# Operation Mega-Sleepover

**by InTheWild**

## Summary

When Alya and Nino drop out of their long awaited mega-sleepover at the last minute, it leaves Marinette and Adrien alone together for the night. An Adrinette one-shot with lots of fluff and sleepover shenanigans.

## Notes

This is set during Season 3, and I started writing it before both finale episodes and Kwami Buster, so there will be no spoilers here! Also, if you're reading this a few months from now, this was written before Chat Blanc and Felix were released, so there's nothing related to anything that will happen in those episodes. But expect lot's of references to all the other episodes :)

See the end of the work for more notes.

---

**Operation Mega-Sleepover**

---
5:13p Alya: Sorry girl, Nino and I got stuck with last minute babysitting, so we won’t be able to make it for mega-sleepover

5:14p Alya: But don’t worry, I made sure a certain model is still on his way over ;)

5:14p Marinette: WAHT?!

Nervous goosebumps began to spiral down Marinette’s arms as she watched the three dots next to Alya’s name dance across her screen. Surely, she was joking right? There was no way Adrien would be staying at her house. The whole night. Just the two of them. Alone. Alya needed to stop typing and respond now.

But before she could find out what Alya was about to say, the doorbell rang.

Marinette screamed, throwing her phone across the room like it burned her.

No, no, no, no. This isn’t happening. Alya is going to be standing behind the door and everything is going to be fine.

“Marinette? It sounds like your friends are here, are you going to get the door?” her mother called from the top of the stairs.

“Yeah, Mom!” Marinette called back, scrambling off the couch and taking a few deep breaths before she turned the doorknob.

And there he was. Adrien Agreste, with his perfectly combed, golden hair and a small overnight bag slung over his shoulder, standing in her doorway. A quick glance around the rest of the hallway confirmed that Alya and Nino were, in fact, not with him.

“Hey Marinette,” he waved with a soft smile.

She was going to pass out. This was not what was supposed to happen. There had been a plan. She and Alya had been having weekly sleepovers for months, and had only barely managed to convince Sabine to allow the boys to join them for a weekend – on the condition that they all sleep in the living room, and Tom would check in on them every so often.

It had been a good plan. Both Alya and Nino would be there as a buffer so that Marinette could keep her nerves under control, and since they were a couple, it also meant there’d be plenty of opportunity for Marinette to get in some good bonding time with Adrien. But now the plan was ruined. She couldn’t be left alone with him for an entire night – she’d turn into a puddle!

“Shmadrien – I MEAN – hey, Adrien,” she gave a toothy grin, meekly returning his wave.

He chuckled.

“Hello Adrien,” Sabine greeted him, having made her way down the stairs. “Alya and Nino aren’t with you?”

Adrien opened his mouth to respond, but Marinette jumped in for him, suddenly realizing there was a way out of this whole thing.

“Actually Mom, Alya just texted me that she and Nino have to babysit tonight – and I know the rules about having boys stay the night, so I would totally understand if you don’t let him stay over.”
She cringed at the disappointment on Adrien’s face.

Sabine pursed her lips, looking between the two teenagers. “Well, I suppose it’s alright if he stays, you two shouldn’t have your plans ruined just because your other friends couldn’t come. Especially with your busy schedule, Adrien – everyone needs a good break now and then. But the rules stay the same, you stay downstairs after dinner, and our bedroom door will be open all night – no exceptions,” she said firmly.

Adrien’s whole face lit up. “Thank you, Mrs. Dupain-Cheng!”

Sabine smiled, “well, I’m heading downstairs to help Tom in the bakery for an hour or so. You two feel free to settle in. It’ll be pizza for dinner tonight.”

Adrien thanked her again as she left, and then it was just the two of them.

Marinette gulped.

“So, what do you want to do first?” Adrien asked, shifting slightly on his feet.

“You,” she responded immediately, before quickly covering her tracks. “U… MS, yeah! UMS, we could play Ultimate Mecha Strike 3?” She avoided his eyes, tapping her fingers together and hoping he didn’t see the light pink that dusted her cheeks.

Pull yourself together, girl.

But Adrien continued smiling, unfazed. “Awesome! I’ve been waiting for a rematch after you kicked my butt the last time!”

His ease and excitement helped calm her nerves, just a bit. Besides, gaming she could handle. Just a regular old, friendly activity. This is what all four of them would have been doing anyway if Alya and Nino hadn’t decided to abandon her.

“You can set that down by the stairs if you want,” Marinette gestured to small duffel bag still tucked under his arm.

“Oh, okay.” He hesitated before placing it next to the bookshelf by the staircase, “um, when do we change into our pajamas?”

Pajamas. Adrien’s pajamas. Why hadn’t she thought about this before? She was going to see him in his pajamas! And he was going to see hers. He’d have to change into said pajamas, meaning he was going to undress in her house!

No, focus Marinette! It’s just a sleepover like you have with Alya all the time. Except you’ll be sleeping a few feet away from Adrien instead of Alya… Yep, totally normal.

“Oh, I, um, you…” she shook her head to clear the mush out of her brain. “Alya and I usually wait until after dinner to change… but if you want to um, change now that’s fine too.”

Adrien shook his head. “However, you and Alya usually do things is fine.”

Marinette nodded, silently grateful she would be allowed at least an hour or so to get used to the idea of seeing what Adrien Agreste chooses for sleepwear.

He followed her up the narrow staircase that eventually led up to the trapdoor entrance of her room. For the most part everything was set up exactly how he had remembered it, her loft bed, the sewing machine with various fabric swatches strewn across it, strings of lantern lights, and lots and lots of pink. It was an endearing sprawl of organized clutter. Not unlike Marinette herself, he
There was one fairly large difference about her room though; he realized as she crouched under her desk to get the game system set up. Almost all of the pictures of himself had been taken down.

On the wall next to her bed he saw the corkboard that had previously adorned about a dozen photos of him that she had been using as inspirations for her designs. But now the portrait collection was more eclectic – one of Marinette standing arm and arm with Marc and Nathaniel, another of a group hug between her, Juleka and Rose, some group shots of Kitty Section, and then there were quite a few selfies of her with Alya, and even two or three of just Marinette and Luka. The photos of himself weren’t entirely gone, there were still two of his headshots pinned in with the rest of the photos of her friends, but he couldn’t help but notice the stark difference between the pictures of him versus everyone else.

“Hey, Marinette?”

She stood too quickly from underneath the desk and bonked her head. Rubbing the spot absently, she followed his gaze, and saw that he was staring up at the collage of photos next to her pillows. Thank GOD I thought to remove all the pictures of him before he came over.

“Um, yes?”

“We should take a picture together! You know, to commemorate the start of the sleepover?”

He pulled out his phone and placed his arm around her shoulder, making a peace sign off to the side of her left cheek. She squeaked at being pulled close to him so quickly, and he snapped the photo. He was pleased with the result he saw in the viewfinder, she looked perfectly caught off guard and candid. There, now she doesn’t have to use one of my lame modeling photos for her friends collage anymore.

“I’ll make sure to send it to you later, okay?”

“Oh, okay,” she said, still dazed.

The loud techno jingle of Ultimate Mecha Strike jostled her out of her haze, as the system finally turned on.

Once she had the controller in her hands, she immediately felt more comfortable, and she let her usual focus settle in. He definitely had been practicing since the last time they played together. But so had she. A smug smile crept across her face as she went for the final blow that would solidify her fourth win in a row.

“Man, I really thought I’d win this time,” Adrien leaned back in his chair.

“You’ve definitely improved though! You know all of the combos, and are really good at a lot of different characters, and – “

Adrien chuckled, “it’s okay, Marinette, you’re just better at the game than I am. Even with all my practicing, I can’t anticipate moves as easily as you do, you’re just better at thinking ahead.”

She avoided his gaze, unsure how to respond to the compliment. She had just been getting lucky at guessing what he was going to do next based on his pervious playstyle. It was hard to believe she was better than him at anything.

“I’m really glad your mom let me stay over after all,” he said after a moment. “I sort of have a
Marinette’s eyebrows rose and she turned back to face him again in anticipation. “Oh?”

“I’ve uh, never been to a sleepover before,” he rubbed his hand on the back of his neck. “And I would have been really disappointed if this one had gotten cancelled; I’ve been looking forward to it all week.”

Her eyes went wide and her lips parted slightly. His comment earlier about when to change into his pajamas made sense now. She had been so caught up in her own anxieties about being alone with him she hadn’t even considered that this might all be new to him.

“Really? Not at all?” she tried to hide the shock from her voice.

“I mean, sometimes when we were younger, Chloe would stay over, but she would just kind of do her own thing most of the time. I’ve never been allowed to have a sleepover with a true friend like this before,” he shrugged.

Marinette cringed internally. She had been so selfish all night, worried only about herself when Adrien needed her to be there as a friend. Determination ran fiercely through her veins. She was going to make sure this was the best first sleepover in the history of sleepovers.

Her brow hardened and she looked him directly in the eye. “We’re going to make a fort.”

“Uh, what?” he asked, slightly taken aback by the shift in her attitude.

“A pillow fort. And pizza, movie marathons, silly games – the whole works,” she stood up, her eyes already darting around the room to take inventory of everything they could use to build. “Now, go grab all the pillows and blankets off my bed while I find some heavy books and some lights.”

“I, uh…” he hesitated only for a moment before his eyes matched the fire of her own, a sly smile quirking the corner of his mouth. “Let’s do it.”

He climbed up the ladder to her bed and began pulling at all the sheets, and tossing the pillows off the side.

“You want to bring this cat pillow too?” he smiled at it fondly, having noticed it the last time he was in her room as Chat.

“Everything!” she called back as she was loudly piling up an odd assortment of objects, that included the books and string lights she had mentioned, along with some clothes pins, a snow globe, one of her sketch books and some colored pencils, a roll of duct tape and some hair scrunchies.

Dumping the large cat pillow over the railing with everything else, he watched her pace the room, lightly tapping her finger on her bottom lip as she considered what else to add to her pile of seemingly random objects. He had no idea what all of that stuff could possibly be for, but the intensity of her concentration as she mumbled to herself and pointed to various things made him sure that he could trust her process.

She looked up at him suddenly. “Okay, that’s everything we need from in here. Help me bring it down stairs?”

He nodded and jumped off the bed, already excited for what she had in store.
She hefted the trap door open and pointed to the opening firmly, “alright, throw everything down.”

Looking between the large pile of her bedding to the pristine looking staircase below the hole in the floor, he hesitated. “Just – just dump it?”

“Yep,” she nodded, popping the ‘p’ sound.

Feeling a little silly and rebellious, he bent down to scoop up all the blankets. It was enough to shield his entire field of vision, several of the sheets began to fall off and drape over his shoulders. Marinette giggled somewhere off to his right as his legs wobbled stiffly underneath him while he moved toward the trap door.

Peering down to the small corner of floor that he could see from his limited vantage point, he saw that he was in front of his goal. He let go, and watched the pillows tumble aimlessly down the staircase to pool into a very soft looking mess on her living room floor.

“Oh, my turn,” Marinette said, scooping up her own pile of fort building materials.

He gaped at her. “You’re going to drop all those books directly down the staircase?”

“Oh, huh,” she nodded.

“But, won’t your parents be upset – I mean, you could damage something,” his mouth still hung open.

She met his eyes, a mischievous smile covering her face. “What they don’t know won’t hurt them.”

And she dropped everything, snow globe included. It all clattered and clanked as it made its way down, but the noise wasn’t as loud as Adrien was expecting, and there was no resounding crash of finality to signify that anything had reached the bottom of the stairs.

He looked down to see that everything had landed safely on the pile of pillows and blankets he had thrown down just moments before. Eyes still wide in surprise, he turned back to Marinette to see her laughing.

“Oh, that was fun, but you’re right, we should make sure nothing was damaged,” she said as she crouched to go down the stairs.

Stepping carefully to make sure to avoid the stray sheets still lying on the steps, Marinette couldn’t help but smile at Adrien’s reaction to such a small act of rebellion. She had put that incredulous smile on his face. Squealing silently to herself, she lost her focus on where she was stepping, and slipped across one of the sheets she had been trying so hard to avoid.

“Marinette!” Adrien called from the stair just above her as he tried to steady her fall. But it was no use, he had gotten tangled up too.

With a yelp as his hand touched hers, she overcorrected and pulled him on top of her instead, and they both went tumbling down the stairs, landing with a resounding ‘floof’ into her trusty cat pillow. It was a miracle they hadn’t landed on any of the heavier objects Marinette had tossed down.

He had the back of her head cradled in his hand, shielding her from any sort of impact, while his face was dangerously close to her neck. His breath was warm as he panted lightly against her collarbone. She became intensely aware that his other hand was splayed over her bare stomach
where her shirt must have ridden up during the fall – the heat of it spreading through her skin and warming her all the way up to her chest.

Gulping, she released her hands from where they had been fisted into his overshirt. “Ha, ha, ha, oops,” she attempted to play it cool.

“Are you okay?” he asked sincerely, propping himself up on his hands to look at her directly.

*Don’t look at his lips. Don’t look at his lips.* He was so close; she wasn’t sure if she was breathing. She shut her eyes tightly. *Focus, focus, focus. Be COOL Marinette, you’re cool and confident!*

Letting one last breath out through her nose, she nodded at him as firmly as she could – which wasn’t much. “Th-thank you. Sorry, that probably wasn’t such a good idea. Usually we just make a few trips to carry everything down.”

He laughed, relieved to know she was okay. Marinette laughed too.

Adrien stood, holding out a hand to help her up as well. Stars swam in her vision as he hoisted her up and she tried not to over-relish in the hand to hand contact.

Breaking away, she got to work putting the fort together before she could let any more stray ‘ugh he’s so cute’ thoughts run through her mind.

First, she started with the pillows, arranging them in a circular fashion on the floor and propping them up against the couch. A few blankets got laid down beneath them – some for a softer padding against the wooden floor, and a few for them to use for their own warmth later on in the night (she blushed as the image of her and Adrien cuddled up under her blankets flashed across her mind). The small coffee table that was usually between the couch and the TV got moved more to the side so they would have room to spread out – but not too far away that they couldn’t still use it to hold their drinks. Then she moved on to the sheets that would become the roof of the fort. She paused for a moment as she visualized exactly how she wanted to construct the shape of the structure and where she’d need to put the various weights and ties to keep everything in place.

“Um, can I help?” Adrien asked from where he sat at one of the bar stools around the kitchen counter.

“Yes!” she clapped her hands together. “I need that stool! That’ll be part of the entrance!”

He stood shaking his head fondly at how single minded she could be when she was focused. “I meant, is there anything I can do to help?”

“Oh,” she paused, taking another look around the room as she used one of the hair scrunchies to fasten a corner of the sheet to the stool he had just been sitting on. “Yeah! Here, sit in the middle right here” – she pointed to the dead center of where the fort would be – “and I’ll be right back.”

He did as directed, tapping his fingers on his knees in anticipation.

There were some rustling noises and a few clanks coming from the bathroom where she had disappeared to.

“Marinette? Everything okay?” He tested after a moment.

“Fine!”

She sounded out of breath.
He was just about to stand up to make sure everything was going okay when she reappeared in the
bathroom doorway.

“Finally got it!” She proudly twirled the white shower curtain rod between her fingers before she
attempted to saunter over to him confidently. She may have stumbled a bit.

“Your parents aren’t going to be mad about that either?” He was shocked. His father barely let him
redecorate his own room, let alone practically dismantle a community space like the restroom.

She shrugged. “I actually learned this trick from my dad when I was younger. As long as I put it
back tomorrow it should be fine.”

“What’s the trick?”

“Here,” she knelt down to hand him the rod, “and put this underneath to stabilize it.”

It was the roll of duct tape. She ripped off a single piece, folded it over itself and stuck it to the top
of the rod, attaching it to another sheet corner. The wide end of the curtain rod at the bottom was
perfectly snug inside the center of the roll. And here he though she was just going to tape up
everything.

“You’re so clever Marinette.”

Her cheeks flamed, but she just shrugged. “Okay, stay there for a minute while I get everything
else set up.”

Standing back up, she grabbed the sheet again and began to place it over various vantage points
across the room – another stool, the back of the couch, the top of the bookcase, and the window
sill behind the TV. It took a few more of the extra sheets from the linen closet to overlap each other
and cover the space of the entire room.

Adrien slowly got shaded by the sifted shadows cast by the droopy bedsheets canopy as she flitted
around the room to finalize her design. His thumb ran absently over the curtain rod and he felt a
small button on the side. It reminded him of the extension button on Chat’s baton.

“Oh! I get it! I’m just gonna push this and then – “

“Adrien, wait! Not ye – “

But it was too late, he had pressed the button, causing the rod to extend to its full length – just as he
had suspected – and subsequently causing the fabric ceiling around him to come billowing down.

He popped his head out from between two of the sheets, smiling sheepishly. “Oops.”

Smacking her palm to her forehead, she mumbled something under her breath. There was
something oddly familiar about the gesture, but Adrien couldn’t remember any time she had been
frustrated with him before. It must have been some time that day the first met, before they had
become friends.

Lifting her head from her hand, she took one look at his dopey grin and the unusual flair of
annoyance toward him drifted away easily. With just his head stuck out of the sheets, they hung off
his shoulders, giving the illusion that he was wearing an extremely long, pink polka-dotted robe.
He’s so cute.

“It’s fine,” she smiled once she regained her composure. “Just don’t move this time,” she added,
her smile turning cheekier.

He gave one firm nod, collapsing the rod back down again, “you got it.”

This time she moved a little faster, knowing now where she wanted to place each of the corners. She made quick work of adding the text books, and the snow globe as weights too, conscious not to leave Adrien alone in the slowly darkening space.

Taking a step back to admire her work, and to double check that the sheets had the right amount of slack, she determined it was time. Crawling through the small opening she had created between the two bar stools, she made her way over to where he was sitting patiently.

“Okay, ready Adrien?”

“Born ready!”

Marinette snorted, and a moment later he extended the curtain rod to press the center of the sheets up, pulling them into perfectly taut peaks above them – the tape on the end of the rod keeping everything in place. Adrien looked around them in awe, she had planned everything to the T. There was enough room for them both to sit up straight, or lay down and spread out of they wanted. There were surfaces for anything they’d want to bring in, enough pillows and blankets to relax, and a great view of the TV. It was a little dim, but he had a feeling she’d have a solution for that too soon enough.

“Wow. You’re amazing Marinette,” his eyes were shining, “I could have never done something like this.”

Her brow furrowed. “But you just did. I couldn’t have done it without you.”

A disbelieving laugh burst up through his chest, “I just pushed a button. Anyone could have done that.”

But I want it to be you, she frowned.

“Alya never wants to make forts with me,” she said after a moment.

Adrien’s eyebrow quirked in curiosity, “but you’re so good at it – look at how awesome this is!”

“That’s exactly why she doesn’t like to make them with me,” Marinette laughed. “She says I get too bossy, and she’d rather just start watching movies or playing M.A.S.H. or something.”

“What’s M.A.S.H.?”

Marinette’s eyes shied away for a moment. “It’s this dumb game we always play where you sort of guess what your future is going to be like – like picking where you’ll live or how many kids you’re gonna have or something… I was thinking we could play it later if you wanted, but it is pretty lame and kiddie so we totally don’t have to and – “

“It’s a sleepover thing?” he interjected.

She nodded, still not quite meeting his gaze, “it is sort of a tradition, yeah.”

“Then we’re doing it!” he beamed.

His enthusiasm radiated off of him, filling her up so she felt like she might burst. If only Tikki could come and pinch her to remind her all of this was still really real. Adrien was in her house – in
the fort they’d made together – and was excited to be spending time with her.

“Okay, but later for that. Right now, this place is in some desperate need of some lighting,” she turned her head, scoping out the best places to string up the lights she’d brought down.

“Always got a plan for everything don’t you.”

“I, uh, well, no, uh,” she faltered under his soft gaze. “Here! Take these and I’ll pin them from the top,” she shoved the assortment of fairy and lantern lights haphazardly into his hands as she fought back yet another rush of heat to her cheeks.

Working together, she directed him to place the cords connecting the lights up to the ceiling of the fort, so that she could pinch them both together from the top using the clothes pins she had thought to bring along as well. Just as they touched their fingers together through the thin fabric to pin up the last section, the front door of the apartment came bursting open.

“Everyone better be decent in here!” Tom’s voice boomed through the room.

Marinette shrieked, jumping about a foot at the sudden noise.

Sabine came in not a second later, teetering three boxes of pizzas in her arms. “Tom!”

“Oh, honey, I’m just teasing,” his features softened immediately and he turned around to take the pizzas from his wife. “Now, where exactly is the boy who will be sleeping with my daughter tonight?”

“Dad,” Marinette hissed. And she thought she had been blushing before.

“Here, sir.” A red-faced Adrien crawled out from the fort, hands folded politely behind his back, as he straightened to his full height in front of Mr. Dupain.

Towering over the teen, Tom leaned down slightly, giving him an intense look, before he dropped the façade completely. “Good to see you again young man!” A very large hand patted Adrien’s shoulder.

He smiled awkwardly, acutely aware of the last time he had seen the baker and inadvertently gotten him akumatized. Then again, that had been Chat’s doing and as long as Adrien managed not to somehow break his daughter’s heart too, then everything should be fine.

“G-good to see you again too Mr. Dupain.”

“Okay, that’s enough teasing Tom,” Sabine said, eyeing her husband carefully. “Why don’t you two come into the kitchen and eat, and we’ll get out of your space.”

“All of this is for us?” Adrien looked over the three large pizza boxes.

“Of course, honey.” Sabine smiled, “Tom and I already ate down in the bakery, so the rest is all for you two. There are some leftover treats in the refrigerator too if you like.”

Adrien thanked them profusely, and after one last look between the two teens, Tom and Sabine made their way upstairs.

“Sorry about them,” Marinette said shyly, grabbing some plates for their slices.

“Don’t be,” he shook his head firmly. Potential awkwardness with her father aside, her family had been much more generous and accommodating than his would have ever been.
“They can just be so nosy,” she grumbled.

Adrien shrugged. “I don’t mind. It’s obvious that they care a lot about you.”

Something odd flitted across his face for a moment that Marinette couldn’t quite decipher. Was it jealousy, or possibly longing? Either way it tugged on her heart. It was no secret that Adrien had a strained relationship with his father, even if he never spoke with her about it. She knew better than to ask him about it, but still, she wanted to offer him some sort of comfort.

“Well, they must really like you to allow you stay over. I doubt they’d trust many other boys to be allowed to stay the night,” she tried to emphasize the compliment she was trying to pay him without being too obvious. It might be too soon for her to let on that she was able to read him so well.

“You think?” His answer came out maybe a little too half-heartedly. Adults always liked him. Polite, media-trained, model-ready Adrien Agreste was a delight to parents everywhere.

As if reading his thoughts, Marinette countered him immediately. “I mean, they know about the lucky charm you made for my birthday, and that you gave up your position in the gaming tournament for me, and um, that you helped me feel better about my hat design for that runway show...” she trailed off, stopping herself before she inevitably over-gushed about him.

A rush of images of Marinette’s parents flew threw his memory; how they were always so kind to him, made sure he was eating enough, and the constant offers to come over as often as he liked. Warmth spread over him as he realized that what she was getting at was true, her parents didn’t see him as some sort of golden child, but rather just a very good friend to their daughter.

“Thanks Marinette.”

His smile was infectious, and her chest swelled to see a look of such genuine happiness from him.

“So, um, where exactly are we supposed to eat this?” Adrien gestured to the slowly cooling pizza slices piled up in front of them, and the severe lack of counter space due to all of the bits and bobs keeping the fort together.

“Oh.” Marinette knocked herself out of, yet another, Adrien-induced bought of giddiness. “Well, I figured we’d just eat in the fort, I set up a table for us and everything. But um, we should probably change into our pajamas first, so that we don’t have to keep getting up to leave.”

She averted her eyes at her own suggestion. Why was this so awkward for her? They were just pajamas for gosh sakes, it’s not like she was asking him to undress in front of her. Agh! No! Stop picturing it!

“Okay, yeah sounds good,” Adrien agreed, seemingly oblivious to her inner turmoil.

He grabbed his overnight bag that had been shoved somewhat awkwardly under the staircase from the mess they had made earlier, and headed to the bathroom to change while Marinette scampered back upstairs to her bedroom.

Closing the trap door carefully, she collapsed onto the floor next to her chaise, letting out a breath she didn’t know she had been holding.

“You’re doing great Marinette!” Tikki zoomed out of her hiding space to look Marinette in the eye.

“Ugh, you think so Tikki?” she ran her hands down her face. “I can’t stop thinking about how cute
he is, how happy I am to have him here, in my house, and that he’ll be sleeping a few feet from me.”

Adrien’s peaceful sleeping face. Inches from hers. I wonder if he gets bedhead...

“…Marinette?”

“Ah!” Marinette was brought back to reality. “See, Tikki! I can’t focus for more than five seconds! This is going to be a disaster!”

Her kwami giggled lightly. “No, it’s not Marinette. I meant it – you really are doing great. You’ve barely stuttered at all since you two started playing games and decided to make the fort.”

Head flopping back onto the chaise behind her, she let out a groan. “That’s only because I realized how stupid I had been! So, I just started focusing on being his friend instead of, well, whatever I had been focusing on before.”

“But that’s a good thing though isn’t it? You’re getting more comfortable around him, and he really seems to enjoy being your friend, doesn’t he?”

“Yeah, but Tikki, I want to be more than just his friend – you know that.”

Tikki floated right up next to her face, “you’ve said yourself that you’ll never going to be able to be with him if you can’t get over your stumbling around him – don’t you think that being friends first is a great way to do that?”

Marinette puffed out a sigh.

“Besides, haven’t you been having a great time with him tonight so far anyway?” the kwami floated back to a more comfortable distance.

“Yeah…”

“Then you should enjoy your time together. This is a great opportunity to get to know him better,” she shrugged.

Marinette bolted up straight with a squeal, bringing her hands up to her cheeks. “He’s staying the night Tikki!!”

“Yes, I know Marinette,” she rolled her eyes fondly. “He’s also probably wondering why you’re taking so long.”

“Agh!”

Jumping up on her feet she began searching for the pajamas she had picked out for the night. It wasn’t until she found them folded neatly on her dresser that she remembered exactly which pajamas they were.

It had been Alya’s idea to have semi-matching PJs with Nino. She had even commissioned Marinette to sew the staring piece for her set. A pair of Carapace inspired thigh-high socks, to go with the Rena Rouge orange pajamas bottoms Alya had been pressuring Nino to buy. Marinette had jumped at the idea originally. It was too cute that they wanted to have a matching set of each other’s super hero persona – even if Marinette wasn’t supposed to let on that she knew their identities.
Marinette had refused to take Alya’s suggestion of Ladybug thigh-high socks for herself, unwilling to adorn anything that could lead to any assumptions about her own alter ego. Which is how she came to be holding instead, a pair of self-made Chat Noir thigh-high socks. They were mostly black and just a hint of purple, with a pair of bright green cat eyes just above the knee, and the seam cut perfectly into cat ears at the center of her thighs. Even though they were simple – and honestly resembled Plagg more than Chat himself – anyone who had even a vague notion of who Chat Noir was would recognize them.

A groan escaped her lips and she let her head fall to rest on the dresser. She couldn’t wear this in front of Adrien. Why had she agreed to this in the first place? It was cute when Alya and Nino would be participating too – but now that she was alone with Adrien it would just be embarrassing. She was going to look like some weird over-zealous fan.

“See, Tikki,” she held up the socks without lifting her head from its position of shame. “Disaster.”

Tikki laughed, her eyes twinkled just outside of Marinette’s peripheral vision. “You never know Marinette, maybe he’s a fan of Chat.”

She scoffed, finally turning her head toward her kwami. “Adrien is way cooler than Chat Noir. No way is he a fan of him.”

“You never know, he may surprise you.”

Marinette sighed. “Well, everything else is dirty anyway. It’s this or sleeping in my jeans, which would just make me seem even weirder.”

Reluctantly, she swapped her outfit, putting on her usual white and pink polka-dot spaghetti strap top, a pair of black, soft cotton shorts that hit her legs just above where the cat ears would land – she had ensured the modesty of the shorts a few days ago when Adrien had confirmed he’d be able to make it to the get together. *That I remember, but I can’t seem to do a load of laundry before the love of my life comes over,* she scolded herself.

Lastly, she pulled the socks up and looked over herself in the mirror. The top didn’t really match the rest of it at all. But she supposed pajamas weren’t really supposed to match anyway, and the socks looked good on her at least. She practiced a few poses until she began to feel silly, and with one last huff she opened the trap door and made her way back downstairs.

“Adrien?” she asked curiously, not finding him waiting in the kitchen like she expected. Her nerves about him seeing her ridiculous socks were slowly burning a permanent tinge onto her cheeks.

“Alya made me wear them!”

There was an agonizingly long pause, but she didn’t dare peek out from under her lashes. Maybe this was all a dream. Maybe he wasn’t even there at all.

And then, Adrien burst into laughter.

Marinette cringed, mumbling “disaster, disaster, disaster,” under her breath.
“No, Marinette, it’s okay,” he placated, a soft chuckle still falling from his lips. Suddenly he felt a lot closer to her, the warmth of his body heat inching slowly closer to her. “Really, open your eyes. Nino made me too.”

Huh? Nino made him what?

Daring to part her eyelids just a sliver, looking down at both their legs, she saw a pair of bright red and black polka-dotted pajama pants standing directly in front of her own black-clad toes. And she suddenly understood his laughter. They were matching just like Alya and Nino would have been.

Flicking her gaze up to his face, she saw the slightest dusting of pink across his cheeks as he rubbed the back of his neck. “Nino told me I just had to bring this pair of pajama pants. Something about it being a good joke, he said.”

Embarrassment now fading, a knowing smile crept over her face. “They would make us match without telling us. I’m sorry Nino pressure you into buying those though. Then again, he was already getting a bunch of crap from Alya to get his pair of Rena Rouge inspired ones.”

“Oh, uh, he actually didn’t pressure me,” Adrien looked away, his cheeks turning slightly darker. “I, uh, I already owned them.”

It was Marinette’s turn to blush again. When she had imagined what Adrien wore to bed, a small tribute to her own secret life was definitely not on the list of things she’d pictured.

She felt it happening. Her brain was turning to mush again. Tikki’s voice rang through her head, reminding her to keep her cool.

“Oh, really?” Marinette quirked her brow, and curled her lips into a wry smile in an attempt at teasing him. “So, you’re a big fan of Ladybug, huh?”

Watching the way his eyes widened in shock was surprisingly satisfying to her. But the expression quickly left, and shifted to match her own as he leaned over a little closer into her space.

“Well, if I’m not mistaken, those look like a pair of Marinette Dupain-Cheng original Chat Noir socks – you must be a pretty big fan yourself to have spent all that time making them.”

Her mouth gaped open in offense, but neither of them could keep up the act for long, and as the corners of his eyes slowly crinkled to reveal his smile, she joined him in his coming laughter.

“Touché, Agreste, touché.”

He smirked as if he had won the exchange. “Okay, come on, you’ve got to see the inside of the fort with the lights on,” he lightly wrapped his fingers around her wrist and led her the few feet forward before dropping the contact and crouching to go inside.

It was slowly getting dark outside, so when she pushed open the flap to join him inside she was greeted with the pleasant soft lighting they had so meticulously put up earlier. And in the center of it all was the most gorgeous image of perfection she had ever seen. Adrien was waiting patiently for her, his legs tucked underneath him, the pink and white of the lights dancing off of his cheekbones, and twinkling across his irises, making them shine in a way she had never seen before. Complimented with his easy smile and casual attire, she was suddenly struck by how intimate the whole thing felt. Even if it was just this one small passing moment, she couldn’t help but feel like this was one of those once-in-a-lifetime feelings that she’d never forget. Even if she wanted to be more than friends, this night was still something they were sharing together.
“I saw that you brought down some of your design books, so I put it over next to your pizza,” Adrien spoke after a moment.

“Guh,” she flubbed rather intelligently, before correcting, “uh, I mean, thank you.”

He gave her another one of those soft smiles that were slowly becoming more and more familiar to her. Scooting over, she saw that he had placed both of their plates between her cat pillow, meaning he intended for them both to share it as a backrest.

“Do you, uh, want to pick out a movie?” she suggested before her thoughts ran away from her again.

He turned to reach toward the cabinet below the TV, pulling out one of the Blu-ray cases. “I was looking through your collection and was hoping we could watch this? I loved the first one but never had the time to go to the theater and see the sequel.”

Marinette’s eyes lit up, recognizing it as the new Spider-Man movie. “Yeah! My mom just picked that up last week and I haven’t had the chance to see it again!”

“Great!”

He passed the case over to her and settled in with his plate on his lap while Marinette set up the TV.

After she hit play, she did her best not to hesitate as she took her place next to him. Their hips fit snugly between both sides of the semi-circle created by her large cat pillow, and she focused on her breathing as she relished in the feeling of their shoulders bumping and the way the sides of their legs were pressed together from hip to knee. If he was in any way bothered by their closeness, Adrien didn’t show it.

They didn’t speak much as the movie went on, mostly laughing and gasping at all the right moments. Once they both finished their pizza and set the plates back on to the coffee table to Adrien’s left, he spoke up.

“Hey, you aren’t going to tell anyone about my Ladybug PJs, are you?” He looked at her from the corner of his eye.

She giggled. “Of course not. What happens in the fort stays in the fort,” she recited the line she and Alya often said on the few occasions they did this together. Half a second later though, she realized all of the different implications that rule had now that she was sharing the fort with a boy. “Uh, I mean, like secrets! Secrets happen here and nowhere else – NO, I mean – it’s like a safe space?” She groaned.

But Adrien just nodded, “I get it. It’s like a sanctuary.”

Marinette relaxed, “yeah! That’s a better way to put it, a sanctuary, yeah.”

“It is too bad that Alya and Nino are missing out on this though, maybe we should send them a picture showing them how much more awesome of a time we’re having than they are babysitting?”

“Oh, good idea. I know Alya will be disappointed to know she missed our reactions to the matching PJ situation.” Also, another picture with Adrien could never hurt.

He slipped his phone out of the pocket not currently pressed against Marinette’s leg, and angled it so that the picture had a view of both of their legs resting side by side, with the TV shining in the
And he sent it without a second thought. Marinette’s chest tightened. Adrien had not just taken a picture of the two of them in their pajamas, but was easily willing to send it out for other people to see it. Suppressing a bubbling laugh, she couldn’t help but imagine how Chloe would feel if she ever set her eyes on the photo.

Having finished eating, Marinette pulled her sketch pad into her lap while Adrien turned his attention back to the movie. Usually she liked to keep her hands busy while she watched something – it helped her to feel productive while she relaxed. She flipped to the page of a redesign she had been working on just for fun he past few weeks, and subconsciously tilted the book slightly away from Adrien as she begun coloring in the rough sketch.

An assortment of red colored pencils caught his attention from the corner of his eye, and he wondered if she was possibly doodling a version of the picture he had just taken, as a way to further tease him. Peering over, he couldn’t quite make out what it was. Was she hiding it from him?

“What are you working on?” he asked innocently.

She squeaked, and tilted it further into her chest. “Oh, nothing, just a silly doodle.”

She hadn’t thought he’d be interested in anything she was working on, and was immediately regretting picking a redesign of her own superhero costume to be working on in the presence of someone else.

His eyes narrowed teasingly, “it doesn’t seem like nothing.” She leaned a little further away as he tilted closer into her space to get a better look.

“It was just for fun, it’s not for anything, and – and it’s not finished.”

“He quickly reached out his hand to try and grab it away from her, but her reflexes were quicker than he’d anticipated, and she easily snatched it out of his incoming grasp.

He pounced again a moment later, Marinette squealing with laughter as she rolled over the side of the cat pillow to get away from him – the box of pencils scattering across the floor. Her reflexes were quick, but he had height on his side, and was easily able to catch her wrists above her head just after she slid the sketch pad across the floor and out of either of their reaches.

He kept her there for a moment, knowing that if he let go of her hands for even a second, she’d be fast enough to take her advantage back and push the book further out of his reach. Honestly, he didn’t even care about looking at whatever drawing she was so eager to be hiding anymore, at this point he just wanted to win.

She stared up at him with a mixed expression of both irritation and exhilaration. He was trying to take a moment to come up with a plan of what to do next, but there was something familiar about the look on her face that pulled on his heart and made his chest tingle.

Why is he looking at me like that? Marinette’s brow creased as she watched a confused searching feeling dance across Adrien’s features. It was soft, but questioning, and made her chest pound.

“Kids! Lights out in ten minutes!”

They both flinched, moving away from each other immediately as Tom’s voice echoed around background.
them.

Clearing her throat, Marinette called back to him, “got it dad!”

Looking back over at Adrien, he had his hand on the back of his neck looking dazed. She could see an apology forming on his lips.

“Here, I’ll just show you, okay?” she interjected before he had the chance. Better not to let the silence linger.

Eyes refocusing her turned to better face her, “oh, uh, sure.”

“Do you remember a few months ago when Alya roped you in to helping me with a photoshoot for some of my designs, and Juleka got akumatized again?” Her words rushed out quickly.

He nodded. How could he forget that one. Handling the Ladybug miraculous was a lot more responsibility than he thought it was, and wasn’t something he’d be forgetting any time soon. Not that Marinette knew any of that. As far as she knew, he was hiding out somewhere just like she was.

“Well after I was shot by Reflekta I was able to sneak around and get a good glimpse of the fight, and saw that Chat Noir had somehow been dressed like Ladybug instead, and I got a little inspired by the design and so I just made this sort of for fun – like a remake of Ladybug’s costume.”

Adrien took the sketch book as she passed it to him. It looked great – it was just a slightly more refined version of Ladybug’s current outfit that incorporated the black paneling on the sides and the black palms and fingers that his costume had when he was Mister Bug.

“This looks great Marinette; I’m sure Ladybug would be honored to wear something like this. But why were you so embarrassed to show it to me?”

“I wasn’t that embarrassed; you were the one who escalated it by attacking me!” She countered, crossing her arms.

He just narrowed his eyes, not giving in to her attempt to distract him.

After a moment she deflated, coming up with the best excuse she could think of. “After the whole thing with Alya making me wear these socks, and then me drawing this I didn’t want you to think I was some crazy super fan or something. It really was just an offhand doodle.”

Suddenly it clicked in his head. The Chat Noir socks, watching Chat as Mister Bug, and of course her direct confession a few months ago. She didn’t want him to know about her crush on him. Well, him as Chat. But considering he, as Adrien, wasn’t supposed to know that last detail, he probably should steer clear of teasing her about that. Besides, the Reflekta incident happened before he had let her down and gotten her dad akumatized, so chances were she was over the whole thing anyway, and bringing it up now didn’t seem fair.

“I mean, I’m the one who actually bought this pair of Ladybug pants, if either of us is a super fan, it’s probably me.”

She smiled, grateful that her flimsy lie worked. *Guess this means I won’t actually be asking Tikki for a redesign anytime soon though.*

“So uh, is it really time for lights out already?” He glanced down at his phone to check the time.
Having been unable to find her own phone for a few hours now, Marinette judged from how long it had been dark that it must be around nine o’clock. The TV had dimmed now, the movie must have ended some time during their distraction over her sketch book.

“Psh, no way,” she flicked her hand nonchalantly. “Ten minutes really means more like thirty. And besides, we can stay up as long as we want as long as we’re quiet.”

“Okay good.” He seemed to relax a bit. “I was looking forward to playing that ‘mush’ game you were talking about.”

“Oh! M.A.S.H.?” She had sort of been hoping he’d forget about it, there were too many opportunities for her to embarrass herself. But this was supposed to be the best sleepover ever, and if Adrien wanted to play M.A.S.H. then they would play M.A.S.H. “Yeah, I’ll get the paper set up!”

He gathered up the pencils that had spilled over the floor of the fort and placed them carefully back into her pencil box before scooting back over to his position in the semi-circle of the cat pillow, while Marinette began to write out the categories for the game on two pieces of paper. Once she was finished, she moved to sit facing him, crisscrossing her legs to match his position. She passed him one of the two identical papers and one of her pencils.

“How does it work?”

He looked curiously over the various words written across the page underneath the large ‘M.A.S.H.’ title at the top. There were four other words total – ‘Spouse,’ ‘Job,’ ‘Kids,’ and ‘Pet’ – each one was underlined and had a number 1-3 underneath them with a blank space next to each number. His heart beat a bit faster as he began to understand what the game was about. He was definitely feeling silly already.

“So basically, the whole idea is to determine how your life could go. You get to pick the first two choices in each category – something that you want. And then, I would pick the third choice for you – something I think you wouldn’t want. At the end, we get a number by random and cross things out until there’s one option in each category.”

“Okay…” Adrien didn’t fully understand the mechanics of it, but knew that Marinette would guide him along the way.

“So, um, for example,” she quickly jumped to what she thought would be the easiest category. “How many kids do you think you want?”

“At least two,” he answered immediately.

*Me too*, Marinette smiled. “Okay, so you write that down under the ‘Kids’ category. Along with a second choice – and you write that down underneath in the first spot.”

He nodded and wrote a number ‘3’ beneath the ‘2’ he had just written. Marinette wrote her own numbers down on her paper as well. They happened to be the same as his.

“And then you pick the last one for me?” He was picking it up quickly.

“Yes,” she grinned, “I choose zero.”

His lips parted in offense, “zero!?”

She giggled, “it’s supposed to be something you wouldn’t want – and you jumped to the answer of
two so quickly, I just sort of figured.”

He narrowed his eyes at her. Now he really was beginning to understand how the game was played. “Fine, then I want you to have fifty!”

“Fifty!?” Her brows rose incredulously, “I don’t think that’s even possible!”

He shrugged, “if I get none, then you get fifty.”

She was at a loss for words. She was going to have to up her game to give him some really bad options for the other three categories.

“Fine, what about pets, what do you want?” She began listing as many dangerous and gross animals in her head as she could think of.

“A cat, definitely.”

She scrunched up her nose, “I didn’t take you for a cat person.”

He just shrugged, and odd twinkle in his eye, “does that mean you’ll be picking a dog then?”

“Nope,” she shook her head, “hamster, actually.”

“A hamster!” His face lit up, “I’m taking that for my second choice too.”

“You’re right though, I do usually pick a dog for my second option,” she wrote it down.

“I knew it. What do you have against cats anyway?”

“Nothing,” she shrugged, “they just aren’t as cuddly as dogs.”

He balked, “excuse me, but cats are plenty cuddly.”

Note to self: Adrien Agreste is very defensive about cats.

“For that I’m giving you a crocodile for your third pick. That’s gotta be the least cuddly animal there is,” he grinned smugly.

Marinette matched his smile, “ha! Joke’s on you, I spent a lot of time hanging out with Fang when I went over album cover designs with Jagged Stone. Crocodiles actually make great pets.”

He opened his mouth to retort, only to close it again. “Touché,” he grumbled. “What do you have for me, do your worst.”

Her eyes shone with an idea that had just come to her. “A fish.”

“…. A fish?”

“Yep. Can’t cuddle with a boring, slippery, slimy fish.”

Adrien groaned, “ugh you’re too good at this. I’m going to end up childless with only a freakin’ fish for company.”

Marinette giggled, “sorry, I have had a bit of practice with this. But you won’t be totally alone anyways, we still have to pick spouses.”

“Oh, yeah!”
Marinette stared down at the blank spaces underneath the ‘Spouse’ category. The emptiness seemed to expand in front of her eyes as she contemplated what she could possibly write down. Usually when she played with Alya they argued for a good five minutes about whether or not Marinette could just write Adrien’s name twice. Of course, the answer was always no, as Alya said it was blatantly against the rules. But now, with Adrien himself sitting across from her, their knees bumping occasionally, she definitely couldn’t write his name down even once. What the heck was she going to do? She supposed to could put Luka down as she had done a few times before, but there was still that one blank space mocking her. Why did she ever bring up this stupid game?

Sparing a quick glance up at Adrien, she saw he seemed to be contemplating just as hard as she was, his pencil tapping gently against his bottom lip. That’s odd... I thought he’d write Kagami’s name down immediately. Even just thinking about it brought a sting to her heart. But she did her best to swallow it down – she’d spent enough of her time recently worried about the girl he was in love with, who apparently thought he told bad jokes. Besides, tonight she was supposed to be acting in a friend-only capacity.

His paper was shielded away from her slightly, but she peered over the top as covertly as she could anyway, and saw that he had actually written something down already. One single word written in the first spot in the ‘Spouse’ category.

“Ladybug!?”

Adrien jumped, pulling the sketchbook tight to his chest, his eyes wide as saucers.

Marinette’s mind was racing, and yet everything felt like it was in slow motion. Ladybug… not Kagami…

“Oh, Kagami, right, guess I just had a brain fart is all… I’ll just write that down too…”

Shoot. Had she said that out loud? Her heart was pounding in her ears, and she couldn’t help but stare at him, completely bewildered. What could this possibly mean?

He squirmed beneath her gaze, bending the corner of the paper between his finger and thumb anxiously. “Uh… what happens in the fort stays in the fort?” he asked shyly.

Did she nod? She wasn’t aware of telling her muscles to move, but he continued on as if she had.

“It’s uh, just kind of a joke? She’s saved my life a few times, and I guess she’s just my celebrity crush?”

Her heart rate began to slow back down. Celebrity crush. Of course. No way was Ladybug the girl Adrien was in love with. Marinette knew firsthand all of the times she had interacted with him as Ladybug, and Ladybug had certainty never told him he joked too often. In fact, it was just the opposite – she had cackled like a love-sick dope when Adrien, as Aspik, had cracked a pun. And he probably reacted so harshly just now because she had practically screeched at him.

She swallowed thickly, “your secret is safe with me. As celebrity crushes go, you can’t do much better than Ladybug.”

“Well, Chat Noir certainly isn’t a bad choice either,” he offered with a knowing smile, glad for an opportunity to shift the attention off of himself.

“What?” She tilted her head, as her previous anxiety was immediately pushed out of the way by confusion. Was he trying to tell her that he had a crush on Chat in addition to Ladybug?
“Well, I mean, the socks, and the following him around when Juleka was akumatized, I just sort of guessed. I didn’t wanna say anything earlier, but now that you know mine, I didn’t think it would be as big of a deal.”

She blinked. And then she laughed, and laughed. “I told you, Alya made me make these,” she said between bursts of laughter, “I don’t have a crush on Chat Noir.”

Adrien’s eyes narrowed, utterly confused. He knew for a fact that Marinette had once had feelings for Chat. And yet, she didn’t seem to be lying now. Could she have possibly moved on so quickly? Or was she just that embarrassed about being turned down by a hero of Paris, and didn’t want to explain herself to him. “You-you don’t?”

Shaking her head, she missed the offended look on Adrien’s face as she caught her breath. “I mean, he’s definitely cute and all, and surely a gentleman, but he’s also, well, pretty obnoxious.”

He gaped at her. “But-but he helps save the city – that’s got to count for something?”

“I mean, yeah, he’s pretty impressive, and we’ve gotten along pretty well the times that I’ve seen him around during akuma attacks – but that doesn’t mean he’s husband material.”

Adrien was at a loss for words. He could come up with hundreds of reasons why Chat would be a great husband. But he couldn’t exactly tell Marinette how exactly he knew all of the inner thoughts and feelings of the masked hero. So instead, he begrudgingly agreed.

“I guess you’re right though. I certainly could do much worse, and I was having trouble thinking of someone, so I’ll write him down.”

He had to fight the small smile that was creeping up his face. “Okay, so what horrible option are you cursing me with this time.”

She felt a little guilty about it, but she already had an answer in mind. “Chloe.”

“Ugh, I think I’d rather be alone than be with Chloe – she’d never give me any space.”

“Okay, then how about Lila?”

“Never mind. Chloe is good.” He jotted it down quickly.

Marinette chuckled, as pure elation ran through her veins at his easy dismissal of both girls. It may have been petty, but there was something extremely satisfying to know that even just as a celebrity crush, she had a better shot at Adrien as Ladybug than Chloe or Lila ever would. “Okay, what about for me.”

He tapped his chin pensively, before he sat straight up like a lightbulb had gone off above his head. “Hawkmoth.”

She choked. “Eeww! That’s – no – he’s, he’s old, and, and evil! You want me to be married to a terrorist!?”

“You gave me the potential to have three kids with Chloe!”

Marinette scoffed, leaning back in offense. “I take it back, you’re evil. Chloe is nowhere near the level of Hawkmoth – and I was even nice enough to give you the option over Lila!”

Adrien shrugged, “I came to win.”
“There is no winning! The game is supposed to be fun, not disgusting!”

But Adrien wasn’t listening, he was too busy laughing at the mental image of Marinette running around trying to take care of fifty mini Hawkmoths.

“Stop laughing!” She had half a nerve to punch him in the shoulder. “That’s it, I take it back, you’re getting Lila as your third option!”

He waggled his finger and pointed to his paper, “no can do, I already wrote it down.”

“Ugh, I am so going to get you back, I am going to give you the worst job of all time!”

Laughter dying down, Adrien just shrugged at her threat. He was sure she could never come up with a job that was any worse than anything he already imagined. As embarrassed as he had been to dodge Marinette’s surprise over his love for Ladybug, this was the category he was truly the most worried about. He had absolutely no idea what he wanted to do in the future. The empty space on the page loomed in front of him just like the uncertainty of his future did.

With a heavy sigh he looked up to see that Marinette was watching him, her face no longer curled up in offense. She looked worried about him. Was he that obvious?

Having written down her own answers quickly, Marinette had been looking over Adrien contemplatively, wondering what he could possibly hate the most, so she could get her revenge. But the longer she watched him stare at the page, the more she saw him slowly hunch into himself, and she realized that as often as she watched him and for as much as she knew about him, in many ways she didn’t know him at all.

She had assumed he’d be as quick to answer as she had. He was so talented at so many things that she could think of a million answers for him – he could continue modeling, be a world-famous pianist, or a competitive fencer, teach foreign languages, or even take over the business side of his father’s company one day. But did he actually enjoy any of that? She didn’t know. Heart sinking as she watched all of the previous joy leave his face, she changed her course and instead brainstormed jobs she thought he might love instead.

Resigning himself, he reluctantly wrote down ‘model,’ and ‘business man,’ before looking up once more to meet Marinette’s gaze. Her eyes were practically swimming with a mixture of concern, and something else he couldn’t quite read – tenderness? That strange pulling feeling in his heart was back, and he couldn’t help but feel grateful that he had such a good friend in her.

“What did you put for yours?” he cleared his throat, hoping to avoid discussing his options all together.

And she knew better than to push him too. “Fashion designer, and I just wrote ‘baker,’ but I like the idea of taking over the bakery for my parents if the designing thing doesn’t work out,” she answered softly.

He smiled as he easily pictured a twenty-five-year-old Marinette running around backstage at a fashion show, doing some last-minute sewing, yelling at all the models to get in line. And then at thirty-five he could just as easily picture her quietly baking in the shop just a few stories below them, flour on her cheeks while two little blue-haired and green-eyed kids ran around her. It must be nice to see something so clearly.

“So, what about for my terrible job?” she asked, rousing him from his thoughts.

“Oh, uhh,” he puffed air out of his cheeks. He’d been too caught up to think about unpleasant
options for her. “A garbage truck driver?”

Her lip curled, “well, that’s definitely not ideal. But I suppose it could be worse. Plus, it’ll give me plenty of time away from my husband the terrorist and our fifty children.”

He laughed lightly, appreciative of her for keeping things light. “Okay, what about me, what’s your revenge?”

“…How do you feel about being a stay-at-home dad?”

He blinked. “What?”

“A stay at home dad,” she confirmed. Admittedly, the idea had come to her selfishly, as an extension of her own dream future that involved a rigorous career and at least two kids. But the more she thought about it, the more she thought it fit him too. His annoyance when she suggested no kids to him, his insistence on a cuddly pet, and the unfortunately distant relationship with his own father – she couldn’t help but think he was probably lonely. And maybe he would enjoy hanging out and raising their – his, she corrected herself – his kids, full time.

He stared at her for a moment as her suggestion sank in, and a wide smile slowly formed over his cheeks. “But you’re supposed to pick something I wouldn’t want.”

“What do you mean? You’re the great and ambitious son of the famous Gabriel Agreste, I thought this would be the opposite of your dream?” she feigned innocence, but held his gaze steadily.

“Thanks Marinette,” he said softly.

She nodded, her chest swelling with joy to see a true smile back on his face. “Okay, now we randomly get numbers, and tally it all up to see how we fared.”

Counting and crossing out as she went, Marinette would occasionally groan as she crossed out the few good options she actually had on her paper. The number she had gotten, twelve, was taking her a while to count, and it was almost agonizing, as she crossed out most of her better options. She moved on to counting up Adrien’s before she read her own aloud. With him having gotten the low number of four, his was tallied up rather quickly. As the game slowly determined his future, she couldn’t help but giggle to herself. His future was slowly beginning to shape into a pretty good future for herself as well.

“Come on, tell me what I got already,” Adrien bounced slightly in anticipation, “if you’re laughing then it can’t be good.”

Marinette shook her head, almost in disbelief. “Actually, I think you’re going to be pretty happy with it.”

“Tell me, tell me.”

“Okay, Adrien Agreste, the M.A.S.H. gods have determined, that you will live in a modest apartment, as a stay at home dad, taking care of your two kids and hamster with your wife, Ladybug.” She had to physically restrain herself from squealing.

He snatched the paper away from her in disbelief, practically swooning, “but that’s the best it could have gone!?”

She laughed, “I guess one of us had to get lucky.”
“Oh no, you didn’t really end up having fifty kids with Hawkmoth, did you?” he cringed.

“Fifty kids with Chat Noir actually.”

Adrien’s jaw dropped. Maybe he should have thought about the implications of inserting Chat into Marinette’s life before he suggested himself as one of her potential husbands. That was a lot of kids.

“And all fifty-two of us live in a nice small shack, with our pet hamster. But at least I get to spend my days at the bakery,” she giggled at the absurdity of it all.

“And we both got our hamsters too, so that’s a plus?”

“As long as I’m not sleeping with Hawkmoth, it’s all good news to me,” she giggled again, folding up her paper to throw it away.

Just unknowingly sleeping with me instead, he gulped, as she began cleaning up their dirty plates.

“Yeah, uh, sorry about that.”

“Don’t be, that was a great answer. Definitely worse than the time Alya made me work as a stripper and have half owl babies with Principal Damocles.”

Adrien shuddered, “what does that even mean?”

“I’m not sure, we can get pretty carried away,” she turned to face him, her hands full of dishes and her crumpled paper. “Do you want me to throw that out for you?” She pointed to his own future prediction.

“Um, can I keep it? Uh, sleepover souvenir?”

Nodding, she bit back a smile, before turning around to bring the plates out into the kitchen.

There was a creaking on the stairs behind her as she dropped the last dish into the sink. Her mother was standing on the last step, rubbing her eyes.

“Sweetheart, it was lights out almost an hour ago.”

Grimacing, Marinette apologized. “We lost track of time. We’ll sleep now, promise.”

Sabine glanced from her daughter, to the fort, and back to Marinette again, a piece of advice clearly lingering on the tip of her tongue. Marinette braced herself for the obligatory ‘be careful,’ or ‘we’re watching you two,’ speech. But a moment later, Sabine merely smiled, and told her to get a good rest.

Not one to protest given the circumstances, Marinette just nodded before scampering back into the fort, where Adrien was already tucked underneath her dark pink comforter.

“That was your mom?”

“Yeah, um, we should probably sleep now so they don’t get mad.”

He nodded, looking positively adorable wrapped up in her blanket. She was frozen in time. This was it. Sleeping right next to him. The whole night. Was she still breathing?

“Uh, Marinette?”
“Right! Uh, the lights, I’ll just,” she gestured over to the wall outlet, crawling over and unplugging it.

The sudden darkness, coupled with her own nerves, made her hands shake as she carefully made her way back over to where Adrien was. She knew she must be close, using her hands to see, she bumped his legs a few times before she found her place next to his side. The cat pillow now serving as their shared headrest, she laid face up, her arms stiff by her side.

“Are you cold?” Adrien asked, but didn’t wait for an answer as he threw the other half of the comforter over her, sealing them both underneath the covers together.

_Breathe Marinette. Just breathe. Breath, and then sleep. You love sleep, you sleep every night. You can DO this._

Who was she kidding? She was currently a centimeter away from Adrien Freaking Agreste, sharing a blanket with him and she was expected to relax enough to fall asleep? She’d never relax again in her life! No, she’d just have to resign herself to a very long, and magical sleepless night next to the love of her life.

“Marinette?” His voice was barely a whisper.

_Oh god, did I say that out loud again!?_

“What do you and Alya do if you can’t sleep?”

Okay good, thoughts are still staying inside, that’s good. “Mm, we talk. Mostly about how things are going with her and Nino, or how things are going with me and yo – um, just me.”

She felt his head nod an inch away from hers. “Then, how are things going with you?”

Oh, you know, just trying not to pee my pants from my current proximity to you, just regular old Marinette stuff. “Um, fine. Good?”

His head titled slightly toward her, and she could hear his teasing tone dripping off of his lips, “are you lying?”

She blew a puff of air, wanting to match his tone and quip back, but something about laying there so close, while unable to see him, made her want to confide in him instead. “I uh, I don’t know. Sometimes it feels like there’s so much on my plate and I just can’t possibly do it all. I mean, I love all my hobbies, but it feels like there’s all this pressure from everyone to be on top of everything all the time, and sometimes I just need a break from it all, but I can’t seem to get one.” It all came out in a rush, and she immediately felt the need to backpedal.

But Adrien spoke up before she could, “I really admire you Marinette. You are always doing things for others, helping people even if they don’t ask for it. But, if it’s ever getting to be too much, or someone is asking too much of you, you can always let me know and I can tell them to shove off.”

He was so serious about it that she couldn’t help but laugh. She couldn’t imagine Adrien telling anyone off, ever. But the fact that he was so willing to defend her, made her heart soar. “Thanks, Adrien.”

He titled his head back to face upwards again and a moment of silence passed between them.

Even though they had been talking easily all night, she still felt a little nervous to ask him about himself directly. Her voice may have hitched a bit when she spoke, “um, what about you, how are
He sighed much as she had just a moment ago. “I am really glad that it worked out for me to come over tonight. I guess I needed a break too.” He paused, “it can get really lonely in my house.”

It was like a stab to her heart. Someone as amazing as Adrien should never have to feel lonely, ever. She was sure he had more to say too. But, as far as she knew, he never spoke about this kind of thing with anyone, and she wouldn’t pressure him into talking about it if he didn’t want to.

It was silent for long enough that she wondered if he had fallen asleep, but then he spoke up again. “It has been easier lately but… it’s almost the two-year anniversary of my mother’s ‘disappearance.’” She felt the blanket rustle as he made air quotes with his fingers.

The pull on her heart was too strong to do nothing, and her hand found his easily as adrenaline coursed through her. Nervousness hit her too late, as the contact had already been made. There was no going back now. It felt like minutes, but hindsight would later tell her it was likely less than a second before he turned his hand over underneath hers and laced their fingers together.

Technically, they had held hands before – always as a result of them having to run away from outside force. But neither of them were running from anything right then. Her whole body hummed, and she could feel her pulse thrumming through each and every one of her cells. But her mind stayed focused on him, and what he was feeling.

“My father insists that she isn’t gone forever but… lately I’ve been forgetting what she sounds like and… no matter what anyone says, she feels so far away.” He wiped away a stray tear that had tracked down his left cheek.

“Oh, Adrien,” Marinette squeezed his hand, willing every happy feeling she’d ever had toward him to transfer through their skin.

Sniffling, he wiped his cheek again. “Sorry, I know I shouldn’t cry about it.”

Propping herself up on her left elbow, but making sure to keep ahold of his fingers between hers, she looked him as directly in the eye as she could in the limited light. “Don’t ever apologize for crying. Especially about something like this.”

He opened his mouth to argue with her, but no words came out, he was too captivated by the fierceness that came from her voice and radiated through her skin.

She laid back down, shifting slightly closer so that their sides were touching, and she gave his hand another squeeze. This time he squeezed back even harder than she did, and they did that back and forth until they were both gripping on as tightly as they could, a slight groan escaping Adrien’s mouth.

“Agh, okay, okay,” he unwound their fingers and she mourned the contact immediately, but she could hear his smile and that more than made up for it. “How do you have such a death grip?”

“Um, rolling dough?”

He just laughed, shaking his head.

Marinette was about to roll over onto her side, her eyelids beginning to droop, when she felt Adrien’s hand shyly slip its way back into her grip.

“Goodnight Marinette. And thanks.”
Once again, she was grateful for the darkness as she smiled so big it threatened to break her cheeks. “Goodnight Adrien.”

Eyes shut tight, and grin spread wide, she committed everything about this feeling to memory. She was light enough to float away, but his hand was the anchor that held her steadily in place, solidifying her in the wonderful reality of the moment. No one could ever take this from her. It was theirs, and if this was what it meant to be friends with Adrien, she could do this for the rest of her life.

~~~

Plates clinked lightly somewhere in the distance, while something sweet smelling filtered through his senses. Coupled with the warm weight resting on his chest, it was the most pleasant way Adrien had woken up in a long time. Eyelids blinking slowly, he had to mentally shake off the fog of sleep to fully remember where he was, but a happy recognition came over him quickly as he saw his entire lower half adorned with various pink blankets. Marinette.

Looking down only confirmed his memories of the evening of fun the night before, as he saw his friend had her head resting on the right side of his ribcage. They both must have shifted slightly in their sleep, as she had somehow managed to now be laying perpendicular to him, legs thrown over the side of her cat pillow, and her head facing straight up. His own arm had also moved so that it was now draped over her, the fingers of his right hand still loosely tangled with her left, and together resting comfortably across her stomach. And with her pigtails having come messily undone, a few strands of her hair were stuck to her bottom lip as she snored lightly.

“Adrien, Marinette?” Sabine’s voice drifted in through the thin sheets that separated the small sanctuary of the fort from the rest of the Dupain-Cheng’s living room. “I made crepes for breakfast!”

Yawning, Adrien shook Marinette’s as lightly as he could, not wanting to shock her awake. “Psst, Marinette. Your mom made breakfast.”

Her brow furrowed in recognition of his voice, before relaxing completely again and she continued to breathe deeply.

He fought back laughter. Alya had mentioned in passing before how difficult Marinette could be in the mornings. “Come on, wake up,” this time he used his free hand to gently shake her shoulder as well.

Face scrunching up, she shook her head. “Adrien’s here.”

This time he couldn’t contain himself, his body shaking her as he laughed. “Uh, yeah I am?”

She pouted. “Not you… stupid cat,” she grumbled.

He stilled immediately. Had she just recognized his voice as Chat’s?

“Don’t worry if she doesn’t wake up yet, sweetie.”

Sabine’s voice almost caused him to jump out of his skin, as he whipped his head to see her crouched in the entranceway of the fort.

“She often talks like she’s dreaming in the morning,” she said kindly, as she took in the picture of her daughter wrapped up in Adrien’s arms. “Come get some food, I’m sure she’ll wake up once she realizes you’re gone.”
He had the decency to blush before she let the entrance sheet fall, and he was briefly left alone with Marinette again.

Gingerly, he pulled his fingers from the spaces between hers, and used both hands to gently cradle the back of her head as he shifted his chest out from under her. Carefully he replaced himself with one of her throw pillows. She snored a little louder for a moment, but otherwise seemed unaware of the movement. Smiling, impressed with her commitment to sleep, he lightly swept the stray hairs away from her lips and forehead before he sat up fully and crawled over to join Sabine in the kitchen.

“Did you two have a good night?” she asked as she passed him a plate full of crepes – far more than he could possibly eat.

“Yes ma’am,” he answered somewhat awkwardly, another blush creeping up his neck as he thought about how it must have looked to her to have seen them asleep like that. “Thank you again for allowing me to stay over.”

Sabine shook her head, as if reading his thoughts and dismissing them. “You’re welcome here any time you want Adrien.”

He thanked her again, before nodding his head in the direction of the fort, “you sure she’ll wake up soon? I don’t want her to miss out on your delicious food.”

“Don’t worry honey, just wait.” Sabine held up three fingers, slowly counting down until she just held up her index finger.

Perfectly on cue, as soon as Sabine’s last finger curled down, they heard Marinette’s groggy voice, “Adrien?”

He snorted. She knew her daughter well.

“Here, you better take a plate to her, she’ll be hungry.”

Adrien grabbed his unfinished plate, along with the one for Marinette and crouched back down into the fort.

Marinette was sitting up just where he had left her, one hand rubbing her eyes, while the other absently played with the one pigtail that was barely still intact. Her socks had gotten shoved halfway down her knees, and one of her spaghetti straps hung loosely around her shoulder.

“Hey,” she said grumpily. “You left.”

Laughing as he handed her plate across to her, he couldn’t let the opportunity slip by. As fast as he could, he whipped out his phone and took a picture of her, as she glared down at her food. She didn’t notice him take the photo at all.

“I had to leave to bring you your food.”

She looked from the plate of food, back to where he sat in front of her with his mussed-up hair and wrinkled shirt and she tried to piece it all together in her sleepy brain. Adrien was here. He was asleep. And then he left. And then he brought me food… Hmm.

Using the fork he had left on her plate, she took a bite without another word.

They at together in silence for a few minutes, Marinette slowly waking up as she chewed.
Memories from the night before popped up in her head, and she had trouble believing all of it was real. But there he was, sitting right across from her, with an all-too dopey grin on his face.

“What?” she asked, still a bit of crepe in her mouth.

He chuckled, “nothing.”

She glared back at him, sure he was making fun of her somehow, but before she could retort a car horn honked from the street below the apartment, and Sabine confirmed that it was Adrien’s driver there to take him home. His face fell.

“I don’t want you to go,” she all but pouted at him.

He smiled at her easy honesty. She probably wasn’t fully awake yet. “Me either, but my father will be angry if I’m home late, and then we won’t be able to do this again.”

“You want to come over again?” She blinked up at him.

“Definitely.”

That woke her up fully, happiness coursing through her like a drug.

They stood up together, Adrien dropping the now empty plates on the kitchen counter before he scooped up his small shoulder bag from where he had left it by the bathroom the night before. He thanked Sabine one last time, before he and Marinette stepped out into the hallway.

“I’ll uh, walk you down,” she said shyly, suddenly aware of how disheveled she must look, she fussed with her hair the whole way down, making sure to readjust her shirt straps as well.

Opening up the side door that led to the street for him, she gave a small wave as he walked out of the frame.

He paused, just past the threshold, before he turned around suddenly, throwing his arms around her shoulders and squeezing her tightly.

Eep.

It took a moment for her body to respond to her brain, but eventually she reached her arms up to reciprocate the hug, relishing one last time in the closeness.

“Thanks for the best sleepover ever Marinette.” His breath brushed against the hairs at the back of her neck and sent shivers through her whole body.

Best. Sleepover. Ever. She had done it, and she had enjoyed every second of it.

When he finally got into the car waiting for him and drove away, she waved until she couldn’t see a trace of him anymore.

~~~

Hours later when she finally finished cleaning up the fort and bringing all her things back up to her room, she found her phone wedged underneath the far end of the couch. It had been buzzing elusively for the past two hours, much to her frustration. She had hundreds of Instagram notifications, along with at least fifteen texts from Alya, a couple from Rose and Mylene, and one from Adrien apologizing for leaving her with all the cleaning up.
She responded to Adrien’s first, as it was the only one that seemed to have any comprehensible words in it, and told him she didn’t mind cleaning up at all. Then she started to scroll through the messages from Alya. A few were from the night before, asking how things were going and if she’d made a move yet. Marinette rolled her eyes. But then she got to the more recent ones, and it quickly devolved into screeching gibberish. The last one, sent about ten minutes ago, reading:

11:31a Alya: GORL YUI HAVE TO CHEKC INSTA RIHGT NOW!!

A quick scan of the messages from the other girls told her the same thing. Nervously, she switched over to the other app, and tapped on the notification icon. Adrien had tagged her in a post. Her heartrate picked up immediately, and she had to take a deep steadying breath before she opened it up.

It was a slideshow of four pictures, the first of which was the photo he had taken when they were up in her bedroom. His arm was thrown around her shoulder so casually, and he truly looked radiant and carefree with his easy smile and shining eyes. Marinette herself looked caught off guard, small rosy circles emphasizing her cheekbones, but a slight curve of her lips. They looked good together, she had to admit. Even with her surprised expression, they looked comfortable together. Like true friends.

There were already thousands of likes on the photo, but the caption caught her eye before she continued swiping through the photos.

adrienagrestebrand: Shout out to my good friend @marinettedesigned for inviting me over for the best sleepover ever!! #WhatHappensInTheFortStaysInTheFort

She choked back a laugh that sounded more like a sob. This was unbelievable. With a caption like that, and the hashtag specifically, it was no wonder her notifications were blowing up. Her laughter was completely uncontrollable as she got the courage to finally swipe through the rest of the photos.

The second one was just of the fort itself from the outside. Which shouldn’t have sent her further into hysterics, except that she was sure anyone could easily infer that they clearly slept together in that fort. Swiping on to the next photo only further confirmed it – it was the photo of them in their pajamas, legs side by side with the TV lighting them in the background.

The last photo though, almost threatened to take her down from her high. It was just her this time, sitting cross-legged in the center of the fort, with her hair completely a mess, shirt strap drooping around her shoulder, and a look of complete annoyance on her face as she glared down at a plate of perfectly pristine crepes. Adrien had added little animated stars around the top of her head. And that was what sent her over the edge. Objectively, she looked horrible in the photo, and the fact that it was her longtime crush who had not only seen her like that, but taken the photo and shared it to the world, should have been absolutely mortifying. But instead, she was elated.

“Marinette? Are you alright?” Tikki flitted into her view.

But Marinette couldn’t speak, and continued to squeal, her cheeks eventually getting sore from smiling so hard. She could definitely get used to feeling like this.
End Notes

If you haven't seen them yet, PLEASE check out these amazing pieces that I commissioned from the super talented @inkshila on tumblr, of the instagram pics from the end of the fic!!

Thank you so much for reading, the length got away from me a bit lol, but I really wanted to write something fluffy and just get to hang out and spend some time with these oblivious dorks.

Do people still play MASH or know what it is? Definitely took me back to write that scene.

Also, if any of you guys read In a New Light, please know that I am still working on it! I've been caught up with life and other projects, but the next chapter is coming, I promise :) 

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