The Truth

by Hecate1412

Summary

There are things Adrien wasn't supposed to learn about, such as what his father has hidden under the house, but he did find out and his whole world quickly came crashing down around him. He's doing his best to pick up the pieces and stay strong, but the ball is now in Gabriel's court and the most he can do is wait.

Wait and Hope.

Notes

This story is based around the AU by Ozmav on tumblr, and developed in the daminette discord. It'll be a part of a series of stories.

Right now this story is setting the stage for the world this series will exist in because it's a little different than cannon. Consider it a prologue for the rest of everything that will happen.
This story will probably be three chapters long, and then the next story that gets added will be Maridadiren. (Marinette/Damien Wayne/Adrien). I hope you all look forward to it because the three of them together is gonna be interesting.
Chapter 1

Adrien had found it by accident. If asked later he won’t remember what he’d been looking for when he entered, but it had brought him to his father's empty office and to the large portrait of his mother that hung behind the desk. His mother was beautiful, and the portrait was beautiful, but it wasn’t his mother. This was a glamorized version. From the little Adrien remembered she’d been a very simple person, but so stunning in the simplicity.

“I miss your mother,” he’d whispered, gently running his hand across the image, except the image wasn’t flat. His sadness turned to confusion as he studied the image again. No, this image wasn’t flat at all. There were buttons. Why where their buttons?

“Plagg?” The dark Kwami shuffled out of his pocket and lazily found a seat on his chosen’s shoulder.

“I’m not that good with emotions, kid,” he warned, noting where they were standing. He was a god of destruction, emotions were Tikki’s thing.

“Plagg,” Adrien repeated, no sadness in his voice, which peaked the small black cat's attention.

“I will give you an entire wheel of Camembert cheese if you help me figure out how to open whatever door my father's hidden with this puzzle.” Adrien wasn’t looking but he could picture the stars in the Kwami’s eyes at the idea of what could be waiting for him.

“You are speaking my language, kid. Just give me a second.” And a second was all it took because the Kwami stuck his tiny paw against painting and it dissolved in a flurry of black energy. Adrien gaped, partially because he had no idea how he was going to explain this to his father, but also because of what was revealed behind the painting. It was a contraption of some sort, different levers were colored differently, but they were always at least three that shared a color. Three were purple, Adrien was tempted to press them, but another group of levers was the same color as his mother’s eyes and for whatever reason, he found himself subconsciously pushing them.

The floor shifted and Adrien let out a small curse not sure what was happening as he began to sink into the ground. And he kept sinking. Cement walls was surrounding the lift, blocking his view until suddenly it wasn’t. Suddenly he was being lowered into... he wasn’t even sure what. It looked like an underground garden of some sort except...
“Plagg is that...”

“Holy—” they both stared at the center of the room because the sleeping figure in the tube was unmistakable

“That’s my mother,” Adrien whispered, as the lift touched down on the floor.

Adrien wasn’t sure what weird string of emotions was running through his body right now, but he didn’t like it. He couldn’t take his eyes away from the center of the room, from his mother who... who was supposed to be dead. His mother was dead. He remembered the funeral, he remembered watching them lower the casket. He remembered throwing a flower and a handful of dirt into the hole. He remembered his father crying, he remembered all the people who came to mourn with them. He remembers his mother dying so why...

“Adrien, you need to calm down. You’re not breathing.” Oh? Guess that was why he was so dizzy. Guess that was why he was on his knees in the grass before his mother’s...what? Her pod? What even was this? Why is any of this here? He tried to follow along to Plagg’s instructions, tried to slow his breathing, tried to push away the panic, and it worked, but not for long. His eyes were finally drawn away from his mother to a bright little thing that fluttered onto the grass before him.

As his eyes focused on the pale, almost luminescent, butterfly, time stopped. He knew that butterfly, he saw it every day for the past two years. He remembered what ladybug told him. The species wasn’t native to France, they would have to have been imported. She’d tried to find the source, but every route took her to a dead end. Chat had suggested the idea that maybe Hawkmoth was breeding his own, but he had been joking. A terrorist breeding butterflies in his free time? The idea had been laughable, but now? Oh no, His eyes drifted from this butterfly to the next and so on. They were everywhere. Fluttering around like they weren’t bred to do evil. Heck! They probably didn’t know! Just another living thing Hawkmoth was taking advantage of to meet an end.

And all at once the world came crashing down on him. It was like everything was falling apart and clicking into place and it was pulling him every which way. He was spiraling, and his thoughts were moving too fast, but within all the buzz, it clicked. “Ladybug was right.” His father is Hawkmoth. His father his Hawkmoth. HIS FATHER WAS HAWKMOTH.

“Ha! I-I’ve been living with a terrorist this entire time, Plagg,” because it all made sense now. Ladybug had suspected Gabriel Agreste before but put it on the back burner when he’d been akumatized. And it made so much sense now. His father was always home in this stupid fortress of his own design. He was always absent. He was always secretive. He had so much free time and the perfect alibi. Of course, the famous fashion designer who shoots out clothing line after the clothing line couldn’t have time to be a domestic terrorist. Why would anyone ever believe that? He’d just become a recluse after his wife passed, except his wife was right here! Alive probably, but here and
not in the casket like Adrien had always believed. She’d been right under his feet his entire life.

Adrien hacked out an attempt of a breath as something gripped his shoulders. It couldn’t have been Plagg. He was too small to reach both Adrien’s shoulders…unless he could transform into some humanoid cat hybrid, which was not something Adrien wanted to see or even think about. Heck if he looked up and saw that he would probably panic even more. Could he panic anymore? He wasn’t sure when the last time he’d actually pulled in oxygen was.

“Adrien, listen to me, focus on my voice.” It sounded muggy and far away, but it didn’t stop Adrien’s mind from creating a heart-stopping idea. What if it was his mother? What if she’d woken up and was trying to calm him down? Figures the first thing the dead would have to see upon waking is her son having a full-blown meltdown.

“Adrien!” The tone was sharper now, more demanding, and the world was spinning and tilting as someone lifted his head up. If he could gather enough air in his lungs he would have yelled as he scrambled away, but his body was having a standoff with oxygen, and Adrien wanted nothing to do with the man—his father—kneeling before him. No. Not his father. Hawkmoth—a terrorist, a lunatic—stood before him. Yet despite the tipping of the world around him, despite the haziness that slowly overtook his oxygen lacking brain, despite the way his chest continued to seize in his panic, he still saw it clearly. There was no anger in his father’s eyes, just concern. Adrien knew his eyes didn’t reflect the feeling. His were full of hate as he spat out a single name.

“Hawkmoth,” and it was filled with as much venom as Queen Bee’s own sting. It stopped Gabriel from moving. He’d never seen Adrien give anyone a look that hateful. He’d never seen his son this angry. He’d always been a ball of sunshine, but the kid before him right now?

No, it didn’t matter. It would all be okay. Gabriel was sure Adrien would understand if he could just explain it, but for now, he couldn’t do anything but watch as Adrien shuddered, his body finally losing the fight as he fell limp against the grass unconscious. He would make this right. He would explain everything when his son woke up. He would fix this, but for now, Gabriel carefully picked his son up and returned him to his room.

By the time Adrien woke up, the sun had set. He wasn’t 100% certain what had happened, but he knew he hadn’t been in his room when he’d fallen asleep. And yet, that’s where he currently found himself. That wasn’t the weirdest part though. Oh no! The weirdest part was that one Gabriel Agreste was sitting on the couch in the center of his room working on his tablet as if hanging out in his son's room was a regular occurrence. Classic father-son bonding! Except as soon as Adrien saw him it all came rushing back.
“Get out.” It was a low growl, dangerous and nearly feral. He was channeling chat noir, a darker side of him, the destruction side of him. He could see the chill pass up his father’s spine as he looked for the threat, only for his eyes to land on his son who was now sitting up in bed. “Get. Out.” He repeated, the rumble vibrating in the back of his throat, as the warning echoed around the room. Gabriel didn’t seem phased as he rose. He seemed hesitant, sure, but it didn’t stop him from approaching.

“I’m glad you’re awake. You had me worried,” His steps froze from the bark of cold laughter Adrien let out.

“I didn’t think you could be worried about anything but yourself, Hawkmoth.” Adrien couldn’t believe he had the gall to act like a concerned parent after everything he’d done. After all the neglect he’d shown him. Now that his big bad secret was blown, he had to be concerned because Adrien could easily tell anyone, and suddenly he would be on the hot plate again. Adrien knew what this was. His father wanted him to join his side.

“You don’t have the full story, Adrien.”

“Well obviously!” He jumped out of bed and rose to his feet. His father may have been taller, but Adrien was nine feet tall right now. “Do I really need to know the story though? As far as I’m concerned, you’re a terrorist! I’ve been living under the same roof as a terrorist!”

“Adrien!”

“And what is with” he waved his hand at the floor below him “—mother died!” All the weird emotions from before were coming back minus the suffocating panic. “I watched them bury her! Why is she in—whatever that was?!” Gabriel deflated at the mention of his wife.

“Your mother’s not dead, Adrien. She’s in a coma. There was an accident that left her braindead. The doctors said she wouldn’t survive on her own off life support. They wanted to kill her.”

“Is that how you see it?” His emotions began to simmer. They weren’t gone, and they certainly hadn’t calmed, but they weren’t explosive anymore.

“I love your mother”
“Is that so?” The teen was hesitant to believe anything that came out of his father’s voice.

“And she loves you. You were the light of her world. All I want is for our family to be whole again,” he tried to get through his son’s head, but Adrien showed no signs of understanding or even caring. He stood there with the same scowl on his face, waiting for his father to continue his explanation. “In order to bring your mother back, to make our family whole, I need the miraculous of creation and destruction. Together they can grant any wish.”

“But at what cost?”

“Whatever cost is necessary.” It was spoken with such sincerity and devotion. It was clear his father saw nothing wrong with his statement, but Adrien… Adrien was a lot of things. He could be an airhead, and he was oblivious at times. He acted like a flirt and smiled like there was no wrong in the world, but he wasn’t an idiot. More importantly, Ladybug wasn’t an idiot, and Adrien listened to ladybug more than he listened to anyone else. He trusted her more than he would ever trust his father. It had taken a while to build that trust, but when they had Adrien finally understood why Hawkmoth could never get his way.

“And what if the price is my life?” Adrien wondered, watching the careful confidence his father built crumble with a simple sentence. “What if the cost results in a mass genocide? You taught me from a very young age that nothing in life is ever free, so why do you think a wish would be? In alchemy, there’s the law of equivalent exchange. To obtain, something of equal value must be lost. What exactly do you think is the equivalent of mother’s life? Do you think she would thank you? Waking up to learn that the only reason she’s here is because you killed others? Because you tormented millions of people for years? Do you think this makes her happy?”

“I’m doing this for you!”

“You’re not! If you were doing this for me, you would have told me about it from the beginning. If you were doing this for me, you wouldn’t have done it at all!” Adrien screamed, the tightness coming back. Not the panic, but the pain. The tightness in his throat, the raw emotion that he was never allowed to feel because this was Paris, and emotions meant Hawkmoth, but hawkmoth was right in front of him and Adrien wanted to feel! “I love mother too!” He screamed loud enough for the neighbors to hear if the whole house hadn’t been soundproofed. “I loved her! I barely knew her, and I loved her and I miss her!”

“This is exactly why—”

“NO! You’re done talking!” it was an order that was to be obeyed, and Gabriel realized this after a
single look at Adrien who was so angry, so upset that tears were starting to form in his eyes. “You have done enough! I loved mother! I miss her, but I mourned her loss. I understood she was never coming back! I was sad, but I thought,” he hiccupped, the tears coming faster now. “I thought I would at least have you! You’re still my father, and yet—” A sob racked his body. “Why wasn’t I good enough!” He yelled sinking to his knees. “Why wasn’t I enough for you! You would have been enough for me. I just wanted my father, but you…you just pushed me away. You schemed and you hurt people and you thought it was for me, but all I’ve ever wanted from you was for you to be my dad. I—I don’t want this. I know mom wouldn’t want this. Please.” He begged. “Please stop this.”

“Adrien, You—” Gabriel didn’t know what to say. He’d been doing this for Adrien, for his wife, for their family.

Almost as quickly as the emotions had overcome Adrien, they settled down again. His rose to his full height, exhausted and tired, but determined. There was a threat in his eyes, and a warning on his lips.

“I’m disowning myself.” His voice was solid and clear, and it shook Gabriel to his core.

“Adrien—”

“Shut up. I’m tired. I’m so so tired. I want nothing to do with you anymore. Not if you’re going to continue like this. Not if you’re going to continue to torment the people of Paris. Do you know how many people I’ve seen die because of you? We’re lucky Ladybug’s cure can bring them back, we’re lucky those who suffered don’t remember dying, but I don’t forget seeing them die. I can’t forget the feeling of worthlessness when I couldn’t save them.”

“Adrien have you died?”

“Maybe I have. I wouldn’t know, remember? You don’t remember it. Not really.” He was certain he had at least once. There were too many close calls, too many times he didn’t remember how the fight ended, too many times Ladybug had hugged him just a little too tight after they reunited at the end of a battle. “Why does it matter? You don’t care about me, Gabriel. If you did, you wouldn’t be doing this, and as long as you are doing this, I renounce you as my father, as my blood, as my anything! I swear on everything I care and value, I will fight you till the day I die, or the day you give yourself up or lose.”

“Adrien, please. Don’t so this.”
“Wait, I’m sorry. I said that wrong. I’ll continue to fight you until the day I die, or this whole thing is over because that’s all I’ve been doing for the past two years. Protecting people. He patted the pocket of his pants lightly where Plagg was. “Come out now, we’re leaving.” The kwami was hesitant, but he wasn’t going to against Adrien, not now. The transformation went off without a hitch and Gabriel stared and stared and stared. He had been suspicious of his son once, but now the facts were right before him. He’d been attacking his son for the past two years. He’d been doing this for Adrien. He’d been trying to protect Adrien and all this time he’d been the one putting him in the most danger.

With one final snarl, Adrien leaped up to the window he usually used to escape. “You are dead to me, Gabriel.” And then he was gone.

Chat raced across the rooftop, careful as he went but desperate at the same time. He was holding himself together but only barely. He had no home anymore, and there was only one place he trusted himself to go to; one person he trusted right now, and his body took him there automatically.

It was a sloppy landing onto Marinette’s balcony, and knowing that he was safe, he de-transformed. He couldn’t stop the tears anymore, couldn’t bring himself to move, but Mari must have heard him land because a few moments later she stuck her head out the window.

“Adrien?” Her voice was so warm and comforting and she wasn’t even trying. It was a lifeline Adrien hadn’t realized he had been holding onto until everything came crumbling down, and he sobbed. “Oh my gosh! Adrien, what’s wrong are you hurt?” He felt Marinette beside him, felt her trying to help him sit up, but he was exhausted and drained, and he threw his arms around her shoulders and sobbed because that’s all he could do right now.

“Y—you were right, my lady.” He cried in the spaces between, “You were right. My father. My father is Hawkmoth.” He felt the long exhale Mari let out. Felt her pull him tighter into a hug, felt her hands combing through his hair as she whispered sweet nothings into his ear.

“Oh, Adrien, I’m so sorry. I’m so sorry this happened to you. I’m sorry I was right, I would give anything for me to be wrong.”

“I can’t go home.”

“No one is going to make you. You’ll be safe here. My family will be happy for the company, and my papa has wanted to get you in the kitchen for years to teach you a few tricks.”
“I don’t have a home anymore, Mari.”

“Of course, you do, Kitty. Your home is right here.” She continued to comb her hands through his blond hair like she had done times before when he was anxious because of work. “Your homes right here.” She promised, and Adrien allowed himself to believe her, allowed himself to relax. Allowed himself to eventually be carried inside where he fell asleep still clinging onto Mari, who gently wiped away his tears.

He wouldn’t mind finding a new home as long as his new home was here with Marinette.
Chapter 2

Adrien didn’t know where he was when he woke up, but he was comfortable, and he didn’t want to move. Well, he didn’t at first until he realized he had his arms around Marinette in her bed—in her room—and he promptly flailed off the side of her bed and dropped to the floor.

“Adrien?” Marinette’s head peeked over the side of the bed as she sleepily blinked down at him, confusion present in her expression.

“Good morning Mari,” he greeted, his smile small and his face flushed.

“Good morning Adrien, how are you feeling?”

“ Weird,” which was the only way he could really describe it. His throat felt sore and his eyes swollen so he knew he’d been crying. “I don’t actually remember how I got here,” he eventually admitted, rubbing the back of his neck.

“Do you remember what you told me last night?” He blinked up at her as everything slowly trickled back into his memory. The fog began to clear, and realization hit him.

“I ran away from home because my dad is Hawkmoth.” He felt like crying. Everything had happened so quickly, and he felt like he should still be feeling something, but his tears had dried up and right now he felt numb. He didn’t remember coming over to Marinette’s last night, but it makes sense that this is where he ended up. Marinette was off the bed and crouching at his side in seconds, a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

“I’m not going to force you to tell me what happened until you’re ready to talk about it, okay? I’m sure learning this was a huge shock and I’m sure it’s not info your father gave you willingly.” Adrien shook his head. “My parents already know you’re here, and you know how much they love you. Even if your father does come looking for you, he won’t get past Mamon without your say so.”

“I dunno what I did to land such a wonderful friend like you.” Marinette snorted and stood up.

“You latched yourself to me after I made you laugh before a runway show.” Adrien managed a smile recalling the ordeal. “Your puns were and still are insufferable.”

“You love them.”

“Keep telling yourself that, kitty,” she teased, pulling him to his feet. “How about we get some food in you. My parents are already up and baking downstairs, I’m sure they won’t miss a pastry or two.” She pointed over to the chest in the corner of her room. “Why don’t you change into something more comfortable. Something tells me we’re not going to be leaving the house today.”

“Mecha strike III?”
“Only if you think you can keep up.”

“Is that a challenge, my lady? You know how competitive I get.” She barked out a laugh and left the room calling back.

“Come downstairs when you’re ready. No rush.” He watched her leave and was surprised by how relaxed he felt. Last night had been…something. It had been crazy, and Adrien knew he should be distressed, and deep down he was aware he most certainly was, but there was something about Marinette that left him feeling calm. She’d been like that since their first meeting in even after all these years, he couldn’t quite figure out what it was she did.

“You’re friends a little ball of sunshine, Adrien. I can see the look on your face. She’s literal warmth to be around, and most people are relaxed when they’re lounging out in the sun, especially a cat.”

“Maybe. I dunno what I would do without her, though,” he admitted, as the black Kawmi floated around him. The chest Marinette had pointed to earlier had an emergency stash of Adrien’s clothes. It had been about 2 years since he’d learned Marinette was Ladybug, and apparently it had been much longer since she’d known he was Chat Noir. It didn’t make anything awkward, thank goodness, because when they learned, they sat down and talked. “I really don’t know what I did to deserve a friend like Mari.”

“You didn’t have to do anything, Kid.”

“Hmmm.” He started changing into one of the various pairs of Pj’s he kept there in case he crashed on her floor after patrols (one of the perks of knowing each other’s identities). Of course, staying the night at Mari’s place wouldn’t have feasibly been possible if his father didn’t already adore the young designer. One text saying he was staying at the Dupain-Chengs was enough to stop his father from calling in an entire task force to track him down. He supposed he had his father to thank for ever meeting Marinette in the first place (which in Adrien’s mind was the only thing his father was good for at this point).

Mari, but some stroke of luck, entered into a contest held by Gabriel’s fashion label. It was the chance to dress his son on the runway at his next show, and Marinette, despite her age, absolutely stunned his father with her designs. So, he invited her to the show as Adrien’s personal designer and the rest was history. She’d been a stuttering mess, and Adrien had been an empty shell of a kid at the time, but she made him laugh, made him actually enjoy fashion for once, and he refused to let her go after that. Even if they didn’t see each other much they stayed in contact, and Mari seemed to be one of the few people that Gabriel was ever okay with letting into the house.

“I think Mari’s just magic,” Adrien decided pulling a hoodie over his head. “Other than Lila, and somewhat Chloe, I’m not sure I’ve ever met someone who doesn’t absolutely adore Marinette. So, she’s magic. I mean she got my heartless father to love her, and he barely loves me.”

“She’d slap you if she heard you say that.”

“Ah, but she’s not here, and I’ll know if you snitch because you’re the only other person who heard me say it.” He warned with a sly smile and a warning glare. He checked his appearance in the full-length mirror before shrugging and walking down to the next floor. No one was going to judging his appearance, and Mari would probably just joke about how he looked more like Chat now with his hair as messy as it currently is.

Upon arriving in the kitchen on their second floor, Adrien found that Marinette had already swiped some pastries, but had also set the living room up in the most epic pillow fort he’d ever seen. “How did you do that so fast?” he wondered, walking over slowly, taking time to truly appreciate the
architectural brilliance created through the use of pillows. Truthfully, it was like a giant nest, but it looked so dang comfortable Adrien was certain he could have laid down and fallen right back to sleep.

“You were taking your time, and I’ve done this enough times with other people to be able to assemble it quickly. It seemed appropriate considering—” she waved her hand towards the window to refer to the mess that was his home life. “Today is all about you and cheering you up. So, whatever you want, we can do.”

“What if I say I want to beat you at a video game for once?”

“Whatever you want, we can mostly likely do,” she amended. “I’m not in the practice of throwing matches to appease my opponents, especially when they pout at me like that.”

“This isn’t a Pout. This is more like life altering, existential crisis. I’m sixteen Mari, I shouldn’t have to worry about stuff like this!” He plopped into the pillow nest with a huff. “Did you parents make the blueberry scones today?”

“Yes!” she set the plate on the counter in front of them and Adrien dug in. There’s a reason her parents were considered the best bakers in Paris, and Adrien was more than willing to let them remind him whenever they wanted because it meant he was being fed pastries.

“I dunno what I would do without you, Mari.” He hummed, for the umpteenth time, leaning against her shoulder as she got comfortable beside him. “You’re literally my knight in shining armor.”

“I could say the same of you.” They sat in comfortable silence for a while before Marinette chimed. “So, other than Mecha strike III, I also have an entire armada of Disney and Dreamwork movies that we can totally take advantage of and a pantry full of popcorn. So, whatever you want to do, I will have something prepared.”

And that’s how they spent the entire day. Rotating between video games and movies. Eventually chasing each other around the floor in a dangerous game of keep away (Mari I swear if you eat that last scone!” “What are you gonna do about it, Agreste?”) which may or may not have resulted in both of them transforming and running across the roofs of Paris it what eventually dissolved into a very elaborate game of tag and stopping petty crime as it happening when they passed.

The game eventually ended with Ladybug and Chat on the top of the Eiffel tower as the sun set, alone, but comfortable together in their silence. Adrien felt exponentially better. He wasn’t expecting to, his world had been turned upside down the night before, but somehow his Ladybug had squirmed her way under his defenses and completely destroyed them, allowing Adrien to pull out of the shell of numbness he would have easily sunk into if his other half hadn’t been glued to his side all day.

“My father is a terrorist,” Chat hummed, leaning back and looking up at the night sky, “and he thinks he’s doing it all for me.” He saw Ladybug shift her head towards him but didn’t say anything. He was grateful for her silence, it meant she would just listen for now. “My dad has this book about our family tree in his office somewhere, I was going to look for it so I could do our history assignment, ya know? Except I found something I shouldn’t have. You’ve seen that portrait in my father’s office before, right? The big golden one?”

“I have, yes.”

“Well turns out it’s more than just a painting. It’s a secret door of sorts. There were different buttons, and if you pushed them all together, it activated a secret elevator. One went down, and thinking back on it, the other likely lead to wherever Gabriel operates as Hawkmoth, but that’s not—” he sighed,
the entire ordeal running through his head again. “He had my mother down there. The elevator went to some underground garden bunker and there in the middle of the room was my mother in some pod looking like she was asleep, but…I remember burying the casket, Mari. I remember the funeral and saying my goodbyes. I remember mourning even though I wasn’t entirely sure what it was. My mother is dead, was dead? She should be dead, but no. She was just there, and I don’t know how I should feel about that.” Her hand was on his shoulder again and she was smiling at him like she always did. Warm and supportive.

“You want to know the best part though? I was right. I joked about a terrorist raising his own butterflies, but it wasn’t a joke. He was breeding them down there, Mari. They were everywhere. It’s no wonder you could never track where they were coming from. They were coming from right below him!” Adrien didn’t feel like crying, but he did feel numb. “And then he tried to convince me what he was doing was right. That he was doing this for me, and for my mother, so that we could all be a family again! I didn’t ask for him to do this! I don’t want him to do this! I would have been happy just having him around, being an actual father instead of a ghost that floats around the house and tells me what to do and where to go!” Mari moved her arm around his shoulder and hugged him.

“It’s going to be okay, Adrien, don’t worry.”

“Easy for you to say. Mari, I have no clue what to do from here on out. I know you said your parents wouldn’t mind me staying, but I don’t exactly have access to any of my funds, I don’t know how I’ll be able to pay for school now, let alone work, and frankly, I’m worried that I’m going to get bombarded by press when people realize I’m not modeling anymore. They’ll want answers, they’ll want to know why golden boy ran away from home.”

“You don’t owe anyone answers, Adrien. And if you think for one second I would let the press anywhere near you—” There was a dangerous glint in her eye, reminding Adrien of just how dangerous Marinette could be. She had too many connections from her design work, and while she never utilized them, he’d always wondered just how much damage she could cause. Then again, better if they never truly found out.

“I think I’m owed answers.” She gave him another sad smile.

“We’ll get them in due time. As hard as this has been for you, at least now we know who Hawkmoth is. We can handle him together, as always.”

“Of course we can. He doesn’t deserve to get away with what he’d done.” They sat there in silence for a while longer, enjoying the view of Paris at night. It was as beautiful as it always was, and it was a sight Adrien would never truly get tired of. “Hey, Mari? How do you feel about going back to your place and watching Brother Bear?”

“sounds like a good plan. Race you home?”

“As if I could ever beat you, princess.”

“Won’t know unless you try, Kitty.” He smiled, and launched himself off the tower, Ladybug right behind him.

Marinette and Adrien mostly stayed inside for the weekend, and both agreed that going to school the following Monday may not be the best idea. So, with Sabine and Tom’s blessings the two stayed
home again, or at least that had been the plan. Neither was used to sleeping in, even though their bodies were begging them to, but they probably would have slept in for once if it hadn’t been for the noise carrying up from the bakery.

“That’s your mother, isn’t it?” Adrien asked, rolling off the air mattress they’d set up days ago. It was oddly comfortable all things considering.

“Definitely my mother.”

“I can practically picture her threatening that unfortunate soul with a rolling pin.”

“Wanna go see who it is?”

“Absolutely.” Which was the worst decision they could have made because as the duo raced through the building towards the bakery, they began to hear more clearly the argument taking place, and while it didn’t stop them, the sight of Gabriel Agreste standing rather meekly just inside the door certainly did. Adrien froze, blood draining from his face as he watched his father take a verbal beating from Sabine. It was a moment before the older Agreste noticed his son, but soon they locked eyes. Gabriel didn’t look mad, he didn’t look like he was here to take Adrien back or to make him see his way. He looked…apologetic? Afraid maybe.

“Adrien,” he began, ignoring Sabine who quickly turned to the stairs. “If it’s alright with you, I would like to have a conversation.” He opened his mouth as if to reply before closing it again. He repeated that a few times, shocked by the fact his dad was asking permission to talk to him as opposed to demanding it. He was still shocked when he felt Marinette pull him behind her as she glared at the designer she used to look up to. He was too shocked to be aware that both Sabine and Tom were ready to throw hands. He was even more surprised when he opened his mouth again and words finally came out.

“I’ll talk to you only if Marinette is present as well.”
Adrien was trying to stay calm, and shockingly he was calm. At least he was tricking himself into believing he was calm as he sat across from his father in the Dupain-Cheng’s living room. Maybe he felt calm because Marinette sat beside him glaring murder at his father. He seemed to shift uncomfortably under her gaze and all Adrien could think was “good.”

“So, you’re Hawkmoth?” She began, confident that no one was listening in on them. As much as her parents disliked the idea, Marinette had convinced them to open the café later to allow the three of them to talk in privacy for a while. It was just them in the building so they could and would talk freely.

“And I assume, based on the revelation of my son’s alter ego and the knowledge of how close the two of you are, that you, Mrs. Dupain-Cheng, are Ladybug.” She didn’t reward him with an answer to his deduction but crossed her arms continuing to stare.

“Is there a reason you’re here, Mr. Agreste? Because I promise if you’re going to try to drag Adrien home, I will make your life a living hell.” Adrien let out a relieved breath. He wasn’t sure what this meeting was going to entail, but he was happy it had started off with Marinette declaring exactly what she planned on doing if his father tried anything at all. Honestly, he was happy Marinette was Marinette. He wouldn’t have been able to do this without her.

“I came for a reason, and it’s not to drag Adrien back. I would like for him to return home, of course, but I know I can’t force him.”

“And why would I ever return home with you?” Adrien countered, amazed that his father had the gall to come here and ask him to return home after everything that had happened.

“I’ve done a lot of thinking, Adrien,” Gabriel began, looking everywhere but at his son, “About what you said before you left. I—I was wrong.” And those words were enough to cause both Marinette and Adrien to freeze. “You were right. I fooled myself into believing I was doing this all for you so we could be a complete family again, but I was wrong. I love your mother, and I blame myself for what happened. I blamed myself for taking your mother away from you. I didn’t think I deserved to be your father, and I made myself believe the only way I could really take back my title as your father was to bring back your mother.”
“You’re doing it again,” Adrien scowled at his father, listening to his explanation. “If you’re trying to make me feel guilty it won’t work. I won’t come to your side, and I swear I will stop you. I will tear down everything you have built up.”

“No, you won’t. Adrien, you are just like your mother. You’re a good person. You always have been and always will be. Do not change yourself because of me.”

“What would you have me do then?”

“Give me a second chance.” It was barely a whisper, but Adrien could believe what he was hearing. His father wanted a second chance? After everything he’d done to Paris? After everything he’d done to Adrien? “Regardless of if you agree, I would like to return these.” He reached into the inner pocket of his jacket and pulled out the two missing miraculous, placing them on the table for the two teens to see. They glanced at each other then glared at Gabriel.

“You’re just giving them to us?” Marinette asked. This was too good to be true. “What’s the catch.”

“I would like to tell you my story if you’ll listen.” He wasn’t forcing them. There was an intentional ‘if’ in there. They could take the miraculous and kick him out or they could take the Miraculous and listen to whatever story he wanted to share.

“The choice is yours to make, Adrien,” Marinette informed, carefully grabbing the two miraculous on the table. She studying them over, wondering if they were fakes, but as soon as they were in hand, the two kwami sprang into existence. They were both clearly confused, but a silent nod towards Gabriel seemed to be enough for them to understand the situation. It was enough for them to return to their objects for the time being. They knew they were safe now, they didn’t have to worry. “Do you want to listen?” It wasn’t a hard decision. His father had already given up. He had no more power of the city anymore, and so he wasn’t sharing this info to turn Adrien to his side. He was sharing this because he wanted Adrien to understand something he never would understand without hearing it from his father.

“I’d like to hear what he has to say. I’ll take everything with a grain of salt, but my instincts are telling me this is something important.” His father gave him a weak smile, aware of the chance he’d been given, but even more aware of the fact that he was on thin ice.

“I appreciate this, Adrien.” He seemed to slump a little in his seat before righting himself again and looking between the two teens. “The story I’m telling you is about how I met your mother, Adrien. You know we met in college here in Paris. For me, it was love at first sight. Your mother was a dancer and she was the most beautiful women I’d ever laid eyes on. I joined the ballet production
team to design their costumes specifically so I could spend more time around her that’s how far gone I was when I first met her. I’m not sure she even knew my name for the first month or so I was there.”

“So, you’ve shared before.”

“Yes, well what I didn’t share was that your mother was the kindest person I had ever met. She had a heart for the people around her and she hated seeing them suffer more than she hated anything else. What I didn’t know when I first met her, was that she was trying to do something about all the hurt around her. I don’t know how or where she obtained the peacock miraculous, but she had it when I met her, along with the butterfly. She would spend her days practicing and her nights going around the town, using the power of both to help people in the best way she could, by it simply talking or lifting their spirits with magic.”

“She was using both at the same time?” Marinette inquired, the wheels in her head spinning, but what they were spinning over Adrien couldn’t guess. He was pretty sure Master Fu was training her to be the next guardian (he was getting on in age after all) so anything and everything Miraculous related made more sense to her than it ever would to Adrien.

“From what I could understand. I happened to be returning to my home one night when I saw her de-transform and promptly pass out. I couldn’t simply leave her, so I carried her back home with me and looked after her until she awoke. That was the first night the two of us truly met. And from there it was history. Unfortunately, as courses began to pick up, she had to focus more on her studies and her dance. Her late-night adventures were put on hold. As more time passed, she eventually stopped going out altogether. After we married and my brand took off, she didn’t have to go out at night. She had all the funds an influence to go out as herself and help those who needed it.”

“So, what happened to her?”

“It would seem there was something wrong with the Peacock miraculous that she wasn’t aware of. It had been sapping her life energy. Despite having stopped using it, the damage had already been done. From what little I could understand from my research, it was like there had been a tear made in the core of her spirit, and her life was slowly leaking out of. Having you, Adrien, was final catalyst for something that was a long time coming.”

“So, it’s my fault she’s like that?” Adrien challenged, wondering if his father was about to blame him for all of this, but the elder designer shook his head sadly.

“This is far from your fault, Adrien. Your birth wasn’t an easy one for her, it left her tired and
weaker than she’d been before. She was on bed rest for a month after she had you. It was terrifying. No one knew what was wrong with her at the time. But your mother had an idea, and she told me in confidence that she didn’t know how long she would live. It was at that moment I decided I would do anything and everything to save her.” He frowned, squeezing his hands together.

“I did years of research, but she grew weaker with each passing day, not that she would show it. Your mother was incredibly strong and incredibly kind, and she refused to let anything keep her down.” Upon closer inspection, Adrien realized his father was shaking, and that his voice had become wobbly as he continued. The great Gabriel Agreste was showing genuine emotion, even if he was trying to hold it back, and frankly, Adrien was shocked.

“Nothing I did work. I needed more time, and I couldn’t find it, so I changed directions. I looked for ways to preserve her through magic, and I found a way. The cryotube you found her in is embeded with magic that keeps what little life energy she still has, circulating in that enclosed space. If it’s opened, I fear it wouldn’t take long for your mother to pass entirely. Time passed, and I refused to let her go, even though you were in front of me. I’d convinced myself that you’d been robbed, and you needed a mother. That I was doing this for you, and for her. I didn’t stop to think about what you both truly would have wanted, I was driven by a single desire and you’ve had to pay the price for that, Adrien. For that I apologize, although at this point, I would doubt it means much.”

“That’s not for you to decided, Father,” the blond assured, leaning forward in his seat. “And I haven’t decided yet how I feel about your apology.”

“I understand. I’ll accept whatever you eventually decide, just know that if you would be willing to give me a second chance, I will not throw it away this time. I will do everything in my power to be the father you deserve to have.” Adrien didn’t know how to reply to this. He hadn’t expected anything from this man, and here he was practically begging for forgiveness.

“That’s not the whole story. There were a few years between when Mrs. Emilie passed, and Hawkmoth began.”

“During that time, I did more research. I found an old book on the miraculous and learned about the power of the miraculous of creation and destruction. I had hoped that if I gathered both, I could restore Emilie to health. I charged forward with that single idea and I did my best to keep Adrien uninvolved by keeping him busy elsewhere.”

“You isolated me and practically kept me a prisoner in my own house for years, father. Even if you’d managed to bring mother back, did you think I wouldn’t learn about how you did it? Do you think she wouldn’t learn? Did you think either of us would have thanked you? The ladybug and cat
miraculous are like yin and yang. They represent a balance. Their wish doesn’t come without a price. What if the price was someone else’s life? What if it was many someone’s lives. What if it sparked a disaster on par with Pompeii? Did you ever pause and wonder who you might affect over your selfish wish?”

“I’m sure we can both agree I didn’t do much thinking during this phase of my life.” He huffed.

“But your wife is still alive?” Marinette asked, which was clearly not what either Agreste expected the bluenette to take out of this conversation, but something was gleaming in her eyes, that Adrien dared not read too far into. It looked like hope. And one glance at his father was enough to tell that he could see it as well.

“She is. The chamber she’s in keeps her alive, but I believe it might be time for me to let her pass, to move on and focus on those who are still alive.”

“Well, maybe not.” Marinette hummed, standing up and pacing. “You, Mr. Agreste, are an absolute idiot though. I can understand the pain of losing a loved one, I’ve lost family myself and a close friend. It’s not easy, and I understand that feeling of doing anything to get them back. But you’re still an idiot. A smart idiot, but an idiot none the less.”

“Marinette, what are you talking about?” She stopped pacing behind the couch and flashed the two Agreste the brightest smile they had ever seen.

“I think I know how to save your wife.” The silence was deafening, and Adrien swore he could hear his father’s heartbeat. “Which is only one part of the problem. You did just turn yourself in, you can’t hurt Paris anymore, but the reality is you terrorized the city for years. The government wants your head. And I have half a mind to give it to them.”

“What do you mean half a mind?”

“The wonderful thing about this whole situation is that magic is involved. This isn’t a matter of the government when you get to the core of it. No one knows you’re hawkmoth, other than me, you, Adrien, and if my guess is correct, probably your assistant Natalie.”

“And what of it?”
“While it’s not my say, we might not have to turn you in. If hawkmoth just fades from existence, stops akumatizing people, the city will begin to realize that he’d gone. Our job as Chat and Ladybug was to retrieve the stolen Miraculous. Turning in the person who was misusing them is not part of the job description. Yes, we would have likely outed him in the final battle and his reveal would spark the government into action, but this isn’t a big reveal. You gave yourself up. Adrien, we’ve completed our mission.”

“So, you want to just let my father run free? After everything he’s done?”

“Far from it, but that’s why I called Master Fu over.” As if knowing he’d been name-dropped, The man himself appeared out of a portal created by Kaalki. He was still as short as always, and he looked tense, but also relaxed.

“Gabriel Agreste,” he greeted with a nod of his head. “My ladybug here tells me you turned yourself in and returned the Miraculous.” Marinette took that as her cue to hand him the magical object in question. He studied them quietly and let out a long breath. “I while ago, The peacock miraculous had been used to help boost morale and give an edge to the allies during a time of war. It would create powerful sentimonsters based on the soldier's desire for victory. The butterfly Miraculous was used during that time as well. It was then when they both went missing, and it’s then when I can assume the Peacock was damaged. Emotions are partially what makes us humans, so when the Peacock miraculous is damaged, it affects the holder in a way that makes them less human. For us, that’s death. We can still act human with the absence of emotions because we’ve felt emotions before. We can fake them because we still experienced them. So ultimately, the miraculous would slowly steal the life of whoever continued to use it, and eventually, the damage would be irreversible.”

“Yes, that’s what I’ve learned as well. My wife’s life had slowly been slipping away from her over the years. Giving birth seemed to escalate it.”

“I’m not surprised. Giving life to another being while your own life is slowly seeping away would have quiet the toll.”

“Your ladybug seems to think my wife might be able to be saved.”

“If she’s still alive, and if there’s enough life still left in her, there’s a chance, yes. I won’t promise anything, there are limits to my magic as a guardian, but I will try.”

“Why?” Adrien asked. “Why would you even attempt to try. This man has tormented the city of Paris for years now!” He could feel his anger bubbling up. It was like both of them were ignoring the
massive fucking elephant in the room and it was driving him crazy. Why would they help his father?

“I’m not doing this for him, Adrien,” Fu informed, hobbling in front of him. “Gabriel has made mistakes. He’s not a good person, and I would happily turn him into the authorities right now, but this is out of my hands. How we proceed from here on is going to be your choice.”

“But why? I don’t—”

“Because we care more about your well-being, dummy.” Mari cut him off, ruffling his hair. “Turning him in will affect you more than it will affect him. We won’t let him off with a slap on the wrist, he is a terrorist, but he’s also your father, and he made this a quiet affair. How we proceed is completely up to us. We can turn him in or—”

“I have a friend who could be his shadow. A new assistant who he would never be allowed to leave the house without. It would essentially be like a house arrest, but with a little more freedom.”

“You would let him off that easily?”

“For you, Adrien? Absolutely.” Fu patted his leg and gave him a warm smile. It was the one he usually gave him when the blond came looking for advice. When he felt like the world was crashing around him and he wasn’t sure if he should be the one to continue as Chat Noir. It was the same smile that always saw him off and welcomed him back whenever he needed someone to talk to. It was the smile of someone who’d stepped into the role of his father whether he’d realized it or not, and Adrien... Adrien was a mess. It took him a few minutes to realize tears were falling down his face, or that Mari was tracing soothing circles over his back. IT took him a while to remember his father was still sitting across from him on the couch, waiting for the verdict for the rest of his life.

“You abandoned me,” He spat when he finally reigned in some control of his haywire emotions. Not much, but enough that he felt he could speak without breaking down. “You abandoned me when I needed you most, you isolated me from the world. I had to run away on the first day of school because you refused to let me go. I didn’t have friends till I started at Collège Française Dupont. Do you know how lonely that was? And to top it all off, I had more conversations with Gorilla than I did with you. You not only isolated me, but you left me alone for years!”

“I know. I realize that now.”

“You terrorized France, for years!”
“I did, and I was wrong. I’m so sorry, Adrien. For ever having put you through this.”

“And now you think a simple apology is going to fix this? I should have them turn you in. I should let you face the punishment for the crimes you committed!” His voice had been steadily growing louder, but a sob broke his anger, and he deflated back onto the couch, not realizing he’d risen to his feet. “I wanted a father. I want my father. I just want you to be there. Is that too much to ask for? To be in the room with me, to talk about your day or something stupid I did at school. For you to tell me about your latest designs, or the inspiration behind them. You might have given me half of my life, but we don’t have any type of relationship. You’ve done nothing to make me believe you even know how to maintain a relationship like that. Why should I trust your apology? There’s no proof that anything is going to change, even if we let you walk away! Why should I trust you! How do I know you’re not going to abandon me again?” He was screaming through his tears. “I don’t want to be abandoned again.” He sounded weak, curling into himself, wishing he could disappear.

This was the root problem. Adrien didn’t hate his father. He honest to god didn’t. Even after learning the truth about him, Adrian didn’t hate Gabriel. It wasn’t hatred he felt, it was heartbreak. While he never admitted it, The blond had been holding out for years. He’d been hoping that one day his father would actually become his father. That he would leave his office and come have breakfast and they could be like a normal family. Adrien didn’t hate his father, he longed for him. He wanted him present in his life.

“Adrien, please look at me.” Gabriel had moved from his seat and was now crouching before his son, carefully taking one of his hands into his own. It took a bit more coaxing, but Adrien did look up, and all he saw was shame. Shame and love and pain and heartbreak and emotions he’d never truly seen his father display since the supposed passing of his mother. But they were all on display now, and they were on display because of him.

“Why should I trust you?”

“You shouldn’t trust me. I don’t expect you to trust me and I would be concerned if you did. I don’t deserve your trust either. I betrayed you, and I abandoned you, even though you are my son and a precious life that Emilie gave me herself. I made many mistakes in that past, and you have every right to hate me. If that’s how you feel, and if you decide to turn me in, I won’t put up a fight. But if you’d allow me the chance, I would like to try again. I know I’m late, but if you’d let me be the father you deserved, to be present in your life. If you’d give me the chance to earn your trust, Adrien—I honestly, I would do anything.” Adrien said nothing, simply studied his father as he spoke, looking for any signs of deceit, any tells that would warn him that this was all a trap, but there was nothing. Gabriel was being nothing but sincere, and Adrien’s heart broke all over again.

Gabriel clearly wasn’t expecting his son to throw himself into his arms, but he somehow kept them from both toppling over as Adrien buried his head into his father’s shoulder and wept.
“I want that more than anything,” he sobbed, hugging his father as the older man hugged him back, his own relieved tears gliding down his face. “Please, I just—I just wanted us to be a family.”

“I’ll do everything I can to meet your expectations then.”

“Willingly giving up was a good start.” Adrien joked, pulling away. “I don’t know if I would have been able to fight you all things considered.” He couldn’t believe this was happening. He thought he might wake up any moment and prayed to whatever beings existed that he wouldn’t. That this was real, and the fighting was over, and his father was going to try! And they wouldn’t have to turn him in.

Marinette and Master Fu left the father and son alone for a while, allowing them to calm down and talk quietly among themselves. Naturally, there would have to be a plan to keep track of Gabriel. Despite his surrender, he was still dangerous, and he knew far too much to be left unattended. The price he would pay would be a breach in his freedom, but it was better than the alternative, and something told them he would be able to live with it. The next issue was—

“I would like to see your wife if that’s okay with you,” Master Fu announced when he felt it was appropriate to interrupt. “I need to see her in order to know if I’ll be able to do anything.” Gabriel nodded, complying with the wish. He had a car waiting out front that took them all back to the manor Marinette talked to her parents beforehand, promising that everything was okay and that he wouldn’t leave Adrien’s side and would call if anything went wrong, but they seemed okay with the situation once they learned Master Fu was traveling with them. Upon arriving at the mansion, it didn’t take long for them to arrive in the underground garden.

It was a hauntingly beautiful place, natural and unnatural at the same time. It felt like some kind of in-between that could trap them if they stayed too long. And it was unsettling. As beautiful as Emilie Agreste was, she looked like a sleeping corpse, perfectly preserved, but simply asleep. It felt like looking at an open casket.

Master Fu stepped up to investigate the chamber keeping Emilie alive. Adrien himself didn’t know much about magic (not like what Mari knows) but he’d asked Master Fu questions about his abilities before. He could read magic as well as use healing magic. He could sense it when he was nearby and if he was fast enough, he could potentially prevent it. From what Adrien knew, he assumed Master Fu was studying whatever magic had been placed upon the chamber.

“I’m surprised you managed to get your hands on magic like this, let alone that you were able to cast it at all,” Fu admitted, glancing at Gabriel. “Then again, Your son is an almost perfect match to the destruction soul of Plagg and that couldn’t have all come from Mrs. Emilie. Although It is likely that him being developed and born from something corrupted by destruction is a result of this as well. Regardless, your wife is in fact still alive, and she should have enough life energy remaining for me to heal her, but it will take time.”
“how much time?”

“I can’t say for certain. I can’t restore her energy. I can seal to tear created by the broken Peacock, but recovering her life energy will depend entirely on her. Her life won’t be in danger of fading away anymore, but she will likely be in a coma until her body has recreated enough energy for her to truly be alive again.”

“Even the possibility of her being saved is more than I was expecting from all of this,” Gabriel assured, tears in his eyes. “I would do anything to hold my love in my arms one more time. If I must wait for her to heal herself, then I will late as long as she requires, and I will be by her side when she finally does return to us.”

“You really do love her,” Adrien realized. He knew his father loved his mother, but there was something different about it now. It felt unrestrained and wholesome. It was warm.

“Most people don’t believe soulmates are real, but I think I found mine in Emilie. I would do anything for her. I tried doing anything for her. Truthfully, my actions leave me doubting I deserve to be by her side again,” he placed his hand on Adrien’s shoulder and smiled down at him. “She would smack me if she heard me say that about myself. I don’t think I deserve to be by her side though. Not right now, not yet. Perhaps when she wakes up, but until then. I will do everything I can to earn your trust again, Adrien. I’ll do my best to be the father you’ve deserved so that when your mother does eventually wake up, the two of us can welcome her back into our family again.”

Now Adrien was crying as well as his father because of this. This is everything he could have hoped for and then some. The fighting was over, he still had his lady, he had his father, and his mother. His mother was not dead and she wouldn’t be dying any time soon.

Adrien had never been happier than in this moment, because right now, it felt like a brand new age, and behind all the overwhelming emotions, he couldn’t wait to see what the future had in store.

Chapter End Notes

HELLO hello

this is the scene setting story for the rest of the series that will be updated at random and will hopefully be mostly one shots.

I hope you all enjoyed. Damian will be in the next story posted to this series, so i hope
you'll read that when its published
also my eyes are currently closing on their own and i think i should hit the hay.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!