploring the topic of our maternal figures.

Gradually, her touch relaxes and she continues to sing in a low, pleasant voice. I close my eyes and focus on her touch, her singing.

Then, there's Marcus. 😊 He will make this appearance for the revenge-oriented Hatis:

"Did you seriously think that he'd be in on your little revenge fantasy?" An all too familiar voice mocks me. I should've known he'd stay here for the show.

"What are you doing here?" Why do I even bother asking?

Marcus smiles like he's in on a joke only he knows of. "To see you make a fool of yourself."

[[“This is just the beginning,” I say with a sneaky smile.]]

I stretch my newly bathed limbs and smile. “He will warm up to the idea. Eventually.”

Marcus sizes me up, and my threat. “You really think so?” His voice is amused. But there's a layer of worry that I smell like blood in the water.

[Progress Update Rambling](#)

[Sep 8, 2024](#)

Hi there!

I will have to keep this short and sweet this time because there's not much else to say than 'I'm writing!' and 'I'm also getting a fever!' so.

The update came and went and I'm focusing on Tinsae's (and Marcus's encore) scenes now. There's a hefty draft done already so I'm hopeful that I'll get something out soon. First, I need to finish Niall's smut that's overdue. Unfortunately, my family is going through a flu now so that's not great but I'm trying my best.

If you have any Q&A questions, or short story suggestions, please let me know. Thank you so so much for being here!

[August smut out now!](#)

[Sep 15, 2024](#)

Hi there!

EDIT: It's out now!

I will take till early next month to finish the smut. Here's the link and the password for when it gets ready. If you unpledged this month (thank you so so much for your patronage!), please follow my Tumblr or Patreon's posts to see when I release it. So, the link doesn't have the game just yet.

Thank you! 🙏

Link: <https://haleym.itch.io/august-smut>

Password: august_smutt

[Progress Update Rambling](#)

[Sep 16, 2024](#)

Hi there!

The flu didn't get to me that bad and I've been writing away. I released the Niall smut (with LT vibes) yesterday and I can fully focus on the update. (This month's chosen RO for the smut is Quinn, which will be interesting.)

I'm making good progress with the update 🙏 It's been super interesting to write Tinsae's scenes. I thought that Tinsae's scenes would follow a similar pattern to Niall but she surprised me. Everyone's been surprising me and that's fun! **SPOILERS:** Vengeful Hatis can have a corruption arc with her and it's been so much fun to start laying out the groundwork for that. **END OF SPOILERS** If I can't finish Tinsae's scenes by the end of the month, I will still release Marcus's encore scenes so I'll keep the update roll going! Will ofc try my best to get it all out asap because I'm itching to get to the meeting with Quinn. 🤪

Anyway, thank you so so much for being here and having faith in me with this project. I can't thank you enough tbh. But I try.

Aaand, back to work! 🍁

[Short story poll](#)

[Sep 20, 2024](#)

Niall sees something wrong with Hati's head (Niall's POV)

16

Camilla feels anxious about the coming of the Emperor (Camilla's POV)

4

Camilla gets bitten by a gremlin Hati (Camilla's POV)

9

Camilla outs Hati and Tinsae gets pissed (Tinsae's POV)

17

Tinsae ruminates after killing the Optio for Hati (Tinsae's POV)

3

Niall shoots down Hati's advances (Niall's POV)

18

Camilla outs Hati and Tinsae gets pissed (Camilla's POV)

6

Poll ended Sep 26, 2024 · 73 votes total

[October smut poll](#)

[Sep 23, 2024](#)

some punishments, some coziness, and a threesome

A nice cozy evening with Tinsae

6

Hati gets punished by Camilla

7

Fluffy smut with a (suspiciously) sweet Camilla

9

Hati gets punished by Tinsae

4

Tinsae gets punished by Hati

2

A night out with the girls that ends in a threesome

26

Poll ended Sep 30, 2024 · 54 votes total

[Sneakier peek](#)

[Sep 24, 2024](#)

Snippets from the upcoming confrontation with Quinn:

Their naked body floats in the steaming spring like a freshly killed carcass.

“Quinn?” I say, my voice betraying a tremble. What would I do if they're dead?

No response.

“Quinn!”

They turn their head to me slowly, aiming their unfocused eyes at me.

Finally, recognition lights them up.

“It’s you,” they say with a smile that slowly brings the warmth of the living back to their face.

“You’re here with me.”

--

“Sorry about that. I think I had some sort of malfunction.”

“You had what?”

“I just felt ill. Nothing serious.”

“You felt cold to the touch. Your eyes were lifeless. I thought you were dead.”

They shrug. "Not yet."

--

"I fear you. I fear for you."

"You fear me?" they ask with a frown. "I... No. Please don't."

--

They process my words, slowly, with their gaze on the ground. "I think something broke in me when it happened."

[The Body](#)

[Sep 28, 2024](#)

Niall shoots down Hati's advances (Niall's POV)

"You look devious," I say with my throat tightening. You do. It's an all too familiar look that I've grown used to. You want my body. And I would gladly give it to you to help you. It might make you feel better. You just learned that your friend is a mass murderer, I could help to distract you.

Just another way I could help.

The degenerate hunger in your gaze doesn't shy me away, it's not the reason I find myself hesitating.

It's the fact that you would most likely be flogged to death were I to indulge. I would never forgive myself if your head ended up on a pike because of my pleasure.

I don't care if there's a chance no one will find out. There's also a chance they will.

Just as I'm about to tell you so, I look into your eyes.

And the darkness within almost makes me shrink to myself.

I blink and it's gone. And my reaction almost brings redness of shame to my cheeks, like I'm a scared maiden, afraid to be touched.

I almost hate the way I feel when you look at me. I feel like you see all of me, there's nothing left to hide from you. I'm naked and ashamed under your gaze.

You see my pathetic self.

If I were to accept your embrace it would only lead me to my ruin. Not only mine, but yours too. Either way, one of us will die. Or both of us.

The thought sends shivers down my spine.

Why? Where does the thought originate from?

It doesn't feel like my own, for how could I know what it whispers to me? Is it my heart telling me so? My primitive senses alerting me of danger?

Or something else entirely?

I do want you. I want to help you. I know how to do that, that's what I'm good at. That's what everyone wants from me and I can give it to you, too.

You lean towards me and instead of leaning in to meet your lips, I take your arm to keep you away from me.

When I touch your skin, a visage rushes through my mind's eye.

Your rotting head on a spike. Waiting. Your washed-up white bones lying on a riverbend under the pale moonlight. Discarded and unimportant

Your empty eyes looking at me, accusing me.

"No!" No no no. Keep away from me. Your skin smells of death and decay, mine and yours.

And you look like you don't understand. Of course you don't. I don't understand it either.

And it makes me feel like shit.

I just need to... Leave. Now.

"I'm sorry," I say. I say it too often with you. I'm sorry for being sorry. Sorry for not being man enough for you. I almost groan in frustration. Why am I like this? "I'll see you later, alright?"

And you say we will. It makes me smile despite everything. Maybe I haven't messed up everything after all.

I need a glass of cream.

[Progress Update Rambling](#)

[Sep 29, 2024](#)

Hello there!

Good news! The Tinsae update is almost done! (It's already 20k words long but I need to write and code a few more pivotal scenes.) I wager it will be out next week. In the meantime, I released the promised Marcus encore scenes (4k words). They're quite dramatic so that's great.

Anyway, why is it such good news that it's almost done and not that it's actually done?

Well.

As some of you know, I experienced a major burnout over a year ago. And for a long time after that, writing never really felt the same. I've enjoyed it but I've felt sluggish at times. Like I should be able to write faster but I just... couldn't. The recovery has had its ups and downs, and when I experienced another death in the family during spring, I almost lost hope of things getting better.

But I continued writing.

And it's been getting better. I've written as fast as I can without burning myself out in the process and this time it meant 100k words in a year. It's like a full-length novel but when you're talking about IFs, it's really not enough (for me and for the size of this project).

During these couple of weeks, I've been pushing myself to my limit. And I was happy to discover where the limit is nowadays; I've written as many words per day as I did before I burnt out. It's been exciting! It wasn't quite enough for the Tinsae update to be out this weekend, but it was so close that I could've gotten bummed out about 'failing'. However, I realize that I should focus on the fact that I've gotten much much better than I was before and that I can realistically start getting these updates out (almost) monthly.

It's been my goal for a while now. And I almost reached it. 'Almost' is important, too.

Anyway, thank you for being here. And for listening to my rambling.

Thank you.

(Oh, and Tinsae's and Camilla's threesome won the next month's smut poll. Naturally.)

[Sneak peek](#)

[Sep 30, 2024](#)

Snippets from the upcoming update:

"Did you think that I would jump at the opportunity and join forces with Camilla?"
She visibly shudders at the thought. "Please don't even joke about that."

--

"The Twins," she starts, "they demanded the branding of faith?" she says as she almost absentmindedly touches my tattoo. And her touch causes a jolt of pain to flash through me. It's like a scorching sun burning my flesh.

She inhales sharply. "I'm sorry." With a frown, she inspects my tattoo. And I look at it with a similar frown on my face. It hasn't been that sensitive before.

She raises her hand as if to touch it again, and I flinch away from her instinctively.

--

She squeezes her amulet when she looks at me. "Your friend is a spawn of evil."

[Q&A \(kinda\)](#)

[Sep 30, 2024](#)

I've been thinking that I should start writing little in between scenes. Something that happens in between the game's actual scenes. That would be fun. Or maybe flesh out the questions a little more, like in this one:

How would the ROs play against each other and against Hati in Ancient Roman chess (latrones)?

Hati vs Camilla

Camilla gives me an evil squint. She means to win this thing and I'm not entirely sure I can beat her in a game that I'm not completely familiar with.

She means to butcher me.

She didn't bother to teach me. Quickly enough, she gave me the rundown of the game and expected me to be ready and willing to die for my pieces.

At least that's the tone she wore.

As quickly as we start, she attacks with fierce determination.

But then, I see an opening. I almost hold my breath as I deduct my plan of action.

I attack.

And I win!

“Yes!” I shout.

Camilla gives me a bored roll of her eyes. “Beginner’s luck. Another round.”

- observant

Before she cleans the table, however, I look at her pieces one more time. She didn’t use an opening she could’ve.

She let me win.

- oblivious

I must be so good at this game!

Camilla vs Tinsae

Tinsae barely pays attention to the board. She moves her white pieces as if without a thought. But there is meaning in her movements. It’s just easy to miss behind her facade of carefree attitude.

Camilla, on the other hand, squints her eyes at the board, completely focused and determined to beat her friend, to leave her bleeding on the battlefield.

Figuratively.

Finally, when the game is almost done, Tinsae asks, “Camilla, dear, I heard you had sexual intercourse with our friend Hati, is that true?”

Camilla gives me a panicked look. I shake my head, I didn’t tell her. Distracted by the thought of her secrets getting out in the open, Camilla makes a wrong move.

And it’s enough for Tinsae to use it to her advantage. Letting out a light giggle, she moves her pieces with ease and wins.

“Oh! It’s a win for me, how lovely.”

“You cheated, you witch.”

“I would never. I just recalled what I heard.”

“Who would’ve—”

“How about another game, dear?”

Hati vs Tinsae

Tinsae gives me a gentle, warm smile. “Are you familiar with the game?”

“Not really.”

“I will teach you.” And true to her words, she does. She’s a patient teacher, guiding my hand with encouraging words.

“You’re doing well, dear,” she cheers me on. Finally, she claps her hands when I make multiple jumps over her pieces.

“Aren’t you going to play seriously?” I ask.

“What fun is it to beat a beginner? I need you at your best before I wipe the floor with your sorry carcass.”

I give her a surprised blink.

“I’m sorry, I was channeling my inner Camilla. Anyway, shall we continue?”

Hateful Hati vs Marcus

“I will end you,” I say through my teeth.

“Murder me on the board first, then we’ll see about the actual murder. Deal?”

I roll my eyes at his playful tone. Why am I even here playing with him?

No matter. I will stay true to my words and end him.

Even if I don’t exactly know how to play. I’ve seen Floyd and the others play often enough but I haven’t touched the pieces myself.

“Do you need help with the rules?” Marcus offers mockingly kindly.

“Over my dead body.”

“Would make for a dull game, were you stone cold dead on the board.”

“Why do you talk so much?”

“A vice of mine.”

He attacks with purpose and ease, he's all too familiar with the game. I cannot win.

But I will try.

But soon enough I find out that he wipes the floor with my tactics. I've failed in my mission to end him. Miserably.

He didn't let me win, he didn't go easy on me. Which is a blessing in itself, because I would've held it against him. I don't need his pity.

Even if I'm loath to admit it, he's good at what he does. I will learn by watching him. I'm patient. I will end him eventually.

"It's a little anticlimactic, isn't it? But you will learn by playing more. Another one?"

Disgruntled, I clean the table and we keep playing.

Hati vs Niall

"I've never played before," I admit.

Niall gives me an encouraging smile. "I will teach you."

But, as it turns out, Niall is not the best teacher.

He gives me a deep grimace when I attempt to move my black piece. "No, no, don't put that there, otherwise my white would be able to make multiple jumps over your black. You don't want that to happen."

I start to put it elsewhere and he yelps, "No, not there either, it's another win for me."

I roll my eyes at his method of teaching. I start to make another move and he theatrically cringes at it.

That's it. "Why won't you play by yourself?"

"Oh, sorry." She gives me a small, pathetic pout. "I just want you to be your best."

"Do you let others teach your soldiers?"

"Naturally. I don't much care for that. Marcus is much better at it than I am."

"Color me shocked."

"You're mocking me."

"Yes."

Niall vs Marcus

Marcus gives Niall a smug grin. “Really, Tribune? You’re trying to win me in latrones?”

Niall gives me a quick look of uncertainty. I give him a nod of encouragement and he shoots Marcus with a determined frown.

“I won’t try. I will win.”

Marcus squints his eyes in delight. “Making you kneel feels even better when you actually try.”

Niall cracks his knuckles. “You’re the one who will kneel.”

So the game begins.

And Marcus is as good at it as he claimed. Seemingly without effort, he corners Niall’s pieces in no time.

There are beads of sweat on Niall’s forehead and he gives me a quick glance.

Marcus interrupts him, “Never take your eyes off the battlefield.”

They keep fighting on the board, Marcus slowly gaining victory. However, in a sudden turn of events, Niall yelps, “I won!”

He gives me a bright smile and points at the pieces, as if to make sure that I didn’t miss such an outstanding performance.

Marcus looks at the board with an incredulous sigh. “Another one.”

- Observant

Marcus could’ve gotten a winning move had he kept moving with purpose. He let Niall win.

[Sneak Peek](#)

[Oct 10, 2024](#)

Working swiftly on the next update, Quinn's got some answers to give (if you haven't, please read Niall's or Tinsae's scenes, they provide more Quinn info for now).

“Was it the Twins who gave you the blessing?”

They give me an unreadable smile. “You think it was someone else? Someone making a fool out of me?”

“Twins wouldn’t do this to you. They wouldn’t infect you with a disease that kills you. They

wouldn't ask for blood in return."

They sigh. "Maybe I'm but a fool. Maybe it was Balor masquerading as our god, infecting me with his cruelty, his madness, and his wickedness."

I frown at the light words. "You're joking."

But the other ROs make their appearance in this one too. Like:

"You look like a wet rat," Marcus says as a greeting.

[Quinn smut is out now!](#)

[Oct 15, 2024](#)

Edit: It's out now! Thank you for your patience 💖

I will take till early next month to finish the smut. Here's the link and the password for when it gets ready. If you unpledged this month (thank you so so much for your patronage!), please follow my Tumblr or Patreon's posts to see when I release it. So, the link doesn't have the game just yet.

Thank you! 🙏

link: <https://haleym.itch.io/october-smut>

password: october_smutt

[November's smut RO](#)

[Oct 19, 2024](#)

Decided to go with the Halloween vibes. A bit late, yes, but November is a scary month too, it's dark and gloomy!

Hati accidentally summons an elder god and gets railed over it (Cernunnos)

38

Monstrous Quinn stalks Hati in a dream

13

Monstrous Hati stalks Tinsae in a dream

5

Poll ended Oct 26, 2024 · 56 votes total

[Short story poll](#)

[Oct 19, 2024](#)

Girls only this time, next month others will be back on the menu!

Tinsae sees that there's something wrong with Hati's head (Tinsae's POV)

Camilla is left alone in the baths after Hati goes with Tinsae (Camilla's POV)

Hati tries to persuade Tinsae that killing people is good actually (Tinsae's POV)

54 votes total

[Progress Update Rambling](#)

[Oct 21, 2024](#)

Hi there!

So, good news! We're officially out of the baths! (Hati doesn't bathe in Quinn's scenes and every other route proceeds to their scene so it doesn't count.) Can't tell you how happy I am about that. The bath scenes were super necessary for the relationship and character development but oh boy if they were a long process to write.

So... Yay! Yay for me, yay for you, yay for Hati for finally getting bathed.

I've been working on the next update and I'm aiming to get it out by the middle of November (the latest). It will mostly involve Quinn but also the others will make their appearance and perhaps send Hati a letter or two about what happened in the baths.

It's been fun to write Quinn's scenes so far. Well, fun and sad, because behind all those bad jokes and the thirst for revenge there is a tragic character. And a tragic relationship dynamic with Hati. (As a sidenote, I really enjoy every ROs' dynamics with Hati. They're all different and equally enjoyable to write.)

Anyway! Thank you so so much for being here, this wouldn't be possible without you.

[Bloopers](#)

[Oct 22, 2024](#)

Things that ended up being cut:

Hati thinking that Paios is coming onto them:

"Would you mind indulging an old man's wish?"

[[Indulging an old man's wish? Is he coming onto me?]]

He's old. Older than my father. He's not bad to look at but...

Before I can ponder on the thought further, Paios stops me: "Please, it's nothing of the sort. I just wanted to know what you think of my Lord."

"Oh... Alright." That makes more sense.

Hati slutshaming Niall (it might make a comeback at a later date but I wasn't sure if there have been enough mentions of Niall's past flings. Besides, it felt super mean 😭🐱)

"So, you'll screw others but not me?"

His eyes widen at my crude words. He shifts away from me, shaking his head.

"I think we're done here."

I purse my lips and look away. "It seems so."

He gets up and starts putting on his clothes. He clearly starts to say something, thinks on it, and remains silent.

Then, finally, without a word, he leaves.

I sigh at the water. Maybe I shouldn't have put it so harshly. I can always apologize later if I feel like it.

["Did you just slut-shame my brother?"]

Marcus.

[Sneakier peek](#)

[Oct 29, 2024](#)

New characters looming in the near future. 🙄🙄🙄🙄

A tall mature woman exits the villa's door. The guards salute her with fear written all over their faces, with their posture rigid and tall, deadly afraid of a slip-up. She ignores their presence with the air of absolute power.

Her pitch-black hair is mostly hidden beneath her cloak as the free strands whip the air in the harsh wind. The power she exudes makes me halt my tongue. She would kill me without a second thought if I gave her a reason. Of that I have no doubt.

She stops in her tracks when she sees me. She inspects me without saying a word. Her upper lip curls in disdain, like I was but a bug she should squash beneath her leather boot. Then, she gives me a cold smile, an icy embrace after the cruelty. "You must be the soldier my daughter has spoken about."

Who is her daughter? Is this the mother of—?

"Speak, boy." Impatience makes her words sharp as daggers.

This one will probably (maybe? perhaps?) be a little farther in the future but something to look forward to:

"One word. And your neck would be lashed wide open," he whispers as he looks at my neck. He runs his finger over my skin.

The power over life and death excites him. I can feel it throbbing against my inner thigh.

"Beautiful..." he whispers.

"Too beautiful to cut open?"

"Ah." He throws me a quick glance. "Perhaps."

"You're not sure?" I purr, the threat of death almost trapping my breath in my throat.

"I cannot deny it would be a pleasure to witness your crimson pulping on the floor. Alas, it would be over far too soon. And I would have to continue living without the sight of you."

[Oct 30, 2024](#)

About money, privilege, and the ROs (and Hati)

When I was reading Alberto Angela's *Rakkautta ja Intohimoa Antiikin Roomassa* (*Amore e sesso nell'antica Roma*), I stumbled upon a snippet about the prices of clothing and such in Rome. Cloaks, for example, were apparently really expensive. When converted into modern currency, they could range from 500 euros to 4000 euros. Even a pretty scarf could cost up to 1800 euros.

Of course, I don't know how this was determined but it was an interesting thought nonetheless.

It made me think about money in the game (it made me think of Niall and his overtly generous gifts).

Money hasn't been a big factor in the story (as of yet) because every RO is rich, except for Quinn who seems to be able to live without money whatsoever (they're probably stealing, and the grandmother is keeping them fed). The only one who's talked about money so far is Tinsae who has amassed her wealth through the work of her own instead of being a trust fund baby (sorry C, M, and N, but it's the truth). She has to make sure she doesn't overspend but also that she maintains the image of a well-off person to impress and persuade the (snobbish) upper-class Romans. She's extremely aware of the poor people in Rome and tries her best to help as many people as she can.

Camilla is extremely well off. Out of the ROs, she's the richest one (but it's complicated). She had a period in her life when she had to survive without as much money but she's never seen actual poverty in her life. She doesn't much care about expensive clothes and such but she wears them since that's what she's accustomed to. That's what's expected of her. Since she has taken a liking to roam the taverns at night, she knows what poverty looks like. It has made her rethink her privileges in her life.

Marcus is also super rich. Or at least his father is. Marcus can easily survive without luxury, since he's accustomed to the soldier's life. He can appreciate expensive things when it's practical. He loves weapons and books, so that's what he usually spends his money on.

Out of the ROs Niall is probably the one who appreciates his wealth the most. Niall is the son of a Hibernian chieftain, so he's no stranger to luxury. His father is an ally to the Romans, which means that their family would've gotten many gifts from Romans to ensure their loyalty. (This was also a tactic Romans used, to show that they held the power over their "allies" (that they saw as weaker than them)). When he was adopted by the Legate, the wealth he had access to multiplied and he learned to make good use of the funds he's given. He loves clothes, cosmetics, and he showers his friends with gifts. He'd rather not dwell on his privileges, he takes things as they are without problematizing things.

And when it comes to Hati, it's probably fair to say that their family was poorer than Niall's was. But they were still extremely well off on Pictish standards. Hati's tribe was far up North and they weren't allies with the Romans, so their access to luxury items must've been more scarce.

Just something I wanted to share with y'all. Hope it was interesting. Thank you for being here!

[Let me help you](#)

[Oct 30, 2024](#)

Tinsae sees something wrong with Hati's head

It aches my heart to see you peacefully soak in the water like it's something you've yearned for a lifetime. You look like a tired old soldier despite your age. There's an immeasurable weight on your shoulders; the weight of the dead. And the tired hatred that gnaws at your very being. To lose everyone you hold dear in such a violent manner is a tale as old as time. I've seen its effects before, I've seen how it destroys the very soul of a person.

The agony and anger within your gaze is shared by many others in this world.

But there's something different about you and your anger. Something that worries me deep in my core. Your coppery smell, the sickly sweet smell of blood that sticks to you like a vice. The dark shadows dancing in your gaze.

I look at my fingers that touched your scar, that hurt you, partly afraid that I'd see them soaked in blood and the blackest of goo. But of course they're clean of any such substances. It makes me feel a little silly.

But I still can't help but to wonder.

Wonder if I should just leave. If I should just leave you and everyone else to your fate. I don't want to see how things will unfold, how you will murder the ones responsible. How you and Camilla will destroy yourselves.

But shame follows that thought, it makes me squeeze my amulet. I shouldn't leave. Not right now, not when everything is uncertain. I need to be here for you, for my friends.

I cannot condemn you for what I don't know to be true. Your pain is natural, as is your amnesia. Everything else could very well be the figment of my imagination.

Even if I was right, there is still time for me to steer you away from the direction your fate has led you.

There must be some way I can help you.

I'm already doing everything to find your family that's still alive.

But I need to do more.

I caress my amulet. I seek comfort from its smooth surface, unsure how to proceed. I can't mend your anger in one evening, I can't undo the things that were done to you.

I close my eyes and focus on the amulet, on Taweret.

And realize that there is something I can do. There is something that prevents you from remembering.

A cleansing ritual might be exactly what you need.

Taweret, please help me help my friend.

I light up the healing incense, and the candles, all the while muttering a prayer to my goddess. The cleansing smoke slowly fills the air and you start looking drowsily content. A bang of guilt makes me bite my lip because I didn't ask for your consent for the ritual.

But what if you're wary of foreign gods? I cannot take that chance. I need to help you.

Just let me help you, dear. Let me and my goddess help.

I need to help.

[Author Q&A](#)

[Oct 31, 2024](#)

What things have changed during the development of the story?

So many! Firstly, Hati wasn't supposed to be Hati at all. They were just supposed to be a regular Roman soldier. I had this prologue scene written where there was an angry Briton looking at the sea, swearing vengeance at the Romans. It didn't take that long to realize that I wanted to hear their story more than this Roman soldier's story.

And since the MC changed into a Pictish druid, in came the Celtic religious themes and characters. I never could've predicted that I was going to write a monster smut with Cernunnos but here we are. I didn't even realize how big of an impact the religious part was going to have on the story, which is

evidently a little silly to think about afterwards because of course the main character's background matters haha.

Even now, there are still plot threads that change and some get even deleted. There was supposed to be a wrestling chapter after the one where Hati meets the slaver who sold their siblings, it would've been somewhat dramatic with some dramatic consequences. But, since the story's changed so much, I realized that the consequences don't make sense in what this story has developed into. So, it had to go. (There will still be a wrestling match with Niall and Marcus, but the scene will be infused with the Saturnalia chapter.) It's another big chapter that I've cut from the story because it ended up serving no narrative purpose. (RIP the chapter where the ROs and Hati go to watch the races.)

It's sometimes unnerving to think if I make the right choices when it comes to the story. But I just need to trust my gut with this and keep going.

How do you get inspired to write?

Music is one of my main inspirations. I have character playlists and I listen to one of those depending on which character's scenes I'm about to write for the day. Also, I love fan edits, sometimes I watch fan edits of my favorite ships from Youtube to get into the writing mood.

What is the most inspiring feedback you've ever gotten from a reader?

I think that one type of feedback I find the most inspiring is when people tell me that my story got them interested in Roman history. That was my initial reason to start writing a Roman IF, to get people more interested in Roman shenanigans.

Do you have a favorite RO to write?

No. They're all interesting to write in their own right. Quinn is the most chaotic one to write, they provide the most amount of surprises which is naturally interesting for me as a writer. But they can also stress me out because I don't know what they're going to do. It was the most difficult to get into their headspace because it's like a buzz of bees in there. But now that I've managed to snake myself in, I love it there. Bring in the buzz.

I love to write Hati's and Marcus's banter because it's so silly. They're like bickering children despite the heavy undertones in their relationship. It's lighthearted but it's not. However, the pacing can be a challenge to master in their relationship. Enemies to lovers is a tricky thing, it can't be rushed, otherwise it's not believable.

I also love to write the deep conversations with Tinsae, which I think provide the most insight into Hati's psyche and their motivations. Tinsae has the most uncomplicated relationship with Hati, in a way. They're the safe haven in the storm, which is a relief for me as a writer, too.

And writing Camilla proves always fun, especially when I have to balance between Camilla's mean girl energy and her subtle hints of affection that are so subtle you need a magnifying glass to see them. It'll

be rewarding to see her opening up but I'm fully enjoying the road there, too.

Niall seems the most uncomplicated on the outside but that man is a mess of things. It was actually funny to see how even his bath code was a mess. That man is rambling about everything and anything and it shows even in the code lol. But it's fine, he's a blast to write. He's Kenough. Niall's golden retriever energy vs Hati's black cat energy is also hilarious.

[Progress Update Rambling](#)

[Nov 12, 2024](#)

Hi there!

I'm still working on the next update. The progress has felt a little more like walking through mud this time but that's a creative process for you. I will do my absolute best to push it out by next weekend. I'm a little worried that I'll finish the text by then and not the code but we'll see. I'm imagining myself in a Rocky montage right about now. I'll keep you posted.

Despite the occasional mud, it's been super refreshing to write every ROs' scenes for a change. The previous updates were so focused on one RO at a time. It also accentuates the differences (and similarities) between the ROs, which is always fun to see. And, of course, the Quinn drama has been interesting, if not a little challenging to write.

Also, smut is out next week. Lots of work to do!

Rocky theme starts playing

Anyway, as always, thank you so so much for being here.

EDIT: Please fill in the Saturnalia costume questionnaire!

The next update will be the beginning of the Saturnalia chapter (I will skip the slaver drama for now, Saturnalia happens right after that.)

Thank you!

<https://forms.gle/TnDWUTuvsnFaW4AJA>

[October smut is OUT NOW](#)

[Nov 15, 2024](#)

Edit: It's out now!

So, I accidentally named last month's smut 'October smut'. Oops.

Here's the link for this month's smut (Tinsae and Camilla). Just in case, please write the password and the link down so you'll be able to access it even if I should take till next month to finish it and you unpledged this month (thank you so so much for your generous patronage!) Please follow my Tumblr or Patreon's posts to see when I release it.

So, this link doesn't have the game just yet, please use last month's link to access the old smut.

Thank you!

link: <https://haleym.itch.io/octobersmut2>

password: october2_smut

[Progress Update Rambling](#)

[Nov 22, 2024](#)

Hi there!

So, I grossly underestimated the time it takes to code and write a set of scenes that will have this amount of variation. I thought that this wouldn't be the case until Saturnalia but of course, everyone is already referencing the bath scenes because so much happened there. Quinn is giving their (unsolicited) opinion and the whole RO gang appears to have their say about things. I thought this was going to be another 20k update but I'm already at 25k and I wager there's still at least a couple of thousand words to go as I code ahead.

That's on me, of course. I was a sweet summer child, happily coming out of the relatively simply coded bath scenes and eager to continue with the story.

I might be a little frustrated that it's still not finished BUT I'm also happy about the story, the characters, and the general direction of the story. It's just on the future me to get better at estimating the amount of work this lump of variables takes to write and code into the scenes. If this was just a Quinn update, I would already be finished. However, since the others barged into the update too, here we are. (Those buggers are to blame!)

But honestly, the amount of RO drama is giving me life so it's fine.

Since the update after this one will be the beginning of the Saturnalia celebration (I'm skipping the slaver scenes for now to get to the Saturnalia chapter for Christmas), I'm asking for your help. Saturnalia will be a costume party, so if you could give me your suggestions for costume ideas (for Hati or the RO gang), I would be ever grateful.

<https://forms.gle/qyEp4T9PwXPE31tv5>

Also, here's an old Saturnalia gift questionnaire I put out a good while ago. Filling it out would be helpful, too.

<https://forms.gle/Pq97XhTz2KauGXGDA>

Thank you! Also, thank you so so much for being here and being patient with me as I navigate this relationship drama simulator.

[December Smut RO Poll](#)

[Nov 22, 2024](#)

I thought that it would be fun to make a little Saturnalia scenario with two ROs; the most popular vote and the second popular. Some combinations work better than others, Quinn would be a disaster with most of them. (Not you immediately voting for Quinn, I see you, you chaos gremlins!)

Niall

9

Tinsae

8

Camilla

11

Marcus

33

Quinn

19

[Sneak peek](#)

[Nov 24, 2024](#)

An assortment of snippets from the next update without context:

Besides, the meaning of the gift makes me frown in puzzlement. He gives me jewelry for giving him a handjob?

--

"Quinn, you're getting on my nerves."

--

"And, to be honest, the thought of burning someone alive is a... I..." They shift uncomfortably.

"You felt bad for them?"

"Don't sound so surprised."

--

"I understand you did what you had to."

--

"You're a monster."

--

Despite their venomous feelings towards Marcus, they seem happy that I'm so efficient with our plan.

- if marcus cry
Efficient? By letting him make me cry like a fool?

--

"Stop asking questions. You won't be killed." She sighs and tightens the cloak around her.

"Does it mean that you're protect—"

"What did I say about questions?"

[Flash poll](#)

[Nov 25, 2024](#)

I wanted to release this poll when the update was done but here we are. So, this is a flash poll *and* a blind poll.

These are all scenes from the new update but you have no idea what the context is. Well, apart from the obvious haha

A slightly worried Camilla (who wouldn't admit it) is looking for Hati

13

A worried Marcus is looking for Hati

31

An extremely worried Tinsae is looking for Hati

4

A panicked Niall is looking for Hati

6

Poll ended Nov 28, 2024 · 54 votes total

[Cut the leg off, throw it off a cliff](#)

[Nov 30, 2024](#)

This time, instead of a Q&A, here's an in-between scene. Quinn is left with their thoughts after Hati leaves

I put on my clothes with a little smile on my face, with my thoughts a little giddy. I liked seeing you.

Although, I do give the wound on my leg a little frown. It deserves that, why would it try to kill my flesh when I'm just trying to survive out here. It, too, is against me. It ought to be cut off, let the dogs eat the meat, let the sun brighten the bone.

Other than that, I think everything went pretty good if I do say so myself.

- Sure, maybe you called me a monster. However, that was to be expected from you when you stormed here like I stole all your chicken.
- You understood my efforts, what I've done for you. You see me. It makes my smile even wider. What a wonderful, beautiful, marvelous being you are.
- I hesitate. Did it? No? Yes?
//you hate me//

No. No no. We can't hate each other, we're all we have. Ridiculous, preposterous, and all of the other adjectives that fit the situation.

I think your terrified gaze might haunt my dreams for a couple of nights, if not more. Other than that, again, I repeat the sentiment and say that everything went pretty well.

The only thing that bothers me about this is how did you get the memories out of my head in the first place. They're not yours to recover, yet you act like it was in your head all along.

//mine mine mine not yours not yours//

Shut up.

Does it have something to do with what I had to do? The connection between us might go both ways. Interesting. Nothing too concerning, of course, because in the end, I've got nothing to hide.

I purse my lips at the thought of you. Someone should probably see how you fare with your new abilities. That would be something a friend does.

And that someone ought to be me, your best friend.

I follow your scent easily. But frustratingly slowly, my leg is a little sore.

Quite sore, actually. It hinders my process with an annoyingly efficient force.

Cut the tainted flesh, throw it off a cliff.

//cut cut cut cut it off//

I smack the festering wound and howl in pain. I fall onto the cold ground, curse the land, curse the air, curse the cursed leg.

Stars still flicker in my sight as I try to blink them away. I'm getting cold. I hate the cold. I hate the wet.

I think I hate this. Yes. I hate this.

Don't smack the leg, it will make it worse. Yes. Of course. Don't touch it, leave it be. Leave it to fester, to taint, to eat my meat away.

I get up and start to follow you again, this time limping more, cursing more, hating more.

When I finally find you, you're sitting on some asshole's tomb, deeply pondering.

No, I think you're dead.

Oh. No. That shouldn't happen.

Oh no no. You can't be dead. I can't live without you. No, you're alive, you must be.

Then. Someone's footsteps.

Company. Hide hide hide.

[Your breath](#)

[Nov 30, 2024](#)

A worried Marcus is looking for Hati

Why do I expect you to act like a normal, fully functioning adult? Running away like a child in the night, forcing me to look for you like a panicked father after his firstborn. Forcing your fellow soldiers to look for you despite the potential punishments they will get for your actions.

Freezing water splashes into my boot and I can't help but wonder: Why am I here anyway? I could just let the others find out that you're gone and let it all play out as it's supposed to. As it plays out for everyone else.

But no, here I am, getting my boots wet like a fool.

If I didn't look out for you, you'd be dead already. And this is the thanks I get.

Not that you'd thank me anyway. You'd just look at me like my face just ruins your whole day. Week. Month. Lifetime.

Frustration and something else that I can't quite place makes me walk faster. Something uncomfortable in the pit of my stomach, something that flares up when I think of you getting flogged or thrown into the river with your hands bound.

How inconvenient, all of this. My jaw hurts, my socks are wet, this is shit.

Then, something in the distance. Something, someone, sitting on a tomb.

Fuck. It's you. You're just out here, enjoying your winter morning like it's nothing. Probably brought some snacks to fully enjoy the moment.

I try to ignore the relief lifting the weight from my chest and channel all my frustration in my stare as I look at you.

"Moron. What do you think you're doing?"

But nothing. You don't...

- Turn to me, flip me off, and tell me to suck a bag of cocks.
- Shy away from me, hurt and beaten by my words and actions, making me feel slightly ill.
- Tell me to leave as if it's none of my business.

No. Instead, you treat me like I'm not here.

"Enough with the stoic crap, get up and we'll talk about this on the way back."

Nothing. You don't move a muscle. The back of your head tells me nothing.

Dead or unconscious?

I find myself hoping for the latter.

I circle around to see your face. And it's as expected. Completely unresponsive, eyes closed, it's a miracle you're still sitting upright.

"Hey. Idiot? Can you hear me?"

Nothing.

I brace myself for getting yelled at and step closer to check on your breathing. Your chest doesn't rise and fall.

Fuck.

I bite the insides of my cheek until the taste of copper spreads in my mouth.

I move closer to your mouth, to your nose, to hear your breathing. Nothing. Not a peep.

Fuck fuck fuck.

I inch closer with my cheek to feel if a breath of life warms my skin.

Nothing.

I bite my teeth until my jaw feels like it's breaking apart. Patience. If your breathing pattern is as slow as it seems, it's normal that I wouldn't feel anything at first.

Patience.

But the anxious thoughts start to take over with every heartbeat that passes. I will bring you home in a bag, I promise you that. I will bury you in the grove I destroyed. I will—

Warmth hits my skin. Your breath.

“\$name.” Relief washes over me with an embarrassing force.

[Sneakier peek](#)

[Nov 30, 2024](#)

So, the update is out and I will skip the slaver thing for now and focus on Saturnalia. It will be filled with code but at least now I'm better prepared. The structure will be as follows (light spoilers ahead): First, the party (the most amount of code, many people in the same place, but also fun), maybe a wrestling match or two to deal with any and all pent-up frustrations. Then, more alone time with the chosen ROs before more *drama*. Also, new characters are introduced! Fun fun!

One Saturnalia couple outfit is at least confirmed, and that is Hati the wolf and Tinsae the sun. Maybe Camilla will dress up as Hades?

Speaking of Camilla, she gets finally caught up with her matron status and the expectations that come with it. A little snippet:

I hold my breath in the darkness when a slave walks by me. Her room isn't far away.

“Camilla? Is that you?” I whisper at the door.

A guttural groan can be heard from the room. “What are you doing here, you idiot?”

- “Well, excuse me! I was here to help you but I can leave.”

“I don't need any help, I'm perfectly capable of leaving whenever I want to.”

“So, the massive lock outside your door is just for the show?”

Silence.

“Well?” I prompt.

“Didn't you threaten to leave? Leave.”

“Why are you acting like this? Just admit that you need help.”

She hisses like a cornered cat. "I don't need your help! I don't need anyone's help. Just... leave." The last word is but a whisper, I can barely hear it. "I don't need you here to gloat."

"I'm not gloating, Camilla, I'm actually trying to help you."

[A brief progress update](#)

[Dec 14, 2024](#)

Hi there! The seasonal flu caught up with me, which unfortunately means the smut's release will have to wait till next week. Thank you so much for your understanding and patience! I'm cursing my luck, but I'm still hopeful I can deliver the update this month, despite losing precious working hours.

Thank you again!

[Short story poll](#)

[Dec 21, 2024](#)

A slightly worried Camilla (who wouldn't admit it) is looking for Hati

15

An extremely worried Tinsae is looking for Hati

7

A panicked Niall is looking for Hati

28

Poll ended Dec 26, 2024 · 50 votes total

[Smut poll](#)

[Dec 27, 2024](#)

January's smut RO

Legate takes Hati on a date after the desk incident

22

A sweet and sensual dream with Tinsae

5

A sweet date with Niall

13

Fluffy smut with a (suspiciously) sweet Camilla

9

Monstrous Hati stalks Tinsae in a dream

7

Hati gets punished by Camilla

7

Poll ended Dec 31, 2024 · 63 votes total

[I killed you](#)

[Dec 27, 2024](#)

A panicked Niall is looking for Hati

I shouldn't have said that.

I don't know what I said but if it made you leave, I shouldn't have said that.

Sure, I don't know for certain that you left back for the North. It's just this nagging feeling in my stomach, something that refuses to leave. Besides, if you didn't leave, that's even worse. Either you left willingly because you don't care about getting caught anymore. Or something took you.

Tightness grips my throat. Either way, the situation is bad. You're in danger.

I should've just been a man and...

And what?

And... Make you realize you're making a mistake and you should leave back home. Or the burning remnants of your home. But now I'm afraid that you've left.

I'm not making any sense right now. When am I?

stupid oaf

"Lord Tribune, are you headed for--"

The soldier falls silent when he sees something on my face. It makes me realize the strain on my jaw and my muscles. I'm looking at the soldier with a deep scowl on my face.

"Sorry, I..." I rub my face to get rid of the grimace. But no. There's no time for that. Without another word, I leave him to wonder if he insulted me in some way.

No time for that.

I need to find you.

"Lord Tribune!" Someone shouts at me and I will myself not to lash out at the source. There's urgency in the tone, something that makes me halt without protest.

It's your soldier friend.

"You're close with Hati, right?" he asks with a ragged breath. And I answer with my gut.

"I am... Not. No. Not at all."

"He ran that way just a while ago." He shows me the way and I try not to sprint after you.

"Thank you, soldier," I say curtly and start to leave.

"You won't hurt him?" he asks. The question makes me smile in relief. You have friends who care about you.

"I will make sure no one will," I say to him in a sudden spout of honesty. I don't stay to gauge his reaction, I need to find you.

Something spooked you. Otherwise, you wouldn't have run away without a destination.

Or did you see me and run? No. That doesn't make sense.

Soon enough, I'm running. No thoughts clutter my mind as I follow your steps like a sheepdog.

Finally, I sigh in relief when I see you. But the relief is short-lived. You're sitting like a statue in the snow. Like you're dead.

"\$name?" I say, filling the empty air with my quivering voice.

"name," I say. "name!" I shout. I grab your freezing shoulders.

It's me. I killed you.

I should have left you alone.

I should've told Marcus he's a monster for keeping you here like a pet.

I should've made you leave.

I killed you.

I—

"Why are you shaking me?" you ask in a daze and I just realize that I am. Shaking you.

"Oh gods, I'm sorry, I—" I stifle the urge to grab you into my arms, instead opting to bite my cheek. "I was afraid," I confess, wanting to tell you everything that plagued my mind. But now is not the time.

What happened to you?

[Hati is kidnapped, what would the ROs do](#)

[Dec 30, 2024](#)

I thought this would be a fun little Q&A thing but more fleshed out. I'm not sure if a scenario like this would happen in the game.

(SPOILER)

I mean, there is a period in the second book where Hati is separated from the rest of the gang but I'm not sure if any kidnapping will take place. The reason for the separation is still in the drafts.

(END OF SPOILER)

However, it's a fun little thing to ponder on anyway. It's a nice little romance trope.

So, how would the ROs react if Hati was kidnapped? Little snippets from the ROs' POV.

Quinn:

Rage. Rage fills my veins.

They took you away from me. They will all die a slow death.

Yes. The thought makes me smile. Slow, agonizing death. I will make them beg for mercy, I will make them scream.

And if they've hurt you, I won't grant them the merciful release of death.

No. I will make them beg for me to kill them. And I won't do it. Never never never, I will keep them alive and make them beg and beg and beg.

I open the door and the bugs inside ready their blades, preparing their pitiful stances as if we're starting a sword fight. I start laughing.

I laugh and laugh as I make them turn their pathetic little knives at their friend, plucking their eyeballs out, as I crack crack crack one's fingers, and watch as another one tries to collect their throbbing guts back inside from the dirty floor.

I didn't mean to kill him so fast but his thoughts were the vilest.

"Are you here?" I ask.

"Yes," you answer. No sign of distress in your thoughts, nothing that would indicate that they've hurt you. Good.

Time to make them all bleed.

Once their bodies litter the floor like useless meat sacks they are, I open the door with a smile. "You're fine." It's not a question, I already know that. And I will make sure you stay that way.

Blood falls down my cheek, entering my mouth.

"Don't worry," I say with a wider smile. "It's not mine."

Niall:

I grip the hilt of my sword with my heart pounding in my ears. All I see is the house you're being held at. I need to save you. I need to see you.

I need to see you. I need to save you.

With my sword ready I kick the door open and count the men. Five.

The closest to the door loses their head. Another coming at me loses his hand. Another head falls.

Pain flashes through me as I realize someone cut my arm. It makes me angrier, it makes me swing my sword harder, and it almost cuts the man in half.

The last one looks at me with fear in his eyes. He throws his sword on the floor, trying to surrender.

But I can't take the chance that he will come back and take you again.

He, too, falls dead on the floor.

I breathe heavily, barely noticing the pain in my arm. I look at the door. You're there, you must be.

I open the door, hoping to all of the gods that you're here, that you're alright, that you're alive and unharmed, that—

You're here. Sitting in the corner, alive, a beautiful sight.

"Are you alright?" I ask, hurrying to your side, to check for any injuries. I keep looking for any sign of harm, I search until you snap at me in anger.

"Oh. I'm sorry. Are you alright?" I ask again. I need to make sure.

Camilla:

I straighten my wig and smirk. The dress is light and without layers, easily discarded when the time comes.

I meekly knock on the door and distort my face into a face of helplessness.

Things I do for you. You'd better be grateful.

The door opens and I'm yanked inside.

Getting manhandled like that almost makes me drop my mask in rage but I will endure their disgusting, grabby hands for you. They will all die for what they did, anyway.

Five men. This will be a challenge.

"Look!" one of them shouts at the other, as if they didn't already see the woman willingly entering their pathetic little hideout.

"Why did you come here, pretty little thing? Are you lost?"

"Please," I say with my eyes filling with water. Pathetic little men love to see women cry at their feet. "My Lords, I am indeed lost and I need water."

The men start laughing. "Did you hear that? The little thing needs water."

I nod and look at the floor. I already mapped out the room, now I just need them to get closer.

Their swords are sheathed, their stances relaxed. They think they're going to get lucky tonight.

One of them grabs the hem of my dress. I rip it off me and as he's standing happily with my skirt in his hand, thinking that I'm a willing participant in his disgusting game, I stab his heart with my dagger. Before anyone can react, I throw my wig at one, stab another one's chest, and then return to stab the one fighting with the wig in his face. One grabs my arm, confused, without his sword, and I bite a chunk out of his hand.

"Crazy bitch!!" he screams and that's the last thing he says.

The last one manages to take his sword, he takes a shoddy swing at me. I dodge, close the distance, and kill him.

I spit at the one's corpse who dared to grab my dress. Disgusting pig.

"Druid?" I shout, adrenaline still rushing through my veins. "Come out."

"Obviously I can't," you reply from the other side of the door. "I'm tied up."

I scoff with a smile. Of course I need to do everything for you.

Tinsae:

I look at the house you're being held at with the torch in my hand. There's a barn, all too flammable. Setting it aflame shouldn't endanger your safety, just as long as I'm quick with my feet when it's time.

"Caleb," I say and he acts without a word, letting the horses loose from the barn. They neigh and stampede, causing a ruckus, most likely making the kidnappers strain their ears, wondering what happened, wondering if they should act. The horses flee, all too eager to get away from their masters.

I mutter them a quick prayer to make them find a more enjoyable life.

I give the torch to Caleb and blend into the shadows near the front door. Soon enough, the barn is set aflame and shouts follow.

One, two, three men run out of the house, shouting for the others to do something about the flames.

There should be two more. I purse my lips in worry. I do not want this to end in bloodshed, it would only put you in danger.

Finally, the two other men run out of the house with buckets in their hands.

And immediately after, I slip through the door and enter the house. I open the door to the backroom. You're here. Unharmed. I sigh in relief and give you a smile as I put my finger on my lips. You should be ever quiet, dear.

You quickly understand my intent and wait for me to set you free from your constraints.

A brief hug is in order before we quickly slip out of the house. The men still battle with the flames and we're already gone.

"Are you alright, dear?" I ask as I place a kiss on your forehead. It's a wondrous relief and delight to hear that you are.

Marcus:

You? Kidnapped?

revenge Hati:

I'm not sure if I even need to interfere, you could make a clean mess of them yourself.

Maybe I'm late and you've already dealt with the situation. At least I could give you a ride back home.

non revenge Hati:

I will not make you forget this anytime soon. Me swooping in to rescue you. Again.

I should start charging you money for this. Or kisses.

Hehe.

I open the door to the house you're being held at. The room falls quiet as I assess the situation: Five men, you're not here. Backroom? Possibly. Is there someone with you? That would make the situation worse. Oh, how I loathe hostage situations.

"Gentlemen," I say with a smile as they prepare their shameful stances. Amateurs. This will be too easy. "I heard you sell horses."

"Huh?" one asks, relaxing their stance already. The others are more alert, suspicious.

"Horses," I repeat. "For the races." I take my pouch filled with coins and throw it at the feet of the slowest one. He will take the bait.

He quickly takes the pouch and starts counting the coins, completely forgetting any and all sense of danger. Others are proving to be as foolish, straining their necks to see how much money is in the bag.

I have the order of execution.

Time to act.

First, the man holding the purse starts gurgling blood when I slash his neck open. Second, the one straining their neck the longest, takes my blade deep into his chest. Third one loses his guts at his feet. Fourth one puts up a fight but it's too late. Fifth one isn't a swordsman and he's already dead on the floor.

I move to the door, there are no sounds. I kick it open and look at you. You're alone.

A sigh of relief. Good.

"I heard there were damsels in distress out here."

And I chuckle when you start fuming.

[Progress update rambling](#)

[Dec 30, 2024](#)

Hi there!

So, I'm back from my deathbed, trying to catch up on my schedule. I really didn't expect to get sick for over two weeks (from pneumonia out of all things) but here we are. All I can do is to thank you all for your patience. I have a couple of short stories for you as an apology for missing out on my ramblings and getting late with the demo update.

Since it's almost New Year, it's a good time to look back on the past year.

While I don't like to talk about money, the year has been extremely tough financially. Being an entrepreneur is expensive in Finland, and it feels like I've been having an uphill battle this whole year. So much so that I thought that I couldn't continue writing full-time.

However! The last couple of months have been starting to look better and better. The game is progressing faster since I can write at a speed I used to write before my burnout, and I haven't felt this

hopeful in a good while. I'd say that's a good way to start a new year.

Of course, I wouldn't be here without your faith in me and the game. Your patience with me has been humbling and I cannot express my gratitude enough. The best way to express that is to continue working on the game so we all can see this book to get finished next year.

Also, I'm aiming to delete the smut tier at some point this year (I mean, next year lol), since it would give me more time to focus on the game itself. Some of you might wish that would be the case already, but for the said financial reasons I can't do that just yet. Thank you for your understanding.

Anyway, I wish all of you a belated Merry Christmas (Happy Holidays, if you celebrated) and an even better New Year. Thank you for being here, thank you for your support.

Thank you.

[Everything is ruined](#)

[Dec 30, 2024](#)

A slightly worried Camilla is looking for Hati

I wonder if you left back home.

It's a little disappointing, even if I'm loath to admit it. Not only does it make things more difficult for me, it's also...

Disappointing.

"My lady," a soldier says with reverence. I give him a quick, annoyed look. Why is he talking to me? It's a wonder he has the guts for it.

I squint. He looks vaguely familiar. Soldiers all look the same. Boring grunts.

He looks at the ground, speaking hastily. "If you're looking for Hati, he went that way."

Good news. No sign of relief ran across my practiced and stoic face, of that I'm sure, even if my chest feels a little lighter. However, I give your apparent friend an inspecting look. He knows that we're... Close, I suppose.

Such keen eyes beg for blood.

"Please don't hurt him, my lady," he says quickly.

The audacity almost makes me chuckle. What a brave little man.

Such curious words leave his mouth. Words that spark something within me. Something that nips out chunks of my insides.

How is it his business if I hurt you or not? Who is he to ask anything of me?

Alas, that is not important. Not now. Now, I need you to return to me, I need you in my sight. I've grown fond of your face.

Besides, I need to make sure you won't get yourself killed before your time.

I don't grant the soldier one last look. He already showed me where you are. He did his part.

Without another word, I start walking towards the direction he pointed at. No need to act coy, he knows I'm interested in your whereabouts. I will have to decide what to do about that later.

After a good while of walking in the wet snow, I finally find you.

I look at your face, one that I'm oddly happy to see again. However, you're expressionless, completely relaxed. At peace. Dead.

"Druid," I say, trying to get a reaction out of you. It doesn't work. You're still unresponsive. Dead.

Irritation crawls down my spine.

To think that you'd die in the snow like a sorry, homeless beggar. After everything you've been through, winter would be the one to take your miserable life.

That's insulting to what you've been through. You, who were supposed to rain death upon the Empire.

"Druid!" I say louder, as if it would make a difference, as if you would hear it to the afterlife.

I grit my teeth. From the first moment I saw you, I've made mistakes. I shouldn't have talked to you. I shouldn't have come here. Now everything is ruined.

"Druid!"

Your eyes focus on me and I almost let out a foolish breath of relief.

[Thank the Goddess](#)

[Dec 30, 2024](#)

An extremely worried Tinsae is looking for Hati

Every part of me wishes that you're gone because you left back home. However, everything in me tells me it isn't so, that I should look for you.

I hasten my step, fully knowing that your monster of a friend is involved. If that thing did something to you, I will curse them to the depths of the Underworld. I will rid this world of its evil.

It is what the Goddess would want me to do. Through her will, it shall be done.

I let out a deep breath to calm myself. For now, I will need to keep my head clear. I will find you, my dear.

"My lady," someone says. I halt my steps to see your soldier friend jogging up to me. He seems agitated, almost panicked, but he relaxes when our eyes meet.

"You're Hati's friend, aren't you?" I say with a smile.

"He ran that way, my lady. Could you—"

"Of course, dear. I will take care of it. Please tell your good Lord Centurion that everything is under control." Marcus's nerves will be calmed if he knows someone is taking care of things. This will hopefully prevent him from acting like a fool he can be.

"Thank you, my lady, I—"

"You're freezing," I say. The shaking in his frame isn't caused by the cold alone. Something else happened. "Do as I asked," I say as I give him one last reassuring smile and continue forth.

I try ignore the wet snow sneaking its way through my shoes. For if I am cold, what does it make you? You've been out since before the morning horn, your friend told me. The thought makes me hasten my steps until I'm running.

Then, there's the sight of your back. But the sight doesn't fill me with glee, for you are completely unmoving.

"Dear?" I ask, waiting for you to turn to look at me. But you don't.

Peace has taken over your features. It's as if you're in an eternal sleep and this world's cruelty cannot reach you anymore.

"Darling?" I say again, as if it would make a difference.

The faint smell of your friend lingers in the freezing air, sickening smell of something rotten and sweet seeps out of your frozen pores like pus.

They did this to you, of that there is no doubt. Their touch has tainted you, and robbed you of your life.

Darkness clouds my vision and I close my eyes. Goddess, grant me the strength and the will to—

Then, I feel your gaze on me. Oh, thank the goddess.

[Sneak peek](#)

[Dec 31, 2024](#)

The sneakier peek will have to wait for next month. The Q&A was so long that I hope it makes up for it



In this one, Hati and Quinn are shopping for Saturnalia gifts.

I look at the selection. Something catches my eye...

For Marcus:

- A stylus.

"What is that?" Quinn asks. "For stabbing him in the neck?" Their voice is hopeful.

"No. It's just a pen."

"Just a... Why would you give him that?"

"He likes writing."

Quinn's eye twitches. "You're giving him something he likes?"

For Camilla:

- On second thought, I have a handwoven bracelet for her.

I clear my throat. I spent too much time on this thing.

(user:) It's not because I like her, of course. I just need her to think that I do. And what better way to show that than me spending hours on this thing?

"Don't tell me you made that yourself," Quinn says.

I remain silent.

“You’re ridiculous.” They pout. “Where’s my bracelet?”