Parisian Nights

by booabug

Summary

If there's one word you can always use for what Ladybug and Chat Noir go through, it's "unpredictable." Every night is different: personal conflict, civilian interactions, life or death situations, just being with each other, and who knows what else? Throughout the nights of one summer, their relationship develops in the city they love, serve, and live in.

This was supposed to be for Ladynoir July 2017. It became it's own thing, a continuous story, though I still worked within the prompts.
Patience

Chapter Summary

Partners are patient with one another.

Chapter Notes

At the time of posting, the fandom is currently undergoing a two week protest called the ML Content Creator Blackout. While I'm not participating, I do want to draw attention to it. Please be aware of how damaging art/fic theft can be and be respectful of creators: do not repost or use their work, and do not like or share fanwork posts that don’t seem to be by the original creator.

This work as it progresses directly reflects how I grow as a writer doing it. There are a ton of things I do for the first time here, a lot of it experimentation, all spontaneous for the prompt. ‘Unpredictable’ goes for me as much as it does for our dear protagonists.

“… Threw himself in front of the blast to shield the heroine! He crumpled to the ground, but, even as the heroine cradled him in her arms, the true injury was in his heart,” Chat Noir sighs, clasping his hands over his own chest. He continues, pacing with a forlorn expression. “For even as he looked into her eyes, he knew. He knew even if he made it out of this predicament safely- by no means a sure thing! He knew, much as he loved her, she could not love him in return so long as the kingdom was besieged by-”

Ladybug huffs a sigh through her nose. Her chin rests in one hand, the other in the air flapping open and closed. She’d been wondering when he would get to this part. It’s the best part, because it means he’ll be finished soon. Chat turns to pace back her way. She drops her talking hand and nods.

“The knight’s vision faded, and… Well, the rest is for another night,” Chat grins and winks.

Ladybug returns the grin, though in a decidedly wry fashion. “You’ve used this cliffhanger before, you know.”

“It happens that knights are woefully prone to blacking out.”

She laughs. “Why do you do the cliffhangers anyway?”

“Well,” He rubs the side of his neck, “I need you to be interested the next night somehow.”

“Chat, I’d honestly rather do without them. I’d listen anyway.”

“You would?”

“Yes.”

He blinks. “Ah… I see. My mesmerizing voice is enough. All this time wasted,” he clicks his
“More like memorizing, chaton, I could say the bit about love spurned by destiny and the knight willing to wait until the stars fade, et cetera, by heart. Well, keep at it anyway. It’s sort of become a nightcap for patrol nights.”

“Yowch. I was going for a dreamtime tale, not a bedtime story.”

“Come on, I didn’t mean it that way. It’s just that I’ve heard it thousands of times, fairy-tales like these.”

“If you’ve heard it that many times anyway, you wouldn’t mind if told you these stories for a thousand nights more?”

“I said I would listen, not that I wouldn’t mind, but yes if you really wanted to spend the better part of three years on this saga, I’m in it for the long haul,” she shrugs. “Though that would be about as long as we’ve already been partners, I think.”

“A thousand and one nights?”

“Oh, well, then I’d have to have you executed.”

“Ladybug! My nine lives are dwindling as it is.”

“So is my one life. Minute by minute. Each night.”

“ Aren’t ours all, all the time? We live on borrowed time! And yet,” Chat leans in close, “There’s no one else I would rather spend it with.”

“If only you put as much into your stories as you did into your flirting,” Ladybug taps his nose before stepping back and stretching. “Let’s see, patrol? Check. Chat’s fairy tale? Check. Chat’s flirting? Multiple checks. I think that’s everything. Time to go to bed.”

“So soon? You haven’t even checked these,” Chat says, flexing.

Ladybug laughs, and flings her yo-yo. She gives his exaggerated bicep a pat. “Good night, Chat, and sweet dreams of your fairy-tale. The one where in the end, the kingdom will be saved, the heroine falls in love with the knight, and they live happily ever after.”

Her smile is warm before she swings away. He watches her go with his own wavering smile. “I can only hope that’s how this one ends.”
Chapter Summary

If you’re not careful, the thoughtless quips you exchange can really backfire.

Chapter Notes

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“How are we supposed to catch him without getting too close?” Ladybug mutters. The grating sound of a steel beam crumpling like paper punctuates why they can’t get too close.

Both her and Chat flinch at the crash of metal and concrete. The shower of stony debris doesn’t come down on where they’re hiding, but it’s too close for comfort. Still, he quirks a brow at her and mutters, “I could always use my animal magnetism, but you know that’s only for you.”

“Oh? Then I don’t think it’ll be effective, even if you tried. That gives me an idea though. Take the right and follow my lead.”

“Don’t steel your heart before I can steal it!” They spring into action.

“Got you something, my lovely!” Chat bounces the akumatized item in his hand before tossing it to Ladybug.

“Why, how sweet you are! Oh dear, but how clumsy of me,” she says, stomping on it to draw out the butterfly.

“That wasn’t easy to get either,” Chat clicks his tongue shrugging, “But I could never stay mad you, bugaboo.”

“You’re just going to keep calling me that, aren’t you?”
Chat bats at the air in front of his nose, a futile attempt against the alcohol fumes coming off his suit. “My nose! If only you got hit instead.”

“You never listen to me about jumping in the way,” Ladybug narrows her eyes at him.

“Yes, but I didn’t know what it was then, otherwise, well... They say absinthe makes the heart grow fonder,” he grins.

She smiles. “I don’t believe in those sayings. After all, apparently familiarity breeds contempt and yet here you’ve grown on me, despite how crazy you drive me sometimes.”

“What kind of crazy?” He leans in, face to face.

Ladybug scrunches up her nose, “You’re right, that stuff gets right in your nose.”

“Do you find it intoxicating?” Chat waggles his eyebrows.

Ladybug’s retort is cut off by the shatter of glass against the table they’ve sheltered behind. “Focus.”

“Bien joué!” They fistbump.

“Tough one,” Ladybug remarks.

“I’ll say. We certainly didn’t win by a landslide,” Chat exhales as he leans on his staff. “Appreciate you saving my butt when she had me on the rocks, by the way.”

“I’ve got to protect what’s mine, after all,” she responds easily, smirking.

Chat’s brows make their way upward, a delighted grin growing from ear to ear. Ladybug’s expression turns to one of confusion. Twirling his tail, Chat’s entire manner goes very, very smug as he says, “So you do know you own my glorious ass.”

“Wh- Not- No! Partner meant! My partner! You- Partner! Mine! Not your-” she gesticulates somewhat in the direction of his-

“Question is, what are you going to do with it?”

Ladybug’s miraculous sounds it’s final warning beep. Hastily, she says, “I need to go, you need to shut up, bye!”

She stumbles on the rooftop ledge as she swings away.
Explosive [Catalysis]

Chapter by allthisink (booabug), booabug

Chapter Summary

“Catalysis is the increase in the rate of a chemical reaction due to the participation of an additional substance called a catalyst, which is not consumed in the catalyzed reaction and can continue to act repeatedly. Often only tiny amounts of catalyst are required in principle.” —Wikipedia

“Our suits protect us,” Chat Noir begins, voice about an octave higher than usual. He cleared his throat and continued in a voice nearly normal, “Protect us against explosions, right? Like, usual explosions, not akuma blasts.”

“I don’t know? I mean, this- this has never happened to me before either.”

“Right, right, I just thought- my kwami doesn’t explain a lot? I thought yours might.”

“Uhh... Yes, she does, but we haven’t covered... bombs.” Ladybug stared at the bomb in the room. Vault. Bank back room? Bankroom. She laughed at her own unspoken joke.

Chat gives her a look. “You okay?”

“Of course, I’m okay, I have to be!” Ladybug says rapid fire, arms flying into the air, throwing her head back. “I have to be okay, that way I look okay, and Paris sees, and they feel okay!”

“Hey, whoa,” Chat puts up his hands and steps towards her slowly. “Maybe, but right now, it’s just you and me, right?”

Softly, he takes her by the shoulders. He feels the tension hunching them up release. His voice is soft as he says, “You don’t need to be anything but yourself with me.”

She lowers her gaze to meet his. For a moment there’s nothing she can do but look at the expression in his eyes. There’s none of the usual mischievous glint in them, no witty edge; yet it feels familiar anyway, in some different way. “Y- Yeah.”

“If it makes you feel any better, I am definitely not okay right now.”

They both chuckle. Ladybug’s fades as she puts her hands on Chat’s back, head lowering to his chest slowly. She murmurs into his chest, “Could have fooled me, silly kitty.”

“L-Ladybug?”

“I just- I can’t help but think.”

“Of what?”

“All the times you’ve gotten hurt,” she says, her hands clutching now. “When you got stuck in the freezer. Then there’s Lady Fragrance.”
Chat lowers his hands from her shoulders to her back, rubbing little circles. “To be fair, being stuck in a stinky car wasn’t exactly an injury.”

“No, but… It means we would smell smoke too, right? Chem’s not be my best subject, but I know about carbon monoxide poisoning. Then there’s the heat.”

He says nothing.

“Chat, we’re probably going to die. We’re going to die, and it’s because I just did the first stupid thing I could think of.”

“But you’re a hero,” Chat says pointedly. His head is right by hers. His voice right by her ear reverberates in her. “Because you had to make sure that, no matter what, it couldn’t go off where any civilians would get hurt. You’re a hero, and that makes you brash, and impulsive, and sometimes it pisses me off, and it scares the crap out of me even more-“

Ladybug interrupts with a short laugh. “Hypocrite.”

“Maybe, but most of all,” Chat pauses. “I love that about you.”

Ladybug freezes.

“If we are going to die, that’s fine by me. With you, being a hero, I wouldn’t rather die any other way.”

“I know. I didn’t call you a hypocrite just because you keep taking stupid hits for me. You’ve died before. For me.”

“I have?”

“Yeah.”

“Oh.”

“You don’t even sound surprised.”

“Well… I’m not. I’d do it again.”

Ladybug looks up at him, at the gentle smile on his face, the look in his eyes. “Chat, I… I think you’re more of a hero than me, more than anyone realizes- no, let me finish— more than even you realize. And I, I really like that about you.”

His smile goes goofy. He closes his eyes and rests his forehead on hers. “Thanks.”

She can’t help but stare, stare as his smile drops, stare him in the eye as they open. She can’t help the stinging in her own eyes as she takes in the look in his.

“I’ve always meant to tell you,” Chat mutters, voice low. “I tried way back on Valentine’s Day a couple of years ago, but that… Didn’t work out so well. I do keep trying to tell you, sort of, always … I’m just scared, you know? So I, I keep couching it in jokes. It’s funny. I’m not scared of dying at all right now. Just that if I don’t tell you now, I might never get to, so I have to. I’m scared of what your answer might be, not that this might be the end. If it is, then at least I get to follow you into the end.”

“Ch-Chat?”
“Just--answer me honestly, alright?” A small, rueful smile tugs at one side of his mouth. “No matter what, I will gladly follow you like I always have because you make me so hopelessly, madly-”

“Chat!” Ladybug tears her gaze away from his to look at the vault door, mechanisms loudly working to open the door. She quickly lets go of their embrace.

He does the same, reluctantly.

“Bomb squad, go go!”

“Operation successful,” Officer Riencomprix says into his radio. “Forwarding Ladybug and Chat Noir to EMTs now.”

They’re rushed out, shoved in different directions.

Out there is Paris, roaring crowd despite the hour, media barking at each other, police spotlights, even the report of helicopters from above.

Just before they’re pushed out the doors to the chaos of the public, the heroes look towards each other with more uncertainty than they ever have before in their partnership.
Chapter Summary

Things go back to normal, right?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Akuma attacks: Fight co-ordination, strategics, occasional offhand compliments from Chat; the latter without any subtext, and usually in the post-fight interview. For appearances.

Patrols: Pointing out suspicious sightings, fans flagging them down for a selfie or autograph (smiles forced), otherwise: silence.

Outwardly, everything was the same. Inside, what had been home had shifted, just a little. Just enough to feel strange, though the familiarity remained.

It’s not long before the night Ladybug calls for a break on a rooftop garden. When she puts her hand on Chat’s back, he stiffens, and her face falls behind him. “Chat, we can’t keep going on like this.”

“What do you mean? We’re working as well ever, aren’t we?”

She walks around to face him. He doesn’t quite meet her gaze. “The heroes of Paris are. We aren’t, and it’s killing me. I miss my partner. I miss my best friend.”

He does shift his eyes to meet hers. The look in them is a hand tearing straight through her chest to clench her heart in an iron fisted grip. She sits down cross legged, throat dry. When she gulps, it’s of no help, so she simply pats the ground in front of her. He sits, without hesitation. “I will gladly follow you like I always have.”

He doesn’t sit as close as usual, and definitely not with his usual nonchalance. She’s trying to find the words to say when he speaks up. “I made it weird, didn’t I?”

“No, no! Not at all,” she shakes her outstretched hands. He gives her a look. “Okay, a little, but I’m as much at fault. It’s just… I had no idea, Chat. I never took you seriously, and really, I- not just… You know, the flirting. I’ve been thinking, and I don’t take you seriously enough, period.”

He scratches the back of his neck. “Can’t say I’ve ever acted like a serious kind of guy.”

“Still. You deserve better than that, and what’s the saying? Something like ‘those who laugh the loudest cry the hardest?’”

A smile tugs at his lips. “Are you analyzing me now?”

“I’m sure the Psychiatric Association would love to know what goes on in that kitty brain of yours, but no. I just thought that it’s about time I got to know you better,” she rolls her shoulders in a shrug.
He opens his mouth shortly before shutting it again and frowning. “Nothing too specific though, I’m guessing?”

“Yeah… Honestly, I hate being such a hardass about that,” Ladybug puts her chin in her hand and pouts. Chat chuckles. “I’m curious too, but my kwami advises against it, and she makes sense, you know? Besides, I’ve learned to trust her on these things.”

“Well, one of us has to be the responsible one, and it’s certainly not going to be me,” Chat grins with wave of his hand. “I’m the fun one.”

“I’m fun!”

“Oh, I’m sorry, I didn’t realize.”

Ladybug shoves his shoulder, the both of them snickering. “Okay, let’s start with something easy. We both know we play Ultimate Mecha Strike. Just fighting games, or any other genres?”

“Hmmm,” Chat crosses his arms and looks down pensively for a moment.

Then another moment. And another.

Ladybug huffs. “Okay, new rule, fast answers.”

“Wow, you are fun.”

“I’m not going to wait until daybreak while you weigh the pros and cons of different video games!”

“I guess mostly RPGs and adventure. I started on fighting games and shooters two, three years ago, since I actually got someone to play with. I mean, I played them by myself before that and never really saw the appeal, but turns out?” He leans in and stage whispers conspiratorially. “They’re actually fun with a friend and not just ragey internet toughguys.”

“Oh, same here. I never even bothered to go in voice chat until about the same time for multiplayer and, not to get cocky, but… I’ve been on the winning team a lot more since I started.”

“Why am I not surprised you’re a shot caller? You play... Snipers?”

“Depends on the game. Some games, snipers help because the fighting’s all over the place, sometimes it’s always concentrated- or should be- so it’s better to be a tank.” A wicked smirk creeps onto her face. “Although, when there’s gas canisters or something? Nothing’s better than waiting for an enemy to run near one and shooting it.

“Just watching them go up in flames,” she sighs with a serene smile. “Priceless.”

“You are savage. I love it.” Chat’s expression goes into a bit of a panic as soon the words leave his mouth. She quickly goes on.

“I take you for DPS.”

“And support, I’ll have you know. Playing both, I always make sure to protect my healers.” He frowns at Ladybug. “Protect your healers.”

“I have to focus on everything else more, but I’ll try to remember.”

That earns her a prolonged, cross-armed squint. He slowly leans closer with a, “HMMMMMMMM...”
She puts her hands up. “Alright already! I’ll make it a priority. You sound like an angry bee. Your turn.”

“Alright… Music. We both love Jagged Stone. Just classic rock?”

“Mostly. I’ll listen to anything and usually enjoy it at least a little, but I don’t really get into anything else. Oh! Actually, a friend of mine is a DJ, and he totally got me hooked on electroswing. I always did like those… oldschool big band songs, and like, Edith Piaf, of course. Still do, but with electroswing I actually want to dance.”

“No way, same!” Chat grins. “I bet you go all out and dance in your room, singing into a hairbrush and everything.”

“… Maybe. I just know you do, though.”

“I do, and I’m not ashamed to admit it. It’s just a crime I have no audience,” Chat sighs, running a hand through his hair.

Ladybug laughs a little too hard at his preening, but it’s the first time he’s done it in days.

“I’m sure. We could always do karaoke night someplace, then you could show off all you want…” Her smile falls. Her heart clenches again. “One day.”

“Yeah!” Chat leans in, grin and voice bright enough to chase off the damper on her mood. “One day. It’s a promise, right?”

“Chat, you know…” She looks at his grin and sighs. She throws her hands up, shaking her head.

“No, you know what? Screw it. Our kwami aren’t aware of what happens when they’ve transformed us. Yes, it’s a promise.”


“I know. I’d get grounded for life anyway, why not say we do multiplayer online together some day too? Scandalous.”

He gasps. “Goodness, I’d have to ask for your parents’ blessing first. We should at least start off with Super Mario Brothers first.”

“Ugh, you’re so proper. I bet you wouldn’t duet Rebel Yell with me.”

He frowns for a moment, muttering disjointed fragments of lyrics to different songs before he bobs his head, “Little angel… pray help from above. In the midnight hour, she-”

His eyes go wide. So do hers. “Oh, no- I didn’t realize how suggestive, it was just the first-”

“She cried more, more, more,” Chat sings in his best growling English, stupid grin on his face as he shimmies his upper body.

Ladybug puts her hands over her mouth and giggles uncontrollably. She can’t imagine anyone else in the world could make Billy Idol’s most sexual chorus the goofiest thing she’s ever witnessed. She can barely breathe enough to say, “Nev-Nevermind, I’m not-”

“You are!” He leaps forward onto a hand and his knees, pointing at her. “No take-backs! You’re singing Rebel Yell with me some day.”

“I never said I would, it was just a bet.”
Chat stands and glares down at her, arms crossed. “Sing Rebel Yell with me.”

“No.”

“Yes.”

“No.”

“Yes.”

“Oh my God.”

“Yes.”

“Is that all you’re going to say until I agree?”

“Yes.”

“Fine.”

“Yes!” Chat pumps his fists in the air. “And we’re playing Mario, and some multi… Uh, did we ever say which game for that?”

“I don’t think so.”

Ladybug has developed something of a Chat-sense, a preternatural feeling for when he’s about to do something she won’t even know what to do with. She watches him turn his head, searching. Her Chat-sense is tingling.

Sure enough, he flicks his staff out, ready to bound. “Chat, what-”

“I’m getting these in writing!”

Ladybug unlatches her yo-yo to follow him as quickly as she can, yelling, “What does that mean?!”

It meant that hours later, early into morning, she stands outside an all night diner with a hand full of napkins she had had to write on, each line beginning with, “One day, Chat Noir and I, Ladybug, will…”

She hadn’t expected to be the one holding them in the end. She had thought he’d keep them, probably memorize them, and remind her of them constantly, maybe even during battle. Instead, he had held them out for her, and the moment she took them, he closed her hand in both of his. “Keep them for me.”

His smile was so fragile when he said it, it didn’t reach his eyes, as much as she had searched that familiar shade of green. They were a little off. She could have sworn they didn’t glow in the darkness the way she remembered. When she had mustered up an, “Alright,” it was in a whisper she didn’t think he could have heard until those green eyes lit up. She hadn’t needed to look down to know he was grinning. Then he winked, and she couldn’t help but grin herself, with a huff of laughter.

“You are the responsible one, after all. Good night, My Lady,” he had said, bringing her hand up with his hands, all those promises nestled between them as he kissed her knuckles.

She had watched as he vaulted off into the night, laughing with what she could only describe as
manic glee.

Ladybug peered down at the scribbled upon napkins. Peered and thought about what she had gotten herself into. The words were ridiculously formal oaths for silly things, but between each and every line were the final words he hadn’t gotten to say that night in the bank vault.

He didn’t need to say them.

She had little doubt about what those words would have been.

She knew now, and she can’t help but keep them in mind, always.

She just didn’t know what to do with them.

Chapter End Notes

Honestly, this fic is my first attempt at something (semi-)serious. If you've read any of my other stuff, or even just look at my comment responses, you might notice I err on the goofy side of things. Maybe. I appreciate any thoughts on whether I'm being too heavy-handed, trying to stuff in too much, or anything like that.

(PS can I like, hire someone to crosspost for me because I'm terrible about it)
Right-Hook

Chapter by allthisink (booabug), booabug

Chapter Summary

Okay, so things aren't quite back to normal. Actually, Chat is getting really confused.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chat jabs with his left, and Ladybug moves to dodge it— straight into a right-hook. She reels from the impact.

She’s been off her game lately. It’s only a momentary thought, but enough time for her to recover. Before he knows it, she has him by the neck in a clinch. It forces him into a hunch, turning his height into a disadvantage, and, most importantly, lets her quite literally manhandle him. Ladybug throws her body weight to one side, and there’s not really much he can do but try to stay on his feet. Key word: try.

He grunts as he lands on his back, at least managing to roll into it a little instead of being thrown flat. Correction: Off her game, except when she’s absolutely beasting on him.

Which she really is, Chat thinks with resignation as he’s turned over onto his face, pinned by one arm. He knows better than to try and force his way out of it. Besides, he’s not really sure he can call upon his usual strength advantage at this point. He takes a deep breath before he pats the rooftop twice. He feels Ladybug release his arm and rolls over onto his forearms.

Only to find she hadn’t gotten up.

She leaves him stunned. That’s just a fact of life. The sun sets. The moon rises. Ladybug makes his mind go blank. He stares like an idiot. That’s at the best of times, when they’re not face to face, not sweaty and overheated and had just spent who knows how long single-mindedly focusing on each other’s bodies.

Except now they’re not anticipating movements or making counters. No, Chat is acutely aware they’re locked in position, and the force that’s holding him isn’t physical, not really.

It’s in the way her blue eyes meet his, those vibrant eyes that can be steely, or gentle, or as inscrutable as they are now, and all the more irresistible for it. While the lights of Paris keep the stars from being seen from the city, it puts them in hers. He could spend the entire night just watching the sparkle in her eyes. It’s in the way the heat from her body crosses the short distance between them to meld with his own, raking smouldering coals to life, so every inch of him anywhere close to her is aflame. His chest heaves. So must hers, she’s breathing just as hard. Every breath from her that he breathes in fans the flames inside of him. It’s a wildfire waiting to happen. He can’t control it. He doesn’t know what to do with it, and now he’s the one reeling. She didn’t even have to try. It’s not fair, but he wouldn’t have it any other way.

Then she gasps and scrambles off him, apologizing as if there’s anything to apologize for. Chat is
still feeling too stupid to respond as Ladybug helps him up. She lets go of his hand as soon as he’s on his feet. The moment she does, he misses the contact. She’s saying something. She’s saying something, so he has to respond. He says the first thing he thinks of.

“Toothpaste.”

Ladybug looks at him as if he had just spoken a foreign language. Chat double-checks that he spoke French, not Mandarin, confirms that he did, and feels even stupider than when he couldn’t think at all.

“Well, now I know you’re not okay.”

“Huh? Oh, I’m fine, it’s just… Your breath. I smelled toothpaste on it. Um. Yeah.” He combs his sweat-slicked hair into some semblance of order.

“Oh. Right. I sort of, half get ready for bed before I go, in case patrols run long, and… Always before sparring since I have to shower after,” she says, doing the same.

Chat opens his mouth. Then closes it, now able to realize he maybe shouldn’t comment on things like her showering or the fact that even with a ruddy complexion and messy, sweaty hair, she’s the most beautiful girl he’s ever seen. Of course, the former would have always been tasteless, but telling her she’s beautiful, that’s… Something he wouldn’t have hesitated to do just a few days ago.

But that was a few days ago.

Still, he can’t help but approach her and reach out to where his fist had landed. “It’s uh, a good thing we don’t bruise.”

Ladybug shifts almost imperceptibly away, but it’s enough to make him drop his hand. She rubs the back of her neck. “Yeah, you- you hit pretty hard.”

“Sorry, I didn’t expect that to land, actually.”

“No, don’t be sorry, I appreciate that you don’t pull your punches.”

“Are you alright? Lately, you’ve seemed kind of out of it sometimes,” Chat furrows his brows. He can’t help but think about the distance between them now, and how little there had been just shortly before. “Usually you would have dodged a combo like that, easy.”

Ladybug sighs. “I don’t know, I guess I have been out of sorts.”

“Well, if it makes you feel any better,” he says slowly, “You don’t even have to throw a punch to get me hooked.”

For a beat, she doesn’t respond. Then laughter bubbles up, and tension Chat didn’t even realize was in his shoulders melts away. He chuckles along, “Alright, that wasn’t one of my better ones.”

“Looks like I’m not the only one who’s a little out of sorts. Keep working on those lines, chaton.”

He grins and throws an arm around her shoulder. “And you, My Lady, should work on that dodging.”

“Hey,” she says, tapping his chin with her fist. “I’ve been doing just fine in akuma fights. It’s only you who has a way of blindsiding me.”
Songs just have a way of popping up and budging their way into my head when I write. Toothpaste Kisses did that this time, and come to think of it, it's a pretty Chat song.

Me writing from Marinette’s POV: this happened and i felt like this
Me writing from Adrien's POV: my prose was as purple as the bruise of unrequited love she leaves on my heart, as purple as the flowers I would give her if I could, as-
Also me: I'm gonna write tension
Also me, later: Make him say toothpaste.
Ladybug hated fog. It meant blurring lines and boundaries so figures became little more than vague shapes. During the day, when she was sheltered inside, had other things to do, it wasn’t so bad. Now, in the dark, unable to perform her duty, she’s left stewing in her thoughts. Where lights attempt to illuminate, they only worsen the fog, obscuring instead. Ladybug scowls, chin in hand, at her predicament.

The streets below are empty. Not even dark silhouettes of pedestrians pass under the streetlamps. She’s all too aware of Chat Noir’s amused gaze. After all, he’s the only thing she can see with some clarity right now. She’s sitting with her arms wrapped around her knees, while he sits in that semi-sprawling way of his.

She’s loath to break the comfortable silence that had settled on them, but she has to. She’s weighed her options. Their partnership may benefit from some secrets, but he had let one of his known, and fair was fair. She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath before she turns to him.

His bright, fond green eyes cut through what fog occupies the distance between them. It just makes what comes next all that much harder.

“Chat,” she begins haltingly, “There’s something I need to tell you.”

A brow raises. “In my limited romantic experience- which is to say zero- that’s never a good thing to hear.”

“I wish I could say otherwise, but… Yeah.”

“I’ll have to make that zero a negative number,” he says with a wry smile. “Alright. Lay it on me.”

“You’re a great guy. Really! A better partner than I could have ever hoped for. So now that I know how you really feel, I just- I can’t lead you on. I have to let you know. A huge part of the reason I never took you seriously, never really considered all that flirting could lead to something is because, because…” Ladybug’s stalling, and she knows it. She sighs. “I already like someone else.”

Silence falls again, not so much settling as a crash.

“… I’d have say I’m at a negative one then,” he finally says, voice shaky, with a cut off puff of a laugh.

“I’m so sorry, Chat, I-” she what? Wishes she had never met Adrien? Not just dishonest, unthinkable. Doesn’t think she could feel the same? No, she’s toyed with the idea that she might
think of Chat differently before, even before he began to pull the curtain back sometimes to show what was behind all the cheesy lines and wide grins. “I just.. I don’t know.”

“Yeah,” he averts his eyes.

Just like that, she immediately wishes she could take the words back. Her mind knows this was the right thing to do. Her heart’s not on speaking terms with her mind.

“So, what’s he like? I guess, our age?”

“Yes, he’s,” Ladybug sighs, and for once it’s laced with something else, not completely consumed with dreamy adoration. Still, she can’t help but smile as she speaks. “He’s really… Sincere. Kind and gentle, to a fault. Rich and handsome, even, but never lets it get to his head. Insanely busy, but somehow always manages to be there when people need him. He’ll always pick you up when you’re down. He’s—”

He’s a lot like you, she doesn’t say. The more I get to know you.

Chat shuts his eyes tightly. With a humorless chuckle, he says, “Say no more. I can hear just in the way you talk about him. You… Really do love this guy. A lot.”

Her throat’s tight as she forces out her own dry laugh. “God, for the longest time, I couldn’t even talk to him properly, my mind would just go blank. I still get all clumsy- well, more than usual.”

“Thought you got over that after the first few times we met.”

“With the spots on? Yeah. Otherwise… I can be a bit of a disaster.”

“Hard to imagine. I can relate though,” Chat says, “To that whole just losing yourself around your crush thing.”

There’s a lull in the conversation. What does she say to that? It feels like an eternity, and all Ladybug can do in that time is worry about the effort they’ve been making. In some ways, they’ve made more progress than ever. It’s very apparent now that there’s much more to Chat Noir than she thought, and yet, somehow, their connection feels more fragile than ever before. It was once an unthinking, absolute, unbreakable tie. Now it’s coming apart, thread by thread. If it unravels entirely, she doesn’t know what she’ll do.

He breaks the silence. “So. Not much we can do in this fog, can we?”

“Right,” she pulls in her knees.

“I think I’ll get going, then,” he says, voice flat. “And Ladybug… Thanks for telling me. It couldn’t have been easy.”

“Forget about me, are you alright?” She looks up at him.

“Forget about you? Never,” he glances over with the slightest tug at the corner of his mouth. He looks away quickly. “Stupid fog hasn’t gotten any better. Guess it didn’t get the memo that you cleared the air, eh?”

After no response, he sighs. “I just need some time, I think… Get home safe, alright?”

“You too, Chat,” she says to his back as he’s already kicking off to vault away.

Ladybug watches her partner until his retreating figure completely disappears into the fog. Then
stares after the space he’s left behind a little longer.

She turns her head back and hunches over her arms, wrapped around her knees, pulling them in tight. It’s a long time before she does head home. She doesn’t even know how long. Just her, alone with her thoughts.

A good hero always thinks with her head.

What about a good person?

Chapter End Notes

I likely won't respond to comments for this and the next chapter.
Chapter Summary

A bit of a twist on the whole purring trope.

“I did say I needed time, but I didn’t say I needed space. Ladybug still picked up on that, which is nice. It’s good to know we’re still close enough that some things don’t need saying,” Chat Noir says as he slowly walks around the square rooftop. “Of course, ironically enough, none of this really needs saying, if we’re being honest. It’s really sort of falling on deaf ears, so to speak— pardon me for saying so, but I think you’d agree, if you could.”

A few of the pigeons cock their heads. Mostly, they ignore him.

“You’re a real captive audience, aren’t you? Maybe you’d like me to sing for you? Maybe not, I’d like to save that for some special occasion. I wonder if that would more or less dramatic than walking around on some old chapel turret-top delivering a soliloquy to birds. Even I never thought I would be this dramatic. At least you’ve all done a fine job of making this a less appealing venue,” he says, looking down at the white splattered rooftop.

Chat continues, “I never thought it would be like this. I thought, best case scenario, we finished patrol earlier than usual, my Lady would be feeling affectionate and let me lay on her. Her lap, ideally. Realistically, I’d be lucky to get a shoulder. In any case, she’d be scratching my head, running her hand through my hair, something like that. She’s scratched me on the chin before, I’ve thought maybe that, if she does it for a while.”

“I mean,” he says with a dry chuckle, “Patrols are ending early. At least my solo patrols are. I wonder if hers are— ah, but that’s not good to dwell upon. Maybe I’m rushing them? I could always backtrack, I suppose. I probably should. Better than talking to myself, oh, excuse me, talking to you fine fellows. It’s just, there’s no guarantee that movement will stop it, but speaking will for certain.”

He feels it starting up again and goes on, just whatever comes to mind. “Given all the other cat tendencies, I thought this would happen eventually. Like I said before, I did expect different circumstances, but you know. Life. Funny thing, I did a lot of research on cats once I realized being Chat Noir was a package deal with cat-like behaviour. It might be partially me, I do sort of have a character I play when I’m transformed, maybe I subconscious do them, even when it’s not actually a side effect. This particular one, though, I’m sure isn’t my doing.”

“Oh, but I’m running out of breath. Maybe I should get theatre training or something,” he says. He does have to stop to breathe, and the rumble from his chest begins. It pauses in between inhalations and exhalations. He feels the vibrations in his throat. Honestly, it is sort of nice, Ladybug’s touch present or not.

It’s also sort of a painful reminder.

“I suppose you don’t even have the means to look these sorts of things up, so I’ll just go ahead and tell you, my fine feathered friends. A lot of people assume cats only purr because they’re happy. As
it turns out, they also purr to comfort themselves when they need it,” he sighs.

He closes his eyes as he takes in the sensation again.

When a weighty breath falls with sinking shoulders, it only makes the purring worse.
Ride-Or-Die

Chapter by allthisink (booabug), booabug

Chapter Summary

Are you all in, or do you fold?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

*Partner patrol tonight? Please.*

How long ago had Ladybug sent the message? It had been waiting there for him on his communicator when Chat Noir opened it up to double-check his route for the night. Now he stares, waiting for his answer to come to him.

*Alright.*

She’s waiting for him at their usual meeting spot. The soft thud of his boots announce his arrival, and the tension from her shoulders dissipates as she turns to face him with a soft smile.

“Good evening, my Lady,” he bows and kisses the back of his hand.

Before he can let go, her other hand is clasping his tightly. “LB, wh-”

When he looks up, she shakes her head softly. Once again, he’s frozen. Electricity runs through her eyes, as blue as lightning, something he rarely sees outside of battle. She speaks up before he can continue, “I told myself I’d say this to you, and I’m not sure that I will if I don’t right now.”

Her heart is pounding. She takes a deep breath, and doesn’t realize she’s squeezed his hand until he gives her a squeeze back. She meets Chat’s gaze, as verdant as ever, but lacking the wildcard glint she’s come to miss so dearly. It’s difficult not to break the contact and look away, but she refuses to let what’s left of that fade away while she’s not looking. If she has the resolve to address Paris in it’s time of need, she can do this.

“Chat, I want- no, I need you to know that, just like you told me that night, you don’t need to be anything but who you are with me. You’re a joker, and a goof, and you’re devil-may-care, but you’re so much more than that. You’re so much I don’t know, but right now, I know you’re hurt.”

He listens. His chest rises and falls with purposeful regularity as he listens. “You said you’d follow me anywhere. I don’t want you to. I want you right beside me, where I can see you. Believe it or not, chaton, I’m really, really scared of losing you. This has been a wild ride, but we’re in this until the end, and I want you with me. I don’t know if I can make it without you.”

She lets go of his hand, which he clenches into a fist and brings to his mouth. Tight lipped, he holds it there, a low hum coming from his throat. He finally breaks his gaze to look upward and everywhere before he stalks a close circle in front of her, then paces the rest of the roof in general.

Ladybug just watches, brows furrowed. “Chat?”
He’s moving with inarticulate gestures. He pumps his fists skyward one moment, chops the air in front of his waist with his hands, hunched over the next, then shadow boxing before she knows it. She doesn’t know quite know what she’s done to him to cause this, or what to do with her manic partner.

He grabs her the shoulders with such momentum, she stumbles back a bit.

It’s not all that takes her aback. His eyes are as vivid and intense as she’s ever seen them, wild grin on his face. “I am so crazy for you. I am so crazy for you, every time I think I can’t love you any more, you pull something like this.”

“I could... see that… The crazy part, at least...”

He barks into a laugh that has him throwing his head back, hand on his brow as he steps back. He flicks out his baton and extends it to staff length so he can lean on it. Still grinning, he says, “Ask him out.”

“What?”

“Loverboy, that guy you’re nuts about!”

“Chat, this is... Everything but the response I was expecting.”

He whirls his staff to his shoulders and holds it there by his arms, leaning a bit forward and to the side. "Thought you’d be used to that by now,” he winks. “You better ask him, and he better see how amazing you are, and treat you like royalty, because you don’t deserve anything less.”

“Let me tell you something else,” he says with deliberation, slowly turning away.

He whirls back around, pointing his staff directly at her. “You better make this happen, or I am never going to stop. If you don’t find someone or shut me down once and for all, then to the day we die, you’re going to have to put with my flirting and shenanigans. Shenanigans! I will spend my entire damn life trying to win your heart.”

All she can do is giggle, but he puffs out his chest at the sound.

He jumps to the ledge of the roof, arms spread wide.

“Do you hear that, Paris?!” She’s surprised his thunderous bellow doesn’t set off car alarms. “Chat Noir is back and better than ever!”

“Pretty sure they never thought you were away at all,” Ladybug says, hands on hips.

“Yes!” Chat turns to her, planting the end of his staff on the rooftop with one hand, snapping his fingers with a swing of his arm with the other. “Love that snark. *This* is Ladybug and Chat Noir, my dear, and better— than— ever.”

“Is that so?”

“Until you provide evidence to the contrary,” he shrugs.

Ladybug is taking slow steps backwards. She quickly unlatches her yo-yo and flings it at an anchor. Already beginning to swing away, she calls over, “Then you’ll win a race to Pont des Arts!”
“Ah, no fair, LB!” He vaults as quickly as he can after her. “And here I thought you wanted me beside you!”

“I do,” she smiles over at him. There it is. He’s speechless again, knowing full well she let him catch up. “But the metaphor doesn’t apply to races!”

She’s off. He snorts, “Oh, you better ask that guy out soon!”

Chapter End Notes

I decided to resolve Chat's heartbreak quickly, thinking it would feel really forced to continue, given the upcoming prompts. I then thought of interpretations with which I could actually prolong the angst, but how could I throw this scene of Chat being absolutely extra into the dark void? I think not.

Thank you all so much for the comments on the last two chapters! Not just for the support (always appreciated, of course) but for the insights. That was the first time I wrote characters really hurting, and I'm glad it affected readers. This fic is sort of an experimental thing for me. I'm writing in ways and tones I usually don't, and am leaving things up to speculation intentionally.

And so, I've decided not to reply to comments from now on, except maybe generally in end-notes, but I'll try to refrain from that as well. I like seeing responses without my influence... Especially since I'm liable to joke around and destroy any seriousness I managed to establish. This one ended on a light note though, so hey what the h*ck.

From KC Green's Gunshow
(although Chat also unintentionally wing-manned himself [in what other fandom can that even happen I love this show so much])
Petty Arguments
Chapter by allthisink (booabug), booabug

Chapter Summary

Sometimes little disagreements can be a healthy thing.

They sit atop a low building at the night time open air night market, finishing off their crêpes.

“So,” Chat says casually as he folds up his wrapper.

“So?” Ladybug asks, scrunching hers up. She throws it gently overhead to avoid any of the chattering pedestrians milling about below, ordering their own street food or eating at late night restaurants. It lands neatly in a trash bin.

“Nice,” they high five. “So, what do you call bears without ears?”

Ladybug groans. “Is everyone saying this joke now?”

“You should feel lucky to have multiple people in your life who appreciate the finest form of comedy. How many?”

“With this joke? My papa, even maman, ah- a friend, and now you. ‘B.’ The punchline is just the letter B.”

Chat tsks. “Spoilsport.”

“Look, jokes like that one are like… Canned soup. Who wants canned soup? They’re bad, and only popular because they’re convenient. Where’s the wit if you’re just repeating it?”

"The wit is inherently- wait, does someone need our help?" They look down to someone trying to get their attention.

“Hey! Hey, Chat Noir! Ladybug! Yo, Ladybug!” A woman is jumping up and down below them, waving her arms with extreme enthusiasm. Her friends are unable to restrain her. The two wave.

“This is so cool! Can you, like, do tricks with your weapons or something?!”

“My entire life… I’ve trained for this moment,” Chat says solemnly in a low voice. Before Ladybug can respond, he’s already doing a spin through the air, transitioning to a flip, then whirling around his staff to land with a bow. The woman is now cheering loudly as her friends clap. A crowd begins to form.

“I can’t believe this,” she says. She can believe this. This is far from the first time it’s happened. In fact, she remembers Chat saying these street level interactions are his favourite part of the job.

She watches on, with a sigh and a smile. She’s very sure whoever Chat Noir is without the mask has, in fact, not been training to be a staff-based entertainer his entire life. Having seen him do this before, it does seem like he’s been working on it. He’s gotten pretty impressive, she has to admit. Oh, that one takes a lot of core strength.

“I can’t believe I’m doing this again,” she mutters to herself while grinning at the crowd. They begin cheering when she stands. She has been working on moves, though.

“Don’t pretend you don’t make puns too!” Chat Noir calls, voice raised over the howling wind. It’s enough to whip and buffet clothes at street level, and positively nightmarish the higher it is. Windows shake within their frames. The two are running rooftops this time; swings and vaults would mean being even higher.

“I never said I didn’t!” She yells back. “I just make them timely and spontaneous, the way they should be!”

"What time would that be, then?!"

"I don't know! Like when we see an akuma's gimmick or horrible design, I guess!"

“That’s the akuma straight ahead! Show me your chops, My Lady!”

Ladybug glares at him in the period of freefall before they land. They ask in tandem, “The air show pilot?”

“Not anymore! All the restoration and maintenance that goes into classic open cockpit biplanes, the skill it takes to pilot them? Nobody cares, they just want factory jet planes, the louder the better. They’ll know and respect what it takes once they face Gale Force.”

“You won’t be blowing hot air once we clip your wings!” Ladybug exclaims. Then looks over to her partner.

Chat Noir makes a face and alternates raised hands in a ‘so-so’ gesture.

“Oh, shut up, you’d love it if you weren’t already biased from before.”

He bounds to the side, hooking his arm around her waist, dodging a wave of concentrated turbulence that completely shatters a store window.

"Whoa! He nearly avia-tore us up!"

"Hey! The design's good for once, respect the hat and goggles, they're classics!"

“I can’t believe,” Chat grunts under the weight of concrete and steel I-beams on his back, “You said that.”

Ladybug’s arms strain at the tension in her yo-yo cord, her hands aching at the tight grip she has to keep on it. “It’s true, though. You just keep firing them off- n ngh- it cheapens the whole thing. That’s almost everyone, Cédric?!”

“Just four more, but we can get them out lickety-split with the space you’re giving us!” The chief rescue technician calls back. “Make that three. We’re quick, you two just hold on!”

“No pressure!” Chat quips, voice strained. His legs are shaking.

“See, that was a good one!” She says, voice just as tight with effort as she digs in her heels. "It had some subtlety, and it was spontaneous."
“Oh, but it wouldn’t count if I had just made another pun beforehand?”

“Depends. One or two? Fine, but it wouldn’t be as funny if-”

“That’s everyone!”

Ladybug grunts hard as she heaves one final pull, letting Chat get out without becoming stuck under rubble himself. She breathes a sigh of relief and jumps down to the ground. “My arms are going to kill me the next few days. I should take a salt bath.”

“Tell me about it. I can definitely skip leg day this week,” Chat says, rolling his shoulders, cricks everywhere. “Those baths feel nice but don’t really help, you know. There’s been a lot of research and, sorry to say, you just have to ride it out- Thanks.”

Ladybug massages between his shoulder blades where he can’t reach. “You know I always have your back.”

Chat doesn’t respond.

“I know you’re laughing silently. Don’t pretend you aren’t. Rubbing your shoulders isn’t going to hide it.”

Cédric, the middle aged rescue tech they are, sadly, on a first name basis with, is chuckling and shaking his head. “You two are such an old married couple.”

“We really are-”

“We’re really not-“

“- like a married couple.”

“Ugggh,” Ladybug groans as she starts banging her head into Chat’s back. “We aren’t!”

Chat cackles. “I love when we finish each other’s sentences.”

“You know, my folks have always said the ones that stay together just have one real argument. Everything else is stupid, nonsense, resolved within the day, week, maybe month,” Cédric waves a hand dismissively. He stops to point at the pair with a smile. “Keepers, they argue over and over, sure, but really? Just about the one thing. You two are bickering about puns about 80% of the time I see you. At least over half, for sure.”

“Monsieur Cédric,” Ladybug pulls her head back. Chat whines, and she sighs before continuing to massage his back. “You big baby. Cédric, I love you, but please stop talking. He’s never going to let this go now.”

“What kind of ring do you want, bugaboo?”

“I am not discussing this with you.”

“You don’t strike me as a diamond kind of lady anyway, but I’d rather steer away from them even if they’re so called ‘conflict free.’ Hmm, I don’t want anything that blends in with my miraculous ring, so anything like silver I wouldn’t be too keen on, but of course if you-”

Ladybug lets him prattle on. She grumbles quietly to herself, “I can’t believe our one argument is puns.”
New Look or Costume Alteration [Chopin Festival]

Chapter by allthisink (booabug), booabug

Chapter Summary

Ladybug gains new perspective.

Chapter Notes

References for this chapter, as was asked for:

- An image of a man in a three piece suit with a four point folded pocket square, from this site. It was so difficult to find one folded, not in just a boring old presidential literal square. smdh
- I'm oddly descriptive with the building because there are photos
- I actually had a satellite view map of the park open the entire time writing this.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Ladybug finds Chat wearing the upper half of a three piece suit: black coat and shirt, everything else matching the green of his eyes, over his supersuit. It looks like it was tailored for him not already wearing clothes underneath, so it’s a bit of a tight fit all over. It’s a baffling sight, and not even a chilly night. “Aren’t you hot in that?”

She regrets her phrasing immediately. “The tempera-”

“I’m hot in anything,” he winks.

“... I walked right into that one.” She puts her face in a hand for a moment, shaking her head. “Whatever reason you’re dressed up for, you couldn’t have just done the waistcoat and tie?”

“Well no, I wanted to do this properly, and the collar on this won’t fold over with a crease, and even then it doesn’t work with any tie, no matter which knot I try,” he says, gesturing with frustration. “Then the shirt just looked goofy with my cuffs, so I had to wear the coat. Besides, the pocket square is essential.”

“It is essential,” she agrees, looking him over with a critical eye. “But then so are pants, usually.”

“Usually, but,” Chat cocks his head back and runs a hand through his hair. “I’m too hot for those.”

She can’t help a snort of laughter she suppresses quickly.

“Not dignifying that with a response. Why exactly are we meeting on a non-patrol night when there’s no akuma and… On top of the General Hospital?”

“You see, Ladybug, it is the weekend, and we can,” Chat uses his mastery of using his baton to show off by extending it to staff length while pulling it out at the same time. He spins the staff as he
turns, bringing it to a stop as he faces and points North. “Go there! Sadly, as miraculous as your yo-yo is, it’s not going to help you get through a park that’s practically all forest, so we are here because I am here to help.”

He lowers his staff and turns back to her as she says, “Ah, you found my one true weakness: trees. So why are we going into the Bois de Boulogne in the first place?”

“Because that’s where the Parc de Bagatelle is,” he rests his forearms on the end of his staff. “And we’re going to the park why?”

“There’s a lovely orangerie there I want to take you to.”

“Why do you want to take me there?”

“I think you’d like it.”

“You realize none of that really answers my questions, right?”

Chat grins.

“You are such a child sometimes.”

“Sometimes,” he agrees, walking over to sling an arm over her shoulders, “But right now. I am your noble knight with the only steed which will get us where we need to go.”

“Assuming I agree to go,” Ladybug raises her brows at him, small smile playing at her lips. Chat simply smiles back. “Okay, so, how are we going to do this? I’ve seen how you get around on that thing-”

“- Excuse you, it’s called the chaton baton.”

“You can’t be serious.”

He snickers into her shoulder. “No, but I thought it’d be a hilarious name.”

“Okay, Sir Nerd,” she pushes his still snickering face off her by the nose, “I still want to know how exactly you expect to get to, to wherever we’re going together using just your staff, when usually you use it shove yourself off surfaces- sometimes sideways, I might add- while your legs... okay, you remember when Scout had the whole crazy legs glitch?”

Chat backs away, hands up, “Now, I take exception to how you describe my mode of travel, which is- actually, that’s pretty accurate. I do not do crazy legs, though... No matter how much I miss that glitch.”

“I miss it so much,” Ladybug says quietly.

They share a moment of silence for a beloved video game glitch, and how they would never see Scout jumping through the air with legs clipping through his body, moving as erratically as two raw pieces of bacon in a wind tunnel. “Anyway!” Chat says as he puffs out his chest, staff held behind his back. “I’m glad you asked, because, I... have no idea.”

Ladybug stares at him blankly.
“Through the power of love?” He grins and shrugs. She shakes her head at him.

Her supremely unimpressed look does nothing to dissuade his grin. He wordlessly extends his staff, one hand maintaining a grip near the top, then hopping up to clamp the soles of his boots on either side once high enough. His legs stick out almost as if sitting cross-legged. It’s a vaguely familiar pose. He reaches out his hand. “I’m kidding. My Lady, would you do me the honour of accompanying me tonight?”

She looks at the park woods, a hand at her hip tapping her yo-yo. “Thinking of making a break for it?” Chat asks.

“I won’t just leave you here but I mean, I can run pretty fast.”

“Ladybug,” Chat says to get her to look over. “Trust me.”

She looks at him for another moment before taking his hand and climbing onto his lap, her arm smoothly wrapping around his shoulders as his wraps around her waist. “Wait, have we done this before?”

“Yeah, remember the mime guy? Cut the Eiffel Tower in half? Might want to use both arms this time, by the way.”

“Right. That was pretty scar-AAAAAAAHHH!” She shouts as what had been her other arm reaching casually to his opposite shoulder turns into her swiftly clinging onto Chat’s neck for dear life as he extends his staff faster than she could think.

Realization hits her that when he had done this before, it had been very, very slowly. He had also just let them tip forward. Now, he pushes down on the staff to increase their upward force, and it really increases their upward force. She’s pushed against him hard then hovers slightly above once they reach the top of their arc, suspended in midair. She thinks, ‘Don’t look down.’

So of course, she looks down.

They’re still above buildings, but they’re in the outskirts of the city, nothing is like the dense cityscape of areas like the 1st arrondissement. Even if it won’t do her any good, her reflexive search for anything to serve as an anchor for her yo-yo leaves her wanting. The buildings here sprawl, and it’s darker than most of the city. She had always thought of Paris as home but right now, it looks completely foreign below her. She balks.

Then they’re falling, and it’s so much worse. They’re falling and there’s road down there, like roads that are hard, and cars, like cars that run people over. Chat’s own voice is shaky as he asks, “L-LB? Everything okay?”

“Fine,” she squeaks, very evidently not fine.

Ladybug shuts her eyes tight. Her heart is pounding out of her chest, and in her ears, and she hears her pulse, and she hears his staff stop retracting, and she hears the wind rushing, and she has to make a conscious effort to keep breathing.

“... Pffffff,” Chat sputters out as he extends his staff into the ground again and angles them forward. “Sorry. Couldn’t help it. I just did not imagine you’d be scared, at all.”

“Of course I’m-” Ladybug buries her face in the fabric of Chat’s suit jacket as a high, prolonged squeal escapes her. Her voice is still high and tight when she manages to regain the ability to speak.
“Of course I’m freaked out! This is nothing like swinging on my yo-yo! Plus I have no control here, I’m at the whim of gravity and my partner, who I’m not completely sure is completely sane!”

“Aw, bugaboo,” she just knows he’s grinning and she kind of hates him for it. “You know I’m completely mad for you, and that you control me heart and soul.”

“Yeah, right now, I’d rather have bodily control.”

“Oh?” His voice drops deep. “Well, if you really want…”

“No! I mean didn’t that- you know!”

“I’m not sure I do, care to elaborate?” He drawls.

“No! I-” she muffles a small scream into his shoulder. “I really wish I could punch you right now.”

Chat laughs loudly, freely. His voice is no longer teasing when he speaks. “Ladybug, come on, I’ve got you, just... Enjoy the view, I guess. How often do you get to see something like this in the city?”

She opens one eye, focusing hard on the ground below. She sees only a bit of pavement out of the corner of her eye, the headlights of a single car illuminating the expanse below her. Grass. She opens her eyes fully. They’re clearing the main road, into an area of grass and sparse trees.

The roads become much smaller as the trees thicken. By the time they’re in the woods proper, Ladybug has gotten used to the jolts that propel her and Chat forward, the small moments of weightlessness, and accelerating descents before the cycle repeats. Her arms have relaxed, though she makes sure to keep her grip firm as she pulls back.

She’s no longer confining herself to seeing only what’s behind and below them. Looking around, she see that there’s a resort just a little ways off, and a clearing beside it they’ll just clip by. By herself, swinging, she just has a brief period of time at the height of her movement. She spends it looking for the next thing to throw her yo-yo around. It’s fast, she always moves quickly and with purpose from place to place. Though Chat’s not going nearly as quickly now as she’s seen him go before, she can really feel a difference.

She catches Chat glancing over at her in one of those periods of weightlessness. She still feels nervous, but the fear has calmed. Her heart is still beating hard enough to feel, but no longer pounding at her chest, and the wind is just a regular series of gusts. She feels it ruffling her hair and sees it do the same to his. He gives her a wink and a smile before he returns to focusing on navigating.

“Beautiful.” His voice isn’t raised much, but she can hear it as clear as a bell. “What do you think?”

Ladybug’s breathing is still a bit shallow. She’s not sure if he’ll hear her when she says, “Amazing.”

His grin at that clears any doubt.

Her fear’s gone entirely as she looks down to see they’re passing over a large road again. There’s not a single headlight to be seen, and it occurs to her just how incredibly isolated she feels from the rest of the world in that moment. It’s just her and Chat Noir.

“Nearly there,” he says.

“Huh? Oh.”
She gulps. His brows furrow, seeking something now. She can’t see as far as he can in the dark, but looks around anyway. Already contrasted against the dark grass, neatly patterned white gravel garden paths are dimly lit. She sees some movement and squints.

“Are those... Peacocks?”

“Yeah, they have a bunch here. Bit much if you ask me.” Ladybug raises a brow and looks straight at him, up and down over his (nearly) three piece suit, then back at him. He glances over with a wry smile before looking forward again. “I know, I know, but I can’t let them completely upstage me when I’ll be shaking a tail feather myself.”

“To what, the wind?”

“That would be all I need,” he assures her. “The music’s in my soul, darling. I thought you might want something a bit more external though. You can’t hear it yet? We’re almost right beside the building.”

She focuses and does notice it. Classical music, piano, coming from a beautiful, one storey, rectangular building. It features large, stately windows nearly ceiling high, topped by semicircles. They’re cheerily lit from within.

They land on the rooftop, and lower slowly. It’s a terrace, a little like hers, except much, much fancier and larger. A low, stonework railing surrounds it, no less beautiful than the rest of the structure. Their feet touch ground. Ladybug’s gaze is already full of wonder at her surroundings as she lets her arms slip from around him. She steps back to wander, stopping to lean over the railing and gaze at the garden. Now she can clearly hear the piano drifting up from below.

“How do you like it?” Chat asks softly as he pads over to her side.

He leans over the railing as well. Even with his hair and clothing a bit tousled by the journey, he somehow looks perfectly in place. It’s funny, he still has that little rough around the edges air to him. There’s no doubt it’s the same guy she teasingly calls alley cat. As the music picks up, she could imagine him busting a move to it, but here he is leaning beside her with a little smile, hair glowing in the light from below, looking as serene as she’s ever seen him.

“Chat, you are just full of surprises. I do feel a little under dressed, but yeah,” Ladybug sighs and looks to him. “It’s lovely.”

He straightens with a grin and slinks around a bit with some swagger to match the music. “Well, you ask me, if you’re under dressed then the rest of us must just be over dressed. You do, after all, set the bar for lovely. The music’s to your liking?”

She giggles at his traipsing around. “It’s beautiful. I’ve never listened to much classical music before, but I like this. Whatever it is.”

“Chopin.”

She cocks her head.

“It is his festival, after all, but your luck is doing wonders tonight on top of it. This piece I like in particular, Polonaise-fantasie,” he says, still strutting about, twirling his belt tail with one hand. He shoots her a finger gun with the other. “A flat major.”

“Very impressive. What else can you tell me about it?”
“Not much, admittedly,” he shrugs, and pouts at the ground as he scuffs his boot. He looks up to smirk at her. “Although I would love to play it for you some time.”

“You play classical piano?” He stops as Ladybug walks towards him and meets his smirk. “I guess it turns out you’re a real class Chat.”

“You’re best, you know that?” He laughs lightly.

“Here’s something that shouldn’t surprise you: My Lady, you have already made me so happy by honouring me with your company,” he bows slightly at the waist and holds out a hand. “Would you grace this humble cat with a dance?”

“I’m not sure I would say ‘grace,’” she inhales through her teeth as she takes his hand, “But if you don’t mind me stepping on your feet, of course I will.”

“It’s not so hard,” he says, looking absolutely elated. He keeps her hand in his as he guides her other behind his shoulder and places his similarly. “There we are. Just stand up straight. I don’t care about trying anything formal if you don’t either, we can just... Sway.”

He leads her in aimless steps, a little to the left, a little to the right. She watches closely. “Hey, don’t worry about it, keep your head up.”

She looks up from their feet. She looks into his smiling eyes, and starts to settle into an easy side to side, turning slightly in place as they do.

“Look at you! Now you’ve got it.” His cheer is infectious. She can’t remember the last time she felt so relaxed, so content. The music swells and falls, but they just sway back and forth to their own beat, even throughout the last note the applause of the people below.

They continue during the pause between pieces, but she hears his sharp inhale as soon as the next begins. The music sounds fluttering, peaceful, but his voice is melancholy when he mutters, “Le rossignol-en-amour.”

‘The Nightingale in Love?’ Ladybug might have even expected some cheesy line or a cheeky smile with the name, but neither come. His eyes just look distant.

“Chat?” He’s stopped moving now. “Chat Noir?”

He snaps out of it and looks at her. She gives what she hopes is a reassuring smile, and finds her heart aching at the look she gets back. It’s incredibly fond, and a little misty eyed.

“What is it?”

“Your smile, it... Uh, no, nevermind,” he looks aside. He sniffs sharply and gently pulls her head to his shoulder. She rests it there and takes her hand from his to wrap around him. Silently, he does the same. She squeezes him tight. “Sorry,” he says.

“It’s okay,” she whispers, and begins to sway again. She can feel a shallow chuckle from him as this time, she leads and he follows suit.

She can hear it now, the melancholy in the song, as she feels his chest rise with deep inhalations and fall with his ragged exhale. She doesn’t know where he really is right now, so she clutches at jacket on his back and takes in the sensation of warmth of his body against hers, his arms around her.

She breathes in his clothes’ clean, laundered smell, the subtle cologne on his skin, some scent of
shampoo from his hair, all buffered a bit by the fresh outdoor air.

He’s solid against her touch, but she feels alone in their little dance.

There’s nothing for her to do but continue until she feels his pull again. She smiles as she buries her face into his shoulder. The rise and fall of his chest against hers begins to match, and he buries his nose in her hair. “Yeah. It’s okay.”

After a while, Ladybug says, “Well, this is one fulfilled.”

“One what?”

“The paper napkin promises. One day, Chat Noir and I, Ladybug,” she recites. She feels him chuckle again and this time it’s full and breathy, “Will slow dance.”

“You remembered that off the top of your head?”

“Yeah. You specified too, so I still have to do other dances. Sneaky kitty.”

“You know something?” She can hear the smile in his voice. “I actually had us take the longest way possible here through the woods.”

She laughs, and so does he. “Of course you did.”

They continue to sway as a new song starts. He speaks up, “Oh hey, about those napkin promises?”

“Yeah?”

“Can you write down another one for me? I used to come here every year with family, but that’s... Sort of uncertain now, so, if you don’t mind, then-”

“I’ll put it in writing. Come to the Chopin Festival with Chat every year.”

He makes some inarticulate noise that probably has something to do with happiness as he bear hugs her. “Thank you! Thank you. You... You, uh, now do you want to stay here, or are you good to go? ‘Cause they’re playing Couperin now and I already feel like I’ve been beaten for years.”

“Oh my God, yes, this is depressing now. I thought this was supposed to be about Chopin. I don’t know Chopin, but he can’t be sadder than this. Right?”

“Yeah, I like him a lot better than this guy. The polonaise must have been the last one, we missed the good part.”

Ladybug glares off to the side. “Stupid Couperin ruining everything.”

“Bug, sorry to say, but I don’t think any amount of glaring is going affect a dead Baroque composer. Not to fret! I have a lovely route planned through the woods again to take us back to the city. It’s much shorter than the way we came, and we even pass the lake.” Chat pulls back to smile at her, drawing out the last word the way a child craving fast food draws out ‘please.’ “Or... We could keep going the way we were and get to city even faster. I guess.”

“Oh, my! Lake, you say?” She exclaims, hands on her cheeks.

“That’s right!” Chat says, as he flicks out his baton and gets in position. In his best travel announcer voice, he says, “Slake your lake thirst and leave this heartache music in your wake! Fly first class Chat today!”
“Alright, I’m sold, you goof,” Ladybug boops his nose after she climbs up onto his lap. “I’ll change course and go the long way with you.”

Chapter End Notes

I wanted to have 10 done at least by the end of July, but I missed the mark. I feel like this is my weakest chapter, but it sets some things in motion.

Like "coup pour ans" ha ha... I apologize for the clumsy bilingual Couperin low-key pun and also for everything to everyone who likes Couperin. I actually really do like le rossignol-en-amour.
Chapter Summary

A hot and humid night gets to our heroes (who are still dorks).

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Maybe we should have skipped sparring night,” Ladybug pants, pushing back hair stuck to her forehead. “I looked at the temperature and thought it’d be fine, but...”

“The humidity,” Chat says, plopping down to sit so he makes as little ground contact as possible. His hands take the brunt of the weight, but it’s worth it to rest on just the heels of his feet and tailbone. He huffs out a breathy laugh, “It’s funny how we both just kind of stopped slugging it out sluggishly and slumped where we stood.”

“You’re into alliteration tonight?” Ladybug yawns. Her voice is unusually low, and a bit husky. “Ugh. Excuse me, I’m not mocking you or anything. It’s just, the heat is making me sleepy, and I already had a busy day.”

The catlike ears atop his head point directly at her. “Ahh, no, don’t worry about it, at all. So, what were you up to anyway?”

“Not much, just helping out my parents at work,” she stretches her entire body. When she looks at him, her eyes are partially lidded. “They work in food. It’s a lot more physically demanding than people would think.”

“Yes that so?” Chat breathes.

“Mnhm. It’s worth it in the end, though. Today, we had leftovers after closing up, so we ate them ourselves and, ohh,” she closes her eyes, voice filled with pleasure as she says, “So good.”

“Yeah, sounds... appetizing,” he licks his lips and clears his throat. His voice is a bit hoarse as he says, “Hope you had a cold drink to go with that, what with the temperature today and all. I know I’m thirsty.”

She’s looking over at him now. “Yeah. Yeah, the heat really carries over into the night.”

“Very true. Hey, do you get uncomfortable in the suit, too? Mine’s kinda sticking to me.” He says, tugging at his collar. He watches as she makes her way over, eyes waist level from where he sits. They track her hips. “Sway-Swaying was... nice, you know that night. Good thing it was much cooler then, couldn’t imagine wearing anything over my suit now.”

Ladybug sits in front of him in the same pose, and taps the soles of his boots with her feet playfully. He taps back, and is smiling a little at her when she looks up. She returns it as much as her fatigue will allow. “My suit kinda sticks too, but at least I don’t have anything heavy like these.”

Her eyes slowly roam from his boots up his body until she reaches his eyes. It takes a moment for Chat to realize she’s looking. He looks up to meet her eyes quickly. “Yeah! Yeah, uh, yours looks
pretty... lightweight. Whew, it’s- it’s really hot- out here, I mean. Suits... Good thing I at least get a zipper, my collar’s really getting to me now.”

She watches him pull his bell down until it’s something like three shirt buttons open. She sees his chest and neck move slightly when he exhales with a rough, deep groan of relief. “Much better.”

“Muuuch better, it looks, like, I mean.” She says, gulping. She pulls her feet back from where they were playing at each other’s. His boots chase her feet a little before he realizes they’re stopping. “Sorry, they were just getting kinda... really... hot- So! Uh, hey, I wrote down the Chopin Festival thing.”

“Right! Great. Cool. Let’s, let’s talk about that.”

“Yeah, let’s! While I was looking for space to write it in, I noticed all the different dance styles you, well, suckered me into,” Ladybug playfully kicks one of her soles into his. “I was making mys- that is- I was just thinking, it occurred to me, we could make headway there even with the masks on. We can’t exactly sign up for lessons together, but I’m sure there’s videos and things.”

“I could always try to teach you,” Chat lights up. “I mean, I’m not a pro or anything, and I’m pretty rusty with some, but I’d love to try.”

“You,” her voice is a bit more awake. “You already know them all? They’re mostly ballroom dances.”

He laughs and scratches the back of his neck. Ladybug’s eyes wander to his other arm as nearly all his body weight is shifted onto it. “Yeah, I’ve taken lessons before, and I kind of listed every one I knew that night. Honestly, I figured, I don’t know how many of them you’d go through with, so... Increase my odds. Anything you wanted to start with?”

Her eyes snap up at the question. “Sorry, what was that?”

“The dance styles, did you have any in mind you really wanted to try first?” Chat asks, leaning forward, forearms on his knees.

“Oh, uh,” she sits up a bit straighter and looks down below his neck as she bites her lip. His eyes are drawn to them. “I’m sure not really... I can’t think right now of the names?”

He snaps his eyes up, up at the sky. “Yeah, no, I get you, I should- I have to think of them too... Yeah. Thinking. Let’s see, there’s waltz? Cha cha? They’re earlier ones I learned, so I think they’re more beginner. Though, personally, I think it’s more important that you’re actually interested.”

“Yeah... Yeah, I think I’m interested,” Ladybug says.

“In what?”

“You- you know, um, right. Styles, dance!” She chews at her lip. “... Tango?”

“... Oh.”

“I mean! It was came to mind first thing, ‘cause. I’d like to- you know... it looks impressive.”

“Cool. Cool cool cool,” Chat agrees. “It’s not one of the easier ones. If you’re interested, though, then...”

“Yeah. Interested.”
“Well…” He looks at her and speaks slowly, “There’s different types. American, International is kinda up there with difficulty? I mean, how haa- difficult. Difficult, can depend more on the individual. What I’m- you’re thinking about, probably, is Argentine. That’s what’s popular in movies and stuff, and mostly, people say Argentine is a bit easier, even! I- hmm- um, gotta make sure, that you’re aware it’s the one that’s… more… intimate? Still very fun! In my opinion! With the right partner… Uh, you know, but- up to you. I think you’re a fast learner!”

“Yeah, Argentine for sure! I really want you to… To teach me! ‘Cause... it looks nice, really, really impressive…”

“Yes!” Chat claps his hands together. “I was hoping you’d go Argentine. Super fun, I promise! It’s been a while, though… Oh, but not too long! Super, super can do this. Definitely.”

“Definitely! I mean, gotta get those promises done, right?” Ladybug swings an arm.

“That we do!” Chat gives her double finger-guns.

They lock gazes. For a few moments, there’s just silence, and staring.

All of a sudden, they both clamber up.

“Whew!” Ladybug plants her hands on her hips and looks around. “I should take a cold shower-because! It is very hot, the air! The air, is, has, a lot of, hot.”

“Uh-huh,” Chat says, getting his baton out and fiddling with it. “I need to get home, get some privacy FOR- FOR READING. Yes. Uhh, I have, right! Fabric of the Cosmos… Theoretical physics… Very interesting stuff that is very engaging and will definitely make me stop thinking of… Stuff… hope you have a great night, My Lady!”

Reflexively, he reaches for her for the standard kiss on the back of hand-affectionate eye roll routine, but Ladybug stares at his hand and gulps. He stops and rubs the back of his head instead.

“You- you too!” Ladybug waves as she swings off. A few blocks later, she facepalms mid-swing. She mutters to herself, “All this time, and this night I just had to suddenly notice how much he’s grown.”

Chapter End Notes

Now that we’ve ended of the painful buildup of the first third and started into the second with raging teenage hormones, *Lady noir Intensifies.*
Chapter Summary

Ladybug and Chat Noir finally stop dancing around each other and do the vertical tango. I have way too much fun with innuendo.

Chapter Notes

Did you know: It's very difficult to write dance scenes without making it confusing.

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**bugmenot 20:07**
isn't this the app the one creepy haha then what ;) guys and ppl who actually like them use?

**chat020915 20:07**
Yeah… Since it ’s anonymous which we kinda need. Plus the more stuff we have to co-ordinate for, the more we need some kind of messenger.

**bugmenot 20:07**
tru and this one just needs usernames right? shocking news: i got this one first try. whats up w the random numbers?

**chat020915 20:08**
Funny thing, the “haha then what ;)”’s haven’t gotten the memo that black cats are bad luck. I ended up needing something unique, so I used a memorable day for me.

**bugmenot 20:08**
oh that was a really memorable one for me too. weird. also tbh im not surprised ever since u hit ur growth spurt ive just avoided the ladyblog comments section when ur in the post

**chat020915 20:08**
Down to the day? See, we were meant to be~ Same btw there’s only one lady in my life I like to hear those sorts of things from. Actually, I started avoiding the comments altogether considering some of the ones about you get me liable to be convicted for manslaughter.

**bugmenot 20:08**
speaking of if you do that creepy dude stuff im going to get convicted for catslaughter

**chat020915 20:08**
Haha then what? ;)

**bugmenot 20:08**
bye
“You’re here early,” Ladybug looks around the flat rooftop they had chosen for dance nights, somewhere away from residential areas. No noise complaints that way, or prying eyes for that matter. With summer break, they agreed adding another regular meetup wouldn’t hurt. She notices the small speakers lightly playing long strokes of violin over tinkling piano. “And well equipped.”

“Some might say well endowed,” Chat winks. Ladybug buries her face in her hands. “Aww, what’s with that reaction? I only meant I have an endowment of ten million euro and half of Artois.”

“Sure, The miserable half,” she says flatly from her hands, partially muffled. That earns a laugh from her partner.

“Okay, so my best friend- civilian best friend-”

She unburies her face to say, “We keep doing that, I think we can stop and just use context.”

“Right. Anyway, he’s kind of a, well, audio nerd I guess you could say.”

“DJ friend?”

“Oh, you remembered!” She smiles, he’s so happy over that. “Anyway, yeah, I asked him for help on the sound setup. Honestly? I got pretty lost. He was talking about amps, but not the kind for electric guitars, and… Dacks?”

“I don’t think the sound of surprised ducks really fit the mood,” she says. He snorts.

“Agreed. Well, he insisted on making a playlist too, which I went over, and I think you’ll be happy to know I heard nary a single quack,” he swears to her, hand over heart. “Anyway, this is the
simplified version, but I still wanted to get it set up and tested first. Sounds good, if you ask me.”

“Yeah, I’m surprised at how nice, actually,” she says, approaching the setup.

He, of course, immediately takes the opportunity of her proximity to kiss the back of hand, kneeling almost so low he’s almost on one knee. He looks up to her. “My Lady, may I have this dance?”

“Well, it is sort of the entire point,” she says, coaxing him to stand with her other hand.

Chat leads her by the hand out to where the centre of their free space. He lets go with a heavy sigh. “As tragic as it is, the fact is that it’s better if we stand a good distance apart to start.”

“I thought you have to hold each other when you dance?”

“Yes, it’s even called an embrace,” he says, leaning forward to grin in her face. He begins taking small steps back. “While I cannot wait until we get to that, for now, you have to learn the basic eight-step. Can you see me, feet included, from there?”

“From your boots to your ears, minou.”

“Alright, when I step back, you step forward with the same foot and vice versa. We’re starting with your left. Ready? One,” he says, stepping back, “Two, step to the side on your right- towards you now, three and four- and step five, actually only you do this, cross your left foot over like this,” he demonstrated, and she mirrored him. “Nice! Good posture. I put my feet together-”

“Wait, how is it fair that you just do that and I have to cross over?” She grouses, even as she practices the movement.

He smiles and shrugs. “Sorry, LB, I didn’t invent the dance. To be fair, that’s where we turn, and as the lead I’m responsible for that. It’ll make sense when we get to it, promise. Just two more- six, you step back with that foot you just put to your right when I step towards you- and seven, to the side on your left. There! Now we’re where we started- and eight, you’ll love, because we both put our feet together now.”

“Great. Sexism is over,” she says flatly.

Chat smiles. “If only it were so easy. Once we get the hang of it, you can lead if you want, but right now let’s do that a few more times, alright? You count too. One.. Two…”

They repeat the steps until their counts are in tandem and timed evenly- they had to pause at step five as Ladybug grumbled the first few times. She says, “Okay, I think I got it.”

“Good! Now we can,” Chat starts walking towards her, and she walks backwards. “Nooo, don’t leave me.”

“What? Oh! Doing it together now.” Chat nods enthusiastically. She jogs over to him takes his hand palm to palm, putting her other on his back. She looks up from where she stands squarely in front of him. “Like this, right? This is how you had me do it in the park.”

“Good memory, My Lady, this would be called an open embrace, but… Since it is supposed to be an intimate dance, there’s what’s called the close embrace- which I’d prefer-”

“- Of course.” He smiles innocently and shrugs one shoulder.

“Put your arm up around my neck, yes just like that, and I’ll move mine around you,” he murmurs,
taking his time to move his hand slowly down Ladybug’s back, teasing down the contour of her spine. The shift in position naturally brings them together, so their hips and chests touch gently. His touch is so light, she giggles when he finally rests his hand in the dip of her waist. “Ticklish?”

“I trust you with a lot of things, Chat, but not with that information.”

“Fair enough,” he says, voice low, twinkling eyes looking askew at bright blue of hers as she smirks from where they stand at angle.

She bites her lip and slowly pulls him closer, their hips and chests pressing more and more against each other by the second, faces growing closer. She meets resistance as he tenses at some point, and she begins to pull back, but both his hands grip at her. She stops. His hands relax again. Where he holds her hand, he rubs his thumb along hers.

When he chortles, she feels his body vibrate against hers, his breath tickle her hair, and hears just how close they are. As he begins speaking, it turns into a half sob, “Ohhh... My Lady, don’t make this any tougher for me. This is about as close as we can get and still move as freely as we need. So, do you like how this feels?”

“Well...” Ladybug trails off, tracing circles on his shoulder with a finger. “It’ll have to do.”

He heaves a breath. “You’re killing me here.”

“You’re the one who stopped me,” She says playfully.

“You’re a wicked, wicked lady, and I really hate having to be the responsible one now. If you want more,” Chat pulls her in by the waist and leans his head closer momentarily to say, “This is only the standard position. Don’t worry, we’re just getting started.”

chat020915 07:01
Morning <3 So, was last night good for you~? Because it was good for me.

chat020915 07:05
Whenever you wake up I hope you see this first thing so you’re reminded that my love for you is even greater than my love for a fine cup of coffee in the morning, which is to say, absolutely immeasurable.

bugmenot 09:27
who gets up at 7 on summer break omg

bugmenot 09:27
morning chaton, it was great and im glad to hear u liked it too i wasnt sure u were into getting stepped on

chat020915 09:28
You really didn’t step on me that much. For the record, I am very much into you which means I’m into anything you do. That much I already knew, but I think we all learned a little about love, life, and the meaning of existence last night. All of which for me means being even closer to you.

bugmenot 09:28
wow never thought u could get even cheesier

chat020915 09:28
I might think fast on my feet, but a messenger means I can take things slow and build up to something very good.

**chat020915 09:28**
Of course, we could always speed things up if you like.

**chat020915 09:30**
Sorry, was that too much?

**bugmenot 09:50**
oh i was prepping breakfast at a normal ppl time back now

**bugmenot 09:50**
i would actually like to speed things up

**chat020915 09:50**
Really?

**bugmenot 09:50**
yeah, I was thinking of getting lessons

**chat020915 09:50**
All your consoles and games yet you choose to play me.

**bugmenot 09:50**
im p sure im not going to enjoy any other teacher more but its my first time learning to dance properly. i read its best to have a pro who can catch bad habits before they form and point out lil things dancers dont even think abt

**chat020915 09:50**
True, you won’t enjoy any other teacher as much as you do me. Oh, and the other points are true too. I am a little rusty. Never had a partner I wanted to practice with like you. I’m sure I overlooked some of the finer points other than you, you are very fine and I could never overlook that but I’m going to brush up a little myself. Do you want me to find you a teacher too while I’m at it?

**bugmenot 09:50**
and I will never overlook your flirting it’s like the opposite of fine print. you know those old memes with the impact font captions? wait nvm they’re memes ofc u do but nah too much you dont know like my sched, location, budget, etc. ty tho v thoughtful

**chat020915 09:50**
I was offended until you remembered I am a meme historian. I could at least send you a list of recommendations that would cover anything. BTW if money is an issue what good does owning the miserable half of Artois do if I can't help My Lady?

**bugmenot 09:50**
guess a rec list couldnt hurt but im absolutely not having u pay for me i know youve been working since we met and idk that anyone starts working that young unless they need the money

**chat020915 09:52**
It’s just because it’s a family business, forget about it. Wow, I just realized how that looks. Don’t worry, my family isn’t a gang. Look, I just want to make sure you get the best. I would die of shame if I let you have anything less. I want to know what they would be like, you know? What if you end
up with a creep? I mean Argentine tango technically isn’t even ballroom so the sort of formality with other styles might not carry over and have them think they can be... A little too informal with you.

**bugmenot 09:52**
even if you’re like, the son of an international company’s ceo im not letting you pay. anyway ur being paranoid its not like theyd stay in business for long if they groped students

**chat020915 09:52**
You can never be too sure. If I can’t do this for you I want to at least be involved somehow.

**bugmenot 09:52**
chat ill be fine

**chat020915 09:52**
I don’t know...

**bugmenot 09:52**
wait omg

**bugmenot 09:52**
is this a jealousy thing

**bugmenot 09:52**
minou… remember copycat… and how pissed off I was when you told me the whole story

**bugmenot 09:54**
chat I can see the read receipt say something

**chat020915 09:54**
Yes. Yes I do.

**bugmenot 09:54**
listen just dont do anything stupid like that again over me. you have nothing to worry abt things are different now

**chat020915 09:54**
Different how?

**chat020915 09:54**
Bug?

**bugmenot 09:55**
idk in a lot of ways. just let me handle it on my own

**chat020915 09:55**
I’m not happy about it, but okay. If you decide on someone off the recommendation list though promise me something. Consider it my dying wish. I might actually die if you don’t do this for me. It can’t be a hot person.

**bugmenot 09:55**
im getting someone hot just to spite u

**chat020915 09:55**
“Your embrace isn’t this close when you’re dancing with your instructor, is it, LB?” He asks as they shift their weight side to side, getting a feel for the downbeat.

“Chat, oh my god. No,” she snickers, pulling back enough to see him pout. She stops laughing, “Why, is yours when you do lessons?”

He looks scandalized by the very idea. “I could never.”

“Then why would you think I could?”

“Because-” he sputters as she leans the side of her face against his. He bows his head slightly so they’re cheek to cheek. Breaths in each other’s ear, he speaks softly, “Because it’s not the same. You don’t-”

She begins to take a step forward, and he steps back as he feels the slight push. Ladybug sighs, “Shut up and lead me.”

“I can’t very well do that when you are, can I?”

“Can you blame a girl when she’s been waiting for this?” They both feel the heat on their cheeks. “You’re right, just…”

She gives his shoulder a light squeeze and Chat steps forward, Ladybug stepping back when she feels the pressure of his body. He takes it slow, one step for every four beats as they walk together. It’s clumsy going at first. Even once their walk is smooth, the first time he tries to turn them, there’s a noticeable lag between when the movement starts and when she shifts her weight so they can actually pivot.

As they go through patterns, she begins to relax and just focus on him. When he shifts his weight, Ladybug doesn’t wait to see how she can respond, she doesn’t resist, just allows the sensation of his body in and lets it move her.

Chat speeds up, two beats a step. She finds herself enjoying the new pace, how easily she can take his signals and feel what he wants from her. It feels satisfying and just natural to move as he asks, feel him moving with her.

He takes them up to speed, beat for beat, and as they dance cheek to cheek, she can feel him smiling.
Good morning, My Lady! I know you won’t see this right away, but I wanted you to know what a wonderful night I had with you. In fact, I even dreamt of us dancing. Or was it all a dream? Always hard to tell when it comes to moments with you. Oh, do let me know it was real.

chat020915 07:02
By the way, here’s a video you might find helpful. I noticed you had a little trouble with the back ocho early on: [url]

chat020915 07:02
I was really impressed by how well you could do it by the end of the night, though. Didn’t you say you were having trouble with it even though it’s been a few lessons? Please keep me updated more on how your lessons are going.

bugmenot 09:16
good morning kitty good to see ur taking it easy and sleeping in now. a whole minute later than yesterday.

bugmenot 09:16
ill let you know about every lesson the day im done with them, promise. and tyvm but im v sure its not bc of me idk i guess it just clicked last night? I find it a lot easier to listen(?) to ur lead than w instructor + practice partners which I needed to learn

chat020915 09:16
Why am I not surprised you had a hard time learning to follow?

bugmenot 09:16
1. hush, you. 2. i learned last night didnt i? to answer ur cheesy and rhetorical question: yes we did dance and it was great once i loosened up and got used to taking your lead.

bugmenot 09:16
sorry abt the awkwardness at first I should have just let you do your thing from the start

chat020915 09:16
Don’t apologize for anything! The first time’s always awkward. I was nervous as hell, for what it’s worth. Glad I could show you a good time.

bugmenot 09:16
well i wouldnt have known if u didnt tell me just now. im going to get around to the video but ur an amazing partner ok

bugmenot 09:18
i take everything back

chat020915 09:18
What, you didn’t like the video? Okay, maybe I was a little misleading about the contents, but I just want to tell you how I’m feeling. I’ve got to make you understand.

bugmenot 09:18
i cant believe i woke up and was immediately rickrolled

chat020915 09:18
You can’t? But we’ve known each other for so long. Your heart’s been aching, but you’re too shy to say it. Inside we both know what’s been going on. We know the game and we’re
chat020915 09:18
GONNA PLAAAY IT

bugmenot 09:18
STOP ITS GETTING STUCK IN MY HEAD

chat020915 09:18
Now I really wish we didn’t have to use the anonymous messenger for creepy sexting. If we could use the one with voice notes you could hear how hard I’m laughing. I’m squawking, Bug. That’s the only word I can think of to describe it.

bugmenot 09:18
i can imagine it ive built up a mental library of your dorky laughs. cant believe im sticking around w u

chat020915 09:18
One day, when we’re married, and have a perfect nuclear family of 2.5 children with a white picket fence house, I will have the privilege of serenading you with my squawking laughter every morning.

bugmenot 09:18
i look forward to your morning mating calls but can we round that up to 3 children? i already have names in mind and i dont want a half of a child praying for death every second of their godforsaken existence. hope u understand

chat020915 09:18
Is that an “I do” then? Three children it is! You never did tell me what kind of ring you wanted. I suppose I’ll just have to take the initiative and buy several rings you can choose from. What’s the protocol for proposing when you have multiple rings? Do I get down on one knee for every one or is it a “why can’t I hold all these rings” situation?

bugmenot 09:19
calm down chaton i was speaking hypothetically. hey im gonna make myself breakfast dont wait up

chat020915 09:19
You know I do everything I can to try and please you, but I’m afraid I cannot comply. I will wait for you until maximum entropy causes the death of all existence as we know it, and then I will find a way to wait for you beyond. My love already is as great as the universe and even after it’s demise, my love will increasingly expand as the living universe does now.

bugmenot 09:38
chat omg can u maybe chill

chat020915 09:38
Tell entropy to chill, I’m not the one eventually causing the heat death of the universe.

bugmenot 09:38
ur gonna be the heat death of me

bugmenot 09:38
ok entropy pls chill so chat will have one less thing to use in his flirting even when it should be obv that cosmic physics isnt sexy

chat020915 09:38
Excuse you, it’s very sexy. However, I make this sacrifice because you have told entropy to chill and may have saved the universe. If a fundamental aspect of the cosmos will listen to anyone, it’s you. Or at least it should, if it knows what’s best for it.

bugmenot 09:38
well u send it a strongly worded letter too bc ur worth listening to too + we can good cop/bad cop this

bugmenot 09:38
i kno u said before ur rusty but u still know p much all the moves right? i kinda wanna take a few risks and fool around but i dont rly trust anyone else to keep me from hurting myself or them

chat020915 09:38
You know I’m always happy to fool around with you and really love when you put the moves on me. I would be overjoyed if you took risks with me.

bugmenot 09:38
ty minou i rly should

chat020915 09:38
Any time, Bug <3

“See, I am right sometimes,” Chat says, running a hand back through his hair with a hand on his hip. Ladybug finishes sipping from her water bottle and fastens the lid again. “Congratulations. You look very proud of yourself.”

“I am! I’m more proud of you, though. I meant being right about you being a fast learner. Every night, you’ve made way progress than I could have expected.”

“Well, you know,” she smiles a little, shrugging. “It really helps that I can build my confidence with you. Even when I mess up, you catch me and we can just laugh over it without feeling awkward at all. Plus, it makes for a hell of a motivator.”

“Motivator?”

“Right, yeah. I’ve actually had a much easier time picking things up in classes when I,” she rubs her arm, “Think about doing it with you.”

“Aw Bugaboo,” he’s cooing as he approaches with a smile. “That makes me really happy. Plus, it’s so embarrassing.”

“Oh, shut up,” she shoves him by the shoulder. “I just want to be a better partner for you, alright?”

“I’m just teasing, and you don’t have to-” he’s shaking his head when he pauses. “Hmm, I can’t finish that. I do the same thing because I feel the same way. I get it. I’m ready to go again if you are.”

The now familiar tango music is beginning to end with a crescendo of violins as Ladybug puts her hand up for him to take and pull her into their embrace. He walks them to where they have more space, something that’s become effortless and unthinking by now.

Ladybug closes her eyes as Chat lowers his head to be cheek to cheek with her. Though she moves her weight from foot to foot in time to the beat to come, he stands still. He’s circling a foot on the ground as he waits for the next song to start. It’s become routine, and she’s long since stopped
teasing him for the gesture of impatience. He finds it's easy to avoid teasing when you make it clear you’re not embarrassed in the least.

With the first note, he starts in excitedly with a strong stride she’s used to taking by now. They move into a regular pattern when he switches the pace to a crawl, savouring their connection as they move together slow and smooth. Ladybug takes advantage of a turn when his leg is between hers to wrap her own leg around his, languidly tracing the back of it with her heel. She feels him smirk as he hums low in his throat at that.

They pick up the pace, Chat tapping a boot on the ground between beats an entire measure. “Getting into it, chaton?”

“Always.”

Ladybug herself can’t help but take an opportunity to flick a foot back, stretching so that it reaches up to her shoulder. After that, he shifts into an open embrace as they continue so he can look at her with raised brows. “You are very flexible.”

She just smirks at him.

He smiles back as she feels him gently push the side of his foot against hers. They slow while he drags it to the side before he twirls her into a spin, keeping a hold by one arm. She catches his eye as she stops when their arms reach as far as they can. Spinning back, she deliberately stops again with her back to his chest so she can reach up with her free hand. Ladybug combs it into his hair, just brushing one of his cat ears to make it flick reflexively with a smile as she pulls her fingers down his scalp, his sideburn, along his jaw.

“I hope you don’t dance like this with anyone else,” Chat mutters.

She shivers at the heat of his breath as he speaks then continues to exhale down the exposed skin of her ear and along her neck, slowly lowering them all the while until he buries his nose in the crook of her neck and shoulder and holds. The low stance has both of them with one leg bent and the other extended. While one of Ladybug’s arm wraps behind her to be around Chat’s neck, both his hands are on her hips.

“I could never,” Ladybug replies. She uses the hand holding his to guide his palm down her hip, the thigh of her outstretched leg, nearly all the way to her knee where she takes a deep breath as he gently squeezes before they begin to rise again, his hand trailing back up all the while. “And you know why.”

Ladybug doesn’t bother to turn around and take up their dancing stance again. She brings her back hand up the nape of his neck to run in his hair.

His hand grasps hers almost painfully. “You... Feel the same way?”

“What do you think?”

She feels him shake his head. “You really can’t just come out and say it?”

“I’ve never been good at... Chat...” She bites her lip and presses the back of her head against him. Ladybug takes a deep breath. “Yes. Yes, I love you, Chat Noir.”

She holds her breath, waiting for some kind of response. “Chat?”

He makes a high pitched squeal as he buries his face into her, which is soon drowned out by a very
loud rumbling noise. A rumbling they can feel between them, from deep in his chest. Ladybug’s eyes widen and she pulls her head up, turning to look at him. “Is that- you can purr?”

He nods.

“I never knew. Is this the first time?”

He shakes his head.

“Wait, when was that, then?”

He’s still basically unable to respond, face buried in her shoulder. He holds up the hand not in hers to indicate he needs some time.

“Oh my god, this is getting to be too much for me too,” Ladybug says, burying her face in her hands. “I can’t believe I couldn’t help but fall for you, you doofus.”

He rubs his face in her shoulder.

Finally, he looks up and pauses purring long enough to say, “Your doofus.”

“My doofus,” she confirms, voice muffled by her hands.

Chat’s purring pauses again as he makes the giddiest chuckle and says as he holds her tighter, “This is all that matters, not the first time. Things always go better for me the second time around.”

chat020915 07:00
Good morning, My Lady. It’s your completely and utterly yours doofus. I’m trying to find the words, but all I can say is that I am the luckiest, happiest doofus in the world.

chat020915 07:00
I love you. <3

bugmenot 07:06
I love you too <3

chat020915 07:06
but just to be clear im only waking up this early to say that today and im going back to sleep

bugmenot 07:06
God, I love you so much.
Chapter Summary

It's the kind of question every couple gets asked: What was your first kiss like?

Chapter Notes

This was meant to be an allusion to Pete and MJ’s first kiss in Amazing Spider-Man #143 (don’t forget the hyphen!), steamy kiss and all. The next panel is a large one where Peter kisses her deeply to prove he’s not the shy wallflower he once was.

PS Spider-Man: Homecoming is really good, and if you’re a longtime reader there are some really well done allusions to iconic comic moments, as well as continuity jokes. For anyone, it's easily the best written Spidey movie so far. I don't want to distract from the chapter, it's just- it's so damn good. Anyway, on with the show.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The first time they kissed was that same night. They just lay together as the music went on. Granted, a flat, hard rooftop wasn’t the best surface for laying around and lounging on, but they made do.

Chat Noir was still purring loudly with one arm serving to prop up both their heads, his other hand lazily rubbing up and down Ladybug’s thigh and hip.

She had continued to run a hand through his hair and scratch his head. The other traced the ridges in his suit, where his skin met collar, the lines of his neck, his jaw, rubbing his chest in between.

“It’s funny, how we’ve kind of gone about this all upside-down, isn’t it?” She had asked as she
flicked his bell back and forth.

He hadn’t been speaking much, seemingly doing his best to avoid interrupting his purring for very long or at all. “Hmm?”

“You’ve spent so much time flirting with me by talking like most couples never do, even after years,” she said with a sleepy slowness. “Really, you were kind of beating me over the head saying how much you love me-”

“Mmmmmmmhm.”

“...In a roundabout way,” she finished her sentence somewhat defensively. She ran a finger over a cat ear to slowly flatten it then watch it bounce back up. “I’ve been spending the last few weeks doing the physical equivalent. Since we’ve already been so comfortable with casual touch so long, I had to escalate-”

“Had to,” He drawled, opening his eyes momentarily with a toothy smirk.

“Minou, I was kind of beating you over the head with how much I think you’re very attractive and I’m very interested.”

“Preciate it.”

“Still didn’t really pick up on it, did you?”

“Years of ‘no,’ can you blame me?” He assuaged any guilt by capping it off with a yawn.

Ladybug smiled softly. “Okay, I guess not. Maybe those years are why I have such a hard time really telling you things. Like... That I love you.”

He giggled, turning his face into his arm. She laughed along, the levity carrying into her voice, “- I know, it makes me... You know, too.

“Anyway, also,” she paused for a moment. “That I need to listen to you more, that I love who I am with you, and how I need to take more risks with you. You know, stop playing it safe, emotionally-the way you have been with me lately.”

Chat opened his eyes with a slight raise of a brow. “Y’mean all that?”

“Yeah, really do. I thought about it, and I needed learn those if we’re going to work. I really want us work.” He closed his eyes again with a sigh and a smile. “I was hoping you got that too. I just, I guess, still need to learn a lot. Like better communication.”

“Yeah, ‘mnot good with interpretive dance, M’Lady,” he grinned, running his hand up to rub the small of her back.

“Yeah, yeah, let me get this all out in the open without too much teasing,” Ladybug booped his nose.

“Sorry, go on.”

“Another thing I can’t leave up to the power of dance,” she said, making him chortle, “Even if it’s probably best to keep the dynamic how it is with battles, I want you to be more forward about us.”

“Y’sure about that? Careful what you ask for an’ all,” he said, voice teasing as he rubbed her spine with a gentle touch she had felt more keenly than if he’d been pressing.
She ruffled his hair, earning a particularly loud breath of purring. “Such a flirt. I meant that sometimes I feel like you’re holding back, and I get it. Thinking about it, once I realized I might actually lose you... Once I stopped taking you for granted, that’s when- stuff. You know, everything that led up to this. I like this.”

“So do I.”

“And I want it to just get keep getting better.”

“It will.”

“So don’t be scared of losing me.”

Chat opened his eyes to look straight at her. “How could I not be?”

“Hey. You won’t, no matter what, I promise.” She cradled his cheek, and he nuzzled into her touch. “This- us? We’re unconditional.”

“Unconditional,” he looked aside and rolled the word around his tongue like it was foreign.

Ladybug softly patted his cheek to get him to meet her eyes again. “Unconditional. Absolutely. I want you to take risks with me too.”

“Yeah,” he said, and fell back into soft purring as he closed his eyes again, though it never quite back returned to the sort of peaceful repose as before.

At some point, they had to admit it was time to go. They had already spent far more time of the night together than usual, and took longer packing up than they really needed. Afterwards, they went through the paces, but everything had shifted between them once again. The old kiss on the back of the hand didn’t felt like the proper goodbye it once was.

He stood, and she kept ahold of his hand. He squeezed softly, not letting go either.

“So... I guess this is goodnight, minou.”

“I guess...” Chat looked down and frowned. “Um, wait... So, hey. Answer me a question?”

“Yeah, yeah, of course! What is it?”

“The uh, the nicknames! The nicknames, minou, chaton, kitty... Why those?”

“I never really thought about it?” She put a cheek in a hand and regarded him. “At first, because you were such a jokester. Even with that and all the flirting, I could tell you were a good guy, so never matou, tomcat, anything like that. I guess it stuck, since, well you are cute for one thing.”

He grinned. “I am cute.”

“You are,” she poked his bell, smiling then began with a sigh, “Most of all, I guess you make me feel so, oh, how do I say it- comfortable. Yeah, comfortable! Safe, and not just physically, like when we’re fighting together. I can get so self-conscious without the spots, and with them on, I’m all business if you’re not around. With you though, I joke and do things I wouldn’t on my own, and... Things are just better, you know? Sometimes you- well you know, aren’t yourself, and it’s a rude reminder of how dangerous you could be.”

Chat rubbed the back of his head, but Ladybug went on undeterred.
“You could be, but you aren’t! Kitten, once any of that is over you never, ever make me feel threatened. Instead, you’re always kind, and gentle, and so incredibly reassuring, and just deeply, fundamentally... Good. You’re wonderful, you make me better- or, I guess, you make me want to be better. Both, maybe. It’s why I ended up falling in love with you.”

He blinked at her, slack jawed. He shut his eyes tight and let his head bow by it’s own weight. He cleared his throat, voice still hoarse when he said “I... see. Thank you.”

“Oh, Chat,” she stepped closer and wrapped her arms around him. “It’s all true.”

His hands lifted to hold her by the cheeks without even thinking about it. He rubbed his gloved thumb softly on her skin. The smooth, patterned surface made a strange sensation, a unique one she felt like she could get used to, but hated that she had no other option but to.

He wondered if they could just stay like that, at least long enough for him to count each and every freckle, memorize where they coloured her skin. Maybe long enough to do it over again to be sure. He wondered whether there were more underneath the mask.

Ladybug was committing to memory every little variation of colour in his eyes, in the lines, the flecks, the shade changing outwards from his pupils, incredibly vibrant until the dark ring where the green ended. Catlike pupils aside, she wondered if they were the same without his mask. Whether she’d recognize them if she could look long and close enough.

He looked down at her lips then back up to meet her gaze. She nodded, smiling.

Chat took a deep breath before he tilted his head and began to lean down, licking his lips in anticipation. She bit her lip quickly before leaning up and mirroring his actions.

Their lips met softly. Every thought melted away. It was warm, slow, and gentle. He hummed contentedly from his throat and she did the same in agreement.

For a moment, they weren’t two masked heroes called Ladybug and Chat Noir. They were just two people in love. That was all. That was all they needed.

As they pulled back, the break in contact immediately awakened them to how fleeting that was.

He rested his forehead on hers. They were eye to eye, still holding one another, still feeling the emptiness left behind cling to them as tangibly as their suits and masks. And they smiled.

As fleeting as it was, they had each other. They could always relive that moment.

“Goodnight, My Lady. I love you.”

“I love you too, mon minou. Goodnight.”

Chapter End Notes

... That was the original intent, but these two don’t have to prove anything like that to each other.
Accident[s]

Chapter Summary

It wasn't supposed to happen, not like this.

**bugmenot** 19:44
have u ever messed up in a way that objectively really isn't that bad but u pray for the sweet embrace of death anyway

**chat020915** 21:11
So sorry, lovebug, had to turn off my phone until now. I got caught using it too much again, you know how it is :( but what’s up? Are you okay?

**bugmenot** 21:11
its ok chaton its just uhh u know how i said im sort of a disaster without the mask?

**chat020915** 21:11
Yes, and I still find the idea kind of adorable, but please go on.

**bugmenot** 21:11
ty. its not. anyway i sort of lost my phone for a while. my bestie found it and gave it back so no prob right? except... we’re always on this app now. and ofc it couldn’t just be that i lost my phone i left it open to this app

**chat020915** 21:11
Okay yeah getting caught on creepy sexting app is pretty bad, but not that bad?

**bugmenot** 21:11
usually shed close it w/o looking cause shes cool like that but shes also super curious, and yeah i know how it is cause shes been teasing me abt being on my phone all the time w the goofy gfdi chat grin. i cant be like yeah im lb and my bf cn is sending me memes while also flirting and for some reason im into that (PS also a disaster abt excuses (PPS also a disaster abt my taste in guys)) so she wants to kno whats actually going on

**chat020915** 21:11
Haha, you love me for my personality. Loser. (PS I thank not only God but also Jesus every day.)

**bugmenot** 21:11
ok but our usernames aren't exactly subtle and my bestie is sort of rly into lb+cn news so she knows how the banter goes and the banter here is accurate for obv reasons... so now she thinks im a hardcore ladynoir roleplayer

**chat020915** 21:11
Snortlaughing.

**bugmenot** 21:11
glad u can benefit from my misery but theres more. she knows how the banter goes publicly
I’m just balancing things out, this what we do, right? Creation and destruction, joy and sorrow... Gotta keep IC... This is going to get better, though isn’t it?

u mean worse. publicly were the same as ever but privately the flirting and joking around just intensifies? sometimes a lot? sometimes enough that it gets uh

Spicey?

omg spicey

ok lets go w that. spicey. like last night. which was what was on screen. so she thinks im not just a hardcore ladynoir rper

she thinks im a hardcore ladynoir erotic rper

LMFAOSKFLJANSFLNLM

when u can breathe again let me kno also im guessing honking sea lion laugh

Inm creying ih cant uead youie mesasage sorry

Oh, lord. I’m sorry that I’m not sorry. Whimpering puppy laugh.

damn it

You know, if you’ve ever wondered how far down the zipper goes I’d be happy to show you.

omg so not in the mood to joke like this rn

Oh really you were in the mood last patrol as you pressed me up against a the wall hungrily like a wolf a sexy sexy hungry hungry wolf in the seductive alabaster marble calcite talcum moonlight. Like you haven’t had deer in over a month.

pls

Your sapphire orbs darkened like sapphires that were held a medium-short distance above a candle for a while so they’re still sapphire but they’re kinda sooty too but like a sexy kind of sooty. Also they
were hooded, so I guess what I’m getting at is that your eyes- sorry, orbs- were like some kind of sooty chimney sweeper monk but in a sexy way

**bugmenot** 21:13

im laughing what is w u and soot anyway you keep using that word

**chat020915** 21:13

It’s a funny word. Feel better? <3

**bugmenot** 21:13

yes ty u hunky dark creature of the dark night hunkily prowling darkly w an air of dark hunky danger but inside a dark sensitive hunk of a soul who wishes only to make sweet sweet dark hunky love to ur one and only soulmate. the only one who can tame ur dark wild heart (also hunky)

**chat020915** 21:13

Pretty accurate, to be fair. I am objectively a hunk and you laugh now, but who knows what depths of darkness would consume my soul if your grace hadn’t tamed my wild, beastly nature which I struggle to keep contained.

**bugmenot** 21:13

uh huh

**bugmenot** 21:13

the romance between syaoran and sakura in ccs is overrated

**bugmenot** 21:15

chat did u go and leave smth in the text field... ?

**bugmenot** 21:16

minou omg have u actually been typing for 3min and counting

**chat020915** 21:17

YES I WAS IT SAID MY MESSAGE WAS TOO LONG AND DIDN’T SEND OR SAVE BUT YOU TAKE THAT BACK RIGHT NOW MY LADY

**bugmenot** 21:17

laughing so much now ur such a dork <3 im sorry i never meant it i was just baiting u

**bugmenot** 21:20

pls r u rly that mad abt it? u can stream anime and ill watch it with u if u want

**chat020915** 21:20

... That would make me feel better.

News helicopter spotlights had always been an annoyance during night time akuma fights. The two heroes had often complained about them to each other; as well as to news outlets, to no avail. Maybe now they would have second thoughts about sending choppers as they take footage of one hit by a full blast of electricity from Circuit Breaker. Everyone stops and stares as lights blink on and off, until finally it rolls a few degrees and begins to lose altitude.

“Chat, I have to net that so it doesn’t crash, you go ahead!”

He nods and vaults off in pursuit of Breaker. When they run instead of staying to fight, it’s never a
good sign. It usually means they’re luring the heroes somewhere they would have the advantage.

“Oh, no.” Electricity sapping and discharging akuma, meet financial district. All the lights you could ever want openly displaying where to draw power from at all hours of the night, and smooth skyscrapers to give Ladybug a hard time navigating. Chat himself is already having a hard enough time trying to fight and move with a very conductive weapon, and he’s not going to get any purchase with boots or claws on that glass either.

“Hey, Circuit Beaker! If you’re trying to get money wired, the banks are closed,” Chat yells from the air, landing in the middle of the street as cars pull over and the people in them make their way into buildings.

“It’s Breaker, punk!” He points his multimeter, an eerie dark purple, at a streetlight and turns the dial a click. It goes dim, and Chat watches for where he’ll point it next. Not at him, he hopes. Not at any of the buildings, he hopes even more. He gets the lesser of two evils and bounds away from the small bolt of electricity.

“Whatever, Circus!”

“You’re at a major disadvantage here, Chat Noir, just hand over your ring! You can’t keep this up forever, but I can.”

It’s truer than he cares to admit. They’re on a major street, triple lane roads on either side, and the line of raised concrete dividing them is too narrow to offer much safety.

“You’ve got me in a dodgy situation, sure,” Chat rolls off the hood of a car, only to break off the side mirror pulling himself back towards it when the next vehicle is run through by electricity. “But I’m still live, Raker! I’m not leafing until you’re purified, either.”

“Let’s see how well Ladybug handles it on her own once I ground you for good.” He peeks out from cover to see Breaker fully turning the dial, street lamp going out completely now. Chat starts making a mad dash for any clear pavement he can find when he hears her from the air.

“Chat!”

“Speak of the angel!” Ladybug grabs his hand and swings him off the ground just in time to avoid a strike to the ground electrifying every car in a 10m radius. Without anything else to latch onto and avoid it, they crash loudly through the floor to ceiling window of a building. It’s glass shatters all around them. Thankfully, the area is dim and empty.

“Sorry it took me so long, I had to convince them to turn the other helicopters back, but they had to call their stations, who had to talk to management, and arrrgh!” Ladybug pulls her hair in frustration, glass crunching under her feet as she paces.

“Whoa, hey,” Chat says, standing up and brushing himself off. “It’s cool, I managed to hold everything down until you arrived. Any ideas?”

Ladybug gives him a look. She ducks a bolt just in time that it hits the ceiling behind her instead, making something break with a shower of sparks.

“They hit the floor.

“You almost-” She shakes her head. “Never mind. I noticed utility poles run down the divider. They’re spaced pretty far apart, but there’s a construction crane on a building nearby. If I can hook on that, I could swing from high enough and close enough between the roads that you can Cataclysm
“them as we go by—”

“- And shut down electricity for the entire street!” He exclaims, pulling out his baton.

“Whoa there, what the hell do you think you’re doing with that?”

Now Chat Noir gives her a look. “It’s the weapon that comes with my miraculous. I’ve been using it for a very long time and can use it to—”

“You are such a sarcastic asshole sometimes,” she grumbles.

“Takes one to know one.”

Circuit Breaker is yelling taunts from below.

“I mean you and that lightning rod are going to be an easy target if you’re extending that far.”

“You’ve seen the videos I’ve sent you of cats on ice, right? Glass like this?” He flicks a shard. “Not much different.”

She bites her lip and looks up to scan the street. “Some of these stupid towers have stone or concrete or whatever on the outside too. There must be one we can jump to and run along far enough for me to get to the crane.”

Chat crawls forward on his belly to look at their side of the street. “There, two buildings down. I’ll have to vault us from here, but it’s not too far, I can be quick about it. Will that get us close enough?”


“You’re not going to throw me at anything, are you?”

“What? No!”

“Okay, just making sure because I at least want a heads up,” he says, holding out his arm while rising to a semi-crouch.

She gets up enough to sidle by him and let him take a hold around her waist. “Listen, chaton, there’s been tons of times when it would have been the easiest route but I’ve only done it like, seven times in nearly three years.”

“Eight, My Lady,” he glares, planting one end of his extended baton into the wall. “Eight.”

She just gets out, “Whatever,” before Chat has jumped and is propelling them down the street. He collapses and stows his baton, letting go of Ladybug’s waist, just as they land to run along the stone between windows on their target building’s face.

Streetlights and windows go dark below them as they run, bolts shattering glass nearby and leaving scorch marks ahead of them and in their wake.

Ladybug throws her yo-yo at the crane. Chat slings an arm around her shoulder then, at her nod after a tug to make sure she’s secure, heaves himself across her shoulders at the same time she kicks off the surface of the building. He keeps his off hand braced against her front as he calls on Cataclysm and they begin to swing down, her arm around his legs keeping him steady.

One by one, utility poles collapse as the steel rapidly corrodes at his touch while they fly through the
air. Each time, the area around them goes black.

Chat makes sure to smirk and look Circuit Breaker right in the eye as they pass.

He howls in outrage.

“What did you do?”

“Nothing, guy’s got anger issues. Anyway, swing back a bit before you unhook, alright? Give me a running start at him.”

She turns them around.

“I could throw you.”

“No!”

“Path of least resistance, but alright, fine,” she lets go of his legs. He shifts his arms to hold around her shoulders and braces to jump down into a run once they’re close enough to the ground. “See you next fall.”

Chat grins as he lets go and hits the ground sprinting. “Thanks for the lift!”

With his night vision, he can clearly see Circuit Breaker and his akumatized multimeter. With the slowing of perception of time when in danger, he can see it’s pointed at him and the dial’s at full turn.

“Been waiting for you, fu-” that’s all he hears before he’s struck full force while he tries to dodge.

At least it feels like full force, because he’s flying fast, feeling nearly paralyzed. He yells as loud as he can, hoping Ladybug will hear. “Get ‘im!”

Then he makes impact with something that falls over, and he’s tumbling over all sorts of things, not knowing which way is where.

Out on the street, Ladybug stops breathing when she sees the lobby Chat was thrown into burst into flames. Every fibre of her being wants to go after him and pull him out before anything, but she heard. She heard that selfless fool urge her to get the job done first. She would. She would then she’d make sure that idiot of a superhero doesn’t die in an electrical fire, of all things.

There are no powered lights, there are only the flames to illuminate the wicked grin on Circuit Breaker’s face as he watches the fire engulf his opponent. He only hears an enraged roar before he’s decked out on the floor.

He never saw her coming.

Ladybug stomps on his multimeter and catches the akuma once it’s barely even fluttered out. As soon as it’s purified, she-

She never used Lucky Charm. She can’t throw and fix- the fire, she can’t put out the fire.

Her feet are already pumping faster than they ever have, she doesn’t even know when she started running, and she doesn’t care. She doesn’t care about the wall of heat she runs into or the smoke making her eyes water and throat burn.

“Chat! Ch-” she coughs, and stops calling but won’t stop looking.
Something burning grazes her as it falls with a heavy thump. Ashes fly in the suffocating air.

Her chest feels tight, and she’s barely breathing. The fire can’t be helping, but she’s sure it’s not the only reason.

The plushly furnished, ostentatious lobby is entirely too sprawling. He was sent in here flying, probably thrown deep inside, and as fast as she’s trying to get through without possibly missing him, she’s still relatively near the entry point.

This close to the entry and some things are already burnt to charcoal. The floor is littered with blackened objects, still smouldering if not crumbling, the distorted air making them waver.

She keeps seeing them in her periphery, movement creating false hopes of her black suited partner.

Still, Ladybug turns at every one.

It’s a good thing she does, or he may have been left there crawling in vain, but she sees him as he struggles to look up and of course, of course, even though he could barely move, he was still trying to make it to her. She rushes over and starts dragging him out as quickly as she can, through the hole in the wall, past the bank of cars, not stopping until the heavy summer air feels frightfully cold, the ground completely dark, and his hacking coughs tear into open air.

She kneels in front of him, propping him up against the edge of the divider with a hand supporting his back, and leans in close to look at him. He doesn’t look hurt, but her eyes are still adjusting and either way, she couldn’t have any idea how badly off he is inside. At least the coughing has slowed enough that he can actually take breaths between them.

“Breathe, just breathe, Chat, please. Don’t you dare die, you stupid cat. Don’t you leave me alone.”

He looks at her with eyes barely open. “Bug-” he’s cut off by another coughing fit.

“Don’t say anything, just breathe.”

“How, you’re so hot you leave me breathless.” He wheezes with a weak smile.

She shakes her head at him, but can’t help a shallow little laugh. “You idiot, now’s not the time to hit mmmph-”

He catches her by surprise with the strength he can muster to pull her in and kiss her. The breaths he takes in between are rough and forced, but Chat kisses her and kisses her like it’s last thing he’ll ever do. For all he knows it will be. His hand in her hair quivers, but he won’t let up, and Ladybug can’t deny him.

She returns his passion just as deeply and desperately, grasping the side of his jaw as if it meant she could keep hold of him in every way.

When she does pull back, chest heaving as his does, she’s relieved that his eyes are less heavy and more lucid. They catch the light the same way they always do, shining brighter than anything whether in daylight or in the lights of the city, like now. The lights are so bright, it may as well be daylight, really. It’s... It’s bright.

Without moving her head, Ladybug’s eyes dart around then widen. “Of course. Backup power, it’s the financial district, it must have backup power.”

Chat waits until he catches her eye to speak, low and gravelly. “It’s lit.”
Ladybug bites her lip and squeezes her eyes shut to keep a straight face, but he doesn’t make any attempt to stop himself. It’s not nearly as loud or raucous as usual, but he laughs out loud. She breathes easier now, even as she squeaks out, “How long have we been making out in the middle of the street lit up for everyone to see?”

“How long have we been making out in the middle of the street lit up for everyone to see?”

“Dunno,” he says, still quiet and hoarse, but without too much strain. “Lucky charm?”

“I didn’t use it for us to beat the akuma, I didn’t have it, that’s why I went in the building to get you.”

“I meant now.”

“... Oh.” She has called for Lucky Charm for the express purpose of fixing collateral damage before. “I didn’t think of that. I didn’t think of that, I was panicking over you too much.”

His hand in her hair rubs at her scalp. “I’m happier than I should be. Little mad you went in. I’ll sort that out later. Right now you should probably fix. Then we get out of dodge.”

“You think it’ll make everyone forget about us making out?”

He snickers. “Nope. Cat’s out of the bag.”

She sighs.

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bugmenot 11:29
so good news(???) my bestie now thinks im ship good luck (is this like weird sports superstitions?) and fully supports/insists on my hardcore ladynoir erp
Animal Impulses

Chapter by allthisink (booabug), booabug

Chapter Summary

Some things are a side effect of the miraculous, some aren’t.

chat020915 02:39
When you think about it clapping is really just hitting yourself in a specific way because you’re happy about something or appreciate a thing isn’t that kinda messed up?

chat020915 02:39
I’m just laying here thinking because I wanted to see how many backflips I could do untransformed but I hit my head on something and now I don’t really want get up but I’m still really amped up like I want to just go for a run but the little cat isn’t having it, it’s really not fair, he gets to sleep all he wants then zoom around plenty when he gets the crazies and because he’s so small of course my room is big enough for him and he’s not noisy so no one’s going to notice

chat020915 02:39
I was thinking about whether I could sneak out and go for run, you know on the sidewalks, and it made me think about how I have to specifically wear jogging clothes or people would think I’m running to or from something

chat020915 02:39
You could think of the flag of Japan as a pie chart of how much of Japan is Japan

chat020915 02:39
You know, where red is Japan

chat020915 02:39
I’m thinking about any tricks I could do with the baton next time civvies want a show let me know if you come up with anything but I was thinking about doing something like fire dancers, wouldn’t that be so sweet? I mean I guess I’d have to carry around like cotton batting and fuel or whatever they use and string? I’ll have to research that. Or I could carry around the staffs they use which I guess would be sort of impractical but then again I could have like not a quiver those are too small but that sort of thing but bigger like what they would have used for javelins and thrown spears when those were a thing in wars

chat020915 02:39
Oh and a lighter I’d have to carry around a lighter or maybe I could use one of those firerods, do you know about them? They’re actually made of ferrocerium and they can produce sparks of up to 3000 degrees, hikers and campers use them mostly
It had been one of their long patrol routes, and both heroes were beat. The reason this route was so long is that it was usually quiet, but tonight they happened on a big weapons deal. Small arms fire really isn’t an issue for them, but there were literally truckloads. The dealers and buyers refused to stop fighting until Ladybug and Chat Noir managed to get them completely subdued, then they had to wait for the police to pick things up.

Ladybug sighs, leaning back on her hands, feet dangling over a building ledge near a small city park. Below, in the comfort of the warm summer night, groups, couples, and individuals laze about. Only the occasional excited conversation or loud laughter floats over to be heard. Up there, it’s just her and Chat leaning on each other, enjoying each other’s company. It’s moments like these that-

She’s almost knocked over sideways when Chat headbutts her.

“Chat! What the hell?” His only response is to start rubbing his face on hers. “Oh god, it scratches, do you have stubble? I didn’t even know you had facial hair yet. How long has it been since you shaved?”

“Leave me and my razor alone. I usually have to be clean shaven for work, but I get a break for a while. It’s my act of teenage rebellion.”

“You’re nailing the being abrasive thing,” she says while making futile attempts to push his head away.

He snickers. “I’m not stopping until you pet me.”

“What? You could have just asked!” She says and starts scratching his head. He falls into a heap of rumbling purrs and tired superhero on her lap.

“Imma rebel,” he mutters, already sounding half-asleep. She sighs.

So anyway, it’s moments like these that makes all the work of protecting Paris worth it.

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**bugmenot 23:07**

i have this close friend and our squad is four ppl right? he has his bff who he does the hand clasp bro hug thing w ofc and theres my bff whos a hugger so they hug but other than w her the two of us arent rly touchy feely

**bugmenot 23:07**

but he does do this thing with me where he brushes up against my side rly close? its not like when im walking and a guy wont budge to the side kind of thing hes super nice and it doesnt feel like that but is it weird? i mean it doesnt make me feel uncomfortable at all. actually i didn’t even think abt it until bestie pointed it out after we all hung out today

**chat020915 23:07**

What.
Do you do it back?

**bugmenot 23:08**

*uhh had to think abt it but maybe ill ask bestie if shes noticed i guess*

**chat020915 23:08**

*Who is he?*

“Alright, water bottle refilled, I’m good to go again, Chat. Chat?”

Ladybug sees his black, clawed hand raise from behind a ventilation shaft on the roof. She walks over to find him laying in front of a large exhaust fan, hair ruffled back and forth by the cool air being pushed out. “I found a really nice spot.”

“It does look nice, but we should get going.”

“The Say that after you’ve laid down over here.”

She shrugs and lays down beside him. “Oh wow, this is nice. Water?”

“Right? Thanks,” he says, sitting up to drink before handing it back.

She puts an arm around his shoulder and snuggles up beside him. He puts an arm around her waist and leans in to kiss her forehead. They decide to end patrol early that night.

**bugmenot 14:26**

*ive hit a block with my hobby projects can u talk rn? kinda bored*

**bugmenot 14:29**

*guess not hmu when u can*

**chat020915 15:12**

*Oh hey, I was just taking a nap in the sun. I can talk now if you want.*

They still tango on dance nights most of the time, and sometimes he teaches her some other styles, but when they do it’s not for the entire night. It’s mostly become an excuse to regularly spend time together without any obligations: no patrol, no akuma, just the two of them.

The music is still playing, but it’s just background noise neither of them can hear very well over his purring. They’ve just been snuggled up, Ladybug leaning back on him as she sits between his legs, and Chat Noir against a wall, hands in her lap where she holds them. His nose is buried in her hair, breath tickling her head in time with the vibrations of his purr.

“You know, your purring gets me so sleepy. Does it have the same effect on you?” Ladybug asks.

“Hmm? Mmmyeah, pretty relaxing.”

She laughs lightly. “You sound more than relaxed, minou. If it weren’t that I would have been able to taste or smell it, I’d ask if you’ve been drinking.”

“Only been drinking in your smell, My Lady. It’s quite intoxicating.”
“Ah yes,” she puts on a snooty voice. “I use only the finest vintage of shampoos.”

“Not just your shampoo. There’s a lot to the scent of you. Even over just the course of a night it changes. You were freshly showered when you came to me and there was the lingering smell of water on you,” he mutters. He moves his head so his nose is by the bare skin of her ear and neck. Now, even as soft spoken as it is, his voice is louder to her, slightly rough with the stupor he seems to be in. “Now that’s gone, and there’s a bit of sweat. Not a bad thing, not bad at all. It’s closer to what I’d guess you’d smell like during the day. I can’t help but be curious about that. I’d love to know. I’d love to be able to hold you and sense you during the day, then I could even...”

His hands squeeze hers, and hers squeeze back, both pairs covered by gloves. “Yeah. You alright there, Chat?”

“Wonderful. It’s one of the reasons I love cuddling, I can smell you so well. Before we were together, honestly, the heightened senses part of my powers I could take or leave, but I wouldn’t trade them for anything now.” He stops speaking to inhale deeply, prompting a particularly intense rumble from his chest.

Ladybug smiles and rubs her thumbs on his hands. “What, are you always sniffing me?”

“Not really during akuma fights, but otherwise, if I can help it. Hope you don’t mind...”

“If it makes you that happy, go right ahead.”

“Mmmhm, thank you, My Lady,” he rubs the side of his head against hers and earns another little laugh. “I love hearing you laugh, too. Laughter especially, but hearing you in general. You’re very vocally expressive, you know that? Not just words, I mean. Your tone and everything. Plus, I can just hear better when I’m transformed. Especially higher noises, I don’t notice those at all otherwise.”

“I make high pitched noises?”

“It’s more like there’s... More texture to your voice. Though yes, you do. Sometimes you make the most adorable little squeaks. Plus I get to hear your... very quiet noises. The little gasps, other breathy sort of things, throaty little hums, little sort of growls,” Chat chuckles into her. “Those are my favourite.”

“I’m guessing you try to get those out of me,” she says, disentangling one hand to ruffle his hair.

He purrs as he leans his head into her touch. “Guilty.”

“Not just a sneaky kitty, a naughty one too.”

“Like you’re surprised.”

“Not at a-” she gasps softly at his sudden kiss on a particularly sensitive part of her neck. He hums deeply, obviously pleased with himself. “You, sir, are a scoundrel.”

“You love it.”

“Yeah, I do.”

“That’s good,” he murmurs and holds her tight. “I have to be very controlled when I’m out of the mask. I love that you let me just sort of... Let myself take over.”

“I know what you mean,” Ladybug says, getting up. He lets her go reluctantly, but gives her a goofy
grin when she simply turns around to sit in his lap and he can wrap his arm around her again. The
grin lingers as she leans in to kiss him, running both hands up his shoulders, his neck, into his hair.
She pulls back, dragging his bottom lip lightly with her teeth. She smirks. “Namesakes aside, we’re
all just animals, aren’t we?”

“That we are.”

“Think you can get those noises out of me?”

“Absolutely,” he goes for her neck again, but she leans back. “What is it?”

“Here’s the challenge: no kissing or nibbling on the neck, shoulders, ears, nothing like that.”

“It’s cute that you think that’s a challenge,” he says with the most smarmy smile.

She leans in to give him a quick kiss. “Then prove me wrong.”
Some things you can only talk about with the one who was right beside you.

Since I usually reply to all comments, I feel weirdly guilty about not, so... Just want to say I read them all and I truly appreciate each one.

“... The best flame grilled chicken!” Chat says, head and ears swiveling as he runs on all fours on one side of the roof. “Oh but if you’re going late, you have to be there before nine. They stop serving fresh off the grill then, I guess since they have to start cleaning.”

“Yeah. Yeah, I’ve been there, actually, my friends and I really like that place. How about dessert places?” Ladybug says, running on the other side.

She doesn’t get a response right away. It’s only when she turns to look to her side that she realizes he’s stopped, his footfalls to quiet for her to have heard. “Chat?”

He’s still on all fours a small distance away when he cocks his head and says, “I’ve noticed you always change the subject when fire comes up.”

“Has it seemed that way?” She grins widely, hand on the back of her head.

He sighs and stands as he approaches her. “Ladybug... Talk to me.”

She waits until he’s by her before turning to walk at an easy pace, only broken up by having to hop over obstacles. They walk one building roof, then two, still alert to the streets around them, but Chat keeps looking over once in a while.

“It’s Circuit Breaker,” she finally says.

“I figured. Hey, I made it out fine, didn’t I? No injuries after, either. Both thanks to my amazing Lady,” he says, putting an arm around her shoulder and kissing her on the temple.

“It was touch and go. If I had only thought about Lucky Charm, or didn’t assume the dark meant a frontal attack would be safe, or... Or so many things. Even now, you’re fine physically, but my powers can’t cure what you went through. I just.” She looks up at him and squeezes his hand on her shoulder. “I didn’t want to say anything when if anyone has the right to be hung up over it, it’s you.”

The next building is significantly taller, they can’t jump it. He turns them around so they can maintain contact and just sink down against the wall to sit. She leans her head into his shoulder as he rests his chin in her hair.
“Listen,” he says softly, “It’s impossible to do everything perfectly in battle. We get into some pretty scary fights. Those are just facts of life. Ours, anyway. Whoever it happens to, there’s no right or wrong about what sticks with us, it’s not like we can help it. Hell, I still think about Animan sometimes.”

“Sounds like we get bothered more by what happens to each other.”

“Yeah, pretty much. Though some things do get to me just- reflexively. There I am going about regular life then, click,” he snaps, “Suddenly totally on edge.”

“Ugh, I know, the same thing happens to me too. It’s usually not even the things I run over and over in my head like the fire. I don’t even remember what situation I’ve been in for something to trigger that until afterwards.”

“Yes, exactly,” he nods. “Oh, I’ll try and avoid talking about fire or anything like that.”

“It’s alright, it’s just going to happen with everyone else anyway.”

“I could be one less person, at least.”

Ladybug scratches behind one of his cat ears, and he leans his head into it, smiling. “Thanks, chaton, but it’s fine, really. It’s just... Weird. Going back and forth between superhero stress and regular life, having to pretend the first one isn’t even a thing. Even during that fight, one moment we exchanged puns, the next I’m watching you fly into a building and my chest goes empty.”

“It’s pretty crazy,” Chat agrees, rubbing her up and down her arm. “It wasn’t the reason in the first place of course, but I think it’s part of why I’m always messing around so much. I think back later or watch footage and I think, man. It’s kinda messed up I was joking about that.”

A breathy laugh from her tickles his neck. “I’m glad you do, though. When I can’t help but think and think about some fight, I’ll remember some quip you made or a silly stunt and I laugh, or at least feel a little better.”

“Well, reason enough for me to keep doing it. Though I would anyway. I’m just a wiseass,” he nuzzles into her hair, shaking his head back and forth roughly so she laughs harder.

“Finest wiseass in the city,” she smiles, ruffling his hair. She leans her head back for a moment so they can grin at each other. “I think it helps everyone else too, akuma victims included. If it makes it all seems less scary for me and you, I’m sure it helps the city.”

“I hope so.”

There’s silence as they take a few moments to breathe.

“Just thought of something,” Ladybug starts with a smile, “My friends have said that for someone with such a positive attitude, I have a really dark sense of humour.”

He laughs. “Same here.”

“Would have been better if I had just gone ahead and spoken to you without you stopping me, but,” she shifts to look up at him, “I guess I’m still working on the whole communication thing... Thanks, Chat.”

“Not a problem, My Lady. It’s not as if I’m totally open with you either yet,” he smiles.
“Hmm... I don’t know, I think I know everything I really need to,” she says, tracing the lines of his mask. “I get that you act a lot differently when you’re not going by Chat Noir, but whoever the guy is under this mask, I love him more I can say. I just can’t quite put a name to him yet.”

“Glad you see it my way,” he says as he gently takes her hand to kiss it. “I’ve always known I’d love the girl beneath that mask, I just get the feeling I will more than I ever imagined now.”
Chapter Summary

Something has been said that's straining our heroes' minds.

Chat Noir looks on fondly as Ladybug sits pouting, chin in hand. He can’t help but smile, even when she sends him withering glances.

“Chat,” she begins with a huff, “Want to hear something that’ll really piss you off?”

He raises his brows. “Naturally, no? I don’t?”

“I want you to hear this anyway, and I think you’d want to too.”

“What does that even mean?” Chat twists the gun out of the woman’s hand by the wrist before she can point it at Ladybug. She growls with pain at the submission hold. “Past tense, right? It was past tense.”

He ducks so that Ladybug’s punch can go over his shoulder, to a man’s face who was trying to sneak up on him, it turns out. They pivot so he can continue to subdue his perp while she fights hers. “Yeah, but ‘never’ was in there too.”

As Chat pulls a ziptie from his belt to begin cuffing the woman, he watches Ladybug dodge an unexpected elbow, bending back on one foot enough that anyone should topple over, but she doesn’t. Hands whirling forward, a fist lands hard right on his head. She rights herself, and lands an uppercut so fluid it doesn’t even look intentional. He drops to his knees, and he won’t be recovering any time soon.

Chat hands a ziptie to Ladybug to cuff the man, the action practiced enough by now that she can do it while watching him kneel to slowly push the cursing woman down to her side with his motion. He’s pulling out his baton to call the police as he double checks the others awaiting arrest.

“There you are,” Ladybug smiles at the child who bounces up and down. He frowns. “Oh, I know it’s fun to feel things go up and down, but you can’t have it too loose, okay? You’ll hurt your back. Uhh, here, have another lollipop! Don’t tell anyone.”

Seemingly placated, the kid tears it open to suck at. She sighs. Turning to Chat, she says, “So what, are we supposed to go blindfolded and with earplugs everywhere?”

He’s been a short distance away and apparently was looking on, already done helping his last kid with their charity backpack and school supplies. “I guess? It’s not like anyone ever sees or hears anything some way but suddenly.”

“Chat Noir! Chat Noir!” A little girl clutching a plush cat runs up and hugs his leg with surprising speed and force. Her father is running after her. Chat has a little lopsided smile on his face as he
looks wide eyed between the child and her father. He looks really out of his comfort zone, but Ladybug waits to see whether she really has to step in.

“I’m so sorry, Chat Noir, she’s just a big fan.” His tone turns stern as he addresses his daughter, “Clara, come on, I’m sure he’s very busy and it’s already night. They’re taking down the tents now and everything. We can’t be late for your sleepover.”

“But, Papa!” She stays clinging onto Chat’s leg. “I don’t even like Ynès. It’s just you and maman like her parents.”

The expression on Chat’s face is hard to read as he looks down at the little girl.

“Hey, little lady,” he says gently, coaxing her off his leg. “If I could, I’d whisk you away and give a piggyback ride allll across Paris, but... We’re a little short on time. How about a few pictures together? I’m sure we can do that, at least. Right, Monsieur?”

He gets down as the girl bounces with excitement and poses with him. Her father reluctantly pulls out his phone to snap photos.

It may not take as long as traversing all of Paris, but this could take a while. Chat just keeps putting them in different poses: holding her up, sitting in different ways, lounging on the ground. There’s no end to his repertoire, apparently.

Chat looks over when technical crew calls for a break. Reporters grumble. Ladybug is must sense it, because she looks over with an empathic ‘HELP ME’ face. He smiles and shrugs apologetically. Ever since the... Accident, they’ve refrained from being too close in front of the press. It seems to have undone her progress over the years in learning to deal with the media.

Picking up their thread of conversation, he says, “So, do you think all that’s about timing?”

“I mean, that’s the most sensible answer, but why now? True, there’s... You know, us, but is that really a huge deal to factor in when we’re talking big picture?”

“That’s the problem, everything about this whole thing is so darn cryptic. I mean you ask me, of course, then it’s a huge deal. Powers that be, on the other hand, well, a little clarity would be nice.”

“Right? I mean I guess it could be-”

“Alright, ready to roll!”

Chat turns and faces the cameras with a perfect grin, Ladybug’s own obviously a little sheepish. They look to each other for a second.

They’re sitting against the walls facing each other in a school gymnasium, last of the fundraisers and their props long gone. The custodians will let them know when they have to go, but for now, they unwind, throwing a basketball back and forth.

Ladybug fumbles again and as she gets up to get it again, she sees the expression on Chat’s face. She loves him. She truly, madly, deeply loves him. But sometimes his smirk is so damn insufferable. She sticks his tongue out at him, making him laugh. “Don’t be mad, I just think it’s adorable.”

“That’s why I’m mad,” she says as she takes her seat again and tosses the ball and sighs. “It’s the whole ‘ready’ thing that gets me most. Ready for what?”
It flies significantly over to his side, but he leans over to catch it easily. “Who knows? It’s not like we’ve ever faced anything we couldn’t handle. Hell, if we met Papillon tomorrow, I bet we could take him down.”

Ladybug catches the ball. “Yeah, I’d love to get that over with. I know I’m ready to put an end to him terrorizing Paris.”

A custodian wordlessly rolls in their cart, and they all wave at each other. She tosses the ball one last time. Chat catches it and gets up, dribbling over to centre court. After a moment’s concentration, he tosses it with a hop. Nothing but net.

He smirks over at Ladybug. She gives him a tight smile back.

They’re plodding over to the opposite ends of the wide rooftop they use for the nights they’re always most reluctant to part on. They both turn to each other at the same time.

They just stare for a long time, pensive. She speaks first. “What does Tikki mean, we would just know? I mean, clearly we don’t. Is there something we’re supposed to figure out?”

“Apparently. ‘Drawn,’ though. I mean we both know now I’ve been drawn to you from the start, but... That wasn’t the case for you.”

She frowns at his words. “Would be so much simpler if I had been, huh?”

He doesn’t respond. They look on in silence for a while longer before waving goodbye, hers rapid, and his slow and casual. They both leave with furrowed brows.
Chapter Summary

Help, some dude by the name of Chekov has been dropping firearms and now they're all going off. The children are having a hard time handling it.

The original prompt is actually *Midnight Hour*, but I had *Twilight Hour* in my head already when I began writing this, and I wrote everything in one sitting.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

From his tail to his spine to his ears, every bit of him seems to perk up as he sees her familiar swinging, twirling figure approaching. The area where they found the privacy for their nights of learning to dance, then to simply be with one another, doesn’t get a lot of foot traffic. The lights are sparse here. He sees her in clearly in the light only half the time— the other half, she’s obscured in darkness.

It’s really not that dark now. The lamps may have turned on already, but it’s not quite night yet. The sun is just close to setting, and his night vision isn’t active.

When she’s falling through the air to land, he realizes he had been holding his breath. He inhales sharply, consciously ignoring any smells. Slowly exhaling through his nose, he rushes over to her with wide eyes to grab her shoulders and shuffle her to the opposite side. Wordlessly, he raises both hands to get her to stay in place and backs away farther than at all necessary.

“Okay, just- just stay downwind, okay?” He says with the last of the air in his lungs before taking a deep breath.

There’s amusement in her voice as she shrugs and says, “Alright, whatever you say. I’m already indulging you tonight, anyway. Not a usual meet-up night, not even nightfall yet... Somebody’s eager.”

She winks, and he feels heat rise as he gulps, unable to do anything but nod. He’s too nervous himself to notice her chew her lip a little.

“Mmhmm, hmmmmyep. I ’preciate it,” he clears his throat. “I did have another request you didn’t mention... It was kind of weird, so, I’m wondering if you did me the favour?”

“Yeah...” She puts a hand on the back of her head. “I did. I mean, I didn’t. Shower before I came here, that is.”

“You know why, right?”

“Yeah. Yeah, I do.”

“... And you’re okay with this?” She starts circling, stopping after a few steps to raise her brows at
him, standing stock still. “Oh, uh, alright. Alright. This is fine.”

He puts his hands behind his back and catches up. They circle slowly to change positions. With each step, the warm summer breeze carries more and more of her scent with it. Her scent, not the scent of her freshly showered or of a superhero’s exertion. It’s not until she giggles that he catches himself with eyes closed, nose up to snuffle at the air. He smiles sheepishly and hunches up his shoulders. They’re standing opposite of each other now.

“Look... minou,” she closes her eyes and takes a few deep breaths. “You can smell me way better if you just come closer. Right?”

“Yes... If I do, there’s no turning back.”

There’s laughter in her voice and she shakes her head lightly. “I didn’t come out here for my partner, my best friend, the guy I’m head over heels for, if I didn’t want to go all the way down this crazy road of ours with him.”

His nervous eyes relax and he smiles gently.

She puts up her hand in invitation like she does at the start of every evening of tango. It’s an invitation he’s never been able to deny. His feet are carrying him over before he knows it, the smell of her filling him up more and more with every step.

He grasps her hand. He thinks about how it doesn’t feel any different than usual. From here, her scent is so damn near tangible. He can almost feel it cradling him as well as he feels her hand cradles his. She bites her lip. She looks into his eyes and, as much as she’s gazed into them before, there’s more depth now she than she ever managed to reach before, though it’s murky past a certain point. She gulps and focuses on how even now, his eyes on hers feel the same as ever. Though it shakes, her hand reaches up to steady on his shoulder. He feels the heat of her hand sink through their suits to his skin. He holds her by the lower back.

She closes her eyes. ‘It’s him,’ she reminds herself, ‘He’s always been here. He’s here now.’ With those thoughts, she pulls him closer.

Her skin tingles with the familiar sensation of his breath only momentarily before he speaks. His voice is breathy, soft, mild, and so familiar in every way when he mutters, “I knew it.”

He goes on to bury his nose into her and drink in her scent slowly, deeply. Then he’s backing away, letting go of her hand, but forgetting the one on her back. He nearly pulls her with him. He lets go with an apologetic smile she knows so well when it stumbles her forward. The smile grows more manic. “I knew it.”

“I knew it, I knew, I knew it,” he repeats, voice growing more raucous each time. He throws his trembling fists in the air with a laugh as he yells, “I knew it!”

His laughter is contagious. Even as she looks at a foot she’s rubbing into the ground and feels the slight flush across her cheeks, she peeks up at him, giggling.

He hums a tune as he saunters around behind her then brushes up so close to her side, he almost pushes her in his excitement. He whirs to face her. “I freaking knew it!”

“So I hear. You- you’re really happy, aren’t you?”

“Am I happy?!” He says with an incredulous grin. She sees him freeze in place, examining her like a poker player looking for some tell. Suddenly, she’s in the air, hoisted by his hands on her waist. She
can’t help but squeal before steadying herself with hands on his shoulders. “Yes! Yes, I’m happy!

“How can I not be happy?” He whirls her around, turning on his heel. It’s a little dizzying, but she finds herself laughing.

He lowers her slightly and she puts her legs around his waist. He moves to support her, an arm seating her, and the other rubbing her back. She’s thankful for his support, because the way he’s looking up at her makes her legs feel like jelly. He can’t help but look at her like that. Every secret gaze, every time he’s watched his partner swinging way doesn’t compare to looking at the girl in his arms. She’s so much more.

“You smell like- like warmth, you know that? Does that make sense? No, you know what? I don’t care. It’s true. You smell like warmth. Like home, a real home. You smell like the best bread in the city, and hot cocoa in a thermos in the winter, ‘just in case,’ and, coffee in the library when we’re dreading our bacs next year, and, and flour. Flour. Restocking day. Today was a physically demanding day in the food industry, helping your parents,” he winks.

She gently runs the back of her hand up and down his jaw, chuckling. “It was. I see your teenage rebellion phase is over, just in time for the gala later tonight. You know, I don’t know if you really can say your family business isn’t a gang. I’m guessing you’ll be wearing a suit, and I do trust you with knowing how essential the pocket square is, but please don’t wear it presidential.”

“Fair enough, I’ve never looked in the trunk of the sedan, and Gorilla will say no secrets,” he laughs, slowly putting her down. “I won’t, I promise. Even if I didn’t think it were a crime myself, I must listen to My Lady, no? She knows best, especially about these things.”

Once she’s on her feet again, she takes his hand and examines the black ring on his finger, bright green paw print shining as the last rays of sunlight give way to night. “I didn’t know your ring was silver when it’s inactive until you said so. I’ve always liked it. I just never looked close enough until recently to notice the claws.”

“Figures I’d be the one to let something that obvious slip.” With his other hand, he brushes her hair back from her ear to the red stud with black spots. “These?”

“They go black.”

“Of course. Perfect counterpart, like us,” he grins at her.

She smiles back. “Like us.”

“I really just want to spend tonight with you,” he puts both his hands around hers.

“So do I.”

“Then come with me.” She stares. He continues slowly, “To the gala?”

“No, I know! That’s meant what you- but! What?! Can I even get in? I don’t even have anything to wear, not anything for something this big and fancy and- chaton! You have to stop doing this, you’re getting so heavy.”

“Pleeease,” he whines, arms around her shoulders as he slowly sinks. “I’ll get you in. Save me, My Lady, it’s going to be so boring it’s not that big a deal it’s just the start of a bunch of stupid passive aggressive verbal jostling and low-key espionage until fashion week. You’re amazing I know you have something you’ve made before in the closet already that’ll blow everyone away.”
She’s being dragged down. He’ll sometimes do this until they’re both flat on the ground, and she gets the sense this is one of those cases. “My strength is leaving me just thinking about going alone, pleeeeaaasse,” he sobs. This is definitely one of those cases.

“Okay! Okay, minou.” He hops up immediately, beaming. She puts her hands on her cheeks, pacing a circle. “This is so weird. It’s so weird, it doesn’t make any sense, but it does. I thought it over, but it’s different seeing-experiencing it. Everything’s clicking together so fast, it fits, but it’s so weird seeing it happen, I knew, but—”

“Hey, Mari, look.” She does to see his hair combed nearly into a perfectly styled cut. There’s some of the usual wildness that just won’t go. He winks and smiles in a much tamer way than she’s used to seeing from Chat Noir.

There’s a small screams as she ruffles his hair back into disarray. He has the audacity to alternate between purrs and giggles. “No. These are not affection ruffles. These are ‘you are being a wiseass and not in the way I like’ ruffles. Do not purr.”

He purrs.

“Adrien,” she growls, grabbing and pulling him by the bell to force eye contact. “Do not tease me about this. I am having a very hard time reconciling everything, and you are not helping right now.”

He stops purring.

“Ah- Ye-yeah, okay, Mari- Lady-nette? Bug?” He gulps, pupils so wide they almost overtake the green of his eyes completely. His voice lowers to a whisper. “Can I be completely honest with you as your partner and confidante and boyfriend?”

The growl leaves her voice as her grip loosens, “Of course.”

“I am really turned on right now.”

“Oh my god!” She lets go of him so quickly he almost topples over, face buried in her hands. “You can’t just say things like that!”

“Wh- whoa…” He catches himself. “Sorry, was that too much? I just- it’s just that I... Both of us, have been saying things like that? And more... Hardcore Ladynoir ERP kinda things, for a while?”

“That,” she begins squeaking out very rapidly, “All started before I really suspected, much less knew for sure, that you’re also Adrien, who I’ve been struggling to get over for Chat, because I’ve had a crush on Adrien since collège, who, it turns out, is also Chat.”

It takes him a moment to parse what she said. It would be impossible to parse for most people at all, but he has known Marinette long enough to do so, and in only a moment. “I am... I was... My competition. All this time. All this time, I’ve been keeping you from getting together with me because you wanted to get together with me.”

“Pfft, yeah, it’s kind of-” her sardonic smile falls. “So have I. It took me so long to be able to have a proper conversation with you. Then I still couldn’t tell you I was crushing on you. You never seemed interested. You were never interested because you were too into Ladybug. Who is Marinette. Who is me.”

They look at each other. Then they slump on each other, deflating until they’re sitting.

“We’re ridiculous,” he says monotonously. “No. No, hold on. It’s not entirely our fault. Your
kwami. Yeah. Yeah, I'm really pissed now.”

“I already was, but now I’m so much more pissed off. I am pretty sure she meant we're expected to figure it out, though.”

"She better have."

Their hands feel blindly around on the ground, seeking each other, until their fingers entangle and they hold hands.

They sit there for a while, focusing on the comfort in the contact.

“Hey, minou?”

“Yeah?”

“Is that gala open bar? If it is, are they hard-line about the not selling to minors thing?”

“It is. I’m not sure, but I think they aren’t. If not, I will totally bribe them the cost of the fine.”

“God, I love you,” she turns to hold him. “I really do want to spend the rest of the night with you too.”

He laughs, wrapping his arms around her. “You love me, or you love that I can help you get a drink to drown our stupid superhero love confusion sorrows?”

“I love that you’re my ridiculous superhero partner who will totally bend the law so we can drink together,” she plays at the short hairs on the nape of his neck, “And I love that you’re my gentleman of a friend who wants to take me to a party he knows is about my passion and thinks that I’d enjoy it.”

He doesn’t speak for so long that she wants to look up, or at least question him, but there’s a weight to the way he holds her tight that stops her. She just leans her head against his chest and rubs his neck.

When he does say something, it’s not quite a question. It is full of wonder. “You love all of me.”

She laughs gently. “I thought that was obvious by now, but yes, I really, hopelessly do. I love Chat Noir. I love Adrien Agreste. I’ll love everything I don’t know yet, because goodness knows if I ended up loving all your nerdy, weeby dorkiness, nothing else is going to stop me. I hope you’ll come around to feeling the same way about me.”

He shakes with silent laughter, or maybe sobbing. “You know how you said you were struggling to get over Adrien for Chat?”

“Yes... Are you going to make fun of me for that?”

“No, not at all. I’m not that much of a hypocrite.” He loosens his hold enough to accommodate her sitting up and looking at him quizically. “I’ve been struggling for a very long time to stay faithful to Ladybug, who, admittedly, I wasn’t even with until very recently, and not start crushing on my very amazing, sweet, and witty friend Marinette Dupain-Cheng.”

Her head collapses onto his shoulder full weight.

“Or I guess I should say, not crush on her any harder, once I admitted to myself that I have been since collège.”
She starts banging her head into his shoulder.

“I know,” he says, stroking her hair. “Look, at least I’m pretty sure we get to be the first couple to get together again while still being together. Pretty... Miraculous.”

She slumps into his shoulder and groans loudly as he snickers. She flicks a cat ear.

“So how do you want to play this, like a reverse surprise party where we invite all our friends and family to find us making out?”

“I’m going to find out just how many ways there are to skin a cat,” she grumbles, tugging on his tail. His snickering just intensifies. She feels his neck stretch up and doesn’t need to look to know he’s looking down at her with a mischievous smile. “Shall we tango at the party? We’ve had plenty of practice up here.”

“I know you’re thinking of dancing like we do here, which will get us kicked out and land you in a scandal.”

“Worth it. Besides,” he leans in to mutter in her ear. “I can’t be held responsible for what happens if you pull me by the tie like you did with my bell earlier, which I am not at all opposed to.”

She looks to find him smiling at her just as impishly as she expected and pokes him on the nose. “Down, kitty. I know we’re going to get pretty buzzed tonight, but try to keep your Chat from showing too much. First of all, it’s sort of a business event for you, and secondly, the booze may help me summon my inner Ladybug more, but I will still be screaming internally and get as red as my suit.”

“Just tell me if I make you uncomfortable, alright?” She nods, smiling fondly and runs her hand into his hair. “Once you do, I’ll only tease you a few more times before I stop.”

She pushes his head to the side, removing her hand from his hair. He laughs. “I’m sorry, I just— you’re so adorable when you’re flustered and I have to get as many times in as I can before you adjust and get all unflappable Ladybug on me when we’re plainclothes too.”

That’s never going to happen, but there’s no way she’s telling him that now. She disentangles herself, getting up. He clambers up after her. “Seeya.”

“No! No, no, no. Come on, you know I say that now, but I’m just- this?” She turns to look, and he gestures at his suit, holding up his tail with the other hand. His voice softens. “This lets me keep from showing it much, but I can never really handle how crazy I am about you. Hell, I’ll probably be the one to spontaneously combust if you overdo it. Besides, I say that based on how I feel now, and... Well, you remember how I said things always go better for me the second time?”

“Vaguely,” she says, though she already understands from the way he’s looking at her.

“I’m falling in love with you all over again. I’m falling deeper than ever, but it’s not like before. It’s not all of a sudden. I think it’s like... like I’m walking into love with you this time. I don’t need to chase after you, you’re already where I want to be— no, you are where I want to be— and you’re letting me catch up. The more I look forward to that, the more I can see it’s going be even better than ever.”

“Trust me, chaton,” she leans in to kiss him slowly, “Speaking as someone who’s been through that, it will be.”
He trails after to kiss her back when she pulls away.

“I never doubt you, My Lady, and I can’t wait until we’re in the same place. Right now, though, this is, uh, this is still going to take some getting used to. I don’t know anything right now. I can’t even think. I do know...” He takes a few breaths, hand to his temple. “I do know that I love you. I know that, thank God, you want to be with me too. So, then, I know that whatever happens, I’ll be fine. No, I’ll be great.”

“I know that’s how it’s been with me. Of course I want to be with you, I’ve fallen for you twice now, haven’t I? Yeah, yeah, wow, yes, this is going to take getting used to. At least the booze will help us start tonight.” She shoots him a cheeky smile and threads her fingers into his hair, getting a contented chuckle out of him as he rubs the side of his face against hers. “I have to go now, minou, I need to start getting ready as soon as I can or we’ll be late- oh, you big baby, don’t whine, we’ll see each other soon.”

“Fine,” he grumbles with a heavy sigh. “I’ll see you soon.”

He’s still leaning over the way she leaves him, heart pounding and head swirling as he watches her go. The way her hips sway is mesmerizing. She turns to face him, and he stands up ramrod straight.

“Oh, and handsome?”

“Ye-Yeah?”

“You’re right about having something tucked away in my closet, come to think of it. I don’t know about blowing everyone else away, but I have this little red dress I think you’re going to love.”

He tries to respond, but only wheezes as she fixes him with a smirk and two fingered salute before swinging away. He watches, seeing her clearly in the dark of night.

That girl is going to be the death of him, and he’s going to love every second.

Chapter End Notes

In France, it's illegal to sell alcohol to those under the age of 18, raised from 15 in 2009. There's no law prohibiting possession or consumption of alcohol to any age or location though. From what I can tell the law is very loosely enforced. I assume it's not too much of a stretch to think Marinette and Adrien can get wine served to them as long as they're not getting completely, obviously drunk.
Eiffel Tower

Chapter by allthisink (booabug), booabug

Chapter Summary

With the monumental change that's happened, our heroes exchange one sort of pact for another.

Chapter Notes

I'm pretty sure most people in the fandom already know this by now, but *coup de foudre* is a French phrase. Literally, it means strike of lightning, but can also mean a sudden, intense feeling of love. If you listen for it in The Umbrella Scene™ you will hear thunder when they're looking at one another. I cry every time.

Ladybug is idly slapping the sheaf of paper napkins in one hand against the other when she hears the telltale clattering of beams and looks down the centre of the tower. A black-clad figure, lit up by the night lights of the Eiffel tower clammers up with practiced agility. He kicks off beams, grabs hold of others, only pausing at one point to grin up at her. She waves with a hand, and he waves back, then flails as he nearly loses hold. She laughs. Before she’s even done, he’s hopping onto the high deck they’ve made theirs.

“Whew, that was a close one,” Chat says, glancing down the way he came. He looks back up to wink, “Eif-fell for you here once already, nearly did again.”

“Boo, that one’s overdone.”

“You mean it's a classic.”

She shakes her head at him before leaning in for a quick kiss. “You’re lucky you’re cute.”

“And a good kisser,” he trails in after her so they stay nose to nose.

Ladybug boops his nose with hers. “That too.”

He looks at her with a quivering smile for a moment before sighing dreamily and falling against her, head against her chest. “What’s the date today?”

“I can’t really remember,” she scratches his head behind his cat ears. “My sense of time pretty much goes out the window during summer. Why?”

“I need to remember when I fell for you here again.”

“*Chaton*, you’re taking that pun from overdone to burnt to a crisp. By the way, you keep saying second, are you going to tell me about the first this time?”
“I’m not just making pun! My username, remember? Chat oh-two, oh-nine, fifteen: the 2nd of September, 2015. We defeated Stoneheart for good, and you made sure Paris knew exactly who you are,” he straightens to smile at her, affection in his eyes laid bare. “You made sure I knew I’d never meet anyone I could adore more than you.”

Now she buries her face in his chest, blushing. “I am never going to get used to how you just say things like that now. It’s like: bad line, bad line, incredibly sincere romantic line, bad line, and I can never tell which one’s coming.”

He laughs, and squeezes her in a hug. “Get used to it, I’m never going to stop.”

“I wouldn’t want you to,” she looks up, hugging back. “That quickly, huh?”

“Un coup de foudre, My Lady.”

She furrows her brows then smiles gently. “So what Tikki said was true. We were drawn to each other from the start. You remember how I said that was a memorable day for me too?”

“Yeah?” He cocks his head.

She leaves their embrace, ignoring his whine with a roll of her eyes. Ladybug walks over to lean over the deck railing in the direction of their old collège. She hears his boots clang on the floor as he follows and shortly after feels his weight fall on her back. She’s pushed into the railing with an ‘oomph’ as he slouches onto her, his head landing on her shoulder. “Chat!”

He just turns his head to give her a toothy grin. Ladybug sighs, unable to help the smile tugging at one side of her mouth. She rests her chin on a hand and the paper napkins she holds in it. “Alright, imagine that cartoon flashback thing.”

“Imagined,” he leans the side of his head against hers.

“It was the end of the second day of school. It was raining, I was mad at you for the gum thing, you tried to say hi to me, and I snubbed you for it. You could have just walked away with your head down, stayed upset. I would have, in your shoes. Instead, you really, honestly poured your heart out to me about your problems and gave me your umbrella. The look in your eyes then, it... Wasn’t even ‘take this so I’ll feel better.’ You really just wanted me to accept it.”

“An umbrella which collapsed on you,” he says, voice light and far off.

“It did, and you laughed. It was so genuine and pure, I wasn’t even offended. I couldn’t help but laugh along a little too. Of course, you stopped to do the whole collect yourself and act dignified thing, but by then it was too late for me. Coup de foudre,” she turns to smile at him.

“... Wow,” he breathes and wraps his arms tight around her waist. “Now I feel lousy. I gave you a defective umbrella and you gave me the greatest gift of all.”

“What’s that?”

“Love.”

She laughs and bumps back into him. “Really? You cornball.”

“But yes, of course. Plus the ability to wreck just about every rando I fight in Mecha Strike.”

“What- Ohh, the lucky charm, for the tournament.”
“That’s right, I carry it around, but... I, hah- I’ve been meaning to accessorize, you know? It’d make a nice bracelet, I think. I was hoping you’d collar this cat of yours. Sort of,” he raises a wrist and shrugs. “I’m not exactly bull-necked, but it’s still just a little bit small.

“Minou, that would make me really happy,” she leans back and looks up at him. “Next time we see each other, I promise.”

“I was hoping tonight, actually.” Chat backs up, raising his arms against the night sky, softly illuminated by the tower lights, standing someplace only they know. He looks up and around. “I mean, special place, romantic night, what could be better?”

“Nothing could be better, but...” Ladybug smiles at him before she looks down at the observation decks below. The wind keeps their words between them. No one’s looking up, and even if they do, they would be well hidden. She looks back to him and nods. “Yeah, we’re good.”

He’s beaming as he drops his transformation, catching his kwami in his hands.

“Oh, you must be Plagg!”

“Yeah, the reason I always smell like cheese.”

“Whatever, kid, you’re the reason I’m constantly gagging, along with-” The little catlike creature flies up and looks over his surroundings. “You must be Ladybug, huh? My boy goes on and on about you, I can’t take it. Ugh, I’m out here because he’s going through with the stupid romantic gesture, isn’t he?”

Ladybug smiles. “Yeah, you’re Plagg alright. Exactly like Chat’s been saying, and yes, he is. Nice to meet you.”

“Likewise. Well, at least the kid’s lightened up a lot lately, so good for you two, I guess,” he shrugs his little arms.

Adrien smiles sardonically as he pulls the lucky charm from his pants pocket. He glances at Plagg, then looks at Ladybug. ‘Tsunedere,’ he mouths.

She laughs into a hand before she drops her own transformation. Her kwami flies out and lands in her hand.

“Oh, you must be Tikki!”

“Adrien! Hello, I’ve heard so much about you!”

“Hello. Oh, you are just the cutest thing I’ve ever- Wait.” Adrien stops his uncontrolled smile and fixes a neutral face on. “Wait, I’m supposed to be upset with you. I’m a little upset with you, but it is nice to meet you.”

“It couldn’t be helped, but I understand,” Tikki smiles sheepishly, before being bowled over into the air.

“Tikki, you big sap! It’s been so long!” Plagg exclaims, tackling her.

She laughs and tumbles along. “You haven’t been giving your Chat too hard a time, grouchy?”

Adrien and Marinette look on fondly before leaving them to it and turning to look at each other. He begins to put the charm on his wrist, and she reaches her hands out when he notices the paper
napkins she’s still holding. She can hardly tie anything while holding those. “Oh, let me take those. Here, you take this.”

They exchange objects. Marinette takes the charm and grins up at him before getting down on one knee. After a wide eyed moment, Adrien snorts and starts laughing.

“Chaton,” Marinette begins with barely contained laughter in the most serious voice she can muster as she wraps the charm around his wrist. “Would you let me tie the knot?”

Adrien coughs and wipes a tear from his eye. “God, Marinette, I love you so much. Yes. Yes, I will.”

She ties the ends of the lucky charm’s red string around his right wrist firmly, fondly rubbing at the four-leaf clover embroidered on the large, jade coloured plush square, before standing to meet his eyes, chuckling. She takes his hand and feels the warmth of his other envelop hers. “Love you too.”

They keep their gaze on each other, smiling, as they rub their thumbs on each others’ hands. It’s one of Ladybug and Chat Noir’s nights, but a special one. This night, for the moment at least, there are no masks, no suits. Just the warmth of their clasped hands with nothing in-between as they stand atop the Eiffel tower.

“Adrien?”

“Yeah?”

“Are you cold too?”

“Holy crap, yes, I didn’t want to say it first, but-”

“It’s so freaking windy.”

“Plagg-”

“Tikki-”

“Transformez-moi!”

Green and red light flash and they breathe sighs of relief.

Ladybug rubs her arms, “Much better.”

“So much better. Thanks for humouring me, Marrrrl Lady,” Chat grins and finger-guns her. He winks and rolls his tongue with a growl in his throat. “Rrrrrrrrrrrrl.”

Ladybug giggles into both hands. “Nice save, catsanova. Real smooth.”

“I try.”

“So I’ve been wondering this whole time,” she gestures at the paper napkins, now in his hand. “Why’d you ask me to bring those? Another romantic gesture Plagg will gag over?”

“Yeah, but let him. This is really important for me,” he frowns down at the paper napkins in his hands, covered in writing. “Remember the night we made these?”

She nods. “That was when I realized how much I was taking you for granted. I needed to take you more seriously.”
“I needed to be more serious. More sincere, like what made you fall for Adrien over Chat.”

“Thinking back,” she sighs, “I really barely knew you then. I wish I had started trying earlier.”

“Don’t blame yourself. Anyways, that’s in the past. Now you know me better than anyone,” he flickers his eyes from the napkins up to hers for a second. “Maybe better than I know myself. So... Knowing all that, all of me, you really want to be with me? For good?”

“Oh, Chat... I’ll say it as many times as I need, but you should know by now that of course I do. Of course,” Ladybug steps in to run a hand into his hair and lean his head down so they can kiss. She feels him kiss her back then grin wide against her lips, his arms beginning to move rapidly. She looks down to see what he’s doing and gasps. “Chat!”

He kisses her on the corner of her mouth as he tears the paper napkin promises apart.

“That’s all I need. I just need to hear that from you. I felt so desperate to keep you that night, whatever it took, and it took these. Now? Fuck ‘em.”

What he’s said is still sinking in and she can’t help but stare. Words written on torn ribbons of flimsy paper fly away on the wind past her. She looks back up to find him with a thousand watt smile on his face and eyes shining with renewed vigour.

“My Lady, this crazy romance of ours is as unconditional for me as it is for you. Binding, sure, but unconditional. I can really, truly say that now, because of you. You’ve taught me what that means. You know how my life is, it’s... It’s nothing but conditions. Terms, contracts, ‘if’s, ‘then’s and ‘so’s, but not us. Never us. It never has been, even when you thought of me as purely your friend and partner. I know that now.” He lets the last piece of written promise fly away on the wind.

Chat holds up his right wrist where underneath, unseen, he wears what she’s given him. He stares and rubs it, saying, “I don’t want you to do things because I’m holding you to some promise you didn’t even really want to make. I want you to spontaneously decide to come with me to a stuffy party so we can drink ourselves silly and see who can make the other more flustered. I want you to do things with me because we’re us.”

He stumble back a step when Ladybug suddenly throws herself on him and holds him tight. He laughs and squeezes her right back. Chat rubs the side of his face against her head, feeling the rumble in his throat and chest rise up.

She runs her hand through his hair, and nods into his neck. “I want that too. I want you to stop me from getting too scared to go to stuffy parties. I want to go to places and do things I never would otherwise and get in trouble with you, because I’m with you all the way.”

His purring pauses for him to kiss her hair and say, “I do love getting into trouble with you.”

“It is what we do, isn’t it?” She kisses his neck and smiles into it.

“You’re damn right it is, bugaboo, and not only do we do it well, we make it look good.”

“Next time, just not so good we almost get kicked out.”
Stay (A little longer)

Chapter Summary

You can't have Ladybug and Chat Noir without Paris, and Parisians can't help but let Ladybug and Chat Noir know they're happy to have them.

As suggested, some context on RAID: they're France's police special forces, and they're damn serious. I can't even say they're like SWAT in the USA because, as well as domestic duties like riot control and high risk crime, they handle counter-terrorism and protection of French embassies in war-torn countries. You can find

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Officially, Ladybug and Chat Noir are vigilantes. Well loved vigilantes, but vigilantes nonetheless. Thus, law enforcement and other government agencies are in no way connected to them.

Unofficially, the metropolitan police have a secure line to their communicators and the pair are basically on call during patrol nights.

So, after helping in a bust gone bad where even RAID was involved, they found themselves being apologized to profusely by the head of the operation as police lights turn around them. “Really, I thought you two would only have to be on standby. It was a just in case thing, I hope you don’t mind and ah, stay quiet about it?”

“No, no, we’re always happy to help, monsieur! And of course, we know how dealing with media’s like.” Ladybug grins wide and raises her hands. Chat nods beside her.

“What he means,” an extremely weary looking officer with steaming foam cups drawls as she approaches, “Is that he thought he could show you two how high and mighty he is and that we don’t need you. Now that you’ve proven you’re a huge asset, he doesn’t want anyone to know he messed up. Would have cost lives without your help.”

She glares at the commanding officer, handing them what turns out to be hot chocolate. She gets a glare back, but he just turns on his heel and stalks away, talking into his radio. Chat whistles. “Looks like someone’s got superiority issues.”

“Tell me about it,” she holds up a fist for him. “Hey, brass politics aside, you two don’t have anywhere you need to be, do you?”

“Not really,” Chat fistbumps her. “Why, do you need help with anything else?”

“Nah, we’ve asked enough from you two tonight,” she smiles. “It’s just that me and some of the other actual dirty work officers want to hang around with you. Plus the rookies are kinda starstruck, though don’t tell them I said that, and the rest of us feel kinda like you’re one of us. Almost. Sort of. Anyways, if you can stay, we’d love for you to join us.”

Chat looks to Ladybug, who shrugs and says, “Sure, we’d be honoured, officer.”
“Oh, and you know Captain Lefebvre?” She asks as they all start walking.

Ladybug grins. “Oh yeah, we’ve butted heads enough times for me to remember. He’s great to work with, though.”

“It only takes one time butting heads with you to be remembered forever,” Chat raises his brows at her. She elbows him.

The officer laughs. “Yeah, he’s really stubborn and grouses all the time about how stubborn you are too. Guy loves you. He’s having a retirement party, and I think he has asked the desk to forward an invitation but, since he’s too bullheaded to admit it, I’m telling you how much he wants you there for him.”

“Aw. I’ll miss him, but he’s really earned it. I hope we don’t end up having to work with someone like that guy instead,” Ladybug rolls her eyes. The officer snorts. “We’ll be there for sure. What sort of present should I bring? Is he still collecting those little porcelain animal figurines?”

He’s smiling as he watches her do her best to keep the blanket around an overexcited little boy, apparently a huge fan. She’s laughing. He feels someone come up beside him and turns to them.

“You got quite the catch, didn’t you, Chat Noir?”

“Sure did,” he grins at the woman and holds out a hand. “I don’t think we’ve met, Mademoiselle... ?”

“Madame actually, you flatterer. It’s Moreau.” They shake hands. “Acting chief of urban search and rescue while Martinez is away.”

“Martinez?” Chat furrows his brows, trying to connect the surname. Oh, the middle aged rescue tech he and Ladybug are, sadly, on a first name basis with, “Cédric! Is he on vacation?”

“Yeah, he and the hubby went somewhere tropical for a couple of weeks.”

“I thought their anniversary’s in the spring?”

“Yeah, like mid-April or something. They’re still going somewhere then too, but they already had rewards points saved up. Lucky ducks,” Moreau clicks her tongue. “Well, if I’m going to be stuck anywhere in the world, I don’t mind Paris at all.”

“You said it,” Chat agrees. The two watch as Ladybug takes selfies with EMTs. “I hope Cédric’s pollen allergies don’t act up. I have allergies too, I know how badly they can ruin everything.”

“Ah, don’t worry about it, they planned for that. His husband plans for everything. Hey, you know, all my kids love you two. I actually don’t live too far away and it’s not too late yet, so if you guys have a bit longer...” Moreau stretches her neck. “I’m sure if I called and let them know, they’d love to meet you.”

“I’d love to meet your family!” Chat grins.

“Great!” Moreau pulls out her phone. “Oh, just so you know, my wife was pretty scandalized by the whole uh, kissing thing. I mean, my eldest son screamed his head off and was jumping off the walls when he saw, he was so happy. Would not get over it for days.”

“Got it. No PDA in front of the wife, maybe sneak something in when it’s just the kids looking.”
Moreau has her phone up to her ear as she raises a brow. She smirks, “Just keep it PG... Maybe PG-13.”

Chat gives her a thumbs up.

“You kidding? For you two, nothing. You wanna pay me back, maybe just stick around, as long as you don’t mind just pulling up a few boxes to sit on,” the cook gestures to the industrial sized fan a little behind his stall, keeping him cool. “Maybe you pull in some customers, maybe you don’t and I get some company while I have no one to serve, at least.”

Sounds good to me!” Ladybug says, Chat already dragging over boxes as she takes their food containers.

“Glad to have you. Just let me know if you want any more.”

“Go on ahead, I’ll catch up.” Ladybug looks at him quizzically, but Chat is already backing up as he grins at her. She slows her pace and keeps walking. “Okay?”

As soon as her back is turned, he books it to the flower shop, only dimly lit from the inside. He pulls a bill out of his pocket and gets the attention of the young florist as she’s closing up. “Hey, I know you’re closed now, but can I please get just a few flowers?”

She looks at him. She looks over at Ladybug’s back. She looks at him. “Stay here.”

Through the shop windows, he sees her working with startling speed before she backs out the door then turns to hand him a massive, beautifully arranged bouquet. The florist shoves it into his hands, crushing the bill in-between, before he can say anything. Still acting faster than he can react to, she turns him to face Ladybug again and slaps him hard on the back. “Go get her, dude.”

Chat blinks. “Oh, ah, thanks! Really!”

“Come on, hustle!” He jumps as she gives him a sportly ass slap that actually creates an audible smack.

“Right!” He runs off. “My Lady! I have something for you!”

“I have no idea how I’m going to explain all of these flowers to my parents,” Ladybug laughs from where she sits on Chat’s lap on a high rooftop. She takes another whiff of the bouquet’s fragrance, then opens her eyes to the sprawling city of lights below. “Thanks, kitty.”

“Of course. You should really thank that florist, though. I’ll have to look up the name of that place once I’m home,” he says, kicking his feet from where they hang off the ledge, arms wrapped around her. “Why don’t you just tell your parents the truth?”
“I can’t tell my parents Chat Noir gave- oh, I see what you mean. Yeah, you would.”

“Yeah, I would.”

“With the help of what sounds like a very enthusiastic florist.”

“You don’t feel weird about the asspat, do you?”

“Nah, I don’t blame her,” she says matter of factly, making him laugh and kiss her temple. “You know, for all the work we put in for the city, all the thank you events and things we get, I always feel like it’s me who should be thankful instead when we’re face to face with people. Man, do I love this city.”

“Yeah. So do I,” he sighs, looking around the city below with a smile.

Chapter End Notes

That's the two thirds mark! I'm in disbelief at the word count, honestly. As a prompt month, it was supposed to just be short chapters. Oops.

I was stumped for anything romance heavy with this prompt, actually. I sort of... Covered that ground last chapter... So you get self-indulgent street level superhero to city interaction instead! They love their city. They'll stay and protect it forever. It counts, okay?

PS I always love background characters and couldn't resist bringing up Cédric again. Small retcon after initial posting so that he's on vacation with his husband. I already had Moreau lesbian and felt it'd be a weird coincidence if they're both LGBT+ but the next day I thought about it and went "yes homo"
The power of the black cat miraculous comes with a heavy burden for those who realize it's potential.

I meant to spend the rest of this story on pure fluff, but current events put me in the wrong mindset for that. That said, I also didn't look this one over a lot since I'm not well rested and it's sort of draining, apologies for any errors. I am always thankful for them being specifically pointed out so I can fix them.

He’s been quiet. He’s been quiet the entire night, running on autopilot.

He has a way of putting his hands behind his back in that formal manner sometimes, but when he kisses Ladybug hello is not one of those times. It’s just to be expected that he contributes as much to their banter as she does, if not more, but he’s only responded. He seems to likes running on all fours, hands hitting the ground, for some portion of the night usually, but not tonight. Ever since things began to change between them, it’s not strange that he’ll go pensive for a while. It is strange that he’s spent the entire night that way. Even now, at the end of patrol, he hasn’t smiled and isn’t smiling. His hands are behind his back again as they stand apart, at a distance he set.

He does smile now, but it’s bittersweet. His voice is flat as he says, “I can never get one past you, can I?”

“Chat Noir?”

“Hmm?” When he looks over, his pupils dilate to what she’s used to seeing. For whatever reason, they had been about as thin as she’s ever seen them before; probably for the same reason his ears have been slightly drooped whenever they haven’t been at attention the whole night.

“Do you want to talk about it?”

“When you’re like this? No. It’s only fair, I can never hide things from you either,” Ladybug smiles back gently, “And my suit isn’t full of tells.”

She waits as he goes silent again and looks out to the city below. Eventually, he starts with, “Did you know the kitchen at my house has induction cooktops?”

“I didn’t. Is that how you could help me so much with tactics against Rail Inductor?”
He nods. Silence falls again.

“Tumbled down one of your research holes?” Her tone is light.

He nods.

“Well, I hope it didn’t keep you up late, but thanks to you, nothing went bad that fight. I did get scared when you threw yourself in front of a metal melting akuma,” she says without any of her usual scolding tone, “But I’ve been more worried about how reserved you’ve been since then.”

“It looked like a load bearing beam. I jumped in to use Cataclysm.”

Ladybug furrows her brows. “Wait, does that have something to do with why there was light when you cancelled out the heat waves?”

“I decreased the wavelength,” he nods. “Radio to visible spectrum.”

“Chat, that’s amazing,” her eyes widen. “I mean, I don’t even totally understand, but it sounds really amazing. I know we’ve gotten better with our powers, but I had no idea you could do something like that.”

“I didn't either, or I just had some idea. I’ve never said anything about it, but I’ve had my suspicions ever since Jagged Stone was akumatized. He was using sound waves for his attacks,” he breathes out. “I could only stop it for a little bit back then, a few months into being Chat Noir, but that had me thinking about just how much I could do on a particle level. Cataclysm doesn’t destroy things, not really, it makes them deteriorate, rapidly. That explained it. I slowed the air movement so fast, it stopped, or nearly did.

“Until this fight though, I didn’t- I didn’t think it could affect something like electromagnetic radiation. If I can do that, can I cause radioactivity? Can I- Can I make something a fucking nuke? Can I do basically the same thing as an atomic bomb, a nuclear meltdown?” Both hands raise into his hair as he looks straight ahead. “Make a Chernobyl out of Paris?”

Ladybug only gets a step towards him before Chat whips around, wide eyed, shoulders hunched up as he backs away. “W-What if I used my powers on a person? Fuck’s sake, my kwami’s named Plagg, and they’re ancient, at least millennia old. Plague, same damn pronunciation, it’s been used since the 14th, 15th, 16th centuries. I don’t know, no one really knows. So much gets lost in history, like, like did a previous Black Cat cause the plague? If not, did they give the word it's meaning, at least?”

Her throat is tight. She swallows before saying, “This has been eating you up inside.”

“How can it not?” He says louder than he meant to.

The words ring through the air between them, leaving silence in it’s wake.

She doesn’t know what to say. She nods and repeats in a murmur, “How can it not?”

All Ladybug can do is watch her partner as the tension in his body gives in to gravity. It’s not just his ears that droop now, it’s his eyes, his shoulders, his arms where he holds his hands away from his legs just enough that they hang in the air.

She sets her jaw. “You’re right. How can thinking about being capable of all that not eat at someone like you?”
He knits his brows. “Someone like me?”

“Someone who doesn’t want that kind of power. The kind of power that other people would do anything for, even kill for. Someone who would never do what those people would, who never wants to hurt anyone,” she steps towards him. He takes one step back, but no more as she continues to approach. “Someone like you.”

He mutters, almost a whisper, more to himself than anything. She doesn’t make out what he’s saying until she’s near.

“... Chosen, and I accepted it. It has to be me. There’s only me.”

He’s hunched over so that she’s above eye level when they’re face to face despite their height difference. She runs a hand through his hair, feels his face, rubs a shoulder, all to no response.

When he begins to purr, the rumbling is ragged with the tears he won’t shed. She’s never felt so helpless.

She looks Chat over and over like there’s some clever solution she can use to fix this, but all she sees is the person she loves with the weight of the world on his shoulders, bent over to stare at his black, clawed hands.

She slowly exhales, bows her head close, and holds her hands up just below his, palms up. She moves them a little towards him, finally getting a reaction out of him as he shifts his eyes to look at them. “Chat? ... Adrien? Come on, please.”

His eyes looks up to meet hers for a second before he blinks and looks to her hands again.

She reaches hand out further, towards his left, the one he doesn’t use Cataclysm for. For a few beats, he doesn’t respond. Then, tentatively, he reaches out and she places her hand directly under. He slowly places his hand into hers. She claps hers around his and slowly, gently, he does the same. “Thank you. See? Nothing to worry about. You won’t hurt me.”

Ladybug’s other hand reaches for his right, and he begins to move it towards hers, but he pauses. Her eyes are watery and throat tight, but she refuses to cry, not now. “Mon chaton, please.”

He shakily begins to lower his right hand. The moment Chat touches her, he jerks his hand back and stops for a few long seconds before putting his hand in hers and letting her squeeze it. Relieved, she lets out puff of laughter, or a sob, and raises them to kiss the knuckles of both his hands. “Oh, kitten,” her voice quivers. He ducks his head under to raise it again under her chin, face buried into her skin, breath coming out in heavy gasps as he throws his arms around her neck, the material of her suit on her shoulders bunching up in his fists, clenched with a desperate strength. The actions of a drowning man surfacing for air and clinging to stay afloat. She wraps her arms around him. “Oh, mon minou.”

He has to fold himself into her, he’s the taller one, the one with the broader frame, the one who’s always covering her, shielding her. She feels hot tears against her skin and the shaking of his body, but hears only ragged purring. “Please, kitty, let it all out. It’s just you and me.”
His purring breaks with a cry of anguish, and continues to be broken up with sobs and cries and choked breaths. He whimpers, “I hate this.”

Ladybug lets her own tears fall silently from closed eyes as she rubs his back, pausing once in a while to kiss his hair and, when she can steady her voice, murmur words of comfort and affectionate nicknames. She’ll do this all night, into the break of day, for as long as he needs her. When his legs give under his weight, he sinks to his knees and she follows to stay with him.

Ask anyone about Ladybug. They’ll tell you she’s too smart, too cautious, to let possible threats slide. Now Chat Noir, he’s fearless, he literally laughs in the face of danger. If he’s struggling or taking hits, it’s only until he gets the chance to hit back even harder.

He’ll never let them know what depths he could sink to.

It feels like forever before his lungs move with some semblance of regularity and the purrs die out. He coughs his throat dry a few times. He murmurs hoarsely, “I have you.”

Again, it’s more to himself than anything. She cradles him tighter. “Chat, you can’t stay out here. Can I take you home?”

“Okay.”

“... Where?”

“With you.”

Ladybug sniffs and rubs her hand across her face to get rid of the tears. She takes a breath and frowns. “Okay. Okay, you’re always up at seven. Will they notice if you’re not there? Will you get in trouble?”

He nods.

“Alright, just hold on tight.”

As soon as they arrive in his room, Chat stumbles over to his bed and collapses onto it, transformation falling. Plagg tumbles out, looking ready to complain when he steadies himself, but his eyes dart between Adrien and Ladybug silently. He flies over to look at his boy’s face. His whiskers droop as he lingers before making himself a nest in his hair.

Ladybug smiles, moving to help Adrien tuck himself in under the sheets. Once he’s settled, she turns to leave, but he grabs a hold of her hand. Voice hoarse from the night, he asks, “Stay?”

She opens her mouth to speak, before closing it and sitting on the foot of the bed. He raises the sheets beside him, and she raises her brows at him. His eyes and smile are worn when he says, “I know you have to leave soon. Just a little.”

Ladybug climbs in and smiles at him tenderly, running her hand through his hair as she drops her transformation, the feeling of his soft locks becoming tangible when her suit disappears. Tikki takes little time before hugging Adrien on the cheek. Marinette giggles, and his eyes move to look over to the cheery kwami. She just smiles at him and gives his cheek a couple of rubs before she nestles up to Plagg.

“Your hair’s becoming a real bird’s nest,” Marinette says. It’s silent and soft, but Adrien’s chest shakes with some laughter. “I’m staying as long you need.”
He frowns, but just sighs and moves his right hand to brush some of her hair back from her face. His eyes catch on his wrist, and hers track his gaze. She gently takes his arm to move it so she can inspect the lucky bracelet. A finger runs along the four leaf clover sewn into the square, plush, green centre piece. “I wish I could have used real jade. I would have if I knew I’d end up giving it to you.”

There’s a soft look in his eyes as he looks from where she holds his arm to her, though she’s still intent on the bracelet. “Why’s that?”

“Well, for one thing, it’s considered very precious. More than gold, even. I remember hearing men once wore jade pendants and only gave them to a woman if they really loved them, not just to show their love but that they’d be respectful and patient. I think that suits us pretty well,” she lets go and smiles as she looks at him. He nods, smiling back, and rests his arm around her to rub her back. “Plus, jade represents five virtues.”

She runs her hand in his hair and looks him intently in the eyes, saying, “Benevolence, righteousness, wisdom, bravery, and honesty and cleanliness- which, sounds kind of weird, literally.”

“A little.”

“Though you do take a lot of showers, weirdo.”

“I live a clean life, My Lady.”

“Maybe, but you can say pretty dirty things,” she boops his nose, then looks aside thoughtfully for a moment. “I’ve always wondered about that last one. I mean, isn’t it two?”

“They can have the same character, I think. Must be one of those things that are hard to translate. I’m not clear on that, my lessons focus on practical stuff.”

“Well, that explains why you’re not schooling me here. What I think it’s supposed to mean, at least from the context I’ve gotten for this, is living and being as clean as jade’s supposed to be. So, honest, morally upstanding... Incorruptible.”

“Yeah, he snorts. “Might need that on top of the luck.”

“That’s not what I meant and you know it, minou,” she says, shuffling closer to cuddle with him. “That’s you. I know I can’t bring around your thinking overnight, but I wish I could at least give you a reminder. So when you’re wearing you bracelet, when you doubt yourself, you remember I never will.”

She feels him take a deep breath. “Well, I... like the red thread at least. You know about that one right?”

“Mmhmm, the tie between two people destined to be together.”

“Right. It can be twisted, tangled, all messed up- kinda like we were- but never, ever destroyed,” he says, holding her tight. “It’s nice to think some things can’t be, like what we have. You know something? This bed always feels too big, but having you and the kwami here, so it’s not only me? It feels nice.

“I think...” A smirk creeps into his voice. “It’d feel real good if we slept together every night.”

She snorts and butts her head against him a little. “There’s my chaton.”
In English, "plague" might be pronounced like play-gh, but in French, it sounds like Plagg's name.

PS I've been feeling like writing a "Days" counterpart (not all 31 again good lord) where it would make sense to correspond with a Nights chapter once this is done bc I'm adrinette trash. As cathartic as this was, I just need me some pure, wholesome fluff.
sharing food

chapter by allthisink (booabug), booabug

chapter summary

ladybug and chat noir have a serious discussion about his wrist strength.

chapter notes

see the end of the chapter for notes

bugmenot 22:07
emergency rooftop

bugmenot 22:07
you. come. now.

chat020915 22:07
wow! hot a what a baabhabiat. i'll be right there.

it was designated the emergency rooftop because it was right in the middle between their houses: the fastest place to meet, assuming they were home, but they couldn't use it too much, that would attract attention. they planned to meet there as little as possible.

all things considered, chat noir couldn't help but wonder why they were meeting there now. there was no akuma attack and nothing on the news. he also couldn't help but wonder, after giggling for a few solid seconds, why she had called him over using a meme. not that he minded. a cover using their usual kind of banter?

he'll be able to ask soon enough. ladybug is waiting, holding a paper bag as big as her torso from the waist up, stuffed to the brim. he lands right in front of her and steps in for their hello, leaning over to meet her with the bag between them.

"good evening, my lady." he gently rests his arms around her shoulders as they kiss. "mmm. minty fresh as always, and- and wow, that smells good, please tell me those are for us."

he sees her satisfied smile in his periphery when he steps beck. she may be the loveliest human being to ever exist. he will never tire of seeing her, of basking in the presence of her, soaking in more comfort and contentment than the sun can ever give; but that paper bag says tom & sabine boulangerie patisserie. he has eyes for no other woman. baked goods are an entirely different matter.

"yup. they're emergency 'make sure chat is feeling better' goodies." using the appropriate hand gestures, with that authoritative voice of hers, tinged with amusement, she says, "you. eat. now."

his laugh is entirely goofy as he buries his face into his arm. he wonders where it falls in ladybug's classifications of chat noir's dorky laughs. she giggles a little herself before saying, "helium isotope joke into chain smoking pig. nice."
Ah. There it is. He rubs the side of his face against hers. She scratches his head. “I missed you so much, bugaboo.”

“We were together all morning, minou,” she says as she sits and puts the bag down, pulling out water bottles. “I still missed you so much too. I couldn’t help but keep thinking of you all day. You’ve really got me on a short chain.”

He grins as he sits down and reaches in the bag. “I kept running out of breath during the fencing workshop today. I guess it’s ‘cause you’re so smoking, but you’re one habit I can’t kick.”

“I know you’re no kickboxer, but iso-hope you can still helium where they can feelium.” She lays on her side and stretches one leg up. “Don’t hog the food, hand me a l’eggy pastry.”

Chat barely avoids choking on his croissant to hold in his laughter and looks for an egg pastry in the bag. He has to push aside a pile of croissants, his favourite, undoubtedly why she put so many and right on top. She’s even going all out with the memes and acting against her usual punnerisms tonight. If this isn’t love, he doesn’t know what love is. He finds one then makes his expression and voice strained as he reaches out to hand it to Ladybug, never actually leaning his body forward. “I’m trying, I’m sticking out, M’Lady, really far.”

She laughs, rolling onto her back. He leans over for real to hand it to her and she takes it with a thanks then grabs his hand to kiss it. She gives him a soft smile, which he returns.

“So,” she sits up and scoots over to sit, legs across his. “How was your special fencing thing, anyway?”

He swallows his mouthful of flaky, buttery croissant. Slinging an arm around her waist, he gives her a dour look. “Terrible. You weren’t there at all.”

“Other than that, silly,” she kisses him on the cheek and holds his arm around her before taking a bite of her pastry.

“Actually really interesting. I wasn’t running out of breath, but it was more intense than usual, lot of fun. We had a guest instructor drilling us in British military sabre- oh, sorry.” Flakes of croissant flew off because of his gesturing onto her leg. He wipes them up with his hand and licks them off his palm. She quirks a brow at him over her second bite of egg pastry. He grins. “What? I’m not going to waste food, especially if there’s a perk. So, for that style, they use sabres that are nearly a kilo, we usually use ones that are around 400g.”

“So guest guy’s lesson carried more weight than D’Argencourt’s.”

“Pfft. Yeah, and that didn’t just mean that fencing for as long as usual took more stamina, the heavier sabres are more demanding on your wrist too. Good thing I’ve built up a lot more wrist strength than most.”

Ladybug gives him this look that he’s come to learn means that she’s laughing internally (not necessarily) but wants to see if he knows why. He does not.

“Okay, what?” Chat asks, popping the last of his croissant into his mouth.

“Do you have so much stamina and unusually high wrist strength from handling your baton so much?”

He nods, closing his eyes to really savour the delicious layers of textured goodness. When he opens them again, she still has that look in her eye but now she’s pursing her lips to hold in a laugh. “Do
you think of croissants when you’re handling your baton?”

Cocking his head, he shrugs. Ladybug is now pressing her fist against her smiling lips and has her eyes closed. She shakes her head. “Honestly, kitten.”

He blinks, puzzled.

She purposefully gazes over to his lower back where his baton is stowed, leaning her head to exaggerate. He follows her gaze. Then she leans her head to the other side, eyes moving to the front of his body and slightly below to- Chat once again just avoids choking on croissant.

He quickly gulps and says, “Not that! I mean partially, the other- the other other- ugh, I mean that not a lot of activities really exercise your wrist, but things I do, which are not that, like rock climbing and using weapons like my sword or baton- ugh, staff- er, rod. No, no, no, damn it. Why is everything I fight with so phallic?”

He buries his burning face in his hands. She’s not laughing which just means she’s not done with him yet.

“So you’ve said before you might be interested in studying HEMA. Would you say you’re more of a longsword or broadsword guy?”

“That you’ll have you find out yourself,” Chat mumbles, already knowing it’s too late, but he will not go quiet in this otherwise good night of savage dragging. Not entirely. His hands fall and he averts his gaze, ignoring his fierce blushing. He pulls out something else from the bag.

Which, of course, just has to be a vanilla icing éclair.

Then she loses it.

As much as he’d love to devour the éclair- theirs are delicious- he gingerly returns it to the bag, and grabs a decidedly innocent looking rectangle of a mille-feuille. Croissants aside, everything in the bag are things he’s partial to as well. He smiles.

Pulling his new sweet, sweet, pastry out, he starts chuckling, and is soon laughing as hard as she is.

Chapter End Notes

[casually follows up the most distressing chapter so far with dick jokes]
Addictive

Chapter by allthisink (booabug), booabug

Chapter Summary

Chat has to be away for a few nights and, when he and Ladybug have it so bad for each other, that ain’t good.

Chapter Notes

Don’t be like them, stay hydrated.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

**bugmenot** 21:00
uuggghhh kitty I miss you so much im glad u managed to convince them to move work within the metropolitan area but ur still too far to visit

**bugmenot** 21:27
ur prob being overworked or deadass asleep (hope ur getting rest) but hmu when you can

**chat020915** 22:06
I miss you too, My Lady, so much.

**chat020915** 22:06
I wouldn’t say overworked. It is sort of draining (just when I’m supposed to get off the lighting is apparently perfect for the director’s ~vision~ ). It’s you I’m worried about. I wish I had gone over for that akuma fight, work be damned. After all, I’m the one whose true weakness isn’t trees.

**chat020915** 22:06
Say the word and I’ll be there. We don’t know for sure that they’d put me on lockdown if I disappeared on them, it’s a risk I’m willing to take. Promise me you’ll ask if an akuma seems tough. What if you get hurt just because you think it’s not the one dangerous enough to need to call me? I worry.

**chat020915** 22:06
They’ve been getting meaner over the years... I know you have too and don’t really need me to handle them, but I watched the footage. So many times I felt snap judgment on how I could have helped. I had to stop I was so frustrated.

**bugmenot** 22:07
technically speaking maybe i dont but i want you with me. i promise ill call u but honestly im trying to check myself too bc i want you here akuma or not.

**chat020915** 22:07
You’re just saying that because you miss the post-victory kisses.

(“Bien joué!”) It was their usual fistbump, with the night news lights on them. They didn’t know if it was the battle high still making their hearts pound and chests heave, or the way their eyes caught the light and created something electric, or their smiles beaming with pride and affection, but when someone yelled, “Kiss!” And set off a chant, they were all too happy oblige. They leaned in for a quick peck of the lips. That might have been what happened if it weren’t that one of them was Chat Noir. At least Ladybug’s used enough to his spontaneity that she took it in stride when he dipped her and gave her a kiss that was more than a peck, but less than what any parent could complain about. There was a brief pause afterwards while crowd cheered. Then it was over, they laughed, and waved their goodbyes before they left the spotlights in different directions.

In the shadows from the lights, away from the focus of the cameras, oblivious to the roar of the crowd, during that pause, they met eyes and held a silent conversation. Their eyes met again after they’ve circled around, just the two of them, her catching his glowing green eyes on the rooftop opposite the street as they ran, his seeing hers perfectly thanks to his powers, and because they were them, and they knew each other, when she leapt across the distance, he knew to catch her, he broke their fall, rolled onto his back, felt the heat and pressure of her front on his, felt her hands in his hair pulling him in again, because in that pause they agreed, they wanted more.}

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theres that but i ve been thinking more of the post-post-victory kisses
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You ‘have been,’ not ‘was?’ It hasn’t been those moments in specific (before now) but it’s good to know I’m not the only one who’s been fixated.
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ur just too good
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You’re just too good.
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haha omg
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I do love when we read each other’s minds but I wanted to drop that line, damn it.
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((No one raised a brow when he said he’d walk her home, they lived near each other, he’s been doing that for his friend for ages, they just don’t know yet, there’s something else on top of friends between them now, they didn’t know that the looks they gave each other throughout the evening were laced with memories of what they’ve done at night, that they were having silent conversations, they didn’t know that, standing outside her door, barely illuminated by the light from within, he and she were looking at each other in a way no one’s ever seen them look at each other before, looking with acute awareness that there were only a few thin layers of fabric between them now, like the cotton of his shirt collar bunched in her hands or the denim of her shorts he lifts her by before that look they’re giving each other has to give way to the shutting of eyes, now that they’re finally alone they can—))

**bugmenot** 22:07

yeah well dwi i want a lot of things and getting that line in first was the least of it chaton

**chat020915** 22:07

I get the feeling I’m reading your mind again and I am having a very hard time dealing with it, lovebug.

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**chat020915** 20:13

Paris (the developed area I am extremely salty to not be in right now) is in good hands with it’s one and only Lady there, but what about it’s poor knight having to do without her? I just snuck away but I think they’ve noticed already. I don’t even have time for a properly long winded dramatic self pity message, woe is me. I’ll talk to you ASAP.

**bugmenot** 20:13

love and miss u too minou. paris just isnt the same without its knight and im in no hands at all without him which is no good. no one could ever take his place. i know its bc me and the city are telling them u have personal stuff, we know, are prepped to make do until ur back but

**bugmenot** 20:13

its so weird seeing ppl act like everythings normal. ofc tons of social media posts asking where u are and patrol regulars asking abt u but at the end of the day the city keeps running and i feel like it shouldnt like theyre not getting it they dont get how not normal this is

**bugmenot** 20:13

or i guess im the one whos not normal bc a certain alley cat came along and changed whats normal for me

**bugmenot** 20:13

(thats u. ur the jerk who got me shook.) (will be waiting for ur msg hope they let u go on time tonight )

**chat020915** 21:00

Hahaha actually, if I remember correctly My Lady, you’re the one who showed up and turned me upside down first! I haven’t been the same since and I wouldn’t have it any other way.

**chat020915** 21:00

It doesn’t matter to me how the rest of Paris feels about Chat Noir’s absence, just that Ladybug feels my absence. I know the reverse is true for me. I feel it every second of the day.

**bugmenot** 21:02
ok i hope u noticed the read receipt so u knew i wasnt ignoring u that was just too much for me omg
sometimes i wonder if ur even aware of what ur saying

chat020915 21:02
Don’t worry, I just assumed you were in the middle of something. I know you can’t resist my
charms.

bugmenot 21:02
and there it goes i whisper to myself as the mood flies right out the window

chat020915 21:02
Just trying to make things easier for you bugaboo, though I have full confidence that I will never be
too much for you. Trust me, I’ve tried and you’ve taken me like a champ every time. On the hand,
I’m not quite sure I can say the same for myself. I feel like I’ve gotten draw s at best, though at least
one of these nights I’d like a win.

((He was saying things, breath hot against her ear as she drank in the rich, deep timbre of his voice,
lapped up the adoration that flowed within it, she could feel him in her very veins, heart pounding so
he ran his course with every pulse, it was too much for her to process the words but it didn’t matter
he was all that mattered he had to know that she needed him to know that, not in words she’ll be
dammed if she stops him talking like that unless it’s to feel the rumble of his chest against hers when
she runs the back of her calf down his leg the way he likes, the heat on her ear hitching before he’s
speaking again lower, closer, rougher, she takes her time running her fingers from his hair down the
nape of his neck, not sure if that shiver between them was hers or his, she rubs at the muscle of his
back and shoulders where he’s always so tense by night, his voice comes out wordless, continuous,
part relief and part something else that makes him pull back, and some part of her that has nothing to
do with thinking has her licking her lips for what’s to come and it’s a damn good thing it doesn’t
because she can’t think she can only inhale before he’s moving in again to—))

bugmenot 21:02
maybe. im not rly keeping count. don’t ever stop trying chat

chat020915 21:02
Maybe? Then there’s a chance I have gotten in a win or two. I’ll just have to aim to win by enough
that you’ll admit it.

bugmenot 21:00
hey chat i know u said ur gonna be a lil late tonight but i just wanted to msg u to

bugmenot 21:00
i just wanted to msg u.

bugmenot 21:00
i love u i miss u i cant stop thinking about u

chat020915 21:3 2
All that and more goes for me, My Lady. You know sometimes when I’m thinking about you, I can’t
help my hands? That sounds a bit weird. I’m too tired to delete it. What I mean is they clench a little.
Muscle memory?
Bugmenot 21:32
and just what memories are u thinking of then sir scoundrel?

Chat020915 21:32
Even if we’re on creepy anonymous sexting app and I’m too tired to be embarrassed about telling you I’m also too tired to type

Bugmenot 21:32
as much as i hate myself for saying this: go get some sleep u need it and ur well being is more important than my neediness

Chat020915 21:32
Don’t wanna

Bugmenot 21:32
as much as i hate myself for saying this: good

Chat020915 21:32
Haha

Chat020915 21:32
Love you

Bugmenot 21:32
switch to voice notes? if ur going to stay up and talk itll be easier than typing and i miss ur voice a lot

▶ ●------------------

“Good evening, bugaboo, I- [yawn]- sorry about that. What were we talking about? Oh right, what I was thinking of. Remember when you... [laughter] I can’t really remember now. Give me a moment, I’ll make another voice note when I can talk straight.”

Holy shit ur voice

My voice?

It’s fucking hot keep using voice notes i don’t care how short what ur saying is

▶ ●------------------

“[laughter] Okay there, I kept the tradition of this chat being full of recordings of my dorky laughs. I’m guessing you said that ‘cause I’m so tired, my voice is rougher than a cat’s tongue. You can’t see it but I winked. I was going to get some water but I think you need it more, sounds like you’re thirsty as hell.”

▶ ●------------------

"Or it would sound like it, but you’re being very unfair and not letting me hear you at all."

▶ ●------------------

"No more voice notes from me unless you do them too."

▶ ●------------------

“It’s just my usual voice, but you’re always thirsty as hell for that anyway, chaton. Don’t worry, my... throat is wet.”
“Is that right? Take good care of your... throat for me while I’m away.”

“You are correct, all I need is your lovely usual voice, though I would love to hear what you sound like when your voice is all husky.”

“Wait, now I remember what I was gonna talk about.”

“Remember when you challenged me to get those exquisite noises out of you while staying focused on your lips?”

“Right, and you upped the ante by saying you’d do it without kissing me at all.”

((She was straddling him, pressed up against him so hard his back was flat against the wall, his doing, he had pulled her against him so tight his claws pricked at her back and she gasped softly, her subtle sweet showery scent was everything he took it in by the lungful but there was sweat too, sweat from their shared heat and heat they had generated, that was what he focused on, their game meant he couldn’t run his tongue over her neck, over her pulse to feel her heart, taste the salt of her skin, he couldn’t kiss he couldn’t bite, but nothing said he couldn’t brush his lips against her nothing said he couldn’t lick his lips afterwards, she had to know he was doing it had to feel how slick they were as they roamed her bare skin, but she said nothing, and she said everything in her little gasps her little groans the way she would start to say his name before she held back, she said yes she said more and he obliged, he ran his hands over the hard planes of muscle on her back, the nape of her neck playing with the short hairs that had come loose, into her hair releasing more of her scent, but most of all, his favourite, her thighs with their toned firmness yet slight give he couldn’t help but press his fingers into that give as he ran them along her thighs, claws grazing, of his claws he was mindful but her voice went higher when they scratched softly her voice said more so his hands said yes and gave, until her hands pulled his head back, his vision only half seeing, too punch drunk from her feel her smell her sound for anything but the look in her eyes that said ‘fuck it,’ their game was over she stopped caring her lips were coming down to meet his, already parting so he could taste her more and she tasted—))

“Okay, that had to be a reason you said ‘maybe’ before, right? That had to count as a win for me.”

“Hmmmm, I don’t know. I feel like saying it was a draw since it was a win-win situation.”

“In that case, aren’t they all? Any win you can claim, I can guarantee I came out feeling like a champion.”

“You’ve got a point there, minou. Like I said, I haven’t really been keeping count anyway. Honestly, I don’t care about any of that. I just need you here with me again really badly.”

“I need you bad too. I’m going stir crazy over here without you. It’s maddening enough
already that I’m doing the hand thing. The hand thing can’t be normal. I swear, My Lady, you are nothing but trouble.”

“I’m trouble, kitten? You can ask anyone, you’re the one who’s trouble.”

“But you’re the kind of trouble I can’t get enough of.”

“I’m going to be replaying that note until I can get you for real.”

Chapter End Notes

This is literally all I had for this chapter in my (really pretty useless) outlines file:
Day 23: Addictive
how tf do i write makeouts
Summer Nights

Chapter Summary

With the end of the season coming soon, Ladybug and Chat Noir reminisce on the colourful characters they've met and think of things yet to come.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

bugmenot 21:57
chat i cant talk for long i just said i have to go the bathroom so i could msg u and let u know ill be a bit late for patrol tonight prob like a half hour? ur partially to blame btw i know those four nights before last were rough on both of us but

bugmenot 21:57
starting to think u have an exhibitionist streak

chat020915 21:57
Got it, I’ll just hang out at the open air market until you’re free. Look, you know how my luck is it’s not that. Though if it were: don’t kinkshame me, bugaboo

bugmenot 21:57
i will kinkshame your belt tailed ass all i want when MY PARENTS ARE FREAKING GIVING ME THE TALK AGAIN. WITH CONDOMS.

chat020915 21:57
Asdghaksgfhjkasgd

chat020915 21:57
Oksay i letfg ansother voice notw pof nmy lkasughinh omdg

bugmenot 21:57
ok thats a good one ill have to come up with a name for that. im a little less mad now but ur def not allowed to stay w me in the house part of the building for a few days

chat020915 21:57
@mydorkylaughter ty. Seriously though, I need to tell you this and hope you pass this on to your parents, as much as I joke and flirt I don’t ever want you to feel pressured into anything you’re not ready for. I know I’m not yet.

bugmenot 21:57
i know kitty ur way too sweet for that <3 and i dont want u to feel pressured either

chat020915 21:57
Just in case though can you ask if they have extra condoms for me? Cause you know they taught us it’s better if we’re both carrying them and just imagine how awkward it would be for me to ask in my house so...
Ladybug has half a mind to punch her partner right in his stupid handsome face the moment she sees him as she makes her way to the night market when— holy crap, that’s fire.

“That’s fire!” She yells, landing by the crowd. “Why is fire happening?!”

“’Cause Chat Noir is lit!”

“Hell yeah I am!”

She recognizes that voice. That woman has instigated a lot of impromptu performances, enough that Ladybug recognizes her and her friends by face. Her friends give her a resigned, apologetic look. She sighs and waves it off, gesturing at Chat and calling to them, “I know how it is.”

They nod.

“Oh, looks like the show’s over, folks- thank you, thank you,” Chat takes his bows to the applause and cheers after the fires at the ends of his staff go out. They disperse after he gives them a lazy salute with, “Have a safe night folks, duty calls. Good evening, My Lady.”

Ladybug shakes her head at him as he approaches, staff over his shoulders that he hasn’t bothered to collapse and stow away as a baton yet. Or to clean off the soot and remnants of whatever was burning on it. “I would say I can’t believe you actually went through with one of your 3 o’clock crazies ideas, but sadly, I really can.”

He snickers, “Sucker, you’re stuck with me.”

The logical thing to do is to multitask and shut him up while having their hello kiss. They put their a hand on each other’s cheeks and barely touch lips when there’s a, “Whoo! Get it!”

She pulls back and watches as the excitable woman is forcibly removed from the area by her friends. A man yells after her, “Hey, you ruined the moment!”

“Trust me, I’m used to it by now,” Ladybug shoots a glare at a grinning Chat. Wait, she recognizes the man. “Oh! It’s nice to meet you again, uh... Monsieur... ?”

Chat pipes up, “You know, we like you enough that we’ve brought you up from time to time, and it’s kind of a shame we don’t know what to call you other than The Nice Curry Guy.”

The Nice Curry Guy laughs. “It’s a mouthful, isn’t it? Don’t worry, it’s not like I ever bothered to introduce myself either. Just call me Cédric.”

The duo looks at each other.

Ladybug says, “Sorry, it’s just sort of weird, we’ve already made unlikely friends with a man named Cédric.”

“Oh, the SARtech chief?”

“You know SARtech Cédric?” Chat blinks, pointing at Curry Cédric. “Is there like, a Cédric union
“or something we don’t know about?”

“Oh yeah, I’m surprised you weren’t told already. Got our own football club and everything.”

“You’re messing with us, right?”

Curry Cédric just gives them the strongest poker face they’ve ever seen, including from criminals who refused to talk. It’s a little unnerving. They breath sighs of relief when he changes the subject. “Have some curry? Always free for you two.”

Chat opens his mouth, but Ladybug cuts in. “Thank you, but we’re already late for patrol. Maybe if the market’s still open when we’re done.”

He pouts at her, and she rolls her eyes.

“Good evening. The chicken? And what size would you like that in?” Cédric (Curry) addresses a customer before holding a hand up high to them in farewell. “Always welcome.”

“Always appreciate it... Cédric,” Ladybug smiles before both her and Chat say goodbye then make their way to the rooftops.

They fall into their usual routine of running along, Chat finally stowing his still singed baton. They keep alert to opposite sides of the block. The hottest nights of the summer are over, and the air is mercifully cooler as they rush through it. The farther they move from the open air market, the less ambient noise there is, chatter of the crowd and calls of merchants growing distant. Only the sounds of the odd pair or group coming from that way follow them. The market lights are quick to fade and give way to the usual streetlamp light.

Chat heaves a sigh that Ladybug can hear from her end. It lacks the exaggeration his dramatic, attention begging ones do. “What’s wrong, minou?”

“I’m really going to miss summer nights.”

“Yeah, I’m not looking forward to the Fall, either. Not just school, though I do kind of miss classmates. Mostly, I’m dreading the cold.”

“Right, you always get tired when the temperature drops, don’t you?” They look to each other, and Chat gives her a sympathetic smile.

She shrugs. “How about you? I’m guessing part of it’s that you’re a little less busy during summer.”

“I mean yeah, there’s that, but it’s more that we can’t stick around and just meet people, you know?”

“No meeting new Cédrics,” she shoots him a wry grin.

“No meeting new Cédrics,” he agrees. “Or badass florists. The last time I got you flowers, I asked if anything exciting happened to her lately. You know what she said? She chased a mugger down three blocks of alleys, including over a stone wall, and tied up his wrists with her shoelaces until she could hand him over to the cops. When she returned the backpack, turns out it was from a tourist whose passport, wallet, plane tickets, everything was in it. She ended up getting a few free beers out of it. Most people, I’d be like ‘uh-huh,’ but with her, I believe it.”

Ladybug whistles. “I have to meet her.”

“We’ll go together next time.”
“Oh, by the way, Captain Lefebvre was sad you couldn’t make it to his retirement party, but he really liked the bear flute thing I passed on for you. The Captain asked what the hell he was even going to do with the damn thing, then told me to piss off he was keeping it forever when I offered to take it back. He said he hopes he never sees you again.”

“Aw, he worries. What a nice guy.”

Once the subject’s been brought up, they pass the time reminiscing about the people they’ve met that summer on night patrols, exchanging stories about running into them again when the other wasn’t there.

The older lady who turned out to be xXxWrath69xXx, that one Mecha Strike player they could never beat. Her handle actually came from the fact that, as a devout parishioner, she considered fighting games her way of purging the sin of wrath, the ‘X’s reminded her of her flower garden fence, and she was actually born in 1969, oblivious to the slang connotation. She asked if Ladybug could help her with her aphid problem.

A man who took care of an entire cat colony and asked Chat Noir to talk to the cats for him, because there was drama happening between some of the cats, but he couldn’t quite figure it out.

The tourist they’re still mad at, Chat for him having “wrong and bad” anime opinions, and Ladybug for being rude about assuming they were terrible cosplayers because he didn’t know about them and didn’t believe they were actual superheroes.

It’s an uneventful patrol, passed quickly by swapping tales. Or, at least, it had felt that way. By the time they’re done, the night market has packed up and they find a high, comfortable rooftop to rest on. Ladybug sits first, and Chat Noir, as he’s wont to do, just slumps around her. He doesn’t even bother to particularly aim for where he’s going to end up lounging, or shift over once he’s sitting. His arms stick out straight ahead because his biceps are on her shoulders. He doesn’t bother moving them.

“Chat.”

“I fits.”

“So you sits,” she finishes with a smile and a roll of her eyes, then she gets an idea. “Wait, stand up.”

He does. “Okay?”

“Now bend your knees so I can hold you under your armpits. Okay, we’re going to walk forward now.”

“Okay, we are walking forward. We are very near the- LB, that’s the edge- Bug, if you’re still mad about teasing over your parents-!” He digs his heels in frantically.

“No, chaton, god. If I dropped you off a building for every time you grieved me, it would be a regular occurrence by now. Trust me, you’re going to love this.”

He gives her a worried look over his shoulder, but walks over the edge of the rooftop. Ladybug does keep hold of him, but he’s left dangling in the air. “Um.”

“No, chaton, god. If I dropped you off a building for every time you grieved me, it would be a regular occurrence by now. Trust me, you’re going to love this.”

He gives her a worried look over his shoulder, but walks over the edge of the rooftop. Ladybug does keep hold of him, but he’s left dangling in the air. “Um.”

“Now stick your arms up straight in front of you.”

He does.
“Still not sure what I’m-” then it clicks. With a voice full of awe and wonder, he murmurs, “I’m Longchat.”

“You are Longchat.”

He sounds like he’s about to cry when he says, “I missed you so much. You’re the love of my life.”

Ladybug snorts as she steps back to let him stand again. She’s immediately caught in a bear hug and lifted off her feet, making her laugh. “Are you really that happy about being Longchat?”

“No. Well, yes, that was one of the greatest moments of my life, but,” he lowers her and holds her by the shoulders, looking at her with this big, goofy smile. “Nearly all of the greatest moments of my life have been with you. This summer, these nights, they’ve... It’s been the best time of my life, bar none.”

She smiles, squeezing one hand on her shoulder. “Same here. I’m not really looking forward to Fall, but, I am looking forward to my first Fall with you.”

Chat kisses her on the forehead before rubbing his face and side against her as he walks to be behind her. He slumps down to sit again, this time audibly patting his lap and saying, “You fits.”

She sits, scooting to lean back against him, and takes his hands to wrap his arms properly around her. He’s purring just from snuggling up to her. Ladybug plays at his hands and says, “We can watch the trees change colours night by night, kick dry leaves around-“

“I’m gonna roll in ‘em.”

“I bet you are, and it’s going to be adorable. Even if the cold sucks, we can have coffee and hot chocolate, and it’ll be even nicer because it warms us up.”

“Oh, I’m looking forward to those pumpkin spiced lattes.”

She turns to face him, wrinkling up her nose. “I’m not going to kinkshame you, but I am going to drinkshame you.”

“Pfffbbt. Snob.”

“Plebeian,” Ladybug says, sticking her nose in the air as she faces forwards again.

Chat gasps. “Ooh, I’m looking forward to my first holiday season with you.”

“Oh, and the nights are always so pretty when people put lights up.”

“You look lovely in those lights, you know that?” He headbutts her gently from the side. “You always do, but especially with all those colourful lights on you.”

She headbutts back. “I’ve never really looked at you to appreciate that yet. Another first.”

“Mmhmm, and what’s next... Oh. Ohh, I’m going to have to start planning for Valentine’s Day.”

She laughs. “That’s literally half a year away.”

“I know, I have five whole months of planning to catch up on.”

“Promise me you won’t overdo it.” Ladybug can feel him side-eyeing her. “Just... Tone it down a little, by your standards?”
He’s still side-eyeing her. She sighs. “Okay.”

Chat does his best attempt at a low, evil laugh. He fails utterly. Ladybug lets go of one of his hands to start scratching his head, stopping his sad attempt and earning a particularly loud breath of purring.

“Then there’s spring, when it’ll finally warm up again,” she sighs. “And things will start blooming.”

“Like even more aspects of our ever growing love?”

“Yes, like even more aspects of our ever growing love.”

“Yes! Plus, plus, flowers I can get from badass florist. I should really actually find out what her name is.”

“Maybe she’ll want to stick with Badass Florist. I swear to god, if her name somehow turns out to be Cédric too...”

He hums in thought. “Statistically, It’s highly unlikely, but I feel like it’s actually possible now. Once it gets warm, people will start coming out more at night...”

“Yup,” she smiles at the joy in his voice. “Then we’ll be right back to summer and the market and us, but this time with way less drama and another first. Our first anniversary.”

“Oh, oh, we get two first anniversaries! Our superhero one and our plainclothes one. Nice,” she feels him nod. “Even more to plan for.”

“Again, minou, literally just under a year away.”

“Still not promising anything.”

“In any case, it’ll be even better than this one.”

“Yeah,” he sighs.

They take a moment to drink in the sight of the city as it is before them, thinking of the past season, and of all the seasons to come. Speculations both wild and assured come to mind, along with fond memories with no regard for the flow of time. Except for his purring, the night is blanketed by a warm silence. With everything else seeming so distant, it feels like just the two of them. Like they’re in their own little world where nothing else matters.

“So,” Chat whispers, “Wanna make ou-”

“Shhh, not now.”

Chapter End Notes

Yep, still a sucker for background characters. The bear flute Chat Noir gave to Captain Lefebvre is actually based on a souvenir I got in China. Now that I've tried to look it up, I'm not actually sure if it's a flute, but it plays when you blow into it the same way you would a flute. Could be an ocarina or xun. Who knows, it's cute.
All at once, it came like an uppercut that sent his brain rattling. How had he missed it before? Chat Noir watched His Lady all the time, and had always found it absolutely adorable when she sat with her chin in hand, pouting. He could never help but smile or even chuckle softly as he stood by her.

Then, one night, he watches the same mannerism and has the presence of mind to notice two subtle differences: she doesn’t purse her lips and stick them out, or furrow her brow.

She just looks weary.

He does not smile or chuckle.

Instead, he begins to give her more flowers, chocolates, and love letters. He takes every opportunity for close, quiet cuddles so the purr that seems to calm her lays her worries to rest. When he jokes and flirts, he’s careful that it’s at her service and not at her expense. When they’re overcome with need and desire, he tells her she’s beautiful, makes sure she feels wanted. When they aren’t, he showers her with chaste little kisses, tells her all the ways he adores her, makes sure she feels loved. Gives her grins and smiles without his usual mischief. Well, less mischief. He thinks it does help. In those moments, she seems happy.

Ladybug strides through the city of lights with her chin up. In the dark of night, she sits holding up that very chin with in her hand, putting Atlas to shame.

In that same dark, Chat is put to shame.

He’s been so intoxicated by how she loves him that he hasn’t noticed how uneven the scales are. She loves in a way that doesn’t need grand gestures, lines and theatrics, signs of affection at every turn. She loves in a way that he can’t help but drink of deeply and has him lapping up every drop.

She loves in a way he just doesn’t know how to.

Sleepless nights and hours of thought as he paces trenches into his floor doesn’t teach him. What he does know is that they’re partners. He knows they’re bound by trust, and that means speaking to each other when they’re troubled.

So he does.

Like clockwork, that look comes over Ladybug again as he stands by her. He asks, “What can I do?”

She blinks at him for a long while.

“What can you do about what, now?”
Chat kneels by her. “What can I do to make you feel better? To keep you from– from this?”

He gestures towards her, not knowing how to put it to words. She stares him in the eye, questioning, and he’s going mad at being unable to answer. Her brows raise and she says, “Wait, do you mean my sulking?”

“I wouldn’t call it sulking,” he frowns. “Sulking is when you get in a stupid fight, or you don’t get what you want, or, or something like that.”

One side of her mouth stretches in an incredulous smile. “*Minou*, is that what’s been bothering you?”

“Well. Yeah. I hate to see you like that, and I treated it like just sulking for so long.”

“That’s why you’ve been extra affectionate and extra... Extra, lately?”

“Oh. I- I guess?”

All at once, Ladybug is throwing herself around him. “Such a silly kitty.”

Eyes moving to look at everything and nothing, he slowly puts his arms around her too.

“You can’t always be my knight in shining armour, Chat,” she smiles. “Yeah, things get to me, but that’s just how it goes. You can’t keep me from ever being unhappy.”

“Okay, but I want to,” his shoulders droop.

“Who’s sulking now?” She teases. “You know I’m happier than I’ve ever been because of you?”

“I know I feel that way about you,” he nuzzles his nose into her hair. “I’m glad to hear you feel the same way.”

“You know I, er, not-sulk around you because I feel so comfortable around you?”

“I kind of figured, but still. I want to be more than someone you can not-sulk around.”

“Pfft. Sorry,” Ladybug pulls back to smile at him, eyes still crinkled with laughter. She runs her hand through his hair. “It’s just- you are. It’s hard to believe that you don’t realize how much more than that you are. You know how I overthink things? Sometimes, I think the way we act like we’ll always be together forever is just youthful optimism or something, but it better not be. You, *monsieur*, have set the bar way too high.”

For a beat he stares dumbly. Then he slowly grins as wide as ever. “Sorry, not sorry.”

“Good. You shouldn’t be. Even when I overthink like that, I always, always end up feeling no one could ever love me the way you do.” She holds his cheeks and rubs her thumbs on his skin. “I love that grin. If you want to do something for me, let me do the stupid worrying. Don’t get all serious like that so much.”

Chat knows she just told him not to be so serious, but he can’t say what he’s about to with anything less than absolute solemnity.

“Anything for you, My Lady.”
Falling

Chapter by allthisink (booabug), booabug

Chapter Summary

There are the kinds of falls where you're aware of hurtling all the way, then there's the slow, step by step falls where you don't realize how far along you are until you're already there.

It isn’t a patrol night, there are no akuma (though there had been one during the day), and it isn’t even one of their planned nights to spend together. They could have very well gone out for a nice stroll on a nice summer night as a perfectly nice and normal couple who wear earrings and a ring for no reason other than that they like how it looks.

Instead, Ladybug is in free fall. Considering the height from which from she had fallen, she’s pretty sure she’s at terminal velocity now. She hurtles towards the ground, wind whipping at her face, no hair to shield it as it’s pulled back by fierce wind. The world is a blur around her. She’s splaying out for air resistance, not that it slows her much. It’s just that she wants to savour it as long as she can. It feels all too soon when Chat Noir intercepts, catching her as he bounds between opposite sides of the street.

“You could have let me fall longer!”

“Uh-uh,” he says as they land on the roof, “Take it from the one with bad enough luck that I see the city as a giant pinball machine field now, it might not hurt to hit the ground, but it’s still no fun. My turn!”

He extends his staff far into the air ahead of them as Ladybug runs along. Below, people on the street point, ask each other what’s even going on, some are laughing, some are taking videos, and more reactions still.

Is this an intended use of their powers? No. Does it serve Paris? Arguably, it helps with morale. Is it fun as hell? Yes.

Chat doesn’t start retracting his staff until Ladybug can’t see him anymore against the night sky. She does her best to track him through guesswork until he comes into view. Throwing her yo-yo to hook a high anchor as a bridge comes up, she waits... and... swing! The timing is just right and she suspects he had planned to land in her arms bridal style.

“Oh! My hero!” He affects a swoon, back of his hand on his forehead.

“Pffft.” This guy. She then realizes they’re approaching the Seine. “Chaton. Ready to up that count to nine?”

“What coun- oh no, no, hoe don’t do it,” his eyes widen.

With her one free arm, she throws him upward while in the middle of the river. Smirking, she looks him dead in the eye during the split-second he’s suspended in the air. He’s curled up, knees and elbows in with fisted hands just under his chin. The look of betrayal and shock is so worth it. Then
he begins his fall with an, “**OHHHHH MYYYyyy godddddd-**” *splash.*

His voice had grown smaller as he fell away from her, but she’s certain that he could clearly hear her cackling the whole time.

She lands on the walkway nearest to where in fell in. He’s a strong swimmer in or out of the suit, but she wants to be sure her kitten is alright. She doesn’t see the small stream of bubbles on the surface and the dark silhouette underneath until it’s too late.

Chat jumps out of the river with an exaggeration of a growl. “**RRAAAAARRRL..**”

He grabs firm hold of her and drags her in with him as she goes, “Nononoooooo-”

*Splash.*

After a few seconds, they surface, treading water. Ladybug wipes wet hair from her eyes to look at her partner, full curtain of hair covering even his mask and grinning ear to ear. He shoots her a finger-gun and they break into giggles.

Ladybug looks at his hand and abruptly stops. She’s first to pull up onto the walkway again, then helps him up. He shakes his wet head rapidly like his namesake, throwing water everywhere. She shields herself with her hands, “Chat!”

She slicks his hair back for him, and he’s happy to oblige and lean in for her. “Hey, are you carrying- oh, this is a good look on you- anyways, are you carrying cash?”

“Wow, I thought you were into me more for my looks than my money.”

“I’m in it for the tax benefits. You know, charity.”

“You tax my poor heart. It must be wet, but yes.”

Ever since they confirmed each others’ identities, he’s taken to keeping more money in his pockets than most do in their wallets in case he ‘has’ to get her something.

“There’s one of those big chain toy stores near here.”

“I don’t follow.”

Ladybug is the one to shoot him a finger-gun this time, with additional pulling back to simulate recoil. “Water fight.”

His eyes light up. “Water fight!”

They’re rushing through the aisles, sliding on the tiles with wet feet, especially when they shoulder check each other gently and snicker. They actually crash into the wall of water guns. As they put things back on their proper hooks and shelves, they’re scanning for the highest capacity, rootingest, tootingest, shootingest water gun.

Working retail at a toy shop is not the joy many people have assumed when the clerk’s answered the question of what they do. At least now, ringing up two damp superheroes as they snort and giggle while shoving each other sideways during their wait is absolutely a highlight. As soon as he hears the total, Chat Noir slaps enough sodden euro notes onto the counter to buy the toys half over as Ladybug furiously tears through packaging. They’re already running out of the store when he yells
over his shoulder, “Keep the change!”

That’s how Paris’ two resident protectors and beacons of hope started a water fight flashmob in the middle of the night. Each take a bank on either end of the bridge. Passersby then their friends, family, and people who have seen reports on social media gather and take their sides. They shoot water at everyone and no one in the opposition. The crowds grow so large, they spill out along the river on both the walkway below and street above, grouping up near stairs where buckets have appeared as parts of supply lines for their side of the silly fight.

Bounding up far into the air above the others, Ladybug and Chat Noir specifically target one another. Chat sputters out water when she manages to hit him straight in the mouth. “I’m reporting you for using an aimbot!”

“Get rekt, scrub! Learn how to- MY EYE.”

They pause once in a while to check that no one’s fallen into the Seine, or to swiftly fill water buckets and deliver them to street level. (Some may grumble about the whole thing, but never let it be said they don’t care about freshwater conservation.)

“GG! GG!” They call to one another once they’ve had enough and take to having meet and greets and taking selfies with those who have come.

They often receive sentiments from the citizens to the tune of how they had forgotten the duo are just people too, underneath it all.

It takes over an hour, but eventually the crowd at large disperses and they’re sitting on the street above the walkway. Their waterarms lay forgotten on the ground beside them. He looks over to say some quip he forgets when he finds himself caught up in simply watching her giggle with closed eyes, a hand hovering in front of her mouth, wet hair a mess. He smiles softly. She catches his eye when she’s finished. “What?”

“Nothing. You’re just really cute.”

She elbows him, blushing. “Where did that come from?”

“From you being really cute?” He says, as if she had just asked the most ridiculous question.

She shakes her head, but the way she looks at him has him blushing too, hand on the back of his neck.

“Oh, but you’re soaking. Can I get a few euros?”

“Sure,” he pulls out his wad of notes. Slowly, they both start snickering as he struggles to peel one from the rest. Eventually, he manages, they high five, and he hands it to her. She tells him to stay, so he watches her go in a jog, thoughtful look on his face.

When she returns, she’s rushing as she carries a couple of fluffy bath towels. The bare suit on her feet doesn’t have the treads his boots do. Not good on the soaked stone ground. He rushes over when he sees the telltale signs of an incoming fall and runs over to catch her by the shoulders.

“Why always the chest?” He asks, playful tone in his voice. “Every time I catch you like this, you grab my chest.”
“It’s a nice chest,” she says without even looking up, as if he had just asked the most ridiculous question. One towel managed to land on top of the other, but the bottom one’s dirty. She glowers at it as he smiles, then throws it over a shoulder to sling the clean one around his neck. She starts patting his hair dry.

He murmurs, “Thanks, Princess.”

It takes her a moment as she pauses with a thoughtful frown, then she huffs out a breath of a laugh and continues taking care of him. “Haven’t heard that one in a while, Chat Noir.”

“Do you think I’m cooler than that Adrien guy yet?”

“I’d say you’re equally uncool.”

“Can’t believe I’ve actually backslid,” he grumbles as he begins engaging in a polite battle with her over the towel.

“Believe it, weeb.”

“Pff-” he clears his throat before he can start laughing.

“See? Naruto watching dork.”

“I’m still cool. Come on, My Lady, I’m dry enough already.” She relents with a roll of her eyes and a smile. “Mind if I undo the ribbons?”

She does it for him, and he starts patting her hair dry in turn. She lets out a content sigh. “This was such a fun night. I’m glad we went out.”

“Me too,” he says as she gives him a look for taking the dirty towel from her too. He just gives her a lopsided smile and holds up his arm. “Walk you home?”

“Sure,” she threads her hand through the crook of his elbow. They amble along through the streets arm in arm. “What a nice night.”

They earn a few looks as they stroll through the comfortable summer night at a leisurely pace, but they steer away from the main thoroughfare soon enough. They take the narrow, winding old streets where the lights are soft and warm instead.

“You know,” he says, “You’re really cute.”

She laughs and slaps him on the shoulder. “Stop that.”

“I will when you stop being so cute.”
Crime

Chapter Summary

The thrill of the hunt.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Ladybug can’t let her guard down— especially not now. Chat’s love for her has been twisted before. It can be again. She swings through the air alone, no partner beside her. The silence rings in her ears.

She’s confined to sleepy old quarters. Less people here, and what people there are stay inside. Open space would be safer for her, but not for the public. Problem is, this is his terrain. The night is his hunting time. She can feel eyes on her. Thinks she feels? There aren’t any glowing green eyes when she looks around. No glint of steel where there shouldn’t be. She still feels eyes on her. Her heart beats hard in her chest.

If he caught her, what effects would he be under? Summer air comes in her lungs biting like winter chill. Ladybug can’t take the not knowing. She’ll take the danger. She lands on a rooftop with rickety tiles. A skittering sound, and her head whips around. Just a piece of tile she broke off. If she was imagining eyes on her before, she isn’t now. That was a dead giveaway. She doesn’t dare move. She takes shallow breaths to hear better. Feels for the space around her, instead of focusing her sight. It’s that intuition that tells her she’s being circled.

A silent Chat Noir is a dangerous Chat Noir. Silent and moving, even more so. People stick her as the brains of the duo, but he can be a tactician too. He’s somewhere near. Moving low to the ground, purposefully slow, perfectly silent, at home in the shadows—and laser focused on her. Moving so she’ll be where he wants her. The mutual silence leaves her feeling her pulse in her ears.

Some part of her wants to call for him to stop. Everything else screams no, to stay alert.

A snap on the roof and she jumps away, the sound of tiles breaking under his weight giving her just enough time to get far enough.

For a single beat they face one another. There’s no smile in his bright green eyes. Where she stood a split second earlier, he’s crouched. Ladybug would have been pinned and vulnerable. Shadow obscures most of his face, but what she can see says one thing: he’s out to get her.

Then her heart beats again, adrenaline pumping, and she’s running away. Yo-yo? Her first thought, but Chat’s too quick. He’d take her down before the string catches.

She’s running. It’s all she can do. At least, until she thinks of something. Anything. He’ll outpace her soon. She can’t trip him, he’s on all fours. It won’t stop him for long.

She can’t swing away, but she still has her yo-yo. Ladybug scans for a good spot. There. She runs near a wall and springs off it. More speed than a running turn. She needs that. Listening hard, she just hears the quiet thud of his boots behind her.

She’s flying between two chimney stacks. Her yo-yo’s out even as she’s rolling to a crouch.
Frantically, she strings up a net. Who knows if it’ll hold him, but that’s all she can do. She hides after taking as much time as she dares.

Ladybug waits. Her grip is white knuckled around her yo-yo. She doesn’t feel anything on the string. Where is he? Did she have more time than she thought? Did he figure it out and circle around?

A frustrated growl, tension on the string. She pulls it taut and gets a louder growl as the net tightens. She takes a peek. Chat’s struggling, but disentangling himself. Shit. Letting string unspool tautly, she runs again.

She bought herself time. That’s all. He’s not trapped for good. He won’t fall for the same thing twice. At least she’ll know when he’s free from the string.

What good will it do if she doesn’t come up with something?

She can’t make another trap now. Not without setting him loose.

Then again, waiting until he breaks himself free means the retracting string will lead him right to her. If she does it now, he may be distracted enough to not notice. She has to decide now.

Ladybug retracts her yo-yo. Hopefully, he’s distracted. She still doesn’t know what to do next.

Eeny meeny miny mo, catch a tiger by the toe... A snare? If he hollers, don’t let him go.

Set one and just hope he steps in? He’s too unpredictable. Bait? There’s only one thing he’s out for.

Tick tock, time’s running out.

She has no choice. If it’s her he wants, she’ll have to offer herself up to catch him. Where can she set up? A laundry line pole. The cables she doesn’t trust, but the pole has rods jutting out— she’ll rely on one of those.

Once she’s airborne, he’ll see red without a doubt. She has to be quick.

Ladybug ties the snare first, before leaping up over the laundry rod and landing on the other side. She goes to the other end of the building and pretends to be looking out for him exactly where she knows he won’t be.

She’s leaving her back open.

If this doesn’t work, she’s screwed. The string better be hard to see, even for him. Fighting hand to hand is her last option. She’d rather not take that chance. If she can get an opening, she knows how to pin him. If Chat has his own physical advantages. They both know how to counter each other. She’d rather not risk it on beating him one on one.

This better work.

She bites her lip, swallowing with a dry throat. This is even worse than waiting for him to pounce.

If he doesn’t trip the snare, it’s on her. She would have to pull at the right time.

That would mean knowing where he is. She can tell when he’s focused on her. That’s all. It won’t help. Hearing him would help, but he’s too quiet. The blood rushing through her is louder.

Maybe it’s their odd luck, but she gets a bit of both.
Ladybug just feels his foot catch. She yanks hard. He yelps in surprise. Whipping around, she makes sure to pull him to just the right height. If she hadn’t pulled, he would have maybe stumbled over the string at most. Now she has him high enough off the ground that he can’t use his hands, too low for him to simply do a hanging sit up and grab the rod or a laundry cable.

Not that it stops him from trying.

And trying.

And— why is he— oh, shit.

By the time she’s letting him fall, Chat’s built the swinging momentum to get on the cable. He lunges off it like an arrow towards her.

He’s on her before she knows it.

She can’t get out from under him. Ladybug clenches her thighs around him and twists her body. Now she’s on top.

She goes for a hold. He catches her wrist— just one wrist?

Damn it. She didn’t realize they were by wall. He pushes off. His hands are braced on the ground before she can roll them again. His weight settles on her. He’s too heavy. She doesn’t have momentum. He’s on top where he knows that works for him.

She moves her hands. He catches them.

They struggle arm against arm, but it’s futile. She has superior core strength, slight lower body advantage, but he undoubtedly has superior upper body strength. Both their arms shake pushing against each other, but he’s slowly getting hers down and— oh, that was never his goal.

He was pushing their hands together. Before she can register that he’s let go, both her wrists are caught in one hand. For all the joking that one night, he really does have a crushing grip.

Chat Noir begins pushing her wrists down towards the ground above her head and pulling his other hand away with the languid ease of a panther with the gazelle’s neck in his mouth, teeth around the pulse, just waiting for the other to give in.

“Oh, Ladybug~” he sing-songs, deep, breathy.

He’s lowering himself on top of her in tandem with her wrists. He slowly shuffles his hips up against hers, forcing through her thighs clenched around him.

“Looks…”

He’s settled his weight where her superior strength is now totally neutralized.

“Like…”

His free hand comes up to lazily take hold of her chin.

“You…”

His thumb rubs so that his claw just grazes her bare skin enough that she can feel it.

“Are…”
He pulls her chin up slightly so they lock eyes, furious blue against devious green.

“Under...”

A wicked, toothy grin slowly spreads across his face.

“Agreste.”

Ladybug groans and frees her hands from his now slack grip to push him off her.

Chat rolls over to the side, shaking with stifled laughter. She closes her eyes hard and rubs the bridge of her nose. “Every time. You have to say that every time you win.”

“Just more motivation,” he says through his chortling as he lays on his back beside her, “For you to beat me, My Lady.”

“I’m not doing these evasion exercises anymore if you don’t stop, minou,” she side-eyes him.

“I’m sorry,” he says, not at all sorry, “Just make another game of it, tap out or tell me to get off before I can finish saying it.”

She silently turns her head away.

He stops laughing.

“Wait...” He says slowly. “You’ve never even tried to tap out or say something.”

Ladybug is covering her face with both hands. She doesn’t need to look to know he’s wearing that insufferable grin right now. Even if it weren’t a given, she can hear it in his voice.

“You like being under Agreste!”

“Please stop calling it that.”

“You do!”

She sighs and takes her hands from her face, rolling to her side to face him and leaning in. Her face is red, but she still fixes him with a wry smile.

“Oh, yes, I’m hormonal and a bit of an adrenaline junkie,” she says, husky and hush, words only for him. "Fighting with the illusion of danger until I'm either on top of my boyfriend or under him is something I really, really, enjoy. Is that such a crime?”

Chat’s not grinning now. He’s even more red in the face, jaw slack. His mouth opens and closes a few times before he gulps, adam's apple bobbing, and shakes his head no.

“Too bad that pun is such a mood kill-”

“I’ll stop saying it.”

Chapter End Notes

istg I didn't mean for this to get thirsty, i was writing and started sweating as it went on.
what passes for planning with me was just "Cops and Robbers: EXTREME EDITION." I've found, over the course of writing this story, that ladynoir has this inherent intensity to it that the other dynamics just don't have and so... this happens. maybe it's just me and this setting.
(In Love With A) Laugh

Chapter Summary

Oh, the things we'll do to make the people we love laugh.

Chapter Notes

Here's to Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, the masters of physical comedy.

“Alya is way too sharp for our own good,” Chat says, amused. With his arms around Ladybug’s waist, his head in her lap, and his face nearly buried into her stomach, it’s a little hard to hear what he’s saying.

“I mean, it’s Alya, she’s always looking for connections. Plus, from an outsider point of view, Adrien and Marinette did get together pretty suddenly,” she says, idly scratching his head as he purrs. “If you actually are my Ladynoir ERP partner, on the other hand...”

“Well, she’s not wrong, she just doesn’t get the whole picture. Thankfully.”

“Don’t worry, she’s just teasing. It’s obvious when she asks things like if we have Ladynoir ERP phone sex too and if we do, whether you do that super gravelly movie voice when you’re role playing Chat Noir.”

Chat snorts, then stops to clear his throat and make his voice as ridiculously deep and gravelly as possible. “Where’s Le Papillon?” She immediately starts giggling.

“I know you’re hiding him... In your clothes. Take them o-” he coughs and shortles. “Oh, that hurt my throat.”

Ladybug trails her hand down to gently rub his vibrating throat, lingering at the curious feeling. “Poor kitty. If it helps, I was extremely seduced.”

“Worth it to make you laugh. I’ve done so many stupid things to get a laugh out of you, but it’s worth it every time. Even if they usually want another take.”

“Who wants another take?”

Chat unwraps his arms around her waist and rolls over to his back, shuffling to keep his head in her lap. “Give me a moment, I’ll show you.”

He drops his transformation and fishes his phone out of his pocket as Plagg tumbles out onto his stomach. He hands Ladybug the phone, “Here, hold this for a second.”

“Kid, what the h-”

“Transformez-moi.”
“-ellLLL-” Plagg is sucked back into his ring. With a flash of green, he’s suited up again.

“Holy crap, you are such a dick,” Ladybug snickers as she shields her eyes.

Chat looks completely unapologetic when he’s taking his phone back. “I mean, it is Plagg’s fault. I’ve gotten like, fifty times more dickish over the years since I met him.”

“Can confirm,” she says, watching the screen’s light change on his face while he goes through it’s contents. She continues, “Alya also said she bets we use the voice note app for our ERP, so I played her some. She said the fact that it’s all just you laughing hysterically in different ways is even weirder than role play phone sex.”

He grins, shaking his head. “I can’t really argue, but here,” he holds up his phone, turned on it’s side with a video he starts playing once she’s watching. It looks like newsreel video.

“*The plane delay is unfortunate. We hope we can stay long enough to greet- Chat!*” Ladybug in the video starts laughing and the camera pans over quickly.

Chat Noir lays on his side in a seductive pose while balanced on the handrail of an airport moving walkway. He grins with a rose between his teeth and is waggling his eyebrows. He grows smaller and smaller in the frame as the long handrail slowly carries him into the distance like a conveyor belt.

Ladybug in reality laughs too. “I remember that. I just kept laughing, I was in tears. They had to do my makeup again.”

“This next one I had to do twice,” he says, smiling, tapping to open another video. “Once to get your attention, then to make you laugh for real. The door was actually unplanned, probably just my luck, but I’m glad it happened.”

“I’m sure Chat Noir will be here for the unveiling party soon,” Ladybug says.

She’s in modern building’s lobby. A few people in formal clothing are conversing at the edge of the frame. Behind her, the wall facing the street has a granite base a metre high. The rest is glass, all the way up. He can be seen landing on the sidewalk outside, then smiling and holding up his hand in greeting as he walks towards the camera.

She continues, “He had a personal appointment during the event itself, but—” *thunk*

Chat walked right into the glass wall. Ladybug turns and sees him stumbling back, rubbing his nose with a look of confusion on his face. She starts giggling. Without looking up, he walks forward again, and—*thunk*— she starts laughing when he hits the glass, cheek squished flat. Now some people behind the camera are laughing softly along. He stumbles backwards, blinking. He looks off balance and reels sideways.

The building’s huge glass door is directly open, square to the wall—*thunk-k-k— The whole door vibrates as he thumps into it with his entire side. Ladybug is laughing even harder.

Chat now looks truly dazed. He steps back, faces the door, and puts a hand against it to lean on. It slips on the glass and—*thunk* — his head hits so hard, it bounces back. He finally stumbles backwards against the wall and leans on his back for a second before sliding down out of view. The audio is overtaken by everyone laughing, hers the loudest.
Right now, she’s barely laughing less than in the video.

Chat’s grinning as he says, “I’m really glad the film crew for these were cool enough to give me the outtakes. I mean, this is one of my favourites, there’s only a few where you completely lose it, and I couldn’t hear it from outside.

“I ended up with mostly ideas where I couldn’t count on you turning around, so I struck up a deal. Crew has to get you laughing, with good audio. They do that, I let them know in advance where and when it’s going to happen, and they can take and keep their own video of what I’m doing. I have both collections, but I’ll just show you the ones of me goofing around for you. Ready for the next one?”

Ladybug, much calmer, but still unable to speak, nods.

*Chat is standing with a banana cream pie in his hand. He waves with his other for a while, until he smiles and holds up the pie to point at it.*

*His face goes completely deadpan and stays that way as he pushes the pie towards the side of his face slowly, deliberately, and with constant and even force.*

*Ladybug’s laughter comes from behind as it presses into his face.*

“I actually experimented a bunch with different stores’ pies and putting more whipped cream for maximum pie-into-face time.”

*The first few seconds of video seems to be cut abruptly. Chat carefully lays down a garden rake, looks around at the circle of them, and re-positions a few slightly. Then he stands in the middle, waving his arms.*

*Something makes him grin and he starts to walk forward nonchalantly, when he steps onto a rake’s tines, sending the pole flying straight up into his face. He walks back in shock, to have the same thing happen, heel landing on a rake head and handle whacking into the back of his head. He blinks a few times, but regroups and takes the obvious course of action: walk around the first rake.*

*There’s another waiting for him.*

“I had to practice getting the angle just right so the handle gets me smack dab in the middle, without looking down. You know, it’s really hard to get a nice, sturdy, metal headed rake these days.”

*They’re in a huge mall and Chat’s getting her attention again. From this angle, the camera catches the end of his tail under the heel of one boot. Once he’s smiling at her behind the camera, he pushes it back between escalator stairs.*

*It catches, he does a wide eyed double take at it, and scrambles on his boots against the escalator’s pull. His feet fly forward and he falls ass backwards. He lands on the edge of one step and bounces down a few with a pained expression before stopping. He gives his tail what appears to be increasingly desperate tugs. When it doesn’t work, he slumps down and is left sitting miserably resigned. The camera raises with him, his silhouette shrinking slowly as he ascends.*
The escalator spans four floors.

He’s going to be there for a while.

“This one looks simple, but it was actually really hard with all the safety measures they have now. I had inside help, they were the ones to make sure it stopped before my tail actually got lodged into the mechanisms.”

Chat doesn’t even wave this time, just waits until he makes eye contact. Even then, he doesn’t smile. He keeps his face completely neutral as, one by one, he puts sticks of celery into his mouth.

He doesn’t stop.

There is so much celery in his mouth, he has to start wiggling them in.

Once he simply cannot stuff any more celery into his mouth, he starts gnawing. There’s at least a dozen full seconds of him gnawing at the enormous bundle of celery in his mouth until the parts of the stalks sticking out from his mouth fall down.

He keeps gnawing, blankly, letting pieces of celery fall, until he can really bite down. Once Chat has bitten through his last stalk of celery, leafy end falling to a pile at his feet, he places his arms behind his back, turns around, and walks away, still chewing and looking as serious as if he were at a funeral.

“There wasn’t any practice or prep work for this one, I hate celery. I just figured it would be the best vegetable for this gag. I am never eating celery again.”

Initially, Chat is just bounding around small heights on his staff, glancing to behind the camera every once in a while. His eyes brighten, then he takes a higher jump that sends him gut first into a horizontal steel pole. He keeps rapidly turning around the pole on his stomach until he falls—just a short distance—he’s stopped by his tail, the end is tied around the pole.

This leaves him dangling by the belt, his entire body limp as he slowly rotates back and forth.

“I was actually tying my tail with my back hand during all those spins. I wasn’t just pretending to be limp at the end there, I was actually so dizzy I just didn’t want to move anymore.”

Ladybug is crying with uncontrollable laughter. She can’t even watch now. Chat Noir is chuckling along. He opens the camera app to record her.

It takes a while for her to notice.

“Chat- what-” she has to struggle to get words out. “Stop- stop recording-”

“No way, I worked hard for those, I deserve this. You have your voice notes, I have my videos.”

“-ruined- so- so many shots-”

“Yeah, I did,” Chat smiles as he watches her laugh through his phone screen. “The footage they’d show on TV would always be the ones after these. You’d be smiling genuinely at the camera, and I’d be beside you all proud of what I did. By the time I ran out of ideas, you were so comfortable in
front of the camera, I was just plain proud of you. You used to get so nervous.”

Ladybug still can’t stop laughing, but she pulls her legs gently away from under him and collapses onto his chest. He starts chuckling again, feeling her quivering with hysterics against him as she embraces him. Chat wraps his arms around her too, the front of his phone against her back.

There’s no one in view. It’s simply the Paris night sky, shaking as the camera does. All that can be heard is the two of them laughing together.
Early Hours

Chapter Summary

In the early morning, Ladybug witnesses the Chat Noir crazies firsthand, when he's frenetic mentally and physically. This leads to a discussion of their first impressions of one another, and Chat being very relatable.

Chapter Notes

Shoutouts to my cats when they were younger for providing reference for this chapter. The stuff about Chat's initial behaviour in this chapter is subtle but true, I noticed it on a rewatch of Origins.

It’s something that is very, very rarely asked of them, but the police has them on call into the early hours of the morning.

Thus, Ladybug gets to witness the 03:00 crazies firsthand as she sits on a railroad car. Her head moves back and forth, watching her partner as he burns off energy in a rail yard. It’s near enough to where they may be needed, and far enough that he doesn’t disturb citizens. She now appreciates why he gets so frustrated being stuck in his room, as large as it is, when Plagg is too tired to transform him.

“It’s funny—” Chat Noir’s words are clipped over the rapid crunching of gravel under his boots and claws,

“— when I was a little kid—” his voice has grown distant,

“—getting sent to bed—“ there’s a cl-clang as he bounces back off a freight car,

“—was a punishment—” he’s skittering on a rail now,

“—now not getting sleep—“ the way he zooms past her reminds her of finish line footage from races,

“—is the worst thing—“ his voice and skittering begins growing distant again,

“—and I would love to—“ she can’t hear anything from here, but he’s jumped onto a car himself,

“—just be told to go to bed, you know?” He digs in his heels and palms, landing on the car opposite her.

He’d been going so fast, he skids nearly off of it. He’s on the edge of falling onto the car connector as he turns to her, head tilted.
His expression is very serious over this epiphany.

Ladybug has been smiling this entire time at the spectacle. “I get exactly what you mean.”

“Right?”

He remains still without moving a muscle. His speech, however, is nearly unintelligible with how quickly he speaks, “Isn’t that weird? We have to prove to machines, that we aren’t machines.”

She takes a moment to run that through her head. “Oh. Yeah, it is weird.”

Slowly, Chat nods.

He looks around the yard at nothing.

Without warning, he’s sprinting off again. His voice gets smaller as he gets farther. “You know how puns only work in their language?!”

She has to shout over to respond. “Yeah, true?!”

“They’re like inside jokes!” He clammers up the side of some sort of freight car lifter. “For the language! The people who know it! But, like, secret inside jokes? You have to find them!”

From where she sits she can see his tail lashing side to side as he’s flat on the rectangular structure’s nearest top beam. His toes and hands are dug in. At least, his hands are until he starts rapidly digging into the beam in fits and stops.

Chat’s hands are on the beam again as he goes still except for his tail.

He turns his head to her slowly, and hollers, “I thought of another way I messed it up!”

“Messed what up?!” She watches him clamber back down. Or, more accurately, lets himself fall haltingly, head up and facing the vertical beam, slowing himself by squeezing it once in a while.

His voice quickly grows louder as he skitters on car tops towards her, on her side. “First day we met, I joked around, from the start, but I wasn’t flirting, you remember?”

“No, to be honest, I thought you flirted from the staaaahh- ngh.” He, once again, underestimates his momentum. Though Ladybug began scuttling away sideways when that became apparent, he still runs into her. She’s knocked over.

Chat has landed partially on top of her, his head having fallen between her chest and the dip of her waist. He decides that it’s a capital place to use as a pillow, and lays his head there while bear hugging her hips.

“I don’t blame you, that first day, it was only a few hours, you know, that we spent together? Anyway, most of it we spent fighting— fighting— who was it? Ivan! Poor Ivan. He’s such a good guy. Stupid Kim. No, well, he can be stupid, but he’s a good guy. He’s less stupid now.”

She sighs. “They are, the both of them, I agree with you.”

“I’m glad our class, our old class, stuck together, mostly, kind of, not like we’re all close, super close, but we haven’t all drifted away, that’s cool, guess that’ll happen, being together when akuma showed up, and them being akuma victims, it’s like us, we’ve gone through things, bad things, so we’re close, so I guess that’s why the class, old class, is close.”
“Huh. I never thought about it, but that makes sense.”

Ladybug’s made friends with new lycée classmates over the past two years. She’d still consider more distant collège classmates, those who went to other schools, at least as close as most new classmates she sees every day.

Chat is in still mode. When they cuddle usually, he still moves in little ways, but right now he’s just clinging.

“What was I talking about again?”

“Our old class?”

“Before?”

“Oh, the first day we fought together as Chat Noir and Ladybug.”

“Right! I was pretty focused, super excited, I mean superhero? Superhero! I was a superhero!”

“Yes, you were, and you are,” Ladybug smiles, reaching back to ruffle his hair.

“I was really excited, and really focused, and then you beat Ivan, oh poor Ivan, wait, no— I’ve been over that— and I was like ‘wow!’ Though I wasn’t in love. Not yet. I just thought you were really cool. The next day, moment I met you, I was like ‘wow she’s cool what do I do.’ Apparently what I do is flirt. No wonder you never thought I was serious. You thought I flirted when I didn’t know you, not a bit, just met you, or just a bit, I knew you for a few hours. Like, what? How many ways have we messed up, even?”

“Seriously, we’ve been such a mess.” Ladybug can’t help but put an arm over her eyes and bark a laugh. “Come to think of it... You know, how you reminded me of the time an akuma got to Nathanael?”

“— Poor Nathanael, he’s such a good guy.”

“Yeah, he is. You reminded me of that whole thing on water fight night—”

“— That was FUN.”

“It really was. That time was when I first met Chat as Marinette, and you just had to show off a bunch. I mean, you reminded me of that time by calling me princess like you did back then, who does that on the first meeting? So that’s another reason I thought you were just a silly flirt 24/7.”

“Uh, yeah, well,” he says defensively, “I was like ‘she’s cool what do I do.’ Plus, like, pretty sure I was already low-key crushing, just couldn’t admit it, ’cause good guys, like Ivan, and Nathanael, and Kim kind of, wouldn’t go around crushing on a bunch of girls, even if it’s just one girl, and I didn’t know, and you didn’t- oh. Ohhhh. OHHHHH.”

He lets go of her and scrambles away. Ladybug sits back up, watching her partner run back and forth even faster, bouncing off walls and burning energy any way possible again. Except this time, he’s not shooting off inane pondering.

He’s screaming inarticulately.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAA—” Chat drowns out any crunch, or clang, or skitter,
“AAAAAAAAAAAAA SO DUMB AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA WHY
ALL THAT TIME
Courage

Chapter Summary

So what is it that our heroes really have to summon up courage for?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“So, you know how they say real courage isn’t the lack of fear, but acting in spite of fear?” Ladybug asks, eyeing Chat Noir’s knees beside her as she rests against a wall.

She knows he can see that from where he lays his head against her slightly bent up knees, he just doesn’t give a damn. He’s even idly using his hands as a pillow. “Yeah?”

“Well, I was thinking... Okay, hold up, how is that comfortable at all?” She frowns down at her partner, who doesn’t even blink at that. He looks totally relaxed as his purring rumbles from his back, which apparently has a spine made of rubber, to her thighs and up half her torso. Apparently, the bend of her legs at her waist is as good as a hammock for his upside-down self.

He makes a vague ‘I dunno’ sort of noise and idly thumps the sides of his upper boots together. She hears them above and to the side of her. Ladybug shrugs. “I’m impressed with how you keep finding new ways to lounge, ones that only look comfortable if you’re boneless.”

“Didn’t you know?” He smiles lazily. “Cats are made of non-Newtonian fluid. Sounds like just humerus exaggeration, but it’s true, make no bones about it. I don’t blame you, it’s a slippery subject.”

“Right...” She rolls her eyes, smiling back. “To get back to the flow of the conversation: we’re always called courageous by people, but it feels like a misnomer. Unless something goes bad, we’re never really scared by akuma.”

“True,” Chat hums thoughtfully. “What if an akuma were based on something we are scared of, though?”

“It is possible. We haven’t really come across any so far, but who knows? What are you scared of?”

“You mean what am I scared of other than myself, the emotional trauma I am aware of, possible trauma I’m not aware of, being further emotionally traumatized, or letting it show at any time what an enormous mess I am?” His smile turns into a grin.

She snorts. “Yes, other than that, and stuff like me disappointing people, not doing everything I can, the idea of terrible things happening because I did or didn’t do something, or didn’t do-slash-not do it enough or too little, and whether or not it will or has snowballed, so I feel like a failure who can’t live with herself.”

They both start laughing.

“Right,” Chat says, “Small fears. Ones that our sense of humour, which our friends find slightly disturbing, didn’t develop over?”
“Yeah, those.”

“How about... Spiders? That’s a common one. I don’t mind them at all, myself.”

“Echh,” Ladybug sticks her tongue out, face twisting in disgust. “I hate them. I’ll jump away, but I’ll try to trap or kill it more than run or freeze. Maybe if there’s a ton of them at once, I’d really freak out. I guess you’re the designated ‘pick up spiders and put them outside’ person, if you care about that.”

“I solemnly swear,” he takes a hand out from behind his head to lay over his heart, “That if there’s a spider akuma indoors, I will prioritize putting as many of them outside as possible, regardless of anyone’s safety or the need to defeat the akuma.”

“Thank you,” she pats his hand. “Snakes, then? I actually find them kind of cool. I never cared at all before, but Alya’s dad had me pet one of the zoo snakes and it was nice.”

“Don’t think of them either way.”

Ladybug yawns. “Excuse me, I’m getting sleepy.”

He yawns too. “Then we say our farewells, think of what scares us until we can’t sleep, and pick this up later?”

“Sure. Horrifying dreams, chaton,” she smiles. He sits forward for their goodbye kiss, and she leans in, holding him by a cheek for it. “You really couldn’t have waited to stand up like a normal person?”

Chat smirks and gently nudges the side of his face against hers. “Sounds like we’ll need a do-over.”

Chat makes a frustrated growl as he crawls.

“What? Is something wrong?” Ladybug asks from behind him. “I’ve been kind of distracted by the view here.”

His laugh echoes strangely in the ventilation shaft.

“Lucky. That’s what I get for forgetting my manners, ladies first and all,” he pauses to shake his ass and now she’s the one laughing. “Ah, it’s just my arm, I keep having to put my damn weight on it. It’s sore from giving blood earlier.”

“Ohh, I should give blood too.”

“Hmm, so you must not be afraid of needles— hypodermic ones. Well. I’ve watched you stitch, so I should specify. Intentionally hypodermic ones. Not bothered by blood is a given by now,” he thinks out loud as he keeps crawling.

“Quit teasing, and here I was worried you were getting claustrophobic.”

“Me? Claustrophobic? Not at all. I’ve yet to meet a box small enough to keep me from wanting to see if I fits. You’ve seen that cat famous for the videos of diving into boxes, right?”

“Yes, I love him, it’s so cu— Chat, oh my god,” she laughs.

He’s emulating the anticipatory butt wiggle of a cat about to pounce.
And he does jump forward, at least a short distance.

Now he’s wiggling his upper body.

“Crap, I think I’m stuck.”

Ladybug looks over her shoulder with furrowed brows as they navigate the chilly catacombs. “I hope death and dead things don’t get to you.”

The circle of dim light from her flashlight passes over loose bones, bleached skulls, and skeletons bare of flesh long rotted away as she turns it to illuminate Chat. He and all the human remains surrounding him cast long shadows. He’s looking around curiously.

“Nah, this is more interesting than anything. The dark doesn’t bother you? I mean it doesn’t bother me right now for obvious reasons, but even when I’m not transformed I just miss being able to see clearly.”

“Well, there’s something about just the light of a flashlight that makes it spookier... I guess it makes my imagination kick in? I start thinking about what’s in the darkness where the beam isn’t. You know me and my imagination. As long as I don’t start, I’m usu— yikes.”

“What? Oh, wow. No thank you.”

A doll with a cracked, darkened porcelain face sits in decayed clothing by a small, curled up skeleton. A shard of it’s forehead is missing completely, open to the pitch black inside of it’s head until their lights shine into the hollow interior.

“Don’t really buy into supernatural stuff like hauntings but, possessed or not, dolls are just creepy.”

“Agreed.”

The paper bag crinkles as she takes it from from the counter. “Thanks!”

Chat doesn’t hesitate to reach in and snatch a burger. He starts eating as soon as he unwraps it enough to not get too much of the wrapper in his bite.

Ladybug gives him a bemused look, though she’s barely more contained in digging into her own.

He swallows. “What? Can’t start patrol on an empty stomach. Huh, I didn’t know that park was there.”

She looks over and says between bites, “Hmm, me neither. Easy to miss.” It’s just a little city park, not much, but there’s a small pond and some comfortably worn benches. Still, the footpath isn’t paved and dirt tracks onto the sidewalk near it.

“It’s a pretty cute little area,” he looks around at the little shops closing up. Corner stores, groceries, small restaurants, places like that.

Then there’s a loud squeal— an honest, high pitched squeal the likes of which he’s never heard from Ladybug before— and she’s jumped into his arms. Chat reflexively caught her and is now rapidly looking around with a frown. “What? I don’t see anything.”

He wouldn’t have heard it if he didn’t have the cat ears on. They swivel to the tiny sound: ‘ribbit.’
A frog. A tiny common frog. He starts cackling even as she shrinks even more into him, trying her best to sound indignant as she squeaks, “They have the worst sticky tongues and when they throw it out to catch a bug it’s so creepy, it stretches out so long, and then the end actually folds in around the bug and it’s horrifying.”

“Frogs? Of all things, frogs?”

“Shut up! Look, I never gave them thought before, it might be a side-effect, but— ohmygod, it hopped at us!”

“Yes. Yes it did, My Lady. Very slowly,” Chat grins at the enormous frown she makes at him. “No, no, this is good. At the rate it’s going, you’ll complete exposure therapy as long as we wait here. Now that we know your fear, we can cure it. Better hop to it.”

“We are not waiting here, and that pun was terrible.”

“It’s a shame, this seems like such a nice little frog. We can get another at a pet store, though. You can make it a cute little top hat and bow tie, and I’ll teach it to sing and dance.” He clears his throat loudly before starting in a deep voice, “Hello, my baby, hello, my honey, hello my rag time gal~”

“Just— just turn us around and walk?”

Chat complies, but doesn’t stop singing, “Send me a kiss by wire, baby my heart’s on fi-”

Without even a noise of surprise, he jumps about three metres into the air, dropping Ladybug unceremoniously in the process. He lands on all fours, back arched. Pupils wide, he sidles away, not taking his eyes off the—

“Cucumber?” She laughs. “Frogs are a little silly, but cucumbers?”

“Uh- I-” The poor grocer is staring at Chat. “I’m, I’m so sorry, the box just tore when I was taking them in, uh... I’ll... Get that out of your way.”

“It’s alright,” Ladybug assures the grocer as they pick up the lone cucumber off the ground. “No one could have thought my partner’s such a ‘fraidy Chat.”

“Okay, I am not scared of cucumbers,” he hisses. “Just that one that snuck up on me.”

She raises her brows. “Just the one inanimate vegetable that snuck up on you?”

He glowers at her before huffing and standing up, making a show of dusting himself off, when his stomach grumbles.

They both look to their fallen burgers.

“Germophobe?”

“Nope.”

They pick up their burgers, brush off dirt or tear off pieces, and both take another bite. They continue walking, briskly at first until they’re a ways off from the frog and erstwhile cucumber. Ladybug wraps an arm around Chat’s waist and leans her head against him. “We’re disgusting.”

“Mhmm,” he agrees through a full mouth and puts an arm around her shoulders.
Okay, so two reference with Chat at the end here:

Cats being scared of cucumbers is actually A Thing
(if, for some reason, YouTube has blocked this video in your country, just search cats scared by cucumbers)

Michigan J. Frog from a 1955 Warner Bros. short, "One Froggy Evening"

I should have noted this earlier, but nearly all my online friends are animation nerds too and already know it, so I assumed most people would get it. Which... Is ridiculous of me in retrospect. Again, search keywords (like one froggy evening, dancing frog, frog hello my baby) if this is blocked.
Daybreak

Chapter Summary

The start of a new day, and talk of all the beginnings to come.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Sometimes, she really regrets setting her bed up under the skylight. She squeezes her eyes shut and reaches for her blanket to pull over her head, only to find nothing. The chill of morning air has her continue to feel blindly — until a hand grabs hers and squeezes it. Her eyes open wide.

Then Ladybug puts her forearm over her eyes and hisses.

A soft laugh tickles her ear. Sleep rough and low, she hears, “Good morning, My Lady,” as she’s pulled in by arms she hadn’t even realized were resting around her. A rush of heat fills her up, dissipating some fleeting thought that she had woken up away from home.

“Mmmnh... Morning, kitty. Dunno ’bout good,” she mumbles, her own voice husky as she turns to bury her face into Chat. She wraps her arms around him with a sigh. “’Cept you’re here. My sweet, solid sun shield.”

“Never been happier to be opaque,” he rubs her back. “Any time is good with you, of course: morning, noon, afternoon, evening, or night.”

“It’s too early for your cheesiness, but you have a point.” She sinks further into him with a smile. “You’d be so nice to wake up to every morning.”

“It really would be nice, starting every day with each other,” he cuddles in closer, and thinks out loud in that fireside voice, “Maybe not at the break of dawn or on a high rooftop, though. I would say... A lived in bedroom, walls some comforting colour we chose together, clothes from last night flopped on to something. We were too tired to care. My books, your sketchpads all over the place. Glass door to a balcony. A nice, soft bed, with thick blankets— though I will fight them over being the one you use to block out the sun.”

“If you wrestled our blankets, you’d just tangle us up and then we’d suffocate.”

“We suffocate together. It’s ideal.”

“Mhm. Too bad I’d grab you first without thinking. We’ll just have to survive getting up,” she sighs, “What next? The washroom, you would definitely take more time in there. I’ll just wait in bed. I wonder what you’d smell like coming out of the shower. Probably amazing.”

“You don’t have to wait and find out, you could always just join me,” Chat smirks, chin being lazily pushed up. “While we’re daydreaming and all.”

“I’ll think about thinking about it. Pretend I pushed your nose, I’m too tired to aim,” she groans softly. As Ladybug relaxes her arm, he keeps his chin resting in her hand as it lowers. She strokes her thumb on the soft skin under his jaw. “You weren’t waiting too long for me to wake up, were
you?"

He shakes his head softly, heavy on her soothing hand. “That akuma really tuckered me out too. It was nice watching you sleep while I could, anyway.” He yawns.

“Sounds like someone needs coffee,” Ladybug says, before yawning as well.

“No way, once I get back to my house, I’m going back to sleep. Though yes, coffee after.” Chat mumbles as his head lolls over to the side on hers. “I should make you a cup some time. Kinda got coffee geeky and, long story short, I have the same espresso machine I see in most cafes now.”

“Are we legally too young to get married and buy a place to move in together?”

“Sadly, I think so.”

Ladybug groans. “What if I bake things to bribe officials with?”

“Unless they’re like me, it probably won’t work. Man, though,” he hums deeply as he slumps around her, “Your home baking and my coffee... Breakfasts would be the best. Maybe I can money-bribe people.”

“Yesss. Oh, our parents, though?”

“Damn. Right, those. Don’t think either will work with them.”

The two grumble over being denied the domestic bliss they clearly deserve and have figured out at the mature age of seventeen.

Ladybug finally raises her head, blinking at the sunlight. She feels a twinge of annoyance again until she focuses on her partner, looking at the way it makes Chat’s hair glow at the edges and warmly illuminates his features. It’s always nice to see what different tones of green his eyes will take on. The light matches his gentle smile and his voice perfectly when he asks, “See what I mean about how nice it was to watch you sleep?”

“I do, yeah,” she says, smiling back and combing a hand through his hair. It’s even messier than usual. She carefully smooths out tangles, and his expression turns blissful as he closes his eyes.

“One day, right?”

“One day.”

“No signing any leases or mortgages for now but,” he opens an eye, “When we do decide to, I wonder how much things will have changed.”

“How do you mean?”

“I guess all this talking about the future just got me thinking about, you know, less fun and more immediate stuff. All those back to school commercials already everywhere, summer ending.”

He opens his eyes with a pout. Ladybug coos in sympathy and sits up to kiss him on the forehead, melting it away.

“Right. Immediate future. After the bacs, which are scary enough, I’m not really sure what I’m going to do. I mean, keep pursuing fashion design, obviously, but how to spend my gap year, which schools to apply to, what kind of back up plan to have...” She looks aside.
“Hey,” he moves his head to catch her eye. “You always figure something out.”

“Yeah... Thanks, chaton,” she squeezes him in a hug before pulling back again. “How about you? Already have plans?”

“Not really, but I’m sure my father does,” he drawls. “Though I can’t blame him entirely. It’s not like he made me take the economics and social sciences stream.”

“Ugh, still, he must have put it in your head that you have to.”

“I guess. Spoke about job security, stuff like that,” he heaves out a breath, “Now, though, I feel like it’s the one stream I shouldn’t have taken. Even if it is smart if I’m going into the family business—they call it organized crime for a reason.”

“Don’t forget, philosophy will let you make great speeches with twisted morality too.”

“True,” he makes an eerie impression of his father, “I don’t expect you to understand, but keeping women from having clothes with pockets is for the best.”

“Pocket sexism? You really are evil!” She gasps loudly. He grins. “No but really, I hate that. Totally putting pockets on my clothing.”

She furrows her brows, saying, “I get why you would have wanted to go hard sciences, but arts and literature? Did I miss something?”

“Nah, don’t worry, you still make an art of reading me like an open book,” Chat headbutts her.

She rolls her eyes and starts scratching his head. “Maybe you just want more classes with the rest of the squad?”

“There’s that but also, I don’t know,” he pauses and leans into her hand, closing his eyes for a moment, before he continues.

“I like school more than pretty much anyone. It’s probably because I was stuck at home for so long, then public school became a nice escape for me. Somewhere I could actually have peers, friends, see everyone goofing around. Even join in a little. Humanities would mean I could maybe become an educator or a school counsellor. Maybe. I wish I actually knew what I wanted... The rest of you, even if Nino’s not sure between film or music, you all have something. I don’t mind modelling, but it’s not my something.”

“Well, I,” Ladybug looks down and around, “I guess I never thought of that. I’ve had my sights set on fashion for as long as I can remember.”

She looks back up with a smile. “Though now that you mention it, you’d make a great teacher or counsellor. I just know the kids would love you. You said that’s a maybe, but even if you don’t have a something, that might not be so bad.”

He stops rubbing her back, his hand stilling as his expression turns into a puzzled frown. “What do you mean?

“Guess it might be a grass is greener thing,” she shrugs, “But breaking into fashion isn’t the easiest. Even if I’m confident in my abilities, it can be a ‘right place at the right time’ situation, or ‘wrong place, wrong time,’ that makes or breaks my career. If it ever gets to the point where it’s just a bad idea all around, I’d still never forgive myself for doing something else. You, though? You could go whichever way you end up wanting.”
“Crunching numbers at some other desk?” His wry smile doesn’t reach his eyes.

Ladybug strokes his cheek. “Any place needs management. Even education. Or labs. Plus, you could just do it until you figure something out.”

He nods slowly. “Nothing says I can’t start studying something else later.”

“Whatever happens, I’m behind you one hundred percent, minou.”

“Yeah. Yeah, thinking of everything else feels...” He takes a deep breath. “ Weird. I don’t know. Us, I do know.”

They look at each other and smile.

“Besides, Chat, you’re a go getter. Or go get her. You managed to snag me, didn’t you?” She raises her brows with a smirk.

He snorts into a laugh. “I needed that. Thanks. If I’ve already managed to get the best thing anyone could ask for, I can make anything else work.”

“That’s for sure,” Ladybug ruffles his hair. “You better make things work, you still have have two out of three to go.”

“Two out of three?”

She stands to stretch, Chat watching for a moment before he gets up too, and trails her as she walks over to the end of the building facing the street. Still puzzled, he leans on the railing at the edge of the rooftop and looks at her. Ladybug catches his curious gaze and looks around at the buildings below them, at the skyline and it’s distant buildings. At Paris.

“We still have to save the kingdom and live happily ever after,” she says before she looks over and smiles, “For your fairy tale.”

He grins wide. “A happy ending.”

“Well, I don’t know about an ending,” she hums. “‘Happily ever after’ is pretty vague. If it’s our story, then I’d rather it didn’t end.”

Chat pulls her in and nuzzles her hair roughly, making her giggle. “Right as always, My Lady. Screw it, right? We’ll make it up as we go along.”

“Just more and more beginnings, and plenty of messing around in between,” Ladybug holds him tight. She sighs. “For now, you should probably go and at least have a little catnap before you have to be up.”

He looks out to the city. “This time I hate that you’re right. See you later?”

“Of course,” she says as they part and he flicks out his baton. As he prepares to vault, she adds, “Hate to see you leave, but love to watch you go.”

She does watch him go, smiling fondly as he laughs in the air.
Their story goes on, but my part in it ends here.

This whole work has been a learning experience and major challenge for me. It feels like a hit or miss thing chapter by chapter. Each one was never planned other than the idea of Explosive to set everything off. Otherwise, the premise, writing, and editing were all done in one sitting then posted immediately. I might go back and rewrite or majorly edit stuff, actually.

Anyway, the important point is whether you enjoyed coming along for the ride. I hope you did. You all are what kept me going. Thanks for reading!

PS Oh! And I will be responding to comments again, so feel free to ask anything you want!
[Stay (A Second Time)]

Chapter Summary

YOU THOUGHT—

I had to do something for the day after the ML anniversary. After all, I made 2 September a part of the story. This one isn't that Ladynoir heavy, but we finally get some karaoke! There's some lowkey DJWiFi too, but the focus is really on the relationship between LB + CN and Paris. As this fic developed, that became very important. This actually feels like more of a proper ending, too. Plus I really like the worldbuilding that came out of this fic so, if I decide to continue as a series or something, this chapter has things that could be setup for what maybe could possibly come in the future. Who knows. whistles innocently

Just so you aren't confused when this comes up, "The Reverend" Al Green is a nickname for the singer.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chat Noir had been prepared to do whatever it took to organize this night. As it turned out, all it ever took were the words, “The second of September is a special day for Ladybug and I, so I was thinking—“ and that was usually when he would be cut off with something along the lines of, “What can I do?”

What he didn’t know, and still doesn’t, is that after he asked one person, they began making their own preparations.

“There better not be fire happening,” Ladybug mumbles to herself, swinging towards the night market. As she approaches, there is, in fact, no sign of fire, but no sign of Chat either. He had invited her out here, she has to find him. She considers taking to the rooftops again already as she’s landing. The market is unusually crowded tonight, meaning there’s a constant wall of bodies. The people are also more diverse, come to think of it. In any case, there’s no way she’ll find him on foot.

She’s about to throw her yo-yo again when she hears him. Voice deeper than usual, over speakers, Chat sings a drawn out, “I...”

Lights go up.

A large stage is revealed. The back is taken up by a projected silent montage of videos fans have taken with the superheroes. All the speakers and cables route to one side of the stage. Apparently, the helm for where all the audio/visual controls are. Presiding over it is— Nino? Nino. Who starts playing a karaoke version of Al Green’s Let’s Stay Together. Backdrop, of course, for Chat at centre stage. The crowd parts between them.

Chat’s eyes sparkle in the spotlights, crinkled with the huge grin on his face as he’s paused. He only sees her. He holds the microphone intimately close to his lips so his next words come out low, and
almost spoken, not sung, “I’m so in love with you.”

Ladybug puts a hand up over her own grin, cheeks warming. The crowd cheers, but she doesn’t hear as they look and grin at one another.

Then his gaze the look takes on it’s usual playful glint and Chat slips into the role of the showman.

He pulls the mic away and starts to move with the beat, singing, “Whatever you want to do,” now he’s dancing sideways towards her. He winks, deepening his voice again with a suggestive tone, “Is all right with me~”

It’s only then, shaking her head slightly, that Ladybug realizes Alya— Alya?— Alya is right beside her. She silently holds out a microphone for Ladybug, a brow raised with a smirk. Ladybug could pick up what she was putting down and no, she did not intend to let Chat steal the entire show. She says as much by smirking back at her unknowing best friend and taking the microphone. She languidly approaches Chat, hips swaying. Their voices mix for the couple of words.

“Cause you,” Ladybug sings. He stops, eyes wide. “Make me feel so brand new.”

Chat absolutely loses his mind. His off hand comes up in a fist to his mouth, mouth open in an incredulous grin. He actually jumps in place. “Oh! Oh, ladies and gentlemen! Who knew singing was a hidden superpower of hers?”

The crowd cheers again, his excitement making a giggle bubble up in her throat. She waits until they meet eyes again to sing softly, “And I want to spend my life with you.”

Chat’s other hand comes up to his mouth again as he smiles.

He comes to the end of the stage, bending down and reaching out a hand to help her up, voices mingled in, “Let me say that since,” she takes his hand and hops up on stage, “Since we’ve been together.”

“Loving you forever,” he begins sauntering around again, and she joins in, “Is what I need.”

He stops singing to clap his hands, getting even more into it, with an “Mmm!” It lets her sing the next part to Chat herself.

“Let me be the one you come running to,” she gestures for him to come closer.

He does, and leans in, shaking his head, “I’ll never be untrue.”

Chat pulls away again, he and Ladybug singing and dancing with each other, swept up in the song now. “Oh baby! Let’s! Let’s stay together!”

The crowd echoes, “Together!”

“Lovin’ you whether,” everyone is singing, “Whether times are good or bad, or happy, or sad!”

Chat playfully twirls Ladybug before they turn to the crowd, stirring them up to all sing again, “Whether times are good or bad, or happy, or sad!”

They go on as Alya stops singing along with everyone else around her and tears her eyes away from her OTP. It’s only made a little easier that they’re playing to the crowd now instead of clearly being so adorably into each other that they were in their own world for the first part. She sighs, hands over her heart, pushing through the crowd.
She climbs the side of the stage to get another microphone from where Nino is dancing and singing along himself. She thinks he might be too into it to notice her, but he raises his brows at her. “Yo, soul girl, not getting into the song? For shame, Alya, what would your parents think?”

“I have emcee duties, they would understand,” she crosses her arms. “So would The Reverend, for that matter.”

“Maybe, but I’m pretty sure an emcee isn’t supposed to give away her only mic too.”

“I gave it to Ladybug, boy, that’s different,” Alya jabs a finger at him. He backs away a step with hands up and an ooh. “Anyways, an emcee isn’t supposed to squee into her mic either, and I totally would have.”

“Yeah,” Nino snickers, leaning on the counter. He pulls his phone out and taps at it. “Man, huge crowd already, considering it was just word of mouth. Hope it worked, keeping it on the down-low from Ladybug. Just gonna get bigger now ‘cause social media is exploding. Trending number one.”

Alya grins, looking at his phone screen, then to the stage backdrop projecting Ladybug and Chat Noir on stage. “And the Ladyblog gets the exclusive stream to the stage cameras. How are you liking handling the A/V anyway?”

“Oh man, hon, I am more kitted here than I’ve ever been. When I was setting up and the crew was giving me the rundown, I could have cried. I lost my damn mind!”

“I believe you, you’re geeking out again right now.”

He holds up some wood sided machine with more knobs and buttons than Alya would ever know what to do with. “A DSI Tempest! These are like, over two thousand euro, I never though I’d even get to mess around with one in a shop, and I’m gonna get to play it all night.” He looks misty eyed again, stroking some kind of extremely complicated looking machine. At least this one has two platters that make it look like the turntables Alya’s used to. She can barely hear him through the music as he says in a reverent tone, “Numark. It’s so beautiful. Digital controller, analog vinyl platters.”

She hugs him, laughing. “Alright, alright, but put the gear love in the feelings box right now.”

“Oh yeah, my bad,” he smiles sheepishly, reaching up to squeeze her arm. When she lets go, he turns to retrieve a bundle of red roses. “By the way, make sure to put your hand over that mic for the next part. You know, if you don’t want to broadcast the fangirling.”

Alya raises her brows at him. He doesn’t take notice as he looks through the flowers. “You’re still not gonna tell me why I’m helping the florist girl hand those out?”

He shrugs, picking out a couple of choice roses. One he lays by his laptop. “I get to pull one over you for once, and you want me to blow that? Yeah, no. Trust me, you’re gonna love it.” Nino leans in to tuck the other behind her ear, twinkle in his eye. “I kinda want to keep it a surprise for you.”

She puts her hand up to fix the rose in place more securely, hand brushing his as he pulls it back. “How do you get at least twice as smooth whenever you’re DJing?”

“Music, babe,” he smiles and sways his shoulders to a different beat than what’s playing, “Love is the message, and the message is love.”

“From the streets, to the mountains, to the heavens above,” Alya returns his song and smile, before climbing back down to get to her job.
As she hands out the roses to audience members, she meets the very intense gaze of the other girl handing them out, who nods at her curtly. Alya has no idea why this would be such serious business, but she’ll be damned if she doesn’t respond with a sharp nod to match.

The song finishes, with the crowd cheering and chanting the heroes’ names. Chat takes the microphones, puts them in stands and parks them at the very back of the stage. She bows and waves. As he’s walking back, she raises her voice to elicit another round of cheering with, “Chat Noir, everyone!”

He bows low several times in different directions with a flourish in each one.

Meanwhile, the projection shows a band, with audio this time. They apologize about not being able to be there in person, but thank Ladybug and Chat Noir for everything they do for Paris, saying they’re very happy that one of their songs is being used tonight.

Ladybug is about to ask what that’s all about when it goes dark. A lone spotlight shines on Chat, who has struck a pose, one hand up in the air. “DJ Nino, if you please!”

Nino throws him a red rose, which he catches. In fluid motions, Chat puts the rose between his teeth by the stem, holds it in his mouth with a rakish grin, pulls Ladybug into a tango embrace, and dips her slightly. It’s quick. She’s blinks up at him. He just waggles his brows, obviously pleased with himself.

“Gotan Project, everyone!” Nino says over the roar of the crowd “And I am very happy to play this song from them.” Electronic tango sweeps in from the speakers, spotlight going dim but still tracking the pair. The other stage lights go up again, lighting up the stage in a low red. Chat immediately begins to lead Ladybug in a... mostly family friendly dance.

(If one were paying attention, they may have heard a cut off squeal of delight over the speakers).

A few wolf whistles come from the crowd, as does a truly staggering amount of roses being thrown onto the stage.

Privately, the couple speaks. “Chat, if you managed this on short notice, I’m a little terrified about what you’re doing for Valentine’s and our anniversaries.”

“My Lady, be very afraid,” he chuckles deviously, but his words come out sounding ridiculous through his teeth and the rose stem. “Though due credit, this is as much thanks to many fair Parisians as it is to me, at the very least.”

“Best wingmen. But you might want to stop talking with that in your mouth, it makes you sound so goofy. Probably not the mood you’re going for.”

“As if that can stop me from utterly charming you,” he mumbles around the rose he refuses to let go of. “Can’t stop me rolling my ‘r’s, either. Rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr.”

“You’re such a dork,” she buries her face in his shoulder to stifle laughter.

“A sexy, seductive dork you can’t resist.”

The audience is hush, taken by the display of fiery passion, hoping to hear their banter which they assume is something much more in line with what they’re seeing and not what it actually is. They break into cheer once in a while for particularly impressive moves, more sultry ones, and at the end when Chat holds Ladybug in a lower dip, their faces much closer than before.
They spend a moment with eyes locked, chests heaving. Ladybug caresses Chat’s cheek so he closes his to lean into her touch, savouring the warmth and affection from her hand.

“Chat,” she says, getting his eyes to flutter open again. She smirks and runs her fingers along his jaw to his mouth. Ladybug flicks the rose out. Before he knows it, she takes his lips in a deep kiss. Distantly, she hears the crowd go wild, but the visceral part of her presses the heat of his lips to the forefront of her mind. His lips curl into a smirk against hers. They have to part for breath. When he kisses her again, she cuts it short to little more than a peck. “That’s enough for now.”

“You are incorrigible,” he breathes.

“No, I would be if I let us continue in front of everyone,” she flicks his bell and winks as she straightens them up again. “I think the rest we have to save for private.”

“Such a tease.” He lets her go and takes her hand, which he bows to kiss the back of. “I look forward to it. This has been all I had planned, so it shouldn’t be long.”

“Try not to fantasize too much while we’re finishing up, minou.”

“As a strapping young man, I cannot promise anything.”

“Um,” Alya gets their attention, microphone down at her side, fanning herself with her other hand. “Trust me, I really, really hate to interrupt, but I can’t keep everyone else waiting for the next part.”

“Next part? I thought this was all.” Ladybug looks to Chat. He looks just as confused.

“Well,” Alya smiles, speaking into the microphone now, “This was all Chat had planned, but I have a little something extra. I hope you don’t mind, but this day is important for us too. It’s when you first showed everyone how you would show Papillon, guys! Come on, take your seats.”

They hadn’t noticed the stage being cleared, a couch having been placed near them. A podium is being set up across from it. Ladybug and Chat sit, Alya standing beside them before Ladybug pats the couch. Alya smiles at her and half-seats herself on the armrest.

She turns to the audience. “For those of you who don’t recognize me, I’m Alya Césaire of the Ladyblog. When Chat Noir asked me for help with this event, I couldn’t help but organize a bit more myself. As touching as that was, we have plenty of love of our own to show them, am I right?” The crowd breaks out into agreement.

“We love you LB and Chat!” A particularly loud, familiar, female voice carries above the others yelling the same sort of things. “You two are awesome!”

Ladybug whispers, “It’s your friend, chaton.”

“No, you’re awesome!” He stands to speak momentarily into Alya’s mic and point in the general direction of the voice. Everyone cheers, but the excitable woman’s yelling cuts through the others.

“We are feeling the love tonight!” Alya laughs over the speakers. “To show our heroes just how much they’ve helped us, I’ve invited a few people they’ve worked with closely to speak. I don’t think these two can actually realize how many people they’ve helped.

“Speaking personally, as someone who was formerly taken by an akuma, the compassion these two have for people like me, no matter how hard they had to fight us, is really amazing. I know their attitude about it has helped me so much.”
She stops to listen to something Ladybug says and smiles. “LB just said that who they fight aren’t really us. This is exactly what I mean. We’ll hear more about this from leaders of some of the support networks that have popped up over the years, but I’ve taken up enough time. We have our first guest, Chief Urban Search and Rescue Technician Cédric... Er, actually, monsieur, I could have sworn I got everyone’s full names and titles, but somehow your last name isn’t here. Sorry about that.”

The man at the podium is indeed Cédric, the middle aged rescue tech they are, sadly, on a first name basis with. He waves off Alya’s concern. “No need, mademoiselle. We’re all friends here, eh? Hey, you two.”

Ladybug and Chat Noir smile and wave. The latter calls over, “How was your vacation?”

“Oh, great! I’ll have to show you two the photos some time— Oh, thanks, Nino!”

Nino, who apparently is also now on a first name basis with Cédric, has set the projector to display a slideshow of vacation pictures and video.

“Anyway, I’ve been a SARtech for a long time now. It’s always tough to lose people, even knowing you can’t save ‘em all. Then you two came along and started helping, akuma related or not, and we barely get fatalities anymore. It’s, well,” he chuckles, “A miracle. ‘Cause tell you what, it’s not just the folks in the statistics— or I guess, not in the statistics thanks to you— that you’ve helped save. It’s the friends and family I hear from, grateful as all get out. For their loved ones being safe, not for the fact that I tried, which honestly kinda cuts deep. Or heck, yelling me out, not knowing what else to do with their grief. Haven’t had a lot of that for a long time, now. You oughta hear the thanks too, so I brought a few letters to read.”

He clears his throat before beginning to read a letter from a husband, some parts on behalf of his children, who could have lost their mother.

It goes on like this with different representatives. Mostly first responders, charity workers, and heads of organizations for direct victims of akuma and akuma attacks. They mostly talk to the heroes, rarely acknowledging the audience, about not just the obvious part of lives saved— the immediate fact that they didn’t die— but what those people went on to do with the lives. They speak of the hope they’ve instilled, courage they’ve inspired, the general sense of safety they give in spite of the face of constant threat.

At one point, between introducing guests, Alya sneaks off to return to the couch with tissues. The cameras pointedly do not show Chat using one as Ladybug squeezes him with a side hug.

The last is former police Captain Lefebvre.

“Evening. Like Césaire said, I was a cop, basically the liaison between the force and these two nutjobs. Don’t really talk like this much, but I kinda felt like I had to for these kids. And we all forget it,” he turns to wag his finger at the crowd, “But they were damn young when they started and they’re still kids. The kinda shh- stuff they do? Ain’t for kids. Ain’t for anyone. I’m a pretty tough son of a... of a gun, but when they started out, I was already burning out. Ready to retire.”

He turns back to couch. “Then I watch the news and some guy I had no idea how we were gonna handle because he’s using literal ff- freakin’ magic shows up, all giving this supervillain speech with a creepy purple butterfly head. I thought, that’s it, this is too weird, time to pack up my desk.

“Then little lady over here shows up lays the verbal smackdown. Now, that got my attention. The two of you clean up that whole mess, and I tell the guys and gals who knew I was planning on leaving that I gotta stick around, make sure you two don’t get yourselves killed. And that was true,
but,” he shrugs, glancing aside, “What I didn’t say, hell, what I didn’t even really know at the time? You reminded me why I got my badge in the first place. I wanted to help people. I just lost faith I could really do that.”

He scratches the back of his head.

“Watching you two though, I knew you were helping people. So I thought, hell, at the least, I can help these two help others. I’m just too old for this shhtuff now, but if I were a younger man, I’d keep on keeping on because of you two.” Lefebvre looks at Ladybug and Chat, through their suits and masks. When he goes on, he doesn’t sound like they’ve ever heard him.

“... It’s funny. I’ve watched you two go from chubby cheeked, bright eyed, bushy tailed little brats to growing up all pretty— and I mean little lady of course, but you too, Chat. Jeez, yer such a pretty boy. You know, my grandkid has pictures of you up on her bedroom wall along with that one model boy? You know the one.”

Chat laughs, hand on his neck. “Yeah, I know the one.”

“Right. Anyway, like I said at the start, you’ve been going through all kinds of stuff no one oughta go through, but still... Even though I can tell it’s gotten to you, I mean how can it not? The two of you are still all bright eyed. I hope,” he goes silent for a moment. “I hope you stay that way.

“It’s not like I haven’t seen rookie after rookie still like that after a few years, but none of them ever started as young as you. For whatever reason, I feel like you two really are gonna stay this way. You’re tougher, grittier, meaner when you need to be than I coulda ever hoped, and still stay the kinda nice, friendly neighbourhood heroes folks really need. You deserve tonight. You deserve more than we can pay back.”

The two superheroes smile at him, and Lefebvre coughs into a fist. “Anyway! Enough of that mushy stuff.” He pulls out Chat’s gift to him.

“I figured out this bear ocarina thing you gave me— turns out I got a lot of time and energy to burn now— and I figured, since I’m wrapping this whole thing up, why not play you something? Lahiffe!”

“Yes, sir!”

“Give me a funky beat.”

“You got it!”

Nino starts playing breakbeat on his drum machine, and the grizzled former police captain joins him on the small bear shaped ocarina he can barely hold properly in his large hands. They are jamming.

Ladybug and Chat Noir are dubstruck. Alya is dumbstruck. The entire audience is dumbstruck. They listen to this absolutely unexpected, yet undeniably sick collaboration in silent awe.

Nino and Lefebvre lose themselves to the music and play on. No one protests.

When this spectacle comes to an end, there is a moment of silence before everyone slowly starts clapping and continues respectful applause as the retired captain tips the bill of an invisible cap to Ladybug and Chat before striding off stage.

“W-Well,” Alya says after he’s gone and the applause has died down. “That was... Wow. Thank you, Monsieur Lefebvre and DJ Nino. Wow. So that’s, that’s the end of the program. If our heroes
can stick around and talk to people? They say yes. Stick around if you want a chance at that. DJ Nino will be playing for us all night, so enjoy the music, enjoy the market, and a round of applause for the volunteers who helped make this happen!"

Though that bizarre, beautiful turn will never truly leave Ladybug and Chat Noir, they put it out of their minds for the night as they get generous helpings of their favourite curry from a very nice guy they know to recharge on as they mill through the crowd, though some stay tight knit by the stage. Music goes on playing (sans ocarina), occasional cheers when Nino goes, “Make some noise!”

They’ve had plenty of meet and greets. Typically, people just want an autograph and selfie, with short talk before wandering off. Tonight, those interactions are in the minority. Usually rare, seemingly every conversation has heartfelt thanks with stories of how they’ve touched personal lives. If anyone notices the way Chat Noir’s smile quivers at times, they don’t make a point of it.

One little girl shyly tells Ladybug that she’s her hero. “I’ve even sort of started standing up to my bully lately, because you wouldn’t take that, and I want to be just like you,” she says as the two lean in to hear her.

“She certainly doesn’t,” Chat says. “Not school bullies, and not superpowered bullies either.”

The girl nods enthusiastically. “When you two kick Papillon’s butt, you aren’t going to disappear, are you?”

“Never,” Ladybug doesn’t hesitate. “Paris and it’s people, like you, you’re too important to us. We couldn’t be who we are without you, right Chat?”

“Right as always, My Lady.” he kneels to be on level with the girl and says conspiratorially, “Just ask her, you really can’t get rid of me once I’m in love, and Paris is second only to her in my heart.”

The girl blinks at him.

“You’re cheesy.”

Ladybug breaks into laughter and he snickers with a shrug.

“But you’re really nice and funny. You’re my hero too, Chat,” she hugs him.

“You know,” Ladybug says, smiling warmly as the girl squeals when Chat pulls her in for a bear hug. “I think you’re already just like me.”

Chapter End Notes

The one unnamed song here, which Nino and Alya sing a couple of lines from to each other, is another Al Green song: Love Is The Message. After finding out members of her family are named after Otis Redding, Etta James, and Ella Fitzgerald, you can pry the HC that Alya's musical tastes run in soul, jazz, and that period's like music from my cold, dead hands. (๑•̩̩̩̩ ๑)

(I didn't specify a Gotan Project song because I couldn't choose.)
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