The Gods Must Be Crazy

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Summary

Every year, the village chooses a young woman to give to the God of Fire as a bride to appease him, so he won’t destroy their land. Somehow, she was sent to the God of Mischief instead, who has no idea why this random (very pretty) girl just showed up on his doorstep. How could he pass up such an opportunity? (Based on an AU idea from @sidsinning on Tumblr)
Bride Day

Chapter Notes

There was the really ridiculously adorable AU idea created by @sidsinning on Tumblr that had Adrien, the God of Mischief finding Marinette, a human girl sacrificed as a bride to the Fire God in the place of Kagami, on his doorstep by mistake.

You can see it here

With permission, I'm going to try and write a story based on this AU.

There is no current update schedule planned (as I have a lot already on the go), but I have the basic story outlined and will post it whenever a new chapter is ready! I think this could be a lot of fun

Thanks for reading.

Waking up after a night full of partying with the god of wine was a literal headache. Groaning slightly as he pulled himself up into a sit on the edge of his bed, Adrien clutched the offending part of his body. He should know better, but really - how could one refuse a party like that? It afforded too many good opportunities. Like free wine. A sly smirk curled one corner of his lips despite the thumping of his brain. It had been a good night.

Cracking open an eye, he winced at the offending sunrise. It was too early to be awake but awake he was. Slipping on his robe, he stumbled to his feet and made his way to the shower, hoping the warm water would ease the ache.

“What’s in the plans for today, Plagg?” Stepping out of the shower, Adrien’s voice was muffled slightly by a towel covering his head as he dried off his blond locks. “Should we go see how the rest of them are doing after the party last night?” He smirked, knowing full-well that the majority of the immortals would likely be strewn all over the place in various states of disarray from their all-night revelry. A perfect opportunity to cause some mischief. It was his job designation after all.

Adrien, God of Mischief.

He took pride in it.

Dressed in a casual robe for comfort, he plodded his way to the pantry and pulled out some food. For all his immortality, he still needed to eat. Or at the very least, attempt to fill the stomach of Plagg, his animal spirit. One of the perks of trickery was his ability to transform himself into a black cat. His cat form could cause so much more trouble than his human-like one.

Throwing a chunk of cheese at Plagg, Adrien grabbed himself some coffee to try and counteract the effects of the night before. He sat in silence for a while, watching as the sunrise strew a golden glow
over the mountain valley that stretched behind his small wooden hut.

Some gods liked big and flashy, but Adrien preferred simplicity and a clear view of nature. It wasn’t like he spent much time at home anyway, simply returning when he felt tired or needed to hide after a prank sparked some level of anger.

Coffee gone along with much of the thumping of his brain, he turned to Plagg. “Shall we?” The little being nodded.

Throwing open the door to pay a visit to the rest of his merrymaking friends, he nearly tripped over an unexpected bundle of white silky fabric on the step. It was likely his startled yelp that roused whatever was hidden within. Slowly, a shape formed from the silk - a young woman - her face appearing in an opening, with a hood around her head. She sat humbly on her knees, rubbing eyes that had been closed in a deep sleep, not even a moment before.

Adrien froze, unsure where this woman had come from, and why she was sleeping on the ground in front of his door.

Her eyes were a startling shade of blue. That was all he could think as she opened them to gaze up at him before taking a moment to look at his house and the rest of their surroundings.

“Where am I?” she whispered, looking slightly confused. Pushing back her white hood revealed dark hair tumbling over her shoulders and a clearer look at her face - splattered softly with freckles. A soft blush tinted her cheeks, likely in response to his unmasked scrutiny.

“Are you my husband now?” Her voice was shy, the blush deepening. Adrien blinked in surprise. Husband? Who was this girl? He glanced over at Plagg, floating beside his shoulder. The cat just shrugged then grinned. A grin that Adrien returned with a sudden thrill of excitement that all his tricks gave him.

“Oh yes…. Today is Bride Day, isn’t it, Plagg?” He could barely contain the glee at the thought of how his father would react to this.

“Yes, yes it is,” purred Plagg.

Stretching out his hand, Adrien reached for his new “wife.” She blushed again, gently placing her hand in his and letting him help her to stand before he led her into this home and closed the door quietly behind them. The grin didn’t leave his face. No need to draw unwanted attention just yet.

Marinette looked around the humble house with a combination of confusion and surprise. It didn’t seem like the home of a ferocious and deadly being like the Fire God. Then again, the man she had opened her eyes this morning didn’t fit her expectations either. Not imposing or scary as she’d long imagined the god to be.

Admittedly, the brilliant sunrise that lit him from behind when she’d first seen him had made him look like he’d been on fire - a silhouette of fiery gold. Still, she was thankful that instead of an angry, dangerous old man, she had discovered a breathtakingly handsome man with golden hair and eyes as green as the leaves.

She wasn’t quite sure how she had arrived at the doorstep of the Fire God.

The day before had been one of ceremony and ritual all blurring together. Her mother’s face, soft grey eyes trying not to cry. Her father’s arms pulling her close, his thunderous voice claiming pride in her. Hands of the elder women dressing her in an elaborate white robe, smoothing out her hair,
their voices offering soothing advice to a young woman who had no idea what to expect.

Night fell as the village danced around the central fire, drunk on rice wine and the pulse of the beating drums. She’d been forced to drink a strange red liquid that had burned her throat and made her cough, leaving her unsteady and dizzy. She’d been pushed into a special chair, pillowed high with colourful cushions, while a priestess called to the gods in a sing-song voice and arms raised.

Kagami and her mother had stood at the edge of the frenzied crowd. The older woman had stood proudly straight and determined while Kagami herself had hidden her face in shame.

The night had dragged on, the dancing figures and sounds of celebration merging in front of Marinette’s eyes as whatever potion they had poured into her took effect. Colours swirled in a way that both made her wonder and made her nauseous at the same time. She wasn’t sure how long it had lasted.

In the past, Bride Days were usually over by midnight - the village fire blossoming into an inferno at the darkest part of the night before the wind of the Messenger would whisk the new bride away to the Fire God. But her sacrifice had taken longer. Maybe the Fire God was rejecting her for taking Kagami’s place.

The people of the village started to stumble over one another, exhausted by the long night of dancing and celebration, worries of a rejected sacrifice itching at their addled consciousness. Marinette couldn’t move, her body heavy with the effects of the ceremonial liquid.

The promise of sunrise has teased on the horizon when the wind suddenly picked up and the fire exploded into a wild flame. Her heart had stuttered in a moment of panic before she suddenly felt herself scooped up from the chair. Wind whistled through her ears, fluttering against the silk of her dress, and the village disappeared out of sight.

From there, it was a blur - the sensation of moving in both slow motion and double time all at once. She couldn’t keep her thoughts straight, couldn’t keep her eyes open. Her eyes had closed, body cradled in the arms of what she assumed was the Messenger.

When the motion had stopped, there had been some loud laughing and lurching from the person holding her before she found herself on the cold ground.

The next thing she knew she was looking up at this man, his eyes wide with surprise, with a small floating black cat beside his shoulder. A man who was now her husband.

She still felt a little dazed, her white gown heavy, her feelings swirling. She was thankful that her village and family would be safe from the wrath of the angry Fire God but worried about what to do now to bring honour to her family.

She clasped her hands together in front of her, meekly bowing her head. “What would you have me do, husband?”

The sound of his sudden outburst of laughter was enough to make her snap her head up to stare at him. He all but glowed while he laughed, head thrown back with his eyes closed. When he opened them again, they danced. All she could do was offer him a timid smile in return.

“Come,” he said, walking through the small house towards the bedroom. She panicked for a moment, swallowing loudly, eyes wide, afraid to follow. He just laughed again when he realized her worry. He took a step back towards her, placing his hand on her cheek, with a soft smile. “Not THAT. I just wanted to find you something else to wear. Unless a bridal robe is what you would
His eyebrow twitched with amusement. Her cheeks were on fire, embarrassment and shock at his gentle touch on her face mingling together.

“No, husband. Thank you.”

She followed behind him this time, keeping her head low while her feet struggled to stay off the hem of her dress. Angry thoughts of how impractical bridal gowns were despite how beautiful they are filled her head.

“What is your name?” he called from the bedroom as she stepped into the doorway. Her feet failed her, taking purchase on her dress and sending her stumbling forward with a soft cry. She thrust her arms out in front of her - hoping to catch herself before her face hit the ground. Instead, he was there, catching her mid-fall. Her face pressed against his chest instead of the floor. She blinked for a moment before hastily pulling backwards in a flustered flailing of arms. He chuckled, eyes twinkling.

He refused to let go of her hand this time, pulling her to his bed and ordering her to sit before vanishing through another door. She took the opportunity to look around - not that there was much to see. The room was startlingly bare with only a single large bed and a small table. The walls had no decorations or ornamentation. A window took up most of the wall across from the bed - revealing a breathtaking view of mountains and sky.

She could hear his voice on the other side of the wall, muffled enough that she couldn’t make out what he was saying. The laugh that followed made her smile a little.

Her whole life, the teachings of the village had spoken of the Fire God with a slight sense of terror for the anger that he threatened to incur on them if they didn’t do what he said: a bridal sacrifice every spring, never letting his fire go out in the middle of the village, giving him the first of the harvest. She had been scared of what waited for her as his newly acquired bride, but this - a smiling, laughing, handsome young man - this was not what she had expected.

There was a small thump on the wall that made her jump slightly before he appeared in the doorway with a sheepish grin and an armful of material.

“Ok, so…. I found a robe that might fit you for now. I’ll find you better clothes soon. I suspect that you might want to freshen up after a night sleeping on my step. The room next to this has a shower and whatever else you might need.” He shoved the clothes into her hands. Pausing, he just stared at her for a moment.

“Do you need help?”

Marinette sat frozen, startled by his question. Her white bridal robe was a complicated design, one that had required several hands several hours to wrap it around her body. In truth, she hadn’t thought much about how she was going to get it off. A crimson flush tore across her face when she nodded, eyes unable to meet his. She dropped the new robe onto the bed as he took her hand and pulled her to stand in the middle of the room.

Her dress was beautiful, he had to admit as he admired the way that it was wrapped and pulled around her. Carefully, he began to pull at the wrappings around her dress, trying to loosen one of the ends to start pulling her free. It was a tedious and slow process, one that they did in complete and
awkward silence.

Adrien’s mind raced with the implications of being so close to what should be one of his father’s wives at the same time as trying not to think of the fact that he was literally unwrapping said beautiful young woman from her clothing in his bedroom. A young woman who thought he was her husband. That line of thinking could get dangerous. Enjoyable, but dangerous.

Plagg sat quietly on the table by the bed, watching him closely - making Adrien even more aware of his actions. Finally, the last of the ties came undone, tumbling to the ground at the woman’s feet. She wiggled her way out of the last of the decorated robes, standing in front of him with a flushed face in a simple white undertunic.

“Thank you,” she whispered, eyes on the floor. She was even more petite than he’d thought, and he had an unbidden thought of wanting to run his fingers over her skin to see if she was as soft as she looked. A quick shake of his head brought him clarity.

“I’ve got an errand to run. I’ll be back soon.” His voice was shockingly gruff. With that, he bolted, the little blur of black following behind him. When the slammed the house door behind him, he leaned back against it for a moment. What the hell was wrong with him?

Plagg just leered knowingly at his shoulder.

“Shut up,” Adrien growled, flicking at the cat. “Let’s go cause some trouble.”

His speedy disappearance left Marinette startled. Gathering all the pieces of her bridal wear, she gently and carefully laid them all out on the bed, smoothing out the wrinkles. Silently, she made her way to where he’d said the bathroom was. It was small and simple - more for practicality than design. The water, however, was warm and cleansing. Shucking her undertunic, she stepped in and washed the craziness of the last 24 hours away.
Chapter 2

The robe he’d left her was too big, better suited for his tall and lanky frame than her small one. She silently wished that she’d been able to bring her sewing kit from home to make alterations as she rolled up the sleeves. At least she could walk without tripping.

Carefully, she separated her hair into pigtails. It would be easier to keep her hair out of the way and without tangles.

Emerging from the bedroom, she took some time to explore the small house. The main door led into a large open space that contained a lounging couch and some chairs in the middle of the room. Against one wall was a small counter with a sink, a few cooking supplies, and a food storage area. A minimal kitchen she supposed. The opposite wall held the doors to the bathroom and the bedroom with its closet.

The far wall from the entrance was left wide open, allowing for the view of the mountains that seemed to surround the house. Folding screen doors could be pulled across, allowing privacy as needed and protection from the weather. The floor of the room extended past the door, creating an overhang where a set of comfortable chairs and small table perched.

Marinette wasn’t really sure what she should be doing while she waited for him to return. Her mother had told her to make sure that every need was filled - to clean before it needed to be cleaned, to cook before it needed to be eaten. She blushed at the rest of the advice the women of the village had offered, choosing not to think too much of the other duties a wife was supposed to fulfill.

Instead, she decided to start cleaning - although, in truth, the hut looked barely lived in enough to have any messes. She fiddled with the only item she had brought with her from the village other than the gown - a small bracelet around her wrist that dangled with a small red ladybug charm. For good luck, her mother had promised. The raised bumps of the ladybug dots on its back felt safe for some reason, allowing her to draw strength for this new life.

Cleaning sounded like the responsible thing to do. First, maybe, she should eat something.

The hall Adrien had staggered out of in the middle of the night looked more or less the same as it had when he’d left. Nino's hall was oversized - tall walls of wood and plaster reaching to a vaulted ceiling of thick wooden timbers. Giant windows on the long walls gave the space lots of light. Tables and couches lined the walls, shoved off to the edges of the room by revellers who wanted to clear the floor to dance. Across the end of the hall from the main entrance was a large area where drummers could pound away making loud throbbing music that had some kind of magic effect on the drinking crowd. Of course, Nino's ability to make the most potent of wines was a definite asset to the party atmosphere.

Evidence of the wild party from the night before was strewn across the tables and floor. Empty cups and bodies of sleeping party-goers in particular.

His long-time friend, Chloe, was asleep on one of the settees with her long golden hair draped over one side of the chair. For a brief moment, he considered tying it around the leg of the furniture, grinning slightly at the vision of her loud and rage-filled reaction. It was tempting, for sure, but for now, he had a mission to accomplish. He had managed to put together a plan of sorts in his head - talking to the Messenger was step one.
His eyes scanned the room, taking note of each friend he found sleeping off the effects of Nino's particularly strong brand of wine. It was all he could do to hold himself back from the mischievous prank opportunities that were laid out before him. If he didn't find Alix soon, he would certainly give in.

Finally, his eyes found their target - a small body with wild pink hair. Alix had the important task of being the Messenger, a job that she loved given her passion for speed. It always amazed him that someone so tiny could handle such a job. The things she had to deliver weren't always small. The Fire God's brides, for example. Carrying people bigger than you seemed as if it would be a challenge, but Alix did it with ease.

Right now, though, Alix was collapsed on a bench, head resting on her arms, a pool of drool forming on the table. Sharing a side grin with his floating cat, Adrien crawled under the table and gently eased off the winged boots that Alix always wore.

Moving them out of the way, Adrien slipped onto the bench next to her and whispered her name loudly in her ear. Alix leapt as if she had been touched with a flaming stick. Her familiar sandals gone, she found herself tumbling backwards, yelping loudly, arms swinging before landing on the ground, feet on the bench. Adrien and Plagg howled at the shocked look on the Messenger's face. A look that quickly changed into a dark scowl.

"Morning, Alix!" Adrien called in a sing-song voice, fist-bumping his kwami pal. Alix glared as she struggled to stand. Years with winged shoes make using your real feet a rarity.

"Where are my shoes, jackass?" Alix snapped, plunking down on the bench in irritation.

"I will give them back, I just need you to answer a few questions for me."

After a moment of angry contemplation, Alix agreed to try to answer whatever questions the God of Mischief might have. Adrien flashed a brilliant grin at her, only to have her groan in annoyance.

"Geez. Tune down the bright whites. It is too early in the morning for that crap." Adrien just laughed. Alix was too funny when she was hungover.

"So, Bride Day yesterday, right?" Alix nodded. "Tell me about her."

The answer was sadly uninformative as Alix shrugged. "Not much to tell. She’s poor. Agreed to take the place of another girl in town to help her family. She was nearly as small as me. Almost forgot to pick her up and make the drop-off. Nino's parties are too much fun to skip out on. Now, where are my shoes?"

"So you dropped her off at my father's last night?" Alix rolled her eyes.

"Yes. Give me my shoes." Plagg tossed the sandals back to Alix, who slipped them on with a grateful sigh.

Leaning back against the table, Adrien stared up into the wooden beamed ceiling deep in thought. "I wonder why my Dad wants all these brides anyway. It isn't like he loves any of them."

"Not really my job to question. Just my job to deliver. Ask him." Winged shoes tied in place, Alix zipped off without further discussion.

Plagg floated to Adrien's shoulder and made himself comfortable.

"Maybe you should," the cat mused. Adrien grimaced. His relationship with his father was
complicated, and he really wasn't sure he was up for that kind of discussion. Plus, he didn't want to bring attention to the missing bride nor the fact she currently was in his house. But a visit to the God of Fire was step two of the plan. Adrien needed to steal some of his father’s precious fire.

He let out a grunt, looking around the hall for more of his friends. Nino himself was just picking himself up from where he had collapsed in an oversized chair in a corner.

"Dude!" Nino's voice wasn't quiet, echoing around the hall. Groans and hisses could be heard from various spots in the room. Adrien grinned to himself. There was a reason he always found his way home after party nights. He did not want to end up hungover with this crowd.

Adrien shoved himself off the bench and made his way over to his best friend, Plagg still hovering on his shoulder. After the obligatory best friend handshake, Adrien and Nino stood at the head to the hall surveying the aftermath. Nino took pride in the parties that left his fellow immortal gods immobilized as if it was the sign of success.

Adrien chuckled at the part he played, pitting the most competitive of the bunch against each other in a drinking match, challenging the more careless ones to games of chance that he always somehow managed to win, and dragging couples onto the dance floor.

"I am going to visit my father today," Adrien announced to Nino, who simply returned the comment with a curiously raised eyebrow. "I might need a shot for the road."

Gesturing to the wine casks in the corner, Nino wondered aloud what occasion was forcing his friend to visit the father he typically avoided at all costs.

"Thought I would check out his brides. You know… for research." Adrien winked mischievously, a smirk on his face.

"As if the Goddess of Beauty isn't good enough for you," Nino teased, making Adrien grimace. His eyes slid over to where Chloe lounged. She was admittedly beautiful, but she definitely wasn’t who he wanted to spend his life with. The thought of dealing with her high-maintenance drama for eternity made him nauseous. No matter what her hopes were for their status, friendship was all that he would ever offer her.

Visions of a small woman with dark hair and vivid blue eyes peering up at him from this step filled his brain instead. Giving himself a shake, he just shoved Nino in response to the jest and made his way to leave.

"Seriously?" Nino commented. "Not even going to leave a wave of trouble before you leave?" That was all Adrien needed. Permission.

With a grin to Plagg, the pair were off. Gently, couches were shoved beside Chloe, shifting the large form of Kim, a god who was known for his brawn over brains, to snuggle beside her, his arm placed strategically across her stomach and head next to her hair.

She would freak out when she woke up. And that was all he needed to keep his day going. With a shared laugh and a salute to Nino, Adrien slid out of the hall.

"Ready?" he asked Plagg, not really caring about the answer before calling, “Transform me.”

One of the perks of life as the God of Mischief was his ability to shapeshift. Merged with the small magical partner who never left his side, Adrien’s body could contort into the shape of a black cat, allowing him to prowl with ease wherever he pleased, causing chaos and trouble along the way. His skin gave way to black fur, his two-legged stance transforming into four, claws jutting from his
fingers and toes, ears sprouting from the top of his head. With his eyes changing to resemble those of
the cat he became, the transformation was complete: Adrien become Chat Noir. He loved the time he
could be free as a cat - fast and agile, able to get in and out of places he could never venture as
himself.

It was with quick lithe movements that he made his way across the valley, savouring the feeling of
the wind pushing against the hair of his head and face. Claws pushed into the dirt, he launched
himself at full speed until he found his way to the other side.

He wasn’t exactly sure what he would do when he arrived at his father’s house. His plan, if it could
really be called one, was to steal some of the special fire that his father kept. Adrien needed it if he
was going to fool the girl hidden in his house into believing he was the mighty God of Fire. It
wouldn’t be easy though.

As one of the senior gods, his father was one of the more angry and controlling ones. His rage as the
God of Fire was well known, swaths of land having been burnt to the ground when he would go on
a rampage. But, with his own son, his father was anything but warm. In fact, Gabriel was ice cold
and extremely distant.

Once, Adrien had felt upset about that, trying to do everything he could to please the man who was
his father. Now, however, he’d given up. Escaped. Moved to the opposite side of the valley with the
intention of living his own life.

He wasn’t even out of breath when the oversized property came into view. Taking a few large leaps,
Chat found himself peering into the courtyard from the rooftop.

Where Adrien’s house was simple with minimal extras, Gabriel’s house was spacious and
extravagant. Built of stone and marble, it was divided into two main sections by a wide gardened
courtyard. One housed Gabriel alone - providing him with the space he wanted for any of the
activities he desired. Since he mostly spent his days secluded in his personal garden with a
sketchpad, he didn’t really need all the luxury for himself. The garden he preferred centred around a
stone bowl engulfed in a fire that burned with a rainbow of colours, lush vegetation and flowers
encircling it. Butterflies often fluttered from flower to flower in a flash of beating wings.

The other half belonged to the wives - a multitude of them, given that every year for just about as
long as Adrien could remember, the village below had willingly sent a new one to appease the
dreaded God of Fire in hopes to prevent any flaming bouts of rage.

Once, Gabriel had only had one wife. A beautiful goddess with golden hair and rich eyes, and a
laugh like the wind through chimes. A woman that he loved with all his heart. Adrien’s mother.
Adrien could barely remember her, but he knew that, in human form, he looked more like her than
his father cared to accept. She had died when he was young, although Adrien never really knew
how. Gods didn’t generally die. His father refused to speak about her, although Adrien had caught
him creating pictures of her in his sketches.

Now, Gabriel had a prime wife - Natalie. A woman he could only label as prim and proper, tied to
her sense of duty like none of the other wives. She made sure the house ran like a machine, well
organized and without any flaws, ready for any need that her husband might have. She viewed
Adrien as a necessary nuisance, not with love nor with hate. Just part of the package of being the
prime wife to Gabriel.

Despite the number of women that were apparently Gabriel’s wives, Adrien was his only child.
Gabriel rarely left his section of the house, and only ever really spoke closely with Natalie. Adrien
had never noticed any affection between them. It was more a marriage of convenience than one of
caring. The rest of the women spent their days doing whatever Natalie required to run the house and lounging together in their section of the villa, enjoying a rich life of relative freedom.

It was here that Chat found himself, peeking over the edge of the rooftop into the courtyard where several of the women were playing in the garden and splashing in the small pond in the centre. They seemed happy enough.

With practiced silent feet, he leapt off the roof and onto the stones below before wandering casually closer. They were all fairly young, obviously beautiful, varying greatly in colouring. All of them wore brightly dyed robes tied tightly around them to create elegant silhouettes. Many of them had pulled their robes up to mid-calf, wading into the water of the pool with bare feet, laughter surrounding them while they enjoyed their free time.

Idly, he wondered why these women stayed here. Why didn’t they go home? Was life as an unused but completely claimed wife of an angry god really better than the life that they had experienced before? Surely his father didn’t really care too much about these brides and the village they were from.

Sitting on his haunches, he waited for the perfect moment to make his presence known with a loud meow. Several of the women jumped, squealing as they noticed the small black cat in the middle of their courtyard.

“A kitten!” one exclaimed, reaching out and scooping him up in her arms. He liked that they didn’t know he wasn’t really a cat, playing the part complete with purring and head rubs. In return, hands smoothed his fur, voices cooed and chattered at him, and he was able to overhear the secrets that they told each other in safety.

For the most part, they simply spoke to each other of nothing much - typical chatter between women about the day to day life they lived. It was only with casual passing that one of them, beside the one who now had him perched on her lap while scratching his ears, wondered out loud about a new bride and when she would arrive. The rest all chittered and discussed what the new wife would be like and if Gabriel would accept her or not. The conversation passed quickly, returning to the pointless topics again while they all lounged.

He took advantage of their attention, enjoying the feeling of fingers scratching his head, until there was a sharp sound of someone clearing their throat off to the side. All the women jumped to their feet, looking sheepish and worried. Chat found himself dropped inelegantly to the grass, thankful for his natural tendency to land on his feet while transformed. He glanced in the direction of the sound that had caused such a reaction. It was Natalie they all faced. Natalie who chided them all without saying a single word. Natalie who shot him a knowing look of extreme disapproval. Stretching out with an arched back, Chat decided to make his way out of the courtyard and find somewhere safe to transform back.

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There wasn't a single surface left to scrub. Marinette looked around the entire house one last time to make sure that she hadn't missed anything important. Pleased with her efforts, she grabbed a broom, stepping out the front door to sweep off the step that had recently been her temporary bed.

With careful movements, she brushed any imagined speck of dirt from the step while she wondered where her new husband had vanished to and if he was going to return anytime soon. Maybe she had already done something wrong and that is why he had run out so quickly. She frowned slightly at the thought.
"What are you doing?" a voice asked, pulling her from her musings with wide eyes and a loud heart thump. In front of her stood a man who seemed completely opposite in colour to the one she had met earlier: dark compared to light. His honey coloured eyes seemed both confused and amused at the same time.

She quickly dropped to her knees, dropping the broom as she bowed her head in polite respect.

"I am cleaning, sir." Her voice echoed her nerves, wavering and timid. He laughed before pulling her to her feet.

"I see that. I didn't know he had a housekeeper. Interesting." He paused. "Put this someplace safe please, will you?" She found a bottle pushed into her hands. "Tell him it's from Nino." She simply nodded in response.

"Well, have a good day," he said before he wandered off into the distance. She stood on the step for a while, clutching the glass with both hands. When she was alone again, she glanced down at the bottle, wondering what was inside. A quick pull on the seal released a potent sweet smell. Curiosity got the better of her and she ran her finger along the inside rim of the jar before popping it in her mouth. It tasted just as sweet as the smell, making her crave more. How could something taste so wickedly sweet? Carefully, she put the plug back in, scooped up the broom at her feet, and made her way back inside.

After careful consideration, she put the bottle on the table, determined to leave it there for whenever her husband returned. Maybe this was a test. Maybe he was trying to see if she would give in to the temptation. The taste she had taken was pulling her back for more. She realized now she shouldn’t have done that.

She tried. She really did. Putting the broom away, making a simple meal for whenever he came back, retying her hair, sitting on the back porch and watching the beauty of the sunshine lighting up the whole valley. But it called her again and again.

Before she even realized what she was doing, she had a cup with a small amount of the sweet drink raised to her lips. It was smooth on her tongue, explosive in taste with a slightly delightful burning sensation as it made its way down her throat to her stomach. This must be the nectar of the Gods, she marvelled, taking another gulp and savouring the experience.

When the glass was empty, she felt both wonderful and horrible all at the same time. Her whole body tingled from head to toe while the world tilted dangerously. Guilt flooded her as she even considered taking more. This wasn’t a drink meant for her. It was meant for him. She panicked slightly, her head envisioning all the terrible consequences of her behaviour. He could easily get mad, taking action on the village below for their sacrifice of such a terrible wife.

Slamming the cork into the bottle, she was determined to refuse to drink any more. Her family had been counting on her to be the wife that the Fire God had demanded, to sacrifice herself in exchange for the village’s safety. She had to control her impulsive tendencies or it would be all for naught.

Her head felt like cotton. Maybe the drink of the Gods had that effect on humans. With very focused intention, she made her way to the lounging couch in the middle of the room and flopped there.

Marinette felt tired. So tired. The sacrificial ceremony of the day before, the long night of waiting for the Messenger, dozing off on the hard stone porch for not nearly long enough, meeting her new husband, and a day of vigorous scrubbing combined with the effects of whatever that drink was had her eyelids drooping. Surely he wouldn’t mind if she rested for a while.
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