

# Chrysanthemum Games Patreon by Thomas Bell (01/January/2023 - 09/April/2025)

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[Weekly Update - 02.01.23](#)

[Jan 1, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

Welcome to the year 2023. Personally, I'm hoping it's a banner year for a lot of things, but one of things I'm going to be actively focusing on this year is my goal of finishing FoA, editing it, and submitting it for publication! As you most likely know, the plan at the moment is for a total of ten chapters and a possible epilogue/sequel tie-in, so while this is something of a tall order (especially considering how long the last couple chapters are likely to be!), I have somewhat-ambitiously set it as my goal.

We'll see how it goes, as I also need to do things like find a job and a place to live and all of that, so who knows how things will shake out?

Anyway, enough on the long term for now. I've got a couple thousand more words done since the BIP went out, and until about the 7th or so, I'll still be in abbreviated 'holiday progress' mode, but after that I should hopefully be able to begin the process of ramping up my numbers again. It's going to take some doing to get through these last 3.5 chapters, and the sooner I *get* doing, the better.

This week will feature a bonus content for some of you, and though I may not have it out on Wednesday exactly (I'm due for some travel here shortly), it'll be here before the next weekly update, at the very least. I haven't decided exactly whom it features yet; we'll see what mood strikes me. :)

I hope you all have a great start to the year, whether you're trying to crush some resolutions or just keep on keeping on. As always, take care of yourselves, and I'll be back here to talk at you next week.

Cheers.

[Bonus Content - RO Scenarios](#)

[Jan 4, 2023](#)

Hello, everyone!

I'm back with another maybe-if sidestory thing in this slot this month, and in this case, it features Hermes's perspective, and a bit of a grumpy, smart-alecky Seph. Though, that might just be because they're grumpy when they wake up.

I hope you enjoy it!

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Hermes is a slow waker, if he has his own choice about things. While it might be generally true that he's not much for sitting around when there might be something fun to do, unlike Pyri, he has his limits.

And one of those is that he prefers his mornings to be leisurely. If he's bothered to sleep, he wants to enjoy the full experience, and not shift too abruptly between that mode and the next.

Considering that he's been spending most of his time with Seph lately, it's hardly surprising that he's indulging in sleep quite a bit more often, since they kind of *have* to. But the influence goes both ways. Sunshine, early bird that they tend to be, has gotten used to doing a few morning routine things and then crawling back into bed to doze a while with him.

Or, really, whatever dozing-alternative activity takes their fancy.

This particular morning, however, he wakes first, on his back, one wing draped lazily off the side of the bed. Seph is half-on the other one, and half on his chest, tucked into his side with their head resting on his shoulder and pectoral muscle. It's that weird kind of slightly-uncomfortable where it's outweighed easily by the pleasure of the closeness, though honestly he can't completely feel the arm attached to the shoulder they're on right now and he should probably fix that.

Instead, he moved his free arm under his head, slipping it between his silk pillowcase and the band of the same fabric wrapped around part of his hair, propping his head up and just sort of... it is weird to watch someone sleep? Maybe.

But it's not that exactly. He just likes looking at their face, and for the moment he can do so without having to make an excuse for it, or play it off with a flirty joke or whatever. Hermes is slow to sincerity, slow to anything that makes his true feelings known, if those feelings carry with them any sense of vulnerability. Especially if there's any chance anyone on Olympus might come to know about whatever he's hiding.

But they aren't on Olympus right now. They're in the Underworld, and that makes it much too easy to stop caring about stuff like that. So far, he's done... pretty well with it. Striking what he hopes is the right balance between letting his Sunshine know that this is different, from what they know he's done before,

with other people, and still giving himself a little bit of the protection lighthearted jibes and over the top flirting grant him. Because he still can't make himself *not* do that, for whatever reason.

He thinks they understand, and this is a tremendous relief. Still, any protracted and *fond* regarding of their visage must be done less than openly, for now.

Hermes has always found them beautiful, even if the exact word he'd use to describe that beauty has shifted over time. When they were kids, Seph was 'cute,' and he'd always laughed at the way they sputtered when he said it. It had been true, though, with their wide button nose and the freckles, like a dusting of deep earth spattered across the warm, sun-touched brown of their skin. Their colors have always reminded him of that sort of thing; of the deep, enclosed secrets of the soil, dark and a little mysterious and steady and always, always with so much more to give than he deserves.

It's there in their lashes, too, a brown between the two others, something like... tree bark? But there are so many colors of that that is almost fails as a description for anything. All he knows is there's the slightest tone of red to it, and when the sun hits it and shows him all the striations in the color of their hair, he always wants to smile.

Always stops himself, because he knows it would be the dopiest, most open expression, and he can't let himself do that, but...

Gently, he moves the arm they're laying on, wincing a little when feeling returns to it in needle-points and a spreading surge of discomfort, but after he flexes his hand a few times, he manages to gently hold the end of a braid. They've wrapped their hair to protect it as well, but the bare end of one has escaped its confinement, and he does let himself smile a little ridiculously now, because it looks funny, and he can only imagine them grumbling about it when they wake up.

The kind of beautiful they are now isn't a child's, anymore, and he won't deny it makes him feel something much different than he did then. Their face is something that might be called 'handsome,' in the way soft cheeks can combine with a hard jawline to make something like that, in the way their whole face shows whatever they're feeling. Hermes has known many kinds of beauty on an intimate level, but theirs is his favorite.

Because it is theirs.

The motion of his arm seems to have stirred them, because Seph makes a disgruntled noise in their sleep, rolling just enough to tuck their face into his shoulder, and he laughs softly.

"Good morning, Sunshine."

The response is barely coherent, but when he makes out the muffled 'I hate you,' he laughs again, louder this time.

"Well, not to be the bearer of more bad news, but one of your braids has gone rogue. Better fix it before we have a hair emergency, hm?"

They roll in the other direction, getting enough distance to narrow their eyes at him. "I'll give you a hair emergency," they rasp, reaching for his head with one hand.

The attempt is still sleepy and uncoordinated, but Hermes yelps anyway, diving for the edge of the bed to pull himself to his feet. Or, he would have if they weren't still laying on one of his wings. Instead, the motion is aborted, and they're both sort of moved about one-quarter of a bed sideways, Hermes forced to brace himself with a foot on the floor or take a very awkward and slow tumble to the ground.

"I win."

Seph, well aware of how Hermes feels about his hair, keeps the ruffle very gentle, and mostly to the confines of the scarf, leaving the puffy ball of curls at the top of his head alone.

It's his turn to grump, folding his arms over his chest. "Only because you cheated. What kind of partner holds a man down by his wings? How controlling!"

Seph rolls their eyes, sitting up with a yawn and stretching their hands towards the ceiling. "Yeah, yeah. Don't act like you don't like it."

The remark, still in their sleepy tone, gets a startled bark of laughter out of him. It's true, actually, he just never expected them to say it. They're very tentative about a lot of things that he can talk about much more casually, so to see them settling into it a little makes him happy in a way it's hard to explain.

This does not, of course, make them immune to retaliation. With his wing now free, Hermes, too, sits up, but then dives sideways, wrapping his arms around their middle and tackling them back down onto the mattress. He lifts both feathered limbs high, mostly out of reach, 'caging' them in place with his arms and legs.

"Yeah? What do *you* like, though?"

He knows the answer to this question maybe a bit better than they do, at least in present context, and so when he lowers his head to gently brush his mouth against their skin, he's confident about it, pressing just hard enough that he can feel the shift in their pulse with his lips. The somnolent pace of it spikes, just a little, and he feels the little shiver in them that means he has the right kind of attention.

"You look ridiculous," they grouse, tugging gently at the knot resting against his forehead. He knows they don't mean it for a second.

"*You* look ravishing," he replies, smarm easily asserting itself, "so I don't care how ridiculous I look."

He pulls back a little, wearing a big grin, and he knows when they roll their eyes again that he's won.

But it's when they lift a hand, grabbing the back of his neck and pulling him down for a proper kiss, that he *feels* like it.

## [Weekly Update - 09.01.23](#)

[Jan 8, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

Another week down, and I'm finally back to my usual place of residence after a year's end trip. This is certainly a mix of things for me personally, but the good news is, it does mean I can get back to a more regular writing schedule.

I'm pretty proud of the fact that I managed to keep up daily progress while I was away for the most part, even if the daily amount was lower than usual. I'm hoping to steadily get myself back to a better pace here for the rest of the month; I'll be aiming for about 1,500 words a day or so.

At the moment, Chapter Eight is sitting at 25,000, which is pretty good! I'm slowly working my way through the second scene of the chapter, which is going to be a long one just due to variation and things, since it directly depends on the events of the previous chapter after the route-split. But I'm happy with my progress so far, and I should almost definitely be out of that scene and into the next by the end of the month if all goes as it is going presently!

Later this week, I'll have a new questionnaire up, which this month will feature Alekto. And then I'll be around at the beginning of next week to let you know how it's going.

I hope everyone's year is off to a great start. Take care of yourselves and each other, lovely people. :)

[Q&A - Alekto \(WYR\)](#)

[Jan 10, 2023](#)

Hey all!

Back with more would you rather questions this month, and in the hot seat is Alekto, who I have to say would probably not get the point of this game. I did have fun with her answers, though; I hope you enjoy reading them. :)

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1. *Would you rather always be 10 minutes late or 20 minutes early?*

Early. The excess time would be annoying, but being late would grate on me even more.

2. *Would you rather be able to take back anything you say or know the contents of any conversation that is about you?*

Take back anything I say. I have no desire to be aware of the things most people say about me. There are some things you just have to accept are better for you not to know.

3. *Would you rather be the funniest person in a room or the smartest one?*

I suppose the most humorous. I know plenty of both, and it is more often the ones with good senses of humor who... make others happy. At least, in certain settings, it is helpful. And I have never had that sort of social ease. It might be nice, but I could suppress it if it were not. Not so the other option.

4. *Would you rather be able to read minds or predict the future?*

In the end, they are the same.

5. *Would you rather be criticized or be ignored?*

Ignored, by most people. Criticized if they have the first idea what they're talking about.

6. *Would you rather have the ability to see 10 minutes into the future or 150 years into the future?*

Ten minutes seems much more practically useful, so that one, I suppose.

7. *Would you rather be forced to sing along or dance along to every song that you hear?*

...Dance, I suppose. Not that either of these options sounds remotely pleasant.

8. *Would you rather spend three years in prison, or three years at war?*

Three years at war. If I were asked to do such a thing by someone who could actually compel me, I know it would be for no lesser cause than the fate of everything I hold dear. If I am not willing to fight for that, what am I?

9. *Would you rather ask for help with a difficult task or figure out how to do it yourself?*

Generally, I prefer to figure things out for myself, but I recognize when this is not possible and will ask for help then.

10. *Would you rather cheat at a game and win or lose respectably-well?*

Lose respectably, obviously. What point is there in cheating at a game?

### [Weekly Update - 16.01.23](#)

[Jan 15, 2023](#)

Hello all!

The report this week is a good-if-uneventful one. I've made steady progress (except for yesterday when the house needed an emergency clean), and Chapter Eight now sits at 35,000 words. I remain in the debrief scene with the ROs, but significantly further into it now. I do think I'll be done with it by the end of the month, which will mean it's once again time to throw in some plot developments.

These ones are particularly exciting, and at least judging by the responses and questions I get on Tumblr, quite a few people have been looking forward to a version of the Orpheus & Eurydice story for a while, so I hope I'm able to do it justice. I fully admit I'm one of those people who tends to be like "Orpheus, my dude, you are a colossal idiot," but, you know, tragedy and the human condition and all that, so we'll see how it all shakes out when I'm writing it!

Later on this week we'll have the POV piece featured in last month's poll, with Pyri visiting Seph on their sickbed and fretting. Lots of fretting. So I hope you'll be looking forward to that. Then of course I'll be back here next week with another progress report.

I hope your January is going well so far; hard to believe we're in the back half already, but I guess that's just how time works or something. Who knew?

Cheers. :)

### [Weekly Update - 23.01.23](#)

[Jan 22, 2023](#)

Hello all!

Here we are, rounding the bend into the last stretch of January. As usual, I can't decide whether I think this has gone by entirely too quickly or entirely too slowly. Sometimes it manages to feel like both at the same time.

Anyway! As of this writing, Chapter Eight is up to 44,000 words, so I've written 29,000 on the month. Considering I've still got a week left to go in it, I'm pretty happy with this. I won't quite get up to 45k in total for January, I don't think, but I should arrive fairly close, and considering a few unexpected curveballs to my schedule I've had this month, that's pretty good as far as I'm concerned.

In terms of where the chapter is actually at, I have moved into the very last portion of the PC's talk with their RO/PO, at which point I'll be transitioning into the plottier part of the chapter, though not without a few touches here and there of the slice-of-life stuff I like to slip in where I can.

As most of you know, the main subject of the plot in this part is the Orpheus and Eurydice story, and of course it's so well known that as I get close to actually writing it, I'm quite nervous about doing it justice heh. Still, I'll move through it as I can, and try to put a FoA twist on it, and hope it comes out well.

Sometime this week I'll be putting out a Moirae's Mirror, though I'm not yet sure what it will be about. It may not necessarily be on Wednesday, as I have a few extra things to do this week that are shuffling my schedule around a bit, but it'll definitely be out before the next weekly update, so I hope those of you who get it will look forward to it.

And, as always, I hope you're all taking care of yourselves and doing well. It's the height of summer where I am, so I'm trying not to melt into a puddle. Sometimes, self-care is a high-speed fan blowing air on you from a foot away.

### [The Moirae's Mirror - January](#)

[Jan 24, 2023](#)

Hello all! This month's mirror is of the 'in-depth preview' variety, and I'm going to talk about some of the choices and decisions I made at the beginning of Chapter Eight!

Without further ado:



Consciousness is slow to return to you. Your mind is in a fog, one that lingers at the edges of your perception even as you slowly crack your eyes open, squinting against the relatively-dim light of... wherever you are.

```
*if ((dreams = "prophecy") or (dreams = "all"))
```

```
    You could swear you've just been dreaming, but nothing about it is distinct in your memory, now, just vague impressions of... power. A pall of power pressing down on you, and the feeling of being wrapped in it, sheltered like something inside of a chrysalis is sheltered, and made new.
```

```
*if not ((dreams = "prophecy") or (dreams = "all"))
```

```
    Mercifully, you at least don't think you dreamt. You feel... perhaps not well-rested, but better than you used to feel, after a bout of nightmares or something similar.
```

```
*if (route != "alekto")
```

```
    *set firstvisitor "alekto"
```

```
*if (route = "alekto")
```

```
    *set firstvisitor "hekate"
```

```
*if (firstvisitor = "alekto")
```

```
    Lifting a hand, you scrub away some of the remnants of sleep from your eyes, wincing a little when this sets off a spike of pain in your head. It subsides quickly, though and you draw in what feels like your deepest breath in ages.
```

```
    You're on a bed of some sort, with a blanket thrown over you, so you suppose things must [i]mostly[/i] be okay, but as the recollections of the last things you remember flood in, you feel a burst of displaced urgency, almost like a tiny shot of adrenaline.
```

```
    So when a throat clears next to you, your eyes snap in that direction, body tensing, only to relax fractionally once again when you see Alekto. She stands against the wall of the room you're in, arms crossed securely over her chest. She does not loosen them to sign when she speaks, perhaps aware that you might not be able to follow much of that right now.
```

```
    *if (alekto_status < 2)
```

```
        "I apologize," she begins, a distinct note of awkwardness in her flat tone. "I doubt I am anyone you wish to see right now, but the others are presently occupied, and it was decided that someone needed to monitor your recovery."
```

```
    *if (alekto_status = 2)
```

```
        "${name}," she begins, a distinct note of concern in her otherwise flat tone. "It is all right. There is no emergency, at the moment. You have been recovering. I apologize for the surprise, but the others are presently occupied, and it was decided that someone needed to monitor your recovery."
```

```
    *if (alekto_status = 3)
```

```
        *if (alekto_friend < 2)
```

```
            "I apologize," she begins, a distinct note of awkwardness in her flat tone. "For the surprise. And the intrusion. But the others are presently occupied, and it was decided that someone needed to monitor your recovery."
```

```
        *if (alekto_friend > 1)
```

```
            "${name}," she begins, a distinct note of concern in her otherwise flat tone. "It is all right. There is no emergency, at the moment. You have been recovering. I apologize for the surprise, and the intrusion, but the others are presently occupied, and it was decided that someone needed to monitor your recovery."
```

Here we are again with the ever reliable 'CSIDE Screenshot' variety of showing you things, heh. As you can see, the PC's status with regards to dreams is coming back in here in a small way. I would like, eventually, for this decision to be one that has pros and cons either way. Dreams, especially the prophetic kinds, can be useful sources of information, but they can also be disjointed, difficult to interpret, and wear on a person psychologically (particularly if they're more nightmarish than anything).

For now, though, this is just some flavour text, and a taste of what might be to come.

There's also two options for who is first in your room here. Most people will get Alekto, and that's for a very specific purpose we'll see later. But if you are on Alekto's route, then Hekate appears instead, as it makes a lot of sense for the resident physician to be checking up on you!

```
*if (firstvisitor = "hekate")
    Lifting a hand, you scrub away some of the remnants of sleep from your eyes, wincing a little when
    this sets off a spike of pain in your head. It subsides quickly, though and you draw in what feels
    like your deepest breath in ages.

    You're on a bed of some sort, with a blanket thrown over you, so you suppose things must
    [i]mostly[/i] be okay, but as the recollections of the last things you remember flood in, you feel a
    burst of displaced urgency, almost like a tiny shot of adrenaline.

    So when a throat clears next to you, your eyes snap in that direction, body tensing, only to relax
    fractionally once again when you see Hekate.

    "Hello, ${name}. I'd apologize for the intrusion, but it's medically necessary, so here we are. The
    others are occupied, but I've just informed them you woke up, so I'm sure they'll all be fighting to
    see who gets to visit you first soon." She chuckles. "Of course if you want them to give you space,
    you should say so."

That's all... a bit ahead of where you are at the moment, and you ask the first question that comes
to mind. "How... long was I out?" Your voice is as bleary as your eyes were, your tongue thick and
heavy in your mouth.

*if (firstvisitor = "hekate")
    "Two weeks and a day," Hekate replies promptly. "We've been careful to make sure it wasn't
    anything life-threatening, of course, but medically I thought it was better to let you wake on
    your own than trying to induce it."

*if (firstvisitor = "alekto")
    "Just over a fortnight," Alekto replies. She hesitates a moment, then adds: "at first we weren't sure
    whether we should wake you, but Hekate thought it would be best to let you wake naturally."

*fake_choice
    # "Two weeks?!"
    "Two weeks?!" You push into a sitting position, aided by
    *if (firstvisitor = "alekto")
        Alekto, who winds a crank of sorts at the side of the bed platform, which raises the upper
        half of the mattress for you to lean against.
    *if (firstvisitor = "hekate")
        Hekate, who waves a hand, a touch of magic winding a crank of sorts at the side of the
        bed platform, which raises the upper half of the mattress for you to lean against.

    You can hardly believe you were unconscious for that long. It makes the urgency of figuring
    out what is going on that much more potent. Who [i]knows[/i] what could have changed in
    two weeks? What could have happened?

    *if (firstvisitor = "alekto")
        Alekto purses her lips. "If it is any consolation," she says, returning to her place against the
        wall, "it has been time mostly spent returning things to something like normal after the
        incident. There have been no further attacks, or dangers of that sort."
    *if (firstvisitor = "hekate")
        Hekate huffs softly. "Easy does it, please," she says, returning her attention briefly to her
        notes. "For the record, there haven't been any other attacks, or anything of the sort.
        Mostly we're just trying to get everything back to functioning normally."
```

The PC was out of commission for two weeks and a bit after the incident last chapter. I wanted to pick a span of time that was fairly long, because what happened to them was momentous in a way that hasn't

been fully revealed just yet. But it also needed to be short enough that there was still a little time before the climactic plot event, which will be set off in Chapter Nine.

```
Only then does it hit you how [i]fantastic[/i] you feel, your body hale and responsive and light in a way you're not familiar with. Better than normal, anyway.
#That was probably a good idea; I feel pretty rested, actually."
That was probably a good idea; I feel pretty rested, actually." Now that you have a moment to register it, your body feels... pretty incredible. Light, strong, in a way that is unfamiliar to you. Your inner wellspring of magic is plentiful and responsive as well.

Given that, you chance pushing yourself into a sitting position, aided by
*if (firstvisitor = "alekto")
    Alekto, who winds a crank of sorts at the side of the bed platform, which raises the upper half of the mattress for you to lean against.
*if (firstvisitor = "hekate")
    Hekate, who waves a hand, a touch of magic winding a crank of sorts at the side of the bed platform, which raises the upper half of the mattress for you to lean against.

You open and close your hands, shifting your legs a little bit just to make sure there's not any unexpected pain, but that's essentially the [i]opposite[/i] of what there is. You feel fantastic; much better than normal. You wonder what's caused it.

*if (firstvisitor = "alekto")
    Alekto hums. "In case you were curious," she says, returning to her place against the wall, "the intervening time has been mostly spent returning things to something like normal after the incident. There have been no further attacks, or dangers of that sort."
*if (firstvisitor = "hekate")
    Hekate huffs softly. "No doubt you're feeling quite hale, but easy does it please," she says, returning her attention briefly to her notes. "In case you were wondering, there haven't been any other attacks, or anything of the sort. Mostly we're just trying to get everything back to functioning normally."

Two weeks is a pretty decent chunk of time, now that you think about it. That progress could be quite far along, actually.
```

The fact that after waking up from unconsciousness the PC actually feels good is not me misunderstanding how unconsciousness works; it's a side effect of what's going on with them right now—the consequences of the end of Chapter Seven. This is the first hint to the fact that what lies in store for them could be a good thing as well as a bad or uncomfortable one. As always, there will be choices about how to react to what's occurred.



```

*if ((firstvisitor = "alekto") and (alekto_apologized = false))
:The pause this time feels at once as though everything has been said and also there is something
still hanging in the air, but you're honestly not sure what it could be. Alekto is visibly struggling
with something, from the downturn to her mouth and the faint twitch in her brow.

When she speaks next, you understand why.

"I... I would like to preface this by saying that I am well aware it may be too little, too late," she
begins, expelling a long breath. "And if so, I understand.
*if (sayitlater)
:I have been... meaning to say something like this. Tried, once before. But you were gracious
enough to let me go without doing it. Perhaps I am merely a coward."
*if not (sayitlater)
:I have been... meaning to say something to this effect since you assisted with the Lethe matter,
but perhaps—perhaps I was too complacent, in waiting for the 'right' time. Or perhaps I am
merely a coward."

Her lips thin into a line as she presses them together. "I am sorry." It sounds like the conclusion, but
fortunately a little more explanation follows to help you trace the same path her thoughts
clearly have. "The way I behaved, when you first arrived here. The way I treated you. It... I was
wrong, to do it. I will not make excuses, and I don't expect you to forgive me. I just... it was my
responsibility to say that. So you know. And so you know that you belong here, if you wish to,
and that I owe you, for what you have done for my friends. My family."

*gosub_scene apology_response

It is with lingering, perceptible awkwardness that she clears her throat. "In any case, this is where I
leave you.
*if (megaira_dead)
:I need to check on Tisiphone. Besides, I believe you have another visitor, and I suspect one
whose company you will much prefer to mine."
*if not (megaira_dead)
:I need to check on my sisters. Besides, I believe you have another visitor, and I suspect one
whose company you will much prefer to mine."

*if (alekto_status = 2)
:Alekto doesn't quite smile, but the way she inclines her head almost manages a similar warmth.
"I am... glad you are well."
*if (alekto_status < 2)
:Alekto nods once, perfunctory and a bit awkward. "It is good that you have recovered."
Then she steps out without another word, leaving you to wonder just who it is she believes is
coming next.
*goto movinrightalong

```

This skips some other dialogue, but I thought it was worth mentioning since I did promise to explain Alekto's presence earlier haha. So, if you haven't already gotten an apology from her for her suspicion of you at the beginning of the story (and you're also not on her route), this is where she gives it to you. The gosub\_scene presents you with a variety of responses that can determine to some extent the tenor of your relationship going forward. You can forgive her, be a little uncertain yet, or outright refuse to forgive her, with a few different flavours of each.

For the most part, Alekto is professional enough that this won't affect how she behaves when the PC is around, but it certainly will in some instances. In fact, if you've already gotten the apology, how you responded changes her behaviour in this very conversation scene.

And that's the Mirror for this time. I hope it was an interesting peek into what's happening under FoA's hood, and I'll see y'all back in this slot next month. :)

## [Weekly Update - 30.01.23](#)

[Jan 29, 2023](#)

Hey y'all!

Here we are, at the end of January. My next couple of days are pretty packed with stuff for the Patreon. I've got to get the BIP edited and posted, and then do the first bonus content of the month (featuring Charon) on Wednesday, so it might be closer to Thursday or Friday before I'm able to post that; we'll see how it goes.

But! This week has been another pretty good one for progress. The chapter currently sits at 55,000 words, which is about how much will be going into the BIP, so that means I've managed about 40,000 words for the month. It's not quite as much as I was hoping for, but it's very close, and I'm overall quite happy about it.

The RO/PO conversation scene isn't quite done yet; the variations have taken up a lot more words than I thought, as they inevitably do. But I'll definitely be finishing that soon, and then from there moving into the next plot developments. I think it's important that PCs be given some time to process what's happened recently, and discuss it with the other characters, and let the plot breathe a bit before the next major things happen, which is sort of why this is the chapter where the Orpheus and Eurydice story happens. It's a cool story, and one I definitely wanted to include in the game in some capacity, but it's not super personal to the player character in the same way the last chapter's developments were. (And the next chapter's developments will be!)

Anyway, that's that on that for now. I'm off to keep testing the BIP, but I hope you all have a fantastic day.

[Bonus Content Poll - January](#)

[Jan 30, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

This month's bonus content poll is about Hekate, who will feature in the next variable bonus content piece (that's the one that comes out in the third week of the month).

I've got a couple ideas that should work for it, so I'm curious to know which one interests you the most.

Very serious meeting business featuring a bit of Olympus's reaction to Chapter Seven

Very serious healing business featuring the consequences of everyone's actions

41 votes total

<https://dashingdon.com/play/kurokiku/foa---jan-23-bip/mygame/>

[BIP - January](#)

[Jan 30, 2023](#)

And hello again, folks. :)

It's the last day of the month, and by now you all know what that means. Here once again is the BIP, this time with all of the first and almost all of the second scenes of the chapter included, for a total of just over 55,000 words. I think some of it can get pretty heavy and dramatic, so a general warning for possible discussion of violence, death, and other things you may have encountered last chapter.

I hope those of you who play as they come out enjoy this one.

[Bonus Content - RO Scenarios](#)

[Jan 31, 2023](#)

Hello everyone,

This month's what-if/maybe-happened side story features Charon angst and a good-natured Dionysus with a pretty obvious crush. I hope you enjoy it!

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Charon sighs almost under their breath, running their fingertips along the deep purple bark of a petrified tree. The grove of them has always been soothing, for some reason, perhaps because of its origins. But

it may also be because there is a stillness here, the sort of quiet that is lacking in any mortal world forest, or any place at all on Olympus.

This is something they have always held dear about the Underworld. Sometimes, the presence of death is a good thing, because when it pervades a place there is something gentle in the repose, at least here. He would never have learned that, if not for his exile, because prior to meeting Hades and walking his realm, their only familiarity with death was with something violent, chaotic, terrible.

It is through his time here that he has finally come to understand that this is not an inherent property of death, but an inherent property of something else. And he is glad to be rid of the burden of interacting with the *something else*, hopefully for the rest of eternity. In the end, that will put all such troubles far and diminished in his past, indeed, and he hopes for it like he has never hoped for anything else.

His fingertips draw down the length of the bark, and he hums quietly to himself, running them along a small fissure where the color brightens into something almost pink. He smiles, just a little, and drops his hand away. They'd have preferred to come here with Hades, as there are some things they've been meaning to ask him, but of course duty takes precedence for now, and the Lord of the Dead has plenty of them to attend to, certainly.

Winding his way through the lifeless forest, he meanders without any haste. They know where they're going, and have no particular need to get there quickly. In fact, given the fact that they can sense someone else already at their intended destination, they might prefer to go quite slowly.

It isn't that they have no desire to see Dionysus. Rather, it is perhaps that they desire to see him *too much*, and this is not an impulse they feel they should indulge. Being around the young god is... something of a challenge, in many ways, and one Charon is reluctant to handle, not because there's anything wrong with him, but because there's plenty wrong with *them*.

They need the quiet and stillness of dead things. And yet they are inexplicably drawn to someone who is neither quiet nor still, whose chaotic essence of life all but overflows from him, poorly-contained and bleeding out into the atmosphere. It is, in so many ways, a poor match, even for something as simple as a warm acquaintance, and yet...

Charon has no idea how Hades has noticed. It's not like him to notice that sort of thing unless explicitly told of its presence. And yet perhaps the degree to which the two of them know each other—a friendship that transcends the ordinary boundaries of such things, the ordinary significance—perhaps this has granted him insight. Or perhaps Hekate has. She was always the sort to meddle, if she thought it was for the best.

*I don't need to tell you that there's nothing to worry about on my end, of course. And I don't want to interfere. But...* He'd trailed off in that distinct way where it was obvious that more was coming, but that he was doing them the courtesy of giving them a chance to figure out what it was and brace for it first, red eyes expectant.

*I think it might be all right for you to allow yourself to explore it. I think he is waiting for that.*

The thing is, Charon knows he isn't wrong. They haven't missed the way Dionysus looks at them, when he thinks no one is paying attention. It is not lost on him what it means, that the youth seeks his company more often than that of anyone else, even Pyri and Hermes, with whom he gets along so well.

And it isn't one-sided, either. Charon has felt a powerful attraction to him for quite some time. Perhaps in truth one that began to grow not long after they met. It feels inevitable. Like something they have no control over, and yet they are not so fool as to deny their own agency in the whole thing. They could have refused his company. They could have deflected, been 'busy,' made sure there were always third parties involved. But selfishly, he hadn't. And now he was paying for it.

Before they know it, their feet have brought them to the lake, and they clear their throat to alert Dionysus to their presence. At first it isn't obvious where he is, actually, and their brows furrow—until with a familiar rushing noise, he appears from beneath the water, slicking dark brown curls back from his face and clearing water away from his eyes.

The original warning would not likely have been audible, but before Charon can make another, Dionysus turns, offering a bright, broad smile in his direction.

"Charon!"

Water runs still down the sides of his face, into the hollow of his throat, giving the rich brown of his skin a shine in the dim light. His eyes, black as the furthest reaches of the ocean, are narrow with his mirth. His happiness, to see them of all people.

He's absolutely beautiful.

It is devastating.

Charon's chest tightens, and he isn't honestly certain if he manages the same sort of placid smile he usually wears, though he does try for it. "Hello, Dionysus. I was not aware you had ventured out here, today." True enough, at least until he'd already begun to approach and it felt too late to resist seeing him.

The softly-glowing fish, echoes of their idea of a lake, dart and drift and lazily revolve around the god of spring. There's no reason to suppose they would be attracted by his presence in particular, and yet of course they are. Of course they would be.

"I... yeah." Dionysus's smile fades a little, he comes a little closer so his feet hit the bottom and he can stand, chest-deep in the clear depths.

Charon observes no particular taboo around the idea of nudity; why would they? Virtually no one does. But still he keeps his eyes pointedly fixed on Dionysus's face. It isn't too difficult, if only because the younger god's tone has drawn his attention instead.

"Is something the matter?"



It's a bit sheepishly that he lifts a hand to rub at his hooked nose. "Well, not really. I just feel a little guilty. I'm, uh... I'm here because it was my best guess about where you might be, today. I didn't want to ask Erebus, because then it would have felt... bad. But I did sort of try to run into you anyway."

He's so perfectly earnest, so charming in the simplicity and plainness of his affection, and inwardly, Charon rages against it. Against himself, for being completely unable to handle this in the way it deserves.

*Why must you be like this? Do you not understand that I half-love you already? That if you continue like this I will never be able to let you go?*

It's a terrible thought, the last. A thought that a better person would not have. But Charon, for all their attempts, is not yet a good enough person to handle something like this in the right way. Not yet a good enough person to gently turn this aside, to reject with grace and tenderness, but firmly enough that Dionysus can close off the possibility in his mind.

Perhaps he will never be good enough to do something like that, because even in his mind it sounds completely impossible.

They have evidently been silent too long, because Dionysus clears his throat. "I'm... I'm sorry. That was out of line. I can go—please just give me a moment and I'll be out of your hair."

"No." The word comes out without Charon willing it. Or maybe just without him being willing to admit he wills it. "Stay, please. I was... surprised, but I have no objection to your presence here." They pull in a deep, quiet breath. "In fact I am glad of it. If you are not averse, I will... swim with you."

The smile blooms over his face again, and as always inevitably happens, Charon feels some part of himself give in. Yield to the bright softness of Dionysus's regard.

Someday soon, there will be no turning back.

Maybe there already isn't.

[Weekly Update - 06.01.23](#)

[Feb 5, 2023](#)

Hello and welcome back, everyone. This month is off to a moderate start, I'd say. The chapter is up to about 63,000 words, 8,000 more since I dropped the BIP on the 31st. I am also finally through the conversation with the RO/PO, and into the section afterwards. This features the PC at their workplace

after the events of last chapter, or one of a few different places if they don't have a workplace. Soon they will be visited by Eurydice, and have at least a bit of a conversation with her before the events concerning her are really propelled forwards.

This is sort of interesting, because up until this point, most interactions with Eurydice are very missable. That's not necessarily a bad thing, of course, but it does make some of the heavier stuff that happens in this conversation a little difficult to work in for those situations where the PC has missed her often, or largely been dismissive of her. Fortunately, I think she still has motive to talk to the PC, as she sees them as similar to herself in a certain sense and will ask them something on the basis of that alone.

Still, I've been thinking lately that I haven't made her characterization as strong as I might like, and so I have been considering adding an unmissable scene with her in an earlier chapter. I'm not sure exactly where I'll put that yet, but I think it's something I need to seriously consider once I reach the editing phase.

I am of course very worried about doing this story justice, but also keeping it very in-keeping with FoA's style and themes, and I think one of the ways I'm going to do that is by keeping the focus a little more on her side of things, rather than Orpheus's. He usually gets the emphasis in the story, because in the way it's usually told, he really drives the action of it, and in the end, the result comes about because of his actions and not hers. So I'm also going to try and give Eurydice some agency in how things turn out—and of course the player as well.

Hopefully I'll be able to figure out how to do that, haha.

Anyway, that's all for this week's update. There will be a questionnaire out on Wednesday, this time featuring Hades. I hope you're all having a good month, and I'll see you in this slot next week.

[Q&A - Hades \(WYR\)](#)

[Feb 7, 2023](#)

Hey all!

If you've been following the pattern of Q&A responses, you know this is a bit out of order, but I've reconfigured the order so that no one 'doubles up' in a month (i.e. we get someone different as the focus for the questionnaire and each of the bonus contents), so some things have shuffled around. Long story short, it's Hades's turn on the questionnaire this month, and we had Charon for the first bonus content and will have Hekate for the next.

Anyhow, I hope you enjoy this one. :)

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1. *Would you rather always be 10 minutes late or 20 minutes early?*

Early, I think. I prefer not to keep others waiting on me, when possible, even if being early has its own inconveniences. Fortunately my power means I do not actually have either of these problems, and can usually manage to be on time.

2. *Would you rather be able to take back anything you say or hear any conversation that is about you?*

Take back anything I say. I admit, while some part of me will always be curious to know what others think of me, paying too much attention to that kind of thing can... send one to dark places. It is best not to give the secret thoughts of other people more weight than one must, I suspect. Also, I am a poor communicator at times, and insurance against that would be most welcome.

3. *Would you rather be the funniest person in a room or the smartest one?*

I suppose... that is hard to say. It would be nice to have a sense of humor that is appreciated by others, but I would rather know as many things as possible that might help them. So in that sense, I suppose I would rather be the 'smartest,' though it isn't really about that.

4. *Would you rather be able to read minds or predict the future?*

Ah... perhaps predict the future. As much as I would sometimes want to be able to simply know how another is feeling... that is why I should not have such power. I would be tempted to use it, you see, and I think that would be a violation.

5. *Would you rather be criticized or be ignored?*

On that one, I cannot decide. I generally prefer that people not pay me more mind than necessary, but being ignored entirely would make it quite difficult to succeed at my job. At least with criticism, I would know what problems I needed to address, even if the solutions were not always as the critic supposed.

6. *Would you rather have the ability to see 10 minutes into the future or 150 years into the future?*

Oh, ten minutes, certainly. There are many useful questions in the day to day that could be answered by such a power, and I confess I prefer to let the further future surprise me, insofar as it can.

7. *Would you rather be forced to sing along or dance along to every song that you hear?*

Well, I do enjoy dancing, but I think singing would be somewhat less inconvenient, so that one.

8. *Would you rather spend three years in prison, or three years at war?*

I would rather spend ten years in prison than one year at war. But I acknowledge that my sense of what time is worth is probably far different from that of most people, so this is by no means an answer I assert as objectively better. Though... for anyone with any sense of war, perhaps the three-three case at least is clear.

9. *Would you rather ask for help with a difficult task or figure out how to do it yourself?*

I prefer to figure things out myself if I can, but I have no aversion to asking for help, and often do.

10. *Would you rather cheat at a game and win or lose respectably-well?*

I suppose it sort of depends on who I am playing with. Hermes, for example, often cheats, and because everyone knows this, such becomes part of playing any game with him. So to out-cheat him would be very satisfying. But with most people, I would rather lose respectably, of course.

[Weekly Update - 13.02.23](#)

[Feb 12, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

We seem to be moving through February at a very rapid rate, unsurprisingly. This week was pretty steady and consistent for progress; the chapter now stands at 74,000 words, 11,000 more than last week, which I'm pretty happy with! I'm making good progress through the (relatively) short scene dealing with the PC's job or lack thereof, and I do think I'll be clear of that by the end of the month, and at least into their conversation with Eurydice.

Later this week, I have a Hekate-POV piece for you all that I hope you'll enjoy, but other than that, not a whole lot to report this time! Sometimes the weeks are just quiet and steady progress, and happily that seems to have been the case this time around.

I hope you're all doing well, and have a great week. :)

[Bonus Content - Hekate POV](#)

[Feb 14, 2023](#)

Hey all!

This month, you voted for some aftermath from Hekate's perspective. So here she is, on a break from her very extensive work, and musing on the subject of Persephone.

I hope you enjoy it. Cheers!

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Hekate quite literally cannot remember the last time she was this exhausted.

After she and Persephone had both collapsed, she'd been the first to wake. It hadn't been such a long time she was unconscious; certain complex magical contingencies she had in place had drawn energy from the places they were meant to, and the enchantments she had etched on her very own body had done their works as they needed to, returning her to consciousness after only a few minutes, alive but exceedingly-fatigued.

Her own fault, really, in some sense. The Underworld had been so safe for so long that she had invested much of herself into it, and had much less to draw on than she needed. She'd pulled some from the infrastructure as she went, because it was necessary, but now that the danger had passed that was going to be more of a problem than a solution. Entire sections of the city would be missing light, water, the basic foundational aspects of life. It might be true that spirits didn't strictly need those things, but they should have them.

No one should have to exist on the bare minimum.

Getting the both of them somewhere better for their purposes had been a matter of asking Hades for an assist, which he provided, the dear man, even in spite of what must have been considerable fatigue of his own. She wasn't the only one with most of her resources invested in keeping the realm functioning as it ought to be.

But from there, it hadn't stopped. Megaira and Tisiphone were in terrible shape, and when Alekto had shown up with them *and* an unconscious Pyri in tow, she'd had to drop anything and everything else she was doing to save their lives. Tisiphone didn't take too long to stabilize, but Megaira's heart had nearly ruptured, to say nothing of the damage that was done to the rest of her. Apparently one of Echidna's foul Daughters had gotten to her, and so in some sense, it was quite fortunate she was even still alive to help.

Then there were the injuries of her other friends. Persephone and Pyri had taken the worst of it, but Hermes was completely exhausted of his magic. Charon was that special kind of reticent and surly that could only mean they'd accidentally transformed, at least partway, and their constant resistance to that possibly wreaked a unique kind of havoc on their system that required delicacy and care when handling. Alekto herself had remained in the waiting room for several hours, slowly oozing blood from several wounds but insisting she go last of everyone.

The limited healers that worked under her, Hekate assigned to handle injured spirits, such as those from the market square. But some of those cases were beyond their abilities, and so they became hers as well.

Now, at last, a week and a half later, she had the time to pause to eat, and sit down. She was, at this point, entirely sustaining herself on the magical bonds she had with her family; their magic was as a rule not suited to healing, but she had learned long ago how to convert it with minimal loss. So in some sense everyone was helping, but in this the lion's share of the work, the physical work of moving about and casting and writing records and seeing to everyone, was hers. So was the mental work, of diagnosing maladies and devising solutions and trying to keep her emotions in check while all of the people she loved most in the world were injured, or dying, or—in Persephone's case—somehow neither and both at the same time.

So, naturally, she took her limited meal in Persephone's room.

There wasn't much to do, here, except eat and extend her magical senses towards the young goddess. The latter was something she found herself doing quite often and from greater distances. Monitoring her vitals, checking to make sure nothing had changed or destabilized. The light connection was something that had kept her level through some of the most arduous days of work, an evenhandedness she doubts she would have had if she hadn't been able to check, whenever she needed to, that Persephone was all right.

And still, there's something irreplicably soothing about actually *seeing* her breathe.

The thought brings a soft chuckle bubbling to the surface of her, and Hekate shoots the other woman a wry look. "You know... I doubt it will be much longer now before I've fallen for you entirely. Woe is you, I daresay."

She expected this result, of course. Has been very much looking forward to it, in a way. But the process is worth savoring, and she's in no great hurry to get there. Hurry is something she finds is mostly the provenance of younger deities than she, like Hermes or Pyri or at times even Alekto, who all very much feel the urgency of everything they see or do or experience.

There's nothing wrong with that, of course, but the time in which Hekate might have hurried to anything is long past. She learned patience because she had to. Because she has always been able to see at least little glimmers of the future, and learned quickly that there was no accelerating the results you wanted, nor staving off the ones you didn't. The gods were slaves to Fate, and it was only mortals who were free.

"It's not so bad, really, though," she muses, chewing over the sweet flesh of a fig. "She seldom bothers to dictate all that much to us, and occasionally there's something downright delightful in there."

The Moirae are not especially fond of their collective vision of Fate's weave. Perhaps Hekate wouldn't like it, either, if her vision were so complete, but it isn't, and she can still find the wonder and hope in what there is.

Persephone's vital signs do not change, and so as she slices some cheese off her small block of it and lays it over a slice of bread, Hekate gently probes the fresh connection between their magics. It has a different feel, really, from those she maintains with the rest of her family, but that is mostly due to the traumatic circumstances in which it was formed. Perhaps... perhaps Fate has had Her say in this as well, though. It wouldn't be surprising.

She wonders, distantly, if Persephone will want to keep it. Most likely not, in the sense that she didn't consent to it in the first place, and unlike Hekate she does not maintain almost half a dozen bonds at any one time. Even if this one is irrevocably special, it's hard to know if that nuance will be something she can get across or something that will get entirely lost in the explanation. She doesn't want to make her feel pressured to keep it, after all.

Even if she very much *does* want her to keep it.

*What would it feel like, to be this close to you, always?*

The question is a delightful sort of torment, and Hekate lets herself feel just a little lost in it for a while, humming softly as she finishes her meal. Once all the little remnants are packed away and gathered, she stands, sighing quietly as she throws a last glance at Persephone.

"Do wake up soon, won't you, my dear? We have so much to discuss, and everyone misses you. Me most of all."

There is, for now, no response, but Hekate hadn't been expecting one. It is with a strange ambivalence, then, that she takes her leave.

[Weekly Update - 20.02.23](#)

[Feb 19, 2023](#)

Hey all!

Another week, more pretty decent progress if I do say so myself. The chapter is up to 85k, which is again 11k more than last week. I'm still making my way through the third scene of the chapter, but I've *almost* made it to the part where Eurydice actually shows up haha. There's a lot of variation in this one, because as I mentioned it keys off either what job the PC has, or whatever else they choose to do with their time if they don't.

I'm actually enjoying writing it quite a bit, because these little scenes are giving me a chance to use some of the secondary characters in the Underworld, or do little lore drops, or other things like that. And my hope is that they're enriching for the story in the sense that they make everyone's PCs feel more like a part of what's going on around them, too—like they're slowly coming to feel (at least a little) more at home in the Underworld, whether they ultimately choose to stay there or not.

Anyhow, there will be a Moirae's Mirror later in the week for those of you who get those, and otherwise, I will be back in this slot next week with another update, swiftly followed by a poll and the BIP!

Here's hoping you're all having a great week; don't forget to rest when you need it. Until next time. :)

### [Moirae's Mirror - February](#)

[Feb 21, 2023](#)

Hey all!

This month for the Mirror, I've written up a (vague and short, but hopefully interesting) history of the Underworld itself. There's quite a bit of lore in here, so for those of you who like that stuff, enjoy! :)

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The Underworld has always been, for as long as there has been death in the universe. Considering that the very first beings in it once warred amongst themselves, one can imagine that this is a very long time indeed. Certainly, Hades the place is older than Hades the person, and it is not a close match.

However, few would recognize the Underworld of old, if all they knew was the Underworld of today. At first, Hades was a realm not only of death, but of primordial chaos, a maelstrom into which the dead would travel almost as if magnetized, to spend some amount of time churning about in its waters or flung against its unmerciful shores, and to die, as to live, was an enterprise of unique brutality and senselessness. Eventually, such a soul would be spat once more into the life of a living vessel, quite possibly traumatized by its experience in the 'afterlife.'

This contributed to, though did not singlehandedly determine, something of a dark age of humankind. Not all areas of the Underworld were equally tumultuous, and in some sense it isn't clear where the surface-level strife influenced the world below and where it was influenced *by* it, but in any case the system was only barely functional, led about by small tugs here and there from Fate but mostly subjected entirely to the whims and randomness of Chaos.



The first generation of truly deific beings, the Titans, were broadly aware of this, and though a few were concerned to do something about it, most didn't trouble themselves much in human affairs, and despite all the evidence to the contrary, death was seen as an exclusively 'human' problem. During this time, the Underworld did have nonhuman residents, and already the tradition of Hades as refuge for eccentrics and outcasts was quite in effect. Not all of these eccentrics were of the benevolent sort, but some certainly were. The kinds of Titans who preferred to mind their own business away from Olympus freely mixed with political exiles and dangerous 'heretics,' beings who exercised the power of creation in novel—and very dangerous—ways. This was the era of propagation and mysticism and stretching the boundaries of what it meant to rule the oldest forces in the world, and humans were largely overlooked, an uninteresting byproduct of creation that came and went periodically in the same way the weather does.

The Titanomachy changed the Underworld in the same way it changed everything else: irrevocably.

For the first time, a singular 'ruler' was appointed for the realm. Aidoneus, the eldest and unluckiest son of the titan Kronos, drew the job in a lot with his two younger brothers, and so descended into Hades, taking on the name of the realm as his own, even as he took its burdens onto his shoulders. He was not alone, then; no few of the Underworld's former residents protested the idea of outside influence, but with the help of the witch Hekate, he swiftly grew to understand the nuances and needs of his realm. And his tremendous power became a stabilizing force for a realm built on pure chaos.

It is commonly said that the laws of the Underworld betray a certain softness of touch, perhaps a certain unforgivable sentimentality of character, but they have nevertheless done what they were meant to do. On the foundation of Hades's magic, the realm was brought into line, the formerly traumatic and difficult processes of mortal afterlife streamlined and re-imagined to cause as little pain as possible. It is said that the two of them tried to eliminate the need for death entirely, and then the need for the loss of memory, but the first failed outright and the second proved on average more terrible in result than its opposite, and so the present-day procedures of death and rebirth were enshrined into institutions.

In time, the Underworld became a place that one could live with a reasonable expectation of care and comfort, and so unsurprisingly, Zeus began to send his exiles there. People no longer 'fit' for the glories of Olympus, but still deific enough that the mortal world would make a poor choice. The first of these was the being now known as Charon, who took that name shortly after arrival in the Underworld. Having expected a pitiless, perhaps even violent reception, he was surprised to note that no such thing was true, and in time he took up the role of Ferryman, a humble but crucial post in the course of the afterlife.

Next arrived the Furies, cast down from the realm of the sun and transformed in their descent. These, too, Hades accepted with open arms, inviting them to find such places and lives as they could in his realm, and so, too, did they settle.

It was not only deities that would come to reside in the Underworld alongside the spirits and original residents. When his name is invoked in a plea, Hades answers, taking up those at the end of their rope and bringing them away from their troubles in other realms into his own. This seems strange to outsiders, and no doubt results in the twisting of the tales into those sorts where he kidnaps young

nymphs and the like and forces them Underground, but he makes no attempt to correct such rumors, and the Underworld's fearsome reputation is allowed to stand without comment.

In time, even the other gods have come to fear Hades and what he represents, for it is well-known that even before he had his name, he had the power to bring death to immortals. And so the Underworld is, for the most part, spoken of in hushed whispers, or not at all.

[Important Patreon Poll!](#)

[Feb 24, 2023](#)

Dear Patrons,

First off, let me thank you all for a cumulative two and a half or so years of support here on Patreon. Fields of Asphodel has come a very long way in that time, and I truly do (quite literally) depend on your support and generosity to keep working on it. Hopefully, one day, writing will be my full-time profession; I do feel I'm getting a little closer every day.

That said, I'd prefer not to bury the lede too much: this post is about the structure of my Patreon itself. I am, tentatively, looking at restructuring the tiers, and on that matter, I'd like your feedback.

Right now, as you're aware, there are a grand total of five tiers, most with at least some exclusive monthly content. As it turns out, this is a lot to keep up with, and sometimes gets a bit in the way of making actual progress on the game. Generally, I'd prefer the extras not to do that, because of course my main focus is and should remain writing the game itself.

So I'd like to run an alternative tier structure by you, and see what you think of it. After you've read it, I'd love if you could answer the poll below and let me know. This is by no means a guaranteed change or anything; I do have to think about what the best balance is of time spent on Patreon content, time spent on the game, and what that means my membership will look like. So if most people prefer the current structure, I'll stick with it!

The Proposal:

Tier 1: Seedling (\$2)

- The Weekly Update
- A monthly bonus content
- Three days early access to new chapters

#### Tier 2: Bud (\$5)

- The Weekly Update
- Two monthly bonus contents
- The monthly bonus content poll
- One week early access to new chapters

#### Tier 3: Blossom (\$10)

- The Weekly Update
- Two monthly bonus contents
- The monthly bonus content poll
- One week early access to new chapters
- The BIP (Build in Progress) every month

#### Tier 4: Everbloom (\$25)

- The Weekly Update
- Two monthly bonus contents
- The monthly bonus content poll
- Ten days early access to new chapters
- The BIP (Build in Progress) every month
- (One time, after three months at this tier) a custom short story featuring FoA characters and scenario of your choice, 1500-2000 words.
- If you so desire, your name in FoA's credits

All of these tiers would include art access, but since those are quite intermittent, I wouldn't be listing them as a separate benefit.

So, if you would be so kind as to let me know what you think, I'd appreciate that!

I prefer the current structure, and would probably unsubscribe if it changed.

This version seems fine; I'd probably stay at the price point I'm already at.

This version seems fine; I'd probably move down one or more price points.

This version seems fine; I'd probably move up one or more price points.

I prefer the current structure, but I probably wouldn't unsubscribe if it changed.

44 votes total

[Weekly Update - 27.02.23](#)

[Feb 26, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

Good news to report this week: the chapter has just passed the 100k mark, and I am officially done with not only the job-related scene, but the talk with Eurydice that happens therein! That means that from here, the chapter is going to be the Orpheus and Eurydice story, followed by one final scene with your chosen RO/PO. Of course, that's all sure to be quite long, but I'm pretty excited about having finally reached it.

That's 15k words this week, and the total for February is now 45,000, which is already more than I was aiming for this month. I think I will spend today mostly bug swatting for the BIP release tomorrow, which will have all the progress so far.

In other news, a big thanks to everyone who replied to the poll. I think based on the response I will in fact be implementing the suggested changes, so look for that to shift around early next month. (I'll do it after the 1st, of course, so no one finds themselves paying an unexpected amount, but those of you who pay on other days should be aware that that's happening.) If you've read the proposal and would like to edit your pledge downwards accordingly, you can do that from now until whenever your payment date is. I think. Admittedly, I have no idea how exactly Patreon is going to do this, but I believe they do protect you from sudden shifts in this sort of thing (which I hope there won't be, anyway), so it should be simple enough.

If you end up charged more than you want to be paying on the new tier system, I will be happy to refund you if you shoot me a message.

Anyway, that's enough of that for now. I hope you're all having a good week, and that the end of the month hasn't sneaked up on you with quite as much skill as it sneaked up on me!

[Bonus content poll - February](#)

[Feb 27, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

The BIP will be here in a hour. In the meantime, next month's RO POV bonus content is Hermes's, so in this case I'm asking you to help me set the dynamic between him and Seph. Which of these sounds best?

He and Seph are best friends, very close and platonic.

Seph has feelings for Hermes, that they aren't always very good at hiding.

Seph has feelings for Hermes, that they are very good at hiding.

Seph is relatively open about the fact that they have feelings for Hermes.

He and Seph are beginning to overcome a childhood rivalry and settle into a strange friendship.

47 votes total

<https://dashingdon.com/play/kurokiku/asphodel---feb-23-bip/mygame/>

[BIP - February](#)

[Feb 27, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

As you may be prepared for by now, the BIP is here. Now with a total of 100k words, and three complete scenes, with loads of variation. Most of this is, in some form or another, exploring the fallout from the previous chapter, before we move into the plot developments for this one. I sincerely hope you all enjoy the ~45k new words, if you follow along with the BIPs. :)

As always, this is quite a rough draft, so I do apologize for typos and the like, of which there are surely many.

[An announcement](#)

[Mar 2, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

I've adjusted the tiers as outlined in the previous poll on the matter, and we're up and running with the new benefit structure!

For the two of you formerly at the \$50 and \$20 tiers, if you would be so kind as to choose from the new options, I would appreciate that. My plan was to just drop you into the \$25 and \$10 options respectively, but it turns out Patreon doesn't just let me do that. Probably for the best, but it does unfortunately mean you'll need to make the adjustments yourselves.

For everyone else, I don't think anything should have changed, except for the listed benefits of your tier, but if you'd like to make any adjustments, of course please feel free to do so. The first bonus content of the month should be making an appearance on Wednesday of next week, and of course there will be a weekly update before then as normal.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the poll; here's hoping the lower workload helps me keep pushing through the chapter and getting this game ready for publication! As always, your support is invaluable (and also very, very concretely valuable)!

I hope you all have a great rest of the week, and I will see you in the Weekly Update slot on Monday. :)

[Weekly Update - 06.03.23](#)

[Mar 5, 2023](#)

Hello all!

And to those of you who are new, welcome. I'm happy to report that the transition to the new structure was pretty painless; hopefully you all found it so as well.

In the roughly five days since the BIP was released, I've written 10k new words, bringing the chapter total to 110,000. I am hoping to either finish the chapter or get it to a full 160k this month, whichever is shorter. I don't know exactly how many more words the chapter is going to take, but the Orpheus and Eurydice scenes have been moving fairly well; I'm done with the first and into the second, where the PC can offer one or neither of them a bit of advice about their upcoming trial.

A lot of the routes are going to diverge from the myth by quite a ways, but there will be at least one that plays out identically to how the story usually goes. There should also be some opportunity to influence things after it's over, as that part isn't usually covered by tellings of the story. My goal here has been not only to give the player some agency over how things go, but to give Eurydice some agency as well. As the story is usually told, she has very little to do with things at all. The story, while featuring her, is very much *about* Orpheus. His choices shape the narrative, and steer it towards its tragic ending. Eurydice, important as she is to him, isn't especially important to the *tale* except as a plot device.

Hopefully, my version changes that a little, or a lot if the PC leans into it.

Anyway, I'm off to go work on it some more. Later this week there will be a bonus content, though I'm not sure what form it will have yet. I might finish off the current batch of questionnaires in the first slot of the month until they're concluded and go from there. Later in the month will be the bonus content featuring Hermes that was the subject of the last poll.

In the meantime, I've got some writing to do, and I hope you all have a fantastic week. :)

### [Bonus Content - Pyri Q&A](#)

[Mar 7, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

As I suggested I might be, I'll be cycling through a few questionnaires in the bonus content for this slot for a little bit. Most of these are only visible at the Blossom Tier or above, but from here on they'll be viewable by Bud Tier folks as well.

This month, we have Pyri answering some 'would you rather' style questions, which I hope is entertaining. :)

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1. *Would you rather always be 10 minutes late or 20 minutes early?*

This is going to sound weird, but 10 minutes late! I think because when I'm late to things it's usually because I was just doing something important or fun or distracting, and when I'm early it's usually because I'm bored, so I'd much rather always be doing interesting things before my appointments! Also... everyone's pretty used to me being late to stuff, so I know they know how to adjust.

2. *Would you rather be able to take back anything you say or hear any conversation that is about you?*

Mm... take back stuff I say, I think. It might be interesting to know what people want to say about me, but on the other hand if they aren't saying it to me, it's really none of my business. Sometimes I don't say things right, though, and it would be nice to be able to fix that.

3. *Would you rather be the funniest person in a room or the smartest one?*

...Neither? Can I pick neither? I like talking to people who are smarter and funnier than me; I always feel like I learn something, and that's fun. Plus if it meant making everyone else less funny or smart instead of making me more funny or smart... I'd be a little worried. I don't want to change my friends that much! I guess if I had to pick I'd say funniest, because that changes less stuff around either way.

4. *Would you rather be able to read minds or predict the future?*

Ohh, telepathy with my friends could be cool. That one! Though... we sort of already have that, with Erebus.

5. *Would you rather be criticized or be ignored?*

Hm. I guess it depends on how much criticism there is. I like some, because it helps me improve, but if it's just nonstop I think that would hurt eventually.

6. *Would you rather have the ability to see 10 minutes into the future or 150 years into the future?*

Uhh... 10 minutes. Maybe then I won't be late for all those meetings after all!

7. *Would you rather be forced to sing along or dance along to every song that you hear?*

Dance! My singing stinks, and it's really embarrassing. My dancing isn't great either, but it's better and not quite as awkward to me.

8. *Would you rather spend three years in prison, or three years at war?*

Well... I guess the war if it was for a good cause I could support, and prison if it wasn't.

9. *Would you rather ask for help with a difficult task or figure out how to do it yourself?*

Ask for help, probably. I don't mind figuring things out, but I need at least the basic idea first or a lot of stuff is just like... *how?*

10. *Would you rather cheat at a game and win or lose respectably-well?*

If I'm playing against Hermes, cheat and win. Maybe Hekate sometimes too. Otherwise, lose respectably.

[Weekly Update - 13.03.23](#)

[Mar 12, 2023](#)



Hey everybody!

It was a good week for progress this time. I've added another 14,000 words to the chapter, bringing us to a total of 124,000 now. I'm also making major headway through the actual myth portion of the Orpheus and Eurydice stuff, which is swiftly approaching the tragic (or not quite so tragic, depending on your choices) ending.

I'm actually pretty happy with the endings I've come up with for this version of that story. I didn't want any of them to be an unqualified 'success,' and I wanted to stay true to the fact that Orpheus looks back because it is in his nature to look back, and that shouldn't be something a few words from a stranger can stop him from doing, even in spite of himself. The story is beautiful because he looks back. But also the PC does have the power to tweak and twist Fate in a way full-blooded gods do not, and it was important for me to respect that as well. So I think the endings I have now will reflect both those things, hopefully in a way that feels both satisfying and true to source.

And honestly that's it from me for now, heh. A quiet week where a lot of words happened. Personally I can't complain about that at all. I'll be back with hopefully more of the same good news in this slot next week, so hang in there for that.

I hope you all have a great week in the meantime. :)

[Weekly Update - 20.03.23](#)

[Mar 19, 2023](#)

Hello again, everyone!

It's been another good week for writing. The chapter is up to 138,000 words as of today, which is another 14,000 up from last week. I've now finished the Orpheus and Eurydice scenes, and have moved on to the last scene of the chapter, which is bound to be a chunky one because of course there is a variation of it for every route. That said, I'm hoping that, as a read, it won't drag, but will have a definite impact, because it contains my remix of a very crucial myth moment. :)

Now, I'm admittedly terrible at estimating when things will be done, but I do think that early access to this chapter will be releasing at the beginning or middle of next month, so I hope you're all looking forward to that. The BIP will be appearing in about 11 days, of course, and there will be a large chunk of

new material in that as well. In the meantime, there's a Hermes-centric bonus content coming up in a couple days, which I'm hoping you'll enjoy.

Other than that, I'm just keeping on with the forward progress. It's pretty crazy to think that FoA only has about two and a half chapters to go before its first draft is done and I enter editing mode before submission. I'm really hoping I can make all that happen this year, but I'm going to try not to rush it, either.

I hope you're all doing really well, and I'll be back next week with another check-in.

### [Bonus Content - A Message](#)

[Mar 21, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

As you voted for in the poll last month, we have here a scene with Hermes. Like the others I've been doing in this slot recently, it features our boy during the time Seph is unconscious, and in his case, during the delivery of some very unpleasant news to a very concerned Demeter. I hope you enjoy it. :)

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Hermes really doesn't want to be here. Especially not doing this.

But theoretically, it's his responsibility. He's the one who can come and go freely between Olympus and the Underworld. He's the one who can carry the message. The letter lies heavy in his bag; an out. If he can't or won't deliver the news in person, his uncle will pick up the hardest part for him, just like always. He'll have laid it all out as truthfully and rationally as possible: without trying to cover up the severity of matters, but without undue panic.

Perfectly, in other words. The kind of perfection that takes him long and painstaking hours of torturing himself over phrases and what they mean, and consulting Hekate and Charon and Daeira about whether he's meeting his responsibility of clear and honest communication. Because Demeter is Seph's next of kin, and in the absence of Seph themselves to tell anyone otherwise, they've decided it's best to notify her of exactly what occurred.

Zeus probably will if they don't, and she doesn't deserve that, even if her parenting is a bit dubious at times. Most parenting is a bit dubious at times. The kind Hermes got definitely is. He wonders if he'd feel more prepared to handle this properly if it had been better.

Can you be prepared to handle something like this properly? What would that even mean? He's supposed to be the one who knows stuff like this, almost instinctively, but quite suddenly he can imagine how difficult his uncle or Pyri must find everyday interaction, and he respects them so much more for being able to muddle through it somehow.

Demeter's manse looms large in his vision, and it only gets larger as he lands. It's easy to forget, sometimes, that Seph's mother is not just Seph's mother, but also one of the most powerful and prominent goddesses on Olympus. Mostly because his interactions with her have always been in the former capacity and not the latter. Demeter is someone who scolds him for mischief and invites him into the kitchen for a sampling of the fruit harvest and talk about how pleased she is with Seph's powers and how they're coming along. Right in front of them, of course, with him egging her on with questions just to see how embarrassed he can make his best friend.

This is... not going to be like any of that. Not even the scolding. It's so much worse than that, and so... indirect, in comparison. Any anger she has will probably be directed other places; she's reasonable enough not to expect Hermes to bodyguard her child, and even if he tells her he tried and failed, which is true, she won't lay the blame for that at *his* feet.

And still this feels so much worse than any of the times he'd had to fess up to something he actually had done.

He knocks on the door, which is answered by a familiar blue nymph. Mystis had been looking after Seph since they were a child, and was often one of the first people they had to plan to avoid in pulling off various hijinks. She smiles warmly at Hermes, but it fades quickly when he can't quite bring himself to return it, and as many servants often do, she switches quickly to formality, just in case, bowing briefly.

He wishes she wouldn't, but he can't exactly tell her not to. Not right now.

"Lord Hermes," she says in her low voice. "Have you a message for Lady Demeter?"

"In a manner of—yes." He corrects himself. Technically, it's not really a message, at least not unless he takes the coward's way out and lets the letter do the talking for him, but it's not such an important distinction that it will matter here. He just needs to get in to see her, and considering his messages for her lately have been letters from Seph, she'll want to see him very quickly if she thinks he has one of those.

Mystis gives him an odd look, but nods. "Very well. Please wait here while I inform my Lady."

He's unsurprisingly ushered into Demeter's study not two minutes later, feeling rather quite unprepared still but knowing he has to do *something*. That's what happens when you get close to people—it brings you all kinds of problems, and makes you do all kinds of difficult things that you might rather avoid.

Needless to say, Hermes has mixed feelings about all of it, and especially about the way Seph's been looking at him, lately.

Demeter is seated behind a large desk. She's almost as perfectly put together as always, and it's the almost that brings Hermes up short. Gods don't need to sleep, strictly, but he can tell Demeter has been running herself ragged from the faint bruising beneath her eyes. It's probably a lot worse under the tinctures she's using to conceal it and give her skin an even appearance. Either that or she's using magic, and it's slipping. It doesn't matter which—that and the dark curls falling loose from their pins are more than enough to remind him of something important.

For him, this is difficult and inconvenient. He's worried about Seph, but ultimately he knows they'll be fine, because he knows them, and knows his uncle, and everyone else in the Underworld. Demeter... doesn't.

This isn't just difficult for her. It's terrifying.

He swallows thickly, but she is the first to speak.

"What news, Hermes?" she asks, and to her credit, her tone is as firm as it's ever been, without the hint of a waver.

He clears his throat, trying to get the thick feeling in it to go away. She looks so *hopeful*, like she's expecting a letter from Seph. She probably is; they've been pretty good about writing to her, even if they aren't always unambiguously excited to be doing so.

"Uh, well." Already he stumbles uncharacteristically, and Demeter frowns outright.

This isn't right. Hermes draws himself up to his full height. "Lady Demeter." Another soft hem, another lurch forward. "I'm here to let you know. Seph is okay, they're going to be fine, but—"

"What have they done?" Her voice is low, edged with fear that sounds like anger. "What have they done to my child?"

"Nothing!" Hermes raises both hands in what he hopes is a placating gesture. Somehow this is already going very wrong. "Nothing. It wasn't—Kronos released a couple of Giants, and—"

"Giants?!" Now there's no mistaking her terror for anything else; it parts her lips and widens her eyes, and she has never looked so real to him, so imperfect. That terrifies him, too, because Hermes doesn't know what to do with real, or raw, or genuine, and right now Demeter is all of those things instead of barely one of them.

She's never been more like Seph than now, when she simultaneously stands from the desk and leans on it for support, her knuckles turning white as her arms shake. "Giants. I need—please, Hermes. Tell me. Tell me they're alive."

He nods vigorously. That much he can do. "They're definitely alive," he says. "Unconscious, but they'll recover." He chances mentioning someone in particular, in hope that her credibility as a magician and healer will outweigh whatever distaste Demeter feels at hearing her name. "Hekate says so, and she's

never wrong about stuff like this. It's just... there was a confrontation. Seph was *amazing*, it's just that Eurytus was—"

"Eurytus." Demeter's voice is thready, passed beyond panic to something fainter. Hermes really hopes she doesn't pass out or something. What's he supposed to do if she just... faints? Can gods faint? Nymphs can, Seph did, but he's never seen it happen to a full-blooded deity before. "My child... you are telling me my child *fought Eurytus*. Could none of you keep them *any safer* than to allow such a thing to happen?"

The anger's back. Hermes can't keep up with the revolving door of emotions. He tried, he really did, but now it's time to let someone else take over. So he digs the message out of his bag, still pristine, and sets it gently on the edge of the desk. "That's, uh—Hades explains everything there. They're going to be okay, Lady Demeter. And... even though it wasn't the best situation, they handled themselves really well. You should be proud of them."

That's probably the last thing she wants to hear, and honestly, whatever she has to say in response to it is the last thing he wants to hear so...

Sketching a quick bow, Hermes flees while she's still distracted, staring at the letter like she wants to burn it. That was definitely neither his finest nor most mature moment, and he immediately feels guilty about leaving her like that, but... what's he supposed to do? He has a terrible track record with worried mothers, and he doesn't know how to handle all the complicated things going on in Demeter's head. She has to have way better people to talk to about this than him. Hestia, maybe. Hestia would have the answers—she always seems to.

He'd go see her himself if he didn't think Demeter was going to need her presently. Instead he runs his hands down his face, surprised when he feels his fingers trembling.

Damn. Damn it all. Seph is suffering, and he doesn't know what to do with what he knows about Charon, now, and nothing makes sense.

And worse—well, not worse, but still pretty bad—he's still the same coward he's always been, hiding in the safe shadow of his uncle.

*Great. Nothing's changed at all.*

[Weekly Update - 27.03.23](#)

[Mar 26, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

Progress continues—the chapter is now at 152k words, up 14,000 from this time last week. I'm still in the first part of the last scene, as I wrote considerable variations for the ROs/POs reacting to how the PC had or hadn't customized their room, and for six of them with about the same number of room choices, that was a lot of variation!

That said, it's all done now, and I don't think any of the other parts of this conversation are going to vary *quite* that much, so it should be somewhat smoother sailing from here haha.

I'm very excited to do the meat of this scene, and not just because it's the last one before the chapter's done. I have sincerely been looking forward to it since I started the game, and as always I can only hope I do justice to the way it is in my head.

As for the rest of this week, the BIP will be out on Friday, for those of you who have access to those, along with a poll about one of next month's bonus contents. I hope the end of March is rounding out well for you all (I'm still miserably hot here but otherwise okay), and I'll see you back in this slot next week with the first update for April!

### [Bonus Content Poll - March](#)

[Mar 30, 2023](#)

Hello, all! Up on the rotation for the vote-able bonus content in April is Hades. I'm not totally sure what kind of scene I want to do from his POV yet, so help me out by voting for one, if you'd be so kind. :)

And for those of you waiting patiently for the BIP, it will be up in an hour.

Something from when the PC is knocked out after chapter seven

Something from Hera's visit and the dinner with PC and Charon

Something mysterious from the future

50 votes total

<https://dashingdon.com/play/kurokiku/foa---mar-23-bip/mygame/>

[BIP - March](#)

[Mar 30, 2023](#)

Hello, everyone!

New month, new build-in-progress. For those of you new to the Patreon, this is the game with an incomplete Chapter Eight tacked onto the end, for those of you who don't mind playing part of a chapter and seeing the outline for the rest.

That said, it's not that incomplete at this point! We've got 160,000 words in total in the chapter right now, which is a full 60k up from last month, and puts us partway through the final scene of the chapter. That should mean that I finish up sometime next month, at which point early access will begin!

One thing to note about these is that they are very raw drafts, so you may notice some typos or other errors. By all means point those out to me if you like, but I'll be doing an editing run for those sometime before the chapter is properly published, so hopefully they won't appear in the next version.

One thing I'd love feedback on is how the Orpheus and Eurydice story in here goes, though. :)

In any case, I hope you all enjoy!

[Weekly Update - 3 April, 2023](#)

[Apr 2, 2023](#)

I keep confusing myself with the date format, so I'm just going to name the month from here on out, heh.

Anyway! Here we are again at the weekly update. As many of you know, the BIP went out just a few days ago with the 60,000 new words I managed to write in March. Here we are again with a new month, and I'm hoping to write close to the same amount. I don't think I'll manage quite that much because there will likely be about a week in the middle of it where I am editing Chapter Eight for publication and outlining Chapter Nine, so let's say I'm hoping for around 45,000 new words in total and see how far I can go.

That said, I do think Chapter Eight will be coming out this month, at least for everyone here on early access, and maybe publicly as well. I'm excited to share the full draft with you all, and I hope you're excited to see it. It is the third-to-last chapter of the game (barring a possible epilogue), and I am very much hoping the events therein sort of feel like it.

As for the progress, I've managed another 6,000 words since the BIP went out, so I'm on track to meet the goals so far. We're still, of course, in the final scene of the chapter, where the PC and their RO/PO talk a bit about recent events, and then a certain very significant offer is made. I'm really looking forward to getting to that latter part, and I hope I handle it properly when I do!

In any case, progress this week should be mostly unimpeded; I don't see myself reaching the end of the chapter *just* yet, so it should be a fairly slow and steady period for me.

I hope you're all keeping well, and I'll be back here next week with more to share.

[Weekly Update - 10 April, 2023](#)

[Apr 9, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

It was another productive week for writing, if a bit less steady than usual. Some of what I'm working on right now has a bit of emotional heft to it, at least from the perspective of the rest of the cast, and I tend to get a little 'into their feelings' when I write things like that, so it's been an interesting last few days especially.

The good news is, Chapter Eight is very rapidly approaching its conclusion! I'm at the very last part of the very last scene, and while I can't guarantee I finish that this week, I'll definitely at least come very close. After that, I'll give myself a week or so for edits, and then early access will begin! I hope you're all looking forward to reading the next chapter, because I am very much looking forward to sharing it with you. :)

Also down the pike this week is another character questionnaire, for those of you who get those. This time from Hermes, I believe (thought I'll double check my rotation list).

I hope April's treating you well, and if it isn't, I hope it gets better posthaste!

[Bonus Content - Hermes Q&A](#)



[Apr 11, 2023](#)

Hello again, everyone!

The first of this month's bonus contents features an 'interview' of sorts with Hermes. I've only got a couple more to go before the 'round' of Q&As is finished; I'm not sure what I'll put in this slot next, but for now I hope you enjoy his answers. :)

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1. *Would you rather always be 10 minutes late or 20 minutes early?*

Oh, ten late. No question. It would annoy exactly the right people, I think.

2. *Would you rather be able to take back anything you say or hear any conversation that is about you?*

Well, as much as I have at times wished I could take something back, knowledge is, as they say, power. I'd rather know what people are saying about me. Always.

3. *Would you rather be the funniest person in a room or the smartest one?*

Funniest. I know plenty of smart people; even they need some cheering up now and then. Plus, it's always fun to be the life of the party.

4. *Would you rather be able to read minds or predict the future?*

Gonna go with read minds on this one. I think if you know the people around you well enough, predicting the relevant parts of the future isn't very difficult, and there's plenty to be gained from knowing the state of things in the present, too.

5. *Would you rather be criticized or be ignored?*

Criticized, I suppose. I prefer to be *liked*, but being disliked is the next best thing, in most contexts. At least people are still talking about me.

6. *Would you rather have the ability to see 10 minutes into the future or 150 years into the future?*

Wait, I thought I'd picked reading minds! In all seriousness, though, ten minutes. Much more useful and relevant to my interests. Namely, avoiding both 'trouble' and 'the consequences of my actions.'

7. *Would you rather be forced to sing along or dance along to every song that you hear?*

Hmm. Tough choice. Dance, just because I prefer it a little to singing. Though I guess that would make it difficult if I was *playing* the song, so maybe I pick sing after all!

8. *Would you rather spend three years in prison, or three years at war?*

War, I guess? It sounds terrible, but I think I'd actually lose my mind in prison. Being held in one place, not even able to go for a walk without someone else's say-so, not being able to *fly*... that's torture to me.

9. *Would you rather ask for help with a difficult task or figure out how to do it yourself?*

I think this one honestly depends on the task, and more importantly who's around to ask. I guess most of the time I'd ask, but if my options for whom were limited in certain ways, I'd prefer to have a go at it myself.

10. *Would you rather cheat at a game and win or lose respectably-well?*

Cheat and win, obviously! It's just another layer of playing a game in the first place.

[Weekly Update - 17 April 2023](#)

[Apr 16, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

I've got good news this week: Chapter Eight is officially drafted! Right now that means I am going back through and editing so it is fit for consumption, which has been going decently-well so far. Then I will need to run all the debugging and tests, but after that, we'll be ready for the early access cycle to begin!

So I am writing this into existence now: Early Access will begin for those of you in the Everbloom Tier on next Monday, 24 April. That means public release will be on May 4, and the various other degrees of early access will happen between those two dates.

Of course, this being right at the end of the month means the BIP might be a bit on the small side, but I should at least have some outline and a bit of writing for those of you who will be getting that on the 30th. And there's another bonus content in there somewhere, so generally there will be quite a bit happening pretty soon here, which I hope you're as excited for as I am. :)

I'm already starting to think about all the changes, tweaks and improvements I want to make when it comes time to edit the game, which believe it or not is in only 2.5 chapters from now. Kind of wild to think about; I'm going to do my absolute best to be done drafting the game by the end of the year. Who

knows when it will see public release, but still. It's pretty daunting to think about. And a bit exciting, I must admit.

Anyway, that's all from me this week; please do carry on as you have been. Or hopefully better, because why not, while we're wishing for things anyway?

[Weekly Update - 24 April 2023](#)

[Apr 23, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

It's been a long week of editing, but I'm pleased to announce that early access for chapter eight is live. Those of you in the Everbloom tier should have access to the whole thing now; please let me know if you have any trouble accessing it. Meanwhile, everyone in the Blossom and Bud tiers will gain access on Thursday the 27th, and the Seedlings will have it on May 1, three days before the release goes public on May 4.

I hope you all enjoy it; it turned out to be another long one, clocking in at about 187,000 words.

At the moment I'm down with the flu, or at least what I assume is the flu because my COVID tests were negative, so I think I'm going to give myself a couple days to slow down and rest. But after that I'll be back at it with the outline of chapter nine, so there should at least be something brief to take a look at when BIP time comes around.

This week's bonus content may be a little late accordingly, but I will definitely get to it before the month is out, so I ask for your patience as I try to fight off this very unpleasant illness. In the meantime, I hope you're all doing fantastically, and I look forward to hearing any thoughts you care to share on the chapter. :)

[Bonus Content - Artificial](#)

[Apr 25, 2023](#)

Hey all!

This month's RO POV features Hades, and you wanted to see him just after the end of Chapter Seven, so here he is in all his angstiness, heh.

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Hades pauses at the threshold, angling his body to see in through the half-ajar door.

As he'd already sensed, Hekate is within, no doubt monitoring her patient. One of a few, at this point in time, unfortunately; he's just visited the unconscious Pyriphelgethon next door, and before that it had been checking in on where Alekto sits vigil at the bedsides of her sisters. His damnable father has made a mess of things, and yet as always he finds it difficult to lay blame entirely at the feet of Kronos.

He should know by now, after all. No matter how long things go this way, no matter how much time passes, or what he says or does, his father wishes only for the same thing he has always wished for. To be the King of the Gods. To achieve that aim, there simply isn't anything he wouldn't do, and while this was hardly a direct and obvious course of action for someone with that goal to take, he should have been more careful anyway.

At least for now, Kronos is confined to the Isles. That's not a foolproof method of stopping him from doing anything, but hopefully it will take him some time to recover and lick his wounds. Metaphorically speaking. While Hades was tempted to impose at least some consequences for what he had done—well aware Zeus will likely choose to impose none—not even the man he hates most in all the world will drive him unthinkingly to violence. He refuses.

"You can come in, you know," Hekate calls from within, her voice very clearly amused. "She's not awake yet, but I'm not doing anything so important I need to be left alone for it."

Taking the permission for what it is, Hades steps inside, pushing the door open with his free hand. The other clutches the ornate metal stems of... well, a bouquet of metal flowers, to be precise. He'd thought to bring some of the regular kind, in the hopes that perhaps that touch of the familiar, of her domain, would... he's not even sure. 'Hasten Persephone's recovery' seems a bit optimistic. But there had been some sense there, of the connection in his mind. Unfortunately, that is not a gesture he is capable of making, regardless of its intent, and so now he has metal flowers, pulled from the many precious stones buried deep at the foundations of the Underworld.

It seems so opposite as to be detrimental, and he remains unsure of the wisdom of this decision.

"How is she?" he asks softly.

Hekate, adding notes to the seemingly endless sheaf of parchment that is her compiled medical notes, shakes her head. "Nothing much different since the last time you asked," she replies. Her eyes catch on the bundle in his hand, and her lips turn up a little at the corners, though she doesn't directly address it.

"She's stable, but I have little concept of how long she'll remain in this state. We *could* wake her, but given the circumstances I'd rather just let it happen naturally."

"She's getting adequate nutrition?" he asks, taking a couple more steps inside. As it turns out, there's already a vase of fresh flowers inside; he's not sure who brought them, but he has a half-decent guess. "I know a god can just sleep away an age if they so desire, but—"

"I've not forgotten, Hades," Hekate replies patiently. "She is being sustained on my magic right now, though I will add that, given how much of *yours* she seems to be receiving on a given day, I'm just about redundant."

"...I'm no healer," he replies. What he can do might help, in some way. That's why he's doing it. But anything that would return the life to her, bring her more quickly to recovery... that's beyond him.

The flowers are a soft pink color, others white. They'd have been gathered from both the mortal world and the Fields, in the specific combination they are. It's not just anyone here who can go there.

"Hermes and Pyri," Hekate supplies, following the direction of his gaze. "They're fretting, as they do."

He smiles, in spite of the discomfort knotting at the pit of his stomach. They are both so very kind, and he is proud to call them his friends.

Settling in the chair, he rests the metal flowers across his lap with a sigh. Hekate doubtless hears it; with a soft huff, she rests her hand atop his head, something she usually cannot do. "Don't overthink it, Hades," she says softly. "I know that's like asking a fish not to swim, but if you *can*, just... let it be what it is."

He's not sure what 'it' she's referring to, but even if he asks, she won't explain further. He knows this, and she knows he knows it, and so when she drops her hand away, neither of them is surprised by her subsequent exit.

Hades, however, *is* a bit surprised by how... strange, this feels.

The guilt has been a constant companion the whole time, of course. And it sharpens now, because it couldn't *not*. Persephone lies, slightly inclined, atop the mattress, blankets pulled to her chest and tucked carefully around her. He can see that her chest rises and falls steadily with her breathing, slow and even, and yet there is something fundamentally separating this state from sleep. It's something he can feel with his magic rather than see with his eyes.

She'd been hurt. Because of him. Because he wasn't strong enough to do what needed to be done by himself. And the worst part of it is... he *knows* he would have been. He knows that, if he had been willing to show her what he really was, striking Alcyoneus down would have been trivially easy. And so this result, her pain and suffering, isn't merely his fault because the situation was a challenge he could not rise to.

Instead it's his fault because he was afraid she would hate him.

The bitter taste of bile rises in the back of his throat, needles of pain spiking along his jaw, and he clenches his teeth, suppressing a wave of nausea and self-loathing. Or at least, tolerating it until it passes. Hekate would say he's wallowing, but Charon would understand. When there is no one else in the world capable of punishing him for his transgressions... someone still must.

"I am sorry," he whispers. "I will never—I will never allow anything like this to happen again."

Even that presumes too much. Presumes she'll want anything to do with him, if ever she learns the truth. And she will. He has to tell her. It wouldn't be fair, otherwise. To leave the worst parts of him undisclosed to her. His weakness. His fear.

But he will do it later. When she is recovered. When there are no longer hundreds of things demanding their attention at any given moment. It would be cruel just to add one more to the pile, atop everything else he has to say, and do, and all of it.

When he leaves, the metal flowers go with him. What need has she, for such poor imitations, when others can touch the real ones, and bring them to her?

<https://dashingdon.com/play/kurokiku/fields-of-asphodel---ea-april-23/mygame/>

[Early Access is here!](#)

[Apr 26, 2023](#)

Hello, friends in the Blossom and Bud tiers!

As promised, I bring you chapter eight, hopefully edited sufficiently that it reads well, though it's admittedly a bit hard to tell because, well, it was over 180,000 words of editing to get through in under a week, and when I tell you that reading 30,000 words that closely in one sitting is kinda terrible...

Anyway! It's done and I'm glad, because it means it's your turn to read it! As always, I'd love to know what you think, but be aware that if you send me asks on tumblr about the new stuff I won't be able to answer them until after public release. Anyhow, I hope you enjoy the very many things going on in this chapter haha.

New words in this chapter: 187,040

Total words in the game: 999,387 (I know. I'm less than 1k words to a million(!))

[Bonus Content Poll - April](#)

[Apr 29, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

The question for the bonus content poll is pretty simple this month, really. The content will feature Charon, so what I'd like to know is whether you'd like me to continue the 'while PC was injured' series or do something else with this one. :)

I'd like to see Charon's thoughts while PC was unconscious

I'd prefer something different

51 votes total

<https://dashingdon.com/play/kurokiku/fields-of-asphodel---bip-april-23/mygame/>

[BIP - April](#)

[Apr 29, 2023](#)

Hello all!

While I continue to fight off the last of this flu, I have made the rough outline of Chapter Nine. Sadly I haven't been able to fill any of it in just yet, but hopefully this should be something interesting to click through for those of you who like having a sense of what's coming up!

Fortunately, with the outline done, I should be in the clear to write for the entire month of May, so there should be some actual game text in this slot next month, and a fair bit of it!

Enjoy. :)

[Weekly Update - 01 May 2023](#)

[Apr 30, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

May is here, which for me means a very pleasant downturn in temperature. Unfortunately, as many of you know I'm still quite under the weather, metaphorically-speaking, but I'm happy to report that things have been going well otherwise. It was my partner's birthday yesterday, the first of those that we've spent together, so that was really nice even though we're both a bit ill.

The BIP went out yesterday, with the outline of Chapter Nine in it, and today in just about an hour, the Seedling Tier will get access to the completed form of Chapter Eight before public release on Thursday. I hope everyone's been enjoying the new chapter so far.

My plan for this week is just to get stuck into Nine, so hopefully I'll be back soon for the next of these updates with good news on that front. I hope you're all doing well, whether it's becoming summer or becoming winter where you are. Good luck with finals and graduations and all that for those of you in or around schools, and I hope everyone has a great month. :)

[Weekly Update - 8 May 2023](#)

[May 7, 2023](#)

Hello all!

It's been quite a week! I'm overwhelmed by the response to Chapter Eight, and trying to keep up with the influx of messages to my askbox haha. Fortunately none of them have been bug reports, which is always a big relief.

Meanwhile, I continue to trek forward on Chapter Nine, which starts off with a pretty big plot development that the PC can respond to in numerous ways. This is going to be something of a tough one to write in some senses, because none of the ROs will be making an onscreen appearance as it's laid out now. Granted, it should be a reasonably short chapter before the behemoth that will be Chapter Ten, and there are very good reasons for everyone's absence, but it does mean the chapter has to be carried by the strength of interactions with characters like Demeter, the Olympian goddesses, and Daeira.

Sort of a weird time to be allowing the player to fill in more PC backstory, but I think it will work out, and hope you'll forgive me for the necessary change of setting. I may allow the chosen RO/PO to sneak in via a dream sequence, but that's something I'm still debating.



Anyway! It's pretty exciting stuff in a way, because it is catapulting the story towards its climax, and the myth towards its resolution. I'm looking forward to sharing it with you.

Up this week is a bonus content, which will most likely be a questionnaire featuring Hekate this time. Other than that, I'll be back in this slot next week with another update on how it's going!

Words I wrote this week: 11,000 (bringing FoA to over a million in total!)





## [Art Commission - Acheron](#)

[May 9, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

I'm back to announce that the super-awesome [@gncrezan](#) on tumblr has continued their fantastic river deity commission series for me, this time featuring Acheron. He's probably the river god that's featured least so far, in part because of his personality—he's pretty withdrawn and antisocial, and content to mostly hang out with his partners and a few close friends. But who knows? He may make a few more appearances in the sequel. :)

## [Bonus Content - Hekate Q&A \(WYR\)](#)

[May 9, 2023](#)

Hello all!

As promised, the first of this month's bonus contents continues the old questionnaire rotation from before Patreon got readjusted. This month it's Hekate's turn. I hope you enjoy the little bits of insight into her character!

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1. *Would you rather always be 10 minutes late or 20 minutes early?*

Ten minutes late, as for me that means I was doing something interesting enough that it was hard to tear myself away from. And isn't that exactly the sort of thing one is luckiest to be doing?

2. *Would you rather be able to take back anything you say or hear any conversation that is about you?*

As an inveterate gossip and hoarder of information, it would be quite interesting to know what everyone says about me. I usually don't regret the things I say anyway.

3. *Would you rather be the funniest person in a room or the smartest one?*

Smartest, though I'm not really concerned with superlatives. I just want to know things, discover things, learn things. And, perhaps, be the person others *rely on* to know things. So if I am, it would be useful to be 'smartest,' in some sense.

4. *Would you rather be able to read minds or predict the future?*

Well seeing as how I already can predict the future, at least in some ways, I suppose I would say I'd rather be able to do that. It feels like part of who I am, in a way, though I admit its usefulness is dubious at best.

5. *Would you rather be criticized or be ignored?*

For most people and topics, I prefer ignored. I live my life the way I want to, and I don't really care what anyone else has to say about that. Lest you think that contradict my answer about knowing what people say about me, it would be nicest if they didn't say anything at all, you see.

6. *Would you rather have the ability to see 10 minutes into the future or 150 years into the future?*

I have both, at varying times and to varying degrees. I find that 150 years is not so long in the span of ages, and it can be useful to calibrate one's trajectory on the important things with a bit of notice. Ten minutes, of course, is much more useful in day to day life, but I would still say 150 years.

7. *Would you rather be forced to sing along or dance along to every song that you hear?*

Mm, sing. I'm not the most talented at it, but I could feasibly do other things at the same time much easier than I could while dancing, which I am better at.

8. *Would you rather spend three years in prison, or three years at war?*

Prison. Definitely prison. And that's all I'm going to say.

9. *Would you rather ask for help with a difficult task or figure out how to do it yourself?*

Nine times out of ten, figure out how to do it myself. That's part of the thrill of discovery and learning, is it not?

10. *Would you rather cheat at a game and win or lose respectably-well?*

I'll say... cheat and win. Only if the other players are good sports about that sort of thing, however. I have no desire to ruin relationships over games, though I have difficulty imagining myself friends with anyone who would get too offended over such a thing.

## [Weekly Update - 15 May 2023](#)

[May 14, 2023](#)

Hello all!

I've had a pretty eventful week, I must admit. Perhaps the biggest piece of news is that the last chapter of my other project (Diaspora) just saw public release, so I'm waiting for the inevitable flood of bug reports and so on, and am sure to be busy with those, on top of my short-term study projects, and of course FoA.

But I'm still making pretty good progress! Chapter Nine is now up to 23,000 words, 12,000 more than last week. It's not *quite* as fast as I usually go, admittedly, but it's close, and until this study term ends, it might be about what I can manage. There's also the fact that I'm trying to find somewhere to live and all of that, so overall I'm quite happy with how things are going.

I'm into the second scene in the chapter right now, where the PC reunites with Demeter in rather unexpected circumstances. Needless to say, there are a lot of variations in how this can go, because the PC's relationship with her can be anything from great to *extremely* fraught. So this one may take some more getting through than the first, but it's interesting to be writing her again at this juncture, and getting into the weeds of ways the PC may have changed. I'm realizing I'm going to need new variables for things, though I may put some of that off until the editing stage of things and just keep trying to write forward for now.

Anyhow, that's me for this week. I hope you're all doing really well. :)

## [Weekly Update - 22 May 2023](#)

[May 21, 2023](#)

Hello again, everyone!

The chapter continues apace! I've managed another 10,000 words on it, and in so doing have completed the scene with Demeter. That brings the chapter to 33,000 words in total, and next up I'll be working on a scene where the PC receives a visit from either the goddess they're friends with (as determined at the party in chapter one), or their Aunt Hestia, even if they didn't go to that. She'll be able

to give a bit more perspective on what's going on outside Demeter's home, as well as no doubt having lots of questions about the PC's time in the Underworld and what they thought of it.

I'm planning some little variations depending on the content of any letters written to the goddesses, and while I anticipate those will be a bit time-consuming, I think they'll absolutely be worth it. I love flavouring things based even on minor previous choices, so there's definitely going to be at least *some* of that.

In other news, we have a Charon-themed bonus content coming up this week, as voted on in the poll at the end of last month, so I hope those of you who like Charon are looking forward to that.

As it always seems to be, my life is a little unstable lately. I'm looking to move to the nearest city to me, and finding a place to live in this economy is sort of like I imagine torture to be, but I will do my best to keep the writing steady even through that, which I've been having some success with so far.

Anyway, I hope you're all well, and I'll be back in this space next week, hopefully with more good news. Until then, have a great one. :)

### [Bonus Content - Reprehensible](#)

[May 23, 2023](#)

Hey all,

As promised, here's a bit of angsty Charon POV for you all. They have a lot of similarities to Hades when it comes to self-esteem, but those feelings are coming from very different places, and he handles them quite differently, too.

I hope you enjoy!

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"What would it hurt?" Hades asks.

Charon has always admired him for being able to do that. For being able to ask a question like that with nothing but complete sincerity. If Hekate had asked such a question, there would have been a hint of a push behind it, because while she often knows best, she isn't always aware that other people need to catch up with her version of reality. If Alekto had, there would have been a tiny hint of 'you already know this,' and that, while true, is also something that sometimes a person isn't ready to hear.

Hades asks it, and it is only the question. No expectation. No assumption. He is willing and open to Charon coming up with something it *might* hurt, and being able to argue it. Not possible, of course, but they're going to try anyway.

"...Your marriage?" He winces as he says it, feeling the awkwardness of the words on his tongue. The 'marriage' is a non-entity. Dionysus and Hades get along, but not at *all* like a married couple with actual... marriage-related feelings for one another. If anything, Charon's best friend has settled into something of a comfortable mentor role for his young husband, and there isn't the faintest hint of impropriety to it. There never will be. Hades is many things, but he is *not* his brothers.

Hades tilts his head like he's considering this, and shakes his head. "No, I don't think so. I am certain it will end relatively soon, but it would do that whether or not you went to see him." The older god smiles faintly, something gentle in the red of his eyes as he meets their blue. "I know you are very good at talking yourself out of things you want to do, but I think in this case there just... may be no good reason not to do it."

Charon sighs quietly. "I don't suppose you could forbid me?" It's just... they shouldn't. They shouldn't do this. It's too much. The others can go, visit with well-wishes and concern in the way friends are meant to do. He can't. His feelings, what he is, these things are too... impure. Unfit.

"I could," Hades replies, briefly glancing over yet another missive from his desk and setting it aside into one of the two piles growing on the right side. "But I don't intend to."

Of course he isn't. Hades hasn't come right out and said it, yet, but Charon knows that for some reason he actually *approves* of all this nonsense. Of the way the storm god's chest feels like it's barely containing thunder and lightning between their ribs.

And Charon, not forbidden by forces greater than himself, will not be able to hold himself away now.

So it is that, no more than an hour later, they find themselves outside the door of the room where Dionysus convalesces. This, too, is their fault, and it is with a stabbing sense of guilt that he enters, pressing his lips together as he takes the chair at the young god's bedside. The other have been in and out, they know, watching over him not only out of medical necessity but friendly concern. There isn't a single person in Charon's inner circle who hasn't come to like Dionysus in one sense or another. Even Alekto has, in her own way, and she keeps vigil here as often as anyone else does.

The more surprising thing is that even Styx has found something grudgingly-positive to say about him, specifically his handling of the in-person incident with Kronos. A very daunting thing to have to face down, even if Dionysus didn't fully understand to whom he was speaking upon the unlucky chance of their meeting.

Charon isn't sure what to make of his propensity for finding danger wherever it lurks and throwing himself headlong into it. On the one hand, it's entirely his business what he wants to do with his time. And admittedly, he *has* shown a great deal of courage. Heroic, even, might be one way to describe it, and in some sense, Charon can imagine him as some half-human hero, walking the mortal realm and

setting to rights whatever wrongs he finds. Certainly with more competence and goodheartedness than many other such 'heroes' have a tendency to show.

But the thing is, such courageous tendencies are, more often than not, eventually deadly. And this, perhaps, is the rub. That *matters* to them, and there's no point attempting to deny that much. They expel a breath, eyes tracing Dionysus's features with something between tenderness and resentment. It is a middle they will, perhaps, have to get used to occupying, foreign as another might find it.

Standing, he paces to the door, then back again, setting his feet carefully, in measured steps, if only because it's all he can do to have a hope of settling his restlessness. They can still remember the fight with perfect clarity, of course. Well, perhaps not perfect clarity. The details are there, but it's as though there is a film over them, a filter belonging to a person they no longer wish to be. Like the memories are crystallized in amber, invariably tinting them with a color Charon no longer feels any affinity for and does not want clouding their vision. But the color is experience, and as close as their metaphors are to getting out of hand, they cling to them, because there's no better way to explain.

Not without admitting to themselves something they don't want to admit to anyone.

*I almost became a monster. I might become a monster, for you.*

The thought fills them with such a bitter swell of rage, of despair, that for a moment they're simply frozen, trying to process it. To let themselves feel it, and then let it go. The way they've learned to cope with all kinds of troubling emotions. But they don't think they've ever met someone who makes them feel as many troubling emotions as Dionysus does.

"Why did you have to come here?" he whispers. "Everything is different now. And I needed it to be the same."

They stride towards him, unsure of their own intent until they come to a stop. It's just... it's magnetism, of some kind. It must be. Something as inexorable as a natural force of the universe draws them to him, and they can't seem to stop it from pulling at them, even if it would be much better for everyone if they stayed well away from all of this.

"You will ruin me," they say on a quiet sigh, tone almost resigned.

He reaches forward, as if to touch the side of the young god's face, but stops short. He shouldn't be here. Certainly he shouldn't be contemplating such a thing. However benign a touch might otherwise be, to affect it without knowledge or consent would be monstrous in a different way than the one he's meant to be worrying about. Another thing to add to the list of his sins, perhaps.

Curling his fingers in towards his palms, Charon drops their hand away and retreats several steps. They need to get their head clear. They cannot possibly face him like this when he wakes. Reprehensible as they find the need, they *are* going to need to ask Hades for a spar, now. Something to get rid of that burgeoning restlessness, to exhaust themselves on someone who is in no real danger, even if they do exhibit their monstrous tendencies.



Yes. That first, everything else later.

## [Weekly Update - 29 May 2023](#)

[May 28, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

This week has brought a rather large change in my personal life—I'm now staying with my partner's family as we look for a place to rent here in Brisbane. The market is frankly awful for renters; everything's way too expensive and still likely to be snapped up within a couple days of being advertised. And of course, two people looking for work just don't look as good on those applications as people with actual current jobs do, so it might take us a lot of work and heartache to find something. So goes life, I suppose.

As to how Asphodel goes, I'm doing pretty well on progress. I should have around 45,000 new words for you all when the BIP comes out this month, so I hope that will be enjoyable for those of you who read them.

I don't foresee my writing schedule being too disrupted by any of this, and I'll do my best to keep up in any case, but I hope you'll have patience with me if things are occasionally a bit later than planned.

Hopefully you're all doing well with June just around the corner, and I'll be back in this space next week with another update. Cheers!

## [Bonus Content Poll - May](#)

[May 30, 2023](#)

Hi everyone!

For those of you waiting on the BIP, it'll be here in an hour. In the meantime (and for everyone else), I bring you this month's bonus content poll!

We're scheduled to get some Alekto POV in June. The last of those featured her mid-battle with the PC alongside. So naturally the question is: would you rather see her as I've done the others, visiting them

after the fight is over, or is backstory preferable this time around?

After the battle, definitely.

I'd prefer some backstory.

44 votes total

<https://dashingdon.com/play/kurokiku/fields-of-asphodel---the-may-2023-bip/mygame/>

[Build-in-Progress \(BIP\)- May 2023](#)

[May 30, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

As promised, here's the BIP, now with 45k brand-new words, including two fully-finished scenes and one more underway. I hope you like it, and as always if you encounter any trouble, inconsistencies, or other odd things while playing, I'd love to know.

[Weekly Update - 5 June 2023](#)

[Jun 4, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

No news in the apartment hunt yet, but thank you for your support. :)

FoA-wise, I've decided to try and knuckle down and get back to my usual pace of writing, since my short study term has finished for now (contingent on one assignment grade I don't have yet). As a result, I've been quite busy since the BIP came out, and the chapter now has 53,000 words, which is 8k up from Wednesday. I'm hoping to keep it up over the rest of the month. Right now, those words are being sunk into variations for the conversations you can have with the goddess you chose to be friends with in the early stages of the game, and there are a lot of variations. Five possible goddesses, several different states based on whether you wrote them or not and what you said, as well as of course all the different feelings the PC can have about their present circumstances and choose to talk about if prompted.

I wouldn't be surprised if just in terms of words, this turned out to be the longest scene in the chapter, even though it might not necessarily read that way. Other scene variations on the way based on whether or not the PC has dream magic and the like should be just as interesting I hope, but a lot shorter to write!

I haven't the faintest clue when the chapter will be done, so at this stage I'm shooting for a tentative release date sometime in July, but it really depends on how much work I can get done and how long the various scenes turn out to be. I do *not* have the gift of being able to make things short and sweet, unfortunately.

Up later this week is a bonus content. I have a new list of character-exploration questions and will be putting them to Charon, the unlucky first victim of the new rotation.

In the meantime, I hope you all have a great week, and I'll be back in this slot next Monday. Thanks as always for supporting me; it means the world.

## [Q&A - Charon](#)

[Jun 6, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

I've elected to do more character questionnaires this round for bonus content, because I found quite a few questions I rather liked. I'd almost call this the 'Dispositional' questionnaire, because it's a lot of self-reflecting on personality and relationships with others, as well as some reflection on the past.

First up for this set is Charon, and I do think some of the answers are *pretty* informative, if I may say so.

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### 1. *What is your greatest desire?*

To be redeemed, and live a quiet life without guilt.

### 2. *Who was the most important person in your formative years?*

I think perhaps my lack of close connection with anyone might have contributed to my later struggles. And yet in my *second* set of 'formative years' when I became who I am now, the answer is unambiguously Hades.

3. *What would you tell the younger version of yourself, if you could talk to them now?*

Slow down. You are drunk on power and the approval of people who do not matter. Look more closely, and see the harm you are doing. Stop, before it is too late.

4. *What sorts of people are you most easily drawn to?*

I don't think there's a particular rhyme or reason to my affinities, that I've noticed. The people I am closest with occupy a wide spectrum of traits. That said, I suppose I get along easiest with quiet, contemplative sorts, perhaps because I tend to act as one now myself.

5. *How would you say you react to stress?*

Poorly. I'm better at managing it these days, but I can be both temperamental and high-strung, believe it or not. That said, I find some comfort in being a calming presence for others in times of mutual stress, so I suppose the answer very much depends on *how much*, and whether I am the only one feeling it.

6. *Of those in your inner circle, who do you feel closest to?*

Hades.

7. *Of those in your inner circle, who do you find yourself clashing with most often?*

This is an interesting question. Purely on merit of personality, I should say Hermes or Pyri. And the person I disagree with most often is probably Alekto. And yet in spite all of that, if you use the word 'clash' I might actually have to say Hekate. It's not a bad thing, but there it is nevertheless.

8. *Do you have any daily rituals or routines?*

The rhythm of rowing is something I find very soothing, and I endeavor to do at least some of it every day. I also regularly take walks, or go swimming. And of course I bathe daily, which is a very pleasant experience, and one I try to keep unhurried by other circumstances.

9. *Of the four temperaments, which one or two would you say are most dominant in your personality?*

Melancholic, these days. A vast improvement.

10. *What part of your personality gets you into the most trouble?*

My tendency to feel things deeply and with very little provocation compared to others, I would imagine.

[Jun 11, 2023](#)

Hello, everyone!

It has been a good progress week for FoA (something I attribute to the need to feel like something is within my control, thanks Autism brain!) I've written 16,000 words since this time last week, bringing the chapter's current total to 69,000 (nice, I know).

We're still in the middle of the scene with the goddess coming to visit, because v a r i a t i o n s, but I think I'm about 3/4 through it at this point, and hope to have it completed by this time next week, so we can move on to a few shorter, snappier scenes that will move the plot forward a bit more. This is all in service of setting up the (probably an) absolute behemoth of chapter ten, and I admit I'm kind of eager to just be there writing that haha.

No new content this week, as the next bonus content won't be until next Wednesday, but in the meantime rest assured I'll be hard at work plowing through this writing as well as I'm able.

I hope you all have a fantastic week, and I'll see you in this spot next Monday. :)

[Weekly Update - 19 June 2023](#)

[Jun 18, 2023](#)

Hello again, everyone.

I have... excellent news to report all around. Firstly, I have a place to live! Getting ready to move in is a process all on its own, but it's one I'm much happier to be undertaking than the apartment hunt. Fortunately for all involved, you won't have to hear any more about that, heh.

And in news much more relevant to the topic of this development blog, I made great progress in FoA this week, too. I am finally done with the scene where the PC talks to the goddess of their acquaintance, and am now moving on to the back half of the chapter, which will hopefully be the shorter half, as the events therein are intended to progress relatively quickly.

The word count is presently sitting at 83,000 words, so another 14,000 up from last week. I'm always really happy when I can stick to the 2,000 words a day pace; it's basically my limit for sustainability, but feels like it's moving things along pretty well. I'm still optimistic I'll be able to release Chapter Nine

sometime in July, and of course I'll keep everyone updated. In the meantime, the BIP is likely to be quite a chunky update this time, so I hope you're looking forward to that.

Later this week (hopefully on Wednesday but maybe Thursday or Friday), I'll be posting the Alekto POV scene from after the battle, which I'm looking forward to writing.

In the meantime, I hope everyone has a fantastic week, and I'll be back in this slot next Monday.

[Bonus Content - Temporary](#)

[Jun 20, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

As voted for in the poll last month, here is Alekto's third entry in the RO POV series, set like the other in this last round while the PC is unconscious. I hope you enjoy it!

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Alekto finds that *not stopping* is about the best way she has of dealing with the situation.

Really, it feels ridiculous to even suggest that she of all people has a 'situation' to 'deal with.' She is, after all, relatively hale, already healed of her injuries, and presently attempting to make sure that everything in Tartarus is where and how it is meant to be—something of a difficult enterprise, when the place regularly changes its layout, if not its components.

Perhaps if anything is a situation to deal with, that is it. And yet, she honestly can't help but feel as though she is using her work—her *life's* work, the thing her life is meant to be *about*—to distract her from something larger and more important. It is an uncanny feeling, and she isn't sure she likes it one bit.

Tomorrow she will have to begin a security review. Powerful as he still is in some sense, it is ridiculous that Kronos was ever able to gain access to Tartarus in the first place. Inwardly, she suspects that there will be no easy fix for the issue, not so long as the King of Titans is technically part of the Underworld, operating in that nebulous and rather coddled middle point for a war criminal, where he gets to rule over its most Olympian portion while enjoying all the benefits of his only good son's work and a citizen's access to his realm, all while not being subjected to real punishments because of his worst son.

Perhaps a person-specific ward would work; strange that it should be necessary. She'll have to suggest it to Hekate, if the other woman hasn't already thought of it.

All of this swimming in her head, and yet here she is, outside their door instead of doing any of it. It's a weakness, well and truly, but Alekto tries not to think about that much. Nominally, she has an excuse—it's her turn to be beside them. Dionysus. Hekate even told her to.

Realistically, she should refuse the duty. But Alekto hasn't refused a duty since she was a very different person indeed. This, too, is an excuse, and the whole pile of them is for this exact moment, when she settles into the chair next to his bedside, and feels all the energy drain out of her. She tries not to even look at them too much, really, as it seems to her that this would be a very strange thing to do. What she *does* is tip her head back to the ceiling, let her posture slump, let her weapons rest on the floor, and close her eyes. Just for a moment.

This ritual sequence is accompanied by a sequence of emotions every bit as dependable. There's the guilt, first of all, of course. Guilt that she couldn't prevent this, couldn't prevent what happened to Megaira and Tisiphone. Guilt that Pyri, too, was injured, someone who is practically, even if she does not acknowledge it aloud, her protégé. And yet... somehow it is that this happened to Dionysus that turns the guilt from a seed in her heart into something that blooms, poisonous and bittersweet.

Because if nothing else, her sisters chose this life, knowing the risks. Blameless in anything, they came with her to the Underworld to be by her side, and when she chose this job, they chose it with her, seeing that it needed to be done. Pyri, too, chose this, even if what they faces in Tartarus was bigger than anything Alekto ever wanted to set them against.

But Dionysus didn't get to choose. He's not a Fury, he's not a guardian of the Underworld, he's just a prisoner everyone wishes to set free but can't.

Of course, he chose to go with her instead of someone else. *That* was a choice. But it's not enough of one, and more to the point it isn't one Alekto understands. Has he misconstrued her strength? Does he believe her more capable of protecting people than she actually is? She must assume so, given how this whole situation wound up. Perhaps she misconstrued her strength.

Cracking her eyes open, she settles her gaze on them. Just for a moment. They've been set to rights, of course; probably Hekate's doing mostly, though Hermes would have helped, given how long the two have been friends. He looks as if he's only asleep, which somehow heightens the feeling that she shouldn't be here. His long red hair is braided neatly forward over one shoulder, the copper tone of it warm against the deep olive of his skin. He doesn't even look all that wan, though she'd hardly call him flush with vitality right now, either, and he's... usually that.

He looks so... human, in this moment, and that is a tender, brittle fragility Alekto is all too familiar with. Rarely does she pay particular mind to his heritage, as it simply isn't something that concerns her, but... she wishes she could give him back that deific sense of health and strength, because it's hard, to look at them and be reminded that they could die.

She shakes her head, tearing her eyes away again.

And to be reminded of other things. Of her own feelings, the fact that she cares much more than she realistically ought to, for a temporary resident of the Underworld. He has done nothing to make her believe he disdains the place, but where else would they want to be, when their love of the sun and their mother both is so obvious? In what world could this ever be anything but temporary?

She has experienced temporary before. It is the most terrifying thing in the world, and she is not strong enough to withstand it a second time. A difficult thought to have, when if not for him even her connection with Megaira would have proven that fragile.

But at least Megaira and Tisiphone chose her. Chose here. Dionysus, as much as they... seem to get along, would not.

And that is a reality she is simply going to have to live with.

[Weekly Update - 26 June 2023](#)

[Jun 25, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

I'm happy to report that this week was another steady one for progress. I wrote another 14,000 words, bringing the chapter total now to 97,000. I'm currently in the middle of writing a very not-dreamlike dream sequence, of which the dreamier version is next up. My hope is that both will be done by the end of next week, leaving us with really only the final scene of the chapter to go!

This makes a mid to late July release for the chapter look very likely, which is exciting for me, and hopefully for all of you as well. Of course the usual early access timeframes will apply, so all of you will be seeing it first. Hopefully, even though this is a chapter heavy on plot and light on RO/PO interactions, it'll be satisfying in other ways, and good setup for the finale to come!

In the meantime, of course, there will be a BIP as usual on the last day of the month, along with a poll, so for those of you who get those, be on the lookout on Friday. :)

I hope you're all staying well, and may your domiciles always be neither too hot nor too cold.

[Bonus Content Poll - June](#)



[Jun 29, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

For those of you waiting on the BIP, that drops in an hour. In the meantime (and for everyone else), please do consider letting me know what you think I should do with Pyri's POV this month.

Just so everyone knows, it will be a double feature, because apparently all the way back in January I just... forgot to post the vignette I had of Pyri fretting at Seph's bedside. So that will be one of the things I'm posting, and the other will be...

Something hypothetical, from Pyri and Diosephone living together in the underworld post-game

Something from their backstory, when they were a human (spoilerific)

Something from chapter eight, like their take on the fruit scene

52 votes total

<https://dashingdon.com/play/kurokiku/fields-of-asphodel---the-may-2023-bip/mygame/>

[BIP - June 2023](#)

[Jun 29, 2023](#)

Hey all!

Here's this month's BIP. Don't mind the url; it says May, but it's really June. I just got a little lazy with the titles this time around. Also, someone here has been posting my BIP urls on a game-pirating website, which makes the whole thing kind of moot. I'll still change them fairly regularly, but it is all a bit demoralizing, I must admit.

If this is you, I would like to ask (as gently as possible) that you stop. The game is going to be free to everyone to play until the first draft is complete anyway; early access is something I give as a gift to my patrons in gratitude for their support. I ask you to consider whether anyone else really needs it to enjoy the experience.

Anyway, all that aside, I hope everyone enjoys the latest if they happen to play it. Chapter Nine is now 105,000 words, which means I stuck to my goal and managed 60k this month! Hopefully I'll be able to keep up the pace and get the whole thing out sometime in July. I have a long term goal to submit the

game for publishing by the end of the year, but with another chapter, an epilogue, and edits to go, that's going to be a tight deadline.

I'll be back soon with another update, and please stay well in the meantime. :)

### [Weekly Update - 3 July, 2023](#)

[Jul 2, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

It's only been a few days since the BIP, so there's not a lot to report for those of you who get that. But for the benefit of everyone: I'm now into the final scene of the chapter, which I am hoping to keep relatively short. My hope is that the whole thing in total will be somewhere between 110,000 and 120,000 words. That's still quite a few of course, and significantly, I will have to do quite a few days worth of editing just to stomp out as many typos as I can before early access, but I can say with more confidence now that, barring something truly catastrophic, Chapter Nine will indeed be releasing over the course of July, starting with early access and ending with public release.

My goal is to get that and the outline for Chapter Ten done this month, but honestly I suspect that chapter is going to be huge, and I don't want to stress myself too much, so the second part is tentative for now.

In the meantime, I hope you're all doing well. There will be a questionnaire this week for some of you, featuring Alekto this month, and of course I'll be back next week on Monday with another update.

Here's hoping you enjoy your July; I'm certainly going to try to. :)

### [Q&A - Alekto](#)

[Jul 4, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

As mentioned last month, I've got a new set of questions for the characters that I quite like, and this month, it's Alekto's turn to answer them. I hope you enjoy.

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1. *What is your greatest desire?*

To be useful to the people who have given me everything.

2. *Who was the most important person in your formative years?*

I hate to say this, but in some sense I suppose it would have been Apollo. Not that he was all that far past his own formative years at the time, mind.

3. *What would you tell the younger version of yourself, if you could talk to him/her/them now?*

Just don't get involved with it all. Well, no. That's not true. But I'd tell her to guard her heart, and to never be afraid to be who she really is. Who she *knows* she is.

4. *What sorts of people are you most easily drawn to?*

It feels insipid to say aloud, but people with good hearts, I suppose. I don't care that much about whether someone is funny, or clever, or beautiful, or even 'nice,' as long as they are good. I suppose by that I mean accepting, considerate, compassionate, with strong convictions.

5. *How would you say you react to stress?*

By knuckling down and trying to ignore it, I suppose. I don't recommend it, but it does have its uses.

6. *Of those in your inner circle, who do you feel closest to?*

This is a difficult question. I am close to them all in different ways. It's either Hades or Pyri, but I couldn't tell you which.

7. *Of those in your inner circle, who do you find yourself clashing with most often?*

Most often is probably Hermes, but that is usually over inconsequential things, or him trying to get a rise. When it comes to clashing about consequential things... that's harder. It might still be Hermes, but it might also be Charon. He often takes the stance of extreme mercy, and my job demands that I make arguments for punishment, so generally speaking we come to odds over important things. There's no enmity to it, though.

8. *Do you have any daily rituals or routines?*

Very many. I like to keep a reasonably-regular schedule that includes time for training, patrols, reports, and a break or two, as well as some time with my sisters. I also try to find some time every day to do do

something artistic, though my definition of this term is broad.

9. *Of the four humors, which one or two would you say are most dominant in your personality?*

You mean which temperament? I suppose choleric, followed by melancholic.

10. *What part of your personality gets you into the most trouble?*

Trouble? I suppose in the past it was my sense of justice. Nowadays no one objects to that, and I don't really get into 'trouble.' However, my directness is sometimes inconvenient in communication with others, because I am not able to control my tone finely enough to take the 'edge' away from it, so to speak, and can thus come off as abrasive when I do not intend to.

[Weekly Update - 10 July, 2023](#)

[Jul 9, 2023](#)



(My references date me, don't they?)

Anyway!

The good news is that the Early Access releases of Chapter Nine begin this week! I'm just about done editing the chapter, so that means after a few final tests, it'll be ready for release. Those of you in the Everbloom Tier will get it first, which will tentatively be on Wednesday, 12 July. The Blossom and Bud Tiers will have access starting Saturday, 15 July, with the Seedling Tier joining the party on Wednesday, 19 July. Public access will begin on Saturday the 22nd.

In the meantime, I'm going to be hard at work getting the outline sorted for Chapter Ten. Ultimately, I hope to have that completely finished by the end of the month, so there will be some spoilery but not filled-in content for the BIP on the 31st. I suspect Chapter Ten is going to be a big one, so I doubt I'll have many words on it by the time the month ends, but having a completed outline will give me the chance to hit the ground running in August, which coincidentally will mark FoA's third birthday as well. (On the 20th, if I'm not mistaken.)

All to say, I'm pretty excited for the next couple of weeks here, and beyond, and I hope you are as well. I'll be back for some of you in just a couple days, and we'll go from there. Stay fabulous, everyone. :)

<https://dashingdon.com/play/kurokiku/fields-of-asphodel---july-23-early-access/mygame/>

[Early Access is Here!](#)

[Jul 14, 2023](#)

Hello, everyone!

As promised, I bring you Chapter Nine. It's a bit short, comparatively speaking, at 111,000 words or so, but does the important work of setting up the big finale to come. I hope you enjoy it.

Just so you know, this chapter contains potential content warnings for abduction and confinement.

Please do let me know what you think!

[Weekly Update - 17 July, 2023](#)

[Jul 16, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

We're smack in the middle of the early access period, as you're all aware. Just as a reminder, Seedlings will be getting access to that on Wednesday, with public release of the chapter to follow on Saturday.

As for what I'm up to now, at the moment I'm working on the outline for Chapter Ten. I'm still in what I suspect is the first third of it, but it's coming along well, and I think I should be finished with outlining by

the end of the month, which is my goal. I do predict it's going to be a big chapter, as it includes the climactic confrontation between Zeus, Demeter, the Underworld gang, and of course the PC, in which a few legal issues are brought up in such a way that it leads into the PC having to make a very crucial decision, whether they want to or not.

The trick right now is balancing player agency with the sum of all the decisions every character (including them) has made thus far. If I do this right, it will feel like a real effort to get exactly what outcome you want, but by no means impossible. And some previous decisions should of course come back in hopefully-interesting ways.

I'm excited to see it take shape, and I hope you all will be, too.

In the meantime, I hope you're all keeping well, and enjoying Chapter Nine. Stay shiny. :)

### [Bonus Content - Pyri Double Feature](#)

[Jul 18, 2023](#)

Hey all!

As I mentioned a while back, this month's bonus content actually has two pieces, because way back when I forgot to post a Pyri bonus content I had written, and it's been sitting in a folder on my desktop all this time haha. So that one's attached, and then below is the one you voted on for this month: Pyri's POV on the fruit scene. The below is pretty chill, the attached, pretty angsty.

I hope you enjoy them both!

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"Do you ever think so much your thoughts just start to run around each other in circles?" Pyri asks, fixing their gaze on Persephone. They're not even sure if they need an answer or if they asked it just to say something. A bad habit, Hekate says, and maybe that's true. "It's just... I keep thinking about Orpheus and Eurydice, you know? About what happened with them. It's just hard to accept that how it ended was how it had to be."

"What do you mean?" She tilts her head, folding her hands in her lap.

Pyri huffs, struggling to express their thought. They run both hands back through their tangle of gingery curls, fingers catching near the ends in a way that makes them grimace and yank the rest of the way through. It's uncomfortable, but no more than an annoyance. "It's just... Fate, you know? The idea that

we can all try our hardest to do something, that someone can *deserve* something good, and everyone can agree on that and want to help, and Fate can *still* keep it away, and all the power of all the gods you want can't do anything about that."

They sigh, harsh and heavy. "It's like being human all over again."

Persephone is quiet for a moment. Thoughtful. "I admit, I don't think I've ever seen a situation where Fate's power was so clear. I'm a little afraid of it, to be honest. The idea that my future might be decided for me, and I can't do anything... that's terrifying."

"Right?" Pyri clenches their hands over their knees. "It's just... what is anyone supposed to do about something like that? How come things get to be decided before we've even tried? It just feels so... *unfair*. Not right. I dunno. Some word for that that's meaner, because I'm *mad* about it!" They are, though they only realize as much as they're speaking, a flare of something livid and painful sparking to life in their chest.

But then, by the end, they're basically laughing, and they shake their head emphatically. What else can they do? "But you get me. We're sort of in the same boat, even. We kind of get to fight, but also kind of don't, you know?"

"...Because I'm not constrained the same way?" Persephone's words are cautious, tentative, almost like she doesn't quite believe them.

"Yeah, exactly. And me too, actually." At least, that's what the others had said, once. "We're supposed to have a little more power against Fate, because we're like... there's things about us that are human, I guess is the way to put it. Maka's like that, too. But it feels like it doesn't even matter when the difference it makes is so small. I just feel like this has ticked me off before, only I can't remember when." That, too, is an immensely frustrating feeling, and it only piles onto the rest.

Persephone doesn't seem to have anything to say to that. Not that they could expect her to, really.

"Oh!" Pyri, abruptly recalling something, unceremoniously ends the topic, reaching into the small bag at their hip and rifling through it a moment before they withdraw a slightly-squashed, but sealed, scroll from it and extend it towards her. Probably best to get to this bit before they forget again, even if the *other* thing they don't want to forget feels so much bigger.

"Your mother sent this, apparently. When Flyguy said so I told him I'd deliver it, since I was coming to see you anyway. You want it?" They tilt their head, the query innocent in its lack of expectation or assumption. As though it would be perfectly reasonable for you to say either yes or no.

"I suppose I probably should take it. Thank you." To say she sounds unenthused by the prospect might be a bit of understatement, honestly, but she accepts the letter and tucks it away nonetheless.

"Don't worry about it," Pyri replies, relinquishing the letter readily and tilting their head at her once she's taken it. They're not sure if more information would be helpful, or the opposite, but they figure they

should err on the side of keeping her informed. "Hermes says she's really freaking out. Which, obviously is understandable. I can't imagine being a parent, but I think it'd be really stressful, especially if my kid was somewhere I couldn't get to them if they needed me." Their brows furrow at this, but they shake themselves free of the thought. Not that they'd want to be a parent in the first place. They'd probably be terrible at it.

The thought vanishes when a tray of beverages and snacks appears on the table in front of them, though Pyri certainly didn't request them. From the look on Persephone's face, she didn't either, so it must have been one of the others. Huh. Well, that was nice of them. Probably Flyguy. Maybe Hekate?

Persephone leans forward, reaching for a small honey-cake, and Pyri figures they might as well have a snack, too. They were training all morning, and honestly the chance to sit down with her and relax is... really welcome.

There's a bit of a lull in the conversation, mostly because they're really bad at talking about the big things. They swear they'd practiced what to say a bunch of times before they came here. They'd even run it by the Boss, just to make sure they weren't saying anything dumb or insensitive, and he'd approved, but... now they can't remember any of it at all.

In the end, they can't do much more than shrug and reach back into their satchel. If they can't remember the right way to say it, they're just going to have to make up another way, and hope it lands somewhere in the same area. Plucking the orange out of the bag, they balance it in their palm for a moment. "So, like..."

*Come on, Pyri. Words.*

"I get that you haven't been able to choose a lot about how your life has gone." Their brow knits. "And maybe some of that's normal for kids, or gods, or whatever else. But honestly, forcing you to come here was like... terrible, on Big Thunder Jerk's part. Even if it actually worked out really well for the rest of us, because you're amazing—anyway." That's true, but it feels like the beginning of a tangent. They need to do this without tangents, so it's clear.

They hem softly, grinning at her instead. Because it's... kind of exciting, right? Hopefully it's okay that they're excited about it. "This is... consider this me giving you a choice, I guess. I got one when I came here, and it only seems fair to me that you should, too." They hold the orange out towards her. "This grew in the orchard, because you're here. Ascalaphus said so. And everyone's been keeping you away from Underworld food, because it might get you stuck in the Underworld and we've all kind of just been... assuming you don't want that. But maybe you do. And either way, you get to make the decision."

Their head tilts. "So... eat this, and you'll become at least a little bit like us. Boss says it will give you the right to live in the Underworld, no matter what anyone else says, but it's harder to know what it'll do to your status with Olympus. Don't eat it, and, well, everything stays the same. But that's a choice too, and this is the only one we can give you, so..." Pyri shrugs, watching her face keenly for a reaction.

Persephone considers the fruit for a moment, then smiles. "Would you like to share it with me?"



Pyri tilts their head; honestly of all the things they'd been expecting, such a straightforward, simple acceptance wasn't it. Not that they're unhappy!

Maybe... well, it's not like she'd ever been really anxious to go back, now that they think about it. Most people would probably have raised a big stink, and that would have been justified, but Persephone had always... yeah. Maybe it *does* make sense.

They feel themselves relax, and it naturally curls their mouth up into a smile. "Sounds great! I love oranges, honestly. All kinds of fruit, I guess."

Persephone turns her eyes down to the citrus in her hand, peeling it methodically. They can't tell if there's a slight tremble in her fingers, or if they're just imagining that.

She separates the thing out into wedges, balancing them on her palm and extending that towards them. Pyri takes a couple with a happy hum. "You know... I think I'm probably supposed to try and sound unbiased or whatever, but... I'm really glad you're doing this. When I think about you going back to Olympus forever it's just *really* depressing, you know?"

It's an impulse to say it, but it doesn't seem to have been a mistake. Not from the way she relaxes, just a tiny bit when they do.

"I do," she replies, a touch wryly, biting into one of the orange wedges at the same time they eat theirs. It tastes kind of funny, but Pyri doesn't mind that one single bit.

In the wake of the discussion, a comfortable quiet fills the space, and for a little while, neither of them feels particularly compelled to say anything, each occupied by their own thoughts. Pyri's are going a million miles an hour around each other again, but it's not quite as... aggravating, this time.

"I think... it might be soon," Persephone says, slowly, breaking the silence. Her tone is almost *cautious*, though Pyri isn't sure why she'd need to be cautious what she says around them.

Their brows knit. Did she have another weird dream or something? "I... have no idea if that's right, but if you say so, I believe you," they reply, a quick grin flashing over their features. "And anyway, whenever it happens... we're all with you. Whatever you decide, we'll support it. Me especially, but don't tell them I said that, or I'll have to fight them all to prove it." They raise their fists in a pantomime of a fighting stance.

Her lips twitch into a small smile.

That feels like enough for them.

[PyriPOV2.pdf](#)

## [Weekly Update - 24 July 2023](#)

[Jul 23, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

As you're all most likely aware, Chapter Nine has now been released to the public. So far, the reactions have been really fun, though poor Demeter is getting a bit dragged. Not that this is unexpected; I think a lot of people are playing PCs that very much enjoy being in the Underworld, so she can seem very much like an obstacle in that case, especially given her actions in the last chapter. It's interesting having a character whose role in the story varies *so much* based on how players imagine the backstory.

Anyway, at the moment I am beginning work on Chapter Ten! The outline is in a state where I'm mostly happy with it, and while a few sections will no doubt be getting some elaboration as I go, for the most part everything is laid out. At the moment, I have about 2,000 words of outline and an additional 2,000 of text, where I've started to fill it in, so I've already made more progress than I thought I would this month, which is nice. It means I can consider anything else a bonus, more or less.

Still, I'm hoping to get a solid beginning done by the end of the month; I'd like it if I had maybe 10,000 words total to send out for the BIP. That'd give me a nice start into next month, where I can hopefully hit the ground running, so to speak.

Speaking of the BIP, that'll be coming up here in a week's time, so you'll be getting it right after another update and a poll next Monday, if you're signed up to that tier. In the meantime, I hope you've all enjoyed running through Chapter Nine, and are looking forward to what happens next.

I certainly am. :)

Stay well everyone!

## [Weekly Update - 31 July 2023](#)

[Jul 30, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

It's a Monday *and* the last day of the month, so there's a fair bit coming your way from me today. First, this update, and then the bonus content poll, and then lastly the BIP (which will drop in about an hour, for those of you looking to play it).

I'm pretty satisfied with what I managed this month overall. I finished, edited, and published Chapter Nine, which seems to have gone over well, and now I've outlined and begun work on Chapter Ten. There's only about 10,000 words in it so far, but considering I was expecting to be pushing myself just to finish the outline, I will definitely take a "bonus" 10k.

For August, my goal is 45,000 words. This is below my 'maximum' writing speed, to be sure, but I'm lowering my expectations for this month for a few reasons. Firstly, it's going to be a busy one outside of writing. I'm going through some self-employment training to help me figure out things like taxes and public liability insurance (it's exactly as riveting as it sounds, believe me). Also, it's my birthday month, and while I am certainly not one of those people who can stretch the day to a week, let alone a month, it does mean some family is coming in from out of town for a while, and I'm less likely to get as much writing done on those days, as you might imagine!

(Also, BG3 is coming out. I honestly don't foresee this interrupting writing, because I am the type to guilt myself out of things like that, but, you know, it might eat a bit into my already-lacking spare time.)

August also marks FoA's third birthday, which I might do something special for if I weren't so focused on just getting the thing finished. I'm starting to think about edits and the like, and some part of my brain desperately wants to be able to skip ahead to when the first draft is done and I can start refining it, until it looks like the game I really want it to be.

My goal remains getting this game published by its fourth anniversary. Considering how long the HG publishing queue can get, that's a challenge, but here's hoping!

Anyway, that's all for this week. I'll be back in this slot in seven days, hopefully with more good news about progress. Stay well, and stay awesome. :)

[Bonus Content Poll - July](#)

[Jul 30, 2023](#)

Hello again everyone!

This month's variable bonus content is destined to be a piece featuring Hekate's POV. The question is, what do you want her perspective on?

Something from her backstory, perhaps featuring mysterious prophetic nonsense.

Her take on a version of the fruit scene.

Something from behind the scenes in Chapter Nine, when she was separated from the PC.

48 votes total

[BIP - July](#)

[Jul 30, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

Because historically new folks to the Patreon have had difficulty finding the BIPs (the links are not the most noticeable), I'm going to try just linking them in the body of a text post for a while, and see if that seems to create less confusion.

So with that in mind, [here is July's](#). As I'd hoped, I managed to get an outline and 10k words on it, which is very cool. Hopefully I'll be able to continue progress into August; from the looks of things, the chapter overall may not be quite as long as I thought it was going to be, so I might be able to manage a significant chunk of it in a solid month of writing.

Anyway, that's enough rambling from me for now. I hope you enjoy. :)

[Q&A - Hades](#)

[Aug 1, 2023](#)

Hey all! It's Hades's turn in the q&a queue, so he gets the spotlight this month with the current list of questions. I hope you enjoy.

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1. *What is your greatest desire?*

To be seen, and taken for what I am without reluctance.

2. *Who was the most important person in your formative years?*

My mother, by every measure of importance but one. Unfortunately, that one measure is 'degree to which they changed the trajectory of my life,' and that distinction belongs to my father. As it was always going to.

3. *What would you tell the younger version of yourself, if you could talk to him/her/them now?*

There will come a time when it does not hurt so much. Bear this, and you will find you can bear anything. It is not fair, it is not right, but it *is* inevitable.

4. *What sorts of people are you most easily drawn to?*

I think perhaps I have a natural affinity towards those who express themselves openly and with kindness. On the other hand, I seem to get along well with the very reserved as well. Perhaps it is the kindness that is the common thread. Even if it is deeply buried, it is always there, in the people I care about most.

I suppose I shouldn't omit that I also often find myself drawn to those who have been cast out, or disadvantaged in some way.

5. *How would you say you react to stress?*

By working. Lest anyone think this is a good thing, I assure you there is a point at which it becomes both destructive and counterproductive. Fortunately, these days I have friends who will tell me when I have reached that point.

6. *Of those in your inner circle, who do you feel closest to?*

That is a difficult question. Closeness is something that has a certain ebb and flow to it; it will fluctuate even as a friendship endures and grows stronger. But I suppose of all of my friends, the one I am most consistently close to, and perhaps the person who knows me most intimately, is Charon.

7. *Of those in your inner circle, who do you find yourself clashing with most often?*

I don't typically 'clash' with any of them. We resolve disagreements amicably, and I often ask for their opinions knowing those will be different from mine. Appreciating the fact. I suppose I am most *different* from Pyri, but that is all the more reason to value their perspective.

8. *Do you have any daily rituals or routines?*

Very many. I have learned to live with the fact that the nature of my work means things are not always routine, but I enjoy keeping to one as much as possible. It ensures that I have the time for the things I find valuable, and do not neglect them.

9. *Of the four humors, which one or two would you say are most dominant in your personality?*

I would like to say phlegm and black bile, if we're talking about the corresponding traits, but I must acknowledge there is a part of me that can be quite... choleric, in times of stress.

10. *What part of your personality gets you into the most trouble?*

Trouble... That's hard to say. I don't often think of myself as 'in trouble.' That choleric streak I was talking about tends to escalate my disputes with my brother, so I try to keep it under control as much as possible. I think that's about as close as I can get to a proper answer.

[Weekly Update - 7 August 2023](#)

[Aug 6, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

Progress continues apace on Chapter Ten. I have to say I think it's going to come out a bit shorter than I thought, which is fair because I think the epilogue is going to be a bit longer. I may try figuring out how much I can move from the latter to the former and see where we end up.

In any case, I'm now about 22,000 words into it (12,000 up from the BIP), and I'd suspect that's a little under halfway done? Just for what I have in the outline? So I might end up moving some things, and I might end up holding off on the public release and doing both of the last sections at the same time; I'm not sure.

In any case, progress might slow down a bit this week, as my birthday isn't too far away, and there's potentially visiting family and all that, but for the moment things are still humming along. I hope you're all doing well, too.

No extras this week, as we had the Hades questionnaire just last week, but I'm also already working on the Hekate bonus content scene, so that will show up in two Wednesdays from now, I expect.

For now, cheers everyone, and I'll see you back in this spot in a week. :)

[Weekly Update - 14 August 2023](#)

[Aug 13, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

It's been a bit of a week, heh. But I'm making pretty steady progress on the chapter still, with another 7,000 added to the total, bringing it to 29,000 as of today. I'm still moving through the main 'plot' scene of the chapter, which serves in some ways as the climax of the story: the PC arguing with or against Demeter and/or the Underworld crew and/or in front of Zeus (the dynamics of this can get a little bit complicated, as one might expect).

There are also hints at backstory and a fair bit of snark to be had, but the biggest emotional heft is likely to occur in the scenes I've decided I'm putting after this one, and which of those you get will depend on what you do with the biggest choice in the game.

I'm not sure what the wordcount will come out to be with this new addition, but I think putting that planned scene here rather than in the epilogue will balance things much more nicely. Up next, I'm scheduled to write my way through Zeus having a hissy fit and things possibly almost coming to blows (probably good no one wants that, as it might, y'know, start a war or something. Gotta love diplomacy.)

Anyhow, that's basically it for the update this week. On Wednesday you'll be seeing a POV piece from Hekate, which I do hope you'll enjoy, as it gives some insight into what everyone was doing while the PC was on Olympus. And then of course I'll be back next week with another update, and hopefully a fair chunk of progress.

I'm another year older, and so is FoA, but I like to think we both have yet to reach our full potential. :)

I hope you have a good week.

[Bonus Content - Hekate POV](#)

[Aug 15, 2023](#)

Hey all!

Something from the Underworld side of Chapter Nine won last month's poll pretty handily, so here's a small scene where Hekate realizes how pissed off she is. Because it's Hekate, she handles this better than most people, but honestly I wouldn't want to be Zeus if they happened to meet with no one else around.

I hope you enjoy it!

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Hekate's arm tightens on the array of scrolls tucked beneath it, the efficient clip of her gait bringing her ever closer to the library. Ordinarily her sanctuary, disturbed seldom, and at present host to the small legion of people that can be spared from the everyday running of the Underworld to solve a very unique problem:

What do you do when your guest is kidnapped from under your noses?

She isn't sure which rankles more: that Dionysus was taken, or that it happened in a way they were unable to discover until he was already gone. Of course, the most important thing is that he's no longer with them, but she can be irritated about more than one thing at a time, and the fact that someone had the audacity to conceal the presence of the kidnappers from both herself and Hades is one of them, right now.

She will certainly be inventing wards to prevent this, as her next major project.

Passing through the library's doorway, she moves towards the center, where several of the shelves have been temporarily rearranged to accommodate a large table. Right now just about everyone is there: Hades, Hermes, Pyri, Charon, Alekto, Kokytos, Daeira, Lethe, Dionysus's coworkers Minthe and Leuke and Ascalaphus, and even Styx, though she sits apart from everyone else at one end of the table.

Hekate drops the scrolls onto the table unceremoniously. "These are the only ones I had that should be relevant. But there's a lot to go through; I hope you're all prepared for several weeks of reading and taking notes."

"It won't be quite that long," Hades says. "I will compress the time as much as I think is safe. But it will certainly still feel that long."

Charon tilts their head. Hekate can tell immediately that he's figured out the same thing she has: Hades is *angry*. Not at them, not at Dionysus. But at Zeus and to some extent Demeter, for bringing this situation about. He's doing an uncannily—and unnervingly—good job of keeping that emotion contained, but she's going to need to watch him. He'll probably need an outlet for that at some point, and there's only so many people who can handle helping with that sort of thing.

Hermes, the poor thing, is despondent and not doing a very good job hiding how anxious he is. "I just don't see why we can't go now," he says, strain evident in his tone. "Surely you all know enough of the law between you to win an argument with the old man. As much as anyone ever can. I hate thinking about him being there, and believing we don't care enough to come get him."

Ignoring the twinge in her chest, Hekate shakes her head. "We've been over this," she replies. "The best thing we can do for him right now is to prepare the best possible argument. It might prove to be flimsy shield against Zeus, but he doesn't act in a vacuum, even if he *does* have an unfortunate amount of influence. If we can get people on our side, he'll have to placate us."



"...I would like to point out that it is unclear whether Dionysus would actually like us to interfere," Charon says softly.

Alekto scowls. *He never said so plainly. But who would want to be kidnapped? You saw the room. There is evidence that he struggled.*

"And in either case," Hades finishes, "Zeus will not allow me to say nothing about this. Not when he has firmly pressed Demeter into a corner and gotten her to do something he can actually punish her for, in his estimation."

"Can he?" Pyri folds their arms, frowning. "I get that what she did wasn't right, but why does *he* get to decide what happens because *she* interfered in *our* realm? That makes no sense!"

It is a very relevant question. In fact, it is the heart of the problem, in some ways. Dionysus has been dragged into this, but ultimately, anything Zeus might inflict on him is only proxy for getting at Demeter. She is the one that matters, by the thunder god's estimation. She's certainly the one he hates with a sort of perverse glee. Honestly, it borders on obsessive, and Hekate can only imagine what caused him to fixate on the woman in such a way. She can find pity for Demeter even in a situation like this.

That does not, of course, mean she'll forgive her for what she's done. If Dionysus doesn't want to be in Olympus, Hekate is going to make *damn* sure he never has to go there again.

Maybe she's a little angry, too.

"He doesn't," Hades replies, flatly. "But I don't want to start a much larger conflict by simply insisting that it must be so. The only responsible route we can take is to bind him with the rope he has already given us. Even if he did so a thousand years ago." He gestures to the pile of reading material, expression grim.

"Couldn't have said it better myself," Hekate adds with a nod, feeling something tightly-knotted in her belly loosen just a little. She's not alone. She has to remember that. Everyone is here to help, and with this many minds and eyes turned towards the problem, the solution must be something they can find.

The last thing she wants is another deific war, and unfortunately, sovereignty violations are exactly the sorts of things that start wars everywhere. But... she also doesn't want Dionysus to be forced away from the Underworld, from her, and *that* species of anathema is perhaps... closer to the level of the other than she'd have thought.

She's not sure what it says about her, that those harms are almost equivalent to her mind, and she doesn't care. None of that matters right now.

Picking up one of the scrolls, she expels a sigh through her nose. "Let's get started, shall we?"

## [Weekly Update - 21 August, 2023](#)

[Aug 20, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

I had a pretty good week for progress this time around, even in spite of taking a couple of days off to rest. Right now, the word count is at 37,000, which is 8,000 up from last week. I'm also very close to done with that I had outlined for Chapter Ten. As mentioned, I'll be adding an additional couple of scenes to the end of that which originally would have gone in the epilogue, but effectively I am nearly done with the original content planned for Chapter Ten! As you can infer from the word count, it isn't nearly as long as some of the other chapters, but that's because there's a bit less variation, and it essentially right now covers only two scenes, one for setup and another for the centerpiece of the chapter: the audience before Zeus.

I think I'm satisfied with how those scenes are, so I'm not looking to pad them out or anything at this stage. This is very exciting, because it means the end of FoA is closer at hand than I'd thought! A pretty wild thought, and also a bit terrifying.

My plan is, then, to add those other scenes to the end of Chapter Ten, publish that, and then write a short epilogue that will also transition into the sequel, for every ending but the (aptly-named, if I do say so myself) no-sequel ending. (That will get its own epilogue, of course).

And then... it will be time for edits and overhauls, heh.

Anyway, I expect that by the end of this month, those of you who get the BIP will at least have the complete version of the original Chapter Ten, without additions, and maybe even some outline for the additions. I hope you're all looking forward to reading it. :)

## [Weekly Update - 28 August 2023](#)

[Aug 27, 2023](#)

Hello, everyone!

I'm mostly happy to report that Chapter Ten now has a solid 45k words to it. 'Mostly' happy if only because I thought I was going to manage a few more than that, but still I'm pleased with the rate of progress overall. Because this chapter happens to be quite a lot smaller than I've been making it out to be in my mind as we approached it, I'm just about done with everything save for the last scene, of which there are of course several versions, but which should be quite fun to write.

I expect that the BIP will include everything up to that part, so my goal for September will be to get Chapter Ten finished! I'm not yet certain if I'll release it when it's done in the usual manner or do so just on Patreon and wait until I have the (short) epilogue also written to do a public release. I'm open to your ideas on that, enough so that I might actually drop a poll about it in here eventually, maybe when I have a better idea of timeframe.

Anyway, I'm starting to do the thing I do where I doubt if the conclusion will really be satisfying, but on the other hand I am somewhat reassured by the fact that there will be a sequel, and that the story isn't really meant to end here, on most paths, and so if it's a little bit unsatisfying, that's probably actually a good thing. :)

I hope you're all doing well, and have a good rest of the month. I'll be back on Thursday with the BIP and the poll. Cheers!

### [Poll - August](#)

### [Aug 30, 2023](#)

Hey everyone! This month's poll is actually not about what I do for Hermes's POV next month, so I guess I'll choose that myself. Rather, it's about logistics. Specifically, I want to know if you'd rather Chapter Ten dropped on its own before the epilogue, or if I waited until both were done to give you the 'end of FoA' in one release.

Keeping in mind that the epilogue is likely to be short and written pretty quickly, and I likely would just release it whenever it was done, rather than doing early access for such a small thing, unless I bundled it with Chapter Ten, which do you prefer?

Bundle them together, so they release once both are done

Release them as they are finished, with only Chapter Ten itself going through the early access cycle

60 votes total

[BIP - August 2023](#)

[Aug 30, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

[This month's BIP can be found here](#). I'm happy to report that the chapter is at exactly 50k words right now, which means I actually managed 40k on the month, which is pretty close to my original goal of 45. Also importantly, everything but the ending scene of the chapter is done (of course, there are multiple versions of that scene, depending on whether it is with Demeter or one of the ROs/POs.

Getting those variations finished is my goal for next month. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy what's there!

[Weekly Update - 4 September 2023](#)

[Sep 3, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

Welcome to a new month. I'm doing my best to hit the ground running with this one, and have now outlined all the versions of the last scene of the chapter. There's some pretty substantial stuff in there, but I'm pretty confident I can finish it this month, which is very exciting. That may not mean an immediate release, as the poll seems to be in favour of bundling Chapter Ten with the Epilogue and releasing both at once, and I don't think I'll quite have both done in a month, but we'll see how things go. In any case, I'm looking forward to powering through this writing, as well as hitting some emotional beats I've been looking forward to for a long time.

Later this week, I'll be releasing the month's character questionnaire, which I believe stars Pyri this time, though I'll have to check my list. And then, of course, I'll be back here next week, hopefully with another chunk of the chapter done and dusted. Wish me luck; I have a pretty intense week of class ahead of me, but I'm hoping it won't affect my writing schedule too much. :)

I hope you all have a great week, and I'll be back here next Monday as usual.

[Q&A - Pyri](#)

[Sep 5, 2023](#)

As promised, this month, Pyri gets the new questionnaire. I always have a lot of fun writing them and their responses to things, and this is no different. I hope you enjoy reading it!

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1. *What is your greatest desire?*

Uhh, hm. I feel like I used to want a lot of things. Now, I mostly just want to protect my friends and the spirits in the Underworld. To just keep getting to live the life I have now, as it is.

2. *Who was the most important person in your formative years?*

I can't remember, when it comes to actually growing up, but I guess in a way my 'formative years' became like... the ones right after I came to the Underworld. I don't think there's *one* person I could pick out as most important, though. It was just... everybody.

3. *What would you tell the younger version of yourself, if you could talk to them now?*

That one's hard, too. But I think I'd tell them... 'it'll be okay. You'll figure it out eventually, so just give yourself time. Just don't ever give up.'

4. *What sorts of people are you most easily drawn to?*

I guess... I'd say just people who care about something? It's easy to get that, even if the thing isn't the same as what I care about.

5. *How would you say you react to stress?*

Well... on a bad day it makes me freak out. On a better day, I can just knuckle down and get through it.

6. *Of those in your inner circle, who do you feel closest to?*

Hmm... I guess maybe Flyguy? Or maybe Leks... or maybe Hekate. But then I also really like boss, and Charon. This question is way too hard!

7. *Of those in your inner circle, who do you find yourself clashing with most often?*

Clashing? Leks and I spar the most, but I'm also really trying to get Charon to fight me! They keep saying it's a bad idea, though... so maybe that's kind of a clash too?

8. *Do you have any daily rituals or routines?*

When I can remember them, I guess! I definitely bathe every day, at least. And I try to get some exercise in, too, but other than that I think my days aren't really very routine.

9. *Of the four humors, which one or two would you say are most dominant in your personality?*

Humor? Oh, you mean like that personality thing. I guess mostly the blood one? And a little bit of the phlegm one? I forget which is which, honestly, but I know I'm not melancholy!

10. *What part of your personality gets you into the most trouble?*

My impulsiveness, for sure. I don't always think before I leap.

[Weekly Update - 11 September 2023](#)

[Sep 10, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

I'm happy to report a good week for progress this time! I managed 14,000 words, bringing the chapter's total to 61k. I'm most of the way through the Demeter version of the farewell scene, which I think is probably the one the majority of you will be getting. There's plenty of opportunities to start to reconcile (or not) with her here, and the player's responses will set the tone of the interactions with her in the sequel.

After that, I have the version that takes place with the RO/PO, for those who end up with the no-sequel version of the story, where you spend all or most of your future time on Olympus. I'm hoping to make that a satisfying end to the PC's story, since unlike the other route, this one won't be getting a sequel, so to speak (I can't well write a story about living in the Underworld if the PC isn't there most of the time, naturally, and writing a story about living on Olympus would be a completely different book).

And then it'll be onto the epilogue. I'm not yet sure enough when that will be to put a definitive date on release or anything, but I'm happy with how things are moving at the moment. This week is one where no bonus content is scheduled, so mostly I'll just be plugging away at the writing and trying to fit it in around my class schedule and homework and all that. Hopefully I'll have more good news next week.

In the meantime, I hope you all stay well. :)

## [Weekly Update - 18 September 2023](#)

[Sep 17, 2023](#)

Hey all!

Not a whole ton to report this week except more steady progress; Chapter Ten is now 75k words, which is 14,000 more than last week. I'm now into the second (and final) version of the last scene, which is the no-sequel end's farewell with your RO/PO. Naturally, this has a bit of that sad flavour to it, but PCs can be completely unapologetic about their choices if they so desire! I did want to make a route that allowed a PC to never quite warm up to the idea of living in the Underworld, even if the people did grow on them a little, and who, when given the chance, would firmly slam the door on those potential friendships and relationships in favour of returning to Olympus.

There's also a few other flavours, of course, including PCs who chose what they did with varying degrees of regret for what they'd be losing, so there are opportunities to express that as well, for those of you who prefer tragedies.

I'm hoping the remainder won't take me more than another week and a half, so I can have some time to edit the chapter before the full thing comes out as the BIP and I can get working on outlining the epilogue! Given the poll results, I've decided to put those through early access and release together, so it might be a bit longer before I can do that, but I'm hoping everything will be publicly released by November, so I can get to editing and overhauling.

In a couple days, there will be a bonus content piece from Hermes's point of view, featuring a minor loose end that may become a small plot point in the sequel, but honestly it's mostly about feelings. :)

Stay well and stay awesome, everyone.

[Bonus Content - Hermes POV](#)

[Sep 19, 2023](#)

Hey all!

This month's Hermes POV focuses on the time the PC (Seph, in this case) is on Olympus after their departure. The cast were certainly not idle during that time, and there were a few things besides research that they needed to do.

I hope you enjoy this one. :)

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"I found them."

Hermes alights on the floor of the throne room. Hades has just finished handling petitioners for the day, and though he doesn't look any different from normal, the winged god can sort of pick up on his agitation anyway. He'd never be anything but patient in front of the subjects who bring their problems to him for arbitration or succor, but he must want to be in the library right now.

Where the others are, looking for ways to free Seph.

The elder god's brows draw down over his eyes and he stands, descending the small dais to stand on level with Hermes. "I hope that's all?" he asks softly.

A small shudder moves through Hermes's wings, not quite puffing his feathers but certainly shifting the shape of them. "You can't seriously think I was going to hurt a couple of idiot humans who didn't know any better."

"Idiot demigods," Hades corrects, with a hint of humor and exhaustion both. "And no, Hermes, I didn't think you were going to hurt them. But I would have understood if you had confronted them in another way."

His hackles go back down, and the shape of his wings smooths out. "I was tempted, I'll give you that." He smiles, more baring teeth than expressing any sort of joy. Hermes has never considered himself the kind of person that gets attached to anyone or anything enough to be *angry* when it's gone, but... Seph isn't really just gone, are they? They've been taken. Styx was pretty clear about what happened—that they'd tried to get her help and she'd given it, only to be thwarted by what could only be the magic of a greater deity.

And the one they'd called on had been Demeter.

Hades's own expression remains mild, but by now Hermes knows not to interpret that as indifference. There's no one here who is indifferent to what's happened to Seph, and that might be the only thing keeping him from doing several different kinds of stupid thing, rather than just one. "I still don't see how they could have been so oblivious to what they were really doing. Are you sure you don't want me to drag them back down here for judgement?"

Hades shakes his head. "Not at this time. It is important that the larger matters resolve themselves first, and then we will see what Seph wants to do, should they return."



"Of course they'll return." Hermes huffs a breath out skeptically. He understands trying to account for all the possibilities and everything, but some things at least can be taken as a given.

"I think perhaps I am not as sure as you. After all, if they chose to remain on Olympus, they would still be quite able to be around the person they care for the most." One snowy eyebrow lifts, just slightly, and Hermes feels his face warm, just a little bit. Good thing it'll never show, on a complexion like his.

He shakes his head emphatically. "Even if that were the only factor—and it's not—they know I like it better here. At this point, Zeus knows I like it better here, if only because of how little time I even spend on Olympus anymore." It's not that he's forsaken it entirely. Hermes doesn't think he could do that. But it's become pretty obvious to everyone, himself included, where he prefers to be.

And he's pretty sure Seph prefers to be here, too.

"I'll take your word for it," Hades replies, and Hermes knows he means it. It's not sarcasm, not a way to end the conversation without actually changing his mind, or anything like that. He just *is* going to trust that his nephew knows what he's talking about.

It's hardly a wonder Hermes prefer to be here, is it? Then the closest he gets to anyone caring what he thinks on Olympus are the rare occasions he visits Hestia, or when his mother is lucid enough to speak with him.

"I just... what do we do now?" he asks. There has to be something.

Hades presses his lips together. "I'm sure Hekate wouldn't say no to more help. We've found the loophole we think we'll need; now it's a matter of citing more cases that support it. We want every single instance we can find written down."

"You think the old man is going to *read* anything for this?"

"Not really," his uncle admits with a soft huff. "Some part of me thinks we could show up with blank scrolls for citations and be completely fine, but it's not a risk anyone wants to take. Nor, fortunately, one that we need to."

That's reassuring. As confident as he's always been that they'll be able to figure out how to get Seph their own way in this, it's still... pretty big to hear that the pieces are actually coming together. Hermes feels his shoulders relax, and then his wings, until now held with an almost aching rigidity tucked into his back.

"I'll go help, then. Maybe bring some snacks."

Hades smiles. "I'm sure they'll appreciate that. Once I'm done for today, I'll join you."

"Yeah. No problem." Hermes knows that if Hades didn't have to keep running the Underworld right now, he'd be there too. Not just because he likes Seph and wants them to be able to live as they choose,

either; he's kind of a wonk about this sort of thing. Or at least, he's scarily good at remembering what information is in each book in the massive library.

Either way, his help will be very welcome, when they have it again. In the meantime, though, there's still plenty they can do.

*Hang in there, Sunshine. We're coming.*

[Weekly Update - 25 September 2023](#)

[Sep 24, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

Pretty great news this week, I think. At 93,000 words now, the chapter is up a whopping 18k from last week. I'm very proud of this, and I actually think it's doubly good news, because I suspect the chapter as a whole will land around 100,000 words, and that the whole thing will be available as this month's BIP. It might be slightly rough and unedited (doubtless with a few typos here and there), but I'll have those ironed out by early access.

This all means that October will be the month in which I do my best to begin and finish the epilogue. I'm sincerely unsure how long that will be, but I'm *reasonably* confident I'll be able to write it within the month, which means the end of FoA's first draft is truly in sight!

The editing process is something I will likely keep to Patreon, and I will probably cover it in some of the upcoming bonus contents and things, so I hope you're all looking forward to the game coming together as much as I am.

Anyway, that's what's coming down the pipeline. I'm doing some travel this week, but I'll do my best to keep on a regular schedule so I can have that complete chapter out for those of you in the Blossom and Everbloom tiers. Everyone else, hold tight for early access, which will hopefully not be *too* far behind!

Have a great week, and I'll be back here next Monday with the next update.

[Bonus Content Poll - September](#)

[Sep 29, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

Hades is up for the RO POV this month, so let me know what you'd like to see from him!

BIP to follow in an hour. :)

Something from when the PC was away on Olympus.

Something from before the game's events.

Something epistolary.

79 votes total

[BIP - September](#)

[Sep 29, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

[Here it is, this month's BIP.](#) This one contains Chapter Ten in its entirety, which is now just a little less than 96k. It was more than that, but my editing process trimmed a few things and outright chopped a large option I'd written out for a scenario that turned out to be impossible (two variables being the case at the same time). I *did* have time for editing, as it turns out, but the job was a bit quick, so if you see something I've missed, please do let me know.

With this, I have only the epilogue to go before FoA's first draft is complete! This is extremely exciting, and I hope you're all looking forward to that as much as I am. At the very least, here's a chunky update to tide you over. :)

[Weekly Update - 2 October 2023](#)

[Oct 1, 2023](#)

Hello everyone, and welcome to October! Hard to believe she's here already, but at this point I've given up on feeling 'current' and must accept that things are always here before I'm ready for them, I think.

Anyway, as many of you know, the BIP went out just a couple of days ago, and Chapter 10 is in a state of 'finished first draft.' That means it's time to get going on the epilogue, and to that end, I have outlined the first of the 2 1/2 scenes that will be included in that. I plan to finish the outline within another day or two and then get to writing! I don't anticipate the epilogue being very long; I think it's something I should be able to finish within the month, but sometimes I surprise myself, so we'll see how it goes. I should have a much better idea of timeframe in the next week, as the outline gets finished and I begin work on filling it in with the writing.

But I'm hopeful that I'll be able to begin early access on the last chunk of the story this month, and have the full first draft out to the public by mid-November, at which point.. edits. So many edits. I can't tell if I'm really looking forward to that process or really dreading it, but either way the feeling is big haha. I've written long projects before, but I've never done a full edit for publication or tried to redesign systems in a game or anything like that, so I think that part will involve a lot of flailing.

We'll know soon enough!

In the meantime, I hope you all have a lovely week, and if you celebrate Spooky Season, well, welcome to the best part of the year. :)

## [Q&A - Hermes](#)

[Oct 3, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

Hermes is up in the questionnaire rotation this month, so here's his take on the latest set of questions. I do think this one is quite influenced by the things I've just been writing, in which Hermes is definitely giving some insight on his own recent character development to the PC. So some of these answers are quite different from what they might have been a few chapters ago!

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1. *What is your greatest desire?*

Uhh, heh. Well, I guess if I'm being honest, it's feeling like I matter. Or belong, something like that.

2. *Who was the most important person in your formative years?*

That's kind of hard to say. Lots of people were important, and not all of them in good ways. I guess if I was measuring by 'who played the biggest part in making me who I am,' it'd have to be His Deathliness. But my mother and my old man both had a pretty big say in that, too.

3. *What would you tell the younger version of yourself, if you could talk to him now?*

Get your head out of your ass and stop trying to please people who are never going to love you.

4. *What sorts of people are you most easily drawn to?*

Sincerely? People who say what they mean, and keep their word. Kindness is good, too, of course, but I'd never want it at the expense of honesty. Which is pretty ironic for me, I know.

5. *How would you say you react to stress?*

Panic. Mostly internal though. Or trying to care less about whatever's got me stressed. That works well when it works, but sometimes it just *doesn't*.

6. *Of those in your inner circle, who do you feel closest to?*

I guess... my uncle, Pyri, and Hekate, all for different reasons and in different ways.

7. *Of those in your inner circle, who do you find yourself clashing with most often?*

Leks, probably. It's not even a bad thing. I think I need someone in my life who is ready to tell me when I'm being insufferable. The grumbling isn't the same thing, and I actually kind of enjoy that. I think she does too, though she wouldn't ever admit it, so I guess it's the fun kind of clashing?

8. *Do you have any daily rituals or routines?*

Hair and skin care, my friend. Absolutely worth investing time in. Wing care, too, obviously.

9. *Of the four humors, which one or two would you say are most dominant in your personality?*

Hmm... I think I'm pretty sanguine most of the time. But I can be a little phlegmatic, when I'm by myself or very relaxed otherwise.

10. *What part of your personality gets you into the most trouble?*

What part of it *doesn't*?

[Oct 8, 2023](#)

Hello, all!

As you may have noticed, Patreon has a new look. My feelings about this are mixed, but the most annoying thing is definitely that all the italics on my previous posts seem to be gone, so that's... a thing that happened. Apologies if you're reading through something and aren't sure of tone due to missing emphasis.

In better news, I've gotten stuck into the writing on the epilogue this week. I was traveling for a couple of days, so I only managed about 5,000 words, but fortunately that was quite enough to finish the first version of the epilogue (the no-sequel version, specifically).

I anticipate that the other version, the Underworld ending, if you will, will be about twice as long (to account for all the variations based on route), but even if it is, I should be able to finish it within the month. So I'm pretty stoked for that.

I hope you're all doing well, and I'll be back with another update at this time next week!

[Weekly Update - 16 October 2023](#)

[Oct 15, 2023](#)

Hello all!

The epilogue continues apace. I wrote about the same amount as last week, and I am now past the group part of the Underworld epilogue and into the individual parts that vary with route. These will have more variation than any other part of the epilogue, not unexpectedly, but I'm planning to try and keep it short and sweet. For now, the estimate is still that I'll be done by the end of the month, but I am going to try and pick up the pace a bit next week, in spite of some appointments and things in my usual writing block that might slow progress down a bit.

Later this week, we'll be seeing Hades's POV, as you all voted for in the poll at the end of last month. And that's about what there is to report, honestly; it's been a bit of a slow start to the month in some ways, in part because epilogues are very difficult things to write, at least for me, and I'm trying to make

the ending satisfying while also leaving the impression that there is more story to come. We'll see how well I manage!

I hope everyone has a great week, and I'll be back in this slot next Monday, hopefully with good news. :)

## [Bonus Content - Hades POV](#)

[Oct 17, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

I realized thanks to a message on tumblr that I've inadvertently fallen out of my usual schedule with updates; somehow I've moved to posting things on weeks 1 and 3 of the month, rather than 2 and 4. But, honestly, this kind of works better for me, because now I'm not trying to write a bonus content at the same time as I'm prepping the BIP, so for now we'll go with it and see how well it works over time.

I've adjusted the pinned post accordingly. To clarify, nothing about the amount of monthly content has changed, just exactly when it comes out. And in this case, it means we get the RO POV content piece a week earlier, so... here's some Hades? I hope you enjoy it!

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The hem of Hades's tunic brushes the rug beneath him as he paces quickly, ineffectually, back and forth. The weight of it, usually entirely negligible, seems oppressive now, stifling, like the spare fabric draped over the back of his shoulder might at any moment strangle him.

Which is ridiculous. It would take much more force than fabric could tolerate to achieve such a feat. Or. Perhaps all it takes is the sudden and unwanted removal of one guest from his home.

He's overstimulated. Understimulated. Fretting. Itching in his own skin. Angry. Oh, is he *angry*. It throbs under his flesh, slow and hot, like his veins pump magma instead of black ichor, flaring just a bit with every inexorable thud of his heart. He hasn't felt rage like this in... he hasn't felt like this since he was *Aidoneus*, and it's tinged with so many other things he can't say it's ever been quite like this before. Worry. Loss. A sort of formless longing he can't put his finger on.

He needs to get a handle on it.

Such a feeling—or feelings—is unproductive. Seph does not need his self-indulgent rage. What they need from him now is what he is in cooler moments. A scholar, someone who can find the information that will free them. A leader, ill as the mantle sits on him, who can rally the others towards a plan. A

tactician, who can look at the situation objectively and maximize their chances of a success. A friend, who will think of them first, *put* them first, above even his own troubling emotions.

And yet.

"You're looking a bit..." Hekate's voice is clear, a bit wry in tone, and when he turns his head towards her, she gestures to her own eyes. "Agitated. Don't go growing horns on me, Hades; you know none of us can handle you when you're like that."

\*Handle.\*The choice of word was probably not meant to imply as much as he reads into it. But then, with Hekate, maybe it was. She has never made him feel like a problem, but she's practical, and she'll say harsher things than Charon or Alekto will if she feels it necessary. And, whether she meant it or not, she's right. He is, in this state, a *problem*. One that needs to be managed. Handled. And it would be beyond unfair of him to ask any of them to take up that burden.

"I... I'm sorry." He takes a deep breath, forcing it in through his nose, and then back out through slightly-parted lips. From the way it whistles over his teeth, he knows they've changed shape a little, and focuses on bringing them back into their ordinary arrangement.

"Don't be," Hekate says, shaking her head. "Anger is completely understandable. I encourage it, even. Just..." She tips her hand from side to side with a complicated expression. "If you need, Charon and I could meet you in the usual place?"

"That won't be necessary." Hades has eons of practice keeping his anger suppressed. It is... difficult, right now. More difficult than it should be. But he will manage it, because doing so is absolutely necessary. And he doesn't want to hurt the friends offering to help him exorcise the feeling in a physical manner. In the other direction, he would encourage that method. But he is... well.

'Monstrous' might be putting it lightly.

Hekate narrows her eyes, as if she's sensed the thought and disapproved. But then, she would. As someone who has been called a 'monster' plenty of times herself, he supposes she takes particular exception to the use of the concept against her friends. Even when they're doing it to themselves.

But all she says is: "If you say so."

And then there's a longer silence, in which Hades tries to wrest his feelings under control and only mostly succeeds. The magma will be there, he knows, unless and until matters are resolved to his satisfaction. And the only way that will happen is if they are resolved to *Seph's* satisfaction. And even if they are perfectly successful at that in every other way, it will take time. Time in which he will feel raw and wounded, instinctively driven to react in the way raw and wounded things do.

But he will be better than his instinct. Better than his heritage. He *will*.



"How is it... how progresses the research?" *When can we leave*, he wants to ask, though that's ridiculous. It's barely begun.

"It's going." Hekate folds her arms over her chest. "It would go... well, not faster, but in a shorter time, if you would make the library into a temporal distortion."

He sighs, the edges of it harsh and ragged. He hates using that power. It always feels so... oily. Slick and wrong, and it makes bile rise in the back of his throat. He especially hates using it to pull a piece of space out of sync with the rest of time, for the obvious reason.

But she makes a good point. Every extra second they can save is one fewer Seph has to go through without knowing what's going on. One fewer before they can have the chance to properly make their own decision about all of this.

"I understand," he says, squaring his shoulders. "I'll do it. I also need you to get in touch with Hypnos for me. There's something I want to try."

Hekate's eyebrow ticks upward, but she nods. "Understood. And Hades?"

"Yes?"

"We'll get them back."

He certainly hopes she's right about that. It would be... no, it's better not to think about the end before things have properly reached it. He'll only catastrophize, which will not help his emotions stay in check. So instead, he simply nods.

"Let's do what we can."

[Weekly Update - 23 October 2023](#)

[Oct 22, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

This week was a pretty good one for progress—I wrote another 11,000 words on the epilogue. Less fortunately, perhaps, it's turning out to be considerably longer than I anticipated. At the beginning of the month, I thought it might come out to 15,000 words in total, but right now it's sitting at 22k and definitely

still going. I'd say I'm about halfway through the last scene, and I now expect it to hit around 35k words in total.

All to say, I may not quite finish it by the end of the month. I'm going to try my best of course, but it may be closer to early November before the Early Access cycle starts. That said, whatever I've got done will of course still show up in the BIP this month as always, and at the very least, that will be most of the epilogue, so hopefully that's some consolation!

That's about it for this week; my goal is to knuckle down and keep going on this so I can get as much done before the end of the month as possible. Variation always sneaks up on me somehow, and essentially writing six different versions of this scene, with smaller variants in all of them, is perhaps predictably a pretty big project. But I'm excited to be done, and I can feel it getting closer nevertheless.

I hope you all have a great week.

[Weekly Update - 30 October 2023](#)

[Oct 29, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

It's the last Monday of the month, so this is sort of my summation of the month's progress as well as this last week's. Right now, the epilogue comes in at 35k words (a number some of you might recognize as my most recent estimate of how long it would be) and... well, there's still more to go. I feel like the shocked pikachu meme sometimes.

Anyway, 35k isn't too bad for a month, and I definitely *don't* have another 35k to go (I'm going to try estimating again, because I never learn anything, and my new estimate is 50k), so come Hell or High Water as they say, the epilogue and Chapter Ten will be going through the release cycle in November.

In the meantime of course, everything I have written so far will be going up as this month's BIP, for those of you who read that. There will be a new questionnaire for November this week (the last one in the rotation, from Hekate), which will be out on the 1st. And of course I'll have a poll up on Tuesday just before the BIP releases to find out what you'd like to see for the second bonus content.

The cover for the game is coming along great; it might be that the completed version is ready this month, so I can show everyone that before honestly probably editing it into the intro post, because it looks great.

Anyhow, that's about all out of me for now. Poll and BIP tomorrow, questionnaire Wednesday, and another update on how I'm going with the epilogue next Monday. Thanks for sticking with me; we're really in the home stretch now!

### [Bonus Content Poll - October](#)

[Oct 30, 2023](#)

Hello all!

Before I release the WIP out into the wild in about an hour from now, I'm curious to know what you want to see from next month's bonus content. I'm going to go ahead and guess that something from Charon when the PC was away would be welcome, so instead I'll ask: who would you like to see them processing their feelings with?

Hades

Hermes

Pyri

Alekto

Hekate

73 votes total

### [BIP - October](#)

[Oct 30, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

As promised, this month's BIP includes a brand-new 35,000 words of epilogue, which is not done yet, but is definitely in its last stage. (The trick, you see, is all the variations, but I'm getting through them!)

I hope you enjoy what we've got, anyway. [You can find the BIP here.](#)

Thanks as always for reading!

## [Q&A - Hekate](#)

[Oct 31, 2023](#)

Hey all!

The last Q&A with this set of questions goes to Hekate! I'm hoping that this slot will be used for a different sort of bonus content related to the editing process next month, but I can't promise that, yet. For now, please enjoy some insight into the Goddess of Magic. :)

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### *1. What is your greatest desire?*

To be the kind of person I can be proud of. Vague and without a definitive point of achievement, I know, but you didn't ask for a well-structured goal, just a desire.

### *2. Who was the most important person in your formative years?*

My mother, I suppose. In all sincerity, I barely remember my 'formative years' most of the time, and I consider this a good thing.

### *3. What would you tell the younger version of yourself, if you could talk to her now?*

Nothing, I don't think. She has everything she needs, and I don't think there is anything anyone could merely say that would alleviate her suffering, or make anything better.

### *4. What sorts of people are you most easily drawn to?*

I admit I have a fondness for those with curiosity, energy, and... let's say a certain *brightness*.

### *5. How would you say you react to stress?*

By doing something about whatever is causing me stress. The worst kind, then, is obviously the sort that doesn't admit of that solution, and I have encountered that from time to time. In those cases, I suppose I eat. And talk. And fret, in my own way.

### *6. Of those in your inner circle, who do you feel closest to?*

I think the kinds of closeness I feel with them are different enough that a comparison by quantity doesn't really make sense. They're just alternate ways of being close.

*7. Of those in your inner circle, who do you find yourself clashing with most often?*

A more straightforward question. I suppose I occasionally clash with Charon, and Hades's tendency towards self-deprecation does rankle me a little at times as well. But I wouldn't say I genuinely fight with anyone, I don't think. At least, not at all often.

*8. Do you have any daily rituals or routines?*

I'm not one for strict routines as such, but I suppose there are a number of things I do daily, or close enough to it. Reading, for example. Brushing my teeth, bathing, that sort of thing. Nothing terribly unusual, I don't think.

*9. Of the four humors, which one or two would you say are most dominant in your personality?*

Oh, I think I show all of them at different times. Perhaps it's best to say my personality is quite balanced. I suppose if I had to choose *one*, I'd say I'm fairly phlegmatic.

*10. What part of your personality gets you into the most trouble?*

The curiosity, naturally.

[Weekly Update - 6 November 2023](#)

[Nov 5, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

I'm back again. Things have been going pretty smoothly so far with this last part of the epilogue; I wrote 10,000 new words this week (after the BIP went out), and I've as of now finished the Hades and Hermes route versions of it, and am now working my way through the Charon one. After that, of course, there's Pyri, Alekto, and Hekate to go, but then I'll finally be done!

I think I'll be most of the way to accomplishing that goal by this time next week, and should hopefully be able to give you a finalized early access and release schedule then. There's no bonus content this week, so unless something really cool or really bad happens, I'll be here next Monday.

I also need to start putting some thought into what content I'll be making available during the editing period, so if anyone has any suggestions on that, do let me know! At this stage I'm thinking I'll keep the BIP going, but update it every month with the edits and changes I've made so far, plus sharing some of my editing plans and process in the bonus content slot usually reserved for the questionnaires. If I do that, I'll probably stick with the usual snippets and POV pieces in the other slot.

But anyway, that's still a bit further off yet.

I know the world is a particularly-large mess right now, and it can be easy to feel powerless and lost in the face of things like this. I don't have any great insight into how to handle those feelings, or how to most effectively act (other than 'as the parties most affected request'), but I hope that, even when things are rotten, you can all find something to take joy in.

### [Weekly Update - 13 November 2023](#)

[Nov 12, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

It's been quite a successful week for writing over here—16,000 words later, the epilogue is now at 61k in total. More importantly, I'm done with everyone's epilogue versions except Hekate, and I'm about halfway through hers. This means I can safely give you all a release date for both early access and the public drop of the Chapter Ten/Epilogue chunk, the final part of FoA's first draft!

So! I'm giving myself about the next week to finish up and do edits and tests on the epilogue, meaning the **Everbloom Tier will be getting early access on Monday, November 20. The Blossom and Bud Tiers will have access to the new content on Thursday, November 23, and the Seedling Tier will get it Monday, November 27.**

Public release will be on the last day of the month, Thursday, November 30.

Please note that **due to this schedule, there will be no BIP this month** (I just won't have anything different in enough time to put one up.)

That said, after that we'll be moving into the editing phase, which will be mostly Patreon-exclusive. I won't be publicly changing the demo after November 30, but of course there will be plenty of editing and drafting going on behind the scenes, so stick around if you want to see all that before the game is published. :)

## [Bonus Content - Charon POV](#)

[Nov 14, 2023](#)

Hey all! This month's RO POV features Charon in the aftermath of Dionysus's disappearance back to Olympus, with some Hades and a little bit of Lethe, but mostly just a lot of wallowing.

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When Charon is stressed, they exert themselves physically.

This is certainly a holdover from much earlier days, when true serenity was impossible, and the best he could hope for was to sublimate less desirable expressions of frustration and emotion into something that would at least give him a moment's peace. To change the form of those feelings, into something he could push out of his body, like one might, in some sense, work out an ache or stiffness or something similarly physical.

It's never been all that effective, in truth, but when nothing else will help, it can at least provide some sense of... relief? Of working towards something? They've never quite figured out how to describe it.

Much to their chagrin, violence is best, whether contained to a spar or expressed as something a little more freewheeling, like the creation of a wild storm. They've restricted themselves to the former for many eons now, and today they restrict themselves even further, because the people he might fight to process his feelings are considerably busy. He should be, too, if he can get his head back 'on straight,' as Pyri might say.

So for the moment, they swim.

The Rivers, which hold a great deal of fear for the dead and humans and demigods and minor deities alike, are no danger to the Ferryman, and today he trawls the waters of the Lethe, hoping for just a little bit of the Oblivion she is meant to grant others.

Of course, Lethe herself sits not far away on the shore, tolerating their intrusion into her domain but not granting him what he seeks, for whatever her reasons might be. She sits on the ground, molding a small piece of clay into who knows what, neither interrupting nor hindering him, but, he suspects, keeping a watchful eye out, nevertheless.

She would do something like that of her own accord, but today Charon knows she has likely been asked.

The water rushes over their skin, dragging at their hair, but they resist the temptation to give themselves more speed by changing form. The emotions will only become more acute if they do; existing in this version of their body dulls everything a little: senses, emotions, powers. It's a good thing, one Charon on most occasions wholeheartedly embraces. Not something he should sacrifice now for a little more smoothness in the water.

Flipping directions, they start back the way they came, sensing Hades's presence moving towards Lethe's and suspecting that he might want to talk to them. Honestly, they both welcome and dread the idea. Welcome it because they know it will end with them feeling better about the whole thing, or at least having a more productive direction to turn their restlessness.

Dread because Hades, for all his mercy, sees through every mask Charon puts up, without fail.

Something that probably happens, when you have plenty of experience seeing someone at their worst and most raw, and helping them find something to stand on again.

He shakes the thought from his head, breaking the surface of the water nearby the two and exiting the river by climbing the bank. Charon waves a hand, pulling the drops of water left on his skin and in his hair away from himself and depositing them back in the river. Hades, obliging as ever, hands him the tunic hanging over one of Lethe's outdoor chairs, and Charon arranges it around himself, turning to face the two with a sigh.

"How goes the search?"

Hades frowns slightly. "As expected, it seems Dionysus was removed from the Underworld by outside parties. The cloaking magic is quite impressive; not even Alekto can track them, beyond to say that they made exit through the nearest entrance and then were pulled away by magic, most likely to Olympus. We don't know who the other parties were, yet, but she's determined to find out."

"Then she will," Charon says simply, and Hades nods.

"I believe so. Of course, the larger issue is who was really responsible, and there seems to be little question of that."

Of course there isn't. Who else would it be but Demeter, desperate to see her son again? Charon understands that. Doesn't hold it against her. No one does, really, because they all know that Dionysus wants to see her again, too. But Charon knows he wouldn't have wanted to leave the Underworld *like this*, without so much as a goodbye to anyone.

Maybe they hold that part against her a *little*, but no one here is going to make the mistake Zeus obviously intends by thinking that their real opponent in this matter is anyone but him.

"Then what do we do? Any action at all is likely to be walking right into whatever trap he thinks he's setting." Charon isn't oblivious to this sort of strategic maneuvering, but he's never been especially good



at it, a fact that has landed him in hot water more than once. For Dionysus's sake, he doesn't want to fall right back into that same kind of naive habit. Fortunately, this time they have friends.

"Yes," Hades agrees with a dip of his chin. "There is little choice but to spring it knowingly. And try to prepare enough that it backfires, so to speak. Hekate has begun to pull the relevant legal texts from the shelves; the plan is to go through everything and arm ourselves as well as possible." He pauses, red eyes narrowing slightly in that mix of concern and heatless suspicion that means he's seeing through them again.

"But enough about that for now. How are you holding up?" He's always so straightforward about it, too. It's charming, in a way, and Charon honestly doesn't understand how they managed to spend their first years here being so wary of this god. Death or not.

They expel a breath through their nose, shaking their head. "That doesn't matter right now. If we fix this, things will be fine. I'm trying to focus on that." Unsuccessfully, mind, but he *is* trying.

Hades purses his lips. "And if the solution involves Dionysus remaining on Olympus?" he asks slowly, watching Charon's face intently.

The Ferryman can't hold that gaze. Not just then. Instead, he looks slightly to the side, over Hades's shoulder.

"Let them be," Lethe says, merciful creature that she is. "It's enough to have the work to do, isn't it? Let the young man have his choice, and then deal with the rest as it comes."

Hades hums, and Charon wonders if perhaps he might not insist, but he doesn't. At least, not here.

"Very well," he says instead, softly. "But Charon... don't forget that you can always talk to me. And you *should* talk to someone. We all need to support each other right now, and you may need the most support of all."

Charon winces. That obvious, is it? But of course it is.

"I'll... keep that in mind," he replies carefully. "Thank you, Hades."

That part, at least, he sincerely means.

[Weekly Update - 20 November 2023](#)

[Nov 19, 2023](#)

Hey all!

It's been quite the week. Long story short, I've finally finished editing the epilogue, and so it and Chapter Ten begin the Early Access cycle as of right now. If you're in the Everbloom Tier, you can see it now; Blossoms and Buds, it'll appear for you on Thursday at noon (AEST). And Seedlings, next Monday is your day.

For some stats, Chapter Ten and the Epilogue together add 158,868 new words to the game's total, bring the final number to a 1,269,990-word first draft. That's almost 1.3 million words, which is... kind of crazy haha.

I have no idea whatsoever how long the average playthrough is, but I imagine it's maybe around half of that? I can't really offer a statistic there as of yet.

Anyhow, I've got a plan in mind for the editing phase, which is about thirteen steps long. I'll share that with those of you who'd normally be getting the BIP at the end of the month, so you know what the previews and BIPs from here on out will be looking like. One of the bonus contents for next month will probably be an elaborated version of that plan, with more notes about what exactly I have in mind for some of those changes.

I'm excited to enter the next phase of development, and I hope you're all excited to be along for the ride. For now though, please do enjoy the end of the game. :)

[Early Access - Chapter Ten and the Epilogue](#)

[Nov 22, 2023](#)

Hello, everyone!

Here we are, on the appointed day, and here it is, the last part of FoA's first draft. I hope the ending satisfies, whichever one you choose, and that those of you who end up with the "Underworld Epilogue" are looking forward to the sequel!

Thank you so much for sticking with me, especially to those of you who've been following the game since the beginning. Your feedback has been invaluable, and everyone's support is very much the reason I was able to get here, to the end of the game (though not the end of the work associated with it, which is still to come).

[I sincerely hope you enjoy.](#)

[Nov 26, 2023](#)

Hello again, all!

The early access version of the game's end should now be there for all of you; I hope those of you just getting around to it (or who do so in the next little while) enjoy it!

Meanwhile, I'm beginning the editing phase. The first step has been to make a sort of 'reverse outline,' where I go through the whole game and map out what scenes happen where and what's important about them and all of that. This helps me get the 'zoomed out' view of the whole game, as you will, since I definitely can't hold all that information in my head at the same time. It's going to be a useful tool in helping me decide what needs to be trimmed, moved, or changed to make more sense or be paced better, for sure.

I'm also making some tentative progress on the revamped personality and skill system, but I'll leave more information on that to a later post, I think. Suffice to say I'm hoping to both streamline some things and also make the PC's personality feel more relevant to their relationships with the other characters. One big spoiler: I'll be doing away with friendship/romance points completely. I've never really liked making those come down to an 'approval meter' anyway, and the system I'm going to put in place to replace that should make relationships of all kinds feel more organic and responsive to the player's actual choices. Plus, there will no longer be any need to pick flirt options! (There isn't even really currently a need to do that, but I know some people can feel kind of pressured to do so at least a few times, because of how games like this usually work.)

Anyway. That's it for this week; I'll be back in this slot next week with more good news, I hope! Stay well out there, everyone.

[BIP\(ish\) - The Editing Queue](#)

[Nov 29, 2023](#)

Hey all!

As one might expect, I don't have anything new I can show off as a BIP right now, having just finished the draft and now being in that part of the editing stage where I'm mostly figuring out what I need to do and in what order. But the spirit of the BIP is previewing what's going on, so in that spirit I present to you a tidied-up version of my editing queue, along with some explanations of what each of the steps actually amounts to. I hope you're excited for what's to come, because I certainly am!

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Step One: Reverse Outline/Beat Sheet/Trigger Warnings - In this phase, I'm doing what's called a "reverse outline," so I can get a better idea of what the game looks like from a zoomed out perspective. This will also help me in compiling the content warnings, because I'll be reminded of exactly what scene is where, and can do my best to compile the possible triggers accordingly.

Step Two: Trim anything that was superfluous - Sometimes, you write stuff because you think you need it, but then the subplot kind of drops out of things. Or it turns out it's better covered later or earlier, you know. That sort of thing. I don't know yet exactly how much will be trimmed out, and this step will honestly probably take place throughout as other things change, but any obviously dead branches on the story will be excised as I move to the editing copy of the game.

Step Three: Character Creation/Give Option to Skip - I tried to do a sort of integrated character creation approach in the first draft of the game, and results were mixed. I honestly think pausing to ask someone what their eye colour is is always a little weird, so I'm just going to get all of that kind of thing out of the way at the beginning. Plus, some people really don't like detailed character creators, so I'll include an option to skip it in favour of a few different preset appearances for those folks!

Step Four: New Personality and Skill System/How to Integrate with Romance - I have... big plans for this one. I'm not yet completely sure that those plans will work, but that's why I do all this editing on a separate copy of the game. This will likely be something I talk more about in a bonus content very soon, but the hope is that it will make the relationships feel more organic while simplifying things like skill stats so no one feels like they have to constantly go check their sheet to see what they should do. That's immersion-breaking, and not very fun!

Step Five: Add Dionysus Options/Retool Magic Descriptions - I've always had in my head that the player will be able to explore more Dionysian style magic, but other than a few small references to things, it never materialized. So I'm going to actually build in an arc where players can get funky Chthonic magic and use it. Existing descriptions of the player using magic in combat will also be redone to feel more unique to the PC's domains, because right now it mostly all looks like energy bolts and shields, and that's too generic, methinks.

Step Six: Decide what the main beats of the character routes will be in the next game - Believe it or not, I kind of need to know this in order to repace the romances/platonic bonds in this game. I was never sure how much to give away or when it would be appropriate for certain things to happen, because I always knew vaguely that there would be a sequel that explored these subplots a lot more. Now I kinda

need to know exactly what the subplots are, and how much of them needs to be out there before the sequel starts.

Step Seven: Outline next game - And while I'm at it, I need to outline the next game. It likely won't be in a huge level of detail, but I do need at least the basic beats of the main plot and the character-specific subplots, because I need to make sure all the right foundations are laid for that stuff in *this* story.

Step Eight: Re-Pacing the Routes/Adding Romance/Character Arc Stuff - Once I know what I need to cover, and what the skeleton of this game looks like (per the reverse outline) and what the systems are (per the skills/relationships redesign), I'll actually be in a position to replot/adjust the routes. This should hopefully involve adding some more romance/platonic bond scenes that feel different for each character, so that they're not all on the same slow burn for some reason. They'll probably all be a *little* bit slow burn, considering the situation the PC is in, but some less slow than others.

Step Nine: Make sure everything that needs a variable for the second game has one/ list all the options for each variable in a doc - I definitely don't want to do that thing I've done multiple times in the course of making this game where I need to refer to something that's already happened but there's no variable in place for *how* it happened. It's a pretty easy fix in the same game, but not so much between games, I'd imagine. I think my approach on this is going to be to give variables to a lot of things. If I do that, though, I'm going to need a big reference sheet with all the names, possible values, and what they track, so I'll just build that at the same time, I suspect.

Step Ten: Non-Missable Eurydice Scene before Chapter 8/Adjust Eurydice's scenes and arc - In general, I'm fairly happy with how Eurydice's story goes. Most of it is missable, but that's... kind of okay. I just want to make sure there are at least two non-missable scenes with her before her plot resolves, so that it doesn't come out of nowhere, because the PC is always involved in the resolution, and it should feel like there was at least some build up to that. This may be as simple as adjusting one of the earlier scenes to be mandatory instead of avoidable, or I may write a whole new scene; I'm not actually sure yet.

Step Eleven: Integrate new personality system in other scenes - By this point, the new system should be integrated into the romance arcs, but there are plenty of other places it can and should have an impact. Dialogue with non-ROs, scenes with internal reflection, and definitely how all the action sequences go in Chapter Seven, just to name a few.

Step Twelve: Smaller Adjustments leftover as needed: motifs, callbacks, etc. - By this time, all the big structural adjustments are done, so this will be the place I do things like add new choices to existing scenes, alter descriptions, use my new variables to add little bits of responsiveness in scenes, and so on. Anything smaller than significantly adjusting a scene will be done here, near the end, because there's no point in making little changes to a scene that may not exist later, or adding choices to a choice block that might disappear.

Step Thirteen: Line and Copy Edits - Once all the substantive changes are done, it'll be time for line and copy editing. I've done some of this as I went along, which will hopefully make the process a bit easier, because it's definitely going to be a slog. No way around it—I have to read the game, word by word, and

make sure my sentences make sense, things are spelled and punctuated correctly, and it sounds like something I want put out into the world and not a complete mess.

Step Fourteen: Steam Capsules - These are publication assets that HG needs to publish the game on Steam, which I am hoping they will want to do! Basically I have to do a lot of playthroughs and take screenshots of things that are particularly illustrative or dramatic. I don't think it will ultimately take that long, and it's sort of an "icing on the cake" step for the editing process, really.

Step Fifteen: Submit the game for Publication - Pretty self explanatory.

I might do a closed beta in here somewhere, so people can give me an idea of how they like all the changes. If I do, it'll probably be after Step Thirteen, and will really only be seeking feedback on how the new stuff feels, plus any changes testers might like in Step Twelve sort of stuff. Of course, if everyone overwhelmingly hates the new skill system, for example, that's a good thing to know, too, so I can revert back to the version without it, but *with* the changes that are actually liked.

It's a lot to do, but my hope is that these are the changes that will really make the game shine, and turn it into the best version of itself than I can write. I'm hoping it won't take me more than three months or so in total, but I have no basis for knowing how accurate that estimate is. In any case, I'll keep you all up to date as big changes come in, and are made playable, so you can try them out for me and see what you think!

Thanks for reading my huge text wall if you got this far; but then I figure if you've read FoA, you're pretty used to those. :)

### [Bonus Content Poll - November](#)

[Nov 29, 2023](#)

Hey everyone! The poll is pretty straightforward this month. I just need to know if you want me to continue my current series of "post chapter nine" bonus contents with something from Alekto, or if you'd rather see something else from her instead!

Stick to the chapter nine aftermath series

Try something else

52 votes total

[The First Draft is Live](#)

[Nov 29, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

Just to let you know, the public demo has now been released. You've all had access to it for at least a little while now, but with this, I take the actual step forward of having the whole game out there in the vast sea of the internet.

Or at least, the whole first draft.

As I've probably said enough times to be annoying, at this point, there's plenty more change to come before the game is submitted for publication, and I hope you'll stick around to see that happen. Your support is the reason I can keep working on projects like FoA, and I'm excited for what's next.

I'd like to address what's upcoming in the editing phase a bit so you can decide whether you're inclined to hang around or take a break from the Patreon (or whatever the case may be).

First off, the RO-POV bonus contents will be continuing as usual. I'm not going to run out of things to do for those for a while, so they're here to stay for now.

Secondly, I will be replacing the other bonus contents, what has until now been the questionnaires, with previews and sneak peeks into the editing process, including some systems I'm redesigning and structural changes I'll be making as I try to tear this draft apart and put it back together better than before.

Thirdly, the BIPs will continue. Depending on how long it takes me to implement certain new systems, they may be messy, partial, or only halfway through important changes, but then... sometimes my chapters were like that! I can promise that, every month from December until editing is finished, I will be putting out a BIP with changes in it. I'm not sure exactly how that will look, or what state some of them will be in, but I'm committed to it.

So, in large part, Patreon stuff will be... kind of the same, honestly, and hopefully once I'm ready to move into the next game, I can just pick back up the normal format pretty easily. If it's relevant, I currently estimate the editing process will take about three months. That's just a guess! It could be a bit less, it could be more. I've never done this part of things before, and certainly not this extensively, so this is very much going to be a process of discovery for me.

Anyway, whether you'll be staying or heading out, please know that I've been so, so grateful for your support, and that it means the world to me. I hope that when the completed game finally comes out, it will feel like that support was worth it.

Cheers,  
Jess

## [Weekly Update - 4 December 2023](#)

[Dec 3, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

I hope you're all doing well as we round out the year.

As some of you have seen, I have a fifteen-item 'editing list' that I want to get through before submitting the game for publication. Having completed steps one and two for now, I'm now hard at work on step three: making a proper character creator. This covers both traits (the way I'm redoing the skill system so no one has to worry about checking math or percentages, which I think will be an improvement), and physical appearance. There's also a shortened version for people who don't care about appearance customization, where the player can pick between three preset options for that after establishing their traits.

I'm mostly done save for the more detailed version of the appearance customizer, though some of the parts I've passed still need filling in with text. I think the creator itself will only take me another day or two, but integrating it into the rest of the game will be quite a long process that I won't be getting to just yet.

Still, I hope the gender and pronoun options will prove to be a little more organic than they were in the previous version of the game, as the whole section gives a bit of the PC's backstory, and I think talking about things like potential transition in that context is a lot more natural than in the process of signing a contract! Gender and pronouns are now properly separate from the beginning, which I think is also a major improvement. And of course, there is always the option to tweak things in the custom pronouns menu in the stat screen if some things don't quite fit as the game sets them (e.g., if you want to be called "my lord" even if you use they/them pronouns exclusively).

I'm hoping this way of doing things will achieve several goals:

1. Give those who like character customization a chance to establish things about their character right off the bat.
2. Give a touch more backstory on the PC, Demeter, and how the PC's life has been up until the events of the game begin.



3. Feel much more natural and inclusive for trans players, and help everyone get the pronoun and gender combination that's right for their PC.
4. Provide a simple and effective setup for the new trait system that can carry forward into the rest of the game.

I'll have a bonus content this week that talks about the trait system in more detail, for anyone who's curious about how that might turn out to be different from the stats system the game previously used.

Anyway, I hope you all enjoy your week, and I'll be back in this spot next week with more news and updates. Cheers!

### [Bonus Content - The Trait System](#)

[Dec 5, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

I promised that the first bonus content this month would cover some changes I'm making to the skill system. So, I've given something of an overview for those changes below, including my rationale for departing from a traditional numbers-and-checks system, the basics of what I'm doing instead, and how I expect these changes to influence the game.

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#### **Rationale**

Generally-speaking, stories of this nature have some form of statistics, and those statistics are usually in the form of "skills" and "relationships." A skill statistic is something that you build up by making choices in the game, and it is later "checked" against some number the game developer sets as the threshold for success. If your number is over that number, you succeed the check, and you get some variation on the result that indicates as much. If your number is below that number, you fail the check, and you get some other variation on the result.

Let's call this a numbers-and-checks system, or perhaps just a Numerical System (NS). There's plenty of room for nuance and experimentation in an NS; some of them are very fun. I, for one, play a lot of tabletop roleplaying games, and numbers and checks are the bread and butter of a lot of the most beloved systems in that genre. It's natural in some ways to use an NS in making a game like this, because the number is the result of players choosing to do something, and so the differing results, too,

are a result of player choice. This makes it feel like decisions matter, and can reward players who pay careful attention to their numbers and the options they're presented in any given situations. At its best, this will feel virtually indistinguishable from just roleplaying the character; a thief is more likely to pick a lock than try to break down the door, after all, so it makes sense that her sleight of hand skill would be high, and she's likely to pass such a check.

But, there's a couple of problems here.

First of all, when your thief rolls a check in a tabletop roleplaying game, where the NS style of play really shines, she can also fail. There's tension, even when a character is doing what she's best at, and failure is a natural part of the game, something that often presents new and interesting avenues of storytelling. This is in part, of course, because such checks involve the roll of a die, but that isn't the only reason. The other reason is that there's a Game Master there, a live human who is working with their players to tell a story. With a good Game Master, failure is a setback, but also an opportunity, to find a different solution or to pull back and rethink the approach, or any number of other things. It's wide open.

IF games, of course, can only pretend to have Game Masters. There can only be some push and pull, some sense of collaboration in the storytelling, because, well, the author of an IF can only write so many possibilities. And so as a result, the skill system tends to become flattened out. A static value is checked against a static difficulty, for 2-3 different possible results. And 'failure' tends to feel a lot worse, for a lot of reasons but at least in part because it tends to lead to a definitively worse result, without much chance for the "wait, but what if...?" of a tabletop game. In turn, some players, used to the concept of a "good" or "golden" ending, or a "perfect" run of a game, get caught up in making sure their numbers are exactly what they need to be, and the game's choices become about changing those numbers rather than roleplaying, in order to achieve the "best" possible result.

There are a lot of ways to minimize or prevent this, and of course to a certain extent, you may just not be able to. There will always be players who want the "perfect" run, and that's okay. But, as a rule, this is not the experience a game developer is going for, and we certainly don't want to incentivize it for the players who might otherwise play the game as a (hopefully) rewarding RP experience.

My solution has up until now been to encourage people to view even the stat checks they don't pass as interesting story developments, and to try to write them as that. Failed checks in the fight with Alcyoneus on the Hades route, for example, may involve sections of the orchard being destroyed, which gives the PC the opportunity to be a part of fixing them later. But, perhaps understandably, most people still view this as a failure, and prefer the "success" state of saving the orchard from all but minimal damage. Part of the fault for this is mine: I didn't write enough about the potential fixing, and so it's not a proper branch, just something mostly left implied, and even then only if you happen to have the right job. But part of it is also these other considerations.

So, my new solution is to make a "perfect" run—that is, one where absolutely everything goes the best it possibly could for an idealized character at all times—impossible. The hope is that in doing this, I'll be also adding fun RP elements to the story, and opportunities for who the PC is and what they're good at to affect the story in different, significant ways. No run will be perfect, but every run will have places

where the PC really gets to shine, and save the day, and I hope that will make for a much more RP-centric experience, where people feel free to explore the options that sound interesting to them, not the ones that will guarantee later success based on the build they're going for.

So here's how I'm trying this.

## **The Trait and Drawback System**

On the surface, I don't think the Trait System I'm using looks all that different from a Numerical System.

Essentially, at character creation, the player picks two "traits" for their character, that represent things they're especially good at, and one "drawback" that represents a weakness of theirs, roughly but not quite the inverse of a trait option they didn't choose.

The trait options are: Magically-Gifted, Learned, Athletic, Intuitive, and Charming. Other than Intuitive, which is new, the others basically correspond to the previously-extant statistics Deific Power, Erudition, Physicality, and Persuasiveness.

The drawback options are Magically-Stunted, Dull, Clumsy, Oblivious, and Blank-Faced. They essentially represent a particular weakness corresponding to one of the traits. Blank-Faced, for example, means people tend to find the character difficult to read or unnerving to talk to, which is sort of the opposite of charming, but it's flavored in a specific way, rather than just being generically "uncharming." All of the drawbacks are more specific than the traits, even though Magically-Stunted doesn't sound like it from the name alone. They're weaknesses, but they're also RP opportunities, and a chance to flavor game text when they might become relevant.

You might quite justifiably think that all I've really done here is turn stats into booleans (true-false type variables) instead of numbers. To some extent... that's kind of true. There's a benefit to this in that there's no way to make all the traits true, and the player has to live with the fact that they can't do everything perfectly in the game. But that's sort of... not what I'm aiming for, either. I don't want to punish players and make them feel bad. The goal is to make a more responsive RP experience that hopefully has people checking their stats screens less, not cause misery in my players!

Which brings us to the final topic of this little ramble.

## **Implementation**

So, how do I make a system that doesn't allow for perfect success all the time feel natural and intuitive rather than punishing?

I think the key is twofold: first, in establishing expectations for what's possible and what isn't, and then in making having traits always feel like a bonus. They shouldn't be necessary to get a good result, but it's probably okay if they're necessary to get a great one. The player needs to have enough power over their situation that their choices feel meaningful, and also like they can succeed at what they want to do, if they work at it or are clever about it or whatever else.

No one should feel like they go into a Giant fight doomed to fail, even if they're Magically-Stunted and don't have the Athletic trait, either. They should still be able to contribute something meaningful, either through one of their other traits, or through thinking the situation through and making an RP choice that can change the trajectory of how things are going, for better or for worse. And, importantly, if they do change it for worse, it should also make things *interesting*.

So as I go forward and adjust the story to fit the new system, there are a couple of principles I'm keeping in mind.

1. Players should be able to get an outcome that feels satisfying in any situation, even if it's not a strong area for their character.
2. Any negative consequences an outcome introduces should be interesting, not simple "failures."
3. Traits should provide opportunities to shine. Using a trait in a situation should never make things worse.
4. Having drawbacks *should*, at least sometimes, make things worse, but it shouldn't do so in a way the player can't overcome.
5. Choices should be structured so that only very rarely is complete success or complete failure possible. Most results should be mixed in interesting ways, where some people will prefer one result and some a different result, so as to avoid the idea that there are "right" and "wrong" choices (this is, after all, only moving the problem of having the "right" stats slightly sideways).
6. What were formerly chances to earn stat points should now be RP choices with different sorts of benefits. Information, time with different characters, items, or possible unconventional solutions to later problems.
7. Traits should not only be relevant when it comes to solving problems. Interactions are going to look different for an Intuitive character than an Oblivious one. Combinations of traits and drawbacks suggest (but do not determine!) personality types, and if someone plays an Athletic, Charming, Dull character, they should have opportunities available to be the himbo/herbo/thembo they clearly want to be!

I'm hoping that keeping all of these design principles in mind as I'm going through and making adjustments will make having traits (and yes, even drawbacks!) feel like fun, and encourage exploration through RP and multiple playthroughs, rather than encouraging people to spend half their time on the stats screen, worrying if their Persuasiveness is really high enough to help Eurydice or if they should try the option that seems a bit more like Erudition, even though it's maybe not what their character would say.

## Conclusion

I hope this has given you a much clearer idea of what I'm about with the redesign. The overall goal is a sleeker, simpler system that actually affects the game more, and more interestingly, than the current Numerical System does. Part of my overall goal for this round of edits is to make the game feel more responsive, and this is certainly a level on which it should be responsive.

In particular, I think having Traits show up more often outside of problem-solving will help them feel more like roleplay elements, and encourage people to really get into their characters rather than worrying so much about success and failure.

## [Weekly Update - 11 December 2023](#)

[Dec 10, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

This week was a pretty good one for progress, if I do say so myself. I got the rest of the way through the character creator, including filling in all the descriptive text and implementing the new trait system in it. Additionally, I got the majority of the planning work for the new personality/romance system done. How exactly I'm going to implement all of these things in the rest of the game is, of course, the big question, and one it'll still take some time to handle.

This next week coming up, I'm going to be beginning to answer it with respect to the traits. I'll be going through the game and replacing the stats parts with trait-based parts, and quite possibly trimming off and altering a lot of the parts that previously raised stats to do different things instead. It's sort of difficult to isolate this task from later steps, like integrating Dionysian magic and so on, so it may end up being that I'm sort of doing multiple steps at once, but I think as long as I'm moving forward and making the game into what I want it to be, this should be fine.

One approach I may take is rewriting the game one chapter at a time and trying to implement all the new systems at once, scene-by-scene. It's sort of a daunting task, but it seems like this might be the most efficient option overall, and it's also the most exciting to think about, so there's a good chance I'll try to tackle things this way.

Fortunately, plenty of what I've written will be reusable more or less as it is, so this will be far from as lengthy a process as it was the first time!

Hopefully I'll have some good news about how it's going next week. In any case, I'll be back here next Monday. I'm doing some traveling on the weekend for the holidays, so it's going to be a bit of a truncated week overall, but I'm optimistic about progress nevertheless.

I hope you're all keeping well, and that you have a fantastic week.



## [Art Commission - Kokytos](#)

[Dec 11, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

I'm not sure how I forgot to post this, but it turns out I now have a slight backlog of commissioned art from the amazing [@gnerezan](#), so... I'll be posting one of these excellent pieces a week for a little while, now.

You may remember the River Deity series from earlier this year with Styx and Acheron; well, here's Kokytos. It's hard to pick my favorite of these characters, because I've actually come to love them a lot in spite of their relatively small roles in the story, but I do think Kokytos here has a special place in my heart. :)

[Weekly Update - 18 December 2023](#)

[Dec 17, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

This week has been kind of a weird one. On the personal side of things, my holiday travel was delayed after I spent over ten hours on a train on Saturday (on what was meant to be a five-hour trip, but stopped partway through for some rain to pass and then had to go back because the storm dropped a tree on the tracks and they outright broke apparently). So now I'm back at my place, and the trip has been rescheduled for Wednesday, this time by car with a friend. Here's hoping that goes better!

But writing-wise, everything seems to be running fairly smoothly, actually. I've mixed around the order of my to-do list a little bit, but I've already got most of the things done that I wanted to do for December, which is great. I'd much prefer to be ahead of schedule going into the new year, because the chunk of work I have planned for January is quite substantive.

This week, I:

- Finished the design of the personality system, which will also play a key part in the romances;
- Decided what I wanted the key beats to be in each of the subplots as well as the main plot of the next game;



- Combined this information into a rough, chapter-by-chapter outline of the next game;
- Got started, using the outline of the next game, figuring out what extra groundwork I need to lay for those plots in *this* game, and what additional scenes will be needed for that.

As you may have noticed, this is not exactly what I planned to do this week, but I've elected to take the "get all the ducks in a row, then rewrite chapter by chapter" approach, which I think will turn out to be the best one.

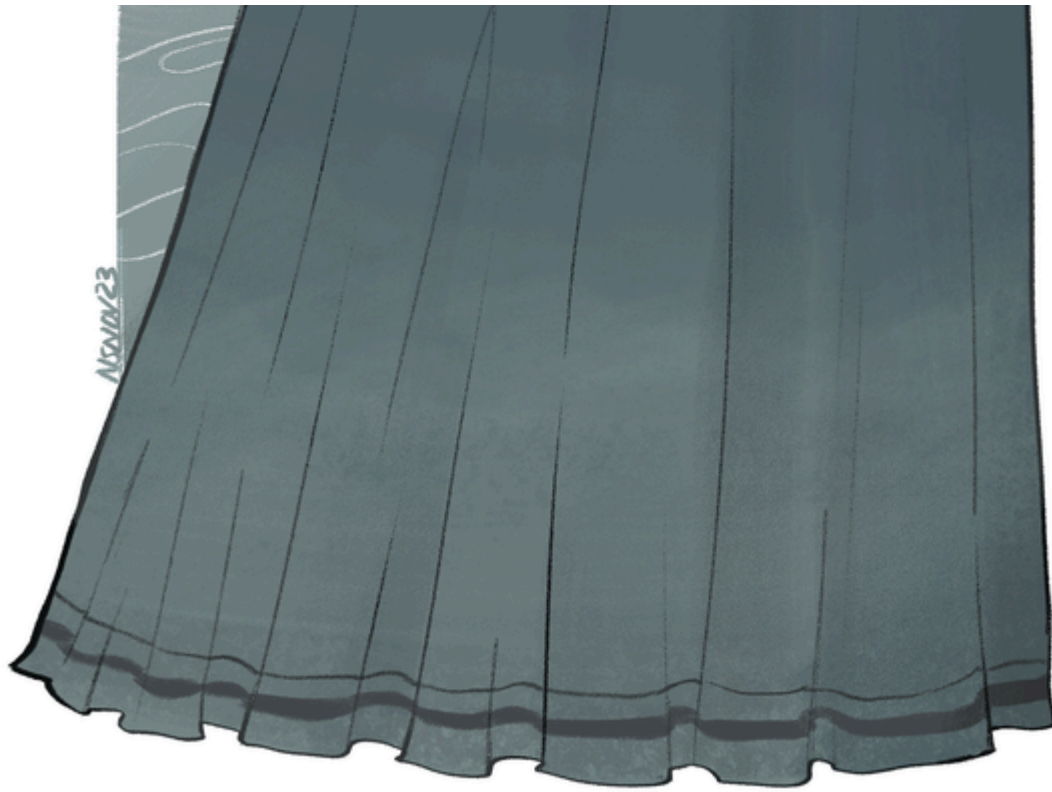
So what I have to do next before I can get to that part is the following:

- Repace and restructure the romances as needed;
- Decide on the approximate placement and topic matter of new friendship scenes with each of the ROs;
- Make a new and improved outline for FoA;
- Write up a list of what I need to be checking for and changing as I go through text I've already written (as opposed to adding new things).

Then, I think, I'll finally be ready to rewrite properly. I'm hoping to finish all of the above by Jan 1, at which point I'll be ready to go full-tilt ahead in the rewriting part.







#### [Art Commission - Lethe](#)

[Dec 18, 2023](#)

Hey all!

Here we are with the final piece of the River Deities series by [@gncrezan](#); this is Lethe! She's definitely a little bit more hale and healthy here than she is in the majority of the story. I really loved the color palette we ended up with, here.

Next Tuesday I'll post a little bonus, in the form of the four river pieces combined. :)

#### [Bonus Content - Alekto POV](#)

[Dec 19, 2023](#)

Hey all!

In line with the results of the poll last month, here's a little something of Alekto during Chapter Nine, this time featuring Meg and Tis, too. (Naturally, this vignette assumes they were both safely rescued earlier.)

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"You know, it would be okay. If this had rattled you." Megaira runs the edge of her reed pen along her chin, the soft feather she's attached to the end of it for no good reason brushing back and forth under her chin. "I'm just... putting that out there." She eases back in her chair with a groan; her injuries are healed in the superficial sense, but it will be some time yet before she's back to normal

"I know that," Alekto replies, trying to focus her attention on the paperwork in front of her. She misses being able to *put* herself to something and plow through it until it's done to her satisfaction, but she just hasn't been able to achieve that kind of focus since—

"Do you?" Tisiphone asks, pausing briefly in the act of applying the whetstone in her hand to the edge of a large axe. She prefers hammers, which don't need sharpening, but occasionally sets to maintaining the other weapons in the garrison nevertheless. "Because while I'm certain you would extend that grace to anyone else, I am less sure you're willing to give it to yourself."

Alekto frowns. "Why are you pestering me about this?" she asks, unable to help making the gestures a bit too curt. "There's nothing to be bothered about. She had an opportunity to go home, and she took it. If anything, I'm just annoyed that the security breach turned out to be so simple. We'd known about the gaps in the Phlegethon, but it was supposed to be taken care of. And then to get past the guard, *and* Kerberos? This isn't just one problem, it's a cascade failure."

"And you're pretty sure they had Demeter's help, right?" Megaira rolls her eyes as she signs. "Look, I'm not calling you a liar, but I don't think you really believe the problem is that a minor deity, some spirits, and a very sleepy guard dog couldn't stop people with the power of a major goddess behind them. We all know what it's like, trying to handle one of the older members of the Twelve. They'd have had to run into Hades himself to have a problem." She pauses. "Or maybe Charon, not that he would have done anything."

"The point is—" Tisiphone picks up, halting her sister's words only after she's begun to ramble, "—the point is, it's not the security breach that we're talking about. And it's not what's bothering you. Well... maybe it's bothering you a little bit, but it's not the main problem. We all know that."

Alekto rolls her eyes. It's always like this. They always act like they know her every thought, shooting significant glances at each other when Persephone comes up. Like they don't think she'll notice. Or worse, like they're expecting her to, and hoping that the annoyance will make her confess to something.

But there's nothing to confess to. Persephone is her *friend*. An important one, but one who apparently doesn't hold her friendship with Alekto in quite the same esteem—

No. That is not fair. Persephone has been here against her will for months now. It is not unreasonable for her to have taken the only way home that presented itself in such a long interval. Because it *is* long.

Or would be, for someone of the goddess's relative youth. Alekto's only jobs here are rectifying an alarming breach of the Underworld's defenses, asking Hekate to come up with something that will make Kerberos less susceptible to magical sleep, and...

Doing whatever she needs to do to make sure Persephone is the one making her own choices, in the end.

"You're my main problem right now," she replies, testiness evident in her motions. "Can you go away and stop distracting me? This paperwork is important."

"Alekto," Megaira says, her tone gentling. "We're not trying to force anything here. It's just... you're not yourself, and I think it would help if you just—"

"What?" Alekto replies, arms heavy with a weariness more psychological than physical. "Talked about it? What is there to talk about? This has nothing to do with me." She shakes her head, looking back down at the paperwork in front of her. The letters all look like nonsense.

"As long as she's happy, that's all that matters."

It's more of an admission than she intended, and she doesn't bother to look up, and watch the two of them exchange another of their significant looks. There's too much on her plate for this. She isn't going to discuss it when only one opinion is of consequence and it's none of the three in the room.

Persephone... Persephone will choose. That is all.

[Weekly Update - 25 December 2023](#)

[Dec 24, 2023](#)

Hello everyone!

I am pleased to report that I got everything done this week that I was planning to and then some. I have a new outline for FoA, including several new scenes with various characters that I'm going to write as I create the second draft, and a list of things to be changing as I go through the rest. Which means that (after I take the day off on Christmas and maybe Boxing Day), I may actually be able to rewrite the prologue in time for the BIP release this month. In any event I'm going to try, because I think it would be cool to have something besides the new character creator for all of you to see.

Because of the complexity of coding new variables into the same document with old ones, I'm going to be using a fresh document (and therefore a fresh Dashingdon upload) for all this. I don't think this will



affect anything too much on your end, except of course for the fact that this month's BIP will once again be very short! But hopefully it will show off some of the new changes, and give you an idea where I'm going with them.

At this point I'm fairly sure the game will not be losing much content. The only scenes really at risk of being cut are the ones that were previously used explicitly to raise stats, and I'm still going to see if I can/should salvage them for some other purpose. There are going to be at least two more individual scenes with each RO (one that is open to all PCs and one that occurs on that RO's route specifically) as well as probably five or so new pair or small group scenes, where you interact with a subset of the ROs doing something which will hopefully be interesting. Hopefully this will help mitigate the fact that some people weren't getting a lot of scenes with characters other than their ROs; it should come out to three new unmissable scenes for each character (two of them shared with other characters). There's also a new scene with Makaria, and several other scenes that were previously missable due to choosing alternative options will now be playable without that restriction. I'm not making it so that everyone will be able to see everything on all playthroughs, but I am loosening the exclusivity requirements quite a bit in the name of character development haha.

This will obviously take some time to do, and may extend editing time a bit, but I'm optimistic about what they'll do for the story, and hopeful that, since I'm getting started in this phase sooner than I anticipated, it will turn out to still be done by my aspirational deadline of March 1.

Anyway, I'll be back with another update on the 1st of the year. In the meantime, I hope everyone enjoys the end of 2023 as much as possible. After the kind of year this has been, we deserve to!



## [Art Comission - The River Deities](#)

[Dec 25, 2023](#)

Hey everyone! As promised, this is the four previous art pieces combined. I really love how they all look together, and [@gncrezan](#) did such a good job capturing everyone (seriously, I am extremely vague and unhelpful, and they are very skilled at somehow pulling what I actually mean out of my head and showing it to me!)

Next week, we'll have a very special preview of FoA's cover!

## [Some Unfortunate News](#)

[Dec 25, 2023](#)

Hey everyone.

I am lucky enough that I usually get to write with good news, but unfortunately today I've got some of the bad kind. It's nothing catastrophic (though it certainly feels that way to me right now), but it does mean a significant delay, and that it's unlikely I get the prologue out for the BIP this month.

Specifically, I lost the version of the game files where the character creator was. Because it was something I'd done this month, I hadn't yet backed it up to my dropbox, and a careless error left me with all that information missing and no way to restore it (Windows 11 is apparently just terrible with this, so if you use it, you may need to go in and manually enable the creation of Restore Points, just so you know!)

This means I anticipate that the part of my week that isn't spent rewriting the character creation scene (RIP me, because I had it exactly how I wanted it and also remember almost nothing about how that was) will be spent on necessary travel home from my relative's place, so... I'm hoping I'll at least be able to remake the character creator and get it to you by the end of the month.

I was really looking forward to finally getting into the meat of the edits, and now this happens. It's extremely disappointing (and, honestly, infuriating) for me, but it's done, and the only thing I can do now is move forward. I hear this sort of thing happens to every writer at least once, which is honestly not shocking haha.

Anyway, I just wanted to let you know where I'm at, because it's a pretty significant difference from the state of things just yesterday. Sorry in advance if there's not much in the BIP this month, but I sincerely hope the completed character creator will be worth it!

## [Bonus Content Poll - December](#)

[Dec 30, 2023](#)

Hey everyone!

In light of the fact that everyone but Pyri now has a bonus content scene during chapter nine, I'm going to stick to the pattern and give them one, too. So, what I'd like you all to choose for me is part of the tone of that, by informing me what kind of PC I'm using!

A Persephone who really came into her own in the Underworld and definitely doesn't want to be on Olympus again.

A somewhat grumpy Dionysus who was slowly opening up to them, but was always ambiguous about where he wanted to be.

A formerly-frightened Seph who doesn't handle anxiety well, but did want to return to Olympus.

42 votes total

## [BIP - December](#)

[Dec 30, 2023](#)

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the first BIP of the editing phase!

I've been hard at work on edits this month, but much of the work I've done has been "behind the scenes" so to speak—determining what exactly needs to be done and how I'm going to go about it. This, combined with the loss of data I experienced last week, means that what's new this month is... well, a character creator and a basic version of a revamped stats screen. Still, I hope what's there turns out to be something you all like. I tried to use the opportunity to make some character creation choice a bit

more organic, and to give a slightly more solid backstory for the PC, as well as some insight into a few specific things about Demeter and how the relationship has gone so far.

Of course, how the PC feels about things and relates to her is still very much up to the player, but having a few more concrete details to draw from later will help any version of the relationship feel more grounded, I hope.

In any case, here it is; as always, I welcome feedback on things that don't feel quite right or areas where it might need smoothing out, so don't hesitate to say so if you think of something like that!

Jess

[Play the new version here.](#)

[Weekly Update - 1 January, 2024](#)

[Dec 31, 2023](#)

Happy New Year, everyone!

Personally I'm hoping for some big changes this year, mostly in the form of publication, heh. But before that can happen I've got to get to work rewriting this draft. The good news is, after rewriting the character creator I lost at the end of last month, I am now ready to spend all of January doing so. I have no idea exactly how far I'm going to get, especially because the first half of the game has the most rewrites and additional scenes to put in, but I'm still hoping I'll be able to get the prologue through Chapter Six finished, new systems implemented, and new scenes written.

It's a very tall order, but I'm hopeful nonetheless. I have a solid outline for what I want where, and a handy list of changes to make as I go; all that remains is to see how I do.

In a couple days, I'll have my editing bonus content for the month up, where I talk about what kind of personality factors I'm going to be tracking and how they might influence certain core areas of the game. There will also be a preview of FoA's cover art up tomorrow, for those interested in seeing that.

Good luck in all your endeavors this year, whatever they may be, and here's hoping we've all got a much better one ahead than the one we've left behind. :)





### [Art Commission - Cover](#)

[Jan 1, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Happy New Year, again, and I hope you're all doing well. Above is a preview of the cover [@gncrezan](#) drew for FoA's publication. I personally love it, and the pottery-style touches while still being in the full color palette looks really unique and awesome to me.

It's also definitely motivating to get that editing done!

I hope you've enjoyed seeing some more of their very cool art; I heartily recommend checking them out on tumblr if you haven't done so already. They draw loads of things for FoA and it's always amazing.

### [Bonus Content - The Personality System](#)

[Jan 2, 2024](#)

Hey again, everyone!

This month's editing-oriented bonus content is going to talk a little bit about the system I'm using to track player choices with respect to romances. It's something of a combination personality/romance system, because while it certainly has a lot to do with how the player chooses to behave... well, I'll just let the

below explanation do its job, shall I? Read on if you've an interest in trying to game-design a romance without "romance points."

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## Rationale

As with the skill system, my affection system started in the classic manner of IF everywhere: you'd play through the game, indicate romantic interest in a character by flirting and doing things they probably found generally agreeable, and romance would blossom.

The thing is, this fell apart pretty quickly. First of all, I didn't really end up tracking whether the NPCs agreed with the PC all that much or not, because the kinds of disagreements these characters might have just didn't feel like the kinds of things that would prohibit a romance, and a general pattern of agreeing or disagreeing didn't seem to carry much narrative weight. Also, a lot of the disagreements are matters of small differences in nuance, and it's generally assumed that the player character is a goodhearted person who isn't unreasonable, and that means that, well, frankly all the characters in the Underworld would just be chill with it even if it happened.

In some games, agreement or disagreement on the issues that come up can be pretty make or break, like in my other game, *Diaspora*. But it wasn't the right mechanic for *this* game, which is overall a cozy slice of life about people getting to know each other and working together to solve problems.

Nor, really, did romance end up being something connected to whether the player character flirted (overtly or more subtly) with any of the characters. In fact, I began to realize overt flirting actually made some of them uncomfortable, and this presented me with quite the dilemma. Generally speaking in games like this, if a response has a heart next to it, it should result in the romance moving forward, at least a little. But here I was, thinking there were instances when it should have the opposite effect. I could just remove those opportunities to flirt, of course, and that might turn out to be part of the solution. But really, what I was grappling with was just one particular instance of a much larger problem in game design: how do you design a romance that feels real? One that feels like the NPCs have agency, and that they connect with the PC on a genuine level?

So I decided that any semblance of a single 'relationship bar' needed to go. It wasn't working, and the two most common mechanics by which such a bar would increase (flirting and agreeing), just weren't cutting it. Besides, there's something that just feels... kind of shallow about this sort of system. As Michelle Clough points out in her book *Passion and Play*, which is all about designing romance in games, at a certain point, systems like this become reductive, turning NPCs into vending machines, where the right kind of token (certain actions, or something very generic, like "kindness") are fed into the machine enough times and a romance pops out.

This has its advantages, certainly; it's easy to implement, can be done either with small subplots or in games that are all about romance, like dating sims, and it's always relatively clear to the player what will get the result they want.

But there are also problems with it. My main three issues with systems like this are 1) It makes the NPCs feel less like real people, 2) It reinforces a very uncomfortable trope where enough “niceness” or flirting or agreeing with a companion will get you a relationship, and 3) It limits players, by encouraging them to pick the options that seem like they will initiate the romance, even if that’s not what their character would do. In more extreme cases, people might “game the system;” this happens mostly in RPGs with approval systems, where you can selectively leave companions out of the action for a bit if you’re going to do things they disagree with, and so on. It all makes the process much less organic, and in this case, for this game especially, that was bad.

I ended up (functionally) just letting everyone choose their route at a certain point and then proceeding forward from there, no flirting necessary, but this feels strange in a different way, in that wildly-different PCs will be treated exactly the same by the NPCs. It’s less stress on the player to choose “right” answers, because there aren’t really wrong ones for the romance (except living on Olympus most of the time, which I think is fairly obvious). But it also just... makes the choices not matter in a different way. Instead of forcing people to choose kind-of cringey flirt options to advance a romance, I wound up with a game where, beyond immediate flavor text, it didn’t really matter what the player chose at all. Things weren’t remembered, there were no differences in anything based on the PC’s personality, and I think this made things feel pretty lifeless and lacking in chemistry.

So. I need a different way to do things, and I think I’ve come up with one.

## **A Responsive Romance System**

My solution to this problem is to make the romances responsive to, but not dependent on, the player’s choices. This sounds extremely obvious, I know. Let me explain.

Generally speaking, in an IF game, what distinguishes one run, and therefore one PC, from another is twofold: first, the choices they make, and secondly, their personality. Sometimes skills or the equivalent also count, but in my particular case, traits are not just skills, but also parts of a PC’s personality. So in order to make one run feel different from another, you can either give the different choices different results, or you can use personality to flavor things. I think the best IFs in *Asphodel’s* genre do both.

Usually, though, differences in what choices do are more significant. They’re where you want to change whole scenes, and so the number of times you can offer choices that really do this is limited. Otherwise you’re writing a thousand branches and you never finish. Differences in flavor text can come from choices as well, of course, but a lot of the time those really come down to personality, even if it’s not tracked. You get different flavor text if you said that thing nicely, said it cruelly, or didn’t say it at all, but this doesn’t fundamentally affect the flow of the game.

And that’s fine! Flavor text is great. So great in fact that I would like there to be more of it in my game. But I would also like it to do work beyond just one choice’s difference. This is usually where personality systems come in. Unsurprisingly, these are bars that track how much of X quality (kind, stoic, flirty, or whatever) the player character is. And then the other characters react to this, or it’s used to write PC dialogue not directly chosen by the player, and so on.

My goal is to stretch this typical model just a little further. Here, I'm taking great inspiration from not only Michelle Clough's ideas about "chemistry," but also from the design of the game *Scarlet Hollow*, a horror visual novel currently in early access on Steam. *Scarlet Hollow* does this really interesting thing where your relationships with the other characters are dependent not on some objective meter for how kind you are, but on a series of vectors describing how each individual character perceives the PC. Are they clever or kind of dull? Reliable or flaky? And so on. One of the devs has written a really great article on this, which I'll cite at the end of this; it's really worth a read, and the game worth playing if you like what you read about (*Scarlet Hollow* also uses a trait system, as it turns out, though unlike mine it lacks drawbacks).

Anyway, the combined idea here is that one way to make character interaction feel more organic and truly different on different runs is to tie it not only to the PC's personality, but to really think about how the PC is perceived by the other characters. For example, if the PC is generally known to crack a joke about everything and is seldom serious, then a serious remark may be interpreted on that run as a joke, whereas on another run it would be taken seriously from the beginning. Likewise, the ROs will react differently to different combinations of personality traits; they may use gentler approaches with a PC perceived as lacking in confidence, for example, and double-check more often that things are okay, or worry that the PC wouldn't say so even if they weren't. This could, at least in theory, make the tone of certain scenes completely different, rather than essentially the same on all playthroughs (as for *Asphodel* they are now).

*Scarlet Hollow* has its own set of personality traits that most impact the story. Mine are different, and admittedly I'm still on the fence about a few of them, but here's the basic list:

Warm --- Cold

Confident --- Unsure

Forthright --- Reserved

Humorous --- Serious

Selfless --- Self-Caring

Each of these, I think, has places in the story where the traits can be expressed, and each would significantly affect the way the other characters approach interactions with the PC. None of them is inherently bad or good, but they would shape interactions in ways that matter. I think it's most likely that I just use one set of variables, rather than a separate one for each character, because the Underworld crew talk to each other a lot and are likely to have roughly the same information about the PC's personality. The thing is, they'll react differently, and that's the part I'm excited about.

Of course, one way to do this is to have these function as true "opposed pairs." In CS games, this is often done. Gaining points in "warm" effectively subtracts from your percentage of "cold," which is not a truly independent variable, just a label for the part of the "warm" bar that expresses its negation.

But I think there's some benefit to tracking all of these independently. Some people, for example, have a 'hot and cold' demeanor, and that's very different from a 'lukewarm' one. In an opposed pair situation, both of those would be expressed by a "warm" stat at around 50%. There's no way to tell the difference. But if you track "warm" and "cold" separately, a hot and cold demeanor is when both of the values are relatively high, and a lukewarm one when both are relatively low. There's more room for nuance.

Of course, there are more personality traits in the world than just these. To a certain extent, you just have to narrow the focus in any given IF to the ones that seem most relevant to the story, but there are also other chances in the narrative to express different things about the character in a more one-off way that might come back. For example, in the present game, there are a few opportunities to express that the PC is afraid of heights. If you take one of the early ones, the later one automatically reflects this. I plan to include more of these, as they're relevant, and there will be a separate, small-but-significant chunk of miscellaneous, but story-significant variables, like one for the PC's general view of Olympus, another for how they feel about Demeter, and so on. These should allow me to write the relevant passages a little less neutrally, which was always a challenge I faced.

All in all, I'm looking forward to trying out this system. I think it will be considerable work to implement, but it's actually helped along by the fact that I planned to do some work on the romance arcs anyway. Changing a bunch of things at once should allow me to really get stuck into this, because I'm expecting some fairly heavy rewrites anyway. Which brings me to the question of implementation.

## Implementation

As with the trait system, the implementation of the personality system is largely going to be about going through what exists and asking myself questions about it that should help me figure out where the changes ought to go. It's also going to need to be implemented not only where there are currently increases for personality values, but in the back half of the game. (I knew about halfway through that I didn't like the personality system I had in the first draft, so I stopped including increases for it.) Outside of choice blocks, personality needs to flavor the text a lot more than it currently does, for that more immersive experience.

So here's my list of questions:

1. If this is a choice block, can it be adjusted to include possible increases to a personality trait?
2. If it's not a choice block, would it make sense to change the "default" text if the PC had a strong or weak score in any particular personality trait?
3. Is this a place where a certain combination of personality traits might be relevant?
4. Particularly in scenes whose focus is character interaction, such as romance-path scenes: does it make sense that the NPC(s) involved would say something different/act differently/the scene would vary based on the PC's personality?

5. For other chosen attitudes, such as opinion of Olympus or Demeter, is that relevant here? How should I change the text accordingly?

Despite being questions, they're not terribly unlike the list of principles for the trait system. In fact there's going to be a lot of similarity in implementing them, which is one reason I might actually end up doing both at the same time.

## Conclusion

So, this is the big idea! Of course, implementation here is going to be a bit trickier than with the Trait System. That mostly checks straightforwardly for whether you have a given trait (or given combination) or not. Personality is by nature quite a bit mushier. I am hoping that, rather than being a huge pain, the mushiness and large number of possible combinations will allow for some interesting nuance, and make every playthrough feel really unique. (At least, if you don't use exactly the same PC every time!)

By the way, here's that article from the Scarlet Hollow dev that got me started thinking about this type of system specifically: <https://blacktabbygames.medium.com/creating-a-dynamic-relationship-system-in-scarlet-hollow-eb175aa899a8>

## [Weekly Update - 8 January 2024](#)

[Jan 7, 2024](#)

Hey everyone.

This week has been very interesting to me, in terms of FoA. It's the first full week I've spent in the rewriting process, and I've learned a lot about how this needs to go and how long it takes to realistically rewrite a scene or chapter.

So. The good news is, I'm generally quite satisfied with the changes I've been making, and the various preparations I made last month are keeping me organized and efficient. I also think I've got a pretty good workflow going, though I may tweak a few things over the coming weeks and see how it goes.

Also in good news, I have finished the rework of the prologue and the first third or so of Chapter One. I'm debating a few scene deletions and the like in the latter half, to streamline the process and make the 'didn't go to the party' branch of things a little simpler. My Changelog so far looks like this:

## Prologue

- Added character creator + backstory context



- Implemented Trait System
- Implemented new personality system
- Added an option for specifying that the PC is either poly or aromantic
- Simplified Hermes backstory choice to three options with the most difference
- Added a tracked variable for PC's initial impression of the marriage
- Added an initial variable for the tone of PC's relationship with Demeter
- Neatened touch aversion options
- Touched up various exchanges for character + dialogue reasons
- Completely rewrote the choice block where the PC reacts to Zeus's commentary on their wardrobe/appearance
- Added an option for the PC to be frightened upon initially meeting Hades
- Now tracking whether PC has an immediate crush on Hades (from the name choice block)

Word Count: 11279 —> 17673 (+7971 Character Creation)

## Chapter One

- Fleshed out and altered the party scenes with Hades and Hermes.
- Redid farewell scene with household NPC (Pholos, Mystis, etc)
- Touched up Demeter's farewell for consistency

To be frank, these early chapters are probably going to need a lot of work, something I'm realizing as I go back and read some of the early writing. I've rewritten a lot more than I thought I would already, and this is before any of the brand-new scenes I'm planning on come into play.

The good news about this is, I really think FoA is going to be a substantially-changed, much better game by the time I'm done. The bad news is, I'm probably not going to be finished with these rewrites by my initial estimate of March 1. I'm not sure how much longer it will take, because it really depends on how well the changes continue to flow. My work days have really been stretching as I try to power through these early chapters and figure out how to do all of this most efficiently. But I'm optimistic that this will be worth it in the end, and I'm looking forward to seeing what you all make of the changes.

I'll be back next week with another update; hopefully at least news that I'm working on Chapter Two!

[Weekly Update - 15 January, 2024](#)

[Jan 14, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

It's hard to believe we're already halfway through January. Someone please slow time down, I'm not okay with this. o\_o

In FoA news, I have finished the edits on Chapter One and am now working through Chapter Two. In case you don't recall, Chapter Two contains the initial discussion with Hades about the situation and the Underworld, a conversation and possible spar with Pyri, a visit to the library with Hekate, and either the group dinner or an exploration outside. As of now, everything through the Hekate part is done, but I'm actually going to be moving some scenes from what is currently Chapter Three into Chapter Two (the ones with Charon, Alekto, Hermes, and the optional court/judgement scene, so it might be a bit longer before I get through that.

I also need to completely rewrite the Alekto scene, because previously it was both optional and a spar (which made sense, because the PC went out to the training grounds to do it). But I'm now making it possible to do that, the Charon one, and the Hermes one all in the same run, which means it might be a little repetitive with Pyri's for those of you who are not playing fight-loving PCs. So, it needs a new frame and a new topic, which will likely take some time.

As for the reason I'm moving all of these things to Chapter Two, well... it's because Chapter Three will be getting three new scenes, each where you hang out with a pair of the Underworld people and do something different. (The pairs for the first set of these scenes are: Hades & Charon, Hermes & Pyri, and Hekate & Alekto, though those are subject to change as I decide what the scenes might actually be.)

All this to say I expect to be finishing Two and rewriting Three for quite a while. I hope to be at least starting on Four by the end of the month, but I'm not sure it will work out that way. My new best estimate for when editing will be complete is mid-April, but I'm committed to giving this project the work it needs and not leaving things as less than I want them just to save time. (Though I make no promises about leaving them at less than they could be because my skill is not quite up to snuff yet haha.)

Here's my Changelog for this week:

## Chapter One

- Streamlined the travel sequence somewhat
- Minor changes to Alekto and Charon's introductions, and the tour choice
- Added a variable for a couple different initial attitudes towards Alekto
- Minor changes to the tour versions, esp. Alekto's
- Changed room options so color and decoration style are separate variables
- Streamlined the scene where the PC explores after being escorted to their room
- Cut early Moirae introduction scene — will move to later chapter



- Streamlined and fixed some coding issues in the early Makaria/Kerberos/Empusa introduction scene.
- Added a Makaria introduction to the contract scene.
- Added a variable for the protagonist's attitude towards children.
- Removed pronoun and title selection from the contract scene, as it is now redundant

Word Count: 51065 —> 47142

## Chapter Two

- Streamlined and rewrote portions of the initial Hades conversation.
- Added ongoing fear options for Hades, as well as two more opportunities to overcome it
- Updated the Pyri scene to add a final impression of them after the first bit. Also streamlined somewhat, removing a mostly-redundant reference to Hylonome.
- Added a variable for PCs who express a dislike of fighting in their refusal to spar with Pyri.
- Edited and streamlined Hekate scene
- Updated Hekate scene to add 'final first impression' of her as with Pyri, including options for crushing and wanting to be friends.
- Redid book choices, for fewer, more meaningful options.

Also, there will be a Pyri-centric bonus content out on Wednesday, so I hope you look forward to that. As for me, I'll be back here next week as always, hopefully with more good news!

## [Bonus Content - Pyri POV](#)

[Jan 16, 2024](#)

Hey all!

Today we have the last bonus content in the Chapter Nine series. It's Pyri's, and I had a lot of fun with it, because unlike most people, they're not trying all that hard to remain calm and composed about it. :)

-----

"It's just—it's not fair!"

Pyri had thought that about a lot of things in life, both after and, they're sure, *before* they forgot everything that had once happened to them. But they aren't sure they've ever been quite this angry

about it.

“Whoa, Red.” Hermes holds his hands up, placatingly, tilting his head with a complicated expression. “You know you’re literally on fire right now, don’t you?”

“So? Who cares? It’s not like it’s burning me.” Even their clothes are exempt from the flames, which is probably a good thing, but one they can’t be bothered to think much about right now. “Why aren’t we going to get Persephone back *right now*?”

They can’t say they’d completely hate the opportunity to punch the so called King of the Gods in the face with a burning fist. That actually sounds like a great idea. If anyone’s ever deserved a real knock in the jaw, it’s got to be him, and Pyri knows this without even having *met* the guy. Knowing Hermes even for a little while is enough, but know that they know Persephone as well...

Hermes sighs. “You know it’s not that simple, Red. Hekate explained it earlier, remember?”

Pyri’s eyes, luminous with their anger, narrow at him. Of course Hekate had explained it all. Something about how they had to assemble a legal basis for giving Persephone the choice about what she wanted to do. Which on one level is ridiculous because Pyri knows she wants to be *here*, and surely just arguing for that would be easier.

But on another level, they get it. They do. They just *also* think the same result could probably be achieved by annoying Zeus enough that he gives them what they want to keep their ‘Chthonic stain’ or whatever out of Olympus. Blackmail, basically. If he was willing to be an ass who used coercion on people to get what he wanted, they don’t see why they can’t give him a taste of his own medicine.

Besides, if worse came to worst, Boss could take him in a fight. They’re *sure* of it.

“So,” Hermes continues, “we need to do this the slow and careful way. Believe me, Pyri, I miss her too, and it’s awful, not being able to just fly up there and tell her everything’s going to be okay. But if it means we have the best chance of actually *making* it okay, then isn’t it worth it?”

“I don’t know,” Pyri replies, frustration seeping into their tone. “Sure that all sounds logical or whatever, but what about what she’s going through while we’re doing all that? She could be in pain, you know? It’s not like she would have gone willingly!”

Of course, they have no idea what actually happened. Leks has figured out enough to trace major deific magic, and Hekate agrees that the most likely contributor is Demeter. But who knows exactly what’s going on up there? Besides, just because Demeter is Persephone’s mother doesn’t mean she should be making the decisions any more than Zeus should!

From what everyone’s said, she won’t hurt her daughter on purpose... but there’s a lot of ways to accidentally hurt someone, too.

Hermes approaches, reaching towards their shoulders with an uncertain smile. “Red. Turn down the heat for me?”

It takes them a moment to remember that they’re on fire, and then another few to make the growing inferno snuff out, but they manage it, and he places his hands on their shoulders, ducking to look into their eyes. “Hey,” he says, half his mouth pulling upwards into a smile.

Pyri grumbles something back at him that’s sort of meant to be a greeting, and he gives their shoulders a squeeze.

“I know this isn’t easy. It’s awful for everyone involved, and I know that’s part of the reason you’re so upset. And that’s okay—you can be upset. But—”

“I know,” Pyri says, expelling a deep sigh. “You want me to remember who I really need to be upset at. And it’s not anyone who’s stopping me from going there right now, because they’re only helping. I *know*. It just—I feel like I’ve done this before, you know? Been stuck doing nothing when someone I care about is in danger.” Maybe even... maybe even forced to rely on someone else? The feeling of it all is somehow familiar, and they don’t really want to explore it any further. The things they chose to forget were forgotten for a reason, after all, even if they don’t recall that either.

Hermes sighs quietly, moving one of his hands to ruffle their hair, then pulling them in for a tight hug. “I’m sorry, Pyri,” he says, soft and unusually sincere for him. It makes something squeeze in their chest, and they shut their eyes tightly. What would they do without their friends, honestly?

The hug saps the frustration and anger out of them, leaving only the embers behind. Pyri knows it won’t be long before they’re mad again, because the situation just won’t allow them to reach acceptance. But...

“Hey Featherhead. I want... if the others think we need to do a court thing. I want to be the one who gives our arguments.”

“Are you sure?” Hermes loosens his grip just enough to move them back out to arms’ length. “It’s not that I don’t think you could, Red, but it’s not going to be an easy argument, and you’re going to have to give it in front of my old man. I’m not sure *I* could do it, if I’m being perfectly honest here.”

And he’s a real god. One of the big important Olympian gods, in fact. They know that’s the part he’s not saying, because as kind as he’s being about it, they know people on Olympus won’t be. Pyri’s hardly more than a human to people like that.

But the thing is, they don’t care.

“If everyone thinks it makes our chances worse, I won’t,” they say. “But I want to. I want to stand up for her. I want to do that part at least, because we all know I’m pretty useless for the rest. I’ll memorize as much stuff as I have to. I’ll practice it a thousand times so I can say it right when I need to. But I want to do this.”

Hermes purses his lips, but he nods. "All right," he says. "Then let's go tell everyone else. You'll need to get started right away, I think."

## [Weekly Update - 22 January, 2024](#)

[Jan 21, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

It's been kind of a hectic week, but progress on FoA's rewrites continues apace. Suffice it to say that I don't think I'll quite be done with Chapter Three by the end of the month (due to the new scenes I have to write), but I should be done with everything up until those, which I think will constitute about half the chapter.

This week, I made good progress through Chapter Two, including writing a whole new scene for Alekto, featuring her sisters Megaira and Tisiphone. Plus some information the PC really should have had earlier in the game, if I'd been thinking about that. My full changelog for the week looks like this:

### Chapter Two

- Edits and adjustments to the group dinner scene
- Edits and adjustments to post-dinner escort scenes
- Removed orchard keepers introduction scene for later use
- Streamlined Kronos introduction
- Edits and minor adjustments to Charon ferry scene/Eurydice introduction
- Edits and adjustments to Hermes scene
- Rewrote the Alekto spar scene completely; included more interaction with Megaira and an introduction to Tisiphone
- Minor adjustments to letter writing scene

My plan for next week is to round out Chapter Two with the judgement scene, which will still be optional, and then to move into Chapter Three with an option to pursue your reading choice further, set up your garden (and meet Ascalaphus, Minthe, and Leuke in the process), and go on that walk with Hades (and meet the Moirae along the way).

After that, I'll be into the block of new scenes for the chapter, which may take a while. The Alekto scene took me about three days to write, and it was comparatively simple. Still, I think the new stuff will be well

worth having, to make sure every PC gets time with all the characters, and gets to know them better before certain vital choices have to be made.

Anyway, I'll be back next week with a quick check-in about how far I've gotten on all of that, and some idea what those of you who get the BIP can expect from that this month!

Please take care of yourselves, and thanks, as always, for being here. :)

## [Weekly Update - 29 January, 2024](#)

[Jan 28, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Here we are at the final update of January. The BIP is due out in a couple of days here, and in it will be all of the Prologue, Chapter One, Chapter Two, and part of Chapter Three, basically everything up to the new group scenes I'm working on.

Of course, Chapter Two in particular will feel much longer, because I'm making most things doable on every playthrough, and I've moved scenes with Hermes, Charon, Alekto, the letter, and the judgement all to that chapter rather than Chapter Three. Let me know if it seems to drag or anything; pacing is a bit tricky sometimes!

Anyway, I also got a pretty decent chunk done this week, according to my ongoing changelog:

### Chapter Two

- Added a second opportunity to set stim variables, this time for understimulation
- Rewrote the Alekto spar scene completely; included more interaction with Megaira and an introduction to Tisiphone

Word Count: 60175—>94542

### Chapter Three

- Added a new 'reading' scene that all PCs get.
- Edited and adjusted garden setup scene—it now includes meeting Ascalaphus & co.
- Edits and flow adjustments to the walking with Hades scene
- Edited and accounted for new variables in the conversation about Makaria

- Added a new choice for an initial attitude towards Hades
- Adjusted Moirae scene for its new location in the plot

Just looking at the number of the chapter I'm on doesn't always feel spectacular, but seeing the changelog and all the things I've actually accomplished this month feels a lot better. The editing process is going to be longer than I thought, but every time I hit a new scene or make substantial changes to an old one, I'm hopeful I'm really making the game better. Give it a read on the 31st and let me know what you think, if you're part of the BIP crew. :)

In the meantime, please look after yourselves. I'll be back next week, hopefully with more good news.

### [Bonus Content Poll - January](#)

[Jan 30, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

As usual, the BIP will drop in an hour. In the meantime, we're due for a new rotation of bonus content, and that means it's Hekate's turn again. So this poll is for what exactly you'd like the subject matter of that to be, now that the Chapter Nine set is finished and no longer an option haha.

Something from the next game. [Warning: this may turn out to be non-canon, given its speculative nature.]

Her perspective on one of her scenes with the PC in the game.

Something from her backstory.

44 votes total

### [BIP - January](#)

[Jan 30, 2024](#)

Hello all!

This month's BIP includes the Prologue, Chapter One, Chapter Two, and the first portion of Chapter Three! I'd have liked to be a little further along by this point, but writing new scenes in addition to making

changes and fixes on the old is a time-consuming process (shocking, I know).

Still, I'm pretty happy with what's here so far, and I hope you all like it as well. Notes welcome, especially if you find any typos or continuity errors!

But if you're just reading to enjoy it, that's totally fine too. :)

[Here you go!](#)

[Weekly Update - 5 February, 2024](#)

[Feb 4, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

I hope February is treating you well so far! I'm still working on Chapter Three, as you might imagine, but the good news is I finished the first of the pair scenes! I changed up exactly what the pairs were, so this scene was actually with Alekto and Pyri! In it, the PC tries glassblowing with the two of them in one of the workshops where the cast does crafts. (I know glassblowing wasn't invented until the 1st century BCE, but let's roll with it; the gods can get a lot of things going before humans can because of magic). You can also talk a little bit about Alekto's hard of hearing status, and Pyri's troubles with controlling their powers, and I think it gives a bit more insight into the way the two of them interact with each other as well.

Overall, I'm pretty happy with it, and I do think the idea to do these scenes was a good one. I've just started work with the Charon and Hermes one that comes next, so my goal for this week is to get through that. The Pyri and Alekto one turned out to be about 8000 words, I think, so if this one's about the same, that should be comfortably doable! I also want to outline the Hades and Hekate one that will follow, so here's hoping for good writing speed this week haha.

So far I've been making everything mandatory, but I think that will stop after Chapter Three, at which point I think it will be more of a 'choose which of these you want to do; you can choose all of them if you want' sort of situation. Anyway, that's a bit in the future yet, but it's probably best to go in with a plan. :)

Speaking of plans, I'll probably be showing you all my revised game outline and explaining some of what's changing in the rest of the game on Wednesday, so I hope that'll interest those of you who get the month's first bonus content. In the meantime, I hope you're well and stay well (or at least get better)!

I'll be back here next week with another update, as always.

## [Bonus Content - The Editing Outline](#)

[Feb 6, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Over the last couple months, I've shown you the two new systems I'm working to implement in FoA's second draft. This month, I've got something a little different—this is essentially my working, revised outline of the game.

As you may notice as you give it a look, I'm changing some things even as I go, and I've put off some decisions about how things should go just because I'm not totally sure how the new stuff I'm adding is going to affect things yet. (Basically anywhere I say "currently, X is the case" I'm making a note of something that probably needs changing but I don't have exactly down yet.

You can probably also tell that most of my big revisions, with adding scenes and things, are in the first half of the game. This is partly because the back half is so much more packed, in terms of pacing and actual events happening, so there was more 'room' at the beginning, but also because it was what I wrote first, and I'm revising now with the end of the game in mind, too.

Anyway, have a look if you'd like!



## Prologue:

- [✓] Character Creation
- [✓] Initial Mood about Marriage - Needs Variable
- [✓] Sneaky poly question
- [✓] Intro Demeter - Soften
- [✓] Intro Hermes
- [✓] Procession
- [✓] Lay groundwork for comfort on Olympus/possible dionysian themes
- [✓] Initial Olympus attitude - needs variable
- [✓] Possible overstimulation/interference
- [✓] Meeting Zeus
- [✓] Hades appears - add variable for insta-crush
- [✓] Name
- [✓] Choice about Party or not - needs option just for saying goodbye

## Chapter One:

(Content Warnings: Alcohol use)

- [✓] Branching for whether or not you went to the party
- [✓] If party: friend selection, optionally, or bit with Hades or Hermes
- [✓] If Friend: gift (find more uses for these!)
- [✓] Farewell to tutor
- [✓] Farewell to Demeter
- [✓] Journey - via bubble or in Hermes's arms
- [✓] Arrival, greeting from Charon and Alekto
- [✓] Tour options
- [✓] If party: to sleep
- [✓] If not party: explorations option

### Moirae

- [✓] Makaria, Kerberos, Empusa
- [✓] Day Two: Daeira intro
- [✓] Hekate and Pyri introduction

- [✓] Contract signing - Hades brings Makaria to introduce to you.
- [✓] Set initial attitude about kids.

#### Chapter Two:

(Content Warnings: Alcohol Use, Optional violence, Non-Graphic mentions of incest/suicide, violence, mention of murder)

- [✓] Initial Hades conversation - more chances to thank, fear overcome
- [✓] Erebus connection
- [✓] Scene with Pyri
  - [✓] Add instacrush option
  - [✓] Set height
  - [✓] Optional spar/weapon selection
  - [✓] Feelings about fighting - make more relevant later
- [✓] Hekate and the Library
  - [✓] Add instacrush option
  - [✓] Initial Book Choice - Groundwork for Dionysian Magic
- [✓] Dinner Choice
- [✓] If Dinner - Getting to know you game, more Makaria
  - [✓] Post Dinner
  - [✓] Escort Options
- [✓] If not Dinner - Kronos
- [✓] Charon, river explanation & Eurydice meeting
- [✓] Hermes, different convos based on friend status
- [✓] Alekto, meet Meg & Tis, early introduction to Tartarus
- [✓] Letter Scene
- [✓] Hermes shows up, asks if you want to see a judgement
- [✓] Optionally, the judgement scene

#### Chapter Three:

- [✓] Option to pursue reading further - Dionysian magic
- [✓] Garden setup and permission setting - Make Ascalaphus and co mandatory

Free time selection and “boon” – definitely need to make that relevant

Common or rare event attendance?

[✓] Hades and/not Kerby walk

[✓] possible maka convo

[✓] set hades initial variable

[✓] Meet Moirae

INSERT: Unmissable pair scenes

Hades/Hekate - ability to bring up judgement

[✓] Pyri/Alekto

Charon/Hermes

Emergency meeting

Meet/see Acheron and Kokytos

Lethe is sick

Choose investigation team

Chapter Four:

(Content Warnings: Violence)

Interview branch with Pyri, Daeira, Kokytos

Into the city

Daeira explains Kokytos's powers

Split up, PC with Pyri

Possible handhold with Pyri

stim chance

chance for a purchase form the market

Investigation branch with Hades, Alekto, Charon

Everyone splits up to do their thing

Resonance is explained

Share magic with someone temporarily - if Dionysian, they should mention the change

Or do something by yourself

Heal branch with Hekate, Pyri, and Hermes

Get to Lethe's house

Intro Lethe

Help someone (resonance)

Or do something yourself

Post-investigation meeting

Conclusions put together

Chance to indicate social discomfort

-Dead are going to start remembering

One week later

Pyri and Hermes turn up

Time for defense lessons!

Magic or Physical

Magic Training lesson

Explanation of schools of magic

Hay bale exercise

Combat training lesson

Choose armament

Running

Possible Tisiphone reference

Post Training

Eurydice Approach

Can reject contact presently (maybe remove this option?)

Gives possible hint about Kronos

Return letters

Always one from Demeter

Optionally one from friend you wrote to

Option to write back to Demeter (and friend)

INSERT: Mandatory character scenes set 3

Hades

Hermes

Charon

Pyri

Alekto

Hekate

Called to Hades office

Choose job or none

Possibly pass on eurydice hint

Few other questions optional

#### Chapter Five:

Dream sequence from Nikos POV

Job Scene - intro job NPC

Makaria, Empusa, and Kerberos in the garden

Set initial state of garden

Attitude towards kids

If you frequently or sometimes attend dinner, small convo with Kokytos

Then date invite

If you don't frequently attend events, door invite to date

Dates

Hermes-Flying

Hekate- Stargazing

Charon - to the pond

Alekto - Mortal Realm market

Hades - Mortal Realm meadow

Pyri - to the Blessed Isles

Second Dream about Nikos

#### Chapter Six:

(Content Warnings: Death, Starvation)

Announcement: Hera is Coming

If minister, asked to help with prep

If not, can still volunteer  
Also the dead are restless  
If guard, some special text  
You inform everyone of your dreams  
They inform you of the options: answering the prayer or going to Hypnos  
First option choice: Hera, Hypnos, or Laus  
First option plays out.  
    Laus: Hermes and Alekto  
    Hera: Hades and Charon  
    Hypnos: Pyri and Hekate  
Second option choice: Laus and Hypnos if you haven't, Hera, or none  
    Laus and Hypnos: same as above  
    Hera: yourself and Hera  
    None: Either walk with Kerberos or an encounter with Styx and Kronos  
DNE: if Hera, you could potentially write third Demeter letter. Also,  
something useful with visit points!  
INSERT Actually just give everyone the option to write another letter, including to ask your friend to  
help take care of your mother.  
INSERT: SMALL GROUP SCENES (incl Hekate/Hermes in one)

#### Chapter Seven:

(Content warnings: Violence, misogyny, mild horror elements)

Update Meeting: covers Laus and culprit interaction (Kronos should matter)

#### Party

Lethe and Hades

Hermes and Pyri

Alekto and Charon

Hekate, Daeira, Kokytos

The dance scene

Quake and bad news

Splitting the party [This is currently the Route Choice]



Hades - Fight Alcyoneus

Hermes and Charon - Rescue trapped people, fight Eurytus

Alekto and Pyri - Rescue trapped people, fight daughter of Echidna/Sphinx

Hekate - Magical defenses/save people

REDO GENERIC MAGIC DESCRIPTIONS (MORE PLANTY)

If working towards Dionysian magic, it should start chaotically manifesting here, too.

PC falls unconscious

#### Chapter Eight:

Waking up, either with Alekto or Hekate

Alekto apology if you didn't already get it.

Filling in of details re: injury, destruction, death

Visit from RO

Possible repercussions of killing someone vs knocking out

Kronos's non-punishment

Also our magic is bound together now, sorry

Decide whether you're okay with this

Job or non-job scene

Eurydice appears (mandatory), can give her advice or not

Makaria Scene

Several days later, there's an emergency/assembling bit

Orpheus is here.

Give advice to him or Eurydice or neither, or give one an item

They handle Cetus, then get an end based on PC's actions

INSERT: Check-in scene

INSERT: Something else for pacing here

The fruit scene

PS things are likely to come to a head soon, here's another letter if you want

## Chapter Nine:

(Content Warning: Abduction, Imprisonment)

Do you want to read the last letter?

If you do, do you want to tell Hades about its contents right now or leave it?

If yes, do you want Kerby or guards for security purposes?

Pirithous and Theseus appear to take you back to Olympus

You can resist or not - Dionysian option also

If you don't, you can try to covertly warn Styx

In any case you're taken to Olympus

Reunion with Demeter

Option to confront her about her methods

Visit from friend goddess to check in

Dream Scene

You're doing something normal when Daeira appears in disguise

Ominous thunder, because they've arrived

## Chapter Ten:

Return to Demeter's House

Prepare for Trial

Carriage ride over

Second chance to confront about parenting

Escorted to Throne Room

Underworld crew arrives

Can go to greet them/sit with them

Citizenship question

Should Demeter be punished for her actions?

Where does PC want to live?

Either Farewell scene with Demeter or with RO

## Epilogue:

Either Olympus or Underworld

On Olympus, discussion with Demeter and Hestia

In Underworld, family picnic

Break off to be with RO

Hekate or Hermes may ask for relationship

Everyone does something slightly romantic, which can be rebuffed

Or, the PC-forward version for everyone

-RO says something nice

-PC can react romantically or platonically

-Currently no relationship status changes from this.



[Feb 11, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Another week, another bit of steady FoA editing progress. I managed to get the scene with Hermes and Charon written this week, and the next one with Hades and Hekate outlined as well. As a bonus, I also got around to making the smaller editing pass I needed to on the emergency meeting scene which ends the chapter, so as soon as the Hades and Hekate scene is finished, so is Chapter Three!

I'm going to try, at least sometimes, to do these editing passes on scenes that only need touch ups at the same time as I'm writing the new stuff. I've noticed that I can still only write at a certain pace (about 2,000 words a day on a good day and 1,000 on a bad day), but I think editing uses a slightly different segment of my brain/type of spoon, so there's a chance I can get through this a little faster by doing both at the same time. We'll see if I can make it work.

Anyway, the plan for this week is to finish Chapter Three and get stuck into Chapter Four. There's a lot of new scenes to be written for this one, too (specifically, a new optional individual scene for, uh, all six of the ROs, so that one's going to take some time too. But if I'm also editing as I go along, I think that'll help me feel like progress isn't stalling over the new material.

Anyhow, there isn't any bonus content this week, but I'll be starting work on the Hekate POV at some point soon for next week.

Stay well, all!

[Weekly Update - 19 February 2024](#)

[Feb 18, 2024](#)

Hey all!

This week has been a trying one. Do you ever have periods where you wonder what you're doing with your life, and whether you're any good at it after all? It's been one of those for me haha. Some pretty negative feedback on my writing has me in a bit of a tizzy, and I won't lie and say that hasn't affected how this week went for me.

That said, I've managed about the same amount of progress. I'm not done with the Hades and Hekate scene yet, but I've started on edits and adjustments for Chapter Four nevertheless, and now have the

entire first branch of the investigation done (the one where you wander around the marketplace with Pyri). I plan to keep moving forward with Chapter Four while getting the last scene in Chapter Three wrapped up this week.

Additionally, I've started work on the Hekate POV bonus content, which is actually going to be of the scene I'm currently working on, with her hand Hades. I think, for certain PCs, this will be the moment where she is first intrigued by the PC, which could be the foundation for either a friendship or a romance! (Or just an incidental thing that happened once, if you don't end up getting along).

I'm glad I'm giving the characters more screen time, even if that seems a bit absurd in a game that's already this long.

Anyhow, that'll be posted on Wednesday, and then I'll be back the following Monday with my last weekly update before the BIP comes out on the 29th.

I hope you all have a good week. I'm going to spend mine attempting to remind myself that there are plenty of people out there who love FoA, and that not every story is for every person.

### [Bonus Content - Hekate POV](#)

[Feb 20, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

I'm back with a new round of POV bonus contents. As ever, Hekate is first in the lineup, and since you all wanted her perspective on a scene from the game, I figured I'd use the new one I'm working on, featuring her, Hades, and an academically-inclined Persephone (she/they this time).

I hope you like it; the scene this is from will be out with this month's BIP!

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"You think you've perfected the formula?" Hades obligingly continues to feed a trickle of his magic into the cauldron as Hekate handles everything else. This one's proving finicky, in a certain sense common to alchemy. It's about order and timing, not just what's in it.

"Well, I don't know about 'perfected,' she replies, a trace of amusement in her tone. "But I think this one will work passably well, if we can execute it just right. Thinnest possible thread of your magic, please."

The trickle tapers off even further; she does have to admire the precision with which he can direct it. For a god that can't stop himself from leaking magic, he actually has quite impressive control of it otherwise, and she hasn't always thought so.

"Ah," he murmurs. "I do believe you're about to have company."

Hekate gets the Alert from Erebus when Persephone enters the library, but for now she ignores it. It will take them a while to get all the way back here, and this part really does require her concentration, as she rapidly adds her pre-measured ingredients, glass and ceramic containers orbiting her like she's a star and they her satellites.

A strange kind of astronomy, she makes.

Persephone does eventually make her way back to where they are, and Hekate can almost sense their hesitation. To be fair, it probably does look like she and Hades are too busy to entertain, but fortunately, the other deity has come at just the right time.

"Persephone, would you find the dried witch hazel in the cabinet to my left?" she inquires, eyes still fixed on her project, which is currently stirring itself. She just needs to wait for the slight color change.

"Sure! Just a second." Persephone moves over the outer line of the magic circle easily enough, opening the cabinet specified. There's nothing but jars of various plants in it, most of them dried, but others preserved in with various magical and alchemical means. Presumably she'll be able to recognize witch hazel, given her facility with botany.

"Your assistance is much appreciated," Hekate replies. "We have arrived at a crucial juncture in the process."

It takes them a bit of looking to find the witch hazel, but once they have the jar, they unscrew the lid and move over towards her. "How much do you need?"

"Just one of the stalks," she says. "Crush it in your palm and then drop it right in, please."

Persephone looks a tad uncertain, but she follows the directions anyway, removing one stalk with its flowers from the jar and crushing it in her fist before dropping it into the cauldron.

The water scythes the ingredients into tiny pieces, which then become part of the smooth blend of the slightly thickened, bubbling liquid instead. And finally, the color change Hekate is looking for.

The young deity sets their book down, looking around a bit until Hekate nods at the nearby washbasin. They clean their hand, returning as Hades inspects the bound volume they've left.

"How are you finding that?" he asks, dipping his chin in the book's general direction.

"I quite enjoyed the read, actually." She smiles a bit; though small, the expression reaches her eyes.

Hades huffs softly at this, his eyes moving to Hekate, still mostly paying attention to her work but also following their words. "See? I did tell you your prose was remarkable."

She hums, skeptical.

"Wait... are you saying you wrote this, Hekate?" She wouldn't call their tone *disbelieving*, as such, but they do sound surprised. That's not itself shocking, of course; the subject matter is not one popularly associated with the Underworld or anyone in it.

"Well, yes," she replies, a faint smile playing at her lips. "Believe it or not, healing is possible even with Chthonic magic. Or at least, I can do it. It's not a common ability in general, mind."

Persephone nods, expression thoughtful.

Hekate snaps her fingers, and all magic around or moving into the cauldron stops. She exhales a breath, then coats the whole thing in a layer of ice, for rapid cooling. Hades, meanwhile, calls over the wrought-iron magic circle. Rather than engraving the circle into something else, she'd drawn the design and had it made of iron itself. It should last longer that way, before it needs replacement.

"This must seem rather odd, but we're actually working on the prototype for a new infrastructure enchantment." Hades explains to their visitor. "This one is for the cooling of individual rooms. Hekate thought it might be a good solution for food preservation, and I'm inclined to agree, if we can get it to function stably, and to be easy for spirits to use."

"The second part is the hard one," Hekate adds. The use case. Always more of a challenge than the concept.

Persephone thinks about this for a moment, studying the circle. "Could we use it to heat rooms also?"

Hekate has to admit she's a bit impressed. Those two functions are in essence the same, with magic, though they may not seem that way at first, and not everyone can do both equally well. It takes both knowledge and practical experience with magic to draw such a conclusion.

"I'd use a different circle for that," she says. "You're getting at something that's true, but I've built an 'acceptable range' into the language of this circle, as a safety measure because it's for the use of people who don't have magic themselves and might accidentally make errors, and I didn't want those errors to freeze them to the bone."

"That... makes sense." Persephone lets out a little breath on the end of the phrase that much be a touch of sheepishness. Perhaps amusement? She's not actually sure.

"I have found," Hades says, "that infrastructure is as much about the people who will use it as the function it needs to perform. Thinking about those two things together can be challenging, but I do find it rewarding. It's always nice to be able to help Hekate with one of her projects."

"More like my wild hairs," she says with a soft laugh. "Sometimes I hear about a problem and the only thing I can think about is 'how can I fix this?' Often enough the solution turns out to be mundane and I just hand it off to someone else... but sometimes I get to see it through to the end."

"Yes, well, even if you consider it a 'wild hair,' those tend to benefit everyone here quite a lot. The staff in the kitchens, and people in their homes, will have a much easier time of it if their food is preserved longer. That is worth whatever you need to accomplish it. You have done a great deal of good for the Underworld, my friend."

"Oh please." Hekate resists the urge to roll her eyes, if only playfully. He's always too quick to praise others, and never quick enough to take any credit. Even now, he's acting like a simple assistant, when the truth is something much more layered. "The only reason I *can* do any of this is because of you. I certainly wasn't inventing much of anything when all I was doing was surviving."

"What do you mean 'all you were doing was surviving'?" Persephone looks between the two of them with obvious curiosity.

Hekate blinks, tilting her head and catching their eyes with her own dark ones. It's not her favorite topic area, but she's not the kind to stymie curiosity unless she absolutely must. She can handle a version of the answer to this question. "Well, frankly, the Underworld wasn't always like this. And I wasn't always as powerful as I am today. Once, I was one of its more powerless denizens, and at the feet of those with more power than me, my only goal was to survive."

She taps the side of her thumb against the iron frame. "It wasn't an especially pleasant time, but it changed, and now I don't have to worry about it anymore, so I don't."

"What other sorts of infrastructure projects have you done?" Persephone seems happy enough to leave it there for now, and her second choice of topic is much more welcome, so Hekate does the same.

"Oh, all sorts." She shrugs. "We're *always* doing maintenance on the plumbing system, because it's one of the biggest. The magelight grid was the first major thing we managed; enchanted lights in every building in this city, and all the others. Very helpful, especially in the days where it was cloudy-midnight-dark all the time."

Hades clears his throat, lifting a hand to the nape of his neck. "Well... yes. I do still feel bad about that, though. I can't imagine the spirits felt much comfort, living in darkness they could hardly penetrate."

"Oh, relax. It's not like it did any permanent harm."

The conversation continues as they finish work on the prototype, and Persephone is certainly quite willing to help whenever asked. It's interesting, how fully someone who has never known any of this seems to be embracing what is so new to her. Hekate isn't certain she would be able to do the same, if she suddenly found herself on Olympus.

And yet they do. It's an intriguing little bit of information about their character, and by the end of the whole thing, she finds herself in the rare position of wanting to know much more about a *person* than she already does.

"...I like her," she says, long after the young deity has departed.

Hades lifts an eyebrow, just slightly. "A most auspicious occurrence," he teases. "I should check to see if I'm doing anything that requires good luck today."

Hekate rolls her eyes. "It's not *that* unusual for me to like people," she replies.

"No, but it is unusual for you to be much interested in any of them."

Maybe he's got a point.

[Weekly Update - 26 February, 2024](#)

[Feb 25, 2024](#)

Hey everyone,

First of all, thank you to everyone who sent in words of support after my minor crisis of confidence last week. You all really boosted me and made me feel a lot more settled again.

Anyway. As for forward progress on the edits, I'm happy to say that not only is Chapter Three now complete, new scenes and all, but everything but the new individual character scenes for Chapter Four is also complete. I will be getting started on those this week and also plunging into Chapter Five edits, where I hope to make the date scenes a little more intimate, whether romantically or platonically, but will otherwise just be making minor edits and adjustments rather than adding a bunch of new material.

I don't think I'll quite be done with that by the time the BIP goes out, so I anticipate that will be Chapters Prologue-4, with a bit of placeholder text near the end of Four for those individual scenes I mentioned.

My changelog for this week looks pretty decent, I have to say:

Chapter Three:

- Added a new scene with Hades and Hekate

Word Count: 79696—>56789

## Chapter Four:

- Edits and adjustments to interview branch
- Edits and adjustments to investigation branch
- Opportunity to use Athena's gift in investigation branch, if opting against magic sharing.
- Edits and adjustments to the healing branch
- Edits and adjustments to post investigation meeting
- Edits and adjustments to training choice & training scenes
- Edits to post training scene
- Edits to letter writing scene
- Edits to job choice scene

I'm hoping to keep the individual scenes in Chapter Four short and sweet, but we'll see how that goes. I have a tendency to go long on everything to begin with, and the scope creep is real!

[Poll - Febuary](#)

[Feb 28, 2024](#)

Hey everyone, and happy Leap Day!

Next month's character POV piece will feature Hermes, and since we're doing scenes from the game from alternate POVs, I'll be doing his perspective on his new scene in Chapter Three with Charon and the PC. So the question is, what type of PC?

A longtime friend, a little unsure of the Underworld but coming to like it.

A longstanding rival, surprisingly gung-ho about being in the Underworld.

A former stranger, clearly not adjusting well to the Underworld at all.

51 votes total

[BIP - February](#)

[Feb 28, 2024](#)

Hello everyone!

This month's BIP includes the completed Chapter Three, with new scenes, and the almost-completed Chapter Four, only missing the new scenes I'll be writing. Of course, lots of Chapter Five is also ready, but since it was only partial and would depend to some extent on the new Chapter Four stuff, I've opted not to include it here just for smoothness of play.

I hope as always that you enjoy the new stuff, and of course the old stuff, too!

The BIP can be found [here](#).

[BIP - Alternate version](#)

[Mar 2, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Some of you have been getting what I think is a hosting-side error with the latest BIP (that is, something I think is the fault of Dashingdon the website rather than either something to do with your computers or my code).

I can't really do too much about that, so what I've done is posted the BIP on itch.io as well. It's not ideal in some ways, as this will require you to download this version of the game, but it seems to be working on my end at least. The downside is, the save plugin doesn't work in itch, so there are no save files, for which I apologize.

The password for the download this month is 023-March24, and you can find the itch page [here](#).

If the game still throws you a 404 error, please let me know. And, enjoy the extra scenes I've written since the 29th. :)

[Weekly Update - 4 March, 2024](#)

[Mar 3, 2024](#)

Hey everyone.



Pretty good progress this week; after putting out the BIP I managed to write the Alekto scene for Chapter Four and the Pyri one, which isn't bad for three days of work! I'm hoping to get most of the way through the remaining scenes this week, because I've got some very important editing to do on the date scenes from Chapter Five, and I need to know what exactly happens in these ones first, in case something in the later parts refers back to these.

Chapter Five is done up until those dates, though, so I suspect it will be reasonably quick to finish off once those major revisions are done, and then it will be on to Chapter Six.

The hard work (writing new material) is really quite frontloaded; once I'm past Chapter Six (and its three more pair scenes), the only totally new things I should need to write occur in Chapter Eight and then either Ten or the Epilogue, depending on where I put the post-trial scenes I'm planning on.

Anyway, I can't really look too far ahead yet, as there's plenty more to do back here in Chapters Four and Five.

Also this week I'll have what I hope will be a fun treat for those of you who get the first bonus content of the month: a (very sketchy but still very spoilery) outline for FoA's sequel. When I tell you I cannot wait for all of this editing to be over so I can get to working on that... the struggle is real.

In any event, I hope you're all having a lovely start to your month, and I'll be back in this space next week with another update. As always, thank you for sticking with me.

### [Bonus Content - BotL Outline](#)

[Mar 5, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

I think I mentioned that this month's bonus content would probably be my sketchy outline for Asphodel's sequel, Blood of the Living. So, here's that! It's missing a lot of details, of course, but I have most of the subplots planned to some degree as well, so I might go into a little bit more detail with some of those starting next month.

Anyway, I think it goes without saying, but there are loads of spoilers in here! As with all outlines, no plan survives contact with the enemy (actually writing), but I do think this is at least the gist of it all. :)

Enjoy!

One:

Intro

Judgement of Pirithous and Theseus

Introduction of dad

Trojan War I

- Meet Patroklos & Briseis

- Backstory

- Some fending off of gods

Group Scene; some initial discussion of the wisdom of getting involved.

But the dead are being mistreated, so we should at least deal with that.

Two: RO, beat one, Demeter Beat One, Iasion beat two

A: Hades Backstory

B: Hermes Backstory

C: Charon Backstory

D: Pyri Backstory

E: Alekto Backstory

F: Hekate Backstory

Demeter sends letter asking if she can visit.

Getting to know Iasion

A scene with Makaria and Kerberos, feat. RO

A scene with Pyri and Alekto

A scene with Hermes and Hekate (possible poly setup)

A scene with Charon and Hades

Three: Main Plot, beat Two, Demeter Beat Two

Patroklos dies

Achilles' rampage

The river god

If you grant her permission, Demeter visits the Underworld

Iasion/Demeter ask about each other

Four: Ro subplot, Beat Two, PC plot 1

A: Hades tries to solve some human problems

B: Hermes warns Medusa

C: Charon visits Poseidon and then Atlantis

D: Pyri meets the minotaur and learns who they used to be

E: Alekto and the Rebuilt Tartarus

F: Hekate and her cult

Ikarios sends a message

A group scene; touches upon what everyone is dealing with; PC can help a little off-route

Poly proposed if applicable; can talk to both members about their expectations

Five: Main Plot, Beat Three, Demeter Beat Three

The body of Hektor

Hektor's funeral

Demeter visits a second time, and this time brings Maia with her.

-Hermes is understandably distraught at her condition

Iasion/Demeter meet

A scene with Makaria and Demeter, or Makaria alone

Six: RO Subplot Beat Three, Iasion Beat Three, PC Plot 2

A: Hades's new cult

B: Hermes confronts Perseus

C: Charon and the Sea Monster

D: Pyri tracks down Theseus

E: Alekto and the castigation of Orestes

F: Hekate's cult does a dumb thing

Instructing Ikarios, meeting Nikos again

Iasion dies, choose to take him out of queue or not.

Off-route scene with Hermes

Off-route scene with Pyri

Off-route scene with Hekate

Poly finalised if chosen

Seven: Main Plot, Beat Four, Demeter Beat Four, Iasion Four

Judging the dead

Moral quandaries

Demeter in trouble with Zeus

Do we make Iasion a god/does he get oblivion'd

Demeter reacts

Makaria and being a death goddess, feat. Hades

Eight: RO Subplot, Beat Four, PC 3

A: Hades's cult is being persecuted; what do we do?

B: Hermes breaks up the fight

C: Charon and the trap/how to deal with betrayal you might deserve

D: Pyri and the thing that killed them

E: Alekto meets with Apollo

F: Hekate saves her cult, decides her future trajectory with them

Demeter/Iasion fallout choice; can encourage/discourage

Nikos tells you that someone killed Ikarios, short investigation

Off-route scene with Hades

Off-route scene with Charon

Off-route scene with Alekto

Nine: Main Plot, Beat Five/Resolution, PC 4

Helping with cleanup and comforting survivors

What to do about the people who killed Ikarios?

Makaria's last scene

Group scene

Poly-specific scene

Ten: Demeter Beat Five/Resolution, RO Subplot Beat five/resolution, Iasion 5/res

A: Hades resolution/reflection

B: Hermes resolution/reflection

C: Charon resolution/reflection

D: Pyri resolution/reflection

E: Alekto resolution/reflection

F: Hekate resolution/reflection

Demeter apologises for everything before

Makes her decision about where to set up shop

Iasion future relationship choice

Demeter/Iasion resolution

Epilogue: Romantic/overall resolution

[Mar 10, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Happy Ides Week, to those who celebrate. :)

Good news: this week, I managed to write the new scenes for Hermes, Hekate, and Charon in their entirety, meaning that only the Hades one is left and then Chapter Four will finally be complete, and I can move on to editing the date scenes in Chapter Five! This is very good news, because I think that means I might have those edits almost done by this time next week.

I feel like I've been sort of 'stuck' in this section of the game for a while, so being able to move through Five and into Six will feel quite good, even if there are yet more new scenes I have to write for that chapter.

That's really it as far as news for the week, but hopefully next week I'll be able to share the word count update for Chapter Four, because I'm fairly certain it's going to be something like 20k-30k new words, which in a week and a half for me is pretty dang good progress.

Anyhow, thanks as always for sticking with me as I wrangle this game into something publishable. Someday we'll be back to forward progress and I'll actually be able to start BotL. :)

[Weekly Update - 18 March 2024](#)

[Mar 17, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Great news for progress this week: not only did I finish the Hades scene and therefore Chapter Four, but I also got all of the date scenes, and therefore Chapter Five, done as well!

I'd gone into them thinking I'd have to change loads because I've had feedback that the game doesn't have enough romance, but as I was reading over them, I decided I was honestly mostly satisfied with how they went. I think, for the place they're at (only a quarter of the way through the two-book series), they make sense. I do think I need some more scenes in the 25%-50% range (that is, the second half of FoA), but I do have those planned and I think they'll help it feel like the romances aren't stagnating or anything, and that meaningful stuff happens before the second book.

(Of course, I think 'meaningful' stuff happens already, but I do understand the critique.)

Anyway, that means this week I'm getting stuck into Chapter Six. I have a fair bit of new stuff to add to this chapter, including new pair scenes, so I don't know if I'll quite have it done before the BIP comes out, but that is the goal I'm shooting for nevertheless.

Chapter Four Wordcount: 96,152 —>130,687

Chapter Five Wordcount: 149,280 —> 148,258

On Wednesday, we'll have a Hermes POV for the bonus content, which I've already started working on, and then I'll be back in this space next Monday.

I wish you all good luck with your endeavors this week, and I'll strive for progress in my own!

### [Bonus Content - Hermes POV](#)

[Mar 19, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

As you voted on, I've got the new Chapter Three scene with PC, Hermes, and Charon from Hermes's POV this month. I went with a Persephone who was Hermes's best friend, a little unsure about the Underworld but coming to enjoy her time there. Hermes, as you might imagine, is quite thrilled with this state of affairs, given his own preference for it.

I hope you enjoy!

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"Winding things back a bit," Hermes begins with a small grin. "Here's a question for *you*, Persephone. Knowing what you know now, are you satisfied with your magic, or would you be interested in trying the Chthonic kind at some point?" The question sort of comes out before he's really considered it all the way through, but part of him *needs* to know.

"Hermes," Charon's voice carries a note of gentle exasperation. "That could have so many implications that need considering. You can't expect her to have any kind of answer just yet, unless the answer is 'certainly not.'"

They're right, of course. And yet...



"Actually, I'm pretty sure the answer is yes." Persephone's expression is thoughtful, and maybe he's imagining it, but Hermes can also see something like... wistfulness in it. Or yearning.

Maybe he's just projecting, but the spike of excitement in his guts is a heady thing, and he wants to pretend, even if only for a little while, than she might feel as he does about this, too.

"Be careful, if you pursue that," Charon cautions. "It is not simply a matter of doing the same thing the same way. If you use Chthonic magic, the way it feels and what it is capable of *will* change. You may even lose some of the abilities you have now, depending on how the powers interact with one another."

"On the other hand, Chthonic magic tends to be pretty incredible, in its own way," Hermes says, smile broadening. There's not point in *just* talking about the negatives. "It's so much more *raw* than the Olympian kind. For me at least, it lets me tap into a different... part of myself, I guess. But maybe I'm a bad example. People can't usually hold both kinds at once, but I can."

Maybe she can. Maybe she can't, but that would be all right, too. If she really turned out to like it, here, if she really embraced it the way he has...

Would he need Olympus any more at all?

Charon smiles gently at him. "You are a rather special case," they say. "More to the benefit of us all."

Hermes snorts, but there's something genuinely flattering about the words. "Don't be weird and sentimental in front of the guest, Blue." It's a rarely-used nickname, compared to some of the more ubiquitous ones, and indeed he gets a subtle *look* for using it, but he doesn't mind that.

Nothing's decided, he knows. It's all only possibilities. But she's thinking about the possibilities now, and that means her feelings about the Underworld are changing. Hermes was never going to push it, but he was definitely always going to want that to happen.

"Can I ask how you two became acquainted?" Persephone asks. Hermes wants to hug her. The interest—that's the important thing.

"Ah. We're not the most expected pair, are we?" Charon asks, eyes crinkling with amusement.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Hermes replies, humor on the edges of his tone. "We're obviously deeply similar, with all the same interests, and even of a similar age!" All lies, of course, but told with such obvious exaggeration that that should be clear.

Charon huffs something that might almost be a laugh.

"No, seriously, though," the young god continues, shifting his eyes to Persephone. "At first, it was because there's actually similarity in our jobs. Everyone on Olympus likes to act like I'm just the old man's personal messenger boy, but I'm actually a psychopomp. Which is the fancy word for someone who guides the dead."

*See me, please. Even all the parts I had to hide from you, before.*

Charon inclines their head. "He is. As am I. While our tasks cover different physical areas—mine within the Underworld and his outside of it—it is fundamentally a similar task. When Hermes was first learning, therefore, I taught him."

"Uh-huh. And how was that?" Persephone's tone is a bit sardonic.

"Hey," Hermes says, the protest token and heatless. He can understand why she'd say it like that, of course. He complains about his work and avoids as much of it as possible, most of the time. And that is what it's like, when the work in question is carrying the mail.

Charon, as ever, is simply honest, and in this case it's all the defense Hermes could have asked for.

"I believe you were implying that this task must have been difficult," they reply. "And it was, but only because of the delicacy of what must be taught. How to handle cases of spirits who are unwilling to proceed, or have become disoriented and confused. Also how to find them. They are not simple, rote matters, but Hermes himself was not a difficult student."

Hermes shrugs, though he also shoots her a look of his own, vindicated and a little bit smug about it. Had he thought her implications more criticism than humor, he'd have reacted differently, but it's not. They make fun of each other sometimes, and that's part of why they're such good friends. This one is his win, though.

Persephone seems to understand this, or at least her curiosity is sufficient for her not to press the point, because she asks something slightly different instead. "Hermes, how much time do you actually spend in the Underworld?"

He considers the question, eyes finding the ceiling for a moment. "Well, I don't know the exact percentage," he says, dropping his gaze back down to hers. "But usually? Kind of as much as—mm. A decent amount, I suppose. A little less than I might otherwise, because I visited you a lot, but other than that... I don't know. Just when I feel like it."

It's legitimately difficult to put his finger on the number, of course, but more than that, he's not quite so sure he's ready to share his innermost thoughts about that. Even with her. Because they're something he's still trying to get a handle on himself, and if it ever got back to Olympus... well, no. It's not like anything disastrous would happen. In fact, no one would care. But he's not exactly ready for confirmation of that, either.

Persephone's brows draw together, but she doesn't insist that he become any more specific, even though she must have caught on to the caginess. Instead, she turns so as to be speaking to both himself and Charon, setting her teacup down politely.

"Thank you for inviting me today."



"There's no need, but you're welcome," Charon says with a small smile. "Any true friend of Hermes is a friend of the rest of us, though we do try not to impose."

"Not such a bad place to stay for a while, is it?" Hermes notes, though he doesn't expect an immediate answer. He just can't help himself.

The conversation meanders a little while longer, until the snacks have disappeared, and everyone can feel the interlude coming to an end.

Charon stands first, carefully brushing down their tunic, and offers Persephone a polite dip of the head. "As much as I would enjoy staying longer," he says, "I fear I have been too long away from the ferry today already. Thank you for indulging me, and I do hope the rest of your day is enjoyable."

"Yours, too," Hermes says to him, turning then to her with an arched brow. "I've got to go, too, Sunshine. But you know me—I'll be around."

Maybe—just maybe—she will be, too.

[Weekly Update - 25 March, 2024](#)

[Mar 24, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

I'm happy to report that this week was a pretty productive one. I've done some needed edits and changes to the body of Chapter Six, and am now working through the brand-new pair scenes that happen at the end. I've just finished the one where you hang out with Charon and Pyri, so my goal for this week is to also finish the one with Hades and Alekto and the one with Hekate and Hermes. If I can manage each scene in two days, that will leave me one day for testing and debugging before I release the BIP, so I'm hoping I can make it happen.

If all goes according to plan, then the BIP will be complete through Chapter Six, which will hopefully also be the majority of the new stuff I'm writing. As I've mentioned, there are definitely some important scenes I need to add in the back half of the game, but some of the later chapters also need relatively few changes, so I'm hoping they'll be a lot quicker to get through!

This week's changelog:

Chapter Six

- Edits to update/dream explanation scene
- Edits to Laus scene
- Edits to Hypnos scene
- Edits to both Hera scenes, removing some repetitive material
- Removed Kerberos scene - plan to move later in game
- Edits to Kronos scene
- Added a new scene with Pyri & Charon

I'm not really sure why Patreon now refuses to format lists correctly, but oh well. In any case, the BIP will be out on the last day of the month as usual, and I'll be back the day after with another update. I hope you all have a great week!

### [Bonus Content Poll - March](#)

[Mar 30, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Hades is up in the POV piece this month. I've been doing perspectives on some of the new scenes for these so far, and I've got a few more to work with now, so I'll let you tell me which one I should use. :)

The one with Hekate and the library

The one baking in the kitchen

The one with Alekto and 'book club'

43 votes total

### [BIP - March](#)

[Mar 30, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

After what felt like a very long month of very hard work, I'm pleased to announce that the new BIP is here, and it includes the entirety of both Chapter Five and Chapter Six! There's a fair bit of new stuff to peruse, so if you're the sort that likes to see all that as it happens, I hope there's plenty here for you to enjoy, alongside the recent new scenes from the end of Chapter Four.

As before, I've done two different versions; I'm still working on making the itch.io version better, but I haven't quite figured out how to make saves or accessibility features in it work yet, so I do apologize if that version is your only option due to DashingDon errors.

[DashingDon](#)

[itch.io](#)

itch password: v024islive

Hopefully that should all work okay (with the caveat about saves and features for the itch version). Please let me know if it doesn't, but if you can allow a little time, I'd appreciate it. I'm with family this weekend and trying to make myself take a day off! :)

[Weekly Update - 1 April 2024](#)

[Mar 31, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

No pranks, Chapter Six is fully edited! For those of you who get the BIP, you've probably already noticed, but I'm really happy I managed to pass that milestone by the end of the month. Of course, there's still plenty to go, but hopefully I can keep up the pace with it all.

Last week, I managed to write three new pair scenes to close out the chapter. This week, I hope to get through most of Chapter Seven. In addition to the usual "technical" edits (replacing variables with the new systems and so on), I plan to rework the combat scenes, particularly where it comes to descriptions of the PC's magic, and maybe just a few details for Hermes's as well (per his most recent group scene, where I threw in hints for a new development I'd originally planned to use only later).

From there, I'll be back into major 'additions mode' with Chapter Eight, where several new scenes are necessary, probably around 8 total, so I anticipate that will take quite a while. Here's hoping I'll get through it all!

I'm now aiming to be finished with edits by mid-May so I can properly submit the game at last. A far cry from my initial goal of being done by 1 March, but at least the end is in sight now!

Later this week, I'll have something editing-related for the bonus content slot, and then I'll be back here, as always, next Monday with what I hope is a fruitful update. Have a great week, everyone. :)

## [Bonus Content - Sequel Storylines](#)

[Apr 2, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

This month's editing-related bonus content involves a few of the individual character routes for the upcoming sequel. As you'll probably notice as we go, these are all still very rough ideas; all I've needed so far is a general storyline, and a way of splitting it into roughly five parts. I've tried to involve existing myths in as many of them as possible but a few of them are more my own creations than anything you'd find in the Greek mythological 'canon,' such as it is. And of course, where myths do appear, I'll be altering them significantly, given that FoA is about completely different themes and a completely different view of the world than the myths tend to be.

Anyway, without further ado, today we'll be looking at two of the character routes: Pyri's and Hermes's.

**Needless to say, major spoilers for *Blood of the Living* follow.**

To begin with, I tried to come up with a one-sentence or less summary of what was going on in the route. For Pyri, it was a single word: Ariadne.

The myth of Dionysus and Ariadne is one of the most well known of the Dionysian myths I think, and in a romance game where you're playing as an amalgam of Dionysus and Persephone, I wasn't just going to ignore his established love interest. This is actually a twist I've had in mind since first conceiving of Pyri's character – they were either going to be Ariadne's sibling, or *be Ariadne*. All things considered, I decided there was no reason they couldn't be the latter.

So, there are a lot of fun tie-ins with things that have always been hinted at for Pyri: their mysterious lost memories, the scars on their face, the (as yet unaddressed with them) appearance of Theseus, who also appears in a pivotal role in the myth of Ariadne, and so on.

The basic five-point plan I have for the route is as follows:

- 1: Oh shit, I recognised that Theseus guy and now I'm starting to remember things.
- 2: I feel like I need to go to Crete (identity discovery, minotaur in the underworld?)

3: What happened to me? (Track down Theseus, who reluctantly explains, help Pyri decide what to do about that.

4: I want to go visit the place where I was abandoned (fight the monster that killed them)

5: I can see why I chose to forget, but now that I have you, I'm glad I remember again.

(Please excuse the informality of these; they are very much still written as they occurred to me!)

As you can see, Pyri's route will involve learning what they chose to forget, gaining closure on painful memories, and deciding who they are in the wake of all these revelations. This is an intimate and frightening process, one ripe for Pyri and the PC to grow closer.

For each route also I've tried to come up with a central question, something driving the plot forward and something for which the answer is something the character at the centre of the route is (consciously or unconsciously) seeking. For Pyri and their route, this question is one of identity: who am I, Pyri or Ariadne, and can I handle remembering everything that I once chose to forget?

For Hermes's route, on the other hand, the one-sentence summary goes like this: "Help I may have screwed up and now this friend of mine wants to kill a relatively innocent Gorgon lady."

As the myth-savvy of you might guess from this, Hermes's route will involve the myth of Perseus and Medusa. As the very myth-savvy of you might realise, for this to be happening at the same 'time' as the Dionysus and Ariadne myth suggests that time is being quite bent around. To which I say: yes, it absolutely is. Please ignore that for the sake of the story. There's a slight in-universe justification in that one of the major characters has time-control powers he's not fully mastered yet, but I'd rather not trot that one out as an explanation unless I *really* have to. Timey-wimey stuff gets weird fast, after all.

Anyway! Hermes is indeed friends with/a patron of Perseus in this story, and this is one of those stories in the source material where most of the people involved are stuck between a rock and a hard place if you look at it. Or at least, Perseus and Medusa both are, which makes for interesting conflict, and means that changing the outcome of the myth isn't going to be as easy as a charisma check or two!

Here's the outline:

1: So, uh, I have this friend named Perseus, and I'm afraid he's about to do something stupid (backstory reveal)

2: Warning Medusa, but also please don't kill him he's just a dumb idiot. (She makes no promises.)

3: Trying to convince Perseus not to do the dumb thing. (This doesn't work because he gave his word and believes it will be saving his mother from an unwanted suitor.)

4: Interceding in the fight between Perseus and Medusa. Coming up with a trickster solution. (Impersonating Zeus?) Maybe some intercession by Athena, who agrees to help?

5: I know I'm not always the most responsible. I'll try to be a little more careful about these things in the future, but I'm never going to stop wanting to help my friends. Thank you for understanding me.

While this story might initially seem quite unrelated to anything deeply personal to Hermes, that's not really the case here. Hermes, at this point in things, is not a god most people ever rely on for anything, and certainly not to actually fix their problems. He's more of a problem-causer than a problem-solver, and he knows this is how he's perceived, and knows that it's largely his own fault that this is so.

But that doesn't mean he necessarily wants it, and in a sense, this is personal growth for him: taking the risk of failure to help a friend and a (relatively) innocent person, putting himself out there in hopes of being the solution, even if his trickster's talents are usually only considered good for causing trouble. It's about learning that who he is and who he wants to be don't have to be in complete opposition, that any kind of person can do a good thing. And that, maybe, taking responsibility now and then isn't the worst thing he could do. He'll need the PC's support, advice, and help to make it happen.

The central question at the heart of his route is basically what I've just said: Can I be the kind of person who fixes problems, instead of making them? There's a corollary in there about whether or not he can trust his instincts, which should get a decent amount of addressing as well.

And that's the preview! I hope you've enjoyed learning a bit about what's to come, and hopefully the plots are interesting, even in this bare-bones sort of form. Have a great week!

[Weekly Update - 8 April, 2024](#)

[Apr 7, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

I hope you're all doing well. My life this week has been a series of minor incidents that have added up to a headache, but the good news is progress on FoA continues apace. I have made minor edits and adjustments to all of Chapter Seven, as well as changing a few descriptions of the PC's magic to be more on theme.

That means this week I'll be moving on to Chapter Eight, and all the new stuff I need to add there! Hopefully this won't take me more than a couple weeks, so I still have a week left at the end of the month to tweak Chapter Nine (in particular, the conversation with Artemis/Athena/etc is going to need some adjusting to account for additional letters the PC has the opportunity to write in this version).

But for now, I'm on track, and I'm hoping to stay the course, because we're really... pretty close to being there, now.

Thanks to everyone for sticking with me through the boring stuff. :)

## [Weekly Update - 15 April, 2024](#)

[Apr 14, 2024](#)

Hey all!

This week, as I was moving through Chapter Eight, I decided that I really only needed to add one scene—a small bit with Makaria and Empusa—to the chapter, because I could also reuse the Kerby scene I'd snipped from an earlier chapter to pace out the section that goes a bit too fast.

So the good news is, Chapter Eight is nearly done! I've written that Makaria and Empusa scene, which contains a bit more opportunity to process some of the Eurydice and Orpheus stuff, and today I'll be adding in the Kerberos scene. Hopefully the testing tomorrow will be mostly clean, and I'll be able to proceed to Chapter Nine!

At this stage, I should definitely be able to accomplish my goal of having that one done by the end of the month. Chapter Ten is going to take longer, especially because I will be adding some scenes and making substantial edits to others, but I might be able to get at least part of it done by May, which is exciting. :)

I hope you're all doing well, and I'll be back on Wednesday with the POV post you all voted on at the end of last month.

## [Bonus Content - Hades POV](#)

[Apr 16, 2024](#)

Hey all!

You voted to see Hades's perspective on the baking scene from Chapter Four, so that's below. Featuring a humorous, bold sort of Dionysus who knows absolutely nothing about baking. :)

I hope you all enjoy it.

-----

"How much cooking and baking have you done before, may I ask? It might be helpful for tailoring my explanation of the recipe, is all." Hades looks slightly downward at Dionysus, sort of able to guess the answer from the way the young god looks rather interested in some of the ingredients—as though they are novel.

"I barely know what any of these things are," he admits.

Hades nods. "Then I will explain the steps as we go along. Please do not hesitate to ask questions if you have them."

He considers a moment, then hands his companion the container of butter and shifts the bag of sugar over to his part of the counter as well. Baking like many things is a series of basic operations combined into something much more complex. Mastering the basic skills and taking things one at a time is the way to go about it, when one is new. "If you could begin by creaming together those two, it's about three quarters of one of these each." He hands Dionysus one of the larger measuring cups. Technically it's weight that matters, but the rough direction will achieve the result almost as well.

"For reference," he adds, "that just means to combine them. The butter is soft, but not melted, so it's not quite the same as just stirring, but you should aim to integrate the sugar evenly with it for now."

The expression on Dionysus's face changes, and Hades suspects clarifying this was the correct choice.

His companion gets to it, measuring out the butter and sugar and folding them together as slightly clumsily but with enough effort to make it work, while Hades measures out flour and other dry ingredients into the bowl in front of him.

"How often do *you* cook?" The question is not unexpected in present context, and Hades doesn't have to think too much about the answer, or how to phrase it.

"I used to do so moderately often," he replies, "then fell out of the habit for a while. When I adopted Makaria, I began to regain interest in it, and it has largely been a process of... scouring the rust off ever since, so to speak. I claim no great skill, but I can do reasonably simple things."

Adding wine yeast to the bowl to act as a leavening agent, he replaces the seal on the container of it.

"Today's cakes in particular are for Makaria," he explains, adding a bit of salt and a bit more cinnamon to the bowl, grinding the latter over the top by hand. "She's been working rather diligently, lately, to learn a new alphabet. I want her to know... that people notice her efforts. And that I'm proud of her accomplishments."



"That's really sweet of you." There's a little bit of puzzlement in Dionysus's tone, but when Hades glances his way, he's obviously smiling, pausing to push one strand of long, dark hair back behind his ear.

Hades clears his throat. "I am unsure about that," he replies, shaking his head. "Sometimes I am concerned that I am not able to tell her often enough, or understandably enough, that I love her and am proud of what she's achieved. Or I worry that she will begin to associate my pride in her *only* with achievement. It is... very difficult to know how my actions will end up affecting her, and that is... worrisome, at times."

He shakes his head. He's said too much, which in spite of being the opposite of his usual problem seems to happen quite often around Dionysus in particular. Perhaps it's better to move on—the next part is adding the eggs to the 'wet' half of the ingredients.

It's a process that necessitates a small tutorial, and even then, Dionysus ends up needing to fish pieces of eggshell out of the bowl. Still, he's doing a good job for someone who has never had much experience with any of the skills involved, and after that, Hades uses a sieve to sift the contents of his own bowl over his companion's.

"She's very intent on it," he says, picking up the former thread of conversation a short way back. It's the best way he can think of to keep speaking while not making his faux pas worse, aside from changing the subject entirely, which he isn't especially keen to do. "Learning as many languages as possible. She says it's because she wants to read all the books in the library, as I have." He huffs softly. "Which is... quite the aim for someone always trying to get out of her lessons. But I suppose even so I also want to be supportive."

"When I was a kid," Dionysus replies with half a little grin, "I wanted to have huge gardens and grow every possible flower in them."

Hades smiles softly at him. The similarity is immediately obvious to him, and he has no trouble imagining a younger version of his—well. They're husbands, aren't they? Strange as that is. Maybe the word he should use isn't something he needs to think about right now, though.

"I could see that, somehow," he replies. "How far did you get?"

Dionysus shakes his head. "Not far. Mother gave me a small plot, I assume because she knew I'd not hold onto the particular ambition for very long. I got about as far in the alphabet as anemones before I gave up."

"I confess to expecting a similar result," Hades replies, a tad wryly. "But I am not inclined to allow that to change how I react. She must know, I think, that I always take her seriously when she's serious."

"I've been told that parenting is very difficult."

Hades tilts his head, considering the words. "I don't think I'd call it difficult," he replies. "It's certainly not easy, but the word I would use is *challenging*. There are challenges to be overcome, some that Makaria and I can face together, some that I can face with Empusa or one of the others in collective effort and some I simply have to handle myself, but I think of those as individual things, more momentary than calling it 'difficult' implies."

He narrows his eyes in thought, talking again before he's made the decision to do. It's easy to get carried away, when the topic is his daughter, something he does recognize about himself. "Perhaps I split hairs unnecessarily. The point of it all, though, is giving Makaria the childhood she deserves. Even if it *is* difficult, I don't mind expending any amount of effort towards that goal. I want..." he pauses, hesitating. "I want her to always feel safe. To know that she can do or be or dream as she pleases, and there will always be people in the world who will support her in whatever her dreams are, no matter how temporary or permanent they turn out to be."

He's talking too much again. And talking too much about himself and Makaria. It must be boring, but how should he—right. That makes sense.

He turns to regard Dionysus, genuinely curious and a bit apologetic for his rambling. "I know, of course, that you are no longer a child, but I daresay most adults have some form of aspiration as well. Do you?"

Dionysus shakes his head, looking almost a little caught off-guard by the query, somehow. "I'm not sure how much I've ever thought about it."

Hades hums. "I don't think I meant anything too elaborate," he clarifies. "Perhaps I should say..."

His brows knit as he considers his wording. "Perhaps I meant to ask, 'if you could choose just one thing, right now, that you want out of life in general, something that would hold true regardless of where you were and other circumstantial details, what would it be, off the top of your head?'"

Maybe that's too precise, but it does seem to make an answer easier, at least, because after a bit of considering, Dionysus does have an answer.

"To have people I love around me, and to have someone special." His tone is soft, a bit wistful at the edges, perhaps. Not that this is unexpected, given the topic matter.

Hades nods immediately. "That is a very understandable dream," he observes with a small smile. "One I daresay many people have, which only goes to show the strength of its appeal. Once, I—" He shakes his head, a small pang of discomfort in his chest. "Well, never mind. That part isn't important." He's said too much about himself, today. Too many personal things, too. And—well. It's an inconvenient moment to have been thinking about the fact that the two of them are technically married.

He clears his throat, shaking off the vestiges of the thoughts. "In any event," she says, "I do sincerely hope you'll be able to achieve it, one day. And perhaps even more importantly, I hope that the journey to get there is as pleasant and rewarding as possible. I find we rarely arrive at such destinations in quite the way we intended, but if the process is worthwhile, then that matters less."

That shouldn't be such a terrible way to close off the topic.

But it seems Dionysus thinks differently.

"So... do you still hope that if maybe you have a role to play in that dream?" He arches one eyebrow.

Hades blinks. His tone, the god of death is fairly sure, implies flirtation and humor, which would in turn give the comment certain implications. On the other hand, it is a question worth taking seriously, and... no. He still shouldn't be thinking about that. Not... not at *least* until the matter of Dionysus's imprisonment is resolved.

He's torn. Between the desire to tell the truth and the desire to be careful. In the end, he compromises as well as he can.

"I suppose that depends on what my role is," he replies steadily after a moment. "But it would certainly be no hardship to be someone you cared about, Dionysus. I hope you know that much, at least."

There's a little bit of silence, perhaps while Dionysus digests the comment, and Hades is quick to move on.

At this point, the cake batter is fully integrated, so he pours it into a lined pan, which then immediately goes into the oven.

"Thank you," he says quietly. "For spending this time with me. I'll let you know when I'm ready to give the cakes to Makaria, if you'd like to come along. You helped make them, after all."

For now... it's enough.

[Weekly Update - 22 April, 2024](#)

[Apr 21, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

It's been a pretty big week for progress here. I finished what needed doing on Chapter Eight, moved into Chapter Nine and did all the edits I wanted there, and I'm now working on the substantial edits of Chapter Ten. Right now, that's mostly in the scenes where you say goodbye to the NPCs if you chose Olympus; I've decided that the tone of those was off in a few instances and I also wanted to give the PC an option to choose a reason for having selected Olympus, rather than the game and everyone in it assuming that the answer was 'I like it better.'

That's going a bit slowly as I rework the sections, but I'm pleased with the change so far. After this part will be a rather large chunk of work where I add a scene for every RO that occurs if the PC decides to live wholly or mostly in the Underworld. Sort of an emotional beat for the characters after the big plot one but before the epilogue's minor timeskip.

And then I've just got the epilogue itself to go, which might see a few adjustments to account for new character scenes, but probably won't be hugely changed overall. Then—dare I think it—I'll be done with editing.

I expect this all to take me into the middle of May, more or less, but hopefully I'll be finished by then. If I am, I'll post the BIP then instead of at the end, and you'll all have a week at it before I have to actually take it down to submit it. :)

Anyway, that's all for this week. I hope everyone has a great one.

[Weekly Update - 29 April, 2024](#)

[Apr 28, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

This week was another fairly decent one for progress, I think. I managed to get my general changes done for Chapter Ten as well as add Hekate's post-Olympus scene. I do still have five of those to go plus adjustments to the epilogue, but the game is looking closer and closer to done!

There will be a couple irregularities in schedule this upcoming month (May). Firstly, this week in particular, you'll have the BIP as normal on the 30th, but the bonus content that I was going to publish on Wednesday the 1st will be moved to Wednesday the 8th. This is just because I'm taking a couple of days off this week to rest and for my partner's birthday.

Secondly, I anticipate that the final version of the BIP will be ready to go sometime in the middle of the month, rather than at the end. Because I want to balance giving you all the early access I've promised with submitting as soon as possible, I will be following the release schedule as soon as it's done. So, hypothetically, if I finish the game on the 16th, it will go out to Everbloom tier on the 17th, to Blossom and Bud tiers on the 20th, and to Seedling tier on the 24th. It will then be taken down so I can submit on the 27th.

(Of course, I don't know exactly what day I'll be finishing; this was just an example. To generalize: I will follow the normal early access tier structure. When I reach the day that would ordinarily be "public

release" on that schedule, I will instead be taking the game down so I can submit it for publication. I apologize for the short access period, but this was the best compromise I could think of.)

I hope that's all reasonably clear, but if not, please don't hesitate to ask questions.

Have a great week, everyone!

### [Bonus Content Poll - April](#)

[Apr 29, 2024](#)

Hey all. The BIP drops in an hour. In the meantime (or more realistically, just whenever you come across this), please feel free to help me out with this poll!

Next month's character POV bonus content features Charon. Which recent scene of theirs would you like to see their perspective on?

Games on the riverbank

Tea with PC and Hermes

Mysterious as yet unwritten Chapter 10 option

48 votes total

### [BIP - April](#)

[Apr 29, 2024](#)

Hey everyone! Welcome to what I'm pretty sure is the LAST end of the month BIP for Fields of Asphodel! Of course, the complete second draft will be available sometime next month, but it shouldn't take all 31 days to get there, so there's that.

Anyway, as usual there are two ways to access this: Dashingdon, which has save files but may throw unexpected errors that I can't fix on my side, and itch, which seems to run without those errors but lacks some accessibility features and also save files.

When I start posting demos for the sequel, I'm going to try really hard to get the itch stuff figured out, because at least theoretically I can add those things in other ways. Anyhow, for now it is what it is. The password this month is '[penultimateBIP](#)' (no quotes). The Dashingdon version is [here](#).

I hope you enjoy what's there so far, and are looking forward to the complete version as much as I am!

## [Weekly Update - 6 May, 2024](#)

[May 5, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

We're still moving along towards the end. This week, I outlined and wrote the Chapter Ten scenes for Alekto, Pyri, and Charon, meaning I only have Hades and Hermes to go before I'm ready to move into editing the epilogue! After that it'll be a round of testing, and then the Early Access cycle begins.

I anticipate I'll achieve most of that this week, but I'm not certain yet how extensive my edits to the epilogue will be, so I can't yet pin down release dates. I appreciate your patience as we get closer to that time.

To tide you over, I'll have the bonus content on Wednesday, where I talk about Hekate and Charon's sequel storylines and how they both deal with one of the central themes of the second book in general: the relationship between humans and gods.

After that, I'll be back in this slot next Monday, hopefully with more good news and a concrete idea of the release schedule. I hope you all have a lovely week!

## [Bonus Content - Sequel Storylines II](#)

[May 7, 2024](#)

Hey again everyone!

I'm once again here with some insight into the individual character storylines for the sequel. This month, I have Charon's and Hekate's for your consideration.

As before, **major spoilers for Blood of the Living lay ahead!**

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As before, I've attempted to condense the plot of each route into a one-sentence summary. For Charon, that sentence is "Atonement is hard."

The big backstory reveal that sets all of the rest of this in motion is the fact that Charon (formerly Ares), got caught up in a deific rage one time and... sank Atlantis. This, as you might imagine, is the event that got them exiled to the Underworld, not so much because anyone care all that much about the humans on Atlantis, but because it was considered Poseidon's city, and Charon himself was considered a bit too reckless and uncontrollable for most people's taste, drunk on human worship as they were. This plot is less about rehashing all of that and the godly politics of it all, and more about Charon trying to maintain the positive changes they've made in their life in the face of temptation to revert to old habits. And it's less about that than it is about learning to forgive oneself, even when other people won't forgive you (and are quite amply justified in that).

Here's the plot beat breakdown:

1: Theseus and Pirithous were idiots, but... (backstory reveal)

2: I got permission to leave but I need an escort/a visit to Poseidon to find out what happened with Atlantis after I sank it. It is not very welcoming.

3: An Atlantean more willing to try and forgive me has sent a request for help dealing with a monster. I don't want to fight, but I feel as though I must.

4: It turns out that sea monster was a trap/attempt to kill me. This is the kind of thing that previously would have sent me on a murderous rampage, but this time I am going to just forgive them and leave.

5: It hurts that there are things I may never be able to make up for, but I'm glad I had the courage to try. Also I belong here with you, thank you for your support.

As you might gather from the above, the central questions in this plotline are "can you be redeemed if no one forgives you?" and "how much of my old self can I allow to remain?" The latter is particularly relevant with respect to violence and its use to do harm versus its use to protect.

I anticipate all of this being quite angsty, but I'm pretty sure those of you playing Charon's route already expected at least some of that!

So then, next we have Hekate! Her route has some similar themes in terms of touching on human interaction with the gods, and the direct intervention of the gods on human life, but she comes at it from

a completely different angle, as someone who maintains good relationships, some of them even personal, with her worshippers, who are oftentimes also her collaborators in magic.

The central question here is in fact about that: to what extent is it wise to directly interfere with the lives of humans? Is there a way to do so responsibly, or should the gods simply leave them alone?

And the summary is: "Ex-Titan goddess puts perhaps too much power in the hands of mortals, then has to fix it and decide what lesson to take from that."

In particular, it goes something like this:

1: Seeing those guys reminded me a bit of my own trial (backstory)

2: I've seen a world where the gods are no longer relevant; I want to give humans tools to look after themselves without our direct intervention.

3: Hekate's cult summons a child of Echidna/meeting Echidna and Typhon

4: Hekate helps her cult defeat the thing they called, informs them she will not directly intervene again.

5: Helping humans is still something I believe in, but I also look forward to seeing how they do in a time when we no longer directly interfere with them.

Two very different approaches to the ways gods and humans can interfere with one another, and hopefully plotlines that have been a little foreshadowed by some of the contact the PC has had with humans thus far (if they chose to at all, that is!)

[Weekly Update - 13 May, 2024](#)

[May 12, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

As some of you may know, the early access period for the full second draft has begun! Everblooms got access on Saturday, and those of you in the Bud and Blossom tiers will have it as of this time tomorrow. Seedlings will get access on the 18th, and I'll be taking the project down on the 21st (all times AEST).

I know there are still a lot of things that could be better about the game, and it's an odd feeling to release it even knowing that. But of course, I don't think I'd ever reach a place where I thought it was ideal, and I know well that I'd never be able to put it in such a state as to satisfy everyone who might



read it. But I've been editing this monster for almost six months now, and it really needs to go to publication.

I am, at least, satisfied that it is *better* for the edits and changes I have made. Perhaps there still isn't enough romance, or scenes with Makaria, or enough emotional heft to the events immediately after the trial, but I believe I have made *progress* in all these areas, and I hope that, with the first two at least, those who feel that way will be willing to accept that at least there will also be more of those things in the sequel.

My plan for this week, while the draft is with all of you, is to do a bit of a blitz-edit on my other project (Diaspora, for those familiar), so that one can also get published someday. So it may be the first week in a long time where I don't get much done for FoA, though I still have some publication assets to put together for the publishers as well, so it won't be completely without any progress on this front!

Once the game is submitted, well... I might give myself my first week off in actual years. But then, I may also decide I can't go without at least tweaking the outline for Blood of the Living, or maybe HG will have a ton of edits for me to make before they'll publish the thing; I'm not really sure. In any case, rest assured that even if I do take a break, I'll be back to work soon enough, this time with a fresh game file and a lot of lessons learned from FoA.

So there will be no additional BIP this month, since I almost certainly won't have much to show for that, but I fully anticipate that, come the end of June, we'll be back to previews of a game being written. I hope you're looking forward to it as much as I am.

Anyhow, I think I've rambled long enough for now. As always, I hope you all have a fantastic week, and I'll be back in this slot next week with whatever news is new. :)

[BIP - FoA version 1.0.0](#)

[May 13, 2024](#)

Hey Blossoms and Buds.

It's time. The full second draft is here. Remember you'll have access to it for seven days before it comes back down so I can submit it to Hosted Games. Please enjoy, and if you happen to spot any continuity errors (that is, places where things happen that shouldn't according to what's already happened, like Alekto apologizing when she's already done so or the game acting like you know someone you've never met on your playthrough or things like that), please, please let me know!

Those don't get caught by automatic testing, and I'm not sure if whatever editing I get from HG will cover that sort of thing, and I'd really hate for any such errors to end up in the final product.

Anyway, as much as I'd appreciate it, this is mostly here for you to have fun with, and I hope you do. Thank you so much for your support; the game wouldn't be what it is without you.

[Itch](#) (password: thelastBIP)

[Dashingdon](#)

[Weekly Update - 20 May 2024](#)

[May 19, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

We're back with the weekly update.

It turns out I did do a fair amount of FoA-related work last week, mostly bugfixes and continuity corrections that various people let me know about, which was very helpful and will definitely make the game more release-ready. There were also a surprising amount of 'publication assets' I needed to come up with, stuff like summaries of different lengths and so on for advertising purposes. I cannot recommend that part of the experience; I'm terrible at 'selling' things.

This is the week: the game in all forms will be removed from its hosting sites by this time tomorrow, so if you haven't gotten around to playing it yet, you have about 24 hours to do so. Then, finally, it will be headed off to HG for... whatever sort of edit they want to give it before its publication.

I estimate that will be quite a few months away, yet, because editing unsurprisingly takes longer the longer a game is, and this one clocks in at over 1.3 million words, so. It's going to be a bit.

That said, I plan to start sequel BIPs in June, so there will hopefully be lots of fun material to chew on whilst we're sitting in the queue waiting for an official release. I'll keep you all apprised with as much as I know.

For now, I hope you all have a great week. I should be back next Monday with an update, if perhaps only to say that HG has received the files. :)

[Bonus Content - Charon POV](#)

[May 21, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

The votes said you wanted Charon's little bit from the end of Chapter 10, so here it is, in all of its emotionally-difficult glory.

Charon and Hades are in some ways the most similar of the ROs, but it's really fun to write these scenes where they're grappling with their emotions, and realize how different they really can be.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy it.

-----

Charon is silent for the trek, occupied by a swirl of thoughts more difficult to escape than an actual whirlpool. Now that there are more than thirty consecutive seconds to sit with their thoughts... they seem to have acquired a lot. Or rather, the ones that had first occurred to them, on the return flight, are now flooding back.

"Um, Charon... you're not mad at me or anything, are you?" Persephone's voice is tentative; she sounds like she isn't even sure she should be *asking*, much less of the answer.

A momentary spike of panic stabs his chest. "No," he replies, lifting his eyes to meet hers much too quickly. "Of course I'm not. It isn't... that. Please rest assured of that much."

They don't want her to think *that*, of all things. How unaccountably cruel would it be, to allow her to suppose that *she* has done something wrong, when all of the wrong rests, as it ever does, with him?

After several more minutes, they arrive at her door.

Charon pauses, setting down the gifts he carries next to it for now, then turning to face Persephone as she follows suit. Their lips part, then close again with a dissatisfied hum. It's another long moment before he finds the right words. Or at least, words that will suffice for now.

"I... was wondering," he admits softly. "If it... is truly possible for you to be happy like this. In the Underworld. It is a question that has vexed me before, but I'm sure you understand why it has such heightened relevance now, of all times."

In some ways, it is the question. Here they are, after all. She has chosen to spend the majority of each year here, and he cannot help but see ahead to a future where she regrets that deeply. Where the shine, if ever there was any, has worn off, and she is only cold and lonely in this place.

But her tone is easy, confident. Warm.

"I know I can be happy here. In no small part because of you, Charon."

They wonder if she knows. That her smile could melt glacial ice. That this very sort of sentiment is the exact reason he worries the most. But it's not something easily put into words, and as much as he wants to press her, to ask after it, to get that far-future result *right now* so they can do their best to put it right—in some things, there is no rushing to the end.

Charon takes half a step towards her, before drawing to a halt, frowning. "I... am glad you're here," he admits. The only thing he can imagine saying instead. "The thought of—I only ever meant to give you a choice. I didn't wish to form my own opinions about the results of that choice, but it seems that, in remaining indifferent to you, I have... rather spectacularly failed. The idea of an eternity without your company has come to sound quite intolerable, if I may say so."

And then, to his utter befuddlement, she takes a step forward herself, completing the motion he had inadvertently begun and wrapping her arms around his middle.

Charon stiffens with their surprise, unsure at first what to do.

*Reciprocate, you utter fool. Give her some tiny modicum of what she deserves!*

They force their muscles to relax, and their hands tentatively move up to rest on her back, just a light touch, just a brief one. If they allow this to become about what she deserves, after all, there will be entirely new problems to contend with. Complications they don't especially want to think about, right now.

Releasing a quiet sigh, they drop their hands, stepping back and clearing their throat. They still need an answer, after all.

"I don't think it sounds great either," she admits with a soft huff. "Fortunately, it's not something we have to test out." She seems, as always, so very assured. Not loudly, but quietly. Softly.

"It is not," Charon murmurs, nodding to themselves. Best just to try and accept it. However... unsettling all of this might be, in a strange way. None of it is her fault.

Hemming again softly, he reverses his earlier step by taking one backwards. "In any event, I have taken too much of your time. You are meant to be resting, so please... get some sleep, or whatever suits you. There will be other opportunities to speak later, should you wish it." A pause, and then, "I would, naturally."

"Sounds good, Charon," she replies simply, offering a smile. The fatigue *is* visibly beginning to pull at her, after all. He has to go.

So, with a polite dip of his chin, Charon takes their leave.

## [Weekly Update - 27 May, 2024](#)

[May 26, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

As you may be aware, I'm currently in the middle of a week or so off writing before I make the plunge into doing work for FoA's sequel, Blood of the Living. At the end of this week and into the beginning of next, I anticipate starting up on that, with some work on mundane things like a spreadsheet of variables I can refer to and hopefully setting up a save-emulation system so that (until I'm far enough along that a save import feature will be added by HG), at least the most important variables can be set per playthrough.

Then of course there will be outlining and a bit more dedicated plotting—I have a bunch of skeletons in the proverbial plot closet at the moment, and I'll want to add at least a little bit of flesh to them before I get writing properly.

That said, at this point I do anticipate I will be writing properly again by mid-June, and so the BIPs will resume, almost uninterrupted, on June 30. In the meantime I'll still have other Patreon stuff for you as normal, including the poll in a few days and the first monthly bonus content next week.

I'm also looking at restructuring the Patreon so the BIP is available at a lower tier, but I'm a little worried about it. This is my only income (yay for being both somehow overqualified for entry level jobs and not having enough experience for any others!) so making that change might shift my income from 'barely sustainable' to 'not even close,' which is a bit of a concern, as you might imagine.

Maybe I'll hold off on that until FoA is published, at least.

Anyway, ad ever, feedback on my half-baked ideas is welcome, but I'll keep pondering anyway. The more important part is, I'm already starting to a bit better after the rest I've had, so hopefully I'll be able to hit the ground running on BOTL!

[Bonus Content Poll - May](#)

[May 30, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Help me decide what kind of Alekto POV post is next. Specifically, help me decide what kind of PC features in it!

Hesitant, but warmhearted Dionysus

Bold, confident Persephone

Sly, humorous Seph

63 votes total

[Weekly Update - 3 June, 2024](#)

[Jun 2, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

It's a new month, and I'm back to work, this time on Blood of the Living! So far so good with the submission of FoA; we're working out a few hitches with the cover art and the tiny sizes a steam listing requires, but the game is currently being both copyedited and edited for content as I write this, so that's exciting!

As of now, the time frame estimates are:

- 6 weeks for all the edits
- ?? for me to make any changes per the editors and return it to HG
- 1-2 months for publication after all of the above is complete.

So it's actually quite possible that FoA will see proper publication by the end of the year, and it should be available to wishlist on Steam quite soon, if you'd like to do that.

In the meantime, of course, I'll be here, preparing to begin drafting on BotL. At the moment this involves making a very large spreadsheet of all the variables in FoA, as well as the values they can have and things like that, which should hopefully make writing with past actions in mind a little easier. It's very slow, sloggy work, but I'm getting through it a bit at a time.

Once I have that, my plan is to outline the whole game in a bit more detail, planning what scenes go where, and then I'll be ready to get properly started!

There will be a preview of a couple more sequel routes up this week for those of you who get that bonus content, and then of course I'll be back next week, hopefully with more progress to share. Things might be a little slow to start up, as I'm staying with my partner's mother right now to help her out before/after a hip replacement, so for now that's top priority. But there should still be time for writing, and I'm going to make the most of it where I can.

I hope everyone's June is off to a good start!

### [Bonus Content - Sequel Storylines III](#)

[Jun 4, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Welcome back to the spoilerific bonus contents about the plotlines of the character arcs for Blood of the Living. As always, major spoilers to follow, so stop reading here if you don't want to have to deal with those just yet.

This month, I'm saying a little bit about Alekto and Hades.

=====

Alekto's subplot could best be summarized in the sentence: "The past always comes back." It's about dealing with some of her not fully resolved trauma, and examining how that ties into the very difficult job she does presently, and whether she can go on doing it if she doesn't see it as just 'punishment' for her transgressions.

The big spoiler here is severalfold: firstly, Alekto was once a Muse, as were her sisters. They worked closely with, and in some cases *for*, Apollo. Apollo was in a relationship with a woman named Coronis, and Alekto was meant to watch over this woman while Apollo was away from her. A bunch of things happened, including Alekto herself falling in love with Coronis, and at the end of it, the woman was dead by Apollo's hand, and Alekto smote and banished to the Underworld.

As she bears some responsibility for this chain of events, and in a great deal of pain, Alekto volunteered for one of the most difficult jobs in the Underworld: punishing mortals who break the laws of the gods.

Here's the subplot itself in list form:

- 1: About Apollo and I... (backstory)

2: The Rebuilt Tartarus - more complete idea of how Alekto relates to her job

3: The Hounding/Trial of Orestes - Apollo involvement

4: A meeting with Apollo

5: Sometimes it's okay not to forgive people, actually. Perhaps I was drawn to punishment because no one will ever punish him, or because I needed to feel like I had atoned. It's not for me now, it's for everyone who is like the me I was.

The central question of the arc is twofold, but the two are quite strongly tied together: can I forgive what feels unforgivable? Can I go on doing this job?

This of course, will involve a fair amount of blending and adjustment of myths, but as always, the core remains the same, even if what the story is really about becomes completely different.

And last but not least, we have Hades!

I haven't gotten more messages about potential character arcs for anyone than I've gotten for Hades. Part of this is a little frustrating, because at times the suggestions can seem a little demanding, or like the person making them doesn't trust that I can see the very obvious potential in themes about life and death and so on. But on the other hand I know it's because people are invested, and so I do sincerely hope I can do justice to those themes, and Hades's character as well.

The one-sentence summary of this subplot would be something like: "Death tries to cultivate a positive relationship with humanity." And that's, really, what it's about. Hades has plenty of trauma in his backstory, some of which will naturally come out as he interacts with the PC, but it doesn't form the locus of the story in the same way it does with, say, Alekto or Charon. I've tried to make everyone's stories feel different, in mood and atmosphere and themes, but what carries through them all is meant to be the power of relationships with other people, and this one tackles that perhaps a bit more literally than the others.

Let's take a look at the outline:

1: For as much control as I have over humans here, out there they barely know me (backstory)

2: Tentative venture out to solve some problems; awe-terror reaction.

3: Oddly, a small cult seems to have sprung up; please help me think of something to do to help them.

4: My cult is being chased out of their area by people who don't want to invoke me. I should help them find somewhere safe to live.

5: Maybe for now it's better if I don't have too much contact with living humans, but I'm glad I could do something positive for those people because I'm death.



The central questions here are, again, intertwined: Is there anything good about death? Would it be okay for me to have more contact with humans?

I hope this framing gives ample opportunity for character development, and for the PC to have a big impact on things. It should also dovetail quite nicely with possible developments in the PC's own cult, if they wound up with one as a result of their actions in FoA. That subplot, along with one about Demeter and Iasion, will be the subject of next month's spoilerific plot bits.

[Weekly Update - 10 June, 2024](#)

[Jun 9, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

We're back. If you haven't heard already. FoA officially has a Steam page now, where you can wishlist the game if you so desire. I'd certainly appreciate it if you did!

In the meantime, I've finally finished the slow task of organising all the variables into an excel sheet, and in the process I noticed a few redundancies and errors that I'll be able to fix once the editors have returned the game with their copyedits and content notes. So, even for that alone, this was a worthwhile, if not terribly exciting, endeavour.

This week, I'm getting started on two tasks: a more detailed outline for where BotL is going and how it's getting there, and a character creator/save generator that will do a bit to mimic your FoA save file for the purposes of BotL testing/early access. It definitely won't be as good as being able to import a save, but it'll at least let you set the big stuff.

Save imports will be available at least with the complete game, because HG does make that possible, but they don't do it right away (I guess because they have no way of knowing whether the sequels in these cases will ever get finished). But hopefully what I'll do in the meantime will be enough of a stopgap, and you'll have to forgive me if there are a few continuity problems because not every single variable from the last game is set exactly as you had it.

Anyway, those are my projects for this week. I'm not sure if I'll get them both finished, but I'd like to be writing by sometime next week, so I'm going to do as much as I can to get there.

Have a great week, everyone!

## [Weekly Update - 17 June, 2024](#)

[Jun 16, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

I'm happy to report that I've finished the save building tool for Blood of the Living! It should do a reasonably good job of making sure all the very most important variables are set, so even though it won't replicate anyone's previous choices perfectly, I hope it does well enough for now.

I've also just gotten started on expanding the outline, so I'll give myself a few more days to do that this week and then I will get to code-skeleton-making and writing the actual first chapter of BotL. There will definitely be something there for those of you who get the BIP this month. It may not be a whole ton compared to a full-sized update, but there will be something.

Personally, I find that a bit exciting. All the admin work and planning is definitely necessary (the variable document made making the save generator much smoother, for example, and I know the detailed outline will help keep me on track), but I'm looking forward to the feeling of tangible progress that writing brings. And, of course, to spending time with the characters once more, and telling their stories.

While the PC is still very much the main character, I'm really looking forward to giving the other characters a bit more of the 'spotlight' with their subplots. :) There should also be an Alekto POV piece coming later this week, probably involving her stunningly-awkward almost-confession scene in the epilogue haha.

Anyway, that's everything for this week's update; as always, thanks for sticking with me. I hope you all have a fantastic one.

[Bonus Content - Alekto POV](#)

[Jun 18, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

As you all voted for, this month's bonus content features Alekto with a hesitant, warm Dionysus. Have a handful of nonsense, with little daubs of both angst and fluff, because it's Alekto.

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For a while, the two of them simply walk through the grasses, enjoying the exercise and the changes to a familiar environment. Not unexpectedly, there are very few words exchanged, and the majority of those are not spoken aloud. Of course, Alekto's mind is still churning, because of course it is. She has something to tell him, and it's not going to be an easy thing to say. She *wants* to, but she has also long learned that sometimes the things you want the most are also the most difficult.

After a while, though, she turns to him with a serious expression, and begins to speak slowly. Not precisely on the topic she wants to get to, but something *adjacent*, at least. "Do you wish to have your marriage annulled?" she asks. "Hades was going to ask you this, soon, but I requested that I be the first one to broach the topic, because I wanted you to understand the options." She looks to the side for a moment, before her eyes slip back to his. "Obviously, the benefits of an annulment are obvious, but you should also consider the protection the marriage affords you, when making your decision. But the choice is yours. We will all abide whatever decision you make."

Dionysus is quiet for a moment, thoughtful, as he often is, running a hand back through his short, dark curls before he resets his hands for signing. "I suppose that kind of protection is something it might be better to keep. But is that really all right?"

The question is loaded, his motions heavy with the implications. But Alekto expected this. Dionysus is, always, considerate of the feelings of others. He can see the practical value in keeping the marriage, but he will also worry how Hades feels about that, considering they are the furthest thing from a couple. He will worry how the others feel about his position as Consort. He might even worry how she—

No. It's best not to assume her particular opinion matters to him more than anyone else's does, even if Hades blinks at her slowly when she outwardly rejects the notion, or Hermes rolls his eyes, or Hekate gives her a look both knowing and skeptical. None of their opinions have any weight in this matter.

She blinks slowly herself, knowing well where she picked up the expression. "Of course it's all right," she replies, fixing him with a solemn stare as her hands move. "If that is what you want to do, or feel you need to do for the sake of your safety, then you should do it. We didn't present the choice to you secretly hoping you would reject it. We wanted—want—you to choose what feels like the best thing for you. No one will blame you for keeping a measure of defense against the kind of problems we know you may come up against."

It is important that he knows this. Whose opinion matters most is irrelevant. They all have the same one, in this, and she is glad for it.

She can see some tension leave his body, and it makes something in her chest ache. Does he still expect, after all this time, that his own efforts to protect himself, protect the life he wants to live, will be met with denial or rejection? What was it really like for him, on Olympus? He loves Demeter dearly, and Hestia too, and yet there's always this sense in him that he is *waiting* for rejection.

Alekto comes smoothly to a stop, to all appearances looking out at the fields with interest. She wants to know why, of course. Like she wants to know a great many things about him. But there are things she must say, as well as ask, and she needs to do that now. Before she loses whatever mad courage is propelling her this far.

So she turns to him, expression as serious as it's ever been, and gently disengages their arms so as to be able to lift both of hers to speak. One-handed signing works reasonably well if you know the other person, but not for anything all that complicated, in her experience. Better to have full use of her second instead of working with it looped through his, as he's been doing thus far.

"I don't know how to say this in a way that sounds... natural," she begins, adding her voice to her words just in case. He's still learning, after all, and the last thing she wants is to have to clarify what she means after she's managed to say it. "But I think I want to say it enough that that no longer matters to me. You..."

She looks down slightly, into his eyes, feeling a prickle on the back of her neck that she wills to go away. Why is it so difficult to be honest about this one thing? Why is it so much more terrifying than facing down Echidna's daughter?

*Be brave, for once in your life.*

"You are important, to me. I am better for the fact that you are here. Have been here, over the time that you have. And I wanted you to know that you belong here, and we are glad to have you."

She winces, knowing she's lost the thread, taken a left turn somewhere when she'd meant to plow straight forward, but her hands drop. She should at least give him the opportunity to speak. It's meant to be a conversation, not a lecture.

"Is it... is it really okay for me to believe that?" Dionysus looks back up at her, just the inch or two that separate their eyelines, and the wideness of his eyes lends her the cue that she has trouble picking up from a voice she can only barely hear.

It is a genuine, vulnerable question, and her hands itch for the throat of whomever made him doubt his worth.

Not a productive instinct, and one she suppresses immediately. Especially because it might have been —

Stars, she hopes it wasn't. But the beginning was tumultuous. Rocky. Entirely her fault.

She furrows her brows, trying to decide what to say, then lifts her hands again. "I... feel I must apologize again," she says, pressing her lips together. "I know my attitude towards you when you arrived was

regrettable, and I do regret it. But no trace of it remains, and I would like you to believe what I have said just now, yes. If you can."

She pauses, then: "If you cannot, I suppose I will simply have to do my best to prove it to you, over time."

*And find some way to make it up to you. Somehow.*

"I... it's okay," he replies, slowly, still a little hesitant with unfinished thought. "I believe you. It's...this is just a 'me' thing, honestly."

Alekto is still for a moment. Perhaps it isn't her fault? She can't feel more than a little relief at the prospect. "Even if that is so," she replies, "you do not have to overcome those ways of thinking alone. I didn't; in truth I don't think I could have. Some pains need more than one healer, and I would be... pleased if I could somehow assist you in this."

That's what it comes down to, really. She has to hope this is the kind of problem she can help with, even a little. If not... where does that leave them?

She turns her eyes towards her feet, a tightness around her eyes that she does not put there intentionally.

Maybe, just maybe, knowing how she really feels would help. Even a little bit. Because he should believe that his presence is important. That he's wanted. That she doesn't know how not to want him, anymore. His simple presence is enough, and yet she suspects some day it will not be. That she will get greedy. That she'll—

She's getting ahead of herself, and Alekto takes a deep breath, steadying her resolve.

"I... don't know how to say this, either," she admits, she swallows thickly. "I'm not even sure I should say it. But I suppose..." Her hands still for a long moment, then resume. "Would it be... accurate, to think that—if, somewhere down the road, my feelings became... different, than they are now. More... inclined to an association other than friendship, that would still *preserve* the friendship... would that be something you might be receptive to?"

Her signs are too jerky, unfluid, her mouth twisted in a way that conveys more of her emotion than she wants it to. It's agonizing, to put such a question out into the world without knowing the answer.

"I... um. P-probably?" Dionysus looks like an antelope with nowhere to run, and she, the lioness. It makes her heart clench, and not in a good way.

She needs to make this situation better, instead of worse. Forcing her features back into neutrality, she likewise makes her body relax, from her toes up to her face.

"I... see," she says slowly. "That's..." Her hands pause. "Thank you for answering."

She doesn't know what to make of the answer, but she does know not to press. She has made him uncomfortable, and that's precisely the opposite of what she meant to accomplish.

Not that she knows what she was trying to accomplish, with a question like that. Not really.

At least he hasn't fled. There's... maybe she can read something positive into that.

For now, though, they should definitely head back to the others. Not be alone, where the awkwardness she feels can fester.

[Weekly Update - 24 June, 2024](#)

[Jun 23, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

It's been... a strange week. About halfway through it, I decided that what I had planned to be the "common plot" between all of the routes—PC and co. getting involved in the Trojan War and the events of the *Iliad*—really just... wasn't working. For several reasons, though the biggest two were pretty stark:

a: It wasn't serving any other part of the plot, so all of the other characters' emotional beats were totally separate from it, which didn't seem like a good idea.

b: It's just a little too big to fit comfortably in as the short-but-solid 'spine' *Blood of the Living* really needs.

There was also, of course, a lingering question about whether I could do justice to such a beloved and much-studied story. Maybe, in long form, from a different angle, I might be able to (though that feels dubious), but I don't think that any version where this many other gods get involved was going to end up looking or feeling like the *Iliad* at all, and frankly, that's a bad thing in this case.

So now there's a different plot there, one that's a little sketchy right now but should fill out more as I go. More to the point, it better ties into the last game, the characters themselves, and is on something closer to the right 'scale.' While gods are involved in the *Iliad*, it is primarily a human conflict, and human limitations play a big role in shaping the narrative. The new plot is something a little more 'godly.'

And of course... it's really only meant to play a secondary role anyway. The primary role this time belongs to the individual plots attached to each RO, and to the PC's family-related subplot, whatever they choose to do with it. I'm hoping BotL will overall be much improved for this change, even if I had a pretty big existential crisis in the middle of trying to figure out the logistics of the change.

I... also may need to change the title, but we'll see how that goes. There were always sort of two reasons BotL was going to be called that, and the more literal one (all the living people spilling blood in the war), is now not at all a main event in the plot.

Anyway, that was sort of the main feature of progress this week, but I've also outlined at least the first few scenes of Chapter One, so I plan to spend most of this week just actually getting words down on the screen, then the last day editing so those of you who get the BIP will have a functional one this month! I'm not sure how it's going to go, after all this time, but I'll give it my best shot and see what we end up with.

In the meantime, I hope you all have a great week.

#### [Bonus Content Poll - June](#)

[Jun 29, 2024](#)

Hey all!

It's Pyri's turn to feature in the variable bonus content this month, so please let me know what you'd like to see from their perspective!

Something from the end of FoA

Something from early BotL

38 votes total

#### [BIP - June](#)

[Jun 29, 2024](#)

Hello, everyone!

Welcome to the very first BIP for Blood of the Living! This demo contains the character and save creator, as well as about 5,000 words of the first chapter. (Much of it is variation depending on which if any job the PC chose in the last game, so it may feel a little short, which I apologise for. But there's a little bit of summary and outline there for what's to come as well, so I hope you'll still enjoy it.

For Blood of the Living, I've switched my hosting to cogdemos.ink, which is essentially the successor of DashingDon, and should have far fewer errors. The downside is that only three save slots are available, but I believe it should have all the accessibility features DD/CS has, so it seems like the best compromise to me.

You can find what of the game exists so far [right here](#). As always, this is a benefit I provide to my supporters, and I'd really appreciate it if you didn't share the link with anyone else.

I hope you're as excited as I am for what's coming up, and that you enjoy what's there. Cheers, everyone.

[Weekly Update - 1 July, 2024](#)

[Jun 30, 2024](#)

Okay, first of all... July? *July*? Since when?!

I know the answer is 'since today' but... sometimes a new month really sneaks up on you. I'm not sure I'm prepared to be halfway through 2024, and yet here we are.

*Anyway.*

Happy July, everyone. As some of you already know, I released the very first BotL BIP here yesterday—a humble character and save creator plus five thousand words of the first chapter. As you can imagine, my goal for this month is just to put my head down and keep making progress on that. I'm a little out of practice with writing daily, and starting things is hard, so I doubt I'll be putting in a 60k month right off the bat like I often did in the thick of writing FoA, but I'll be setting a goal of 30k words for this month. 1,000 a day used to be my sort of "minimum," but I'm also now trying to give myself one day off a week (I haven't been, because I am both terrible boss and harried employee in this situation), so hopefully this means I'll be able to stretch myself a little beyond that a few times as well.



In any event, that's the news for this week. The first bonus content this month will still be BotL subplot spoilers, but this time not for the ROs, so tune in for those on Wednesday, if you'd like!

And, as always, have a great week.

## [Bonus Content - BotL Subplots IV](#)

[Jul 2, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

This month, we have the last of the previews for BotL. As always, these are subject to change, and in the case of these particular subplots, they may be cut short or absent from the game entirely depending on what you choose, because they both have to do with the PC's parents!

Also as always, big spoilers to follow.

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First, let's talk about Demeter!

So obviously some PCs will have attempted to cut their mother out of their life entirely, depending on how the player headcanons the relationship and how the character in that context reacted to some of Demeter's choices in the last game. In those cases, the first 'flag' for the subplot will still come up—that is, Demeter will still send them a letter near the start of the story, and the PC will be given a chance to soften their stance towards her just a little bit, but they also don't have to.

If the PC wants Demeter out of their life, out of their life she will stay. If they're open to reconciliation, or maintained a good relationship with her in the last game, however, a subplot follows:

- 1: Has either been out of touch until now, or in touch; sends letter asking if she can visit.
- 2: If you grant her permission, Demeter visits the Underworld
- 3: Visits a second time, and this time brings Maia with her. Hermes is understandably distraught at her condition
- 4: In trouble with Zeus, needs a place to let him cool down; suggest either Underworld or mortal realm.
- 5: Apologises for everything before; commits to being a better parent to you... a more honest one who will not try to shield you from things unless you ask her to.
- 6: Depending on choices, decides to return to Olympus to be the counterweight Zeus needs, stay mostly on the mortal realm, stay mostly in the Underworld.

As you can see, this is fairly vague except for some key bits, which is intentional. There will likely be a fair bit of variation in how all these things go depending on the PC's relationship with her. But the choice at the end that wraps things up is, I thought, sort of fun, in that she can end up living in the mortal realm or even in the Underworld. The full implications of any such choice are left to the reader to headcanon, but I do imagine the Underworld would change a fair bit for her presence.

And then, of course, there is the long-lost dad in the room: Iasion. He was originally going to appear as part of the Trojan War plot, and canonically he is still fighting in it right now, but he was always destined to die in it, so I've just moved that part up in the timeline a little bit.

Most of his story in fact, takes place after his death... provided the PC engages with it, and eventually makes a pretty key choice that calls back to a mythological story about Dionysus.

- 1: Hello, I believe I am your father.
- 2: Getting to know you/I wanted to apologise. For never having met you before.
- 3: Taken out of queue/not taken out
- 4: Conversion to deityhood/forgetting and reintroduction
- 5: What kind of relationship would you like to have, going forward?/I feel like I know you, do you know me?

That choice, specifically, being taking Iasion out of the line for oblivion, judgement, and so on and making him a god. (Dionysus in some stories actually did this in the case of his mortal mother.)

The PC can still interact with Iasion in the event they don't make this decision, but it will have a tinge of bittersweetness to it, as he forgets his exact relationship to them. Or, of course, they can choose not to engage with him at all.

For a certain confluence of choices in both of these subplots, there's even a sub-subplot where Demeter and Iasion meet again, interact, and may or may not repair their relationship. All of it really comes down to whether the PC wants to reach out to one or both or neither of them, and in what way that happens.

I'm hoping it'll be pretty interesting to play, and I'm looking forward to writing it, even if I suspect it'll get pretty complicated pretty fast.

[Weekly Update - 8 July, 2024](#)

[Jul 7, 2024](#)

Hello again, everyone!

The first week of this month was a productive one for me. So far, I'm in line with my goal of 30,000 words for this month; I wrote 7,000 of them this week, and I've been mostly happy with how the chapter is shaping up so far. Hopefully you all will be, too, when you read it.

That's basically the long and short of it this time. I'm just trying to get back into the swing of writing daily, while understanding that I could be interrupted any day now by getting editing notes back on FoA itself, which is naturally a daunting prospect as well, haha.

But for now I'll just keep moving along until I have a reason to do something else instead, and maintain steady progress as long as I can. Like a language-app streak or something; it's the consistency that counts!

Anyhow, I'll be back in this slot next week, hopefully with more of the same to report. I hope you all have a great week. Northern Hemisphere friends, please try not to fry and remember to drink water; everyone down here in the south half of the planet with me... well, also drink water. If you're anything like me, it can be hard to leave the blanket nest to do anything, but hydration is important. :)

Until next Monday!

[Weekly Update - 15 July, 2024](#)

[Jul 14, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

More solid progress to report this week—another 7,000 words down, bringing the chapter up to 19,000 as of this writing. I'll soon be moving into the individual RO/PO scenes at the end of it, so I don't think that overall the chapter will be too monstrous in length. Maybe somewhere around 35,000? I might be finished with it, or nearly, this month, but I'm going to wait until I have at least the first few chapters before going public with the demo, so there won't be an early access period just yet or anything.

Anyway, I'm getting back into the flow of things gradually; I might have been able to get a little more done this week, but I had a couple other commitments that took some chunks out of my writing time. I've finished those now, so the only 'extra' I need to worry about is the bonus content appearing on Wednesday.

You voted to see something from Pyri at the end of FoA for that, so I'll be figuring out what that is and writing it up over the coming days. It might be a piece from post-trial for an Olympus-choosing PC, so we'll see if I can make that work.

Otherwise I'm planning to just keep on keeping on this week and hope for the best. Nothing back from HG yet; I'm honestly not surprised the editing process is taking longer than forecast, because this is a very long game. But if I don't hear anything by the end of the month, I'll probably send an email just to make sure everything is okay.

Speaking of, I hope you're all doing well, and as always, I'll be back in this spot next Monday with another progress update. Stay shiny. :)

### [Bonus Content - Pyri POV](#)

[Jul 16, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

This month's bonus content is from the end of FoA—in this case, from the "no sequel" end of FoA, where the PC (in this case, a Persephone), elects to stay behind on Olympus full-time. What follows is Pyri's version of the conversation that follows that discussion, and the last time they ever see one another in person.

I hope you enjoy it, in the way angst can be enjoyed!

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By the time Persephone meets back up with Pyri, the crowd has notably thinned. In the end, even something this big doesn't seem to matter much, to anyone on Olympus. Or maybe it just seems that way because they all knew what Pyri didn't: how it was going to end.

They ignore the staring—there's a lot of it, and it isn't comfortable, but it's mostly not directed at someone as insignificant as them—putting one foot in front of the other as steadily as they can to approach her. She's patting her hands against her tunic, maybe nervously, maybe not. Pyri thought they had good guesses when it came to her, but considering how this all worked out... well, that's obviously not how things really were.

They part from the group with a short nod to Hades, who leads the others away to a not-eavesdropping distance. Pyri only sort of gets it; they know that more than one other person is surprised and saddened by the decision Persephone made. Maybe they're just all better at keeping it to themselves. Not that Pyri even knows what they should keep to themselves and what they should say. But... if someone cared about them, they'd want to know.

Once they stop, she does, too, offering a small smile.

They try to do the same, but the best they manage is some kind of awkward grimace, and it feels terrible to keep trying, so it's a short effort.

"So..." They shuffle their feet a bit, scuffing their nicest sandals in the dirt. There's an order to this. Most important things first, right? "A lot just happened. You're okay, right? Not like... freaking out or anything?"

They look up from their feet and towards her, and her lips crimp in... thoughtfulness? Awkwardness? Something else altogether? Second guessing all these things is already exhausting.

"Are you?" The words come out a bit tentatively.

Are they? Pyri knows, on some level, that they *will be* okay. They were okay before her. They have a good life, a life worth living, with friends that make the hard times feel worthwhile. But...

Their expression crumples for a moment, caught between too many things. How can she even ask, really? How can she not know how they feel about this? Had they just... had they never made it clear enough how much they like her?

"I mean, I don't know. I just..." Pyri reaches up to rub at the nape of their neck, the words leaving them only with great difficulty. It feels like they have to scrape each one out of their chest through their throat, like they're choking on the size of it all.

"Maybe I should have expected this," they mutter, almost more to themselves than you. "But I didn't. Not even a little bit." It wasn't like she'd ever said she wanted to go back home. Ever acted like it. Was that all it had been? Acting?

"And it sucks, Persephone, but I... just. Why did you do it? Why did you choose Olympus?"

They can hear her pull in a breath, like her answer's ready but she's not so sure she wants to come out with it. She does, though, to her credit. Not like there's anything *not* to credit her for in the first place. "I did it because... it was the only way to stop all this back and forth. If I had tried anything else, I could be used against you, and I didn't want that."

"What?" Pyri replies, flummoxed. Whatever emotions were building in them. Whatever they were trying to get to with all this, is swept aside for the confusion, and then for something more like regret.

"Why would you do that?" They ask, voice cracking softly over the words. "Don't you think we could handle anything they throw at us? Don't you think we *would* have, for you? We would have! Happily!"

Flinching, they drop their tone back to a more reasonable volume, chest tight. They have to try to think about this from her perspective. They have to be understanding. "I... I get it. I would want to protect my friends, too. But, Persephone... we'd never want you to sacrifice what you want just to keep the dumb

thunder lord from being mad or whatever. I wish... I wish I could have told you that, before now. I wish I'd figured out that I should."

Wasn't there some way to take it all back? Maybe... maybe Boss could... but no, he wouldn't. This was of her own free will. Or it was Fate. Either way, he wouldn't be able to wind it back without... without a lot of problems a lot worse than the ones Persephone was trying to protect them from.

I just..." Pyri expels a breath in a frustrated sigh, scrubbing their hands up and down their face. "I'm having a hard time here, Persephone. I thought everything was going to be fine. That we'd all get to go home and have a laugh about this later, you know? And now it's 'we'll send your annulment paperwork' and 'do you want your stuff sent back to you' and I don't ever get to see you again." They drop their hands, eyes meeting hers in... what? Some kind of vain hope she'll deny it? What is there to deny? She hadn't been ambiguous in the least.

"It... hurts. A lot."

They know they always said they'd respect her choice, and they *do*. They really do. It's just... they're allowed to hurt, right? Anyone's allowed to hurt, when they lose someone they care about. Letters just aren't going to be the same, even if she *does* write them.

It feels like something in their chest is collapsing.

"I know. It hurts me, too." The look on her face—the way her mouth pulls, the strain around her bright green eyes—is convincing, even right now, when they don't feel like they have a sense of her anymore. She *is* hurting. This isn't something she says just to make them feel better. And yet...

Pyri swallows past the thick lump in their throat. "Would it really have been so hard?" they ask. "To trust us? To believe that we could protect you?" They shake their head, hard enough that it feels a bit like something rattles. That's not fair of them. "No—don't answer that. I don't want to know. I already do, I guess."

"Pyri... I never meant to hurt you with this." She half-reaches out, as though to touch them, but they already know it won't connect. She doesn't touch anyone, and they've made sure they learned it well, so that they don't make her uncomfortable.

A bit of a moot point, now.

"I know." They hold their hands against the sides of their neck, fingers laced behind. They can't reach out. They mustn't. "I think that makes it worse somehow. But... never mind that. I'm not actually here to complain to you." What they actually want only comes to them right then, but it's firm with certainty, even when nothing else is. Like it's something they've been carrying with them much longer than this.

"I wanted... I wanted to tell you good luck. And that I hope no matter what happens, you're happy, you know? I want that for you." They smile, and even though it's a bit shaky at the edges, it manages to feel better than the last one. More like they mean it.

"...thank you." Persephone looks a bit lost, but also a bit like maybe she has other things to be doing. Because she would. She has a whole life, here. Family. Things to... things to be, things to do, people to love and be loved by.

And them, well... everyone always leaves, in the end. They don't know how they know that, but they do.

Pyri takes a step backwards, and then another, taking one of their hands away from the other and giving Persephone a slightly-awkward wave.

On the third, they finally turn, heading over towards the others. They look back, only once, and hurriedly face forward again when they do. They don't really know much about what happens after that. Later, they remember meeting Hestia, and thinking maybe in other circumstances that would have been really neat. They don't remember anything she says. Or anything they say. Or anything the others might have said to them.

There probably were some things. But in the end, it doesn't much matter.

They just have to keep moving forward, no matter what.

[Weekly Update - 22 July, 2024](#)

[Jul 21, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

I can't say I have a lot of news to report this week, really. I've been making steady forward progress on the chapter, to the tune of another 7,000 words, bringing the total as of this writing up to 26,000. For some idea what that means, the chapter has a total of three scenes per playthrough, more or less. The first two have only a little bit of variation depending on choices and the like, but the third has six versions, one for each RO/PO. I am done with the first two scenes, as well as the Hades version of the third scene, and about half of the Hermes version, or thereabouts.

I don't think I'll quite have every version done by the end of the month (because that sure crept up on me unexpectedly!) but the first chapter will definitely be done sometime in August, and then we'll be onto the next.

Those of you on the Hades, Hermes, and possibly Charon routes will have a full first chapter to play as of the BIP. As for everyone else, please do hang in there; the ladies and Pyri will have their turns soon!

I'm going to look into restructuring the Patreon a bit soon, but I'm still thinking about exactly how I want to do that. It's sort of difficult to take risks with, because it's my only living, but at the same time I'd really like to make early access and the BIP more, well, accessible.

Anyhow, that's just something I'm thinking about for now. If I do make a change, it will probably coincide with the release of FoA or the first demo release of BotL, whichever one comes first. I'm beginning to suspect both of those things may be a few months out yet, so we'll see how it goes.

Until next week, be well.

### [Weekly Update - 29 July, 2024](#)

[Jul 28, 2024](#)

Buckle up, everyone, there's *news*.

As you may or may not have heard via Tumblr already, FoA now has a tentative release date of September 2024 according to Steam, and early in that month according to HG staff. This is, of course, contingent on me getting the final version of the game back to them in a timely manner, as they've returned it to me after a solid couple months of editing.

I plan to spend the last few days this month doing that, with the ultimate goal of having it back to them by August 1. This should be quite possible, as most of the editing was copyediting, and the few continuity notes and so on that I have to address are generally fairly simple fixes to the game's code.

So that is what I will be working on for the next bit, with the caveat that the BIP will still be coming out as normal on the 31st. I was fortunate enough to both meet my 30k goal for the month and also finish Charon's chapter one scene yesterday, as well as get the testing done on that, so all I'll really have to do is post it and get it to all of you.

In other news, I think I've decided to give restructuring the Patreon a try. It's a serious risk to my ability to pay rent, but at least I live in a country with an actual social safety net, so there's that. The biggest change I'm planning to make is to make the BIP accessible at the \$5 tier, and I know that's what most of you are here for, so you can see why I might be concerned haha. None of the tiers will be going away, but there will be a few benefits being adjusted; for example, I'm going down to one bonus content a month, and it will be moved to the \$10 tier, and things like that.

I'll be sure to provide a more detailed summary of how the tiers will look as we get closer to the time; I plan to put this new structure into effect on 1 September, so until then everything will be the same, the



August BIP will only be available to those of you at Blossom or higher, etc, etc.

Anyway, that's sort of the shape of things right now. I hope you're all having a fantastic week (I, for one, am watching lots of the Olympics), and I'll be back soon with the BIP and bonus content poll.

Cheers, everyone.

### [Bonus Content Poll - July](#)

[Jul 30, 2024](#)

Hello everyone!

As is traditional, the hour before the BIP drops, I throw a poll out there. This time, we've got a new rotation of bonus contents, and per a very good suggestion I've received, this time I'm going to be doing something in the style 'Character A, from Character B's perspective.'

Now I know some of my characters are more popular than others, so while Character A is decided by where in the rotation we are (this month, it's Hekate), Character B can't be the same every month, so each time someone wins, they're excluded from the vote next time, before being added back in. So for example if everyone really wants to know more about how Pyri thinks of Hekate, then Pyri won't appear as an option in August's poll about Hermes, but will reappear in September, if that makes sense.

Anyway, this month, the content piece is *about* Hekate. Who is the actual POV?

Hades

Hermes

Charon

Pyri

Alekto

53 votes total

[BIP - July](#)

[Jul 30, 2024](#)

Hello, everyone!

As promised, the July BIP adds 30,000 new words. For those of you on the Hades, Hermes, or Charon routes, you have the complete first chapter, whereas those of you on the Pyri, Alekto, or Hekate routes will have everything but the last scene with your RO/PO.

As with many Chapter Ones, it's largely setup, but there are certainly also significant events based on the happenings of the last game, so I hope you enjoy both elements.

[Here's the demo.](#)

[Weekly Update - 5 August, 2024](#)

[Aug 4, 2024](#)

Hello everyone!

Welcome to August. This month is a lot of things for me, but among them is FoA's birthday! It's been four years, as of the 10th, since I started working on a little cozy project to make myself feel less bleak and hopeless in a very bleak and hopeless time. I had part of Diaspora under my belt at that point, but frankly I was still extremely new to CS and to writing original work with the intent that others read it. I would still sort of consider myself 'new' to all of that, given that my first complete project is just now wrapping up, but I'm certainly pleased with how far things have come since then, as well.

This week, of course, I released the BIP, and I have kept writing since, 4000 more words bringing me to the end of Pyri's version of the last scene and the beginning of Alekto's. I do believe I shall have Chapter One finished by the end of the week, and be able to start Chapter Two. Since I haven't released the demo yet, I won't be doing an early access schedule for those, but that might be closer than I think, if I'm able to keep up the pace. I have ten chapters planned for this story, and the first is almost certainly going to be the smallest, but it will feel good to have it ticked off the list already!

Anyway, my plan for the upcoming week is just to keep writing and see where it gets me. The final piece of 'preview' bonus content will be up on Wednesday, also, where I talk a little bit about a subplot I have in mind for the PC themselves!

And of course, I'll be back in this spot next week, hopefully with more good news. Stay well and stay wonderful, everyone. I hope you have a great week.

## [Bonus Content - Sequel Storylines V](#)

[Aug 6, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Welcome to the last installment of the storyline preview series. This one's going to be a little short, because firstly it's only about one subplot and secondly because I'm going to be keeping things vague so as to leave a few surprises, but today I'm going to talk a little bit about the planned subplot for the PC themselves!

In FoA, to some extent most of the plot was about the PC. How they settled in (or didn't) to the Underworld, who they made friends with (or didn't), and ultimately, what they chose for their living arrangement for the foreseeable future. In the sequel, there is of course naturally still a lot of focus on those developing relationships, but the plot points themselves most often primarily concern another character, and give the PC an opportunity to grow close to the people involved by *getting* involved in whatever's going on.

But of course, the PC's continued development as a person and a deity is important, too, and there's no reason to drop those threads here. So I've decided on a subplot that will touch on both, by introducing the ability to interact with perhaps the PC's first straightforward worshiper.

I don't count Nikos here (though they will be making another appearance), because firstly, the PC could feasibly have had no interaction with them, and secondly because they're not so much a worshiper as an oracle, and their attitude toward the PC is slightly different accordingly. Anyway, the beginning of the subplot is pretty simple: a man named Ikarios gets in contact with the PC (either via prayer or Hermes, if the PC got rid of their ability to receive prayer through dreams). Ikarios is trying to start his life over, and as the burgeoning deity of new beginnings and major life turnarounds, the PC has a chance to help in a couple of different ways, and offer him guidance.

The plan is for there to be further opportunities for the PC to work towards 'Dionysian' powers or 'Persephonean' ones, to cultivate relationships with humans or remain distant from them, and eventually, when things go upside down, to decide how to handle the administration of divine justice. I'm hoping it will provide a satisfying arc for everyone who gets involved, though of course there will be options to be involved only relatively little (it's a subplot, after all, and while I hope it's an engaging one, a PC who doesn't want to involve themselves in mortal affairs is a legitimate PC to play!)

So, I hope you're looking forward to playing it. I, for one, am looking forward to writing it.

## [Weekly Update - 12 August, 2024](#)

[Aug 11, 2024](#)

Hey everyone.

It's been sort of a mixed week here. On the one hand, I've made another 7,000 words of steady progress, putting me partway through the last Hekate scene of Chapter One. So it's not quite done, but it's on the way there, and will definitely be finished this week, at which point I'll also be able to move on to Chapter Two.

In less-good news, I've been losing a lot of subscribers over the last few months, and it might not be long at this rate before I am no longer able to sustain myself with the money I make through writing. This puts me in a complicated position, and may require that I step back slightly from my projects, slowing my progress in order to devote more attention to searching for a conventional job.

I don't want to do that, so I'm hoping that the upcoming Patreon price restructure and FoA being officially published will help replenish those numbers, but probably around the end of September, I'm going to have to make a serious assessment about whether writing for a living is something that can support me at this time.

I will, of course, never stop writing in general—it's just a question about how fast I'll be able to work on my projects, and whether I need to be looking at doing something else alongside FoA that might be a little more well-received in general. Anyway, I don't mean to doom-and-gloom here; these are just the things that are on my mind right now as my living becomes significantly less secure than it was at the end of last year. I know I took five months to edit, and that probably lost me a lot of support, but it's the recent dip that's really pushing things to the limit.

But then I doubt I have to tell anyone that it's hard to make a living as an artist.

In any case! I'm looking forward to getting into Chapter Two, and I hope you all are excited to start reading it! It's also my birthday this week, so here's hoping there will be some cake involved. Cake makes everything better.

Have a great week, everyone, and don't forget to be good to one another. :)

[Weekly Update - 19 August, 2024](#)

[Aug 18, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

My birthday week went... okay? At least as far as writing goes, haha. I've managed another 8,000 words, finishing off the last of Chapter One and bringing me 6,000 of the way into Chapter Two, which was enough to finish on the introductory scene and get into the first major part of the chapter. I won't spoil it, but a potentially very important person shows up in the Underworld, and the PC has to decide what they want to do about something with very personal consequences.

I'm just hoping to hold steady for this week and see what I can do. There's also a bonus content coming up on Wednesday, and to no surprise, Hades won the poll, so we'll be seeing Hekate from his perspective this time. I'm looking forward to figuring out what I'm doing with that.

In the meantime, we are 2.5 weeks out from FoA's official release! For me this has mostly meant stressing out about paperwork, and then crossing my fingers and hoping the Australian government is prompt. Which, for reference, is rather like hoping Sisyphus will get the rock up and over the hill this time.

But all I can do is wait and try not to worry too much. In any event, I hope you all have a lovely week. I'll be back here on Wednesday with the bonus content, and then next Monday I'll run you through the changes I'm making to the Patreon structure, and how they'll affect you all going forward (spoiler: probably not much, though some of you are likely to want to go to a lower tier).

Anyway, that's all from me this week. Cheers, y'all, and thanks for sticking with me!

[Bonus Content - Hekate & Hades](#)

[Aug 20, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

As you voted, the bonus content piece this month is from Hades's POV, and it's about Hekate, who in this instance features on her route. I hope you all enjoy the read.

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He follows her through the orchard, trailing behind her like a satellite to a star.

For she is very much such a thing today, bright and radiant in her happiness, exuding a sort of warmth that invites even a mere spectator such as himself to enjoy. It heartens him to see it; Hekate in such a state is a rare thing, and yet he has always wondered if maybe perhaps this isn't the truest version of her.

Happy, not because there are not trials or difficulties before or behind, but because she is handling them capably, and everything that truly matters is as it should be. In these moments, she truly *is* magic.

"You really did a number on this place," she observes, pausing to tilt her head at a fallen tree. Even her braids are bright today, an almost metallic, star-glazed white threaded in and over her dark hair.

Hades winces, but her tone softens the blow. There's no denying it's true, after all. "Alcyoneus was... difficult," he says slowly. "It is hard, to handle someone of considerable power fully trying to kill you."

"Hard if you're making a point of not killing *them*," she specifies, and he nods. It's the truth, after all.

"Unfortunately, much of the orchard suffered the consequences. I'm not entirely sure we'll be able to find what you're looking for." Whatever that may be.

But at a certain point, there's no need to ask questions. His oldest friend had asked him to come to the orchard with her, so that she might do something important, and ask him something, and that simply means it was as good as already done. He wouldn't decline anyway, but to do so while she was so obviously pleased about something would have been even worse.

"How is Seph?" he asks, well aware that the answer to this question probably has something to do with Hekate present state of radiant contentment. She wouldn't be so pleased if their prognosis was bad, or if they'd taken things poorly upon waking.

"Recovering," she replies with a nod, pausing to give a half-uprooted tree a magical nudge back into place, then forming the soil over it again. The act sets it to rights; some of these will probably need a little more prolonged care and magic from the resident horticultural experts, including Seph himself, but he's glad to see that not *all* the trees are damaged to such an extent.

He'd have preferred to fight almost anywhere else, but allowing Alcyoneus near the city where Hekate and Seph were trying to set up defenses was unthinkable.

"And does that have anything to do with why you're in such a good mood today?"

"Am I?" Hekate looks back over her shoulder, half her mouth pulled up in a playful smile. "I hadn't noticed."

"Hekate, you're literally glowing."

"Oh, right. That. Look, not all of us can make things cold and dark when we're upset. Some of us are silly and sparkle when we're delighted."

"I think I would vastly prefer to be of the latter type, actually."

She wrinkles her nose, but this, too, has the air of amusement to it. "Really? But the—" she snorts—"the 'tall, dark, and brooding' thing works so well for you. Shimmering would be entirely against type. No one would know what to think of you."

"...You continue to reinforce my opinion."

She laughs outright at that, something almost girlish, in a way he doubts she ever got to even as a young girl.

Were either of them ever young? It's hard to imagine, anymore. Perhaps they must have been, once, but any memory of it is nothing more than a vague impression of a stranger, swallowed almost wholly by the thing that killed those strangers.

But then, the Titanomachy killed lots of things.

"To answer your original question," she says, a sing-song lilt to her tone. "I'm here because I want to ask Seph to stay in the Underworld. Or rather, since we're being sticklers about *pressure*, to give them the option."

He blinks. This must be the part she wanted to ask him about. "You know why we're being 'sticklers,'" he points out, arching one brow above the other.

"Yes, yes, of course. And while I'm making light of it right now, it is important. But I also think it's important for them to know we actually like them and want to be around them. Holding back too much on that front because we're worried about pressure might achieve the opposite. They might feel like they aren't welcome to stay here, because we've all been too distant and polite. Well... except Pyri. I don't think they're capable. But my point stands."

And it's a good one. Hades would have no idea how to achieve such a balance, and he knows he has erred on the side of 'polite distance,' because that's how he is more or less all the time. His friends know he loves them, fortunately, because expressing as much is not his strength.

"Well, then. I shall leave you in charge of making the offer in whatever way you see fit," he replies.

She grins back at him, and with that, the matter is decided.

They walk a while longer, though; Hades a bit lost in his thoughts. Mostly about what they'd just discussed, and what it might mean for Hekate, not just Seph.

"Do you think they're..."

"Maybe," she says, on a gusty sigh. "But in the end that's really for them to decide. I always wondered why it was so uncertain, but if it were them, that would make sense."

He nods slowly. There is no tying a human-blooded person to Fate. At least not so fully as the gods can be shackled.

"Well... I hope, for the both of you, that it works out well."

Hekate huffs. "No need to be so serious. Things are only beginning, you know? I for one am enjoying the part where it's just fun and interesting to be around them. I've not made a new friend since Pyri."

"...They haven't been here that long, you know." Hades pauses, helping her right another tree and then stepping well away so as to allow her magic to work without interference.

"No, but I like making friends. Now—aha! I had a feeling."

She approaches a much more intact tree, floating herself up among the branches to sort through what she finds there. "You've managed to rot most of these, I think."

"...I apologize."

A sigh, and she pushes a branch aside to look down at him disapprovingly. "Don't apologize for your powers. Better you have them than anyone else I can think of, and I mean anyone. I'm just pointing out that maybe they'll have something to plant to replace some of the destroyed ones. Decay is a natural process that aids the life cycle, you know."

"I am aware."

She seems willing enough to let it lie there, rather than retreading old argumentative territory, and a few moments later, Hades hears her make a sound of approval, after which she lands, clutching a slightly-dull, red apple that must have somehow survived the conflict.

"Perfect," she declares. "Now I just need to decide when to give it to them."

"Best not leave it too long," he observes. "Who knows what will happen between now and then?"

"Yes, yes, realm of barely controlled manifest chaos and all that. I do love it here."

Hopefully, so does Seph.



[Aug 25, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Welcome to the last weekly update for August. This one has some important information about upcoming changes to the Patreon, so it might be a good idea to read until the end.

As far as progress this week, I managed another square 7,000, bringing Chapter Two up to 13,000 overall. I'm hoping it'll be at 18k when the BIP releases.

Anyway, I promised a rundown on the new version of Patreon this week, and here it is. Basically, my goals were to 1) make the BIP more accessible in terms of price, because I know it's a bit expensive currently, and 2) to give myself a few less extras to worry about every month so I can focus on getting the sequel out in a more reasonable time frame than the almost four years it took me to finish the first game!

So, the tiers themselves aren't changing in price, but what is available in each of them will be swapped around a bit. **The following structure will go into effect on 1 September, 2024.**

*Seedling* (\$2 USD): Weekly Update, 3 days early access to new chapters (when the demo process begins)

*Bud* (\$5 USD): Weekly Update, 3 days early access, access to monthly BIP

*Blossom* (\$10 USD): Weekly Update, 7 days early access, access to monthly BIP, monthly bonus content

*Full Bloom* (\$25 USD): Weekly Update, 10 days early access, access to monthly BIP, monthly bonus content, custom short story (one-time, after 3 months only)

Now, this new structure with the BIP specifically causes a bit of a bump in things when it comes to the August/September changeover. If the Bud Tier gets access to the BIP on the 1st, then it seems there was no benefit to the extra \$5 Blossoms paid in August. To avoid this, I'll actually be releasing two versions of the August BIP. The 'Bud Version,' what will be available to the Bud Tier on September 1, will contain the completed Chapter One. The 'Blossom Version' will have not only that, but also the material I've done so far on Chapter Two.

Come the end of September, everyone at Bud Tier and up will receive the same BIP. I hope this is a way I can make things fair to everyone.

So, there it is. I apologize for the text wall, and I hope it was all understandable. I suspect a lot of you at the Blossom Tier will want to drop to Bud, so I wanted to give you ample time to do that before the changes go into effect. :)

Anyway, that's that on that. I hope you all have a lovely week, and I'll be back here three days(!) before FoA releases with what I suspect will be a very nervous weekly update next Monday.

[BIP - August](#)

[Aug 30, 2024](#)

Hello, everyone!

If you're new around these parts, the BIP is my form of "monthly update," where patrons get access to what I've written over the previous month, usually in the form of a partial chapter. In this case, what we have is Blood of the Living's character creator, save generator, all of Chapter One, and the first 18,000 or so words from Chapter Two.

There's also some outline and notes beyond that, and you're welcome to peruse if curious, but by no means is that necessary. You'll be able to tell easily where I've stopped writing. :)

[Here it is; I hope you enjoy it.](#)

[Weekly Update - 2 September, 2024](#)

[Sep 1, 2024](#)

When I tell you I'm having one long, slow anxiety attack...

Anyway, hey everyone! It's release week here in FoA-land, and as you might be able to imagine I am on *tenterhooks* about it. Hopefully I'll come up with something a little bit more reasonable than 'please buy it and maybe be gentle in reviews' for some sort of official tumblr post later in the week, but for right now, this is absolutely where my head is at.

I'm also very excited, of course, but you know. The fear is always strong, with me.

In other news, the BIP went out last week, so everyone at Bud tier and up should have access to that. Let me know if you're at such a tier and can't access it, for whatever reason. I've also made a few changes to the Patreon to reflect the new tier structure, and if my messages for the next few weeks

have a little more 'explaining for new people' tone to them, please forgive me any redundancies and so on.

I do, of course, very much plan to continue working on Blood of the Living this week, so we'll see how well I do at that, given that I'm sure FoA's release will reveal at least a dozen catastrophic bugs that I will need to fix somehow (I believe this is just sort of part of game development, so I'm trying to be prepared!)

Hopefully next week's update will be a little closer to the realm of chill normalcy; for right now, I'm going to go distract myself from thinking about it and try not to develop a nail-biting habit.

I hope you all have a fantastic week, and don't forget: FoA goes on sale September 5!

[Weekly Update - 9 September, 2024](#)

[Sep 8, 2024](#)

Hello, everyone, and welcome if you're new!

Last week, as everyone knows, FoA finally released to the public. I think that went mostly well, though I have no idea about numbers or anything like that. As expected, I've already done a number of bugfixes; I'm hoping there won't be legions more, but with a game this size you never know.

In other news, I've been working away on the sequel; Blood of the Living got 8,000 new words this week, up to a total of 26,000 in Chapter Two. I've now moved into the first Makaria & Kerberos scene of the game, which will hopefully be a short and sweet breather after some of the more dramatic possibilities of the scene before it.

There's also a bit of an opportunity to do some 'timeskip magic,' as it were, and tweak your relationship with the two of them a bit; PCs who refused her last game can have tentatively started interacting with her, and PCs who got along well can have closed off a bit, etc.

Anyway, that's all to report on this week. I'd like to make a special request of those of you who have a couple minutes to spare. If you wouldn't mind leaving a review for FoA somewhere, I would greatly appreciate it!

But even if you're not feeling up to that, don't worry about it. I hope you all have a great week, and I'll be back with a bonus content on Wednesday, for those of you who get that.

[Sep 10, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

I'm currently just starting with a bonus content series that involves taking a look at one character from the perspective of another, usually with some reference to a PC in there somewhere. Last month, we had Hades's POV on Hekate just before her version of the fruit scene. This month, we have Hekate's POV on (childhood friend) Hermes, shortly before the PC arrives in the Underworld.

I hope you enjoy it!

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“So this friend of yours. Dionysus. What’s he like?” Hekate frowns down at the diagram she’s working on. Something’s a little bit off...

Hermes, lounging sideways on one of the library’s couches, flips a page in his book, though she’s not entirely sure he’s reading it. “Well, what about him?” he asks, a hint of cheek in his tone.

Hekate rolls her eyes. He’s absolutely insufferable when he’s in the rare position of knowing more than her about something. Still, the twinge of amusement she feels softens any possible annoyance.

“What do you mean ‘what about him’? You know good and well that the answer to that is always *everything*.” A smile pulls at the corner of her mouth, and she moves a finger, erasing a few lines from the diagram.

Hermes laughs, setting the book on the nearby table, quickly closing it when she frowns at him for leaving it open facedown. “I can’t tell you everything, Hekate. The guy’s got to have some things to tell you himself, you know? Let yourself be surprised for once in your life. If you can’t, do the... the star thing.”

“You know it’s called divination, Hermes. You’ve *done it with me*, before.”

“Yeah, yeah. My point is, you only get a certain number of details about Sunshine. So... three questions. Choose carefully.”

*Sunshine*, huh? Hermes does have a proclivity for nicknames, ranging from the endearing to the obnoxious, and something like that could be either one quite easily.

Still, she supposes imposing some limits here is reasonable. It wouldn't be too kind to go into future events knowing much more about Dionysus than he does about them. Not that fairness really comes into this anywhere. This is the person who's going to be coming to the Underworld to marry Hades, after all. Hekate doesn't find it unreasonable to want to be prepared for such a situation.

But... if Hermes is treating it this lightly, that's probably most of what she needs to know, anyway. If this person were dangerous, or even just entitled in the way Olympians can so often be, he wouldn't be teasing her with the promise of information. He'd just be providing it.

"How much like Demeter is he?" Not that she really knows much about Demeter, but Hermes likes to talk, so if she gives him a decent prompt like a comparison, she might end up learning more about both of them.

He laughs again, and when she looks over, something in his eyes has softened. "I guess I'd say... the powers are pretty similar, but that's basically where the comparison ends. He's a riot, Sunshine. Sharp as a knife, almost as charming as me, and has his head in the clouds about twenty two hours every day."

"You're so arrogant," Hekate says with a soft snort. "'Almost' as charming as you? I suspect you're underestimating him, if you say something like that. Or just overestimating yourself."

"Of course not. That's a very serious assessment of the situation, Hekate. Using a very precise gauge of charming-ness that you couldn't possibly understand, due to having all the charm of a heap of nettles."

"Oh look, he has jokes. Who'd have guessed?" She rolls her eyes, still smiling. "All right. How long have you known him, then?"

"Since we were both kids." Hermes flashes a grin at her, but then the expression fades into something more relaxed. He rolls onto his side to face her at her work, shrugging the shoulder he's not leaning on. "What good is a question like that?"

"Quite a lot. You wouldn't hang around someone that long unless you either had to or you really liked them. Given that it's unlikely you were forced to get close to the child of your father's political opponent, I surmise you did so voluntarily."

"...Yeah." Hermes clears his throat uncharacteristically, but when she looks back up, his face is smooth, betraying no hint of why he'd been so reserved for just that moment. "We're friends. He's a good guy. I think you'll like him."

"Mhm." Her eyes narrow over at him. "How much do *you* like him?"

The question is pointed, but Hermes doesn't act like it, stretching his hands over his head and humming as if in thought. "Well, I just said we were friends, right? That's kind of a lot, for me. I don't have so many real ones."

It's not quite an answer, but his affected nonchalance is an interesting observation on its own. Hekate pauses in her work, considering for a long moment before she nods to herself.

Perhaps it would behoove her to keep an eye on things. Just in case.

## [Weekly Update - 16 September, 2024](#)

[Sep 15, 2024](#)

Hello again, everyone!

I continue to be just generally blown away by the response to FoA. It seems to be doing rather well, in terms of the number of people playing it, and that's really reassuring. I sort of thought only a handful of people (perhaps this very handful here, as a matter of fact) would be interested in playing a cozy version of some very un-cozy Greek myths. But it seems the idea has a little more legs than I anticipated, and I'm really thrilled to be able to share the game with you all.

Of course, it's been a bit of a motivation boost for working on the sequel as well, and I finished a total of 9,000 words on that this week, bringing Chapter Two up to 35,000 in total. I'm presently working on the first of the paired scenes—that is, the character interaction stuff that takes place with the PC and two other characters. We've got another installment of art club with Alekto and Pyri up first, which is what I'm working on so far. There will be little peeks into their storylines for people not on their routes, and hopefully a sweet moment at the end for those who are.

I'm also beginning to think a bit more seriously about projects beyond FoA, and next steps I might take in various directions. I do think whatever I write next will be a bit different; less sprawling slice-of-life and more high-stakes action with mystery/intrigue, and likely somewhere within the realm of high fantasy, but of course there are plenty of things I want to retain, like inclusiveness and at least the *occasional* injection of warm feelings haha.

Just something I'm noodling with a little bit as BotL starts to feel more like a tangible reality instead of a vague concept.

In any case, I hope you all have a fantastic week. I'll be back here again next Monday with another update, so stay tuned!

## [Weekly Update - 23 September, 2024](#)

[Sep 22, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

We're rounding the bend into the last part of September, here. I've written another 10,000 words this week, bringing the total for chapter two to 45,000. This puts me partway through the Hermes and Hekate group scene, which has been interesting for a number of reasons. Structurally, it's not so different from the Pyri and Alekto one before it until the end, when PCs who have indicated they're poly and are in a relationship with one of them will have their first opportunity to express interest in being in a relationship with *both* of them.

(If the PC is not poly to begin with, no worries. It won't even come up.)

That doesn't, of course, make it immediately happen, but it's one of about two opportunities there will be to get onto that path through the game. And, of course, in the event the PC *is* poly but does not want to be in that *particular* poly relationship, they can close off the option as well, and remain in a mono relationship with the character whose route they're on.

Anyway, here's hoping I manage to handle it in a way that feels organic and right for the characters.

I'm hoping to make a pretty reasonable chunk of progress next week as well, because next Monday will be BIP day, and by then I'd like at least some of the PC's scene with Hades and Charon to be done as well. But, we'll see. I can only write as fast as I write (and as circumstances allow, and those will include visiting family, so my attention will be a bit split). As always, we'll see how things go.

I'm also starting to look back into Twine formatting and the like. Not because I have a particular desire to switch to making Twine games, but because I might like my next project to be something I can keep Patreon-exclusive for as long as I want, and CoG (my publisher) has rules about how long I can keep my content only here. So I'm thinking I might write the game simultaneously in two different formats, as both an exercise in learning another way to code and so I can keep a BIP version here for as long as I want without making it public.

Right now I'm only noodling around with it, but we'll see. I'm pretty pleased to note that on the days where I get planning done for the new project, I actually get more writing done for *Blood*, too, usually. Like growing carrots and onions in the same soil.

Anyway. That's what I've been thinking about this week. I'll be back here next week just before the BIP drops. I hope you all have a great week between now and then.

## [Weekly Update - 30 September, 2024](#)

[Sep 29, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

The BIP is due in an hour, for everyone in Bud Tier or above. In the meantime, progress this week went fairly well. I added 8,000 words to Chapter Two, bringing it to a total right now of 53,000. I'm not totally done with the Hekate-route version of the Hekate and Hermes scene just yet, so I'm not as far as I was projecting, but having only a little bit to wrap up at the end for that and two more scenes in the chapter otherwise does mean that the public demo should go out some time in October, all else being equal.

It's been a rough week in terms of personal setbacks, including my computer's screen breaking and forcing me to set up on another monitor in a configuration that... is not at all comfortable in any way. Hopefully my new laptop arrives today, so I can get back to making progress in a way that doesn't force me to squint and keep my neck at a bad angle.

In any event, fortunately it was only the screen! I was literally just about to back up several days' worth of progress to dropbox when it happened, so you can imagine my initial panic. I also had to call the Australian government for several different reasons this week, which is both time consuming and stressful, and then I had a very long doctor's appointment, but the upside to all this is I'm on medication for my chronic condition now and also I might be able to get paid my first month of royalties on time, which is all very good news.

Anyway, I think that's about it for this week; I'll be back again next Monday with another update and potentially some news, depending on how things go with getting the new computer and being productive and so on. :)

Until then, I hope you all enjoy the BIP, and have a great week otherwise.

[BIP - September](#)

[Sep 29, 2024](#)

Hello, everyone!



The end of September is (finally) upon us, and you all know what that means—the BIP is here.

This one has everything I've written so far, amounting to just over 100k words in total, not counting the character creator or save generator. It has all of Chapter One, and almost all of Chapter Two, missing just two and a little bit scenes.

I've also added a new functionality for those of you who'd like to opt out of being asked about your touch preferences more than once. It will let you set preferences, either wholesale or by character, and they'll remain set like that until/unless you change them manually, rather than the game prompting you. Characters may still prompt you for things outside the norm, but if your PC is super touch averse and always will be, or totally fine with casual touch and not in need of opportunities to change their mind about that, this new menu option may be for you.

It can be accessed in the settings portion of the stats menu, just like the tone indicators and so on. There's a more thorough explanation of what all the settings do there, as well.

Anyway, [here is the update](#). As always, please do not share with anyone outside the appropriate Patreon tiers; this is something I provide to those who are helping me make a living out of my dream. The public demo will drop soon enough, I promise.

I hope you all enjoy it. :)

[Weekly Update - 7 October, 2024](#)

[Oct 6, 2024](#)

Hello everyone!

Spooky season is here at last, and I'm sure for most of you that means things must be finally cooling off. They're warming up here in the southern hemisphere, but I suppose I'll just have to cope.

Anyway! I've been making good progress on BotL so far this month; chapter two is up to 62k words, meaning I've written 9,000 words since the update. I'm still in the thick of the Hades and Charon scene; for a few reasons this one has slightly more variability than the others. But at the pace I'm going, I'm confident we'll be in early access for the two-chapter demo before long, so I hope you're looking forward to that.

I'm also still very slowly noodling my next project, which I am now fairly confident will be a Twine game. There's a lot to get ready for it, though; given its nature as an homage to traditional (western) fantasy

and RPGs, there should really be maps and things to go with it, and since I'll be using Twine, I need to make sure I can build an accessible and visually-appealing interface, so all of that is going to take time.

But I'm enjoying the process, at the same time as I try to slowly amp up the progress on BotL.

There will be a bonus content this week, featuring Hades from Charon's perspective. I figured you all might be interested in that combination, so I hope you'll enjoy it when it appears on Wednesday.

In the meantime, have a lovely week. May it be as restful as you'd like and as productive as you need!

### [Bonus Content - Hades & Charon](#)

[Oct 8, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

If you're not aware, I've been doing a bonus content series where one of the characters gives their perspective on another, usually from an existing or 'missing' game scene somewhere, and assuming that the second character is in a romance with the PC.

So, this month, Charon's POV is about Hades, just after the PC's post-trial return to the Underworld, but pre-epilogue. For these, I usually settle a few small details about the PC as I need them, so this one refers to a Persephone who assists the Moirae, but that need not be taken too seriously—one can assume the scene would run roughly the same for a Dionysus or anyone else, really. :)

Anyway, I hope you enjoy it!

-----

Hades leans back heavily against the wall, a soft breath passing quietly over his lips. A half-aborted hand gesture is all the invitation Charon needs, however, and he takes a seat across from his friend, folding his legs across each other beneath him and laying his staff down on the floor next to the cushion.

The dark tones of Hades's sitting room aren't the best for seeing, but Charon is long accustomed to low visibility, and they can see that his face is paler than usual, drawn tight with a subtle weariness that he has no doubt been doing a very effective job of hiding up until this point.

"How is she?" Charon asks, idly wrapping his fingers around the cork in the amphora. It pops free with a small, resonant sound, and the smell of heady ambrosia wine follows. With a small gesture, he calls two

cups from the cabinet in the kitchen, both appearing on the table between them. He pours, the sound almost soothing in the quiet, then pushes one of the cups towards Hades.

The Lord of the Dead cracks his eyes open, slivers of red irises nearly luminous in the gloom.

"She is... I hesitate to say 'well,' but it seems she is pleased to be back," he replies, his tone measured, cautious.

Charon can understand a bit of caution, now of all times, this of all subjects. It has been a very long day on Olympus, and it was an easy one for precisely none of the parties involved. Even unflappable Hekate is tired; she'd gone to rest almost as soon as the group had splintered.

"I'm sure everyone else is likewise pleased to have her." Charon takes a sip of the wine, holding it in their mouth and allowing the taste of it to roll over their tongue. Sometimes, ambrosia seems almost too sweet. Cloying, sickly. But when made into wine in the Underworld, it takes into itself a pleasing bitterness in contrast, something that makes it much more palatable to drink.

Or perhaps they have simply grown into the sorts of people who prefer what is familiar to them.

"No doubt," Hades murmurs. "She has made herself rather indispensable, by the Moirae's estimation."

Charon's lips twitch slightly, and he nods. "If even Atropos agrees, then it must be so. But I rather think you would know that even without their opinion." His brow ticks up just slightly, and Hades expels a short breath, the sound just the tiniest bit amused.

"What gave it away? The constant low-level panic in her absence or the fact that this is the first time I've stopped working in weeks?"

Sometimes, Charon thinks, Hades can be an awful lot more self-aware than most people would give him credit for. It's always his awareness of other people that is the trickier bet, so to speak.

"What will you do now? She will be on Olympus for three months every year. Spring, I would assume." It would be rather like Demeter to want that arrangement, and Persephone seems generally amenable to her mother's wishes, if perhaps not the sort to obey just because.

"I will learn to treat spring as winter, I suppose," Hades says, a touch wryly, lifting his cup at last and taking a swallow as well. "But in truth, I am... glad that this was the result. Anyone can see that she and Demeter are close. They need to talk about some things, I would guess, but they are close. I never wanted to take her away from everything she knew and loved."

"Mm." Charon tilts their head. "And yet, when the time came to choose between 'everything she knew and loved' and *you*—"

"You're exaggerating," Hades replies, shaking his head. "I am *far* from the sum total of the life she has built here."

Charon huffs. “Yes, of course. And yet I think perhaps your stake in it is greater than you think. You have made room for her in your life. I daresay she has made just as much room for you. It wouldn’t make you a worse person, to enjoy that knowledge.”

“Perhaps, then, I will enjoy it—should I ever acquire it.”

“You can be so utterly stubborn.” Charon clicks his tongue. “I know she’s young, Hades, but as she herself pointed out, she is old enough to decide where she resides, and whom with. Is it really so much of a stretch to suppose she is old enough to know her own heart?”

“I’m not sure *I’m* old enough to know my own heart.”

“Well, then, perhaps she’s the mature one in the situation, after all.” Charon rolls their eyes, taking a somewhat larger swallow from their cup.

“Of that, I have little doubt,” Hades replies, a hint of irony in his tone. “Nevertheless, I must put the question to her, and abide by the answer.”

Really. Charon of all people could understand, perhaps, wanting to treat important things with as much care as possible. Perhaps, were their situations reversed, it would be he hesitating and Hades pushing him forward with gentle exasperation. No—no perhaps about it. If anything, he might be even worse. But still, they’re in the situation they’re in, and it’s a little frustrating to watch his closest friend put barrier after barrier between himself and what he wants. Or at least what he *could* want, if he ever let himself explore his own feelings.

“I am quite sure she will ask you—rightly—what *your* opinion is on the matter,” Charon points out. “Will you have an answer for her?”

“Yes.”

“The *real* answer?”

“I... perhaps. If I can decide what that is.”

Well... at least he knows he needs to. Perhaps, for now, that is enough.

[Weekly Update - 14 October, 2024](#)

[Oct 13, 2024](#)

Good news, everyone!

Chapter Two is now fully written. I added another 9,000 words this week, rounding the chapter out at 71k. This means the total length of the first two chapters is 130,000 words, which is right around what I was hoping for, to keep me on track for a 600k word sequel. That said, the first chapters are usually the shortest, so I'm not entirely certain how that's going to go, either.

Anyway, word count is not the most important thing here. More significantly, this means that I just have an editing pass and some testing to do before we're ready to begin the early access process. I can't promise exactly when that will be, but I anticipate Full Bloom tier members will see the complete first demo on Wednesday or Thursday, with the other tiers gaining access as they're described. (So, Blossoms three days after that, and so on).

I'm excited to be putting it out there at last, and I hope these first couple of chapters are enough to whet the appetite for the rest.

I've also started working on my outline for Chapter Three, and I'm pretty excited with some of the stuff that will be coming up in that, so that's always good news, too. We'll see how much of that I can finish before the BIP date.

That's basically it for this week; on the noodle project, all I can say is, I am terrible with mapmaking software, but I'm trying! :)

I hope you all have a great week; I'll of course be back here at the same time next week for another update.

[A note about early access](#)

[Oct 17, 2024](#)

I just realized I never confirmed for everyone the exact dates the tiers would be getting access to the BotL demo. You can probably infer it from the release date I gave on tumblr and the tier descriptions, but now you don't have to!

The Full Bloom tier got the demo yesterday, the 16th. This means the Blossom tier will get it Saturday the 19th, followed by Seedlings and Buds on Wednesday the 23rd. All releases will be at noon AEST, since I'm in Australia and time conversion math is painful. :)

The public release, of course, will still be on Saturday the 26th.

Cheers, all!

## [Early Access - Demo 1](#)

[Oct 18, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

As promised, the early access period for the first demo (chapters one and two) begins now. Since you're Blossoms, you get a week with it before it goes out to the public, and I really hope you enjoy it.

You may have already read this in the last weekly update, but what we have here is 130,000 words, give or take, excluding the character creator and save builder at the beginning. If you've been following the BIPs, you know more or less what you're in for, here, but hopefully the last few scenes are interesting nonetheless.

[You can play the full demo here.](#)

Cheers.

## [Weekly Update - 21 October, 2024](#)

[Oct 20, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Early access for the demo has begun, as most of you are aware. Those who haven't gotten access yet will be getting it on Wednesday, so I hope you're looking forward to that.

I do apologise if you come across any typos; I was editing while very, very ill and suspect I may have missed one or two or ten because of this.

In better news, I managed to compensate for the editing and testing days with some pretty intense workdays the rest of the week, and I've managed 7,000 words of Chapter Three so far. It's not tons, but I do like how things are shaping up with what's been done. It's an optional scene with Demeter at the moment, and I'm pretty happy with the amount of variation in how she treats the PC and how the PC can respond to her. (Including, in fact, by skipping the scene altogether.)

I have this feeling that, eventually, whether the PC is interacting with just one parent, both, or neither will result in a lot of messy variance, but at the moment at least that feels like a plus rather than a problem.

Anyway, that's the news for this week; I'll have some news on what Buds and up can expect from the BIP in next week's update, so stay tuned for that!

Have a spectacular week, everyone.

[Weekly Update - 28 October, 2024](#)

[Oct 27, 2024](#)

Hello everyone!

As most of you are no doubt aware, the public version of the demo went out on Saturday. It has a couple typo and flow fixes that the most recent Patreon demo doesn't, so for the next little while I'd recommend that version.

Of course, that doesn't really apply if you get the BIP, which will be out on Thursday, because that is going to have the first part of chapter three! I've finished the optional Demeter scene, and I'm now working on one version of the (also optional) Iasion scene—the one where the PC goes to see him alone rather than with Demeter. Some parts of these scenes will be similar, but others will be quite substantially different based on whether she's present or not, so I'm taking the perhaps slightly-inefficient route of treating them as separate entities for now.

Certainly, as I'm writing the sequel and the focus is changing from one single story to a variety of subplots, the amount of optional scenes is increasing by quite a bit! There are conceivable playthroughs that will actually have no new content added in the BIP or for some time after it—specifically, if the PC wants nothing to do with either of their parents. But I do hope most will want to explore the subplot with at least one or the other, and I'm sure most players will see a bit of what I'm writing here, so on it goes.

The last part of Chapter Three will be a variable scene with the player's RO/PO (or both, if they've previously indicated interest in a poly with Hermes and Hekate). Chapter Four will be the next developments in the RO subplots, but I wanted to put a firm foundation down for the Iasion and Demeter stuff first.

Anyway, that's what's going on at the moment. The BIP should have at least 15,000 words in Chapter Three, as I managed another 7k this week. I'll need a day or two for testing as usual, hence the conservative estimate. In any case, I hope the demo has left you eager for more. :)

[BIP - October](#)

[Oct 30, 2024](#)

Hello, everyone, and Happy Halloween to those of you who enjoy spookiness and candy!

The public demo just came out a little while ago, of course, so I haven't made it all that far into Chapter Three yet, but there are 16,000 words of new material, including the complete first (optional) scene with Demeter, and a partially complete (optional) scene with Iasion for those of you who are seeing him without Demeter's company. Right now, most of what's done on his scene is a variation on the first one, which will only show up for people who didn't have that first meeting, so don't be alarmed if you choose to go see him and not much is there.

Also, for those of you with gardens, take note that if you choose to show yours to Demeter, the scene will not yet be customized to your actual garden state or what is planted in it; I've created a "default" situation for now, until save importing becomes possible. So chances are things will be a little off for your specific continuity; rest assured that all the other variations have been written in and will be there when the game is published.

To be honest, the response to the first public demo was... pretty underwhelming, especially considering that I think some pretty big things happened in it. But, that's the way it goes sometimes; perhaps the family subplot isn't something that interests everyone, and that's of course fine. I'll keep plugging away anyhow; I know there are a lot of people who don't tend to speak up even when they enjoy something, and I definitely get that. I tend to be that way, too.

So to all the silent enjoyers, *and* the more conversational among you who have been supporting me here the whole time, this one's for you. :)

[Play the BIP here.](#)

[Weekly Update - 4 November, 2024](#)

[Nov 3, 2024](#)



Hey everyone!

I hope you're all enjoying the start of November. I've got a pretty busy month upcoming, with a visit from my partner's mum followed by a (not major, no need to worry) surgery that will still likely involve a bit of painful recovery time. I'm also trying to make at least 40k words on BotL this month, so... here we are, haha.

I'm off to a good start, with 9,000 since the BIP on the 31st. I'm in the last part of the first version of the Iasion scene now, so I think I'll probably be working on the with-Demeter version by next week. I hope to be able to re-use a little of the code between versions; I think sections of the scene will be the same, while other sections will be quite different.

In any event, it's been pretty enjoyable to write so far.

The bonus content is typically scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month, which is quite late this time. I might get around to it in time for this Wednesday instead, but if I don't, it'll be here on the 13th. Most of the stuff I have to do is concentrated in the latter half of November (the surgery, for instance, is on the 18th), so this first bit should be fairly free and clear, if I can keep up my progress. (And keep clear of Veilguard!)

Anyway, thanks so much for the support last week, everyone. It can be hard to encounter negative feedback in the wild, particularly when it's unnecessarily unkind, but you've all really helped lift my spirits, and I appreciate it so much.

[Weekly Update - 11 November, 2024](#)

[Nov 10, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

I've been keeping up a pretty blistering writing pace this week, to the tune of about 12,000 words. It's tough to try managing 2k a day, but I know I'm capable of it, as for a while it was sort of the 'going pace' when I was writing FoA. I'm not sure how close it will get to being that again, but for now I'm aiming for a goal of 40,000 this month, around things like my surgery, which will certainly drop productivity a little bit.

Anyway, all this to say I'm about halfway through the second Iasion scene variant, the one where Demeter is included. After that, it will be a collection of route-specific scenes with the ROs/POs, and then we'll be moving into Chapter Four, where the RO/PO subplots really get started.

So, I think I will be comfortably done with this part and into writing that one by the end of the month. Maybe even by the end of the week, depending on how it goes for me.

There will be a bonus content (Charon from Alekto's POV) coming out on Wednesday, for those of you who get those. Otherwise, I'll be back here next week with a pre-scheduled update, because the 18th itself is surgery day.

Have a great week, everyone, and hang in there as best you can. The going is tough, for sure, but I believe in us.

### [Bonus Content - Charon & Alekto](#)

[Nov 12, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

Continuing on with the "ROs from other ROs' points of view" theme, this month we have Charon from Alekto's. They're a strange pair in a lot of ways, but I think there's a way they relate that it's hard for anyone else to quite get. As the two Olympian exiles in the bunch, they do have a lot in common, after all.

I hope you enjoy it.

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Charon runs the pad of their thumb lightly along the edge of the book cover. It's rare they get the opportunity to join Hades and Alekto for their reading, and so of course naturally today Hades has been called away on an urgent matter.

Alekto is still here, though, and she studies them with a frank gaze, watching the unusual amount of fidgeting with a growing sense of certainty. He is very clearly deep in thought about something. She has a guess as to what that might be, but whether she should mention it is something she has not quite decided.

"I wonder what I've done, to be so scalded by your gaze," they say lightly, glancing up to meet her eyes with a faint smile. "It is rather fearsome, you know."

Alekto scoffs softly, letting go of the book in her own lap to lift her hands. *That is just how my face looks, as you are well aware.*

Charon's lips twitch, and for a moment they abandon their fidgeting to raise their hands as well, letting them hover comfortable in front of their chest for a moment. *Now you make it sound as though I think there is something wrong with your face, when we both know that you are lovely.*

She rolls her eyes at that, shaking her head just enough to put a ripple in her thick ponytail. *If we are to talk about 'lovely' people, then perhaps I can indeed ask you what is on my mind.*

Charon tilts his head, a wry sort of resignation surfacing over his placid features. *You were going to, anyway.*

Yes. There is no point in denying what is obviously true. *Dionysus annulled the marriage.*

He looks thoughtful again for a moment, something softening almost imperceptibly in his features. If Alekto didn't know how to look, she might have missed the subtle change entirely. Then he pulls a visible breath in, and his shoulders slump a bit on the exhalation.

*It seems so.* Even the motions of their hands are limp, unenthused, and Alekto barely manages not to roll her eyes.

*Are we pretending this has nothing to do with you, now? Because it's been fairly obvious to everyone else that you're nursing an infatuation for quite some time now.*

Charon leans back a bit, almost a recoiling motion. *Everyone?*

She frowns. That had been a bit deceptive. Not intentionally, though, and she moves her hands quickly to correct herself. *Hades. Myself. Probably Hekate, though I haven't spoken with her about it.*

Charon runs their long fingers back through pale hair, disheveling the waves a bit in the wake of the motion. "Implying that you *have* spoken to Hades," he says. She catches a bit of wryness in their voice, as well.

"A few times," she replies. "He is concerned for you as he always is."

"And you?" One brow lifts slightly over the other.

"I... want you to be happy, as I always have," she replies simply.

*Always* might be a little bit of a stretch, as their early acquaintance was not the smoothest, but then nothing about Alekto's life had been smooth, then.

As if remembering the same things, Charon's brows knit. "I admit... I would have thought you of all people would be cautioning me," he says slowly. "With what I've done—with how young he is, I—"

*None of that,* she signs sharply, fixing them with a scowl that *is* meant to be intense. *The past is behind us. We are who we are now. We have to be.*

The gestures, and their sequence, are familiar enough to almost be muscle memory. How many times had she moved her hands this way, trying to write the truth into her very sinew? It seems, to some degree, to have worked. The advice had come originally from them, and yet at this point in their lives, Alekto feels it is she who has really taken it to heart, and they who need to be reminded.

*I know*, he replies, hesitant enough that she doubts he does, *but not everyone will think that way. What if he doesn't?*

*What if he does?*

She lets that hang in the air for several long seconds, lowering her hands a bit and giving him a pointed look.

Charon sighs again, but there's a sense of resignation in the tilt of their smile. *I could argue more, but I know you'd never let me win.*

*I would not. Best to save your breath. And your hands.*

That gets her a chuckle so soft she doesn't actually hear it; she can see it shake their body a little, is all.

"If I promise to consider it, can we talk about the book instead?"

Alekto tilts her head to the side, eyes narrow, and then nods.

"Very well."

[October BIP - Dashingdon version](#)

[Nov 12, 2024](#)

Hey everyone.

It seems that a small but not negligible number of you are getting early restart errors with the cogdemos version of the BIP. I would advise everyone experiencing this to clear their cache and try again first, but in the event that doesn't help, I've now also got a Dashingdon version. I hope that will help those of you with this error, and in the future, unless I see evidence that the site admins have fixed the bug, I will upload both versions.

Dashingdon, of course, has its own errors to worry about, and no one is actively maintaining the site anymore, so I can't do anything about those, but hopefully it will be a decent alternative for everyone

who can't get the newer site to work properly for them.

I'm sorry for all the trouble. These are more or less the only options if save files matter to you, and I think they matter to most of us.

Anyway, enough from me: [the Dashingdon version of the BIP is here](#).

[Weekly Update - 18 November, 2024](#)

[Nov 17, 2024](#)

Hey everyone.

If you're reading this around the time it's released, I'm probably having surgery right now. I'm not sure, at the time of this writing, exactly how long my recovery period will be, but I do know I should hopefully still be on track for my goal this month of 40,000 new words in the chapter.

I've finished both variants of the lasion scene, so now I'm working on the final block of seven RO scenes, starting with the poly one. I hope to have at least one or two of those done by the end of the month as well.

As for this week, I managed another 12,000 words, with taking Sunday off to try and do a bit of proofreading, and, you know, resting and such. I've now written 33,000 words since the start of November, which I'm quite happy with. At the moment I'm just hoping they're *good* words.

In any event, I expect progress to slow down this week, but that seems forgivable to me, all things considered. :)

I'll definitely be back next week with some kind of update, though, so I'll see you then! In the meantime, I hope you all have a great week.

[Weekly Update - 25 November, 2024](#)

[Nov 24, 2024](#)

Hello again, all!

It's been... quite the week.

As it turns out, the surgery I was scheduled to undergo would not have been a good idea, for various medical reasons I won't bore you with. The end result is that I spent... several hours in the hospital being prepared for a procedure, and then when I got to the actual surgical suite, it didn't happen. Considering this was for a procedure that would have helped a chronic condition I have, you can imagine, I think, that this was rather disappointing news.

Overall, I think not having it done right now will produce better results, but it's still disheartening, and I've been in a bit of a funk. On top of that, I've been dealing with a lot of (unrelated) lower back pain and stomach issues this week, so it hasn't been as productive as I might have liked.

Still! I wrote 5,000 words, and am now in the middle of the first official poly scene with Hekate and Hermes, which is exciting to me. I've never written a poly relationship before, and it's fun to take a crack at the unfamiliar (the *researched* unfamiliar, but still). My goal is to get the whole of Chapter Three out by the new year, but I still have six more route-specific scenes to go after this, so we'll see if I can manage that, or if it's maybe a bit too optimistic.

In any case, I've also bought a new couch, which will hopefully help with the lower back pain (I do all my writing on the couch, like a heathen), and I did get a little more storyboarding done on what might eventually become my first novel, so the week hasn't been a total wash, by any means.

The BIP, of course, will appear next Saturday. I'm definitely on track to hit my 40k word goal, so we'll see how much I manage beyond that.

I hope that wherever you are, you're doing well. Until next week!

[BIP - November](#)

[Nov 29, 2024](#)

Hello, everyone!

Today is the last day of the month, and so the Build-in-Progress is here. This month, I managed to write 42,000 new words on Chapter Three, bringing its total word count to 58,000. Everyone should now have a version of the Iasion scene, with or without Demeter, unless of course you opted to not see him at all.

The RO scenes are not written yet, except for those of you who have already indicated interest in the poly with Hermes and Hekate—that scene is fully outlined and partially written.

As promised, I've made two versions, so you can pick the one that tends to be least buggy for you (and try the other if it doesn't work). Just a reminder—if something's going wrong with your saves, I'm not the person who can fix that, as those and similar issues are related to the hosting site, and not to my code.

Continuity errors, typos, and weird flow, however, are almost certainly my bad, and I'd love to hear about any of that.

I hope you enjoy!

[Dashingdon](#)

[COGDemos](#)

[Weekly Update - 2 December, 2024](#)

[Dec 1, 2024](#)

Hello, all!

Welcome to December. That never becomes a less-strange sentence, because the end of the year always sneaks up on me. At this time last year, I was getting started on the edits for FoA's complete draft. Little did I know that I had five months' worth of work ahead of me!

I've certainly got more than that when it comes to completing BotL, but that's a little more expected. My goal for this month is to finish Chapter Three, or write 30,000 words, whichever comes first (though hopefully they'll happen at around the same time). Ideally, I'd like to start the early access cycle for the new chapter around the end of the year, but we'll see how things go. It's a busy month, with doctors' appointments and holidays and family visits and so on, but I will do my best nevertheless.

I'm also making little bits and pieces of progress on my maybe-upcoming twine project. I have a basic plot idea, but at the moment there's a hole in the middle that really needs filling in, so I'm going to poke at worldbuilding and possible ideas to see if I can put something in that spot that feels good. I've also been working on the UI design, which is something I know almost nothing about, but I couldn't find a template that entirely suited me, so I'm making changes to the one that came the closest. We'll see how it goes.

Anyway, that's the latest for the month; as most of you know, the BIP went up yesterday with 42,000 new words. That was quite exhausting, and the general business of Decembers is why I've reduced my goal for this one. We'll see how I'm feeling in January and reassess then.

I hope you all have a lovely month; with any luck, I'll be back here next week with good news about progress.

[Weekly Update - 9 December, 2024](#)

[Dec 8, 2024](#)

Hello, all!

This has been a very good week of progress for FoA, with a grand total of 14,000 new words. I'm quite pleased by the speed of this, as it gives me a little leeway to take some holidays off this month while still meeting my wordcount goal.

The end of the poly scene is taking a lot longer than anticipated, largely because there's some discussion in both the Hekate-route and Hermes-route versions about what kinds of physical intimacy the PC is comfortable with and interested in. So the stuff I'm writing now will most likely also be used in the individual scenes with those two characters, since the poly itself isn't involved just yet. So it's a little like working on multiple scenes at once, which I'll take, since I was really planning to be done with this one by now.

Still, I think it's a pretty important conversation for the characters to have as part of the relationship, so in that sense it's absolutely worth it. It does mean I'm not predicting January for early access rather than the end of December, but that's how things often go around here—I always end up writing more than I expect!

Anyway, that's all from me for today. On Wednesday, we'll have a new bonus content for the Blossom and Full Bloom tiers, and then I'll be back here with another progress update on Monday, this time from... about five hours to the north of my current location, where I'll be visiting family.

Have a great week!

[Bonus Content - Alekto & Pyri](#)



[Dec 10, 2024](#)

Hello, everyone!

This month's bonus content is the second to last in the current series, wherein one RO (the one whose route the PC is on) is seen from the perspective of another. In this case, we have Alekto, as seen by Pyri.

The series will conclude next month, with Pyri as seen by Hermes.

I hope you enjoy them both, but for now, the first.

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"You've been using brighter colors lately." Pyri, leaning a little aside from their own easel, looks at Alekto's work in progress with interest.

She likes painting landscapes; that's always been true. But this one, the first in a while since they've been working on other projects, features several distinct ones that Pyri's pretty sure their friend wouldn't ordinarily use. Not bright, exactly. Just brighter.

Alekto glances down at them, her face placid. "The Underworld has been getting brighter," she replies with nonchalance. "I am trying to reflect the reality."

Pyri supposes that's true. The colors have changed, at least somewhat, and the light level is a little brighter. They don't completely understand how that works, or why, but supposedly it has something to do with the state of mind and power of the people within it. Boss had said it would always be *the Underworld*, so they're not expecting buttercup-yellow or anything, but maybe they can take the healthy greener hue to be a positive sign.

"It's probably Dionysus, right?" they ask, shifting their attention from the landscape to more fully encapsulate their friend's face. "The reason for the change, I mean. It's basically been the same as long as I've been here, and it didn't change until after he came, so..."

The guess is left to trail off; Alekto's lips press together a little bit, and she nods. It's not the most comfortable-looking nod, but Pyri's no good at figuring out why things like that might be the case, so they ask.

"That's... a good thing, right?"

Alekto's brows lift before settling back in their place, and she clears her throat. "Yes. Of course. The colors are but a sign of a larger trend of increased vitality. That, obviously, can only be a good thing."

"Can it? Because you sound a little weird about it." Pyri, still holding their own brush, dips it in the water and wrings it out for now, pinching it back into shape the way she's taught them and setting it handle-down to dry in a clay cup. There's residual paint on their fingers, but they get most of it off on their apron and don't care about the rest.

"I'm not sure where you're getting that impression from," Alekto replies, looking back at her canvas as though it might have the answer. "I am no 'weirder' about this than I am about anything else."

"Yeah, but no, that's really not true. You're much weirder about stuff that has to do with Dionysus. I can tell." Perhaps because they pay uncommon attention to people's facial expressions, trying to figure out what things mean. They're seldom too successful with the ones that aren't obvious—which is a lot of them, considering the number of reasonably-stoic people they spend time with. Leks, the Boss, Charon... even Hekate, when she wants to be. But still. Trying means they can at least pick up on when things are different from usual, even if the meaning of the difference is often inscrutable.

So they know. They know she's weird about Dionysus. They just don't know *why*.

"That is... regrettable." Leks only seems to stare harder at her landscape—a portrait of a solitary tree on a riverbank, its branches dipping low towards the water. Pyri knows the one, but they could swear she always manages to make the mundane look like something more than it is. Or at least, something more than they can see, just looking at the real thing.

"Well, I guess so, yeah. If it's bad-weird. Dionysus is a great guy. You don't... still think he's like... a spy, or whatever that was, do you?"

"No." The answer is immediate and sincere. "I don't think that. And the... 'weirdness' isn't—" Alekto clicks her tongue against her teeth. "It isn't a bad thing, necessarily. It is, however, regrettable that it is noticeable."

Pyri's brows furrow. "Oh. I don't think I understand. Why would it be bad if people noticed if it isn't a bad feeling?"

She sighs, tearing her eyes away from the painting to settle them on Pyri's face. "Not everyone has your infinite tolerance for the awkward, Pyri. Some people would find such feelings as mine a burden, or at the very least somewhat uncomfortable to deal with. I would prefer he not need to do that."

Pyri, warmed by the compliment, takes a moment to process the rest of what she'd said. "Well... do you know he'll feel like that, if he learns about whatever it is?"

"Not necessarily, but it is hard to imagine anyone feeling otherwise." A small pause, and Leks's eyes narrow a little. "Before you advise that I ask, I should say that doing so in a form that would be understandable would immediately give things away, and have the exact result I am trying to avoid, should his answer be yes."

"Oh." Their brows knit, and they hum softly. "Well... for what it's worth, I don't think it's that noticeable. I know something is going on, but I don't know what, and I think I'm probably... I think I probably pay too much attention to this stuff, so I don't know that anyone else would have noticed."

Alekto huffs a soft breath out through her nose. "Regrettably, I'm sure at least some have. But thank you anyway."

"...Sure?" They aren't certain what that thanks is really for, but if she's saying it she means it, so...

"You're welcome."

### [Weekly Update - 16 December, 2024](#)

[Dec 15, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

I got another 12,000 words done this week, bringing me to a total of 24k for the month. I'm hoping to wrap up that last 6k this week, so I can have the last week of the month off for the holiday. Right now, I'm done with the poly scene and starting the first of the solo RO scenes, namely Hermes's. I'm hoping that the last few thousand words will get me most of the way through that.

That's about it for news this week. Still slowly poking at plot and character design for my potential Twine project, as well as slowly assembling parts of the UI.

I hope you're all enjoying the end of the year as well as you can. I'll be back next week, hopefully with the news that I've hit my 30k for this month!

Good luck out there.

### [Weekly Update - 23 December, 2024](#)

[Dec 22, 2024](#)

Hello, everyone!

You may remember that I said I was aiming for 6k words last week, to round out the 30 I was aiming to have for the month. Well, I got there, and the non-poly scene with Hermes still wasn't quite finished.

So... then I wrote 7k more just to bring that scene to a close.

I'm pleased to say, therefore, that I've written 13,000 words this week, and the total for the month is at 37,000! I think I'm going to give myself the last week and a little bit of the month off, so that'll be what goes out when it's time for the BIP.

Anyway, I hope you're all having a lovely end of the year, and for those of you who celebrate a holiday around this time, ideally you're enjoying the celebrations. At a minimum, hopefully it's not driving you up a wall. :)

### [Weekly Update - 30 December, 2024](#)

[Dec 29, 2024](#)

Hey everyone!

We're almost at the end of the year!

As I thought, I spent most of last week relaxing and enjoying my holiday, but I have started doing a little bit of prep work for the final part of this chapter—outlining the scenes in more detail. Those outlines will not be on the BIP that goes out tomorrow, but the rest of my progress from this month definitely will be.

I'll talk a little bit more about what I'm aiming to achieve in January next week, but for now, the BIP will release tomorrow, with new content for polymancers and Hermes solomancers.

I hope you all have a wonderful end to 2024, even if for you, like for me, the year as a whole was quite... challenging. And best of fortune to us all in 2025.

### [BIP - December](#)

[Dec 30, 2024](#)

Hello everyone!

The initial plan for this month was to release the BIP with 30,000 new words. I'm pleased to say that I've exceeded that a bit with 37,000 instead, mostly so I could get to the end of the scene I was working on.

This amounts to an addition of the poly scene (with variants for being originally on Hekate's or Hermes's route), and Hermes's non-poly RO scene. So if you're on a different route from one of those, there isn't anything new this month, unfortunately, but if you *are*, then Chapter Three is now finished for you!

I'm hoping to get through the remaining 5 RO scenes next month, because for some of them there will be considerably less variation, but we'll see how I manage to do, because five scenes of any sort is a tall order for a month!

In any event, I'll stop yapping now and let you get to the reading. :)

[Dashingdon](#)

[COGdemos](#)

[Weekly Update - 6 January, 2025](#)

[January 5](#)

Hey everyone!

If you haven't gotten it from me already, happy new year!

I spent the partial week getting started on my way through the rest of the chapter 3 scenes. With 6,000 new words, it's now sitting at 101k in total. I'm a good chunk of the way through the solo Hekate scene now, but the romance variations at the end are going to be where a lot of the word count comes from. Fortunately, having already written her version of the poly scene, I have a fair bit of that already, so I definitely foresee being done with her scene and onto the next by this time next week.

So, in the spirit of this time of year, I also thought I'd mention my goals for our new rotation around the sun. Obviously, the sooner I can finish BotL the better, but realistically I'd like to shoot for being mostly done by the end of the year, maybe reaching Chapter Seven or Chapter Eight (like FoA, BotL will have 10 chapters in total).

I'd also like to get some serious progress in on my Twine project, currently codenamed Project Crystalline, and release at least to Patreon a workable demo of what that's all about. It's still in the planning stages at this point; there's a lot more systems to work out than with FoA, because it's an homage to tabletop roleplaying games, so there will be some dice involved and some different options for mechanically-relevant traits and so on. Plus a sidequest system.

Of course, BotL is the priority until it is finished, so for now Project Crystalline is firmly on the backburner, and serious development on that will take a while. But that's sort of my plan for the year from a macro perspective.

On a much more micro note, there will be a bonus content this week featuring Pyri and Hermes, the last in the 'ROs from other ROs POV' series. So check that out on Wednesday, if you get those.

Best of luck to us all as we round the corner into a new year; I hope you can all harness a little of the double-edged 'fresh start' spirit to your benefit!

### [Bonus Content - Pyri & Hermes](#)

#### [January 7](#)

Hey everyone! The last of the 'ROs from another RO's POV' series is here, and we have Pyri from Hermes's. This one is set specifically in the part of FoA between the Chapter Five outing and the Chapter Eight fruit scene, and is best understood as being during Chapter Six. I had fun with these two; they're normally mostly being silly when they're spending time together onscreen, but they have their more serious moments as well.

Anyway, enough rambling. I hope you enjoy. :)

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Pyri hits the dirt, facefirst, and Hermes can't help but laugh.

It's not an uproarious one, but it's no mere chuckle, either, burbling out from his chest in a rolling sound he rather likes. He's never understood the point of being self-conscious of the way he expresses his joy, which is perhaps one of many reasons why he likes them so much.

They feel more joy than perhaps anyone he's ever known, and at things other people would find blasé or merely mildly pleasant.

And some things most people would hate, like falling flat on their face. They roll over, laughing just as much as he is even as they wipe soil and loose debris from their nose and chin.

"You know the taste of the dirt is different now?" they ask, looking up at him with a gap-toothed grin. "I've eaten enough of it to be pretty sure, between Leks and this stuff."

'This stuff,' of course, being their continued efforts to learn some mechanism or another for flight. Unfortunately for them, they were not blessed with an obvious physiological method, as he and Alekto were, and they aren't what anyone would call gifted at magic, making the process rather arduous.

Still, for the relatively short time they've been trying—been a deity *to* try—their progress isn't bad. They can jet along the ground with their flames now, pushing their top ground movement speed to well above what the average god could muster. Not that 'top ground movement speed' is a priority for most gods, but he likes that about them, too.

"Oh yeah?" he asks. "Tastier or more gross?"

"I dunno," they reply. "I think it's more like mortal realm dirt than it used to be. Maybe I'm tasting nutrients?"

Hermes raises a brow. "I know you think Sunshine's pretty great and all, Pyri, but I don't think he's managed to make this into mortal realm dirt just yet."

He offers a hand down and they grasp it, levering themselves up and hopping to their feet. He's not normally one for dirt, but he doesn't mind so much if they leave a smear or two behind on his arm. He has no plans to taste it, though.

"Maybe not yet, but I bet he will eventually. If he stays, I mean." The second part of the thought sobers their expression. "Do you think he'll stay?"

"What, with you here? I'm surprised he hasn't fled already." He grins broadly when their expression screws up into annoyance, amused by the little flickers of heatless flame that spark in the air around them.

"Hey. I'm serious, here." He knew they were beforehand, but they fold their arms over their chest, and he has to concede that the slight frown they wear is genuinely a bit troubled by the question, not breaking in favor of humor nor amusement.

"I know. But I don't have the answer to that, Red. It's something you'd have to ask him."

Of course, he has his suspicions. Suspicions that Dionysus might be coming around to living in the Underworld after all, and that the oblivious little faceplanting disaster in front of him might have more to do with that than they realize. He wouldn't want to put pressure on them, or confuse them too soon.

After all, everything he has is conjecture, and if Sunshine's not quite ready for that to be known or explored, Hermes isn't going to force the issue. He's not above nudging it, but he'd only ever did that if he thought it would actually be helping.

Pyri hums, the sound a little dissatisfied. "I don't want to bother him," they say, wrinkling their nose.

A vision flashes before Hermes's eyes: Pyri awkwardly avoiding the subject, leaving Dionysus be because they've somehow convinced themselves that they're annoying to him specifically. Probably because of that stoic face of his, which of course is a cover for sheer awkwardness rather than annoyance or anything like that. Sunshine has the 'strong and silent type' thing going for him, and in this case, also working *against* him. They'd mentally circle each other and never bridge the gap.

Okay. Maybe he needs to interfere just a *little* bit.

"I don't think you bother him," he replies, rolling his eyes a little.

"You don't?" They visibly perk up, but a skeptical frown sinks onto their face a second later. "How do you know figure?"

Hermes lifts a hand, rubbing his thumb along the curve of his eyebrow. "Well, he didn't seem annoyed to be going on a picnic with you, right? He won the javelin contest and everything?"

"Well... yes." Pyri visibly grapples with this counterargument. "But everyone loves that lot, and winning things. You'd tolerate someone you were annoyed by to show everyone how great you are."

Hermes pinches the bridge of his nose. Sometimes being known is painful. Like a little stab in the chest, with the twist of complete frank innocence. A smile tugs at his lips, but he suppresses it as best he can. This is meant to be a 'serious' discussion, after all, even if he finds it a tad ridiculous.

"I would," he admits, "but exactly how many similarities do you imagine Sunshine and I share? Didn't you remark, *to my face*, about how different he was from me, and how neat it was that we managed to be friends anyway? Did I not then, as now, wonder if your admiring tone towards him was therefore some disparagement of my character?"

"Er... well, yes. But it's not a disparagement! Two very different people can both be great, you know?" Pyri wears an expression of genuine concern at that, and he has to suppress a chuckle. It really is difficult to be mean to them. At least for any length of time.

"I know. And luckily for you, I also know I'm incredible. But the point is, the fact that I would do something is not a good argument that Dionysus would do it. And I'm telling you, he wouldn't. He went with you because he likes being around you. If you're going to decide anything about your relationship with him, you should work from that assumption, and *not* the one that he finds you annoying, okay?"

Their eyes find the ground, and they expel a gust of air. "It's just... I'm not *totally* oblivious, you know? I know plenty of people think I'm annoying. And it... really hurts when someone says it to my face."

Hermes frowns. There *had* been a few incidents like that, most notably one with Styx. He can understand that it might be starting to wear on their optimism, and the lack of any really obvious (to them) signals from Dionysus could be honestly a bit difficult to know what to do with.



“Hey, Red. I understand that. But it’s not like you to just hide when you might end up with a good friend instead. So... don’t start now, okay? So what if you’re not for some people? There are plenty more who love how you are. / love how you are. And I have the best taste, so who cares what anyone else thinks?”

Reaching out, he ruffles their hair. “And if you need to cry or yell or whatever because Sunshine turns out to be the wrong kind of person for you, I’ll be here. I won’t even tell him if you say mean things.”

That’s never going to happen, but if the offer can give them a little confidence back, he’ll make it. Easily.

Pyri grumbles a little, but their lips are twitching as they push his arm away from their warm, slightly-frizzy curls. “Yeah, yeah. Fine. I’ll... talk to him.”

“Good.”

“Eventually.”

“Less good, but sufficient, I suppose.”

[Weekly Update - 13 January, 2025](#)

[January 12](#)

Hey everyone!

I made some quite solid progress this week, getting another 10,000 words down, for a total of 111k in Chapter Three. I've now finished the solo Hekate scene, and gotten a start on Alekto's as well. I'm hoping I'll be able to finish that one this week and get started on the next.

At my current pace, I probably won't quite finish the chapter by the end of the month (though I'm definitely going to try), but I should at least be very close, and set up to complete it in February. As it turns out, doing seven versions of the final scene takes some work. :)

As always, I appreciate everyone's patience, of course.

[Weekly Update - 20 January, 2025](#)

[January 19](#)

Hi everyone!

I managed to squeeze in 11,000 words this week, which was just enough to finish off the Alekto scene. (It brought the chapter to 122,000 words.) This has given me a pretty realistic idea of how long it takes to do one of these, so my revised goal for the end of the month is to have the next one done (with a couple more days thrown in for editing and testing to make sure the BIP will run).

That one is I believe Charon's, which will leave me with Pyri and Hades to finish, hopefully by around the middle of February. I'd really like to be done with Chapter Three, because I know the next one is going to be even longer, and I'm really starting to worry about scope creep and how long it's going to take me to finish this game.

But, for now all I can do is write the scenes I need at the pace of which I'm capable.

I hope everyone's doing well; take care of yourselves out there!

[Weekly Update - 27 January, 2025](#)

[January 26](#)

Hello everyone!

Another week, another 11,000 words. I finished the Charon scene, and I might get just a tiny bit of the Pyri one done this week, but that probably won't make it into the BIP. The rest of the time between now and the 31st is going to be devoted to editing and testing, so that hopefully the thing goes out in a readable form!

As most of you have likely heard by now, one of the hosting sites I've been using for the demo, Dashingdon, will be shutting down at the end of this month, so as of this upcoming BIP, I will only be using CoG Demos to host the work in progress. It's made a lot of improvements since I first started using it a few months ago, so if it didn't initially work very well for you, I encourage you to give it another try, because hosting options that allow for save files are extremely rare.

Please keep in mind that with the CoG Demos site, you need to be logged in to use save files, though.

Anyway, that was the focus of this week; I've not made a lot of headway on Project Crystalline while I'm focusing on finishing this increasingly-large chapter. But I'm down to two more scenes to go, so we'll see how things go from here.

Cheers, everyone; I hope you have a great week.

## [BIP - January](#)

### [January 30](#)

Hey everyone!

Here's the BIP for this month; the chapter is now sitting at 133,000 words or so (up 38k from last month!), and the final scenes have been completed for Hekate, Alekto, and Charon, so if you're on any of those routes, this is now the complete Chapter Three for you. Hades and Pyri will be the order of business for next month, so look forward to that, too. :)

Just as a reminder, Dashingdon is shutting down imminently, so this month's demo is hosted only on CoGdemos. You'll need an account if you want to use the save feature, I've heard, so keep that in mind!

[The demo is here.](#)

### [Weekly Update - 3 February, 2025](#)

### [February 2](#)

Hey all!

This week, as I mentioned in the last update, was mostly editing and testing for the BIP release, but I did also get 4,000 words in on the Pyri scene, which I expect might be just a little under halfway through. The last scenes of Chapter Three do vary quite a bit in length, generally depending on how many branches there are, which is dependent on the pacing of the individual romances. For example, the PC can already be in a relationship with Hermes or Hekate, so those scenes look different from ones like Pyri's or Charon's, where that's not quite established yet, so there are fewer branches to account for.

I think they should all read as *about* the same length, though, since obviously with all those variations, there's only one branch shown on any given playthrough. All to say, I'm thinking the remainder of the Pyri scene and Hades's shouldn't take me more than a couple of weeks to finish, so I'm hoping to begin the early access cycle for Chapter Three sometime in the middle of February.

This month's progress might be a bit slower for me overall; my partner's dealing with some health issues at the moment, which means I have to go to appointments and procedures and the like from time to

time, but overall I'm expecting a steady month, and hope to be stuck into Chapter Four by the end of it.

I'm also working on the user interface for Project Crystalline, so it might be that the bonus content this month is a look at some progress on that, rather than anything directly FoA-related. It won't be like that all the time, of course; I'll only preview the new project when there's something significant to say, and otherwise bonus contents will remain Asphodel-focused for now. I do hope to be able to bring you all an exclusive demo sometime this year, but for now it's very much on the backburner, as BotL remains the focus of my creative energy.

Anyhow, that's the overview for now. I hope everyone's doing well, and that February treats you kindly. :)

### [Weekly Update - 10 February, 2025](#)

#### [February 9](#)

Hey everyone!

Good news to report so far—this week, with an extra 8,000 words, I finished off Pyri's scene, leaving me with just one to go, featuring Hades. I'm hopeful I'll have that one done by this time next week, but if it's not quite that fast, I think it will be close, so stay tuned for an announcement on when early access will be happening!

As I may have mentioned earlier, this month's bonus content may be a first look at the UI for Project Crystalline, rather than anything FoA-related, but this shouldn't be too common an occurrence, so if you're only here for Underworld-related things, don't worry too much about that.

Anyhow, I may get a little less progress in this week, but I'm hoping I'll mostly be able to stick to my schedule, and in any event, I'll be back next week with another update. Until then, I hope you all stay well.

### [Bonus Content - Project Crystalline UI](#)

#### [February 11](#)

Hey, everyone!

As I mentioned, this month's bonus content is a bit unique. Some of you already know that I'm slowly cooking up another project behind the scenes, one that I'll be releasing in Twine rather than ChoiceScript. I've been gradually building the UI, based on a template, with my own changes and additions for the anticipated needs of this story—currently just called "Project Crystalline."

Here is the fruit of my labours this far. Of course, it's not done yet, and there's a fair bit I need to add, including but not limited to:

- Light Mode
- Link formatting
- A settings menu
- Links from the character, quest, and codex landing pages
- Potentially artwork, particularly in the menus
- Additional formatting for menus, etc.

Anyway, the project can be found [here](#), and the password, in case you'd like to take a look, is letsseetheui.

Naturally, I welcome suggestions for improvement, especially if they aren't already on the to-do list above.

[Weekly Update - 17 February, 2025](#)

[February 16](#)

Hey everyone!

As some of you are aware, the early access cycle for the new version of the demo, with all of Chapter Three included, began yesterday. That means everyone else will be getting it over the next week and a bit, and the public update will drop just before the end of the month.

(Chapter Three adds 157,000 words to the game, in total.)

I'll be taking some time to get the next chapter set up before I start writing; outlining can be a tough process sometimes, but hopefully it won't take too long.

Anyway! This week I wrote 12,000 words, so I'm still doing quite well for the month, and will hopefully be on track to get started on at least one of the routes for Chapter Four for the BIP.

I hope you all have a great week; Blossom Tier will get the new demo on Wednesday, followed by everyone else on Sunday!

## [Early Access - Demo #2](#)

### [February 18](#)

Hello, Blossoms!

It's a week before public release, which means it's your turn to get access to the demo. As I mentioned in the last weekly update, this chapter's pretty huge, but it probably doesn't feel that long, since the last scene splits eight ways based on your route. Still, I hope you enjoy it!

[You can find it here.](#) Remember to create an account and login if you want access to save slots.

## [Weekly Update - 24 February, 2025](#)

### [February 23](#)

(The way I accidentally typed '2015' up there for a second. Oof.)

Anyway!

Hello, everyone. We've nearly hit the end of the early access cycle for Chapter Three. Everyone on here should be able to see it now, so if you can't, please let me know.

I ended up only doing a bit of basic outlining this week, but as a result, I also managed to get 8,000 words on the first of the scenes for Chapter Four. This chapter begins with a route-specific scene for each RO/PO, where we start to follow up on that part way back in Chapter One where they asked the PC to help them out with something. I'm now about 50% of the way through Charon's route, so I'm hoping to have that one at least finished for the BIP, but we'll see how things go this week.

I also got a pretty good amount of plotting done for Project Crystalline this week; the overall shape of the thing is slowly coming together, and I'm beginning to develop certain sidequest chains now as well. It'll still be quite a while before anything gets written down in story form for that one, but I'm happy with

the progress I'm making so far; it gives my brain something to do that isn't just trying to get words on a page, which I appreciate at this point in time.

Meanwhile, life continues to be life. I'm expecting my landlord to price me out of my place by raising rent again this year (if you live in Australia right now, you know this is not uncommon in the least), so there may be a big move in my future, which will surely be both annoying and expensive, but we do as we must. I hope you're all hanging in there, and finding some time to do things that bring you joy (and not, say, doomscrolling and depressing yourself just by keeping up with the news cycle).

I'll be back in this space in a week, when it will be March! So until then, have a good one.

[BIP - February](#)

[February 27](#)

Hey all!

I just released Chapter Three, so as you might expect there isn't a *whole* lot of new content for the BIP, but! If you like Charon I have good news for you—their Chapter Four plot scene is done, as is the one that immediately follows, which everyone gets. So far, that's 17,000 words, meaning I managed to write 9,000 more this week, so things are certainly humming along.

[You can find the latest game version here.](#)

I hope you enjoy it!

[Weekly Update - 3 March, 2025](#)

[March 2](#)

Hello again, everyone!

As most of you are aware, the public build of Chapter Three went out this week. In the meantime, I've been working away at Chapter Four, and have added another 9,000 words to it, bringing it to a current total of 17,000, which some of you no doubt saw in the BIP. This includes Charon's individual route

scene for the chapter, as well as a scene everyone gets once that first part is over, where you have a brief talk with the Moirae about prayers and domains and things.

As you might have guessed, the prayer you get here, and the plotline attached to it, is the main chance you have in the game to expand your domains, and the plan right now is for that to happen based on how you respond to the request for help. Of course, the option remains to be uncomfortable with answering or receiving prayers, and even not participate in the plotline at all, if that's your preference.

That leaves me with five other individual plotlines to advance in this chapter, plus one group scene at the end, where perhaps you can do a little bit to influence how things are going for the characters whose routes you are *not* on, and that will be Chapter Four. I anticipate that this will take me all of March, and quite possibly all or most of April as well, but I'd like to aim to release Chapter Four sometime around early to mid May if I can. I have a sort of tentative goal for the year to get through Chapter Seven, which would put me in a good place to finish and submit in late 2026. But I'm keeping that in mind as something to aim for rather than to hold myself to—there is a lot of game to write between now and then, in any case.

[Weekly Update - 10 March, 2025](#)

[March 9](#)

Hello, all!

Chapter Four continues apace; another 9,000 words was just enough to write Alekto's scene for the chapter, and I've also done a bit of the outlining work for Hermes's, which is next in the queue. So far, I'm on pace to complete four of them this month, so we'll see how that goes.

Up on the queue this Wednesday is a bonus content, and in this case, I've elected to delve into the backstory addressed in the most recent Charon plot scene, to show a little more about how that came to be. So it'll be a little different in style to the usual 'characters interacting' type of bonus content, but I hope you'll like it.

That's about the long and short of it for this week, really. There was actually a tropical cyclone (the south Pacific's version of a hurricane) over the weekend, but it didn't actually do much. Sort of disintegrated as it made landfall, so fortunately I didn't lose power or anything, and work proceeded normally. I'm certainly not going to complain about that—I was not looking forward to my first hurricane-ish-thing!

May you all avoid the storms (literal and metaphorical) for another week, too. :)



## [Bonus Content - Charon](#)

[March 11](#)

Hey everyone!

As I mentioned in the last weekly update, the next series of bonus contents will most likely deal with the backstory of the subplots related to each RO/PO. Since the one I wrote first (and you've now had the chance to read) is Charon's, that's where I'm starting.

Obviously very many spoilers for anyone who isn't up to date on the BIP.

I hope you enjoy it.

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It was a slow thing, the descent into prayer-madness.

At first, Ares didn't notice it at all. He was simply worshipped, as all of the most prominent Olympians were. He had walked the world of mortals, acted upon it with greater frequency than most in his capacity as the god of storms, had heard his first prayer as a plea for mercy.

Curious, he'd halted the storm the prayer came in reference to, and after that, there were many more. Some he answered, some he ignored, using his judgement and the advice of the gods with more experience in such matters than himself. Athena said that it was impossible to answer every one, and that sometimes the mortal world needed calamity.

She was wise, and so Ares believed her.

Sometimes, the prayers asked him to send storms to sink boats—warships were popular requests, but ordinary merchant vessels weren't immune, either. At first, these had simply amused him, and he would answer them at his whim, laughing with his sister when the destruction of a fleet disrupted the best-laid plans of Athena or Poseidon, but eventually Ares grew curious.

For all the time he'd spent wandering the world, whipping up the waters and sinking beneath the surf, he had never spent time among the humans themselves. He didn't care much for them—they were the playthings of Fate, and that was all. Unwitting pawns in petty conflicts and proxy wars, who got into plenty of equally-ridiculous conflicts of their own, and called in the gods like debtors.

Eris said it was better not to get involved with them.

But she wasn't so wise as Athena, and Ares's curiosity won out over his indifference.

He descended once more from Olympus, and the first thing he came upon was a war camp. He made friends with the soldiers there, drilled with them and ate with them, all the while unknown to him as the god he was. They were fighting a generational enemy, they said, though none could explain what had actually made them enemies, except to cite the conflict itself. Raids, deaths, dishonour.

At first, Ares was amused by it, the shortsightedness of it all, but then the attack came.

Standing on the field, he saw the same people he had spoken, eaten, trained with, falling to their enemies' swords, spears, and arrows, and he finally understood.

His fury roared in his ears, and a tempest ripped through the enemy camp, destroying their back lines and supplies, and forcing a retreat.

He anticipated being cast from the camp, for fear of his power and resentment that he had not used it sooner. Instead, the soldiers—Atlanteans, they called themselves, from the city of Atlantis—embraced him. Thanked him for his power. Feted him, brought him back to their city as a hero, their disguised benefactor.

They built a temple to him, to Ares, and it was the grandest thing he'd ever seen.

He decided that these people would be his people. That he would use his power in exchange for their devotion, and that this would settle the uncertainty in his heart.

Others, hearing of the terrifying patron of Atlantis, sometimes called upon his power as well, and Ares was happy enough to use it, for any cause but those against Atlantis. He doled out death and destruction, and the clamour of prayers in his head grew so loud as to drown out everything else, a clangour that was only ever eased in the still moments at battle's end.

Eris warned him against succumbing to it too often, but he scoffed. The irony was rich, coming from the likes of her, and she'd never been wise, anyway. His power was growing, swelling to rival that of Athena, and he suspected, perhaps, that one day it could rival even Zeus himself.

Ares couldn't remember when he'd started to want that, but it was of no consequence. People changed, and he was hardly immune to that. He bid Eris, his sister, to temper her reservations and try it. She did, and found it much the same as he had,

Intoxicating.

Atlantis flourished under his patronage, for a civilisation protected in war was a civilisation strong in peace. The riches of their ancient enemy became their own, and the city expanded until it was nearly the biggest in the world, driven by an engine of technology well ahead of its peers. Though it bordered the ocean, it feared no storm, and the rains were always on time.

But of course, those without grew jealous, and in time another army was mustered, to sack the city and plunder its wealth. The invaders marched quickly, almost without warning, and soon the prayers were drowning Ares.

Protect.

Kill.

*Destroy.*

There was nothing else. He was war, after all—what else could there be, but to do as the prayers bid him? As they fuelled him to do?

He raised his hand. To divide the ground, to put a fissure in the earth. To swallow the front line of the invaders, deter the rest. To protect the clamouring voices that called for his intervention.

He split the earth.

Atlantis fell into the sea.

And Ares fell with it.

[Weekly Update - 17 March, 2025](#)

[March 16](#)

Hey everyone!

I kept on pace last week, writing another 10,000 words to complete Hermes's Chapter Four scene. I've honestly been really enjoying these; as much as it's nice to hang out in the Underworld doing more episodic or one-off scenes, I am at heart an adventure plot enthusiast, and so getting the first really meaty part of each mini-plot written for everyone has been a lot of fun. I'm getting to reference and use more myths and figures, and put the characters in new, often stressful situations, and really start cracking into some of their issues accordingly.

This week is Pyri's scene, and I'm quite excited for it. :)

That's basically it from me this week. Project Crystalline continues to percolate in the back of my mind, and may have a proper name, now, but I'm sitting with it for a while and seeing how it strikes me in a few weeks.

I hope everyone's doing all right; the world is pretty out of pocket right now, to say the least, and for those of us who are dealing with personal difficulty on top of that, it can seem like a *lot*, sometimes. If that's you (like it's me), hang in there. We'll make it.

## [Weekly Update - 24 March, 2025](#)

### [March 23](#)

Hello again, everybody!

This week, I wrote another 10,000 words, finishing up Pyri's Chapter Four scene. This week, my goal is to finish Hekate's, and get everything sorted out for the BIP at this time next week. I think I should be able to manage it, but if I don't quite get to the end, you'll have everything I do manage to get done on the 31st, as usual.

That should leave me with just Hades's route and the group scene to do at the beginning of next month, so hopefully I'll be able to start releasing the chapter via early access in mid April or so. I am expecting it to come in around 75,000 words in total, which is honestly right around the per-chapter length I was hoping for with this project (as opposed to Chapter Three, which was significantly longer!)

Anyhow, I really appreciate everyone who plays and writes me with continuity questions, typos, and all sorts of other feedback; I know I must be missing plenty of things, with as quickly as I'm trying to get through the scenes. I'm having a lot of fun with them, though; already in this chapter I've introduced both Medusa and the Minotaur, on different routes, so some of you can look forward to them on your playthroughs. :)

I hope you're all hanging in there, and I'll be back with the stats on the BIP next week. Cheers.

## [BIP - March](#)

### [March 30](#)

Hello, all!

This month's BIP has quite a bit of new stuff. Specifically, the route-specific scenes for Alekto, Hermes, Pyri, and Hekate are now all done, meaning that only Hades's scene and the group scene at the end

are left to go. The chapter is currently sitting at 56,000 words, making my total progress for the month around 39,000, which I'm pretty satisfied with.

In any event, [I hope you enjoy reading it](#), and feedback is always welcome!

## [Weekly Update - 31 March, 2025](#)

### [March 30](#)

Hey everyone! This post is a tad later than usual because the BIP also needed to go out today, so I gave that one the noon-my-time slot and made this a smidge later. If you've already seen that, then you have most of the news, which is, in short: this month I wrote four route-specific scenes, one each for Alekto, Hermes, Pyri, and Hekate, and spent about 39,000 words doing so.

That leaves me with Hades's route and a group scene to go in Chapter Four. I anticipate that Hades's scene will be about the same 8-10k that everyone else's has been, and I plan to finish it this week if possible, though I am traveling a bit, so it might not quite get there. I don't know exactly how long the group scene will be, but it definitely ought not take me more than two weeks, so the early access cycle will definitely begin somewhere in April, with public release being very early May at the latest, barring, you know, things like health emergencies and those sorts of unpredictable factors.

In any event, I'm excited to have a chapter of relatively manageable length for once; 1.5-2 months between chapters feels great, honestly. I'm sure some of my upcoming ones won't allow it, but the sense of progress is really very uplifting, haha.

I hope you're all doing well, and as usual, I'll be back here next week with another update.

Cheers.

## [Weekly Update - 7 April, 2025](#)

### [4 days ago](#)

Hey everyone!

I got Hades's scene done this week, which was another 10,000 words onto the chapter. That means this week and possibly next, I'll be working on the final group scene, doing some editing and testing, and then putting Chapter Four through the early access cycle. I hope you're all as excited for that as I am!

The bonus content also goes out this week, and this month it's from Alekto's POV, so we'll be looking at some of the stuff in her backstory that relates to the themes she talked about in Tartarus, if you're on her route.

Otherwise, I'm just humming along as always. I hope you're all doing well, and that if you're not, the change of season brings you some relief.

Until next time.

[Bonus Content - Alekto](#)

[2 days ago](#)

Hi everyone!

This month's bonus content features some of Alekto's backstory, relevant to the most recent scene with her, as last month did with Charon. The style's a little more conventional, in this case, as it features her talking to Hades about some pretty serious stuff, and reflecting a bit on how her life has changed since her exile to the Underworld.

I hope you enjoy it.

(Please note that this story features a previous name Alekto went by, but not her deadname. There are some mentions of the magical equivalent of gender-affirming medical care, and topics in the area.)

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“My Lord, I would like to take the job in punishments.”

Aoide isn't sure how well she modulates her voice. She can only hear it dimly, and in truth she feels it more than anything, as vibrations in her head and throat, and she hasn't quite figured out how those correlate with how other people hear it.

But the Lord of the Dead does not flinch, nor make any other sign that she has erred in volume or pitch, and so for now, she can only hope that means she hasn't, because her mastery of the sign language she is learning is still far from passable, for such an important conversation.

Hades's brows knit; she instinctively stiffens, bracing herself for some outburst of displeasure, but none follows. He is not an entitled son of Olympus, she must remind herself. He does not expect that everything will go exactly as he prefers it, immediately. He does not rage at those beneath him.

"Punishments?" he says instead, and she could swear she feels his voice vibrate beneath her feet at least as much as in her ears. "That is... Aoide, you understand that you are not obliged to take on any tasks at all?" She doesn't need to perfectly discern his tone to understand the gentleness in it; it's right there in the softening of his features.

"With respect, sir," she says, hopefully still audibly, "I am."

Even as she disagrees with him, her chest is warm. He'd used her name for herself even when it didn't *look* like that name should belong to her. Now, it does, and in spite of everything—in spite of her exile, her grief, her shame—she has never felt more like herself.

It is perhaps ironic that this of all times would be when she decides to take on a different name altogether, but perhaps, finally, being *Aoide* to someone other than her sisters, someone other than *her*, means the name has done what it was always meant to do.

To show her herself.

Hades waits patiently for her to elaborate, so Aoide does her best to put her thoughts in order.

"I... owe you, and Lady Hekate as well," she says, biting lightly at the inside of her lip. "You have both done more for me than you can possibly imagine. Given me a place to stay, given me... given me a form to live in that finally feels—" She chokes over the words, a thick lump in her throat.

"You have no idea how long I felt like a stranger in my own body, my lord. Nor how... nor how it feels to finally be *right*." She shakes her head. "I know you do not require repayment of me, and neither does Lady Hekate. But *I* need to repay you. And I want to do it this way."

By taking what seems to be the least-desirable job of the most necessary jobs in the Underworld. Perhaps that's extreme of her, but... right now, it doesn't even sound that bad. If she can castigate mortals, if she can punish them for their indiscretions in the eyes of the gods, then...

Perhaps that will mean fewer arrows shot from on high. Fewer people struck down in the rages of entitled sons of Olympus, who believe that whatever they want is theirs alone. If her punishments can be sufficient, then those mortals can still live.

Hades looks at her with deep red eyes, and for the first time in her life, Aoide feels like someone is staring right through to the soul of her.

"You won't be able to save everyone," he replies quietly. "And the work is miserable. People will curse you. They will evoke you in prayers only to ward you off. They will not celebrate you, nor call on you for

inspiration. You will feel horrible about the punishments you must visit, upon both the living and the dead.”

“I know,” she replies. “But someone has to do it, and I have to do something. Surely...” her voice trembles. “Surely Fate has brought me here, like this, so that I might do the task. I promise you, I will not lose sight of the necessity of it. I will not lose sight of why I do what I do.” Aoide squares her shoulders as best she can, her jaw reflexively clenching.

He stares at her for a long moment, but she holds her posture, refusing to falter in the face of his scrutiny.

“You will need to be trained for battle,” he says. “And to subdue the creatures that dwell within Tartarus. Your duties there are the larger part of the job. Being called upon to punish the living is uncommon.”

Of course it was. The gods preferred to handle that kind of thing themselves, usually to extremes. But, bit by bit, she would get them to rely on her. To at least dismiss such matters as unimportant and fine to be left to her lowly self. Humans, too, rarely tried to summon such punishment for their own kind. But still. Still, it was something.

“I understand,” she replies. “I will become strong enough that you can feel assured in leaving this to me.”

The lord of the Underworld inclines his head. “Very well,” he says softly. “But know that you may always relinquish your duty at any time. It is not your burden alone to bear, and you must also swear to look after yourself, so that it does not become too much.”

“Yes. I swear it.”

“All right. Then... to complete the domain transfer, you will need to choose a new name. I regret that ‘Aoide’ is not suitable for this particular role.”

She considers this for a moment. She will miss her name. She will miss the person she was, even if she could only truly be herself in secret. But perhaps that is all right. She will be someone else, now. Someone who is known for who she is to everyone. Someone who is *always* herself.

“Alekto,” she says, firmly.

“My name is Alekto.”