Transferred

by Cameo_Cat

Summary

Lila promised to make Marinette's life terrible. She succeeded. With the school against her Marinette transfers. Salt, friendships, and Fresh Baked Justice in due time.

Notes

Original post on tumblr: https://dakota-r-riley.tumblr.com/post/184958197716/transferred

Was inspired by this post: https://dakota-r-riley.tumblr.com/post/184682818176/can-you-make-a-headcanonprompt-where-marinet
Marinette couldn't have been in a happier disposition walking to school. She was caught up with her schoolwork, she got a full eight hours of sleep, no akumas all this week, and a wave of inspiration saw to many new designs in her sketchbook. The only thing that could make this better was if Adrien showed up with a tray of her favorite flavored macarons!

She skipped up the steps and into the school. “Good morning, Alya!”

“You’re in a good mood today.” Alya smirked at her friend, “Chloe get a botched haircut?”

“No, it’s just a good morning.” Marinette took a deep breath, “I feel like for the first time in weeks I can stand still and breathe.”

“Good for you, girl. Get that self care.” The two started a conversation for their plans for the week as they walked into class.

Marinette sat down and disaster struck. “Ugh!” she shot up from her seat, “My seat is wet!”

“My side isn’t,” Alya patted her side of the desk. She brushed a finger over Marinette’s side and sniffed, “Smells like cleaning product. Maybe bleach?”

“Bleach?”

“Turn around,” Marinette turned and Alya cringed, “Yep. Definitely bleach. Your entire butt is discolored now.”

“Darn it!” Marinette stretched to see her favorite pair of pink jeans now ruined. “I can’t walk around like this.”

“Go home and change. I’ll clean this up.”

“Thanks, Alya.” Marinette bolted from the room. This was a damper on her day but it was no matter, her house was right across the street and she had plenty of time till class started.

She flew down the stairs and was running for the front door. But her two left feet did what they do best and next thing she knew she was falling face first into the ground. “Ouch…”

“Marinette, are you okay?” she heard a voice behind her. Adrien.

“Yes!” she rolled over so he couldn’t see the huge stain on her butt, “Perfectly fine. Not even a scratch.”

“Are you sure? It looked like you hit pretty hard.”

“All good here.”

“Good.” he held out a hand to help her up, “I was actually hoping to see you before class.”

“Yeah?” she perked up.

“You know how we have that project for history? The one where we analyze the evolution of stuff?”

“What about it?”
“Well, since I know you’re really into fashion and I’ve been raised in that world since birth I was wondering if maybe you wanted to team up. We could write a whole presentation on how fashion evolved throughout history.”

This was amazing! Adrien wanted to be her partner for a project. A fashion project! That meant hours researching together, creating the presentation together, talking late into the night about what they found. Then that late night talk slowly turns into a deep conversation about their hopes and dreams and deepest darkest secrets. Their sleepy minds and bodies confessing things they never dared to say in the light of day. Falling asleep with the phone on and waking up the next morning remembering what they had confessed but still happy about it as they realize they were utterly made for one another--

“Whoa, Marinette, what happened to your butt?” Nino’s voice broke her out of her daydream.

Her face went pure red as she turned away from him trying to cover the stain. She got so enamored with Adrien she had completely forgotten why she was out here in the first place!

“Oh…” Adrien glimpsed at the stain but immediately turned away, “That uh...that doesn’t look good.”

“I--I uh--” This wasn’t happening.

The bell rang and Marinette tried not to scream. She had wasted her time to get changed. If she left now she’d be late for sure.

With no other option she took off her jacket and tied it around her waist. It would hide the stain for now. But the emotional damage had been done. “It’ll be okay, Marinette,” Adrien placed a hand on her shoulder, “It’s just a little stain.”

“You’re right,” she smiled at Adrien, “Also, I’d love to be your partner for the project. It sounds like a great idea.”

“Great. Now let’s get to class before we get in trouble.” They rushed back upstairs to the classroom.

Alya assured Marinette her seat was safe now but had to wonder why she was still in the same clothes. One look at who she entered the room with though was all the answer she needed. As Ms. Bustier started role call Marinette brainstormed who would have put bleach on her seat. Kim is a prankster but he would have done it to the entire class if that was his game. Chloe seemed a good choice but she had seen her and Sabrina come in after her incident. That would only leave--

“Lila?” Ms. Bustier called.

“Present.” Lila’s voice rang from the back of the classroom. Marinette sat boiling with rage. Of course it was Lila. Trying to sabotage her via lies wasn’t enough, now she had resorted to clothes ruining pranks.

“Alright class,” Ms. Bustier called her attention back to the lesson, “Don’t forget that I will need your pairs for the history project and what you’ll be presenting by the end of the day.”

Marinette’s raged quieted down. Who cares about Lila’s dumb prank? A ruined pair of pants was nothing compared to having Adrien as Marinette’s history partner!

“Actually Ms. Bustier,” Lila said, “I don’t have a partner and seeing as how there is an uneven amount of students I don’t think it would be fair to make me work alone.”
“One group of three should be fine.” Ms. Bustier shrugged.

“Then that group has a bigger advantage then the pairs. Maybe it would be best if we all worked separately. That way it is equal.”

Marinette turned and glared at Lila. No way is she splitting up Adrien and Marinette that easily.

“I suppose that would be more more fair.” Ms. Bustier agreed. “Instead of presentations how about everyone writes a three page paper on the evolution of whatever you choose.”

That little--

“Perfect!” Lila clasped her hands together, “I’d like to cover the evolution of fashion.”

“Alright,” Ms. Bustier jotted it down on her clipboard, “Lila has fashion. Anyone else have topics?”

No. No this wasn’t happening! Her project time with Adrien! Her topic! Her pants! Lila had ruined them all in less then ten minutes! Marinette bit down on her notebook to keep from screaming. She risked another glance at the object of her ire. Lila was looking right at her with a devious smirk. She couldn’t even call her out for ruining her day. There was no proof that she was the one that put bleach on her seat and it wasn’t exactly against the rules to convince the teacher to change the format of the assignment. Still, that didn’t mean she couldn’t be angry about it.

During lunch Marinette got to go home and change clothes. At least that was one problem fixed.

If anything Marinette should have realized exactly how this week, nay, this month was going to go. Lila was out to get her. To punch her into the ground so deep that she could never escape. In a way...she succeeded.

That week Marinette was the victim of many pranks. She thought the bleach was bad. Marinette wished for something as nice as bleach. Her locker was filled with shaving cream ruining all her homework the next day. Poison ivy was rubbed onto her desk giving her hands and forearms a horrible rash. Her backpack had a bunch of broken pens dropped into it. Lila even managed to get gum in Marinette’s hair without her noticing.

Still Lila left no evidence. No one saw her do it and there were no cameras where she could have tampered with Marinette’s things. Marinette complained to Alya about how Lila was ruining her life but her best friend didn’t think Lila could do it. Alya only thought that Marinette was blaming her because of Lila’s interest in Adrien.

“Lila,” Marinette approached her after having gotten the gum carefully clipped from her hair, “I know what you’re doing.”

“Doing what?” she blinked her eyes innocently.

“These dumb pranks. I know it’s you that’s doing it. I don’t care that you don’t like me but how is this making you happy? Sure they can make life harder but at the end of the day it is merely you ruining objects. They can be replaced or fixed. No real harm.”

“So what you’re saying is that I should do something worse?” Lila smirked.

Marinette’s blood ran cold. Maybe this wasn’t a good idea.

“Listen pigtails,” Lila got closer, that smile too sweet to be real, “I was being kind before. I promised to ruin you and that is exactly what I’ll do. You think shaving cream and gum is bad? You’ll wish
that you never crossed paths with me Marinette Dupain-Cheng. If you want to avoid what I have in store for you then back off or you’ll see what I can really do.”

She flipped her hair and shouldered her way past Marinette. Marinette couldn’t move herself from the spot Lila had rooted her in. The last time Lila had made a threat like that Marinette almost got akumatized. She pulled out her phone and went the picture folder she kept full of things that made her happy. It was her emergency pick-me-up in cases like this where she felt at her lowest. She had been using it a lot lately.

Once she had calmed down she adjusted her bookbag and took off for home.

It was the start of a new week and Marinette was taking extra precautions to avoid any more pranks or whatever it was Lila had threatened. She made it about halfway through the day without hitting a single snag. There was a study hall and Marinette was in the library putting the finishing touches on her history paper about the evolution of baking. She had exceeded the three page requirement to a lofty four and a half. If she could have had fashion as she would have liked it would have been even longer but Marinette was still very proud of her paper.

With a quick spell check she hit print and went to collect her document from the printer. Good thing she finished it when she did seeing as how it was due in twenty minutes. She would have had it done yesterday if it wasn’t for a nasty akuma taking up the better part of her essay time.

She got to the printer and sighed. Paper jam shredded her essay. She unjammed the printer and went back to the computer to reprint it.

“What in the…” she trailed off as she looked at the computer screen. Where was her essay? The document was gone! Not just the essay but all her notes and the sources she had saved. She tried everything but her paper had been wiped out of existence! “Lila!” she growled under her breath.

The bell rang and Marinette dragged herself to class. Hopefully Ms. Bustier would understand. The class started to hand in their essays. “Marinette, where’s your essay?”

“I had it done. Completely, one hundred percent done, but when I went to print it the printer jammed.” Marinette muttered.

“That’s alright, just e-mail it to me.” Ms. Bustier answered.

“Also,” she took a deep breath, “The essay itself was deleted from my folder along with all my research notes.”

“How did that happen? Did the computer crash?” Ms. Bustier was looking at her now with more suspicion than sympathy.

“No. Someone deleted it.” Marinette could practically feel Lila’s triumphant smirk beaming behind her.

“Who would do such a thing?”

“I don’t know…” she mumbled. No one was buying this. She knew what she looked like. It was an even less believable story than the old dog-ate-my-homework excuse.

“Well, I’ll give you till tomorrow morning to hand in your essay.” Ms. Bustier’s words were clipped, “But next time I hope that you’ll take your assignments more seriously and not wait till the very last minute to do them.”
“Yes, Ms. Bustier.” she sunk lower in her seat. Class continued on and Marinette spent her entire
night trying to recreate the essay. It wasn’t nearly as nice as the one she had before. Barely making it
to three pages as the sun poked through her window. At least it was done.

She e-mailed it to Ms. Bustier and collapsed into bed so to get an hour or two of sleep. Her alarm
went off way too early for her liking. Too tired to summon the ability to care about anything
Marinette pulled herself from bed, threw on a pair of sweatpants and her comfiest t-shirt and hoodie,
used her hands as a comb and shuffled downstairs to grab a croissant and tea. Normally she didn’t
like using caffeine as a means to keep herself awake cause it only made her heart rate increase
without actually waking up her mind. If there was a chance it could work this time though she’d take
it.

Marinette trudged up the stairs of the school and dropped into her seat. Lila could set her on fire for
all she cared. “Morning Marinette...oh wow.” Alya settled her head next to her bestie’s. “Late
night?”

“Shh,” Marinette covered her mouth, “Sleeping.”

“Oh. But I feel it is safe to warn you that the art students: you, Alix, Nathaneal, Marc, and the rest
of them are getting those pictures for the newspaper done today.”

“Nooooooooo,” Marinette pulled her hood up further, “I look like crap.”

“Sorry, girl,” Alya rubbed her back, “Maybe there’s a design in the art room you can slip into during
photos.”

“That doesn’t help this,” Marinette pointed to her bedhead and dark circles.

“A comb and some concealer will have you looking fresh faced in no time. Now shush, you have a
solid five minutes of napping before class starts.”


Shockingly enough those five extra minutes didn’t do jack for Marinette’s tired mind. Neither did the
tea. At least it tasted good. Alya kept having to nudge Marinette awake throughout the lesson. She
was starting to wonder if maybe she should have stayed home today. It was a shorter day too so it’s
not like she would have missed a whole lot.

The time for pictures came and Alya helped Marinette clean herself up. Her hair was tidier and with
some borrowed concealer from Rose she was looking more awake too. Now all that there was left to
do was slip into that dress she had hanging up in the art room.

“Hey Marinette,” Marc waved to her, “Is that what you’re wearing for pictures?”

“No, I was gonna--”

“There we are, how do I look?” Lila emerged from the backroom wearing Marinette’s dress. “It
wouldn’t stand a chance on real runway but for a college student it’s passable.”

“Lila,” Marinette’s done meter had reached it’s limit, “Get out of my dress.”

“What? Why?” she pouted, “I was only doing it as a favor to you.”

“Huh?”
“I’ve been told I make an excellent model and the teacher here said that I could model your designs. That way it shows off your work and my skills.” she gave a little twirl.

No. Lila had done a lot but Marinette was not going to let her parade around in a dress she had put her blood, sweat and tears into. It was the absolute pinnacle of her designs. The scalloped straps, the ruffles of the ballgown, the print she had custom made, the butterfly decal she had hand sewn onto the drop waist. She had put so much effort, care and money into making this dream gown and Marinette didn’t even get to model it. She’d rather pull an ugly step-sister and tear it to shreds than see Lila in it.

“Take it off.” Marinette ground out through clenched teeth.

“What was that?” Lila asked.

“Get out of my dress or I swear I will hold you down and pull you out.”

“Marinette, stop, you’re scaring me.” she curled into herself. Her eyes were wide but not with fright. It was a challenge.

“Chill out, Marinette,” Alix stepped between them, “It’s just a dress. Who cares if she’s wearing it?”

“No. It’s okay,” Lila sniffed, “Marinette made it. She should decide who can wear it.” She made a big show of hanging her head as she marched back towards the backroom.

“Nonsense,” the teacher stopped her, “Lila, wear the dress. Marinette,” he crossed his arms, “If you cannot nurture the dreams of your fellow classmates because of your own pride then I don’t think you should be in these photos.”

“But--”

“Your dress will still appear and we will give you credit but I think it would be in your best interest to go home. Besides, you look exhausted.” he ushered her towards the exit.

Marinette wanted to shout. Scream. Cry. This wasn’t fair! Lila was ruining everything! Still, they disappointed glances mixed with the angry faces of her classmates did her in. She turned tail and ran out of the room. She locked herself in her room and let herself have a good cry. Tikki kept her company, not saying anything but instead being a reassuring presence by her side. Lila may have the whole school wrapped around her finger but Tikki was there. She knew the truth. Everything would sort itself out.

At school the next day Marinette was awake, stylishly dressed, and ready to face anything Lila could throw at her. A group was surrounding Lila’s desk in the back. “Hey Marinette, did you wanna see the newspaper?” Nathaneal popped out from the group.

“Oh sure,” she was still miffed by the whole debacle yesterday but at least her design was out there for everyone to see. Even if it was on Lila.

She skimmed over the article but didn’t see her name anywhere. “Is this continued on another page?” she asked.

“No. It’s all here.” Alix shrugged. “Why?”

“My name…” then she spotted it.

‘Lila Rossi (pictured center), aspiring model, poses like a pro in beautiful ball gown. The dress was
designed and created by fellow art student, Margaret Dubois-Peng (not pictured).’

“Oops, looks like the journalist got your name wrong, Marinette,” Lila frowned, “Such a shame. I gave them your name myself. I guess she misheard.”

“Kim,” Marinette called, not taking her eyes off Lila, “Hold me back.”

“From what?”

“From this.” she launched forward and Kim’s arms encircled her waist before she could make it over the desk. “It wasn’t enough that you got me kicked out of the picture but you gave them a wrong name too!”

“Hey, break it up!” Ms. Bustier charged them, “Marinette! What on earth do you think you are doing? I know you are upset but you cannot go around blaming other people for it.”

“Ms. Bustier, I--”

“That is enough. You march yourself down to the principal’s office right now. Maybe by then you’ll have cooled down.”

Everyone in class was glaring at her. Charging Lila hadn’t been a good idea. She couldn’t help it though. Weeks of torment at the hands of this girl had caused her to snap. Not that anyone would believe her. Not after what they had just seen.

The fight gave out and Marinette kept her eyes downcast as she shuffled to the principal’s office. She couldn’t keep living like this. If she didn’t do something soon then Lila could very well get her akumatized. Then where would Paris be? She needed to keep her cool. For the sake of Paris. Marinette literally couldn’t afford the risk of being upset.
Chapter Summary

Marinette snaps and everything quickly spirals out of control.

Chapter Notes


After explaining what had happened in the classroom, the principal gave Marinette three days detention. If Lila was there she probably would have talked Mr. Damocles into a full blown week of detention. Why stop there? Lila had already dragged her down far enough that she probably could have gotten Marinette suspended.

Mr. Damocles dismissed Marinette back to class. She wasn’t ready to head back into the belly of the beast yet and made a detour for the locker room. She laid back on one of the benches and stared at the ceiling.

“Marinette?” Tikki popped out of her purse, “Do you want me to pull up your ‘Feel Better’ playlist?”

“No. Thanks though, Tikki.” she held the kwami close, “I just need some time to breathe.”

“Why don’t you say something? What is happening to you can’t be justified by any means.”

“It’ll just be my word against Lila’s. I may be the one with the deeper history with my classmates but she knows how to turn the situation around to look like the victim. She’s like a more manipulative Chloe. Everyone knows Chloe is full of it so they aren’t taken in. With Lila though they only know what she’s shown them. What she’s shown them reflects back on me like a funhouse mirror.”

“Marinette? You in here?” Tikki disappeared back into Marinette’s purse. Adrien walked into the locker room. “There you are, I got worried when you didn’t come back to class earlier.”

“I’m fine,” Marinette sat up, “Lila got to me is all.”

“I saw that.” He sat down next to her, “I’ve seen you get mad before but to rush her like that…”

“That’s not how I am. Even at my angriest I’ve never resorted to violence as a means to vent my rage. It’s like she’s getting in my head. Pushing all my buttons in the perfect way so I explode.”

“It won’t be like this forever. The truth will come out and then she won’t have a leg to stand on.”

“How much longer though? I can’t keep going on like this, Adrien.”

“I can’t say. But you’re strong, stronger than all of us. Our everyday Ladybug, remember?” he wrapped an arm around her shoulders, “No matter how much she tries to distort the truth you’ll
always have me in your corner.”

Marinette’s brain was short circuiting at the contact. She still had enough sense about her to listen to what Adrien was saying though. “Thanks, Adrien.”

They walked back to class and Adrien politely nudged Nino back to the desk with Alya. Everyone else was staring at Marinette like a fairy tale villain. Truly that stunt with Lila had tilted the scales in her favor. Adrien had enough foresight to keep her shielded from the worst of it by keeping her close. Her own shining knight.

Adrien even walked her home to make sure no one accosted her.

She’s strong. She can be strong. Even when she’s not Ladybug she can do anything. No weakness. No sadness. She can’t fall prey to Lila’s attacks. She won’t!

As the days went by Lila’s assault was unending. Every incident was at best inconvenient or at worst horribly damaging to her psyche and/or reputation. Marinette kept a brave face and didn’t let it break until she was alone. The process of holding everything in was grating on her already shot nerves. If things didn’t get better soon Marinette wasn’t sure how long she was going to last.

Another day dawned and Marinette gathered her courage as she walked into the school building. “Marinette!” Rose ran up to her, “Look at what a fan of Kitty Section made us?”

Marinette took the little pencil topper out of Rose’s hand. Each one was meant to look like a little chibi of each member in their band gear. “These are adorable, Rose! Kitty Section has really taken off since that tv concert, huh?”

“It is really exciting.” Juleka smiled.

“Excuse me ladies,” Max walked up to the group, “You wouldn’t happen to have seen a travel charger anywhere have you?”

“No. Did you lose yours?” Marinette asked.

“It was in my locker but now it’s gone.”

“We’ll keep an eye out for it.” The girls promised and they all went to class.

It was a shame that Max had lost his charger. Maybe it was just a boy thing. Nino’s headphones went missing yesterday too.

The next day Mylene was in mourning since she couldn’t find her favorite headband. It was a birthday present from Ivan and it had disappeared without a trace. Even the Kitty Section pencil toppers Rose and Juleka had been showing off to their classmates had vanished. There was no way this could be a coincidence. There was a thief among them. Marinette’s immediate hunch was one Lila Rossi but she didn’t say anything. How could she? She didn’t have any proof outside of her distrust of the girl.

“No! No! No!” Lila was in her seat at the back of the class looking frantic as she deposited the contents of her bag out on the desk.

“Something wrong, Lila?” Alya was the first to ask.

“My phone is gone!” Lila sniffled, “I need it on me at all times in case of emergencies. I’m one of Clara Nightingale’s emergency contacts. If she gets hurt I’ll have no way of knowing!”
Marinette scoffed. An emergency contact to Clara Nightingale? Marinette was sure Lila had never so much had been in the same room as Clara let alone be good enough friends to be an emergency contact. Just another tall tale.

“Don’t worry, we’ll help you find it.” Nino grabbed his phone and dialed Lila’s number.

Ring! Ring! Ring!

All eyes swiveled to where Marinette was sitting. Her bookbag was ringing.

No…

Ring! Ring! Ring!

Hesitantly Marinette reached for her bag and unzipped the front pocket. Sure enough there was Lila’s phone.

How had she managed to sneak her phone in there? It must have been when Marinette went to the bathroom earlier. Stupid! You would think that she would have learned not to leave her belongings alone with that snake slithering about.

“Marinette, why did you take my phone?” Lila stuck out her bottom lip.

“I didn’t take your phone!”

“You do realize that you just pulled it out of your bag, right?” Alya eyed Marinette suspiciously, “Also, you kinda have a track record of palming people’s phones.”

“But I didn’t--Hey!” Kim had grabbed Marinette’s bag. “Give it back!” Marinette reached for it but Kim was too tall.

“If you stole my phone then what if you stole all the recent missing items of our classmates?” Lila had quickly gotten over her ‘shock’ of Marinette’s ‘theft’. “I think it would put us all at ease if we made sure you aren’t the thief in our midst.”

Kim unzipped Marinette’s bag and rummaged around. “Look what we have here.” he pulled out a pair of headphones. “These are yours, aren’t they Nino?”

“Yeah, I put that sticker on them.” Nino took the headphones back. “Marinette?”

“I didn’t--I don’t know how those got in there!” She knew perfectly well how they did. Lila.

Kim handed the bag over to Lila. “Look, the Kitty Section pencil toppers, Mylene’s favorite headband, and Max’s travel charger.”

“No!” She snatched her bag back from and emptied the rest of it. There wasn’t anymore pilfered items but it didn’t matter much now. “I swear to you all, I did not steal any of this! I’m being framed!”

“Who would frame you?”

“Lila! She’s been out to ruin me since she got here! All the pranks, my paper being deleted, the wrong name in the newspaper, the thefts. It’s all been her! You’re all just too blind to see it!”

“Marinette Dupain-Cheng, I will not stand to hear your lies about me. I have done nothing wrong. I offered you friendship time and again and all you’ve ever done is yell at me. What have I ever done
“Cut the crap, Lila! I don’t care if I’m the only one who can see through you, I will not take the fall for your sabotage again!”

“But I’ve never--”

“Liar! For once in your life tell the truth! You stole all that stuff and then slipped it into my bag so that it would look like I took it. I have to have some faith that everyone will see you for what you truly are. You. Are. A. LIAR!”

“I--I--” Lila bolted out of the room.

“Hey! Get back here!”

“Marinette!” It was Alya that snapped, “Just stop.”

“What?”

“Stop trying to make Lila the bad guy here.”

“She is the bad guy!”

“No. She isn’t.” Alya sighed and walked over to her friend, “You’ve been on edge lately and you’ve been taking out all that frustration on Lila. It isn’t fair. She’s here trying to get an education and make friends like the rest of us and you are resolute in your decision to hate her.”

“Alya, please,” Marinette begged, “Not you too. You’re a journalist. You’ve said it yourself that you have to have all the facts before you can make a concrete judgement. What makes more sense? That I would steal all this stuff and blame Lila because I got caught? Or that Lila, the girl you barely know, is a pathological liar and manipulator that hates me?”

“I don’t want to believe that either of you are a bad person. The facts as they are presented paint a telling picture. One that doesn’t portray you as much of a hero, I’m afraid.”

“Please…” Marinette was losing the will to live. Not Alya too. Please not her best friend.

“I’m sorry, Marinette. But I can’t condone this kind of behaviour. We all know why you really don’t like her and projecting your jealousy onto her just because she likes Adrien isn’t healthy. I think you owe her and everyone else here an apology.”

“Adrien? You think this is still about Adrien?” Marinette felt like she was going manic, “Not everything in my life revolves around him! I hate Lila because she is a liar, a thief, a manipulator, and a life ruiner. She has you all wrapped around her little finger and I can’t take it anymore. I will not stand here and be made the villain when all I’m doing is trying to rid the evil from my life.”

“Then how about you go?” Alix said. Everyone else nodded in silent agreement.

Marinette looked to Alya for something. Some kind of support. But she wouldn’t meet her eyes.

“Fine…” Marinette stuffed everything back into her bag, “I don’t want to be a part of a class like this anyways.”

She kept a brave face, her heart hardening as she walked to the principal’s office. They talked for a couple minutes and Mr. Damocles started the paperwork for her transfer. After he told her it was in motion she thanked him and started to leave the school.
On her way out of the school she passed Adrien heading in. “Marinette, hey, where’s the fire?” he stopped her. “You’re crying…”

“I--” She sniffed loudly, “I can’t…”

“Shh, it’s alright,” Adrien sat her down on the steps, “What happened?”

“Lila happened. What else would it be?” she spat.

Adrien listened patiently as Marinette ranted and blubbered about how Lila had framed her for stealing all the missing items. How she broke down and chewed Lila out. How the class turned on Marinette because of it. Finally she told him about her decision to take their suggestion and leave the school.

“But that is--” Adrien clenched and unclenched his fists, “This isn’t right! You shouldn’t have to leave. I’ll go in there and tell them all the truth right now.”

“Don’t. They’ll just turn on you too.” Marinette muttered into her knees.

“I don’t want you to go though.” Adrien took one of her hands and squeezed it, “Are you sure there’s nothing I can do to make you stay? We’ll move to a different class away from Lila.”

“That means so much but if I’m in this school Lila will still find a way. Being around all these people that think I’m the bad one is wreaking havoc on my mind. All it is going to lead to is even more stress and with everything else going on in my life that’s one thing I don’t need right now.”

“Marinette--”

“I can’t--I can’t--” Marinette hiccuped, fresh tears welling in her eyes, “I can’t anymore. I’m not strong--strong enough. I’m sorry,” she wiped at her eyes trying to banish the tears before they could spill, “I--I’m sorry I can’t be stronger. I’m sorry.”

Adrien pulled her into a bone crushing hug. “No. You don’t need to apologize.” He pulled back enough so he could look in her eyes, “Never apologize.”

She hugged him back burying her face into his neck as she pulled together her last shreds of dignity and strength. She never wanted to leave these arms. She was safe here. Accepted. At least one person still believed in her.

All too soon Marinette broke the hug and took a deep breath.

“You um,” she tried to force a smile, “You should head to class. I’ve been keeping you long enough.”

“You’re more important than a literature lecture right now,” He gave her a genuine smile, “When do you leave?”

“End of the week.”

“I’m gonna throw you a farewell party.”

“Who are you going to invite? All the people that still want to be associated with me?” Marinette joked but the comment was too real.

“It’ll be great…as great as a farewell party can be anyways.” Adrien helped her to her feet. “Are you going back to class?”
“No. Not today. I have to talk this whole transfer over with my parents anyway.”

“Where are you transferring to?”

“Lycee Carnot.”

“Hey, that’s where Kagami attends school.”

Marinette was too exhausted to curse her luck. Of course the school she would be transferring to would have her romantic rival. Kagami was better than Lila by far though. And at least she’ll know someone when she starts there. Even if the two of them haven’t really spoken more than a handful of sentences to each other.

They said goodbye and Marinette went home to explain further what the principal had called them about. Her parents were saddened to hear how horribly she had been suffering. Had they not been paying attention? Was that why she was so reclusive lately?

Marinette assured her parents that this was not their fault in the least. She was in a bad spot and now she was out of it. Things could only get better now that she would be leaving the toxic environment Lila had created. They let their daughter go and rest. After some self care and a heaping helping of her favorite dessert they would talk more about this transfer.

Tikki floated next to Marinette’s head as she laid in bed. “Are you sure about this, Marinette? Lila can be exposed. We can still fix this.”

“This is fixing it, Tikki.” Marinette pulled up her Feel Better playlist and breathed slowly.

Lila had gotten what she wanted but Marinette saw this as her own win. Karma was an unforgiving mistress and in time it would come for Lila. Then Marinette could sit back and watch the carnage with a smile and a snack.
The days leading up to Marinette’s goodbye party and subsequent departure from her school were...difficult. Word spread quickly that Marinette was transferring schools. It was a somber affair. No one approached Marinette about it. She wasn’t even sure they really believed that Marinette was actually leaving. Surely their comments that she should leave the school weren’t to be taken literally. It was the middle of term after all. This had to be a rumour that started spreading after the chaos of yesterday.

Marinette sat alone in the courtyard munching lazily on a muffin and flipping through a magazine. She hadn’t spoken a word to anyone all morning. Adrien was making up a photoshoot that got rained out a couple days ago leaving Marinette stranded.

“Marinette,” Alya approached her, “Can we talk?”

“Of course,” Marinette closed the magazine. A small spark of hope fluttering in her chest as Alya took the seat next to her.

“There’s no easy way to bring this up so I’m just gonna say it. There is a rumour going around school that you’re transferring schools. That is just a rumour right?”

Marinette took a deep breath and shook her head. “No. I am leaving at the end of the week. I’m transferring to College Lycee Carnot.”

“Oh…” Alya took a sudden interest in the concrete floor. “Is it because of what happened yesterday?”

Marinette raised an eyebrow at her. “What other reason would I have?”

“I know that yesterday wasn’t great but to transfer schools because of one bad day?”

“It’s not just one bad day, Alya. It’s been an entire month of bad days. The pranks, the sabotage, the manipulation, the lies--” Marinette took another calming breath, “I can’t take it anymore.”

“I know that things haven’t been great. I’ve noticed that you’ve been stressed out lately and maybe I should have done something, said something earlier, so we could have avoided this mess.” Alya
peered back at Marinette, “I don’t want to believe that you stole all that stuff. You’re a bit of a spaz but you’re not a thief. I don’t believe Lila is either. It’s complicated is what I’m trying to say.”

“Whatever,” Marinette muttered under her breath. She was done trying to convince the others that Lila was the devil. It was a waste of her time to try.

“Hey, I’m trying to be reasonable here,” Alya huffed, “You’re my friend, Marinette. You’re a good person and with all the stress you’ve been under you were bound to snap eventually. It’s a human response. But taking it out on Lila and the class was too far.”

“Alya—”

“Then going ahead and storming off to switch schools is a dramatic I didn’t think you capable of. You got in a fight, it didn’t reflect well on you so now you’re running away instead of owning up to the fact that you were in the wrong this time.”

“You haven’t listened to a thing I’ve said!”

“Or maybe you aren’t listening to what I’ve been saying. You don’t like Lila, fine, you’re allowed to not like people. But what about the rest of us? We’re your friends and you got mad at us for defending someone you were unfairly blaming for your streak of bad luck. Don’t we deserve an apology? Is your personal pride worth losing all your friends? Are you actually that vain?”

Marinette smashed the remainder of her muffin on top of Alya’s head. She didn’t fully realize what she had done till it already happened. Angry tears leaking from the corner of her eyes. “My friends would believe me. Since no one does I guess that means I’m losing nothing.”

Alya kept opening and closing her mouth trying to form a coherent sentence. Marinette got up and left cursing herself for losing her muffin for such a short lived moment of satisfaction.

That spark of hope from earlier had died completely. If she was taking her frustration out on her supposed best friend then what hope left was there? No. Now only a smoking sense of absolute discontent lingered.

When class started again Marinette wasn’t surprised to see that Alya had moved to the empty seat next to Nino. Adrien took Alya’s former seat next to Marinette. He tried asking her what had happened while he was gone but she shook her head. She didn’t want to relive that conversation again. Not when Alya was right there.

Adrien walked Marinette back home after school and she explained the situation to him then. He listened and cringed when she got to the part of her smushing the muffin on Alya’s head. Just another bad decision in a long line of bad snap decisions she had been making this month. She wouldn’t apologize though. Brushing a few crumbs out of her hair was nothing compared to the sensation of Marinette having her heart ripped out and stomped on everytime she entered the school grounds.

“I don’t think she’s gonna come to the farewell party after that.” Marinette flopped down on her couch. “Are you sure you won’t just cancel it?”

“I already ordered a cake so yes it is.” He joked as he took the seat next to her, “I know this sucks but can I get a smile? A little smile?”

“I don’t wanna…” Marinette pouted.

“Fine, that’s fine,” he scooted closer, “But what if I…” he started tickling her and she squirmed away
with a laugh. “There it is. There’s a happy Marinette.”

“You’re ridiculous.” She sighed. If there was anything good to take away from this horrible month it was that it had certainly brought Marinette and Adrien closer. She was still a nervous wreck when she even thought of him in a romantic way but these dumb moments were easy. He was a friend in a time when she didn’t have any.

Adrien’s phone beeped. “I gotta go, the Gorilla is waiting for me.” Adrien stood up again, “If you need someone to talk to you know how to get ahold of me. See you tomorrow, Marinette.”

“See you,” She walked him to the door. He gave her a quick hug and went down the steps leaving Marinette with a dorky smile plastered on her face. Of course only Adrien would be able to lure a genuine smile out of her after such a disastrous day.

Marinette’s last days at Dupont flew by. She hadn’t said a word to anyone other than Adrien the entire time. Finally it was the day of her farewell party. Adrien had a set up in an empty classroom for the small party. While no one from their class was willing to come he had convincingly invited Aurore and Wayhem from one of the other classes to come. He also invited Kagami which Marinette wasn’t too keen on but if they were going to attend school together they might as well try to get along.

Marinette was packing up her locker when she felt a presence behind her. She turned around and didn’t let anything show as she came face to face with Lila.

“What do you want?” she turned her back on her as she continued to empty her locker.

“I came to say goodbye. I didn’t think it would be that easy to get rid of you. You have the same annoying tenacity as another self-righteous pigtailed worm. But then again, you aren’t very super. At least Lady-barf can claim to have skills even if she owes them all to her magic toys. You don’t have anything like that though.” Lila was practically purring with satisfaction, “You’re just a sad little nobody that can’t tell when she’s outmatched. You’re doing the right thing by leaving. Without you getting in my way I’ll be running this school. I’ll probably even have Adrien wrapped around my little finger before too long.”

“Insult me all you want, Lila. Your words mean nothing to me. You’re a compulsively lying brat that needs to deceive others to fulfill some unending need for recognition and acceptance.” Marinette closed her locker and looked her enemy dead in the eye, “I’m not leaving cause I’m scared. I’m leaving because I deserve better than this. And I pity you.”

“Pity me?” Lila narrowed her eyes, “I won.”

“No. You got me to leave the school, yes. You got what you wanted but you haven’t won anything. I pity you because you are so scared that you could never be accepted for who you are that you need to make everyone else feel lesser so that you may stand a chance to be in their good graces.”

“That--that is not--you don’t know what you’re talking about!”

“They don’t know the real you. So they can’t really be your friends. If they knew who you truly are they would hate you as much as they hate me. You know that’s the truth and it terrifies you. You won’t be able to keep up the facade forever and whenever that mask of yours breaks the backlash will be more gruesome than you can even imagine.” Marinette collected her things and moved past Lila, “Have a nice life, Lila Rossi.”

She walked up to the classroom and looked at her tiny farewell party. It wasn’t anything special, just
some food and drinks, a handmade farewell banner, and some music. Adrien and Wayhem were
talking by the windows. Aurore was sitting on a table sipping some soda and watching Kagami and
Chloe argue. What was Chloe doing here?

“Marinette!” Adrien was the first to notice her, “I know it isn’t much…”

“It’s perfect.” she assured him. “Surprised to see Chloe here though.”

“She asked if she could come.” he shrugged.

“Okay then…” Strange turn of events but its not like she was expecting this to be a party for the
ages.

“Hey Kagami, Chloe, Aurore,” Marinette approached the girls, “Thanks for coming.”

“Marinette!” Aurore jumped up and hugged her, “I was bummed to hear that you were transferring
and when I heard Adrien was throwing this little shindig I had to come. Gonna miss having you
around.”

“Thanks, Aurore, I needed to hear that.” She wasn’t sure how much Aurore actually knew about
why Marinette was leaving but it was nice to have someone besides Adrien sad to see her go.

Marinette turned to Kagami next. “Hi, I guess this is more of a hello then a goodbye for us.”

“I will admit that I was shocked when Adrien told me about your transfer to my school. I’ve really
only heard good things about you.” Kagami said, “Then when he explained who this Lila character
was things became clear as to why you are choosing to leave.”

“Honestly, Lila is faker than Sabrina’s knock-off Jimmy Choo tote.” Chloe rolled her eyes, “I could
smell the pile of crap spewing from her mouth before it made it past her lips.”

“You know Lila is a liar? I thought you were just as taken in with her lies as everyone else.”
Marinette couldn’t keep the surprise out of her voice.

“Please, I’m not that dense. The way she hangs all over my poor Adrikins is so annoying and over
the top that it couldn’t possibly be genuine.” Chloe looked back at said boy who was thankfully
absent from this conversation, “I think your crush on him is ridiculous too but I at least respect that
you seem to genuinely like Adrien for who he is. Lila only wants to be with him because it’ll spite
others and make her look good. It’s all about her image.”

Wow. An actual compliment from Chloe? As close to a compliment as Marinette was going to get
anyway. At the end of the day Marinette could see put aside her own issues with Chloe to see why
Adrien defended her so. The mayor’s daughter had a heart in that designer clad body of hers
somewhere. Maybe she’d pull a Grinch Christmas miracle and her shriveled heart would grow three
sizes one day.

The party continued on and Marinette was pleasantly surprised at how nice it was. The few people
that attended were nice and the atmosphere calm. Wayhem had a plethora of bad jokes that had
everyone splitting their sides with laughter. The six of them even split up into teams to play a couple
games during their time before they had to start cleaning up.

When everything was packed up and everyone started to leave Marinette gave her final goodbyes.
She swapped numbers with Wayhem and Aurore. She liked them and they made her promise they
would hang out again soon. Kagami told Marinette she looked forward to seeing her in school
Monday before heading out.
Then there was Chloe.

The two girls had been enemies since they were little kids. Marinette’s departure should have been a celebration on both ends given their history. But with a common enemy and a mutual friend in Adrien things had changed somewhat.

“Thanks for coming, Chloe.” Marinette finally said, “I know we’ve never gotten along but today wasn’t terrible.”

“And I suppose there will be a small part of me that will miss our classroom rumbles, Dupain-Cheng.” Chloe smirked, “All the others are too spineless to think of going toe to toe with me. You were my only real challenge.”

“I’m sure you’ll find plenty of others to have a good argument with, Bourgeois.” Marinette stuck out a hand, “I’m counting on you to put Lila through the ringer while I’m gone.”

Chloe grasped Marinette’s hand firmly and shook it, “If she comes at me she’ll wish she never entered this school.”

With that Chloe left and it was just Marinette and Adrien standing at the school entrance.

“Getting along with Chloe now? Never thought I’d see the day.”

“I would call it more of mutual tolerance than getting along.” Marinette looked back at the school, “I know that this was my decision and that it’s the right decision but why does it have to hurt so much?”

“It will hurt a lot less than if you stayed under Lila’s thumb.” Adrien told her. “If it wasn’t for the fact that I think my father would pull me back to homeschooling if I asked for a transfer I’d come with you.”

“And it means the world to me that you would even consider that. But you have a place here. Lila isn’t out to destroy you and our classmates don’t hate your guts. It’d make no sense for you to leave.”

“Doesn’t mean I still can’t feel guilty about all this.” He sighed, “All this time I thought that by ignoring Lila and not picking fights that things would be fine. That the universe would double down on her or something. But while I was off living in my ignorance you were suffering. I’m a terrible friend.”

“Adrien--”

“Now you’re leaving because I can’t fix this and everyone is going to think bad things about you when they should be apologizing for ever believing Lila. You’re hurting and life sucks and I wish I could bring everything back to the way it was before Lila.”

“Adrien.” Marinette touched his cheek, “You’re more tore up about this than I am.”

“Yeah, I’ve been a crappy friend.” he murmured, “If I had just--”

“Stop. No more feeling guilty about this. It won’t help anything.” she ordered. “Just see me off with a smile.”

Adrien pulled her in for a long tight hug that helped put some of the broken parts of her morale back together. “I’m gonna miss you, Marinette.”
“I’m switching schools, I’m not dead.” she chuckled, “I’ll miss you too, Adrien.”

“If you ever need someone to talk to I’m just a phone call away.” they stepped out of the hug all too soon. The Gorilla honked the car horn. “I gotta get going.”

“See you soon, Adrien.” Marinette waved to him.

“See you soon,” he waved back and rushed to the car.

Marinette watched them pull away from the curb and drive off. She took a deep breath and turned for home leaving the school behind her once and for all.
First day of school! A new start!

Marinette was trying to remain positive as she got ready for her first day at her new school. She kept herself grounded with the reminder that whatever happened at least Lila wouldn’t be there. After Chloe, Lila, and Hawkmoth she could take on anything. Hopefully…

No! She can do this! It’s just school.

She packed up her bookbag and made a quick check of herself in the mirror before heading out. Possible downside to not having school be right across the street was how much later she would be to class if she overslept. Not like it was her fault! Nighttime akumas are the worst. There should be a rule stating that classes start at least an hour or two later if there was an akuma the night before. Give Paris’ hardworking heroes the time to rest before carting them off for history lectures and chemistry homework.

As she left her house she saw the students of her old high school filtering into the building. Why should she look on at her school with bittersweet longing? Wasn’t like they were looking at her bakery with woe now that she was gone. She snapped her attention back to the street and started the journey to her new school. It didn’t take long, a quick walk to the underground, ride the train for ten minutes, another short walk and she was at the front doors.

It was a formidable school. Larger than her old school by far and decades older. College Lycee Carnot. Beautiful and ominous. Probably would have been mistaken for a castle if not for the dozens of school students milling about out front.

 Practically every student around her had someone next to them. No one was without a friend as they entered the building. Her mind wandered to Alya and what the others might be talking about before shaking the thought from her head. They’re not thinking about her. She won’t think about them.

Marinette took a deep breath and entered the school. She had to stop by the principal’s office for her complete class schedule and map of the building. Now if only she knew where it was.

“Um, excuse me,” She approached one of the other teenagers. An asian looking girl with bright pink dyed hair and a yellow sundress. “Can you tell me where the principal’s office is?”
“Who are you?” The friend with her asked. They had dark red hair in an undercut, jeans with more tears than denim, and reminders and doodles covering their arms.

“I’m Marinette, I just transferred here.” She told them. “I don’t know my way around yet so I could use some directions.”

“Principal’s office is down this hall, take a right, up the stairs, hang a left and it’ll be at the end of the hall. Big old wooden double doors, can’t miss it.” The pink haired girl told her.

“Thank you, and you were?”

“I’m Nanette and this is my friend Quinn.” Pinky pointed to the redhead. “Normally we’d show you the way but we’re going over notes right now so…”

“Oh it’s no problem, I think I can manage.” she thanked them again and took their directions up to the principal’s office.

The principal welcomed her to the school, gave her a schedule, a map, and a hall pass and sent her on her way to her first class.

After getting turned around a couple times Marinette finally found her homeroom. Nervously she knocked on the door and a short, stout man with slicked back orange hair opened it. “You must be the new girl, are you?”

“Yes, I got a little lost on my way here.” she waved the not very helpful map in her hand. “And you’re Mr. Babineaux?”

“That I am,” he stepped aside to let her in, “Attention class, today we are welcoming a new student to our school. Care to introduce yourself?”

“Oh um,” she looked at the faces staring at her and gulped, “My name is Marinette Dupain-Cheng. I just transferred from College Francoise Dupont.”

“Does anyone have questions for Marinette?” Mr. Babineaux said.

One of the students raised their hand. “Isn’t Francoise Dupont that school where the mayor’s daughter attends?”

“Oh yeah, Chloe and I were in the same class.” Every year since they were tiny kids unfortunately.

There were a few nods.

Another hand shot up. “Doesn’t Adrien Agreste attend Dupont as well?”

“Yes. He’s a very good friend of mine.” She felt warmer talking about Adrien. Surprise.

There were more excited whispers among the class.

“Not to sound rude but why would you transfer away from such a prodigious school? I know ours is nothing to sneer at but with so many high profile classmates it doesn’t seem to make any sense.” Another kid asked.

“Well that is…uh…” She didn’t want to come right out and say that she was bullied out of her old school.

“She probably couldn’t keep the grades.” Someone else said.
“That’s not–”

“A lot of akuma victims come from that school too, don’t they? What if she was one and that’s why she had to leave.” Another voice piped in.

“I’ve never been–” Marinette tried to cut in but was promptly cut off.

“Do we really want such a harbinger of bad luck in class?”

“Excuse you.” A figure from the back stood up.

Kagami.

“Who are all of you to form opinions on someone you don’t even know? I agree that Dupont is a good school but Marinette had her own reasons for leaving. Now how about you all be quiet and ask her some real questions.”

Kagami sat back down as the class hushed itself into quiet apologies. Marinette never thought she’d be so thankful to see her romantic rival in all her life.

A few tense seconds went by before one of the students raised their hand. Marinette recognized it as the same girl she asked for directions earlier, Nanette.

“Are your parents the ones that own the Dupain-Cheng bakery?”

“Yes.” Marinette breathed out a sigh of relief, “You heard of us?”

“Yeah. My moms own The Winking Violet cafe a couple streets over from you guys. They rave about your canelés all the time.” Nanette’s smile grew.

“I know The Winking Violet. I must have passed by it a hundred times but I’ve never been.”

“You should totally go there,” the person sitting next to Nanette said, “It’s kinda the local after school hang out spot for the class.”

“Quinn is over exaggerating.” Nanette waved it off.

“No I’m not.” Quinn said. “Your moms reserve extra seats for us practically every day cause they know we’re coming through.”

“I think that is enough for today.” Mr. Babineaux said, “Marinette, take a seat. I think there should be an open one beside Mlle. Tsurugi in the back.”

Oh…next to Kagami.

This is fine. It really is. Kagami is a cool girl. A cool, confident, rich, smart, pretty girl that Adrien has feelings for. This. Is. Fine.

She sat down next to Kagami and kept her eyes up front on the lesson. She could practically feel the tension wafting between herself and Kagami. They weren’t on bad terms but it wasn’t exactly like they were besties either. Why oh why did she have to get seated here of all places?

Thankfully Marinette didn’t need to focus on that and instead kept her attention on class. They were in the middle of a 1500s literature period for right now. Mainly Utopia by Thomas More. Class wrapped up and next it was off to maths. She had to play catch up since it was the middle of term but if she could get the notes off of someone then she should be fine.
“Marinette,” Kagami scooted closer to her, “Would you like a copy of my literature notes?”

“Oh uh, sure,” Marinette gave Kagami her e-mail so she could send over the file. “Thanks, Kagami.”

“Don’t mention it.” She shrugged. “You’re my classmate after all.”

“Not just for the notes. I was losing control with all those questions earlier and you really helped me out by saying something.”

“You’re a nice person. You didn’t deserve to have everyone gang up on you like that. Especially considering why you left Dupont.”

“Lila is a monster.” Marinette admitted.

“Obviously.” Kagami smirked, “How can your old class not see it?”

“She’s a good liar and they are easily impressed. So long as it isn’t Chloe saying it.”

“Ugh, Chloe,” Kagami made retching face, “She irks me something fierce.”

“At least you haven’t been dealing with her since primary school. Believe it or not but she was actually worse when she was smaller.” The girls left the room and started heading to their next class.

“Really? How is that even possible?”

“A princess phase that her parents let her take way too seriously. She was the princess and everyone around her was her servants. Failure to comply resulted in the biggest temper tantrums you had ever seen.”

“She hasn’t matured much, has she?”

“I wouldn’t say that. She’s better. Not a saint but I don’t hate her like I used to.” Marinette wasn’t comfortable labeling Chloe the villain anymore. Not when there were Lilas and Hawkmoths flitting about.

The rest of the school day went by without incident and Nanette and Quinn even invited her to hang out after school. Kagami was invited too but she had to return straight home.

Sounds like someone else Marinette knows…

Nanette and Quinn were sweet and fun. Also, Quinn really wasn’t exaggerating when they said that The Winking Violet was the class cafe spot. A whole section in the outdoor dining area was reserved for the students.

“Hello, sweetie,” a middle aged black woman with a long mane of curls came up to their table. “Usual for you and Quinn?”

“Hey, Mama. Yeah, also this is Marinette. She’s a new girl in our class.” Nanette introduced them.

“Nice to meet you, do you know what you’d like to drink?” Nanette’s mom asked.

“You too. I’d like a lemonade, please.” Marinette turned back to her new friends. “This place is adorable, Nanette.”

“Thanks. Mom and Mama put a lot of work into it.” Nanette blushed under the compliment. “But that’s a conversation for another day. What do you think of Lycee Carnot?”
“Big.” Marinette said, “It’s a really big school.”

“You get used to it.” Quinn assured her, “I used to get turned around all the time when I started. Nanette found me banging my head against a wall in frustration when I couldn’t find my way to chemistry one time. We’ve been best friends ever since.”

“Well, you guys certainly made me feel welcome. I needed that.” Marinette’s smile dropped slightly.

“It is totally okay if you don’t want to talk about it but I was kinda wondering,” Quinn started, “Why did you transfer to Lycee Carnot from Dupont?”

“It’s a long story.” The echo of Lila’s sadistic laugh echoed in her head, “I don’t want to talk about it right now.”

“It’s cool. Just curious.” Quinn was quick to drop the subject.

“I guess you already knew Kagami, huh?” Nanette said.

“She does fencing with my friend, Adrien. I’ve seen her a handful of times outside of school too so she’s not a total stranger.”

“I’m honestly surprised that she’s warmed up to you at all. Usually Kagami keeps to herself. Always sits in the back away from everyone and even eats lunch alone. Not that we don’t invite her to eat with us but she just prefers being on her own.”

“I don’t know her that well so I can’t comment but she seems like the type of person who likes to keep things close to the chest.” Marinette shrugged. “Easier to not get hurt that way.”

Quinn and Nanette exchanged a worried glance. There was something going on but they respected Marinette’s choice not to talk about it. After all, they had only just met. They had no right to go digging into her personal business. The two changed the subject and the rest of the afternoon was spent in better spirits.

By the time Marinette had to return home all the nightmares she had endured at Dupont felt just like that. A bad dream.

“This was fun,” Marinette told them, “Next time maybe you can come to my parent’s bakery after school. The house is right above the shop so we could sneak some goodies and play video games or something.”

“That sounds awesome!” Quinn exclaimed. “I am going to gorge myself on cookies.”

“Not if your diabetes has anything to say about it.” Nanette elbowed Quinn playfully. “See you tomorrow, Marinette.”

“See you, Nanette. See you, Quinn.” she waved to them before heading back home.

Marinette’s parents noticed immediately that their daughter was doing much better today. She was smiling and humming and all during dinner she raved about her new school. They were glad she was finally happy again.

As Marinette was settling down for some sleep when her phone buzzed. It was a text from Adrien.

_Sorry for texting you so late. Homework got away from me. How was your first day?_

Marinette smiled and texted him back.
Better. So much better.
Chapter Summary

Miraculous Whine and Cheese Club. AKA: Adrien Needs to Vent!

Chapter Notes

Original post on tumblr: https://dakota-r-riley.tumblr.com/post/186785853756/transferred-5

After a couple days Marinette was finding herself well accommodated to her new school. She kinda knew where she was going from class to class, and had some nice new friends. Nanette and Quinn had basically adopted her and Kagami was always there with an open seat in classes. She had a routine which made everything easier to digest.

Wake up, go to school, hang out with friends, go home, have dinner, do homework, text Adrien, go to sleep.

That was another thing. Adrien and Marinette hadn’t seen one another since she transferred schools but they texted every night now. Usually about how their day had been. Small talk and dumb jokes. It was nice. Talking to him before she fell asleep was a perfect way to end her night.

This night was no exception. Marinette’s phone pinged with a new message from Adrien.

_Do you wanna grab lunch tomorrow?_

Her heart sped a little at the thought of seeing him again after so long apart.

_Sounds great!_

Marinette responded.

_Great! Where do you wanna go?_

_My friend Nanette’s parents own a cute little café halfway between the schools. The Winking Violet. Sound good?_

_Sounds perfect! See you there!_

_Goodnight, Adrien_

_Goodnight, Marinette_

Marinette let herself a small squee of joy before plugging her phone in to charge and going to sleep.

The next day Marinette headed over to the cafe. Nanette’s moms, whom Marinette had gotten to see
a lot of these past couple days, saved a nice table inside. It was raining so the outdoor seating was closed which was a shame since it was great for people watching.

“Marinette?” Marinette looked up to see Aurore. “Hi, I thought that was you.”

“Hi, Aurore, what are you doing here?” she asked.

“Looking for a part-time job. No one is hiring weather girls so I thought I’d try my hand at waitressing.” Aurore shrugged, “What are you doing here?”

“Getting lunch with Adrien. Did you want to join us?” Marinette offered.

“I don’t want to intrude on your date.”

“It’s not a date. We’re just catching up.” Marinette’s face lit up with the mention of the word ‘date’. “I haven’t seen him since I transferred. I haven’t really talked to you either so I’d rather like it if you stayed.”

“Well…” Aurore looked out at the downpour before pulling up a chair at the little glass table. “I have missed you.”

The girls got to talking and were sipping some warm tea when Adrien finally showed up. “Sorry I’m late. It took me forever to convince father to let me come out for lunch.”

“No problem, Aurore’s been keeping me company.” Marientte nodded to their companion.

“Hey Adrien, I know I wasn’t invited--”

“You’re fine. It’s nice to see you outside of school.” Adrien assured her before sitting down and ordering a hot chocolate. This was turning out to be a better afternoon than Marinette pictured. Good company and a warm drink to sip while the rain pattered outside. It was so cozy.

After they exchanged the usual pleasantries and ordered their food they started to get into the real meat of the afternoon.

“How is your new school?” Aurore asked Marinette.

“Great. The people I’ve met are really nice and the teachers are first rate. Also, no Lila. It’s probably one of the best things to ever happen to me.” Marinette responded through bites of her sandwich.

“UUUUUGGGGGGGGHHHHHHH!” Adrien threw his head back as he let out a long groan. It would have been funny if not for the multiple heads that swiveled their way.

“What’s going on with him?” Marinette whispered to Aurore.

“Oh, Lila has been dogging his heels ever since you left.” Aurore frowned, “He’s not too happy about it.”

“Oof.” Marinette looked back at Adrien, “How bad has it been?”

“I am trying to be the better person but I cannot keep it up.” Adrien grumbled. “It’s like since you left she thinks she has free reins to do as she pleases. She has practically taken over the school with her lies. She got the seating chart rearranged in class and now I’m stuck next to her in the front row because she convinced Nino to sit behind me with Alya.”

“I am so sorry for you.” Marinette couldn’t imagine the horror going on back at Dupont if Lila was
uninhibited. “What else has she done?”

The next half hour was a well needed venting session from Adrien about all the crap Lila had been getting up to since Marinette’s departure. Her lies had somehow gotten even more ludicrous but everyone was still buying into them. With some help from Alya, and a lie about being Prince Ali’s go to for second opinions on political decisions, she had taken Marinette’s former position as class president. Not only was she gluing herself to Adrien’s side at every chance she was also furthering her efforts to paint Marinette as a monster. Even after she left she wasn’t done. She wanted to make sure that absolutely no one at Francoise Dupont had any sympathy for Marinette Dupain-Cheng.

First it was that Marinette was using subtle cheats and glitches to make herself a better gamer and not playing fairly in the school gaming tournament months prior. Then it was that she had stolen her derby hat design from a sketch of Lila’s. None of which Lila would even be able to justify because she hadn’t even joined the school at that point! She was just looking for documented cases of Marinette’s accomplishments and trying to debunk them. And the class apparently will just take her word for it because who else would be a good judge of those accomplishments? People who were actually there? Ha!

“Wow.” Marinette sat back and stared at the boy across from her, “You really needed that didn’t you?”

“It has been a long week, Marinette,” Adrien laid his head down on the table, “I am so tired.”

“There there,” Aurore gave his head a pat, “Rest easy sweet prince.”

“It sounds like Lila is on cloud nine.” Marinette muttered into her tea.

“She’s the only one,” Adrien said, his head still on the table, “The rest of the school has been really subdued lately.”

“What do you mean?”

“I’ve noticed it too.” Aurore pushed her salad around in her bowl, “It’s kinda sad really.”

“It’s because Lila drove out our purveyor of optimism and happiness.” Adrien flashed Marinette his big, sad, green eyes. “You can really feel your absence at school.”

“You’re saying that to make me feel better.” Marinette told him.

“I’m serious. Ever since you left everyone has been either on edge or too tired to care about anything. Just the other day Kim and Max got into a yelling match in the main hall. Ivan and Mylene have practically turned into the couple that stand next to one another but never speak. Marc stopped coming to art class and hasn’t said a word to Nathaneal either. It is the saddest kind of surrealism.”

“You can’t blame all of that on me leaving. It’s getting colder, weather is getting worse, people fall into seasonal funks.” Marinette tried to explain it away.

“Really? You think it is a coincidence that everyone suddenly got worse when you weren’t there? I always said you were our everyday Ladybug and now I’m sure of it. You bring happiness and luck
wherever you go. We were lucky to have you in our class. Now that you’re gone it’s like a year’s worth of karma is coming back to haunt us.” Adrien shuddered. “I think it can only get worse.”

“Aurore, tell him he’s being overdramatic.” Marinette rolled her eyes but she was secretly pleased the with the praise.

“No can do. The boy is right.” Aurore said, “You left and you took the class’ morale with you.”

“What about Chloe?” Marinette asked.

“What about her?”

“Chloe knows that Lila is a liar and we all know Chloe isn’t one to take things lying down. I refuse to believe Lila has gotten complete control over the school with Chloe there to butt heads with. What has she been doing?” Adrien and Aurore looked at one another. They hadn’t thought about this. Chloe fought everyone at pretty much every opportunity. Now that she had a new opponent, and Marinette’s blessing to be ruthless with said opponent, why had things gotten so out of control?

“She’s your friend, Agreste.” Aurore leaned back in her chair, “What’s Queen Bee been up to?”

“Chloe…” Adrien sat back and thought about it, “She’s been quiet, actually.”

“Seriously?”

“I mean she’s just been going about the day like everyone else. Not challenging Lila or getting into petty fights with the others. It’s really weird now that I think about it.” Adrien pulled out his phone and scrolled through his messages. “The last time she messaged me was three days ago. I get texts from her everyday. That’s not right.”

“Do you think she’s fallen into that depression you say the rest of the class is in?” Marinette couldn’t believe her ears. Chloe ‘I’m-the-daughter-of-the-mayor-so-you-must-obey-me’ Bourgeois, was being an amicable classmate?

“No, I think she’s the only one that looks like she’s there for a reason. Everyone else has that aura of, have to be there, surrounding them. Chloe...has energy in her deference. I can’t explain it. It’s like she’s flying under the radar for no reason.”

“Huh,” The three teenagers decided to stop moping about Lila and how much of a bummer Francois Dupont had become and moved onto happier conversation. Mainly it centered around Marinette regaling them with her time at her new school and funny moments from her new friends.

All in all it was a pretty good afternoon.

“I gotta get going,” Aurore stood up, “it was great seeing you again, Marinette.”

“You too, we should find a day to get together again.” Marinette smiled.

“Totally. See you at school, Adrien.” With that Aurore was gone.

“I should be heading back too. I have some catch up work I need to get done.” Marinette pushed her chair in.

“I’ll walk you home.” Adrien opened the door for her.

Thankfully the rain had stopped. The streets had that fresh rain smell and little puddles dotting the pavement that Marinette had to resist the urge to jump in.
"We should do this again." Adrien said, "I miss seeing you every day."

"Yeah?" Marinette felt herself blush once more.

"Yeah," was she delusional or was Adrien blushing too? "I--"

"MARINETTE!"

The next moment a blur of bright pink had tackled her to the ground.

"Oof," Marinette wheezed, "Nanette, I can't breathe."

"Sorry." Nanette stood up, "My mom told me you were in the cafe but I was in the middle of a painting and by the time I found a stopping point you were gone and--holy crap Adrien Agreste!"

"Are you okay?" Adrien helped Marinette up.

"Yep. I've taken harder falls than that." She brushed herself off, "Adrien this is Nanette. Nanette this Adrien."

"Nice to meet you." Adrien smiled at Nanette.

"You too. Marinette wasn't kidding when she said she knew you."

"Um, Nani," Marinette poked her, "You have paint all over you."

"And?"

Marinette pointed to her blouse now stained with green and blue streaks. "It's still wet."

"Oh no! I'm so sorry!" Nanette blanched, "I didn’t even think of that!"

"It’s okay. It’s just a little paint." Marinette assured her. "Actually, I think this is a good excuse to try my hand at hand painting clothing. Maybe give it a water flower design."

"I’ve done that before." Nanette said, "I made Quinn a scarf for their birthday once and they loved it. If you want you can come back to my place and work there. I have every color of the rainbow in paint and a killer sound system we can jam to while working."

"I would love to but I really do need to get home. Tomorrow maybe?" Marinette hated to disappoint her.

"No problem." She shrugged, "I should let you two continue on your way. It was nice meeting you, Adrien. Marinette talks a lot about you."

"Nanette!" shrieked through clenched teeth.

"She likes you a lot."

"That’s good to hear. It would be awkward if she didn’t." Adrien said placing a hand on Marinette’s shoulder.

Marinette didn’t hold out too much hope for his words to mean anything more than liking her as a friend. She loves Adrien but if she was being honest the boy is either too infatuated with Kagami to consider anyone else an option or he’s is really that dense about picking up hints. The only way she could be more blatant about her crush was if she told him she dreamed about marrying him one day.
“AWE!” Nanette gushed, “You two are so cute. Okay, I’ll let you go. Sorry for tackling your girlfriend, Adrien.”

“NANETTE!” Marinette was going to collapse into a puddle of anxiety, “He’s not my--”

“I’ll text you later!” Nanette shouted over her shoulder as she hustled back down the street.

“One of your new friends?” Adrien chuckled unperturbed by Nanette’s comment.

“Yeah, she’s...eccentric.”

“I like her hair. If I was a braver sort I would dye my hair something crazy like that.” Adrien ruffled his golden locks, “You think I could pull off pink hair?”

“I think you could pull off anything.” Marinette answered honestly.

“Even crocs?” he raised an eyebrow at her.


“You said--”

“I don’t care if you are Aphrodite incarnate, no one can pull off crocs! It is a comfort shoe meant to not see the light of day!”

“I’m getting you a pair for Christmas now.”

“I think if you were to spend those big boy model checks on something as abhorrent as crocs your dad would disown you on behalf of the fashion world.”

“Still failing to see a downside.”

“You little,” Marinette smacked his arm and they continued on their way to her house. “At the very least Lila may stop bothering you if you wore them to school.”

“Now I have to get a pair and test that theory.”

“She’s really gotten that bad?”

“You are super lucky that you got out when you did. Homeschooling is looking like the better option nowadays.”

“It’ll get better. For your sake I hope it does.”

“Thanks. I hope so too.” they made it to Marinette’s house and said their goodbyes. Marinette said hello to her parents before shutting herself in her room and changing out of her stained shirt. She set it aside to work on later and went to check her instagram. She scrolled through some pictures of her old friends hanging out. She hadn’t the heart to unfollow any of them yet.

Curious about Adrien’s past statement she went to Chloe’s page. Wow. Adrien wasn’t kidding. Chloe hasn’t posted anything on her social media in days. As someone who flooded her timeline with selfies and designer endorsements this was really weird. The last selfie she posted was her wearing a trilby and holding a magnifying glass up to her eye. The caption read: Detective Bourgeois and the case of Dolos and Aletheia.
What is up with her?
“Quinn, do you know when that essay for history is due?” Marinette walked into class with Nanette and Quinn.

“Um,” They checked their arms, “Thursday?”

“You need to get a planner or something.” Marinette sighed.

“I’ve been barking up that tree for three years.” Nanette rolled her eyes.

“I have a system.” Quinn scoffed.

“Writing everything on your arms is not a productive system.” Marinette argued.

“Says you!”

“Quinn, darling, as someone who meticulously keeps an organized and color coded planner/calender in my room this ‘system’ of yours gives me anxiety. For all that is sweet and holy, buy an actual planner. Download an app on your phone. Something!” Marinette begged.

Marinette really liked Quinn, they were smart and fun and had an encyclopedic knowledge on everything having to do with conspiracy theories and cryptids. Marinette hadn’t even heard of the giant snail like creature, Lou Carcolh, until they mentioned it once while hanging out at Marinette’s house. Like them as much as she did, their organization was zero. She’s seen their locker, their bookbag, she could only imagine the neat-freak meltdown she’d experience if she ever set foot in Quinn’s room.

“Nah, this is easier.” Quinn shrugged as they took their seat.

“Quinn…no…”

“Good morning,” Kagami approached their table. Ever since Marinette had talked to her that first day the two were getting along better. Kagami was even starting to branch out more to her classmates. “Did you all have a nice weekend?”

“Morning, Kagami,” Nanette smiled back at her, “I had a great weekend. I even got to meet Marinette’s boyfriend, Adrien.”
Kagami’s pleasant expression faltered and the temperature in the room dropped ten degrees.

“Nani,” Marinette pinched Nanette’s arm forcefully, “I told you he’s not my boyfriend.”

“The way he was looking at you though and how much you talk about him–”

“Shh!” Marinette clamped a hand over her mouth, “We are just friends. He doesn’t see me that way at all.”

Kagami muttered something under her breath that Marinette didn’t catch. Probably cursing the fact that Marinette liked Adrien too. Every time Adrien got brought up, in even the tiniest of moments, things between Kagami and Marinette soured. An unspoken rivalry for the blonde’s affections tensing the air without saying a word.

Class started and Marinette went back to her seat. She risked a glance at Kagami and sighed. She really was a nice girl when you get past her hard outer shell. They even seemed to have quite a lot in common when they got right down to it. A little too much in one case. And that is what drove them apart every time.

Adrien.

A crush on a boy isn’t what should split what would otherwise be a pair of close friends, should it?

“All right students,” Mr. Babineaux started handing out papers, “To finish out our study of Utopia, we are going to be doing a pairs project. You and your partner will create your own utopian island. You have complete creative control but there are a few points that everyone must hit. 1: Draw a map of your utopia. 2: List the laws and regulations of your utopia. Lastly, write a small essay on the values the indigenous people of your island hold and why, minimum two pages. If you want to add other things like culture, holidays, or what have you then that is more than welcome. You have the rest of class to find your partner and start your project. This will be due next Wednesday where you will present your utopia to the class. Have at it.”

Immediately everyone started pairing off. Marinette stretched her head to look at Nanette and Quinn but they were already huddled together making rough sketches of their island. Looking around the only available person seemed to be Kagami.

“So…” Marinette smiled at her, hoping to diffuse some of the tension, “Want to be partners?”

“That sounds nice.” Kagami stated matter of factly.

Oh boy.

They started by outlining the core laws their island would function under and then moved onto what the punishment for breaking the laws may entail. Kagami seemed to have a much harsher form of punishment then Marinette had in mind. Marinette was able to talk her down out of anything lethal. Although she may have let slide the liars have their tongues cut out rule for reasons…

The bell rang and everyone started packing up for their next class.

“I was thinking, I don’t know what your schedule is like but maybe we can figure out a day to get together and keep working on the project. I’m not too worried about the map but I think we would need more time than class allows to hash out the culture and values of our island.” Marinette explained as she and Kagami packed their things.

“I’ll let you know when I’m free. With tournament season coming up my mother has arranged for me
to spend more time practicing my fencing.” Kagami said, “I’ll probably barely see anyone outside of Mr. D’Argencourt, mother, and Adrien.”

And there was the tension again.

“Right, you have my number so you just let me know. We’ll figure something out.” Marinette smiled through the awkwardness.

After school let out Marinette opened her phone and pulled up her contacts. She wanted to talk to someone about this whole Kagami and Adrien situation. Nanette and Quinn are great but they don’t have the whole story and Marinette was not in the mood to explain everything. She sure as heck couldn’t talk to Adrien about it. Aurore didn’t really know Kagami. Wayhem can’t keep a secret to save his life. Chloe was a hard no for many reasons and not just because she went AWOL.

She stared for a long minute at Alya’s name. She would understand what Marinette was going through. At the very least she’d be able to give her some advice.

Marinette put her phone away with a sigh. “Why such a long face?” Tikki whispered, popping her little head out of Marinette’s purse.

“I want to be friends with Kagami cause she’s really nice and we can get along but every time Adrien gets mentioned things go south. We don’t say anything but I can feel it. It’s like there is a string between Kagami and I that frays a little more when Adrien is mentioned. I want to say something but I feel like doing so would just make things worse. What if I say something wrong and we end up arguing? I don’t want to fight what could be a good friend over a love triangle.”

“I feel like not saying anything could do more harm then ignoring it altogether.”

“I know but what if–”

A loud crash from down the road halted Marinette’s reply. A dozen or so people were running away as more crashes crept closer to where she was. An akuma no doubt.

Marinette ducked into an alleyway. This Kagami situation would have to wait. “Tikki, transform me!”

Marinette lunged onto the roof of the nearest building and searched for the source of the destruction.

“BAH!” A giant baby waddled around the corner, “BAH!”

“Seriously? Hawkmoth akumatized August again?” She sighed. At least she knew how to deal with this akuma already. Not as easy as taking down Mr. Pigeon but at least she didn’t have to worry about Chat’s allergies.

“I’m guessing someone’s pretty cranky about being woken up from their nap.”

Speak of the devil.

“Hey Chat Noir,” Marinette greeted her partner, “It’s been a while.”

“Too long, my lady,” he grinned back at her, “While I did enjoy the break from akumas I did miss our moments together.”

“Which ones? Where I throw you at akumas or when you leap into the line of fire yourself?”

“Yes.”
“Let’s just get junior here pacified before dinner. I think giant babies would take a lot more than a bottle to keep them happy.”

“True.”

Marinette scanned over the akuma. What was his problem today? He wasn’t chewing on anything so it wasn’t teething. He was rubbing his eyes a lot. Maybe he really was grumpy from waking up or just too tired to realize that sleeping would rid him of his grumpy mood.

“We need to get him to fall asleep.” She told Chat Noir, “Help me lure him somewhere with room enough to lay down. I have an idea.”

“On it.” Chat Noir jumped closer, “Hey! Over here! Wanna play with a kitty? Gotta catch me first!”

The pair went running as a sleepy August waddled after them.

Marinette knew that she should focus on the akuma but her thoughts about Kagami wouldn’t leave her be. “Chat, can I ask you something?”

“Anything,” he shrugged as they ran, “Finally gonna ask me on a date?”

“Not so lucky, minou,” she rolled her eyes, “You see, there’s this person I’ve started making friends with but she likes the same guy as me. I still want to be friends with her but the topic always brings up a cloud of awkwardness because of this boy. Any advice?”

“I have two options.”

“What’s the first one?”

“Talk to her. If the both of you want to be friends but this subject of a shared crush makes things uncomfortable then you need to address it. You don’t have to bow out of your crush so the other isn’t awkward but keep pursuing this mystery boy without letting it harm your friendship. If you truly are on good terms then a little rivalry is fine as long as you don’t delve into underhanded tactics like sabotage.”

“And what was option two?”

“Ditch mystery boy and go out to the movies with me?” he asked with a hopeful but joking smile.

“I think I’ll stick with option one. Thanks though.”

They got to the football field arena and circled around August. He wouldn’t cause anymore damage here.

“What’s the plan?” Chat Noir asked.

“We got him here, now we need to get him to sleep. Let me see what I got,” She thrust her yo-yo into the sky, “Lucky Charm!”

A CD dropped into her hands.


“But not enough. No. We need back up.” Marinette sighed. “Someone who can cast a calming illusion.”
“Rena Rouge?”

“Yup,” Marinette grasped her yo-yo tighter, “I’ll be right back. You keep August entertained.”

She sped as fast as she could to Master Fu’s. He was unperturbed by her sudden appearance as was the case nowadays. “Marinette, in need of an ally today?”

“Yes, I need the Fox Miraculous.” She took the necklace out of the box.

“Is something the matter, Marinette?” Fu asked.

“Sorta, I know who I should give it to but I don’t want to. But I also could use someone who already know what to do,” she contemplated briefly giving the necklace to Chloe but with her under the radar dealings of late she wasn’t sure where to even find her. That really only left one option.

“Grudges are only a form of self-punishment. Remember that, Marinette.” Fu told her, “Do not let your emotions stand in the way of the common good.”

“You’re right.” She looked to Tikki to make sure she was recharged, “Let’s get going. I don’t know how much longer Chat can keep a giant toddler in one place.”

After transforming back into Ladybug, Marinette sped as fast as she could to Alya’s house. She hesitated at the window before shaking the contempt from her mind. Ladybug isn’t mad at Rena Rouge.

She knocked on the window startling Alya off her bed. Quickly she ran to the door and thrust it open. “Ladybug? What’s up?”

Marinette held out the box with necklace. “I need Rena Rouge for a quick mission.”

“Oh, right,” Alya took the box but didn’t open it.

“Problem?”

“No, I just...” She looked back at her bed where her laptop sat with what looked like fifteen or more tabs opened, “I was doing some research. But duty calls!”

She transformed into Rena and the pair went vaulting back across the rooftops to the arena. Chat unfortunately had been caught by August and was turning a sickly green shade from being waved around in the toddler’s hand.

“Cast an illusion of a giant mobile to help him fall asleep. I have some tunes to put on.” Marinette ran towards the commentator box and popped the CD into the arena stereo system. A minute later a giant mobile appeared over the field spinning plush ladybugs, black cats, foxes and turtles on strings.

August stopped playing with Chat Noir and focused on the mobile. Combined with the soothing music he was yawning and soon curled up on the grass for a nap. Chat wiggled his arm free and cataclysmed the bracelet where the akuma was. After that Marinette went out to catch it and thrust the CD into the sky to right all the damage August had caused this time.

The sleeping toddler was taken back to his mother by Chat while Marinette collected the necklace from Alya. “Thanks for letting me help out today.” she said.

“We needed you.”

“I’m sure you could have figured something out without me. Truth be told, I haven’t felt very heroic
lately.” Alya twiddled her thumbs. The beeping of Marinette’s earrings told her she needed to get out of there fast.

“Wait!” Alya stopped her, “Can I ask you something?”

“I’m kinda in a hurry—”

“Are you friends with a girl named Lila Rossi?”

The question took her aback. “No. Outside of when she was akumatized and a less than flattering confrontation when she tried to use me as a pick-up line I have never interacted with her. Why?”

“Nothing…research…it’s not important. See you later, Ladybug.” Alya ran from the arena to return home.

Marinette’s transformation wore off and Tikki landed on her shoulder. “Are you okay? Seeing Alya again must have been strange.”

“Yeah, kinda,” Marinette reached into her bag and pulled out another cookie for her kwami. “Let’s head home after we return the Miraculous. I’m too emotionally worn out to contemplate further human interaction.”

The walk home Marinette checked her messages. She had a text from Kagami telling her what times she could work on their project. They set a meeting time for Friday after school to work. With Chat’s advice still ringing in her ears Marinette made a mental note to talk to Kagami so they could get on the same page about their feelings regarding Adrien. Not today though. The rest of today was going to be fruit tarts and video game therapy.
Seven

Chapter Summary

Kagami and Marinette are adorable besties and no one can change my mind

Chapter Notes

Original post on tumblr: https://dakota-r-riley.tumblr.com/post/187480433041/transferred-7

Today was the day! Marinette was going over to Kagami’s house to work on their project. She had been rehearsing what all she was going to say to her when she got there. Marinette really wanted this to go well. Now if only she could keep her cool and not get tongue tied while speaking and everything should be fine.

Marinette arrived at the address Kagami had sent her. It wasn’t what she had expected. It was a rather modern looking house with smooth pristine white walls and large windows. It didn’t really seem to match the brick and wrought iron architecture of the rest of the city. She rung the door bell and waited until Kagami answered.

“Good afternoon, Marinette, I hope you didn’t have trouble finding the house.” Kagami smiled at her. She was dressed in a pair of dark grey sweatpants and a t-shirt with a cartoon character’s face on it. Seeing how casual Kagami was Marinette was starting to think she was overdressed in her sundress and ankle booties.

“Hey, Kagami, I found it just fine.” She stepped inside, “Wow it looks so much bigger in here.”

The house was simply designed with lots of open space in all directions. Some pictures lined the walls and a couple of houseplants rested in the corners but besides that it was pretty plain.

“Can’t have too much stuff crowding the hallways for mother.” Kagami said, “Oh, can you take your shoes off? I have a pair of slippers you can wear.”

“Not a problem. My mom used to try to implement the same thing at our house but with how much running in and out we do she gave up.” Marinette stepped out of the ankle booties she had put on and wiggled her feet into the slippers Kagami had handed her.

“Can I ask who that character on your shirt is?” Marinette asked.

“Oh that’s Pucca. She’s the main character from this TV show I was obsessed with as a kid. Kinda still am.” Kagami looked at Marinette with a chuckle, “Kinda looks like you with the dark hair tied up in red ribbons.”

“New Halloween costume idea.” Marinette followed Kagami into the living room and sat down.

They started unloading their project materials. “What is up with that empty room we passed on our
way in here?"

“Practice room. When the weather is bad it is where I practice fencing. It was where I usually practiced all the time before I convinced mother to let me start training outside at different parks. Had to convince her the open air and city noise was better for getting me accustomed to fighting in front of noisy crowds.”

“Got a pretty short leash as a kid, huh?”

“That was last year.”

“Oh,” Marinette shifted in her seat, “Kagami, I am so sorry. I didn’t--”

“Don’t be. It was a short leash.” she made a little choking gesture that made both of them laugh. “Now, where were we on the project?”

Marinette relaxed and looked over her checklist of project hit points. “We finished the list of laws and regulations in class and were starting on the essay. At some point we are also going to draw the map of the island.”

“You’re the more artistic one if you wanted to do that part and I’ll construct the essay from our notes.”

“But that seems like so much more work for you.”

“If we collaborate on it then I feel our different styles of writing may clash and it will look a lot less neat than one person writing it consistently. Also, don’t take this the wrong way but, I wanna make sure it gets finished on time. Your schedule of chaos may impede that.”

Her mouth dropped open. “My schedule is not chaotic.”

Kagami arched a single eyebrow at Marinette. “Sure. What are you doing after we finish up here?”

“Go home and finish the rest of my homework, research water flowers, finalize the design I want to paint on my blouse, call Nanette, eat dinner, I need to get back to Jagged’s assistant Penny about if I can help design a new t-shirt for his tour, I haven’t watered my flowers yet today too, then I…” When she listed it all out like that is did seem pretty packed, “Okay I see your point.”

“Don’t worry about the essay. We’ll write down what the values and culture of the island is like and then I’ll piece it together.” She assured her. “Sound fair?”

“I suppose.” Marinette still felt like she was getting off easy in terms of the workload.

“Also, Marinette,” Kagami said, “Don’t overwork yourself.”

Marinette smiled at her and the two got to work. Kagami was a very diligent and straightforward worker. No surprise there seeing how she is in life. Which made it almost impossible to find a place to bring up the Adrien issue.

Marinette cleared her throat and turned fully to Kagami, “Hey, I wanted to say something.”

“Go ahead.” Kagami kept her gaze down on her notebook.

“You got a bathroom around here?” Marinette kicked herself for chickening out.

“Down the hall, first door on your right.” Kagami pointed, not looking up from her notes.
“Thanks.” Marinette got up and went down to the bathroom. After locking the door she opened her purse to let Tikki out.

“Is something the matter?” Tikki asked.

“No, just wanted to chat.” Marinette leaned against the sink. “How you been? Anything new?”

“Marinette,” Tikki flew up to eye level, “You’re just putting off talking to Kagami about Adrien. There isn’t going to be any better scenario to do it so you might as well go out there and bring it up now. The sooner you Ladybug-up, the sooner it’ll all be over.”

“Ladybug-up? Is that supposed to be like man-up or--”

“Marinette!” Tikki poked her nose.

“Alright! I’m going!” Marinette snapped, “You know you are really cranky when you miss your after school cookie.”

Marinette left the bathroom and walked back to the living room. Kagami was still working ever steadily on the project. “Ladybug-up,” Marinette whispered to herself and entered the room again.

“Hey, Kagami,” Marinette sat down next to her, “Can we talk about something?”

“Get lost on the way to the bathroom?” Kagami smirked.

“No, nothing like that. And it isn’t about the project either.”

This grabbed her attention. Kagami stopped writing and diverted her entire attention to Marinette. “You have my attention.”

“Okay, perfect.” Marinette took a deep breath, “Well, the thing is, I um--I wanted to say--it’s not a big deal or anything but uh...drat.”

Kagami was patient and didn’t push her to get to the point which was appreciated.

“Alright, there’s no easy way to segway into this so I’m just gonna go for it.”

“Please do.” She nodded.

“You and I both like Adrien and every time someone mentions him things between us get weird and it makes me really uncomfortable because I really like you and I don’t think a crush on the same guy should ruin the friendship we have.” Oh by the powers above Marinette felt like that simultaneously took three years off her life while also lifting a huge weight off her shoulders.

Kagami wasn’t saying anything. Her composure seemed to have slipped a notch and her big brown eyes were blown wide. ‘Please say something!’ Marinette screamed in her mind. ‘Anything!’

“Well,” Kagami looked away, “That was...not what I was expecting you to say. But I’m glad you said it.”

“Really?” Marinette didn’t dare relax yet.

“Yes. I’ve been thinking about it a great deal too.” She tugged at the hem of her t-shirt, “I know that you and Adrien have known each other longer and he thinks a great deal of you. He got so concerned at the ice rink when you left. Seeing how quickly he came to your aid made me a tad envious.”
“He’s like that with everyone really.” Marinette tried to keep her emotional distance, “He’d be there in an instant for one of his friends.”

“But when one of those friends has a crush on him?” Kagami probed.

“It’s not like he notices.” Marinette clenched her hand around her pencil, “In truth, it got to be more hurt than it was worth at one point. I almost gave up on him completely in terms of romance.”

“Why?”

“You.” Marinette felt her face grow hotter, “You two get along so well and have a lot in common. When he came up to me asking for advice on how to ask you on a date it crushed me but I said yes because I want to see him happy. Whether that be with me or you or someone else.”

“It probably also helped that you had a cute older guy mooning over you the entire time we were at the rink.”

“Luka. It is a lot easier with him, that’s for sure.” Marinette shook the thought from her head, “We’re getting off track. We were supposed to be talking about how our crush on Adrien is affecting our day to day interactions.”

“Right. Yes.” Kagami straightened, “If we’re being brutally honest then I should say that I feel a little threatened by you in that regard. I’ve done everything short of confessing to Adrien and still I feel like he keeps looking back at you.”

“Threatened by me? How? You’re so confident and cool all the time. Not to mention that you’re insanely pretty. You’re like Mulan made real!”

“Are you kidding?” Kagami scoffed, “How many passions do you excel at? You can create just about anything and already have major professional contacts in different industries. Also, you wanna talk about pretty? Have you looked in a mirror recently? You little blue eyed, button nosed, cream puff! How am I supposed to compete with the definition of a cinnamon roll?”

The two girls stared at each other before bursting into laughter.

“Oh, wow,” Marinette held her belly, “A cinnamon roll? Seriously?”

“Are you serious? Confident and cool all the time?”

“You are!”

“I can’t even muster up the courage to talk to my classmates in a social capacity half the time. For class or fencing I have no problem but if it is just me trying to be casual then…” Kagami trailed off. Their laughing fit flitting away into a dark hole of insecurity and awkwardness.

“Kagami, look at us,” Marinette rested a hand on her shoulder, “We’re friends. Nanette and Quinn and Adrien are all your friends too. There is nothing for you to be nervous about. Not in front of us. Not in front of anyone.”

“We are friends.” Kagami sniffed, “And I don’t want Adrien to come between us.”

“Neither do I.”

“But I also don’t want to stop pursuing him.”

“I don’t want you too either. Just like I don’t want to stop my pursuit of him. But I think we can rope
“You mean the both of us keep on crushing on Adrien and try to date him but keep it civil between us.”

“Exactly. No sabotage. No jealousy. And if one of us does get to date him then we will back off and be happy for the other. Sound good?” Marinette stuck out her hand.

“Sounds perfect.” Kagami shook it. “I am so glad we got that out of the way.”

“You cannot even imagine. I was so stressed about bringing it up because it never seemed like the right moment and I didn’t want to run the risk of making you angry or ruining things further.”

“And I didn’t want to scare you off. I know I can be intimidating sometimes but I like you and I just wanted this whole uncomfortable part of our lives to disappear.”

“It’s over now.” Marinette cast her eyes down to the coffee table littered with their project supplies, “Unlike this major project we have to present in a couple days. We should probably get back to that.”

“Oh geez, I didn’t realize how long we were talking. Hand me the notes you made on the culture of our island.”

Now panicked and pressed for time before Kagami’s mother came home the two girls raced to make up for the time they had lost. By the end all that was left to do was for Marinette to take the rough draft of the map they had constructed and make it neater while Kagami ironed out their essay. They said goodbye and Marinette made Kagami promise that the next night they had free they were having a sleepover.

Marinette caught a bus home and took a few minutes to relax in her room before she jumped onto the list of other things she needed to do.

“I’m glad you worked things out with Kagami,” Tikki was sitting on Marinette’s knee munching on a cookie, “I knew the two of you would make great friends.”

“I’m more thankful that it’s over with. I never want to have a conversation like that again for at least the next year.” Marinette reached for a cookie off the tray by her computer. “Hm…”

“What is it?” Tikki perked up again. “Wave of inspiration?”

“Sorta,” Marinette booted up her computer and started searching. “Kagami is gonna love this!”

“And you’re sure that we can do this?” Adrien was on the phone with Chloe. Usually at this time he was talking to Marinette but Chloe had brought something to his attention that was pretty dire.

“When have you ever known me to fail?” Chloe bragged.

“It’s not that I don’t doubt you, Chloe.” Adrien was pacing his room, “But are you sure there isn’t anything I can do to help?”

“I’ve already explained your part in this, Adrikinz. Don’t worry about a thing and keep Dupain-Cheng’s nose out of this. I’ll call you when I have an update.”

“Can’t I at least hint at it?”
“Adrien,” Chloe’s tone was warning.

“Fine. I’ll keep my lips sealed. Goodnight, Chloe.”

“Sweet dreams, Adrien.”

They hung up and Adrien slumped onto his couch. He didn’t like the idea of keeping things from Marinette but this was a pretty big deal. Hopefully it would all work out in the end.
Eight

Chapter Summary

The salt has returned. As well as the Protect-Marinette-At-All-Costs Squad.

Chapter Notes

Original post on tumblr: https://dakota-riley.tumblr.com/post/187681270681/transferred-8

“I can’t believe you’ve never gone bowling before.” Nanette said.

“I was never invited to go bowling.” Kagami shrugged. “Didn’t have a real interest in it either.”

Kagami, Nanette, Quinn, and Marinette were done with school and decided to celebrate the end of their utopia projects by going out bowling. With the weather steadily getting colder the further into the autumn they got they needed to find entertainment inside.

“You are going to love this place. Lots of neon lights, a billiard room, a bunch of arcade games, tons of cheap greasy junk food. It is like the perfect teen hang out.” Quinn wrapped an arm around Kagami and Marinette’s shoulders. “And I get to whip your butts!”

“Wanna bet?” Kagami smirked.

“You may wanna watch yourself, Quinn.” Marinette giggled, “Kagami is a tad...competitive.”

“You mean the all-star fencer has a competitive streak? Who knew!” Nanette joked.

They continued on their way laughing and talking. They were almost to the bowling alley when Marinette froze on the sidewalk.

The others stopped and looked at her confused. Kagami looked around and sighed. Up ahead was a group of Marinette’s old classmates and they were heading straight towards them. No alley to duck into either.

“Hey,” Kagami looped her arm through hers, “It’s alright.”

“Yeah,” Marinette nodded, “I just…”

“What’s going on?” Nanette asked. “Marinette, are you feeling okay? Do you need to go home?”

“No. I’m fine.” She felt bad for worrying them, “Let’s keep moving.”

Marinette was hoping that the other group would veer off in another direction but they kept steadily approaching them. Maybe if she kept her head down no one would notice.
“Adrien!” Nanette shouted, “Hey, Adrien, over here!”

Nanette, why have you betrayed me? Marinette thought as her pink haired friend waved to the group of oncoming students.

Adrien as well as the rest of the group was right in front of them now. So much for passing by unnoticed.

“Hi, guys,” Adrien waved at their group, “Where are you all off to today?”

“Bowling. Kagami’s never been.” Nanette explained, “Oh, and this is my friend, Quinn.”

“Hey,” Quinn was distracted by how Marinette was squeezing herself behind them. “What is up with you?”

“I...”

“Marinette?” That voice. That sickly sweet, vile, voice struck her to the bone.

Marinette peaked over Quinn’s shoulder. Among the group with Adrien was Alya, Nino, Kim, Max, Alix, and…

“Lila,” Marinette muttered.

“It’s been so long.” Her smile stretched wide, almost like she was showing off all the lies she pressed through her teeth.

“Not long enough.” she spat. Her fear quickly turning into rage as she was put face to face with her enemy once again.

“Oh, you’re still not upset about the expulsion, right?” Lila frowned, “I mean, it was over a month ago.”

“I wasn’t expelled. I transferred.” Marinette didn’t need to keep up any pretense now. She was uninhibited in her dislike and the power both thrilled and scared her. “Now if you don’t mind, my friends and I will be on our way.”

“Oh, don’t leave so fast.” Lila grabbed her arm as she tried to push past, “Aren’t you even gonna introduce me to your new friends?”

Was today gonna be the day Marinette gave someone a bloody nose? Her hand balled into a fist as all her frustration started to accumulate.

“Let go of her,” Kagami pinched Lila’s arm, hard. Lila dropped Marinette immediately.

“Ow!” Lila whined overly dramatically. “Why did you do that?”

Marinette was pulled back to Nanette and Quinn who kept their arms protectively linked with hers.

“Don’t touch my friends.” Kagami leveled her with a single glare.

“Adrien,” Lila turned her pleading eyes to him, “Is my shoulder bruised? I have really sensitive skin. I bruise like a peach.”

“There’s nothing there,” Adrien responded in a deadpan voice.
“Why are you even wearing a tanktop? It’s the middle of October.” Nanette asked.

Lila squeezed herself closer to Adrien, “I’m warm blooded but now that you mention it I am a bit chilled.” She pulled Adrien’s arm around her, “Much better.”

“Here.” Quinn tossed their jacket in Lila’s face. “That should keep you warm.”

Lila tore the jacket off her head. She was close to snapping but kept it on lock. “Thank you.” she stressed, her eyes raking over the worn down jean jacket in her hands, “But I just couldn’t--”

“I insist.” Quinn looked at Adrien, “You wanna come bowling with us, blondie?”

“That does sound fun!” Lila beamed.

“I wasn’t asking you.” Quinn snatched their jacket back from her.

“I don’t want to intrude on your outing.” Adrien said.

“Don’t be ridiculous.” Quinn grabbed him and pulled him next to them, “I’ve been hearing a lot about you from the girls and would like to confirm if what they said about you is true.”

“What are they saying about me?” Adrien looked back at Kagami and Marinette with a small smile.

“This and that. You in?”

“Sure.”

“Dude, you’re just gonna bail on us?” Nino spoke up.

“He sees you every day at school,” Kagami stated, “He only gets to see us once in a while. So it’s not really bailing. Especially if he wants to come with us more than he wants to stay with you.”

Dang, Kagami! Marinette stared at her. Sure Marinette wasn’t on the best of terms with her old classmates but that was cold. Then again if Kagami hadn’t stepped in earlier Lila would be lying on the ground with a broken nose. The most she would probably regret from that decision is a bruised hand.

Seeing all her old classmates like this Marinette was able to see what Adrien and Aurore had meant. They weren’t exactly zombies but they didn’t look too thrilled to be out. It was almost like they had gotten dragged along and didn’t have any fight in them to object. It may have been sad if they hadn’t assisted in her bullying induced transfer to a different school across town.

The rest of the students shuffled their feet muttering goodbyes and quietly ushering a red faced Lila past Marinette’s group.

“I like your sweater,” Alya murmured on her way past, “It’s really cute.”

Marinette’s heart lurched as her former best friend gave her a waning smile before moving on with the others.

“Thanks,” Marinette said quietly. Alya was too far down the street to have heard her.

“Okay!” Nanette clapped her hands together, “That was a whole new level of uncomfortable.”

“Yeah…” Quinn and Nanette were looking at Marinette again. A million questions waiting unanswered on their tongues.
“Everything okay with you?” Adrien asked breaking her attention away. “Lila…”

“I’m fine.” she stammered. “We were bowling right? Let’s go do that.”

“Marinette--”

“I’m fine!” she snapped as she moved on ahead of the others. “I just...I just really want to get a good bowling ball before all the nice ones are taken.”

Her friends weren’t convinced but it was obvious she wasn’t going to talk about the confrontation right now. Not that she could keep avoiding it. Eventually she was gonna have to vent. Not even five minutes around Lila again and Marinette was ready to blow her fuse.

They got to the bowling alley and tied on their shoes. Nanette was typing in the names on the scoreboard while explaining the rules to Adrien and Kagami. Quinn sat down next to Marinette. “I found you a pink bowling ball.” they handed it to her. “Your favorite color, right?”

“Yep,” Marinette took the ball, “Thanks, Quinn.”

“I know it’s not my place to pry but you know if you need to talk then we’re all here for you. You don’t have to keep it to yourself.”

“I know.” she leaned her head on their shoulder, “I appreciate it.”

“And if for some reason you need us to kick someone’s butt we got you covered. Outside of Kagami basically being an attack dog. Did you see her face when that girl grabbed you?” Quinn made a scary face, “Hoo, I thought she was gonna break her arm. But you also got me, the first pick for dodgeball superstar and Nanette who has really sharp long nails.”

“My own little army,” she laughed, “I feel safer already.”

“Good,” they smiled.

“Marinette!” Nanette swiveled around in her chair, “Your name doesn’t fit in the slot so I just put Mari.”

“Mari?”

“What’s wrong with Mari? Everyone calls me Nani.”

“Nothing. It’s just that no one ever calls me Mari.” Marinette shrugged.


“She never asked to be called by a nickname.” Adrien shrugged. “Besides, Marinette is a pretty name.”

“But Mari sounds so cute. Also, as friends it is our duty to assign cute and embarrassing nicknames. Isn’t that right, Applesauce?”

“Nanette!” Quinn snapped, their face going red, “I swear to Loch Ness if you call me Applesauce again!”

“Why does she call you--”

“Don’t ask.”
“Awe, come on Quinny, what’s so wrong with--”

“Wettie Nettie.”

Nanette looked at them horrified, “We agreed that that nickname would die in a hole never to see the light of day again.”

“Yeah, but we also said the same thing about Applesauce. So if we’re taking embarrassing old nicknames out of retirement…”

“Fine. Truce. Shut up.” Nanette grumbled and went back to typing in names.

“Do I wanna know the story behind either of these?” Marinette asked.

“It’s better if you don’t. Just know that they are best left forgotten forever.”

“Wait, does Wettie Nettie have anything to do with that day the air conditioning at school--”

“Kagami,” Quinn was furiously shaking their head, “Do not engage.”

“Got it.” they all relaxed as they started the first round of bowling. Quinn and Nanette were dominating with Kagami right on their tails. For someone who had never played before she was doing very well. Better than Marinette and Adrien that is. Gutterball after gutterball.

“You need the bumpers up, blondie?” Quinn teased.

“You joke but I may actually need them if I want to get any points.” Adrien sighed as he sent his neon green bowling ball down the lane. And it spun right into the gutter again. “Come on! What am I doing wrong?”

“Take a walk, Adrien,” Nanette patted him on the back, “Marinette, you’re up.”

Please, oh please, Marinette begged in her mind, give me some Ladybug luck. She took a deep breath and threw her ball out into the lane. Keeping straight...keeping straight...turning slightly...and…

“STRIKE!” Marinette jumped for joy, “I got a strike!”

“Good job, Marinette,” Kagami said, “It was an excellent turn.”

“Now just do that for the rest of the game and you may come in second to last instead of dead last.” Quinn joked, “I’m pretty sure your model friend isn’t gonna get anything above a spare.”

Marinette did in fact not get dead last but had tied for last place with Adrien which she supposed was better. Quinn was raining champion with Nanette missing out by just two points and Kagami missing out by a mere handful.

“Alrighty then, losers buy the food,” Nanette grinned at Adrien and Marinette, “And since you two were dead last…”

“I don’t remember agreeing to those terms.” Marinette pouted.

“It’s no big deal, Marinette,” Adrien took out his wallet, “I was the real loser. I’ll pay.”

“Yeah. Make money bags pay.” Quinn ruffled Adrien’s hair, “Get three orders of the biggest fries they have. Extra greasy. Extra cheesy.”
Kagami put a hand over her mouth, “That sentence made me puke a little.”

“Live a little, Kagami,” Quinn and Nanette sided her, “When was the last time you ate something truly bad for you?”

“Bad for me like a heart attack,” Kagami shuddered, “I don’t think I should.”

“How about a game of air hockey? If I win you eat. I you win then you can order a salad and be sad with your healthy living.” Quinn challenged.

“You’re on.” Kagami’s competitive nature won out and the pair raced to the arcade to settle the score.

“I better make sure those two don’t send a puck through a wall.” Nanette rolled her eyes and chased after them.

“And I’ll help you carry the food, I guess,” Marinette followed Adrien to the concession. They ordered a little bit of everything and five large glasses of soda before returning to their table.

“Besides being absolutely dreadful at bowling this afternoon has been pretty fun.” Marinette said as she settled the tray of food down.

“It was a lot more fun than what I was doing before you showed up.” Adrien took a sip of his soda, “I don’t know how I got roped into that outing with Lila.”

“I was meaning to ask about that.” Marinette scooted her chair in closer, “Why were you out?”

“A rare free afternoon and plans with the boys quickly turned into a group outing with Alya and Alix which wasn’t bad until Lila caught wind of our plans and invited herself. Unfortunately I didn’t have a good enough reason to tell her no. Lila didn’t want to go to the movie we were planning on seeing so we just started walking around town looking for something to do.”

“So we swooped in for the rescue.” Marinette felt sorry that Lila was still running the school with reckless abandon. What was Chloe doing? She was supposed to be keeping Lila in line. Come on, Queen Bee!

“Stop pouting, Quinn,” Kagami and Nanette returned with a sour faced Quinn, “No one likes a sore loser.”

“She beat you?” Adrien laughed.

“Not a single point.” Nanette was holding in her laughter, “It was actually kinda sad.”

“Shut up, Nani,” Quinn grabbed one of the baskets of fries and shoveled them into their mouth by the fistful. “What were you two talking about?”

“I’m gonna go out on a limb and say we were having a venting session over Lila?” Kagami guessed.

“Yes.” Marinette grimaced into her glass.

Nanette and Quinn shared another uneasy look as if to say who was gonna ask. “Marinette?” Nanette asked, “Does this Lila person have anything to do with why you transferred schools?”

“Well...um...” she looked to Adrien for support. He grabbed her hand giving her the courage to face this terrible tale once again. “Settle in, this is a bit of a downer.”
So she told them all about what happened with Lila. All her plans to sabotage Marinette and her threats to ruin her finally succeeding in pushing her out of the school. She got choked up when she mentioned how it seemed none of her friends were on her side, except for Adrien of course.

By the end both Nanette and Quinn were red in the face. “That little--” Nanette looked like she was going to pop a blood vessel, “I’m gonna go in the bathroom and scream. One second.” She stormed off.

“Are you serious? That twerp we met outside got away with all of that?” Quinn’s nostrils flared. “Who’s got an address? I wanna have a little chat with this pest.”

“Quinn, it’s not--”

“AAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!” A scream from the bathroom silenced everyone in the bowling alley. Nanette stomped back out and sat back in her chair. “I’m better.”

“You sure?” Kagami quipped, “Didn’t strain a vocal chord screaming bloody murder?”

“There’s gonna be a bloody murder!” Quinn pounded their fist on the table.

“Guys, please,” Marinette pleaded with them to calm down, “I appreciate the concern but it doesn’t matter now. I left of my own accord to get away from her and start fresh. If I never see her again it’ll be too soon.”

“But she was so--so--”

“Evil!” Nanette finished. “She’s plain evil!”

“She’s also a talented liar. I’ve tried taking her on before and it cost me my friends and my school. Karma will sort her out for me.”

“You seriously believe that?”

“I have to. It’s all I feel I can do.” Marinette felt another hand grasp hers.

“If she ever does come after you again,” Kagami said, “You’ll have us behind you.”

The others nodded. Marinette let out a breath of relief and gazed at her wonderful friends. “Thank you. You are great. Truly.” she leaned her head on Kagami’s shoulder, “And now that the emotional breakdown is out of the way, who wants me to pulverize them at Street Fighter?”
“Tikki,” Marinette spoke from the bathroom floor, “Do your powers include necromancy?”

“You’re not dying, Marinette.” Tikki was settled on the cool tile next to her sickly chosen.

“Tell that to my stomach.” Marinette heaved into the toilet once more, “Tikki, find Plagg and please have him kill me.”

“It’s just strep throat. It’ll be gone before you know it.” Tikki assured her, “Can I do anything for you?”

“Well--”

“My powers cannot revive your throat.”

“Water please.” Marinette sighed as she tried to spit the taste of bile from her mouth. Tikki floated down with a little paper cup full of water. “Thanks, Tikki.”

There was a knock on the door and Tikki flew into the medicine cabinet to hide. Marinette’s mom stepped in and put a hand to her daughter’s forehead. “My poor baby, you’re burning up.”

“Mooooooooom,” Marinette collapsed against her, “I am dying.”

“It is a good thing I got these antibiotics then.” Her mom pulled out a capsule of pills and handed them to Marinette. “Take these, drink plenty of water, and I’ll bring you some ginger tea and toast.”

“I don’t think I can eat.” Marinette mumbled.

“You’ll only feel worse if you don’t.” Her mom reminded her, “Now, I know it may be hard for you but I don’t want you trying to do a million things today. Forget about deadlines and due dates and just rest. Okay?”

“Okay.” Marinette didn’t have any energy to move let alone argue with her mom.

She texted Aurore and Wayhem to let them know she wasn’t going to make it to the movie tonight. They were understanding and hoped she’d get better soon.
Unfortunately for Marinette that was just day one. Turns out her sore throat and nausea wasn’t some simple strep throat. Oh no. She was in full on flu time. Which meant that this sickness was here to stay for a while longer. It had been going around the city and it had come for her. The only sights of the outside world she saw was when her friends would drop off her homework and the feel better soon texts she got from the others.

Even Alya had posted a get well soon comment on Marinette’s picture on Instagram. That made her feel a little better.

Marinette had fitted her bathroom to be as comfortable as it could get during her sickness. Blanket and pillow on the floor, medicine, a full glass of water, some crackers, phone and charger, some books and magazines to read, and of course a soothing Tikki nesting on her head.

Her phone beeped and she looked to see who texted her. Adrien.

I’m sorry I can’t come and see you but my father has forbidden me from being anywhere near you while you’re sick.

Marinette texted him back.

It’s not a problem. I don’t want to get you sick and I especially don’t want you to see me like this.

He texted her again.

Nothing a hot shower and long rest can’t fix I’m sure. Has anyone been to see you though?

Just Nanette and Quinn. Wayhem came by with soup but I was asleep.

I guess Kagami’s mother won’t let her out to see you either. I figured as much.

Why’s that?

Cause there’s this arts fundraiser coming up that we both have to go to and if we catch the flu our parents will literally kill us.

Well we can’t have that. I prefer my friends alive.

I do too. We’ll do something when you feel better.

I’m holding you to that.

As well you should.

I think I’m gonna take another nap. Nightie night.

I’ll let you rest. Feel better soon!

Marinette dragged herself from the floor and dropped herself onto her chaise, it was too much work to climb up to her bed, before promptly falling asleep.

She had a dream where she was running across the rooftops of Paris but she wasn’t Ladybug. She was dressed in her big ballgown she designed and the world behind her started to turn to night as she ran. “Marinette,” someone’s voice called from the roof next to her. She looked over and saw someone running alongside her. She couldn’t make out their face but what they were wearing kept changing colors. Black then white then red then pink.
“Marinette” they called again.

What did they want? Were they trying to catch her?

“Marinette!”

The person glowed a bright yellow that blinded Marinette and shocked her awake.

“Marinette!” Tikki was tugging on her earlobe.

“Whasswrong?” Marinette slurred as she gently shooed Tikki away from her ear, “Medicine time?”

“No. I’m so sorry but there’s an akuma.” Tikki looked devastated but not nearly as much as Marinette felt.

“Please tell me it’s just Mr. Pigeon again.” Marinette really didn’t want to get up. Her body ached and without the solace of sleep her stomach started to roil again.

“No. It’s a new akuma and you’re really not gonna like it.” Tikki showed her the footage from the Ladyblog. The akuma had sickly green skin and bleach white scrubs. Across their back was what looked like a giant syringe filled with mucus yellow liquid. At random they would pull it from their back and shoot at citizens coating them in the slimy goo.

“Gross,” Marinette’s stomach churned even more. “What does the goo do?”

“Makes the person really sick. Seems Hawkmoth is taking advantage of someone who really doesn’t like being sick.”

“Me.” Marinette pushed herself up, “And we’re positive that we can’t just let this slide until I’m better? It’s not like they’re causing property damage. They’re just making other people sick.”

“Marinette, I know that you feel terrible but it’s not like superheroes can have sick days. Swallow it down and get it over with quick. Then you can come home and relax.” Tikki told her.

“Fine. Tikki, transform me.” Marinette was in her Ladybug get up now. She took a deep breath and launched out of her room to find the akuma and beat them.

At first things were fine. Marinette was tired and weak but she could keep moving without puking.

“Hello, my lady,” Chat Noir was vaulting after her, “I was wondering if you were gonna show up.”

“I really didn’t want to.” Marinette sniffed.

“Did Flu-demic get you?” Chat Noir looked her over, “You look horrible.”

“That’s their name? Flu-demic?” Marinette wanted to crawl back into bed and die. “Also, that’s the first thing you have to say to me? I know I look like a wreck. I don’t need any reminders.”

“Someone’s grumpy when they’re under the weather.”

“Chat,” Marinette warned him, “I am struggling to function right now so if you don’t want me to projectile vomit on you I suggest focusing on beating the akuma and less on teasing.”

“Noted. Just leave it to me, Ladybug.” Chat Noir saluted before vaulting ahead to where the akuma was wreaking havoc.
As much as she wanted to lie back and let Chat Noir deal with this akuma Marinette knew she would feel guilty later. She had to at least try even if she felt like the gunk that gets scraped out of gutters.

She launched herself at Flu-demic again and again in an attempt to subdue them to break the giant syringe where the akuma had to be located. Chat was avoiding the shots of sickening goo left and right. Marinette wasn’t too worried. Not like it could make her more sick than she already was.

Chat was distracting Flu-demic while Marinette went in for a surprise attack from behind.

“Not so fast, Pukey-bug” Flu-demic whacked her in the stomach and sent her flying back.

She crashed through a wall and landed into someone’s living room. She wasn’t able to hold it in anymore and puked all over the poor resident’s hardwood floor.

“Ladybug?” someone approached her, “Are you alright?”

Marinette tried to get up but all fight had left her body. She couldn’t move. Everything hurt.

She looked up to see whose house she had crashed into. “Kagami?” Marinette squinted at her friend.

“What’s happened?” Mrs. Tsurugi rushed into the room. “What’s going on?”

“The akuma sent Ladybug into our living room.” Kagami informed her mother. “She doesn’t look like she’s doing well.”

“I’m not” Marinette started to sob as all the pain hit her. “I can’t--I can’t--”

“But you have to!” Kagami knelt next to her, “You’re Ladybug! You always win.”

“Yeah,” An idea struck her, “Ladybug always does and she will.”

“That’s what I thought--hey! Where are you going?” Kagami asked as Marinette dragged herself into the bathroom and locked the door.

She took off her earrings and Tikki popped out. “What are you doing?” Tikki stressed in a whisper.

“Chat Noir needs Ladybug to cleanse the akuma.”

“I know. But I can’t do it in this state, Tikki.” She held out the earrings. “Take them to Kagami.”

“Kagami? Are you sure? This isn’t like any of the other miraculous, you can’t just hand it out to anyone.”

“Kagami is a skilled fighter and a loyal friend. I trust her. Paris needs Ladybug to save the day but it can’t be me today.” she put the earrings in Tikki’s arms. “Go on and explain what’s happened. I’ll be here when you’re done.”

“Are you sure about this?”

“Positive,” Marinette eyed the toilet, “Not like I’ll be able to move from here anyways.”

Tikki nodded and zipped through the door with the earrings. A minute later there was a knock on the door. “Yes?” Marinette sighed.

“Ladybug, I can’t--”

“Kagami,” Marinette interrupted her, “I am puking my guts up in here and unable to move. Paris
needs someone to save it and I have total faith in your abilities. Tikki will explain everything and you’ll have Chat Noir to help you.”

“But--”

“You can do this, Kagami Tsurugi. I’ll be waiting here when you’re done so you can return my miraculous to me. Understand?”

There was a moment of silence. “Tikki,” Kagami said, “Transform me.”

Marinette watched the sparkle of pink light filter from underneath the door. “I won’t let you down, Ladybug.”

“I know you won’t. Good luck, Kagami.” Marinette melted into the floor as she was finally able to relax. Kagami rushed out of the house and into the fray.

Marinette spent the next couple minutes laying on the floor groaning and puking and overall trying not to die on her friend’s bathroom floor. There was another knock on the door. Could it be Kagami already?

“Miss Ladybug,” No. It was Mrs. Tsurugi.

“Yes, ma’am?”

“Will you open the door?”

“I’m sorry but I don’t have my disguise. I can’t--”

“I’m blind, child.”

Oh. Right. She wasn’t too keen on letting someone in when she was in civilian form but it’s not like Kagami’s mom would be able to recognize Marinette. She debated for a moment before unlocking the door.

Mrs. Tsurugi stepped in with a small tray holding a glass of water and a warm bowl of oatmeal. “You should keep your strength up.”

“Thank you ma’am” Marinette took the tray and sipped at the water. It felt good to have something in her rather than rocketing out of her.

“Do not let your sickness discourage you.” Mrs. Tsurugi said, “You still fought valiantly despite it and with a stronger body you may have succeeded.”

“I know.” Marinette took a couple testing bites of the oatmeal, “I feel bad having to ask so much of your daughter so suddenly.”

“Kagami is a fierce warrior with a tactical mind. She will not let you down.”

“I am sure of that.” Marinette sat a little straighter, “You’ve trained her well.”

“Of course. Even with my own disability I have never hesitated. Never backed away from a fight I could not win. I want the same for my daughter.”

“But I feel it is important to remember that she is also young. She is already plenty strong but she should also be allowed to have moments of weakness like the rest of us. To be strong all the time...to never want to rely on others...no one should feel that helpless.”
Marinette could practically hear the scathing remark Mrs. Tsurugi held on her tongue. She may only be holding it because she was talking to one of the heroes of Paris.

“Meaning?” Mrs. Tsurugi snipped.

“I mean I’m one of the heroes of Paris. The one thing that stands between justice and the destruction of this city and even I can’t be on top of everything all the time. Today is a prime example of that.”

“Hmm,” Mrs. Tsurugi hummed.

Several more minutes passed and Mrs. Tsurugi left Marinette alone to wait for Kagami’s return. The water and oatmeal had helped her feel more like a human being.

“Ladybug.” Kagami was back at the door now. “I did it. Flu-demic was defeated.”

“I knew you could do it.” Marinette was relieved to see Tikki fly through the door with her earrings. She gave her a bite of her leftover oatmeal to fuel her back up before transforming again and leaving the bathroom. The living room was back in one piece which was nice to see.

“Thank you for undertaking this task for me.” Marinette thanked her, “You really helped me today.”

“I did my best. Thank you for having faith in me.”

“Was Chat Noir at all surprised that a different version of Ladybug showed up halfway through the fight?”

“Yes. I assured him that you were alright and that you asked me to handle things from then on since you were sick.”

“The important thing is that Paris is safe.” Marinette yawned, “Now if Hawkmoth can wait until after my flu is gone to send another akuma that would be great.”

“Wait, that wasn’t because of the akuma?” Kagami started to back away from her.

“Afraid not.” she smiled in apology, “You may want to make sure you take some medicine or at least disinfect your body if you don’t want to catch what I have.”

“I’ll go do that now. My mother will murder me if I’m too sick to attend the fundraiser coming up.” Kagami sighed. “Feel better soon, Ladybug.”

“Thank you for everything, Kagami.” Marinette finally was able to return home and collapsed onto her bed.

“Sleep.” Marinette almost moaned as she sunk into the warm familiarity of her bed.

Then her phone rang. “UGH!” she reached for her phone, “Hello?”

“Hey, Marinette.” It was Nanette. “I’ve been trying to call you for half an hour now. Did you see the news on that akuma?”

“Yup.” Marinette knew about it all too well, “What about it?”

“Turns out it was our very own Quinn.” Nanette giggled, “I should have known this would happen. Quinn never gets sick but when they do then they have a tendency to blow it way out of proportion. They’re such a hypochondriac and not to mention a terrible patient if you ever try to take care of them.”
“Quinn is sick?” Marinette hadn’t heard this. “Oh no, did they catch it from me?”

“Probably. We both know they’re terrible at keeping themselves tidy what with using their arms as a planner all the time. They probably had a reminder written on their hand when we dropped off your homework a couple days ago and then didn’t wash it after so not to lose it.”

“That does sound like Quinn.” Marinette made a mental note to bake them some get-better-soon cookies when she wasn’t sick anymore. “You haven’t gotten sick too have you?”

“Nope. I keep my hands washed.” Nanette laughed. “Now that I’m on the phone with you I realize that I must have woken you up when you’re not feeling well. I’ll let you rest and see you back in school when you’re better.”

“Not a problem. Talk to you later, Nani.” Marinette hung up and turned off her phone. No more distractions today. Only sleep, medicine, and more sleep.
“Quinn, you can no longer claim that you are not that bad when you are sick. I hope you realize that.” Nanette teased as the girls and Quinn walked into class the following week after everyone’s flu had disappeared.

“The whole Flu-demic thing doesn’t count.” Quinn objected. “I was sick and so not in my right mind.”

“Marinette was sick and she didn’t get akumatised.” Kagami pointed out.

“This is victim blaming!” Quinn dropped into their seat, “I’m not talking to you bullies.”

“We’re only teasing, Quinn.” Marinette assured them, “We know it wasn’t your fault.”

“I’m still interested in that new Ladybug that showed up halfway through the fight.” Nanette said, “No one seems to know what happened there. Not even Chat Noir seemed to understand what was going on.”

Marinette looked over at Kagami who was keeping a stoic face in front of the others. After Marinette had gotten her miraculous back and few good hours of sleep she checked the Ladyblog to see if there was any footage of Kagami as Ladybug. It was so weird seeing someone else do her job. But Marinette knew Kagami was clever and strong enough to do it. Maybe she could be her unofficial backup in case Marinette ever got sick or injured again.

Class started and Kagami and Marinette went to their seats in the back. Mr. Babineaux started his lecture on Shakespeare and talking about the different plays they would be reading and discussing in class.

“Marinette,” Kagami whispered, “Now that you’re feeling better I have a request for you.”

“And what is this request?” Marinette whispered back. She was trying to keep notes while also listening to Kagami.

“Do you know about the Next Big Night Fundraiser?” Kagami asked.

“Of course. It’s only the biggest arts fundraiser in France. Adrien told me the both of you were attending.”
“Yes. Adrien invited me as his plus one to the event and Mr. Agreste kindly invited my mother to join as well.”

“That’s so cool you get to go.” Marinette only ever got to watch it on TV. One day she’d make it there to support all the classic as well as the up and coming artists, designers, musicians, writers, and actors. So much talent in one room!

“It is. But I need to find something appropriate to wear to the event. I have nice dresses and outfits in my closet but I need something new for this night.”

“You want me to help you pick out an outfit? Go dress shopping?”

“No. I was actually hoping you would design a dress for me.”

“Design you a dress?” Marinette tried not to squeal, “That’s an awfully big responsibility. It can’t be just any ordinary dress either. You’re sure you want me to be the one to make it?”

“Absolutely. There’s no one I trust more to make me a spectacular dress.” Kagami smiled at her. “When I mentioned it to my mother I was expecting her to rebuke me. That I shouldn’t get my dress made by, for lack of a better word, a novice. But she seemed rather open to it. I’d say almost encouraging.”

Marinette recalled the talk she had with Mrs. Tsurugi when Kagami was acting as Ladybug. Had she actually taken her advice?

“That’s great. It will take some time so we should start as soon as possible. When are you free?”

“Mlles. Dupain-Cheng and Tsurugi,” Mr. Babineaux was tapping his foot, “Is my class getting in the way of your conversation?”

“Sorry, sir,” Marinette apologized, “Won’t happen again.”

The rest of class Marinette couldn’t bring herself to focus on the lecture. She kept imagining different dresses to put Kagami in for the fundraiser. She hadn’t had a chance to make anything formal that would actually get any use. Sure there was the ballgown she had created that Lila ruined by taking away her credit but it was more of a passion project. This was actually going to be seen by critics and other designers. It had to be perfect.

“Marinette!” Nanette shouted finally tearing Marinette’s attention from her sketchbook.

“Huh? What happened?” Marinette looked around. When did she end up in the library?

A dozen other students were shushing them but Nanette didn’t care. “What are you doing? You haven’t looked up from that sketchbook in like an hour.”

“Sorry.” Marinette closed it, “Kagami wants me to help her design a dress for a fundraiser she’s attending and I got a little carried away with ideas.”

“I don’t mean to sound like the mom friend but you should be focusing on your maths homework.” Nanette edged the textbook towards her, “You’re still behind from being sick.”

“I know,” Marinette opened the textbook and got to work.

After finally finishing the last of her homework the trio departed for home. Marinette was flipping through her sketchbook again looking at all the quick designs she had created during class. So
invested in her work she didn’t register that someone was waiting outside the bakery for her.

“Hey, Marinette,” Marinette looked up to see Alya standing next to the shop door, “I don’t know if you’re busy or even want to see me but I was hoping we could talk.”

“Oh…uh sure. I guess.” Marinette didn’t know what to make of this. She had let go of her grudge against the class long ago. It was too much effort to keep mad at people that didn’t mean anything significant to her anymore.

The girls walked upstairs to the living area and sat down on the couch.

Several moments passed of them sitting there not quite looking at each other. Tikki bumped around in Marinette’s purse to get her attention. Someone needs to break the ice.

“So,” Marinette hated that it had to be her, “What did you want to talk to me about?”

“Right,” Alya sighed, “It’s um…well I…sorry. I do have something to say I’m just panicking.”

“That is a fat mood.” Marinette mumbled under her breath. Alya must have heard her cause she snorted softly.

“I wanted to come by and say that I’ve been thinking a lot lately.” Alya said, “Mainly about your departure from the school and your allegations against Lila.”

“Have you now?”

“Yes.” Alya met her eyes with determination, “I was wrong. I was wrong about you and I was wrong about Lila. She’s not at all who she claims to be.”

“Is that so? How’d you come to that conclusion?” Marinette couldn’t help the sarcasm. It was the only way to disguise the glimmer of hope blossoming in her chest.

“The day that you and Lila got into that whole fight and it looked like you stole everyone’s stuff I thought I had a pretty clear picture. It wasn’t anything pretty and I didn’t want to believe it but the facts as they were presented led me to an assumption. Then when you actually left the school I started to rethink some things. Cause I know you. You’re strong and brave. You are not one to back down from a fight and I don’t know you to intentionally start them for something as petty as jealousy.” Alya was fidgeting with a curl in her hair.

“So you’ve changed your mind?” Marinette pried.

“I did my research.” Alya’s voice had taken an edge, “I started having my doubts about Lila when you left and then not two weeks after you were gone she was still saying stuff about you. Trying to spread rumors that I just didn’t buy. Like, she tried to say you used cheat codes during the gaming tournament a couple months back? I’ve played against you. You do not cheat. You got steamed when you noticed I used one once. Then there was some crap about you stealing your derby hat design from a sketch she did and I knew she had to be lying. One, because I know your signature style. Two, I’ve seen your sketchbook with the design in it. And three, she wasn’t even here! She was still living abroad when all this happened.”

“I think Adrien told me about those lies too. I figured that everyone would just believe them like they believed all her other outlandish claims.”

“Oh, yes, I debunked the heck out of all those.” Alya tapped her phone. “Did some research and I was able to prove half of the things she had told us were untrue in ten minutes of searching. I
honestly can’t believe anyone ever believed it. Including me.”

Alya’s hands shook and she looked at Marinette with tear filled eyes, “I should have listened to you. I should have believed in my best friend but when the time came for me to have your back I didn’t. I let Lila drive you out of school with her lies and her manipulation of our class and I cannot begin to tell you how sorry I am. I should have never doubted you and I sure as heck shouldn’t have got in your face about it.”

“Alya—”

“No. Let me finish. You need to hear this.” Alya took a deep breath and wiped away her tears, “I am so sorry, Marinette. You’re my best friend and I treated you like a misbehaving child. Even if you don’t forgive me or want anything to do with me after today I’ll understand. I just wanted to let you know that you mean so much to me and I’m sorry I let someone else come between our friendship.”

“Alya,” Marinette reached for her hand, “I forgive you. I think I forgave you a long time ago. Also, if we’re doing apologies then I suppose I should say sorry for smashing a muffin on your head. It was the frustration lashing out and I shouldn’t have done something so stupidly boorish.”

“Girl, do not even try to apologize for that. If the positions were reversed I probably would have done the same if not something even more barbaric. I had it coming with how I acted anyways.” Alya laughed dryly.

“Doesn’t mean I don’t still feel guilty about it.” Marinette sighed. “Does this mean that we’re okay now? You still want to be friends with me?”

“I should be the one asking you that.” Alya said, “Can you still want to be friends with the world’s crappiest best friend?”

“No. I want to be friends with the girl who loves me enough to swallow her pride and take the time to rethink her ways and ask for forgiveness. That girl is pretty awesome.”

“I’m gonna cry again.” Alya took off her glasses and pressed her eyes into her hands, “I freaking love you, Marinette.”

“I love you too,” Marinette hugged her best friend. “You can make up for the emotional distress by letting me whip your butt at Ultimate Mecha Strike.”

“Deal.”

After a few more minutes of tears and assurances that everything was better between them again they moved onto video games. Alya filled her in on all that was going on at the school and ranting about the lies Lila was telling. She was pretty sure that Lila’s lies were losing their credibility with every new fib. She would be shocked if anyone in class was believing in her anymore. Not that anyone had the guts to call her out. That little liar would probably just pile on even more to confuse them.

“I am so tired, Marinette,” Alya dramatically dropped her head into Marinette’s lap.

“Tired of getting beat?” Marinette smirked.

“Not that. I’m tired of the emotional strain that has become my life. With you gone things at school and at home have been bleak and boring and too annoying to even care about anymore. Everyone has been in a haze for weeks and it is really starting to take its toll.”

“It’ll get better eventually.” Marinette patted her head, “How about we go downstairs and grab some
emotional support macarons from the bakery?”

“Yes! Please! I’ve been too awkward to come here since you left and I am dying for those macarons.”

“Your cravings shall not go unsated anymore. Salted caramel, right?”

“You know it.”

Marinette stepped out of the living room and into the stairwell. Once she closed the door she started doing a little giddy dance. Alya believed her! Alya knows the truth! Alya and Marinette are friends again! Yes! Yes! Best! Day! Ever!

“I’m glad you and Alya are friends again, Marinette.” Tikki zipped into the air, “It looks like you are too.”

“I missed her so much, Tikki. I didn’t realize just how much until today. Even more I’m just glad she knows the truth now. I feel like this weight has been lifted off my shoulders having her with me again.”

“That’s great! You deserve it.” Tikki nestled her head against Marinette’s cheek, “Now how about you sneak me one of those macarons too?”

“Sure, Tikki,” Marinette grabbed an assortment of macarons from the shop and excitedly told her parents about how she and Alya were friends again. They were happy to hear it. They had missed having Alya around too. Not that they didn’t adore her new friends but they knew that there would truly only be one Alya in Marinette’s life.

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“ALYA AND I MADE UP!” Adrien almost fell off the couch as Marinette’s delighted shrieks blasted over the phone.

“That’s great.” He righted himself, “What happened?”

“She came over and we talked and she said that she believed me about Lila and--I am just really happy right now!” He could practically hear her happy little bounces through the phone.

“Is that Dupain-Cheng?” Chloe asked him.

“Yes,” he tried to push Chloe away politely, “Her and Alya made up.”


She hung up.

“Chloe!” Adrien took his phone back, “Why did you highjack my phone call?”

“Shh, working.” Chloe was on her phone and dialing someone. “Hey, listen closely because I--do not hang up on me, Cesaire! Do you want to expose Lila or not? Yes I know she’s a liar, please try to keep up. I think we could help one another. My place, tomorrow, bring your research and don’t breathe a word of this to anyone. Bye.”

“What was that?”
“Insurance that all my work doesn’t go down the drain with one stupid blog post.” Chloe sighed as she leaned back on the couch, “Come here, I wanna post a selfie of us.”

“I am still highly confused as to what just happened. I thought we weren’t going to focus on the project tonight.” Adrien scooted closer so they could both fit their faces into the screen. “Oh wow, we look like clouds.”

“I love these Korean face masks,” Chloe took a couple photos before posting one on her Instagram. “Spa night with @adrienagrestebrand #weareclouds #treatmyself”

“I needed this.” Adrien relaxed as they hit play on Haunted Cabin III: The Cursed Lake. “I can’t remember our last spa/movie night.”

It was a monthly thing for Adrien and Chloe dating back to when they were little kids. They would have a relaxing spa treatment, pig out on the couch, and riff bad horror movies all night before crashing at four AM. It was one of the only times Adrien could get his father’s permission for a sleepover.

“I still think you should have done more than just a clear coat on your mani-pedi. I got actual gold flakes in my manicure.” Chloe flashed her sparkly nails. “We could have matched.”

“You know my father doesn’t like it when I wear nail polish. Last time I came home with painted nails he had Nathalie read me the riot act because it didn’t look professional.” Adrien sighed. “Also, we already have matching robes, face masks, headbands, and slippers. Do we really need more?”

“You forgot the foot massagers.” Chloe kicked off her slippers and stuck her feet in the quietly rumbling machine. “And the answer is always yes.”
Eleven

Chapter Summary

It is about to get real

Chapter Notes

Original post on tumblr: https://dakota-r-riley.tumblr.com/post/188333851106/transferred-11

After Marinette finished talking to Adrien, or Chloe rather, on the phone she got back to work on the present she had been making for Kagami. A mini-backpack in a white, red, and black color scheme with a patch of Pucca in the corner. The inside was lined with a noodle bowl pattern that she thought Kagami might find cute.

Marinette was sure that Kagami wouldn’t want to accept it since she was already asking a lot with her designing and constructing her fundraiser dress. But she had already been working on it so she was going to accept her gift whether she liked it or not!

She finished the backpack and stowed it away in her closet to give to Kagami tomorrow when she stopped by to start designing her dress. Strange there seemed to be more room in her closet. Maybe she just never noticed how much room she had before.

“Marinette!” her mom called up to her room the next day, “Kagami’s here!”

“Send her up!” she shouted back.

“Hey, Marinette,” Kagami stepped into the room, “Thanks for doing this for me.”

“Hey, Kagami. And trust me, the honor is mine. I rarely have an excuse to make formal wear.” Marinette picked up her measuring tape. “Take off the jacket and I’ll take your measurements.”

“Can do.” she shrugged off the coat and stepped on the little pedestal Marinette had set up. “This is so strange. I haven’t had anything tailored specifically to my measurements in years.”

“Really? You’ll be amazed at how perfect custom tailoring feels. Arms up, please,” She wrapped the tape around her bust. “Have you given any thought as to what style or color you want for your dress?”

“Not really.”

“Well you do have a signature color with the red if you want something like that.” Marinette said as she moved on to her waist and hip measurements.

“I have more red in my wardrobe than I know what to do with. I like it but I think I’d like to try something different for this.”
“Well then, we have a lot of options. You’re very much a winter. Did you want something warm or more cool tones?”

“Cool.”

“Dark or light?”

“Darker I’d say. I’m pretty pale so I’m worried that lighter colors would wash me out.”

“Not if you choose the right one but okay.” Marinette jotted down the last of her measurements, “I’d say something like jade, plum, mauve--ooh, royal blue would look fantastic on you! Hold on I think I got a swatch of it somewhere.”

“I do like this shade of blue,” Kagami said, pointing to the beautiful royal blue swatch Marinette had chosen.

Marinette held it against her skin, “I told you it would look good on you. Did you want this color or did you want to look at more colors?”

“Let’s see some of those purples you suggested.” The rest of the afternoon flew by as they went about debating colors and silhouettes.

“That’s too short!” Kagami whined as Marinette helped a measuring tape up to her middle thigh.

“What about this?” She went to just above the knee.

“Mmm.” Kagami wouldn’t stop making that pouty face.

“If you want a high-low silhouette then it needs to be high in the front.”

“Then scrap the high-low.”

“Okay. But I still think we should get a flash of leg. Maybe twin slits?”

“Just let my legs be hidden.” Kagami’s face was pink.

“One slit?”

“Maybe.”

“We’ll keep working on it.” They wrapped up for the day and Marinette started putting her materials away.

“This was nice.” Kagami said, “I didn’t think designing a dress could be so fun.”

“Now you understand why I like designing so much.”

“I guess so,” Kagami looked around at the other sketches and pictures Marinette had posted around the room. She stopped in front of a picture of Adrien and Marinette at the fashion show. Marinette caught her lingering on the picture, her face not giving anything away.

“Kagami?” Marinette approached her. “Is everything okay?”

“He really likes you, you know.” she murmured, “You come up every time we see each other at fencing practice.”
“He’s just a really good friend.” Marinette turned her away from the picture, “I thought we weren’t gonna be weird about this.”

“I’m not being weird about it.” Kagami sighed, “I thought you would have liked to know how much he thinks about you. Even more so lately it seems.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Adrien has been rather…distant lately. I can’t quite describe it. He always seems to be focusing on something else and that something else has something to do with you.”

“That is strange. I’m sure it’s nothing to worry about though.” Marinette pinned the finale design for Kagami’s dress on the wall, “Besides, you are going to have his undivided attention at the fundraiser in this beauty of a dress. Forget all of Adrien’s attention, you’ll have the entire guest list fawning over you.”

“I think you give me too much credit.”

“I think you give yourself too little. Oh wait, that reminds me for whatever reason,” Marinette darted to her closet, “I started making this for you the day we worked on the utopia project.”

She pulled out the backpack and handed it to Kagami. “I was inspired by that character you liked.”

“Marinette…” Kagami clutched the backpack to her chest, “This is too much. You didn’t need to make me this.”

“I figured you’d try and resist. Don’t worry about it though. I enjoyed making it and I want you to have it.” Marinette assured her. “Now you should get going before your mom starts panic calling you.”

“Thank you, Marinette.” Kagami slung the little backpack over her shoulders. “I’ll talk to you later.”

“Bye Kagami!” Marinette waved as she left the house.

Now that that was finished all Marinette needed to do was go out and buy the material for the dress. She texted Alya to see if she wanted to come with. They had been apart for so long Marinette wanted to catch up on the hang out time they lost.

After a minute she got a response.

You know I’d love to girl but I got a major group project going on that’s due at the end of the week. I promise we’ll hang out after! Love ya!

“Well that stinks.” Marinette frowned, “Guess it’s just you and me, Tikki.”

She headed out for the store. The fabric shop was one of her favorite places to visit. Not only did it mean she was working on a new project but she adored seeing all the materials and envisioning new garments.

She found the perfect shade for Kagami’s dress and moved onto the aisle full of buttons and zippers. Turning the corner she froze when she saw someone else in the aisle. They looked up and smirked.

“Hello, Marinette, fancy seeing you here.”

“Lila.” Marinette made a point to ignore her as she maneuvered around her to get to the zippers.

“What? No friends to hide behind today?” Lila remarked, “Or did they realize how annoying you are
and ditch you too?”

Marinette ignored her.

“You aren’t even gonna put up a fight, are you?” Lila laughed, “Is that how far you’ve fallen? From your class’ precious everyday Ladybug to the spineless little nobody you really are. I’d pity you if it wasn’t so pathetic.”

They’re just the words of a deranged brat. She’s not worth the time.

“Come on,” Lila edged closer, “It’s no fun if you don’t react.”

How come this zipper was so hard to find?

“Whatever. I’m through with you. I’ve moved onto bigger fish. Mainly that little blogger friend of yours.” Marinette’s head shot up and Lila smiled wider as her comment hit its target, “It’s sad really. I liked Alya. Up until she came crawling back to you that is. Thankfully it won’t take nearly as much to drive her out of the school as it did you.”

“Why?” Marinette couldn’t keep it in any longer, “Why are you like this? What do you gain by doing these things? What hurt you so badly that you have to ruin the lives of everyone you come in contact with?”

“I only ruin the lives of my enemies.”

“That’s the thing, Lila. The second someone does something that doesn’t match up exactly with how you want they’re your enemy. You tell people things that you think they want to hear and spin tales that you think will make you look cooler and for what reason? So that you can feel justified in your horrible behaviour towards your peers? Are you even happy? Happy living these lies? Happy that no one will ever like what you really are because you keep that mean, envious, and scared gremlin that is the real you behind your grandiose stories?”

“Are you finished?” Lila rolled her eyes.

“Yeah, I’m done caring about what you do. You are going to get yours, Lila. Karma is coming for you and when it does you will not be able to salvage anything from the wreckage.” Marinette grabbed the zipper she needed and shimmied past her.

“I’d pity you if it wasn’t so pathetic.” she spat the words back in her face before racing to the checkout counter.

She paid for the materials and meandered back home. Lila could do whatever she wanted in terms of trying to torture Marinette but threatening Alya had been one step too far. She was not going to let her ruin someone else’s life.

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“Geez,” Alya looked around at the mess of papers scattered around Chloe’s room. “I see now why Sabrina does all your assignments if this is how you organize.”

“Less talky, more worky,” Chloe shuffled some papers around, “I need to figure out how to sort all of this into a cohesive narrative by Thursday.”

“Maybe you should have thought of that before the due week.” Alya sighed as she booted up her laptop.
“Maybe you should stop with the attitude. You’re lucky I’m letting you anywhere near this, Cesaire.” Chloe sniped.

“She’s my best friend! I have more of a right than you!” Alya growled back.

“Girls!” Adrien hushed them, “Please keep it down, I’m on the phone.”

The girls muttered their apologies and went back to the project. Adrien stayed on the phone hashing out the last details for the fundraiser with Nathalie. As events got closer it was taking a lot more work to keep their plans underwraps and running smoothly. They had one shot at this and if it went wrong then that was it. Improvisation was not Adrien’s strong suit. Which considering that he needs to improvise excuses to run off and be Chat Noir says a lot.

“Yes, Nathalie,” Adrien repeated, “I am aware how important this is. I can assure you I have planned for every contingency. Okay. I understand. I promise it’ll all turn out fine. Alright. Yes. Yes. I’ll be home within the hour. Goodbye.”

Adrien turned back to the girls. “Okay, we gotta work quick cause I need leave soon.”

Chloe downed the rest of her coffee and slammed the cup back on the table. “Then let’s get moving cause I am not doing all this by myself.”

“The Case of Dolos and Aletheia.” Alya typed into the slideshow title card, “A Modern Retelling by Chloe Bourgeois.”
It was a beautiful day. The sun was shining, the leaves in the trees were changing color, Marinette had all her assignments done, Kagami’s dress was coming along beautifully, Alya and her were talking again, and Quinn had finally purchased a real planner.

Marinette now sat in a window seat of Nanette’s moms’ cafe sipping a mug of warm tea and listening to the excited and funny ramblings of her friends.

“You’ve been awfully quiet today.” Nanette noted. “Everything okay?”

“Everything is pretty much perfect.” Marinette sighed, “I’m enjoying the moment while it lasts.”

“Here, here,” Nanette clinked her mug of cocoa against Marinette’s. “Heard anything from Adrien?”

“Nope. I don’t know what is going on anymore with him.” After Marinette’s confrontation with Lila at the fabric store she called Adrien to vent. He couldn’t talk long as he was on his way home and had something important to discuss with his dad when he got there. She kept her complaining short and tried calling Alya instead but was met with an even more abrupt end to the conversation as someone in the background made a bunch of noisy complaints about deadlines and narrative flow.

She tried talking to both of them the next day and again was met with quick dismissals and apologies. Something was going on but Marinette for the life of her couldn’t tell what it was. Were those two in cahoots for something? If they were, why couldn’t they tell Marinette?

Marinette’s phone beeped. “This may be him.”

“And I am telling you, Tsurugi!” Quinn was nose to nose with Kagami, “I don’t care how powerful a ninja Pucca is, she could not defeat the kraken!”

“It is essentially a giant octopus. She could totally take it!” Kagami argued.

“I will physically fight you on this!”

“Children,” Nanette’s mom approached the table and swatted Quinn on the top of their head with a menu, “No shouting in the cafe. You’re disturbing the other customers.”

“Sorry, Mrs. Labelle,” Quinn and Kagami muttered. “Hey, Marinette, can you settle this for us?”
“In a minute, I got a message from Chloe.” Marinette opened her messages.

“What is it?” Kagami leaned over her shoulder.

“She sent me a video. Geez, twenty minutes? What is this?” Marinette recognized the thumbnail as her old classroom.

“Fresh Baked Justice.” Kagami read out the title, “Was the caps lock necessary?”

“Let’s see what’s happening.” Marinette propped up her phone and pressed play.

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“Why am I the one recording?” Marinette recognized Alya’s voice behind the camera.

“Because I, unlike you, never doubted her. So I get to present the information.” Chloe was standing at the front of the classroom as the other students entered. “Now wait for my cue to start recording.”

“I’m already recording.”

“You incompetent--”

“Watch it, Chloe.” Alya warned.

“Fine, whatever,” Chloe huffed as she waited for everyone to get seated.

Ms. Bustier entered the room and gave Chloe and Alya a confused look. “Girls, what are you doing?”

“I knew we were presenting our projects today and I wanted to be the first.” Chloe said.

“And Alya is recording because?”

“Because I want to relive everyone’s jaw dropping reactions to my perfect project.” Chloe boasted but there was something slippery about the way she said it. Something she wasn’t letting on about.

“Alright then,” Ms. Bustier smiled, “Since you are so eager you can go first.”

“Perfect,” Chloe cleared her throat, “My dear plebeian peers, may I present my wonderful project of a modern retelling of an ancient story. The story of Dolos and Aletheia.”

Chloe hit a button on the remote she was holding and the slide on the screen changed to a picture of Lila with little devil horns photoshopped on her forehead.

“Now, in ancient myth Dolos was a either a lesser god or simply a personified spirit of trickery and guile depending on your interpretation. A master of cunning deception, craftiness and treachery.” Chloe continued on unbothered by the mean looks she was getting from her classmates, “The most well known story concerning Dolos is while under the apprenticeship of the Titan Prometheus he forged a copy of a statue Prometheus was sculpting.”

The powerpoint changed slides again. This time a picture of a statue of a woman with sad eyes and holding a tablet of some sort filled the screen.

“The statue Prometheus was sculpting was of Aletheia, or her Roman name, Veritas. Aletheia is the goddess of truth in ancient myth. Prometheus decided to create a statue of her so to help regulate the behaviour of people.”
Again the slides changed this time to a picture of an incomplete statue of a woman that had Marinette’s head photoshopped on it.

“Now in the myth, Prometheus was called away from his shop leaving Dolos alone. In his ambition the trickster decided to use his free time to fashion a forgery of the statue Prometheus was making. So good were his skills and in the details of the forgery that when Prometheus returned to the shop and saw the copy he decided it was impeccable and put both statues in the kiln.”

Slides changed and now stood a regular picture of Marinette with a little halo around her head and next to it was a shopped photo of Marinette twisted to give her an evil smile and a burglar mask. The devil horned Lila picture stood between them looking awfully smug.

“The only problem was that before Dolos could finish the Aletheia statue he ran out of clay and could not add any feet. Thus when the statues were done the true version of Aletheia awakened and walked with measured steps but her incomplete twin was stuck in place unable to move forward. This product of subterfuge thus came to be known as Mendacium, or Falsehood. Standing in place as a reminder that while something false can start off successfully, inevitably, Aletheia, or Truth, will prevail.”

“Well, Chloe,” Ms. Bustier looked put out, “This is well researched but how is this a modern retelling? You’ve only repeated the original myth and put your classmates faces over the pictures.”

“I am aware, Ms. Bustier.” Chloe nodded, “I was merely informing everyone of the original story. Now we will be moving onto the modern retelling. In this version the personifications of Dolos and Aletheia have been changed to Lila and Marinette respectively.”

At this the students in their seats started to squirm and exchange bewildered looks.

“Ahem,” Chloe cleared her throat and hit the button to change slides once more. This time instead of a shopped photo it was the class picture. “Once upon a time there was a normal high school class. In this class there was a pillar of truth and justice, almost to annoying degree, known as Marinette Dupain-Cheng. All was well in the class and many people liked her. Until one fateful day when a dark power of lies and deception crept into the school. A miss Lila Rossi.”

The screen now showed a still from Alya’s interview with Lila the first day she came to school.

“Lila charmed the people around her with tall tales of interest and famous connection in order to impress the students. While this irked Marinette she could not prove her lies were in fact such and so suffered in silence. Any time she tried to call out the falsehoods being fed to her peers she was met with resistance and, in extreme cases, hostility.

“What Marinette did not realize at the time was just how much her attempts at uncovering the truth angered Lila. How if Marinette could provide concrete proof to her claims then Lila would be powerless to stop it. Unfortunately for dear Marinette, she was stunted in her mission of justice by Lila with sabotage and manipulation of her classmates.”

A video appeared on the screen of what was clearly Lila sneaking into the janitor’s closet early in the morning and leaving with a large white jug of chemicals before ascending the steps into Ms. Bustier’s classroom. The time stamp on the video read about a month ago. The day Marinette sat in bleach.

A minute later the door to the classroom opened again and Lila stashed the bleach back in the closet before integrating herself with the arriving students.
“Thankfully for Dupain-Cheng, another hero rose to the challenge. One detective Chloe Bourgeois.” Chloe smirked. The camera panned to Lila. She looked more composed than she should have considering Chloe was going to expose her for the lying worm she is. Adrien, who was forced next to Lila, looked absolutely delighted by Chloe’s project.

“This day would mark the first in a long line of pranks and lies that Lila would use to break down Marinette and drive her away from her friends and the school.”

The next video took place in the library. The time stamp read about a week after the bleach incident video. Marinette was sat at one of the computers furiously typing away on a document. A couple feet away at the printer Lila stood taking the paper out of the printer and shoving it back in all bent and crushed. She walked away and a minute later Marinette stood up from her desk and crossed to the printer to collect her paper. Only the printer was now jammed due to Lila’s sabotage. Unaware of any foul play Marinette went about unjamming the printer while Lila now snuck to the computer Marinette had inhabited and started clicking at things on the screen. She ran back into hiding as Marinette got the printer fixed and returned to send her report to the printer again. Only this time Marinette started to freak out and frantically click everywhere on the screen trying to find a now permanently deleted document.

Chloe described what was in fact happening in the video to the class so they had the proper context before reminding them of Marinette’s ‘excuse’ for not having her report done. Her ‘excuse’ that someone had deleted the document and all her notes.

A few students started to look at Lila with suspicion.

A newspaper clipping now occupied the screen. It was the article about the art students and the picture of Lila wearing Marinette’s ballgown. In the article the false name Lila gave the reporter for Marinette was highlighted.

“Now thanks to the incredible work of Detective Chloe, I was able to find the reporter of this article and ask them about the misinformed name.” The screen changed to a video of a journalist sitting in their office. The name on their desk matching the name on the article.

“Now,” the video version of Chloe said, “What can you tell me about the person who gave you the name Margaret Dubois-Peng for this article.”

“It was this girl pictured in the center of the photo I took,” the journalist held up the picture, clearly pointing at Lila, “And I did not mishear her. She told me that the name of the girl that couldn’t make the picture was named Margaret. I remember because I thought the dress was beautiful and wanted to get the name perfect since the talented designer was absent from the photo.”

“I am sorry to inform you but there is no Margaret Dubois-Peng that attends Francoise Dupont. The actual designer of that dress was a girl named Marinette Dupain-Cheng whom Lila is in the same class with and knew the dress belonged to.” Video Chloe said.

“Really? Doesn't she know what kind of exposure an article in this newspaper can give to young artists? Especially considering that the Next Big Night Fundraiser is approaching. This is when the organizers and founders of the event start looking for possible recipients for the Next Big Thing title.” The journalist asked. “What kind of petty high school drama would make her lie about that?”

“What indeed?” The in class version of Chloe asked as the video on the screen ended. “I’m sure we all remember Marinette’s little freak out that day when she tried to vault a desk to get to Lila. Her outlandish claims of sabotage have more weight now, don’t they?”
Oops. Looks like Lila’s stone face started to crumble. Only slightly. She wasn’t about to give anything away yet.

“Now, I could go into all the other interviews I managed to accumulate with other famous contacts Lila claimed to know like, Jagged Stone, Prince Ali, and Clara Nightingale. So I will!” Chloe pulled up another video. This time a short montage of said celebrities holding a photo of Lila and stating that they had no idea who this person was and debunking whatever claim she made about them right then and there.

The quiet whispers passed around the class were now getting louder before Chloe called their attention back to her.

“Now, for the final nail in the coffin of Marinette’s departure from the school,” Chloe clicked the remote again with a list of items appearing on the screen. The stolen items Marinette was framed for stealing. “Her supposed theft of various objects from the rest of the class. Like Nino’s headphones,”

The screen changed to a picture of Lila grabbing the headphones out of Nino’s bookbag while his back was turned.

“Or Max’s charger.”

Another photo of Lila snatching the charger off of the table in the library Max was sitting at while he was reading.

“Mylene’s headband and Rose and Juleka’s pencil toppers.”

Two more photos both of Lila clearly reaching into the girl’s lockers and pulling out the objects.

“Unfortunately I have no evidence of her putting these in Dupain-Cheng’s bag as there are no cameras set up inside the classroom but I think the evidence of her initially being the one to steal the items speaks for itself. Lila Rossi is Dolos. Spirit of trickery and deception that drove away the Truth.”

All eyes were on Lila now. Unperturbed Lila stood up and walked to the front of the class next to Chloe. “Chloe, I will be the first to say that this is a very nice project. You obviously put a lot of work into it. Not only trying to create a parallel of high school drama to an ancient tragedy. Spectacular work. I can’t believe you even got all those celebrities to play along for it with those fake interviews. I’m sure that as the mayor’s daughter they were only too happy to help you with your project.”

Oh no. Lila really didn’t think she was going to lie her way out of this, did she? There was no way! There was video and photographic evidence on all accounts!

“These photos are some of the best photoshopping I’ve seen. You must have worked with Alya over there to create them.” Lila waved at Alya recording. “But I think there should be a helpful disclaimer to remind everyone that this is in fact a work of fiction twisted to look like real life events.”

“You are not that lucky, Rossi.” Chloe made a come hither motion and Adrien stood up. “While I know everyone in class has got to be at least speculative about me, I know they all believe Adrien. What reason do they have not to? He’s done nothing wrong ever in his life.”

This time it was Adrien who addressed the class. “I can confirm that what Chloe has said this morning is true. All of it. I knew Lila was a liar from the beginning and that she was hurting Marinette. I thought that she couldn’t cause such horrible damage to our class with her lies but I was wrong. I made Marinette ignore the problem like I did and it cost me dearly. Cost us dearly.”
He wasn’t smiling as he turned to Lila. “After what you did to Marinette and how I saw her cry because you had managed to turn the entire school against her I offered to come back and expose you for the liar you are. It was Marinette who convinced me not to so that the class wouldn’t turn against me next. It may have cost me some good friends but there are times that I look at this environment you created with your selfishness and think that maybe getting pulled from school altogether wouldn’t be bad if it meant getting away from you.”

At this the class got into a frenzy as they tried to attack Adrien for knowing the truth and not exposing Lila earlier if what he said was true. Chloe whistled loudly drowning out the frantic voices and restoring order once again.

“I’m not done.” Chloe rolled her eyes. “To close out my project I wanted to bring special attention to this particular parallel

“In one of Aesop’s fables he tells the a tale of a man that found Alethia in the wilderness away from civilization and asked what she was doing there. I believe this ties in very well with the treatment that Dupain-Cheng received during her tenure here. The quote is as follows: “A man was journeying in the wilderness and he found Alethia standing there all alone. He said to her, ‘Ancient lady, why do you dwell here in the wilderness, leaving the city behind?’ From the great depths of her wisdom, Alethia replied, ‘Among the people of old, lies were found among only a few, but now they have spread throughout all of human society!’” Chloe read dramatically, “Now if we were to take the people of old referenced here and imagine it as the people of this class and the little white lies we all have told from time to time that would be a fair comparison. But when Lila Rossi started to attend our school her lies infected our peer group and her influence has been felt throughout the entire establishment. Thus the lies found among only a few have spread throughout the whole school and with it has also driven away the truth...and a friend.”

Lila wasn’t smug now. Her hands shaking slightly out of either fear or anger.

The entire class was stunned into silence for about ten seconds before everything exploded. People were launching up from their seats and pointing at Lila with anger and disbelief. It was hard to make anything out with all the noise but a very distressed Lila stood in the center of the storm trying to fix everything before getting overwhelmed and running out of the room.

After that the camera turned to Chloe and Adrien wearing matching smug grins before the video ended.

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“That was glorious!” Marinette tried not to be one of those people that revelled in other people’s misery but Lila had this coming. And Marinette loved every second of it.

There was a message along with the video that Marinette had failed to see prior to pressing play.

You are gonna get a lot of our lame classmates texting you apologies. You should ignore them. They aren’t worth the energy.

“Chloe…” Marinette’s giddy grin softened. She would never have guessed that her long time childhood bully could ever be so...nice.

Another message popped up. This time from Adrien.

Did you get Chloe’s message?

Yes I did. She texted back. It was amazing! How are things over there now that the storm has
The storm is still going. After Lila bolted no one could keep quiet so Ms. Bustier left everyone to chat and get it out of their systems while she went to look for Lila.

Are you okay? I saw how everyone tried to lay into you.

No worries here. You know how Chloe is. We’re standing in the back rn watching the chaos. I keep hearing people say: Marinette was telling the truth

VINDICATION!

You deserve it!

Chloe told me not to respond to the apology texts I’m bound to get any second now.

You know me. I’d at least hear them out but I understand how they hurt you. Forgive but never forget and all that.

You’re right. In time yes but for right now I’m gonna leave them unread. Let them squirm a little.

Marinette no!

A text from Chloe.

I’ve been reading over Adrien’s shoulder and my response is, Marinette YES!

“I may have been slightly wrong about Chloe.” Kagami smiled, “To go to all that trouble just to prove your innocence? It is commendable.”

Marinette saved the video to her phone. “That’s why she’s Queen Bee.”
It's over. It's finally over.

Marinette breathed in the moment. Lila had finally been exposed. She couldn’t fool anyone anymore. Her old classmates knew the truth and Marinette’s name had been cleared.

It felt so good.

“Marinette?” Nanette scooted closer, “You’ve been really quiet for the past several minutes. Are you okay? Was it the video?”

“They know the truth. Everyone knows she’s a liar. I’m free.” Marinette’s laughter quickly spiraled into overwhelming sobs. Tears of joy. “I’m finally free.”

Nanette, Kagami and Quinn all reached over to envelope her in a hug. Marinette didn’t think that this would hit her so hard. She felt a tad ridiculous crying like this in the middle of the cafe. But goodness help her if she would have been able to stop.

Her phone buzzed on the table drawing her attention away. She took a deep breath and wiped her tears away. “You guys can let go now.” She told her friends, “I’m okay.”

“Are you sure?” Kagami asked.

“Yeah. All that stress about Lila finally left my body and it shook me up more than I thought it would.” she glanced at her phone. She missed whoever was calling her.

Kagami’s phone started buzzing this time.

“It’s Adrien,” Kagami answered, “Hello--huh? Adrien, slow down, I can’t understand you.”

The others stopped talking and looked to Kagami. “Yeah, she’s here.” Kagami looked at Marinette, “We’re at the Winking Violet Cafe. What’s going on? What’s happened?”

“Adrien?” Marinette got closer to the phone, “What's wrong?”

“Marinette! Lila got akumatized and she’s hunting down everyone that exposed her.” Adrien’s voice sounded panicked, “You need to go and hide.”
“Are you safe?” Hello again stress, missed you the whole ten seconds you were gone.

“I’m okay. Just find a good hiding spot and stay safe. Ladybug and Chat Noir will take care of Lila.”

“Yes they will.” Marinette clenched her fists, “You stay safe too.”

She looked at her friends. “Lila is akumatized so we need to get to a safe place.”

“Too late!” A voice outside the cafe snarled. The windows crashed and everyone ducked for cover from the flying glass shards.

An enormous fox with nine long tails stood in the middle of the cafe. It’s eyes trained solely on Marinette now sprawled on the ground.

“Marinette,” the fox growled, “You wanted to paint me as a monster so now that’s what I am and you are going to pay!”

“Lila, stop this!” Marinette yelled at her.

“I am not Lila! I am Kitsune! And you are dead meat!” Kitsune pounced at Marinette.

“Back off!” Kagami threw herself between Marinette and Kitsune. She was wielding a table chair like she was some kind of old lion tamer. “Marinette! Run!”

“Kagami--!”

“You think you can take me?” Kitsune laughed. “One pathetic little wannabe hero against a monster?”

“How about two?” Quinn jumped in as well.

“DIE YOU POKEMON WANNADE!” Nanette threw Marinette’s muffin at Kitsune. There is a literal glass vase that would do for a better distraction but instead she sacrificed the soft food item. Wasteful!

“But--” Marinette couldn’t just leave her friends but she also needed to get away to transform.

“GO!” The three of them yelled at her.

With a heavy heart she pushed off the floor and made a break for the exit. Kitsune tried to follow but Kagami, Nanette, and Quinn blocked her way. She needed to find a secluded spot and fast!

“Come back here!” Kitsune pounded down the street after Marinette.

“I gotcha!” Marinette was scooped up and vaulted into the air.

“Chat Noir?” Marinette looked at her partner, “How did you find me?”

“Uh...your friend Adrien told me.” Chat answered.

“Adrien? Is he okay?” Marinette asked, now even more worried.

“He’s safe. I promise.” He set Marinette down on top of a roof, “Stay here. Ladybug and I will take care of Kitsune.”

“Thanks, Chat Noir.” Marinette waited until he was out of sight before opening her purse, “He’s
gonna need help. Tikki, transform me!"

As soon as she was powered up Marinette took off to take down Kitsune. She should have saw this coming. Of course Lila would get akumatized after she was exposed. Nothing to do now but take her down and purify the akuma before she hurt anyone else.

She found Kitsune prowling the streets and snapping at anyone not quick enough to get out of her way. “This isn’t ideal.” Marinette muttered. She couldn’t even see an akuma object on her anywhere.

“You can say that again.” Chat Noir sighed. Marinette hadn’t even heard him approach. “I barely managed to get to Marinette before our nine tailed friend down there tried to eat her.”

“I was having such a good day before this.” Marinette sighed, “Did you happen to see anything that could be holding the akuma earlier?”

“Nope.”

“Perfect.”

“Do we have a plan?”

“Go down there, protect civilians, keep Kitsune detained until we find the akuma, kick some butt.”

“Are you still sick? You’re usually a little more serious in these matters.”

“I got a lot of energy and I wanna do some butt kicking. Let’s do this!” Marinette jumped into the fray with Chat Noir behind her.

She lashed out her yo-yo wrapping around Kitsune’s throat and pulled her back from a group of civilians like a dog on a leash. “Get out of here!”

The civilians sped off just as Kitsune threw the yo-yo off. She turned to Marinette and Chat Noir baring her teeth and growling. “I was hoping to sink my teeth into a baker’s daughter but I’ll settle for hero instead.”

Kitsune lunged at them but they dodged out of the way. Chat Noir tripped her up and beat her down with his staff as best he could while Marinette leashed her and searched for the akuma. There really isn’t anything on her. She’d have to get closer. Maybe there was a necklace or something hidden in her fur.

“Chat Noir!” Marinette yelled, “Cover me!”

“On it!” Chat Noir jumped on Kitsune’s back, extending his staff so it stuck between her jaws like a crude bit.

She slid under Kitsune’s belly and groped around her neck. There has to be something!

Kitsune started to buck and thrash wildly. Marinette delved her hand deeper into her fur. It was like putting a hand in a wolf’s fur, it just kept going.

“AAAAHHH!” Chat Noir was sent flying as Kitsune managed to knock him off her back.

“Darn it!” Marinette tried to roll out of the way but Kitsune was faster and swiped a massive paw at her head.

She pulled herself onto the nearest roof with her yo-yo and held the side of her head. It didn’t feel
like she was hurt but one of her ribbons was gone. She pulled out the other ribbon and tied her hair back in a single ponytail for the time being.

“I’m back!” Chat Noir huffed as he made it back to the action. “You’d think I’d be used to getting thrown around like that but it never gets any easier.”

“Hope you’ve recovered because we still need to figure out where the akuma is hiding.” Marinette stared down at Kitsune who paced the street growling at them and carrying on about heroes ruining everything.

“Wait, I got it!” Chat Noir exclaimed, “I know where the akuma must be!”

“Where?”

“You see the tails?” Chat Noir pointed to the nine long tails Kitsune had. Each was tied off with what looked like a ribbon of sorts. “Those ties on them are the only other thing on her. The akuma must be hiding in one of those.”

“You’re right!” How had she not seen that before. “How’d you figure that out?”

“Well I was gonna make a comment about how cute the single ponytail looked on you when I had the realization. Doesn’t Lila usually wear her hair with little hair ties near the ends? Much like the ties on the end of Kitsune’s tails?”

“Chat, you’re brilliant!” Marinette praised her partner, “Since we know where the akuma is I think it’s time for this. Lucky Charm!”

She thrust her yo-yo into the air and out of the bright light dropped a plastic container. She opened it up and took a whiff. “Hoo!” she pinched her nose, “That is some seriously strong red pepper flakes.”

“What are we gonna do with that?” Chat asked.

Marinette looked around for something to help her. That hose, Chat Noir, his staff, her yo-yo, and the very potent red pepper flakes.

“I got it!” she explained her plan to Chat Noir. “Do you understand? She handed him the container.”

“You can count on me, my lady!” he jumped back onto the street drawing Kitsune’s attention.

While he was keeping her distracted Marinette grabbed the discarded hose laying on the street. “Now!” she shouted.

Chat Noir started spinning his staff until it created a powerful tunnel of wind and uncorked the container of pepper flakes so they flew directly into Kitsune’s face.


Kitsune kept sneezing giving Marinette the opening she needed. She lashed out her yo-yo entangling her feet and knocking her to the ground. Next she bound the tails together with the house and pulled the ribbons off of all of them. She ripped each ribbon in half until a dark butterfly flew out of one.

“No more evil doing for you, little akuma.” she captured it in her yo-yo before releasing it purified back into the world, “Bye bye little butterfly!”

Chat Noir tossed her the pepper container. “Miraculous Ladybug!” the ladybugs went about correcting all the damage Kitsune had done. Including replacing Marinette’s single ponytail with her
“Pound it.” The duo bumped fists in victory.

“Huh?” Lila was back to normal and gazed around at the street. “But, I was--” she saw Ladybug and Chat Noir a few feet from her and frowned. “If it isn’t Crap Noir and Ladybarf.”

“Hey! I know you don’t like me but there is no reason to pick on my partner.” Marinette snapped at her. “We just saved you from destroying the city, again.”

“Whatever. This is the worst day ever!” Lila stomped her foot, “First with that pampered brat’s presentation and now this! I’m going home!”

Chat Noir didn’t let anything show as Lila stormed off. Usually he’d at least try to be the assuring one in these instances but he seemed to be basking in her bad mood as much as Marinette was.

“Do you think she’s okay to leave alone?” Marinette asked Chat Noir. “She seems really mad. What if she gets akumatized again?”

“I don’t think it’s that bad. She’ll sulk and fester in her anger for a while but I don’t think it’ll be so powerful as to get her akumatized twice in the same day.” Chat Noir shrugged.

“I hope you’re right.” Her earrings beeped. “I’m almost out of time. See you later, Chat Noir.”

Marinette found an alley a couple streets down from the cafe to transform back in. Tikki nestled herself snugly in Marinette’s purse to munch on her cookie as they walked back to the cafe.

When she walked in everyone was in a buzz about the latest akuma attack. Kagami, Quinn, and Nanette were crowded in the corner looking at their phones frantically. Quinn noticed Marinette enter first and ran up to her.

“You’re okay!” Nanette and Kagami followed suit to crush Marinette in their arms.

“Of course I am.” Marinette assured them, “Is everyone here okay?”

“No!” Quinn smacked her arm, “You scared us half to death! The last we saw you a giant fox was chasing you down the street. We’ve been worried sick! You didn’t answer any of our calls, we thought something bad may have happened to you.”

“Sorry,” Marinette checked her phone. Sure enough there were a bunch of missed calls listed on her phone. Quinn, Nanette, Kagami, Alya, Aurore, and even one from Wayhem.

“She’s here now and she’s in one piece.” Kagami said, “That’s all that matters.”

“Well,” Nanette set her hands on her hips, “To celebrate not being mauled by a giant fox creature and the downfall of a horrible lying she-demon I say we take this party back up to my room for an impromptu dance party. Who’s with me?”

“Sounds ridiculous,” Kagami shook her head, “I’m in.”

“Yes!” Nanette grabbed her arm, “I knew I’d wear you down to the dumb fun level as the rest of us!”
The four of them adjourned to the apartment above the shop and filed into Nanette’s room. While the other three partied it up Marinette took a minute to call back her other friends to assure them she was okay. They wanted to talk more about Lila’s well deserved downfall but Marinette didn’t have the energy for it right now. They’d all meet up tomorrow to talk about it.

After her calls were finished she joined her friends back in the small bedroom where Quinn was trying to get Kagami to floss. Oh what sweet, weird, friends she had. Wasn’t flossing outdated yet? Who in the past couple months was flossing?

“I nabbed this from the cafe,” Nanette handed Marinette a muffin. “Since I sorta lobbed yours at an akuma earlier.”

“Thanks,” Marinette took her muffin and nibbled it as her friends laughed and danced around the room. Today was a great day.
Chapter Summary

The class used: Remorse
It is super effective!

Chapter Notes

Original post on tumblr: https://dakota-riley.tumblr.com/post/189172276371/transferred-14

The next couple of days after Lila’s downfall were strangely normal. Outside of Marinette’s old classmates liking her social media posts again they weren’t interacting with her directly. According to Adrien and Alya, Lila had vanished from the school altogether after what went down. No one had heard from her and no one was looking to reach out to her. Served her right for everything she had done. If Marinette never saw Lila again it would be too soon.

“Thanks again for coming over to help with this,” Marinette told her friends.

Alya, Aurore, and Wayhem were all in Marinette’s room as she pieced together Kagami’s fundraiser dress. Kagami couldn’t make it over so Aurore was being used as a live model to see how it looked walking and sitting. Wayhem actually knew how to sew too so he was helping with a couple alterations and handing over a convenient pin or needle when needed. Then Alya was sitting on the chaise keeping the rest of them entertained with music, gossip, and memes.

“It was nothing.” Aurore said, “You’re sure it’s okay for me to wear this though? Isn’t it supposed to be tailored to Kagami?”

“It is but I need to see how it moves and hangs on a real person and you two have the same measurements. If she wasn’t at fencing practice I’d have her here but it is what it is.” Marinette shrugged.

“For the short notice it turned out pretty spectacular.” Wayhem praised, “Aurore, I want to make sure the hem is even. Can you do a slow turn?”

“Sure,”

“Ha, someone made the lady yelling at the cat meme with Ladybug and Chat Noir.” Alya said.

“Who’s the cat?” Aurore asked.

“Chat Noir. Why would the cat themed hero not be the cat in the format?”

“Diversity? Ladybug could be a cat if she wanted to be.” Aurore shrugged.

Marinette had to stifle a mad laugh. She had played Lady Noir once. That was plenty. Although she
will admit the few photos of herself with Chat’s miraculous looked good. She really should wear black more often.

“I think we are done.” Wayhem stepped back. “Hem is even. Anything you notice that needs fixing, Marinette?”

“Let me see.” She paced around the dress tugging it here and there and making sure all the seams were neat. “Looks good. How does it feel? Too tight? Too loose?”

“It is perfect.” Aurore stepped off her tiny pedestal.

“Walk in it. I wanna see how it moves.” Marinette instructed. “Okay. Moves well. Looks good. I think we are done. You can go behind the divider and change. I need to grab the garment bag from the downstairs closet.”

Marinette had pulled the garment bag out of the closet when there was a knock on the front door. She set the bag down and went to see who it was. Maybe Kagami had managed to get off early and wanted to try on the dress.

The dozen of faces waiting outside her door were definitely not Kagami. It looked like all her old classmates had decided to pay a visit. She hadn’t directly talked to any of them since she transferred and they had only barely begun to try reaching out to her now. Suffice to say it felt very strange seeing them here at her house.

“Hi,” Marinette gripped the door handle tighter. “What uh...what are you guys doing here?”

“We--well we wanted to um--” Nino wrung his hat around in his hands.

“We came to apologize.” Alix blurted out.

“Oh” Marinette had thought this might happen. She wasn’t expecting everyone at once though.

“Yeah. We were pretty harsh when everything with Lila happened. It wasn’t right.” Mylene said.

“You were also pretty scary too.” Kim was silenced by Ivan subtly elbowing him in the ribs.

“To be perfectly honest our failure to recognize Lila’s deceit was nothing short of imbecilic. I should have known she was lying when she said you cheated during the gaming tournament. Your skills are far too refined to ever have to resort to cheat codes.” Max said.

“We were so mean and we’re really sorry about all of this.” Rose looked like she was close to breaking down in tears. “I didn’t--I didn’t think that--”

Juleka hugged Rose as she started to blubber.


“They’re here to apologize.” Marinette was trying not to have another breakdown.

The all at once relief of stress and anxiety had left Marinette rather sensitive. At random points it would just hit her all at once and she’d start crying or laughing or both. Yesterday Adrien gave her a hug and she broke down. So having all her old peers outside her door apologizing and asking forgiveness was definitely wearing on her sanity control.

“Uncool guys. You just can’t ambush someone like this! Even if it is well meaning.” Alya stepped
out into the hallway and closed the door behind her. There was some muffled conversation before she opened the door again. “Now, what do we have to say to Marinette?”

“Sorry for coming over uninvited and without any notice.” Nino said. “We weren’t sure you would see us if we asked.”

“I won’t act like everything that happened didn’t hurt me. I thought we were all friends but when the time came you all took Lila’s side. Someone you barely knew. It was infuriating but even more disappointing that my word seemed to carry such little weight with all of you.”

“Marinette--”

“Let her finish.” Aurore glared at the others.

“I know the real culprit here is Lila. She’s the one that lied and sabotaged and drove me out of the school by turning everyone against me. I’ll never forgive her.” Marinette took a deep breath, “But I think I am ready to start forgiving you.”

The class perked up at that.

“That is great to here. There is one other thing we came to ask though.” Nathaneal said.

“What is?”

“We would love it if you transferred back to Dupont. We miss you and want our sweet classmate back.” Rose said.

“What did I just tell you guys about putting pressure on an unassuming person?” Alya groaned. She turned to Marinette, “I am so sorry about them. You don’t have to answer.”

“I think it is a fair question.” Wayhem shrugged. “Now that Lila’s been exposed, would you transfer back?”

“I know we weren’t in the same class but it would be nice seeing you around school again.” Aurore smiled.

“Everyone, please,” Marinette backed up, “I appreciate you coming over to apologize and asking me to come back. But the fact of the matter is that I am not coming back to Dupont. It isn’t anything against all of you but I love where I am right now. I’ve made new friends and have finally caught up with the rest of the class at my new school.”

“Also,” Marinette sighed, “Even though all of you know the truth about Lila I can’t be around her. I not only want to keep as far from her as I can but I feel like I need to stay way from her. Especially now that she’s been outed as the liar she is I can only see her getting more hostile.”

“No one has heard from her in days though. She might have transferred schools or been expelled.” Alix insisted. “If she did try anything we’d be there for you this time. You wouldn’t need to worry.”

“I still can’t take that chance. I left because it was the best thing for me at the time. Now I’m not returning because this is still the case. I hope you can accept that.”

Everyone looked disappointed but nodded.

“Thanks for hearing us out.” Mylene said.

“Alright, off with the lot of you.” Alya shooed them out. “Nino, you’re coming with me. Marinette,
I’ll text you later. Bye!”

“Bye!” Marinette watched them file back down the steps. When she heard the downstairs door close she dropped to new knees. She had felt like keeling over the second she opened the door and saw all them waiting for her.

“Whoa, are you okay?” Wayhem helped her up.

“I need a moment.” Marinette trudged over to the couch. “My head hurts.”

“For what it’s worth, I think you handled that very well.”

“Thanks.” Marinette took a few more calming breaths. “Oh wait, the dress,”

“I got it.” Wayhem grabbed the garment bag. “You chill for a minute.”

“Thank you, Wayhem.” Marinette leaned against Aurore, “Why does life have to be so darn complicated?”

“If it were simple it would be boring.” Aurore patted her back. “The worst is over now.”

I doubt that. Marinette thought. More hard times and horrible people would come but for right now she could breathe and know everything was okay. If only for a little bit.

Wayhem and Aurore hung out for a bit longer before they had to go. Marinette checked on Kagami’s dress a final time before texting her that it was all done. Unfortunately Kagami’s schedule didn’t mean they’d get a chance to do a final fitting before the fundraiser but Marinette was going to come over extra early the evening of to help her get ready. Hopefully if anything needed altered she’d have enough time to do it.

The days flew by and soon it was the night of the fundraiser. Marinette took the dress and made her way to Kagami’s house. Kagami answered the door and pulled her inside.

“Someone is excited,” Marinette laughed, “here is your dress,” She handed over the garment bag.

“What isn’t there to be excited about?” Kagami was bouncing as she took the dress. It was cute seeing her getting all giddy about it. “I’ve been looking forward to tonight all week.”

“And I can’t wait to see the outfit all put together. Go try it on!” Marinette ushered her into the bedroom. She waited nervously as Kagami put on the dress.

“MARINETTE!” Kagami shrieked. She’s seen the alteration.

Kagami stepped back out of the room in the dress. It looked fantastic. A fitted royal blue dress with an off the shoulder neckline. “What is this?” she pointed at the small slit Marinette had put in the dress. Nothing too much but it gave a cheeky peek of thigh when she walked.

“I know that you didn’t want anything short but you deserve to show off your legs a little. This is a great compromise.”

“I don’t know…” she tugged at the slit.

“If it bothers you that much I did bring my supplies to close it but you look amazing. You look hot.”

“Really?”
“Yes! Go put on the rest of the outfit. We’re on a deadline!” Marinette helped her tie on her strappy black heels while Kagami put her earrings in. Marinette carefully did her makeup so it wasn’t over the top but highlighted her big brown eyes and made her lips very kissable. (Side note to review sexuality later.)

“Alright,” Marinette put her in front of the mirror, “What do you think?”

“Wow,” Kagami couldn’t stop smiling, “I look--I don’t even know!”

“You look spectacular. You are going to turn heads this evening, my dear Kagami.” Marinette stood behind her smoothing out her hair and picking tiny bits off lint off her dress.

“Thank you, Marinette.” Kagami smiled at her. “It means so much. Not just the dress but being encouraging about Adrien. But more importantly this friendship between you and me. You are a great girl and I’m glad that I’ve gotten to know you better.”

“Me too,” She rested her head against Kagami’s shoulder, “I don’t think I ever thought I would be hyping up my romantic rival for a date with my crush. But, it’s you and I kinda love you. You’re great and no matter who Adrien ends up with, whether it be you, me, or someone else, I’m glad we have this friendship.”

“Dang it, Marinette,” Kagami fanned her face, “Is this mascara waterproof?”

“Don’t cry!” Marinette grabbed her a tissue, “No tears!”

“Stop being so sweet then!” Kagami dabbed at the corner of her eyes.

After they had both calmed down Marinette checked the time. They had to get going if Kagami was gonna be on time. They walked out to the limo. “Hope you have fun,”

“Okay, so I have a small confession,” Kagami was fidgeting. Fidgeting!

“What?” Marinette eyed her suspiciously.

“You’re coming to this fundraiser too.”

“What?”

“Come on, we don’t have a whole lot of time.”
Chapter Summary

In this house we love and appreciate Marinette Dupain-Cheng!

Chapter Notes

Original post on tumblr: https://dakota-r-riley.tumblr.com/post/189263827011/transferred-15

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Kagami!” Marinette was shoved into the limo. “What do you mean? I can’t go! Look at what I’m wearing!” Marinette gestured to her overalls, Chat Noir t-shirt, and converse. “This is a fancy fashion fundraiser!”

“I know. We have something for you to wear at the venue which is why we’re getting there early. Calm down, we got an entire outfit and we’re gonna do you up with hair and make-up. You’re gonna be the belle of the ball.” Kagami was trying to calm down a frantic Marinette.

“You were supposed to be--”

“Shush.” Kagami chuckled, “It’s fine. It’s gonna be great.”

“You’re killing me.” They pulled up to the back of the hotel. The girls rushed inside and were met with Aurore waiting for them. She was wearing a lilac dress with ivory flower embellishments around the bust.

“Hello girls,” Aurore was beaming, “Kagami, you look great! Marinette, you are going to look fantastic. Come with me.”

“Treat her well!” Kagami called to them as Aurore dragged her away. “I’ll see you in there, Marinette!”

“Aurore, please tell me what is going on.” Marinette begged as she was pulled along and into the elevator. Aurore didn’t let anything go as they sailed up and up and up. They finally stopped and Aurore dragged her up to a door. She knocked on it and the door was opened by Sabrina. She was in a simple turquoise tea length dress and had her hair curled and pinned.

“She’s here!” Sabrina pulled Marinette and Aurore inside what Marinette realized was Chloe’s room.

“About time.” Chloe stood in the center of her room in a long high neck black and white dress with twin high slits. Her hair was loose from its usual ponytail but pinned back away from her face with a little golden hair comb.

“Chloe, what is--” Marinette was cut off as the trio pushed her into the bedroom part of the room. Hanging up was the outfit Kagami had mentioned.
“I don’t know how you got that but don’t you think it’s a little much?” Marinette said.

“Not for what you’re gonna be doing.” Aurore was hopping from one foot to the other.

“But what are we doing?”

“Stop wasting time, Dupain-Cheng. We got an event to get to.” Chloe and the other two were practically pulling her out of her clothes before Marinette kicked them out to get dressed herself. After she was dressed Aurore pulled her away to do her makeup while Chloe tackled her hair.

“And she is perfect,” Aurore held up a mirror, “What do you think?”

“I look nice but I would love to know why I’m here in the first place.” Marinette was getting impatient.

“Recognition, Dupain-Cheng.” Chloe smirked, “This is the most covered charity event of the year and you are a walking centerpiece in this dress. So go down there, head held high, and let everyone know who you are. Got it?”

“Got it.” Marinette wasn’t gonna argue with Chloe about this.

Together the girls rode back to the ground floor. Chloe explained what Marinette would be doing and left her in the hands of the butler while the three others went out to a limo to take them around to the front of the building. Marinette waited behind the little stage that was set up in the hotel ballroom, occasionally she would peek out to look at all the guests. She spotted the table where Kagami and Adrien were sitting. Chloe, Sabrina and Aurore were also at the table. The parents: Mrs. Tsurugi, Mr. Agreste, Mr. and Mrs. Bourgeois, and even Marinette’s parents were sitting together at a table right next to the teenagers.

What were her parents doing here? They didn’t mention any of this! They were gonna get an earful when they get home.

After everyone was seated and comfortable, Mr. and Mrs. Bourgeois got up and came onto the stage. Marinette stepped back into the shadows as they welcomed the guests and talked about their hopes for tonight’s fundraiser.

“Now, this program is not just to fund the arts but to bring prominent artists and designers of the next generation into the light. Around the venue you will find many pieces that our young creators have been meticulously working on and will be able to continue to create thanks to your generosity this evening.” Mayor Bourgeois said. “Every year we choose one of these young upstarts to highlight as our next big name in the industry. Many high profile names today I would say, owe their jumpstart to success to this award. Clara Nightingale being last year’s winner and even our own Gabriel Agreste having received this honor back in the day.”

“To announce this year’s next big name of the arts is Gabriel’s son, Adrien Agreste.” Mrs. Bourgeois said. Everyone applauded as Marinette assumed Adrien stepped onto the stage.

Was this…

“Thank you everyone for being here tonight.” Marinette recognized Adrien’s voice speaking over the microphone now. “As Mayor Bourgeois already explained, this honor is more than just a title. It is a starting point to a road paved with opportunities. One that with hard work, an open mind, and eyes full of creativity will lead to a successful career.”

“That is why it is my very great honor to introduce our choice for this year’s Next Big Thing, Paris’
own Marinette Dupain-Cheng!”

“I--I--”

“Go, Marinette!” Tikki chided her.

Marinette regained her wits and walked onto the stage. The entire room was applauding her.

Adrien stood at the microphone with a proud smile and a hand extended out to her. Nervously she took it and he pulled her closer towards him. “Did we surprise you?”

“Yes, I think it’s safe to say you did.” Marinette didn’t know whether to blush or cry. “Why though?”

“ Cause you deserve it. More than anyone I know.” His smile softened into something sweeter that made Marinette’s insides melt.

Adrien turned back to the microphone. “Marinette is wearing a ballgown that she designed and constructed herself. Just one of many creations that she’s made. But her talents don’t end there. I could go on and on about how she is Jagged Stone’s preferred designer for accessories, posters, and album covers. How she created the stage outfits for the up and coming band, Kitty Section. Heck, it would take me all night to list how kind and creative this girl next to me is.”

Marinette was definitely gonna start crying.

“Marinette, things between us may have gotten off to a rocky start but I am glad that we are such great friends today. You are always putting yourself out there for your friends, your family, for justice, for creativity, even for strangers. Life can be tough but you push forward and soldier on with a smile on your face and a can-do attitude. In this day and age, when evils like Hawkmoth and corrupt politicians and everyday jerks have dragged the morale of the population down, having someone like you that chooses to see the beauty in the world is something we need now more than ever. There are many kind and creative people in the world but there is only one Marinette Dupain-Cheng and she will never be able to be recreated.”

And the tears were falling. No stopping it now.

The crowd erupted once more into applause while Adrien handed her a tissue. “Kagami told me to bring this up with me. Good thing she thought ahead.”

“Yeah,” Marinette let out a bark of laughter between her happy sobs. “This is--that was--I don’t know what to say. Thank you.”

“Marinette Dupain-Cheng, ladies and gentlemen.” Adrien gave her one final moment to soak in the undivided adoration before escorting her back to his table. She stopped by to hug her parents and thank the adults for choosing her before settling in with her peers.

“Surprise,” Kagami smirked.

“I can’t believe you guys,” Marinette was still trying to calm down, “How did you even do this?”

“Lots of careful planning.”

“And my dress?” Marinette gestured to her ballgown, the one Lila had gotten her miscredited from in the newspaper, “I put it in storage after the Lila incident.”
“We explained the situation to your parents and they gave it to us with the promise that we would treat it with the utmost respect.”

That would explain why she seemed to have more space in her closet.

A small dinner was served and then a couple more people came up to speak about the night. More young artists were highlighted before everyone was encouraged to go and take a look at the pieces around the room. There seemed to be art of all kinds there. Paintings, sketches, sculptures, clothing, short movies, music samplings. There was a table lined with story excerpts people could read from young authors. Journalism articles hung on the walls like pieces in a museum. There was even a part of the room dedicated to carpenters and the amazing furniture, instruments, and wooden toys they made.

Several people during the night came up to Marinette inquiring about her dress and possible other designs she had created. Kagami was quick to show off her own dress and brag about Marinette’s skill in making it.

Many of the people at the event were critics and renowned fashion designers that handed Marinette business cards with promises to make her their protege. Things got a bit heated when two designers started trying to outdo the other with their offers forcing Adrien to swoop in and politely extract Marinette.

Eventually the party started to wind down and people were making there way home. Mostly the older adults that couldn’t quite keep up with the number of young people in the room.

“Hey, Marinette.” Adrien approached her. At some point in the night he had ditched the jacket and tie and was walking around with his vest open and top button of his shirt undone. “I saw your parents head out. You didn’t join them?”

“Not yet. I wanted to enjoy the party a little longer.” Marinette looked around the room, “What about you? I don’t think I’ve seen your father around.”

“He had one wine glass too many and headed home. I figured he wouldn’t notice if I showed up a little later than when I was supposed to.” he grinned in a not so innocently Adrien way. “That being said, are you doing anything after this?”

“Seeing as how my original plans for tonight was to veg out in my room binging old romantic comedies I’m gonna say no. Why?”

“Well, I was wondering if maybe you wanted to go to that bowling alley we went to before. It’s open till two AM all week so I thought that you and I could go for some late night, over-dressed, bowling catastrophe fun.”

“That sounds great—”

“Sorry Adrikins, but we already have plans tonight.” Chloe cut between Adrien and Marinette.

“We do?” Marinette stared at her.

“The sleepover.”

“Sleepover?”
“What are you, a parrot?” Chloe scoffed, “We’re having a girls night in my suite. No boys allowed.”

“But--what--when was this?” Marinette sputtered as she was pulled away from Adrien by Chloe.

“Oh. Bye, Marinette!” Adrien waved to her, “Have fun! I’ll text you later!”

“Bye!” Marinette squeaked out as she was whisked out of the ballroom.

They went back to the elevator and up to Chloe’s room. “Are there any more surprises that you have in store for me tonight or is this the last one?” She asked.

“You love it.” Chloe smirked. Kagami, Sabrina, and Aurore were also in the elevator. Sabrina and Aurore weren’t a surprise but Marinette hadn’t expected Kagami to be with them.

They entered the suite and the girls started to dress down removing their heels and accessories.

“Makeup wipes in the bathroom and pajamas on the bed.” Chloe said, “I got foot massagers by the couch and room service on speed dial.”

Marinette went to the bed and saw that there were matching silk pajamas for each girl in their favorite color and monogrammed with their initials. Red for Kagami, teal for Sabrina, sky blue for Aurore and honeycomb yellow for Chloe. Marinette’s was a nice powder pink with the initials MDC stitched across the pocket in cream threading.

Marinette waited her turn to change into her new cozy pajamas and joined the rest of the girls around the couch. Kagami and Aurore were deciding what movie to watch while Chloe had Sabrina make a list of what they wanted room service to bring up.

“Hey,” Marinette approached Chloe. “Can we talk?”

“Sabrina, you know what I like. Finish ordering. Also, make sure those two pick a decent movie.” Chloe told Sabrina before standing to talk to Marinette. “Yes?”

“I know we’ve rarely seen eye to eye and I would be one of the furthest things from a friend in your opinion but I wanted to take a moment and say thank you. Not just for the fundraiser and this deluxe sleepover but for going above and beyond with your takedown of Lila. It was incredible and to think you did that for me--”

“And an amazing grade.”

“And an amazing grade.” Marinette agreed, “It means so much. I don’t know what all of this makes us, not friends exactly, but maybe not enemies? Playful adversaries?”

Chloe’s holier-than-thou smile softened. Her walls dropping just for a moment. “We’re allies. Not always but I wasn’t just going to let one of the few people I respected be disgraced by a knockoff mean girl with dead anime mom hair.”

“What hair?”

“Nothing. Something Adrien told me. It doesn’t matter.” Chloe huffed. Her walls going up again. “I may not have my miraculous but that doesn’t make me any less the superheroine I am.”

“I know it doesn’t.”

Chloe smiled.

Marinette wished she could give Chloe her miraculous more often. With her identity being outed it
was just too dangerous. But maybe she deserved a new miraculous. Nothing would fit her as perfectly as Queen Bee but Marinette had hope that she would do well with a new power. So long as she didn’t advertise her identity to all of Paris again.

A knock at the door drew their attention. “Room service!” A voice called from outside.

“I’ll get that. You go make sure Tsurugi and Weather-Girl chose a good movie.” Chloe flipped her hair and sashayed over to the door.

Marinette hopped the couch and sat down. The buffet of luxury junk food was laid out before them. They all got comfy in their seats and pressed play on the movie. Kagami leaned against Marinette as the movie played and ended up falling asleep halfway through. Marinette didn’t have the heart to move her so stayed put. Not that Hawkmoth himself could get her to move from that spot. Who knew Kagami was a cuddler?

As excited as everyone had been earlier once the movie started playing everyone started dropping like flies. Marinette had nodded off as well at some point and only woke up again when she felt something being draped over her. She squinted her eyes open and saw Chloe walking around putting blankets over the other girls.

She could pretend all she wanted but there was a good person inside Chloe. She rarely came out and even then most of the time it was to help make herself look better. But there were times, behind closed doors, with no witnesses around, that Chloe was kind just because she wanted to be. Maybe it was those moments that Adrien always got to see that helped the friendship he held with her. Maybe Chloe would become even nicer. Maybe she would continue on her little tirade of pompous superiority. It was anyone’s guess.

Marinette was glad that the chance for Chloe to become someone even better than she is was still an option. A year ago she would have thought it impossible. Of course a year ago there wasn’t a butterfly terrorist and people getting turned into monsters every other day. So it seems a lot can change.

Chloe was nice, Lila was gone, Marinette had loving friends, and Kagami was softly snoring on Marinette’s sternum. It was about as perfect as she could hope.

Tomorrow may be uncertain but it wasn’t for her to worry about. Not when she had people she loved to stand beside her...or sleep on her. Marinette readjusted the blanket and stretched herself into a more comfortable position without waking Kagami and went back to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

That is it for Transferred! I had a lot of fun writing this. What was supposed to just be a quick vent of salt spiraled into this longer fic and I think it turned out pretty good. Thank you all for reading!

Also there is gonna be a bonus chapter that is pure Kagami/Marinette pairing going up later as a separate one shot so keep an eye out for that. I’ll post a link here later probably.

Love you lots and thanks for reading!
-Dakota
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!