The Growing Pains Of Child Soldiers
by BloodWolf13

Summary

What do the citizens of Paris do, when they realize that their heroes are literally growing up before their eyes? They freak the fuck out.
Or everybody realizes that the heroes of Paris are young teenagers and are a little (extremely) worried about children fighting a terrorist.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
A theory for the ages

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It started with Chat Noir’s stupid growth spurt. It was probably not fair to blame him for something that was inevitable - but damn it - Marinette was angry. At the beginning of their superheroes careers they had successfully fooled people into thinking that they were over five thousand years old. Pharaoh was one of the most annoying akumas that they had to fight - seriously? Ignoring the fact that he wanted to do tests on an old artifact, he also needed human sacrifice to complete the ritual, all that was before being akumatized.

Having Alya post about their supposed age, on the Ladyblog had helped conceal their age. The magic of the miraculous also help them, most people didn’t really think about their age anyway. They were more worried about the next akuma attack, and how the heroes would defeat the latest nonsense that Hawk Moth decided to make.

People didn’t think about the fact that they were 5000 years old, because they had gotten the job done. Hell. They didn’t even care that much about Chloe’s age. In high sight that might have been because she caused a train to go off course while playing hero. She was also rarely seen by the public - revealing your secret identity to the world was not a good idea - so most people though she was just used when things were under control.

How Paris had consider this was something that would forever remain a mystery to Marinette, but in the end that was not the problem.

The problem had started three months ago when a Ladyblog fan had post a theory on the forum’s blog. It crashed the site and when the major news networks caught wind of it - the rest of the internet soon followed.

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It was a Monday morning and Marinette had arrived at school 15 minutes early, with the homework for the week finished, no assignments delay, and she was caught up on her studies - that should have been a clue at how badly things were about to go. Even before she had become Ladybug this was a rare thing.

As she was walking calming through the school she noticed that the entire student body is basically in little groups, looking at their phones and arguing. Weird, maybe Marinette had lost the release of a Jagged Stone song or a video game. She shrugged and decided to ask Alya what had happen, and starts to head to her class.

“Good Morning…” she trails off. The class was a freaking war room; if she thought the arguments outside were weird, she had no way to describe what was happening here. It was chaos, everybody was screaming at each other.

“Marinette did you see the post? Did you check the Ladyblog last night?” Alya asks so fast that Marinette took a minute to register what she had said. Marinette didn’t even notice approach her. Alya looks like she both needs a nap and is about to run a marathon. She has bags under her eyes and at the same time her entire body was trembling.

Marinette recognizes that look. It’s the ‘I didn’t get enough sleep last night, but I drank a ton of
coffee as a replacement’. She has seen that look so many times in the mirror; she could almost guess the amount of caffeine in Alya’s blood stream.

“What…?” she hadn’t. Last night she had decided to catch up her sleep and had done very little, before diving head first into her pillow and sleep for the next 12 hours straight.

Alya must have guessed it, because she gave her a knowing look. Marinette was simply handed a tablet by Alya. It was open on the Ladyblog and it had…500 000 thousand views? In 16 hours? What the fuck? Even akumas didn’t have so many. She tripled check and - yup - half a million views and counting.

Marinette had a funny feeling that the universe had decided to give her a good night sleep, so it could throw her to the wolves the next day. Dread filled her, was it too late to run? Probably, it was best to see what was going on. She smiles at Alya and starts to read the article.

**Lady’sChat7**

**What is the true age of Ladybug and Chat Noir?**

I know that this blog has a lot of theories (some insane) about this topic - most don’t have facts backing up there thesis - they are just opinions. But I have been researching this for a week, and honestly? I am a little freaked out and at the cusp of a mental break down.

To explain by impendent mental breakdown, I am going to tell you a little story. I study Design and Art at the University of Paris as a senior. One of the things I like to do to unwind (after an exam week) is make videos of the evolution of people’s lives through photography. You know those videos documenting the life of a person growing older, photo by photo? Seeing them age in minutes to some pop song? Yeah, I decided to try to do that for Ladybug and Chat Noir’s.

I will admit that I started with Chat - because I had a little celebrity crush on him - that died within minutes of realizing that he is probably too young for me.

So, it’s Friday and I start to compile a long list of photographs of the heroes. I start to select photos from the same places over the years, and I noticed something. I have considered lot of ways to present my original findings. But in the end I decided that nothing beats a cliché and a picture is worth a thousand words:

Pic000121   Pic000922

The picture on the left was taken a year ago; the picture on the right was taken last week. See something funny with Chat? No? Well, you should because behind him is the door to the famous Café D’ Angelou, and apparently Chat has grown 10 centimeters (5 inches) in a year and half.

My thought process after that was a little erratic. Confusion was the first thing that surge in my mind. How did he get taller? Is it some weird thing with the miraculous magic? Being allowed to grow at will? That’s a power right? Maybe it takes too much energy and he doesn’t use it often. He is an adult…right? The last question made a shiver go down my spine, as fear stroke me.

Chat Noir is not a fucking kid right? He is not a teenager (my crush died here) somebody would have noticed right? Paris has not let two teenagers running around fighting freaking super-villains terrorists for two years. Like kids fighting terrorist is a normal everyday thing.

Denial was the final thing that my brain did to try and preserved my sanity. I came up with three theories about why Chat Noir couldn’t have possibly have gotten taller. And spent an afternoon
trying to proving it… I failed miserably.

Theory number 1 - The pictures are altered. They came from both TV networks (known for their work ethics) that were streaming live. These photographs were actually stand stills. (Links).

Theory numbers 2 - The angles of the photos were different. No. It was the exact same angle and the squares on the door weren’t changing. It was filmed from a small wall outside the café. The camera men that film there will often use it to make sure the camera doesn’t shake during filming.

Theory number 3 - The door or the walls were changed/replaced - I know stupid theory for a historical café, but I was getting desperate and running out of ideas. After a very weird and awkward phone call the management informed me that the door and walls hadn’t changed. They also recommended that I should see a therapist. Honestly? That might be a good idea.

But I wasn’t ready to admit that teenagers were running around Paris saving people in magical girl outfits and furry costumes. The photos had to be a fluke. So I spent the night torturing myself trying to prove myself wrong. Here are the results:

MultiPicsLinks

So around one in the morning there was no denying it, Chat Noir had grown. Just as I was about to go a get the cheap bottle of vodka - and drink like there was no tomorrow - my brain, my sweet marvelous brain pointed out something to me. Ladybug had also seemed to grow in some of these photos.

Pic000001   Pic000213

Photo on the left is of the first akuma - when she was confronting a fucking terrorist. Photo on the right it’s also in front of the Eiffel tower two weeks ago. Look at the lamps, see anything? No? Well, go to the eye doctor because she is 6 centimeters (2 inches) taller.

Insert denial process mention above and we get to 5 am. Picture this - the sun is rising in the sky, a beautiful Paris morning and I am shitfaced drunk - trying to deal with two teenagers apparently growing up. It sounds ridiculous; it was extremely painfully and heartbreaking to accept this truth.

I sleep most of the morning - thank god for Saturdays - and when I got over my hangover, I started write an early draft of this theory. Note the use of early, because…oh boy, I haven’t even gotten to the ‘good’ part yet.

So - like an asshole - I show my roommate my findings and leave her catatonic for the better part of an hour. She starts to go through the Ladyblog with me and sees the Pharaoh’s fight.

“She is over 5 thousand years old” claims my now very relieved and smudged faced roommate.

“Pharaoh claims to have fought a Ladybug five thousand years ago, but are they the same one?”

No response from my roommate. By the way she hates me now.

Here is why I don’t think they are the same Ladybug.

1. Chat seems surprised at the revelation; she has said in several interviews (Links) that he has been her partner from day one. If they have been partners since day one, wouldn’t he be the same age? Either she lied to Pharaoh or in the interviews. I am inclining to believe she lied to the akuma.

2. The day before Ladyblogger managed to grab a book that fell out of Ladybug (also where the
fuck was she carrying that). The book was from an 8 grade class and it attracted a bit of
attention. Sure it was odd, but there were a million logical explanations for it. She could
have been holding it for a civilian or some younger relative, nothing that was truly
incriminating. At the time it was believed that this kid was just projecting her age to the
heroes. The fact that next day the theory is disproved by Ladybug herself helped everybody
to ignore the Ladyblogger post. Note: This is also the only time Ladybug ever talks on
camera about her age.

3. The Ladyblog is an extremely popular website about the heroes, especially around young
people. If Ladybug is as young as I think she is, she probably checks up on it. When the
akuma starts talking about the ‘Ladybug’, she took the chance to throw attention from her.
The Ladyblogger also says that Ladybug told her that she was holding it for a ‘friend’. Either
Ladybug has a babysitting gig or she was around that age.

Finally the Ladyblog is a good blog, but Alya Césaire is young. Come on, the kid claims to be a
reporter but she is 15. She is a good writer and when making claims has usually good arguments.
But she often lets her impulses get the better of her and believes just about everything related to
Ladybug - like that kid in her class that says Ladybug is her BFF and she believed it. She just needs
to slow down and fact check more often and she will be a great reporter.

I am getting off track. The point is that Alya Césaire believed Ladybug when she told her she was
ancient. And I get it; these kids have superpowers and fight an emotional based terrorist on a daily
basis with magic. That raises a lot of questions…and honestly? Their age would be the least of my
questions.

My roommate and I spent the better part of Saturday trying to find out the ages of Ladybug and
Chat Noir. Lucky for us there are dozens of studies made about the heroes. So, we just had to start
to pull statistics to see if any had an extensive age demographic in their studies. Several had a
divide by age groups, we use those. We notice several things.

1. One almost everybody over twenty has never tried to figure out their ages. It’s probably the
magic that keeps us from looking too hard or thinking too hard. The people who are
interested never actually try to find out their ages. (Links)
2. Teenagers all seem to think they are between 16 and 20 years old when they began. All their
fan art and fan fiction and theories circle around this. They seem to be affected differently by
the miraculous magic. We came up with a lot of different (insane) theories for this, honestly?
No actual clues to why it is. (Links)
3. The magic that they used makes it extremely difficult to notice their facial features. I had a
three hours fight with my roommate about the color of Ladybug’s eyes. Do you know how
the argument ended? We both look at the same photo (Pic1) and saw a completely different
shade of blue than the one we had previous seen.

By the end of the night, I was just about ready to break out the cheap tequila (ran out of vodka last
night) and find oblivion and forget everything. My roommate was more than willing to join in. But
first I had to make sure I had notes of my discoveries.

Then my roommate decides to get back at me for showing her my findings, and points out Queen
Bee aka Chloe Bourgeois is a fucking 15 year old.

To be honest I didn’t even think about trying to investigate that I just called it a night. Damn it, I
had earned it.

Sunday morning-ish we start to investigate what we could find about the other heroes of Paris.
You know those part-time heroes that only really show up when Ladybug and Chat Noir need help.
I have a theory that they are all around the same age as LB and CN. Why you may ask? A few of them are growing and a few of them are the same size.

At this point you are thinking that I just went from mildly-insane-sort-of-makes-sense to bat-shit-crazy. Unfortunately I didn’t. There are seven new heroes, by my account.

Rena Rouge - The first to show up from the newbie’s. She is the one that has been used the most. There is not a ton of photos of her, but there are enough for this:

Pic000345

Pic000124

Yup. Photo on the left 8 months ago, she is leaning on a building. Photo on the right 4 weeks ago, leaning on the same building. See anything? No? Well…by now you’re just in denial. Look at the door from the building. Rena Rouge has grown 3 centimeters (1 inch). Less than LB and CN, but she hasn’t been in the public eye that much or that long. Still, she is fucking growing, so that means she is not an adult. Ladies and gentlemen and non binary folk we have one more kid.

There is one more thing… Here is a photo (Pic000101) of her kissing Carapace. Yeah…another one…

Carapace - Sorry dude, but you being the boyfriend of Rena Rouge kind of gives away you age… that or you are a massive creep. I am incline to believe the former rather than the later. There are not enough photos for an accurate comparison. In this case it’s not needed.

Queen Bee - The only one we know the secret identity and age. 15. I don’t know really have a lot to say about her, right now.

Ryuko - One apparition, one photo. Normally she would be the one to give the benefit of the doubt, but she is around the same fucking height as LB. There is a 50/50 chance that she is older.

Pegasus - One video and he is shorter than Ladybug. He actually looks like he is a kid. If LB is still growing up, how exactly can Pegasus be older than her?

King Monkey - One video, same one as Pegasus. By height might pass as adult, by personality- no doubt in my mind (Link) - a teenage boy. I will accept rebuttals here and on the next one.

Viperion - The most mysterious superhero. Not a lot about him or his powers, by height…he might be an adult…but honestly? I am not betting on this. The odds are not in my favor, and I doubt that the universe is kind enough to not let this one be of a reasonable age.

Note: before advancing to the next part of this theory, I would like to point out that Ryuko, Pegasus, King Monkey and Viperion age is harder to make out. This is due to having so few appearances. However Ryuko and Pegasus are likely to be younger because of their height. I might be completely wrong - but until we have more appearances by them - I can’t be sure.

King Monkey and Viperion are the only ones that can be really debated, but if out of the 9 superheroes running around at least 4 are confirmed that they are literally growing. Plus one that is definably a teenager. Well, odds are the other 2 are also teenagers, just taller teenagers.

At that moment I realize that Hawk Moth and Mayura were probably the only adult users of the miraculous in Paris. There were no words to describe the feelings that came with this particularly realization. Logically we know that Hawk Moth and Mayura are villains, bad people who attack Paris on a regular basis to further their schemes, and to obtain the miraculous. They are horrible
monsters, but there is something about them fighting and abusing literal kids on a daily bases, that makes you sure there is a special place for them in hell.

All this research and work brings us to Sunday night. Picture this: my roommate and I just spent the last three days compiling what is basically an ugly truth. We have class in the morning so we can’t really drink - that and the only liquor left in the house are a few beers.

So here are the facts: We know for a fact that five superheroes are underage, or at least in the last phases of their teenage years. There are two heroes that are full time superheroes. We don’t know where they came from or how they were picked. They are fighting a terrorist with superpowers.

The last one is the one that really gives you a kick in ass. It was extremely difficult to accept the truth, but facing it? No words. I don’t think I really need words. Because every single one who is reading this - if you believe me - will know how I felt. I kept thinking back to my younger cousins - who are sixteen.

The knowledge that the heroes were around their ages - maybe even younger - left a sour taste in my mouth.

Child soldiers, the heroes of Paris are child soldiers. Fighting against what appears to be an adult man trying to get their miraculous while terrifying the citizens of Paris. I went back to watch old videos of their battles.

While at first I saw heroes kicking ass and saving Paris, now I just saw children bearing a responsibility that was too big for them. Saw dangerous akumas trying to kill teenagers and steal their jewelry from their death bodies. I cried while holding my roommate. We both went to bed early, but didn’t really get a lot of sleep.

This brings us to Monday late afternoon. My roommate and I meet again this time to investigate two final things. First, to see if we could find out about who gives the miraculous - I want to have words with that/those individual(s). Secondly, to calculate the amount of time Chat Noir and Ladybug spent on their fights with akumas and patrol.

The first was basically impossible to find out. From that ‘episode’ on the train from Queen Bee’s first appearance we get two things. Ladybug looses the miraculous and QB found it.

LB and CN were more upset about the stolen miraculous that a fifteen year old with superpowers. I get their train of thought - I agree with it - but most adults would have at least told her that she was too young for that responsibility.

Honestly, Queen Bee as should have been a massive sign something was wrong. There is a clip (link) on Heroes Day when she gets akumatized. It is heartbreaking having to see this kid fighting her brainwashed parents and trying not to hurt them.

Side note: I have opinions about what Chloe Bourgeois did when she was first Queen Bee - that derailed train - but I wouldn’t get into it. That girl might occasionally fight alongside other heroes, but she is spoiled and entitled brat. No doubt about it.

Also, if we taking into account the fact that LB and CN both seemed young and the other heroes are all part time, I don’t think that they always had the miraculous. If this is truth I have a lot of questions, which I will probably never get an answer to.

There is just one question that I can’t really let go: why pick teenagers?

We have no idea where the miraculous came from. So, we can’t really know that much about the
people wielding them. We know that LB and CN showed up when the first akuma appear. We can gather two things from this. First, is that the heroes are a response to Hawk Moth. Secondly, Hawk Moth had previous knowledge of the Miraculous.

How and why? We have no answers to those questions. When I reviewed the first attack, I noticed something. That recording of them confronting Stoneheart in the stadium shows their lack of knowledge about their powers. CN tries to use two cataclysms; and LB doesn’t purify the akuma.

It looked like they didn’t know how to do their jobs. I am not criticizing them for this. Especially, because I honestly believe they had never transformed into superheroes prior to this encounter. I think they were new to this and obvious did not know the full extent of their powers. It looks like they might have been ‘gifted’ the responsibility, rather than always having it.

So moving on to the second question or as I like to call it: How much time are these kids losing while fighting crime? The answer - like all other answers so far - is depressing.

We started with how long an akuma battles usually lasts. We used actually statistics for this (links). During a week an “ordinary” battle lasts from 30 minutes to two hours, there is an average of 3 to 5 battles a week. So per akuma battles it can be from a one hour and half to ten hours a week. I know what you thinking that’s not so bad.

Yeah…there is 168 hours in a week. If we count 8 hours to sleep, which we are being generous because most teenagers - depending on how old they are - should sleep up until ten hours a night. That’s 56 hours plus another 40 for school - depending on the grade they are in - that’s 96. Plus one hour every day for homework, one hour for personal hygiene, another for eating and another for transports that brings us to 124 hours wasted.

Which it’s fine they are young 44 hours a week to do what they like it’s a lot. However they fight akumas. Let’s split the difference into 5 hours, which leaves them with 39 hours a week of free time. That’s a lot about 5 hours a day, pretty good for a teenager, right?

Yeah… just one more thing…they patrol an average of 20 hours a week, which means those 39 hours turn into 19. That brings our underage heroes less than three hours a day for free time. This is without considering time with family, friends and hobbies, all important things to the formation of a healthy adult. Social bonds are important at any age, but when someone is younger they need more stability in those bonds.

That is me being optimistic. If we consider that every once in a while, there are some akumas that have lasted hours at a time…well, LB and CN free time has reach negative. That means something on their personal lives needs to be cut. Sleep, school, basic necessities and food probably take a nose dive, for them to maintain their usual rhythm.

Also - to prove that he is the biggest asshole on the planet - Hawkmoth sends an average of two akumas in the early hours of the morning every week. So at least twice a week their sleep schedules go out the window.

I am going to give you a comparison. My roommate and I both are attending University, we work part-time jobs and a great deal of our time is dedicated to school projects. Unless it’s final’s week, we have more free time that Ladybug and Chat Noir.

These last two points took the better part of the week to investigate - after all we had classes and work. When I resumed writing this theory, there was an akuma attack, it almost seemed mocking. I watch Ladybug and Chat Noir take down an akuma in 49 minutes and 11 seconds. I counted every second and I spent the better part of that crying my eyes out.
Honestly it was a miracle I didn’t get akumatized. Or maybe Hawkmoth knows not to send butterflies to people who want to kill him on the spot.

So we arrive to the last part of this theory. What are their actual ages? I will only do this for the main heroes, in the part time heroes there are too many variables and not enough data.

Based on their growth over the last two years I would put Ladybug and Chat Noir at oldest 18, at youngest 15.

Why? Well, according to Google, during puberty there are several phases of growth. Putting their height aside, I can’t really see a lot of those phases in LB and CN and I think a part of that is the magic protecting them. Honestly, I was uncomfortable in trying to see how much of the kids bodies were developing. I didn’t really dive in as much as I could.

This brings us to Friday afternoon, when I am actually writing this. I have shown this theory to a couple of classmates and all of them - after a brief catatonic moment - agree that there is something here. I have put all the Links I could here, and most of the research is easily accessible to anyone with internet.

So, I leave you with a brief but grim reflection. One of the things I realize early one is that Ladybug and Chat Noir are fantastic at their jobs. No matter their actual age, they have my eternal gratitude and respect. The way they fight and deal with akumas - even after they have been de-akumatized - is awe inspiring. Their anti-bullying campaigns, their kind words, the way they help people outside of akumas, the way they protect us is beyond words.

I have nothing but gratitude and respect for them, which is why the fact that they had to take this responsibility pisses me off beyond believe. Above all they are good and kind human beings, and they should have a childhood free of monsters. All children should be protected, nurtured, and loved. Alas that cannot always be truth.

We can’t really ask them to stop fighting crime, because they are the only ones capable of defeating the akumas. But we can and should help them. We should stay away from akumas and not gap at them, making us easy targets. We should give them a kind word and comfort. We should start a tread on this blog trying to discover Hawk Moth’s identity. Delete the one about their secret identities and protect them from paparazzi trying to take their picture. We should mind their privacy, because even if they are a public figure, it’s obvious rude.

My first instinct after this week is wrap a blanket around their shoulders and protect these small beans at all costs. I can’t. But I can tell them - if they ever see this - without a doubt in my mind they are the greatest people I have ever see.

Thank you, Ladybug and Chat Noir.

Comments:

Saltyintheblog: I have no fucking clue why there are two children running around and no adult back up.

Chatmaniac: Sounds fake. Chat is too hot to be a kid.

Fan2: WHO IN THE FUCKING HELL IS CHOSING THESE KIDS?
**LB<3**: So guys have you notice this? Because I am getting a little freaked out, I have been through the links a dozen times and they are all real. This isn’t real, this can’t be real.

**Butterflyhunter**: No way. I think they are young but you are exaggerating a lot, particularly on the part-time heroes’ age. I believe that (cont).

**ScreamQueen**: Ok. If this is true, I have a lot of fanfiction that need to disappear, like yesterday.

**LB<3<3<3**: Ok, I know most people are talking about the theory, but can we just take a moment and acknowledge that Lady’sChat7 just throws shade to Alya Cesarie aka the person in charge of the forum, and called Chloe Bourgeois - the girl famous for treating to call daddy - a brat.

In response to **LB<3<3<3**: Thank you. I thought I was the only one (cont).

**CN<3<3<3**: If they are kids shouldn’t we do something? I mean can’t we ask them to give the miraculous to the police. They can choose military people or someone actually train in combat. Doesn’t need to be kids.

In response to **CN<3<3<3**: That sounds like Hawk Moth’s dream or something. We are also at a phase that the most akuma’s are really dangerous. There is no one but Ladybug and Chat Noir with experience fighting them.

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Marinette had no idea what she had just read. She knew that most people tended to age them up, but…did the entirety of Paris really think that they are adults? Was the miraculous magic that strong?

A thought popped into her mind - most people she heard talking Ladybug called her a fine young woman. The more she thought back, the more she realize that some people went as far to call her and Chat fine young adults. She always believed it was just the miraculous magic working to cover their identities.

This was bad. Most comments were a debate on however this was true or not. However some were discussing actual ages. There were thousands of comments; she couldn’t read most of them because the blog kept crashing.

Marinette briefly thought about sending Chat Noir a message, to see what they would do about it. She just didn’t really have a plan yet. Watching her class having a heated argument, she thought ‘I should have stayed in bed’.

Chapter End Notes

Hello, first fic. I'm deslexic, so if you see any mistakes, just let me know.
I won't update that much, at least once a month, because I am an extremely slow writer. I finished all my fics, so don't worry. I have other miraculous fics that I will put here, but not before I finish Growing pains.
I have another two chapters of this fic complete, and a third started. However I'll stick to the schedule meantion above.
This will probably have 5-7 Chapters.
Thank you for reading, be nice in the comments.
Marinette finally puts the phone down, and looks up to Alya. She’s arguing with Nathaniel about something.

“…is obvious their age. Why would Ladybug pick an adult when the team is basically teenagers only?” Alya defends.

“We don’t know if it’s Ladybug who picks the heroes. What if it’s somebody else?” Counters Nathaniel.

Before she can respond, Nino looks at Marinette and asks “Dudette what do you think?” Suddenly, Alya, Nathaniel, Adrien all focus on her.

“A-h…W-Well…I d-d-don’t know.” she stutters out an answer.

“It’s fine girl. I needed some time after reading the theory before I could even form an opinion. It was a lot of information” Alya replies.

“Well, this theory is well constructed.” Interjects Max “Most of the points have prove backing it up, and when the writer isn’t sure she states it. Also all her sources are from credible places. The photos are from live fights or from news reports. The statistics used regarding their fights, comes from the University of Paris. The only real thing we can argue about is the heroes’ ages.”

“It said as much in the theory. The estimate of their ages is thrown off, by what phase of puberty they might be in.” adds Adrien.

“I like how she doesn’t try to analyze the heroes’ bodies to find out their ages. It would be creepy.” Alix says “Some creep is probably going to do this on the news…”

“I think admitting that she wasn’t able to make an accurate guess about Viperion, Ryuko, King Monkey and Pegasus was very smart.” Max interrupts Alix before she can start to rant “I agree that King Monkey and Viperion are probably teens too, but since there isn’t evidence, it’s all base on speculation.”

“What about Ryuko and Pegasus?” Adrien asks.

“Not sure. If it was only their heights in question, I would argue against it. However, base on the amount of information and that at least four other heroes appear to be underage,” he looks at Chloe in the corner of his eye “and one is confirmed. It gives the theory a little more credibility.”

Marinette suppresses a chuckle at how awkward Max sounds talking about his superhero persona. It’s nice to see other people - other than herself - having a difficult time keeping the secret.
“I don’t know.” Nathaniel says. “Even Lady’sChat7 admits that it’s not really a certainty. Maybe Ryuko and Pegasus are just short.” Max doesn’t really look happy with the last statement, but he knows he can’t really confirm that Pegasus is a teenager.

“That is your personal opinion. You don’t have all the facts.” Max says a little frustrated. “What I think it’s really interesting is how the magic seems to affect the adults and the kids differently. Why do you think this is? Lady’sChat7 says she had several theories about it, but she didn’t write them.”

“It was not the main point of the theory.” Nathaniel says. “I find it really curious though…”

Alix cuts him off “Show hands. Who here believed that Ladybug and Chat Noir were older that 18 when they started?”

No one in the class raised their hands. Marinette decided to join the conversation, she needs more information, before making a decision about how to handle this. “To be fair I think we were more focused on how Ladybug and Chat Noir were fighting Hawk Moth. There wasn’t a lot of information back there. Even now we still don’t know much about the miraculous.”

“Marinette is right. According to Markov about 86% of the questions originally put forward by the public, still don’t have an answer. It’s normal we don’t concentrate on the question of their ages, when we still don’t know much about the magic.” Max looks uncomfortable saying the word “and Lady’sChat7 theorizes that’s part of said magic. There are simply a lot of factors we don’t have regarding the miraculous.”

There was a pause after he spoke. Almost like everybody was trying to absorb what was said. Then all hell broke loose. Most of the class was trying to talk over each other and no one could understand a thing. A sudden whistle made everybody shut up, they all turn their heads to the front of the class where Ms. Bustier was standing. Marinette had never heard her teacher whistle before.

“I know you are all very excited about debating that theory, but we have to start class. If we finish early, I promise that you can keep debating. You will just need…to do it more silently.” Thank God for Ms. Bustier.

Everyone shuts up, and turns to their teacher. It’s an extremely silent lesson. Marinette can’t recall ever having a more quiet morning in class.

Sadly, the rest of the class went by very fast. Marinette for the first time in her life wanted more work. She was not even close to finding a solution to her problems. From what she could see most of her classmates weren’t worried about her age. However, this could be because a few of them also were superheroes.

Plus, if she took into consideration that most of them never believed that Ladybug and Chat Noir were adults…she needs more information. Marinette has no idea, how adults are going to react to this. If the post is anything to go by then most adults - or all adults - have been under the assumption that Ladybug and Chat Noir are a lot older. Logically she knows that they can’t really do anything about it, Hawk Moth and the akumas are not something that will go away on their own.

A part of her is hopeful that the miraculous magic will keep this from spreading. The other part, the realistic side of her is telling her that this will not be contained. Although most news stations don’t really use Alya’s blog, some do use the footage from the battles, and occasionally a couple of the most popular theories. It would take a miracle for this to be ignored. Even if most would assume it was false, it would be really interesting to debate the heroes’ ages.
She needs to come up with a plan and fast. She needs more information, specifically from an adult. If Marinette doesn’t get ahead of the curve and fast, she and Chat are in for a rough few months in the public eye. She waits for the ending of class and just before being dismissed, she asks “Ms. Bustier, could you mediate the ‘debate’ we are about to resume?”

All eyes turn to her and Marinette turns red. “I mean…there were a lot of ideas floating around and things got a little confusing at the end with the screaming”. There’s an awkward pause, and Marinette realizes that she could have insulted the entire class by calling them a bunch of loud mouths.

Thankfully Alya comes to the rescue “That’s a nice way of saying that we were all screaming at each other, and no one could understand one another”.

Ms. Bustier smiles and accepts Marinette’s proposition. On the plus side no one seems offended, in fact most seemed relieve. Marinette guesses that the class has realized that it will be a lot easier to hear each other.

“Ok, rules if you have anything to say raise your hand. If there is more than one person with their hand raised, wait for me to call you. Don’t interrupt your classmates and don’t yell.” Everyone agrees with the rules. “Very well, Marinette it was your suggestion. Can you give us a brief explanation of the topic and a summary of what was previously debated?”

“The theory on Alya’s blog was about the ages of Ladybug and Chat Noir. Someone was trying to find out their ages, especially because they seemed to be growing in height.” She notices Ms. Bustier flinch at the mention of them growing up, but forces herself not to react. She could ask later about Ms. Bustier’s opinion. “We mostly focused on the statistics, and how the magic was affecting us differently from the adults.”

“Ok. Does anyone want to start…” before she finished the question, most of the hands shoot up. Ms. Bustier takes a different strategy. “Let’s start with…do you consider that the theory has valid points? Yes or No.”

All of them said yes. “Is there something specific about the theory that you liked or disliked? Agree or don’t agree?”

Max’s and Alya’s hands shot up faster than the others. Ms. Bustier decides to start with Alya since it was her blog, and she had read the theory first. As such, Alya had more time to analyze and reflect upon it.

“I think it was really smart how Lady’s Chat7 analyzed the Pharaoh fight. At the time I was so excited to ‘know’ Ladybug’s age that I didn’t even think that she could have lied to the akuma” She admits a bit embarrassed.” plus, the way she noticed the surprise on Chat Noir’s face, and how that was the only time Ladybug ever talked about her age.”

“To be fair that was one of the first battles. People just didn’t have a lot of information” Adrien raises his hand and adds to Alya’s commentary. Most people seem to agree with Adrien.

“Could they have reincarnated? It’s one of the most popular theories on the blog. That the heroes are either old or are born in times of great need” Kim says.

Max intervenes. “Unlikely. Since that would mean the temporary heroes are all reincarnated.” He pauses, probably trying to tell them why not, in a way that doesn’t incriminate him as a superhero “I believe Chloe could clarify that for us. Do you have any memories of past lives?”
“No. Even if it’s obvious that I was a Queen in other lives, I don’t remember them.” Chloe responds while inspects her fingernails. “Also, I don’t know why anyone would ever think that Ladybug was an adult. Ridiculous, utterly ridiculous.”

“Why do you say that? How did you know?” Adrien asks.

“Well, Adrikins…” she stops and blinks. It was the first time Marinette was seeing a person realizing that they were affected by the miraculous magic. Chloe was Queen Bee, but that didn’t mean she couldn’t be affected by the miraculous magic. “…I…I just did.”

In the back of her mind, Marinette makes a note to have a discussion with Master Fu about how powerful the magic was, and the limits it had. But right now that wasn’t a priority.

“If we assume that the Ladybug and Chat Noir of now are not the ones of ancient Egypt, there is no other reference for their age.” Max summarizes.

Alix raises her hand. “It would also be completely out of character for them to reveal anything personal. One day Alya finds a eighth grade textbook, and the next Ladybug, and Chat Noir imply to be older than that. The timing is too suspicious.”

“I was determine to search every girl in our year, until I would had found one without the textbook. But that reveal of their alleged ages complete thrown me off.” Alya looks like she is going to start a rant. Marinette really hopes she doesn’t go around asking girls for their history textbooks. Never mind that it was a year ago, and some girls might not even have the book anymore.

Marinette intervenes before Alya starts obsessing over this again “I didn’t really believe that the book was Ladybug’s” Alya turns to her with frowning “Think about it. I have never seen Ladybug carrying school materials while in costume. Why would she be carrying one then?”

Marinette actually got scared of having anything on her that could identify her. It was a lesson learned, but no one needs to know that.

Thankfully Adrien seems to pick up on what she is trying to convene and adds “You think she was holding that for a civilian? Or that she saw it and was going to return it?”

She turns red at being put on the spot, but thankfully the entire class will just assume it’s her crush on Adrien - and ok. The blush is not 100% because of the debate - they don’t questions her pause. “Now, I think Ladybug was going to return it. We have seen Ladybug return lost personal objects to people before.”

“Then why would she take the book back from me?”

“She could be trying to protect the owner. If the book wasn’t hers and if you find out before she could have lied, would you have put that on your blog?” Alya nods in response to Adrien. “Well, you could have made that person a target. Even if Hawk Moth didn’t believe you, he could have still gone after the person to see if they were close to Ladybug.”

Alya pales a little at the thought. No one in their right mind would want to help Hawk Moth akumatize people or make them a target.

Max takes that moment to raise his hand, to add his opinion on the theory. “I really liked the structure of the theory. There are several parts that could be developed into their own theories. One of them is on how Lady’s Chat7 was affected by magic differently than us. They honestly thought that the heroes were adults.”
Nathaniel shyly raises his hand “I think we are affected by the magic a lot more than we realize.”

“Really? How?” Several people try to ask at the same time. Ms. Bustier clears her throat, and tells Nathaniel to continue.

“In the beginning, I noticed that every time I drew the heroes, it was really hard to stick with the same colors or facial features. It was hard not to have two drawings showing different eye colors. After a while I just automatically started to stick to a color, but it wasn’t something that I was sure. It was instinct. Sometimes I will go on DeviantArt to check out other versions and…” Nathaniel diverts his eyes to the table “well, it’s like they’ve only see blurred photos of Ladybug. Sometimes they are completely different…”

“They draw her as an adult?” asks Alix.

“No. I have seen drawings of her having light blue eyes, dark blue eyes, big lips, small lips, different facial structure, and so much more. There is always something different. Usually a small detail, and you don’t see the difference if you aren’t looking for it. It’s like people see completely different versions of her, they usually get the bigger details right. The color of her uniform, the position of the spots, and her height difference from Chat Noir is all the same, but the rest…”

“Have you notice the same in Chat Noir?” Juleka inquires.

“Yes. I draw him less, but it’s the same. One of the most difficult things was the color of his eyes. I know they are green, but what type of green? I have see dozens of drawing all with different colors.”

“So what you’re trying to tell us is that the magic is always affecting us? Not just when we interact with the heroes?” Max looks like is about to imploded with the amount of information, and theories relating to magic. He also looks really happy to try to figure it out, so Marinette takes this as a win.

“Dude, that is beyond insane. It means no matter what you’re thinking about, the magic is always affecting you.”

“Maybe, but it could only work if you are thinking about the heroes.” Max sights “Markov, point that as another mystery. How many do we have now?”

“Currently there are 43 questions without answers.”

“Nathaniel have you try to draw the new heroes?” Rose asks.

“Yes, the problems are the same. No matter how many photographs and videos I have. Since we don’t know who they are, we can’t really know what they look like.”

“Are we really sure their eyes and hair is that color? Could they change with the transformation?” Alya asks leaving the class trying to piece together an answer. Marinette decides to take that moment and see if her classmates notice the differences in Chloe, she usually notices.

“It goes beyond that I mean…Can anyone here describe what Chloe looks like in the mask?” No one in the class says a word. “I was there when she first transforms…and I can barely describe what happen.” That was partially because Marinette was freaking out about having lost the Bee Miraculous, and freaking Chloe Bourgeois finding it.

“You are right.” Adrien looks at her in shock. “I was also there, but I can’t really describe what happen. There was a flash of light and then Chloe was in a costume, looking completely different. I know that was Chloe, so I could see her there, but…” he trails off not knowing what to say.
Fortunately, Marinette knows exactly what he is trying to say.

“Her energy, it was like something changed about her. You couldn’t really say what changed but you knew that something was different.” She looks back at the rest of the class. “Can anyone here think about Chloe and Queen Bee and say that they look identical?”

Maybe that wasn’t the best way to satisfy her curiosity on how others perceive the superheroes, because chaos breaks out again. Everyone starts talking over each other. Ms. Bustier had to actually whistle for a while to get their attention. “One at the time, please. Chloe since you are Queen Bee, maybe you can tell us if you notice any differences when transform?” Chloe preens at the attention and looks smug, so she fails to notice the strain in Ms. Bustier smile at the mention of Queen Bee.

“Oh obviously I have the best outfit out of all heroes.” Groans are heard throughout the class. Alix actually shouts “Just answer the question.”

Chloe in a rare moment of self awareness stays on point. “Fine. When I look at photos I don’t really see any difference. When transform I don’t really think about my appearance, because I am too busy fighting…”

Marinette not wanting to hear Chloe’s perspective of the fights interrupts “Does she look physically the same as Queen Bee?” Chloe glares at her.

“Don’t Chloe’s eyes become lighter when she is Queen Bee?” Sabrina asks. Chloe looks at her like she is as lost her mind.

“Ridiculous. Utterly ridiculous.”

“When I tried to draw Queen Bee, I actually found I easier to use photos outside of the costume.” Nathaniel adds.

“That means even the people we know will still be difficult to identify, when they are in superhero form.” Max looks at Markov. “Does that mean the magic stays in effect even if we know the identity of the person? That means we may have actual seen all the heroes of Paris outside of their masks, but the magic is protecting them.”

‘Sure that and six of all the miraculous users in Paris are sitting in this classroom and no one seems to notice’ Marinette thinks. ‘Queen Bee, Rena Rouge, Carapace, King Monkey, Pegasus and me.’ The magic is that powerful. Marinette has always assumed that the only reason she’s barely affected was due to being Ladybug. She has always had an eye for details, and she knows almost all of superheroes secret identities.

The rest of the conversation is a back and forth on how different the heroes look and the magic behind it. Marinette takes the opportunity to begin developing a plan. She had gathered a few things from the conversation. Firstly, is that everyone believed that Ladybug had lied about her age when fighting the Pharaoh. Secondly, although a few of them have notice that they are affected by the magic, they can’t immediately identify it, if it's not pointed out. Thirdly, they seemed more fascinated by the magic, and its affects then Ladybug’s or Chat’s ages.

Although she couldn’t really go around talking about miraculous magic, she could easily drop hints that their ageing was only a trick caused by the magic. It would take some work and a little luck, but it was doable. If her classmates - some of the actual heroes - couldn’t see that the magic was actively working right now, the distraction should work. She had to talk to Chat Noir before making an actual plan, but it was more to make sure everything lined up.
There was just something she needed before making this plan A. She needed Ms. Bustier opinion. If the miraculous were affecting adults differently they could be more focus on their ages, and that was dangerous.

If such was the case than plan B was going to be different. They would acknowledge that they were not adults, but not disclose their ages because of the danger that Hawk Moth presents. She wouldn’t say she had started to this when she was barely 13.

Ladybug would imply that she was in her late teens, maybe even 20 years old. That would make them 17/18 when Hawk Moth first started. Maybe a comment on how Queen Bee is just a couple years younger. It would be difficult to deal with the fallout of ‘underage heroes’ - if only they knew - but since they were no longer underage, no harm no foul.

“Anyone else has anything to add?” Ms. Bustier asks drawing Marinette’s attention back to the class.

“Are sure that Hawk Moth and Mayura are adults?” Kim asks. Marinette has no ideas if this is a legit question or he is just trying to reignite the chaos. Most of them laugh and snicker at the thought.

Marinette however takes the opportunity to gather more information. “What did you think of the theory Ms. Bustier?”

The class focuses back on Marinette, but this time she doesn’t blush. She needs information from an adult perspective to decide between plans A or B. Her classmates where great so far, but Marinette needed a hell of a lot more before making a soundproof plan.

This was a dangerous action, pushing for information about the heroes was something that Alya would do. Marinette most times didn’t even seem to care that much about the heroes, or at least start conversations about them. Plus, now that everyone was on guard regarding the miraculous magic, it would be easier to trip up.

Ms. Bustier takes a deep breath and exhales. She looks around the room at each one of her students with an unreadable expression. Finally her eyes set back on Marinette.

“I read it last night; I had a little time to review it. I must say it’s well written; the way the author presents their findings, and adds data is very efficient. I will say there is room to improve, mainly when the author diverges from the main topic, and a few errors in grammar. The idea of presenting it as a story is captivating and interesting.” She smiles at Marinette. Her smile is so strain that makes a part of Marinette ache.

She almost wants to drop it. Almost. She can’t, not yet. Marinette is going to ask her parents opinion, when she gets home. She has a feeling that it might be more painful than this. At home she doesn’t have the space maneuver she has here. If her parents try to change the subject, she can insists once or twice, more and she has to lie to her parents.

Marinette Dupain-Cheng is many things, a good liar it’s not one of them. Here she is just a student that it’s oddly fascinated with this theory, and she has an equal fascinated class with her. She doesn’t have to lie and the peer pressure is a lot bigger. She silently asks Ms. Bustier for forgiveness, because it’s clear she doesn’t want to talk about it.

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“I was asking more around the lines of the content and not so much the structure.” The way she says it is cold with a hint of steel. Straight to the point, in a way she only uses when she’s Ladybug and something has gone wrong. Marinette notices the surprise on some of her classmate faces, but
she just smiles and looks at Ms. Bustier.

“When the author reveals their feelings how they accepted the heroes’ ages, she describes it as ‘heartbreaking’. I think this is the perfect way to put my opinion when I started to read it.” The amount of guilt faces around the classroom would probably be a red flag at any other point, but now? Not so much. You could hear a pin drop, but Ms. Bustier wasn’t finished.

“I was under the impression they were older, that Chloe was the younger hero among their team. I thought they were using her as a role model for kids to overcome their…more insensible sides…” That’s a kind way of saying she thought Ladybug and Chat Noir were using one of the biggest bullies of Paris, as an example that people can change. She was not completely of mark, but it was a little more complicated than that.

“…and that was why she was on the team. When I read through the part about the part time heroes, I felt like crying. When I read the part about the free time the superheroes have, I felt like crying. When I remembered that they have been doing this for nearly two years, I felt like crying. Children should be happy, they should have space to make mistakes, time to learn about the things they like and don’t like, time to grow, time to laugh. They shouldn’t be fighting terrorist’s everyday of their lives.”

She smiles the most heartbreaking smile at Marinette and says“I know you all focus on the magic aspect of the situation, because it’s what seems to be the most fascinating to you. But as an adult, especially as a teacher seeing children picking up weapons and going to fight terrorists is - for me - one of the uglier sides of humanity.”

“They don’t pick up weapons, they save the day, and they are teenagers not children.” protests Adrien in an attempt to comfort their teacher. He completely misses the point that Ms. Bustier was trying to make.

“They are still fighting every single day. Before I came here I was at the teacher lounge, and all of them agreed with me. Children should not be fighting for their lives. They should be loved and happy. Not burned out by fighting several hours a day, and being exhausted.” No one says anything, but Ms. Bustier has started to cry while talking about the subject. “But there is nothing to do now. We can’t really demand that they give up their miraculous to other people. We aren’t Hawk Moth. And that makes it so much worse. That we have to put the defense of the world on children.”

Alarm bells go on in Marinette’s head when Ms. Bustier says the other teachers agree with her. Maybe it’s an exaggeration, and only some of them really agree. However her gut feeling is screaming at her. This is not going to be an easy fix, plan A is going to be very hard to pull off based on Ms. Bustier opinion. The magic could help, but it has been Marinette’s experience that adults are a lot more cynical than teenagers.

How does she play this? She knows that the solution needs to be fast and efficient. Playing up the magic aspect is not enough. Plan B is also going to be more complicated than originally thought. Ms. Bustier seems really guilty over the thought that the heroes of Paris are as young as her students - the irony - so even admitting at being ‘younger’ than the public perception is not going to be easy.

Ms. Bustier seems to have recomposed herself, she is no longer crying. Marinette feels insanely guilty in that moment. Ms. Bustier didn’t deserve to me put on the spot like that, especially because she felt uncomfortable talking about it. “Maybe…” The class focuses back on Marinette, but she doesn’t really look up from her desk.
“…they aren’t teenagers anymore?” It’s obvious a way to try to comfort Ms. Bustier. In that moment she feels Alya grabbing her hand. She looks at her and receives a compassion stare. She probably thinks that Marinette feels guilt about pushing the subject - it’s so much more than that - but she can’t tell her truth, so she smiles. Marinette feels like she has spent the day faking smiles, and it isn’t even lunch time.

“Maybe you are right Marinette. I hope they aren’t, and if they are I hope they have a support system in place.” Marinette feels a stabbing pain in her heart, but keeps smiling not really saying anything. Adrien smiles at her, and for a second Marinette finds it a little easier to keep a smile on her face.

The debate continues but she doesn’t really add anything else. They talk a little about the ethical issues of having teenagers fight Hawk Moth, but they don’t really get into the issue. No one wants Ms. Bustier to start crying again.

At lunch time Marinette is still pretty quiet, but her classmates assume it’s because of the class debate. She has a lot on her mind. How to handle the situation? How to approach her parents? Can she approach her parents knowing they might react in the same way as Ms. Bustier? She needs to talk to Chat and come up with a plan, there is no way they can ignore this. They need to release a joint statement about the issue and fast.

“Marinette, girl are you listening to me?” Alya brings her back to the table.

“Sorry, I am a little distracted…”

“Dudette, I don’t think Ms. Bustier took it personal. It wasn’t like you were trying to make her feel bad. You didn’t even push that hard, and you would have stopped if you noticed Ms. Bustier was uncomfortable.”

That wasn’t really true; Marinette was going to push for an answer no matter what. She needed the answers to come up with a solution. However Nino didn’t know that.

“I think Ms. Bustier didn’t take their supposed ages well.” Adrien says, while smiling at Marinette. Normally she would become incapable of speech if Adrien spoke with her, but today she was just too worried.

“I can’t say that I blame her. This morning I was talking about it with Nora and she was pretty freaked out. I didn’t really think it was a big deal. She pointed out that if ten years the twins want to pick up magical jewelry and go fight Haw Moth, I probably won’t be very happy.” Alya looks nervous for the first time in the conversation. Marinette can’t tell if it’s because she’s worried about her secret identity or if she is having second thoughts about being Rena Rouge.

“Yeah, if Chris decided to pick up superhero as a career in a decade, I would lock the little dude in his room.”

“Why? You said that you didn’t really think that Ladybug and Chat Noir were adults- Why is the thought of your little brother becoming a superhero in the future so weird? Especially, because he would be older than you are right now.”

“Dude its different when you have little siblings. You look at them you know that someday they will be adults with responsibilities and duties, but you don’t just think that day will come. Trying to picture them saving the day is weird.”

“You and Alya are part-time superheroes. You haven’t figured out that it’s more than saving the
day.’ Marinette thinks back to Chat Noir first appearances when he didn’t look like he was taking the job seriously. With time that pass.

All part-time heroes still see the akuma as someone they need to defeat, and then save the day. They all look up to her for a winning plan. They don’t feel the pressure that she and Chat feel every single day. They don’t know the fear she has of failure.

She can’t fail, not even once. If she does, then Hawk Moth wins. They don’t know that sometimes, after the real rough akumas, she lays in her bed beyond exhausted but incapable of falling asleep. Her brain wouldn’t let her rest with the what-if scenarios running to her head. Sometimes it’s so hard to be Ladybug.

The conversation ends when Adrien leaves a little early to call Nathalie, and Nino needs something from Max. Marinette looks at Alya. “Do you think they are too young?”

“What?”

“Do you think that Ladybug and Chat Noir are too young to be fighting Hawk Moth?”

“What? Marinette they are awesome. They always save the day, they are amazing heroes.” Alya looks at Marinette like she has gone mad.

“I know that. I am not asking because I doubt their success—“she does, sometimes it’s the only thing she can think about “—is more along the lines of their mental health. I mean they might have a busier schedule than Adrien.” She laughs awkwardly.

“Well, we still don’t know their ages for sure. They are probably older than us, and besides they were chosen for a reason.” Sure, Master Fu was too old and he needed young people who would fit the miraculous. They didn’t get chosen because they were the best options around, they got chosen because their youth would allow them to grow into the powers of the miraculous. A dark part of her brain whispers that it was because they were naïve enough to want the job.

“You’re probably right.” The smile she gives Alya hurts. “I’m just worry after the way Ms. Bustier looked…” she trails off. Marinette is worried about the reactions of the rest of Paris.

Alya hugs her. ”Don’t take it personal. Ms. Bustier was just emotional. The miraculous magic probably affected her more than us. She didn’t know they weren’t adults. She will get used to it, and then it will be old news.”

“You’re right. It’s just been a weird day. I mean I got here fifteen minutes before the bell rang.”

“I know. It has been a crazy day.” They walk arm in arm to class, the rest of the day goes pretty quickly. Alya rushes home after she starts getting calls from TV stations about the theory. The news is about to go national.

Marinette walks calmly back home, and allow herself to relax a little. It’s a beautiful day.

“Hi, honey how was your day?” Her mom asks as soon as Marinette walks thought the door.

“Crazy. There’s this new theory on the Ladyblog that had the entire school talking about it.”

“Really? What was it about?” Her dad asks.

“Ladybug and Chat Noir ages.” Both her parents look surprise. ”You should read it when you have time. It’s pretty interesting.” A few clients came in and Marinette starts to head upstairs, her mother
tells her that they’ll talk more when the bakery closes. That leaves about three hours to call Chat Noir, and search for more information online.

Getting a hold of Chat takes priority, so she transforms and checks her yo-yo; she has a message from Chat Noir:

“M’ Lady I have seen this theory on the Ladyblog that might be a cat-astrope. I can’t meet up until patrol...something in my personal life...but I assume we might need to chat. Eiffel tower, the usual time? Stay pawsitive. See you later.” (Link)

Well, that is one less problem. Chat’s aware of the problem and they will meet later.

However in the back of her mind there are two red flags. One, Chat already knows about the problem, which means the theory has gone viral. Two, he actively sought her out with the problem - normally he’d waited for her lead - but it’s obvious that he’s worried. His message was a lot shorter than normal and he was talking a mile a minute.

He might have been rushed by personal issues - he did mention something going on - but Marinette is more incline to believe he’s a little anxious. She takes a deep breath lies on her bed and groans. She really thought today was going to be a slow day.

Chapter End Notes

Hello. How are you? Thank you all for the comments and advices given in the last chapter.

Last chapter I told you this story was going to be 5-7 chapters. Now I know for sure, it's going to be 7 Chapters. The planing of all the Chapters is done, it's just a matter of writing. Since I work it will take a while. I was actually only going to update this when I finished Chapter 5, but then it turn into a Frankenstein of a Chapter. Still it's almost done. It actually gave me two different ideas for other fics. I put together loose 'plans' for those fics, but I don't actually write more than one fic at the time. So don't expect to see them here. I did say that I would update once a month. So I guess this is december chapter. Hope you like my Christmas gift. Sorry for any mistakes. Be nice in the comments.

Blood Wolf
Taking a deep breath Marinette ponders her options. She doesn’t really have a lot of distractions for the rest of the day. There isn’t a lot of homework that day - she only has a single sheet that she could fill out in ten minutes - patrol isn’t for a few hours, and her parents don’t really need any help. She could just work on some fashion projects she has, but first she needs advice.

She decides to just ask for Tikki’s opinion on how to handle things and detransforms. It will help her relax a little, even if Tikki doesn’t know what do.

Tikki immediately starts munching on a cookie. “Do you have any advice?” Since Tikki has been with her from the beginning of the day, she must have some type of advice.

“Not really. Throughout the years there have been questions regarding the worth of the heroes, their magical abilities, and much more. The age concern is something more recent. I had Ladybugs that were around your age already married with a kid…”

“YOU HAD LADYBUGS FOURTEEN AND PREGNANT!?”

“Around you age, most were older. But you forget that I have seen cultures, that if you weren’t married by twenty you were doomed to be a spinster. Times change, medicine evolved, and people started to put more importance on childhood. The guardians of the miraculous used to start their studies before they were even ten years old, and the training was really difficult and harsh. After their demises Fu never tried to train anyone, and you’re the first Ladybug I had in over 200 years.”

“Oh. So people thinking Ladybugs were too young…”

“Hasn’t really happen before. However, I don’t think this will be a bad thing. You’re teacher said that they need the heroes. All the comments you’ve seen so far come to the same conclusion. I doubt that anyone will try to stop from being Ladybug.”

“I’m not worry about that, no one wants to go into Hawk Moth territory like ‘Give me your miraculous’. But the public opinion is important. If people think we are too young they might interfere with our work. When I get hit by some insane projectile as Ladybug, people just assume I can shake it off and keep going. But if they see a teenager get hit by the same thing…the feeling wouldn’t be the same. Anger and frustration will rise and Hawk Moth will turn that into more akumas…”

“Yes, but you will deal with it. You need to have faith that people aren’t going to lose their minds over this. There might be an adjustment period, but after that people will still see that Ladybug and Chat Noir protect the city.”

“You’re right. I have a couple plans but I need to talk to Chat Noir about it. Right now I’m leaning
towards plan B - tell them we are young, but not too young, in our late teens. They might fixate a little, but they wouldn’t obsess over the issue.”

“That’s the spirit! Everything will work out in the end. Besides in less than two weeks you’ll turn fifteen, you’ll be laughing by then.”

Marinette checks her phone for messages, but everything is clear. The Ladyblog page has crashed down and a few online journals have started to share the theory. Nadja Chamack is even doing a special about it tonight.

“I guess I’m going to do my homework and finish a few design projects. I still need to see what my parents think about all of this.”

“Relax. You have time, besides in a few weeks this will be old news.” Tikki snuggles Marinette’s right cheek and gives her a tiny kiss.

“In a few weeks the magic will probably kick in.”

Tikki freezes mid air, looks at Marinette in shock. “What do you mean?” Her voice goes up an octave.

“Well the miraculous magic doesn’t just change our appearances. I mean in the beginning I remember seeing the differences between my friends…”

“What!?” Marinette gets another sinking feeling.

“I know it took a while…but I started to see the differences that the magic was causing in our appearances. But don’t worry after a while I could easily see past the differences.” Marinette finishes with a big smile.

Meanwhile Tikki just stands there, mouth gaping, face frozen in complete shock. “You…You…you…what?”

“…” Marinette isn’t sure what to say. Tikki goes through several emotions in a span of seconds.

“Marinette being able to tell apart different features of the other superheroes while in costume is not normal. Chat Noir is the exception because he is your counterpart.” Tikki voice goes up a decibel in panic “Very few Ladybugs where able to identify this situation, much less analyze the magic behind it.”

Marinette blinks hard. “I thought all Ladybugs were chosen because they had a very creative mind and were able to think outside of the box?”

“Of course, but that doesn’t mean they could all see beyond the magic so easily. You didn’t just see beyond the magic. After a while it just stopped affecting you. Marinette you gain a little immunity to the magic. That is extremely rare. You are one of the most creative Ladybugs I have ever had and you are still very young.”

“What?” now it was Marinette that was baffled.

“Some humans are a little more magical inclined, when they partner up with miraculous jewelry for long periods of time. But you developed an actual case of magical immunity to the miraculous magic.”

‘Great another thing to worry about’ Marinette thinks but doesn’t say. “Should I be worry?”
“No. I mean side affects shouldn’t be any different that the ones you already know.”

“You mean the good luck and the creativity?”

“You always had creativity. Everything you create was something that you would have made, no matter what. The miraculous just gives you a… how do I put this… a hunger for it. You want to create more often. The good luck is different, but not completely related to me. Humans do have good and back luck without any outside forces interfering.”

“Ok. Should I inform Master Fu of this?”

“Not right now. Sent him a text that you need to talk about the magic of the miraculous and how it affects you. But it’s not really a priority right now… You have other problems.”

“You scared me…” Tikki goes back to hugging Marinette’s cheek.

“Oh, Marinette… I am so sorry, that was not my intention. You just caught me off guard, I was amazed. Don’t worry, is not a bad thing, and Master Fu will tell you the same. Just try to relax a little you had a stressful day.”

Marinette decided to take Tikki’s advice and relax. Her parents would call her when they closed the bakery. Marinette decided to get lost in her work. She finished her homework - still somehow amazed at being at the top of her school work - and finished all the designs that had been commission. Finished two personal projects and filled half a sketchbook with new ideas for a new collection.

Three hours later when her parents were about to come up, Marinette was basically try to keep busy anyway she could.

She tried to text Alya, but gotten a text back from Nino saying that the Ladyblog had crashed so much, that Alya had to updated the website to accommodate the new viewers. That and two news stations had asked for access to the blog’s commentaries and for her commentary on the matter.

Apparently, Alya had begged her parents to attend the show, and they cracked. Since Alya would attend a night show, her parents had agreed to let her skip school for tomorrow. She would receive her homework via email - they had ask Ms. Bustier - and had to stop drinking coffee for the next month.

Marinette shudders at the compromise that Alya made. One month without coffee was just not worth it. Her mind flashes back to the first time she saw Alya earlier in the day she looked a little jittery and in needed of a goodnight’s rest. Alya’s parents had probably allowed her to skip school - not because of the night show - but due to the fact that Alya was going to crash sooner or later. No matter how strong you are the need for sleep will always be stronger.

She texted back asking the time Alya was going to be on, she would try to watch it.

“Marinette we’re closed. We have a few cookies and macaroons leftover.” When her parents notice that Marinette had started to take more cookies than usually - Tikki’s fault - they made sure to make a half a dozen more everyday so she could always have them. They already did this for the macaroons - her weakness where the strawberry ones.

It always warmed her hearth. It was so cozy and thoughtful exactly what made Marinette’s parents the best. “Wait a minute, I’m coming.”

“Ok. Be careful with the stairs.” Her dad worried too much.
“Tikki how many cookies do you have up here?”

“Four.”

“Leave those for patrol. We’ll split the others, half for now, half for tomorrow.”

Tikki gives her a brilliant smile. She never has the risk of running out of cookies - living in the bakery guaranties it - but better safe than sorry. Tikki hides in her jacket for moral support and Marinette walks slowly down stairs.

She greets her parents with hugs and steals the sweets. “Busy day?”

“Nothing we couldn’t handle.” Her dad replies. “We are doing a catering event this weekend, but we have everything ready. The ingredients are already here, we hired help for the shop and for the event-”her dad smiles weirdly at her probably thinking back at the last time she helped them out at an event”and we are ready for every eventuality. It’s just out of the city. We might not be back before Sunday night.”

“Do you need help?” Her parents both look at each other and have a silent conversation.

“No, sweetie we’re ready. We also took the next weekend off for your birthday and you grandmother is coming to town.” Marinette smiles at the news.

“That’s great.” Finally, some good news.

Marinette knows that now is a great time to show them the theory, and ask for her parents opinions. Ms. Bustier tear stain faced flashes back in to her mind, and she has to force herself to remain composed.

“What about you? You said that school was crazy today because of something on the Ladyblog?”

“Yeah, Alya is really busy today. She’s not going to school tomorrow because some news station wants to talk to her about it.” Her parents raise their eyebrows at that “Have you had a chance to read the theory?”

Her dad looks at her sheepish, but here mother looks like she knows something is up.

“The theory about Ladybug and Chat Noir ages?” her mother has caught up that something is off. She just doesn’t know what.

“Yup. Here, maybe is on TV.” Turning on the TV was a huge mistake. Nadja Chamack was talking about their ages, and the headline read:”Ladybug and Chat Noir: The Child Soldiers of Paris?”

Her parents gap at the TV in shock. Nadia’s voice filed the silence and her parents eyes were basically glued to the TV. There was a panel with four people discussing this - Alya was there - and it was a very heated discussion.

“-after the theory was published, several people have tried to disprove it. The most popular choice is by commenting that since the magic affect our perception of the heroes, this may be another illusion.”

“Nadja let me stop you right there. While I wouldn’t say that magic falls under my expertise, I don’t see what type of combat advantage is making it the heroes seem like they are growing up. I’m sorry, even from a disguise point of view is weak. Why would it choose to affect only their growth? If it already disguises their features, their hair and eye color, why not their height?
Furthermore why would their growth be continuous? If the magic was affecting our perception of them, shouldn’t they be growing and shirking depending on the photo?”

Marinette looks at her parents and motions for them to sit on the couch, where they could all watch the show. Maybe watching this we’ll be easier than trying to explain the problem. Her parents still look a little shock, but now they didn’t look quite as confused. She honestly can tell if that’s a good or bad thing.

Marinette looks back to the TV and sees Alya, looking really happy to be there. Inside Marinette is panicking a little because even thought they are only focusing on Ladybug and Chat Noir. If they start to talk about the part-time heroes, Alya might slip up. It would be another problem that she cannot afford right now.

The conversation between Madam Chamack and some scientist guy gets more heated. The man reminds Marinette of how Max sometimes looks unhappy talking about magic, even though Max knows that magic is real. Nadja is trying to push for the theory that the magic is affecting how the public perceives the heroes age. The scientist guy is not having it, and keeps pointing out that if that were true the heroes’ growth would not be progressive. It would at times look like they had de-aged.

Marinette wonders if one of the reasons that Nadja is pushing so much for the not-teenagers side is because she has been akumatized. If the adults all thought that they were fighting two adults, what would happen once they realize, they were fighting teenagers?

The camera focus on another man that seemed oddly familiar to Marinette “We have to consider another part of this. If this is true and the superheroes of Paris are indeed minors, what are we going to do about this?” A caption appeared underneath the man - he was a Commissar of the Paris Police Department - Commissar Durand. Marinette remembers seeing him after some of the longest akuma fights.

“What do you mean?” Nadja asks.

“We are all aware that Hawk Moth is after the heroes’ magical jewels. There have been many discussions over the correct way on how to handle akumas. While there is an overwhelming consensus in letting Ladybug and Chat Noir handle the actual fight. The technical support of the heroes and how to deal with civilians during the fights have been mix. That and-”

“Can you be more specific?” The scientist interrupts.

“Well, we know that civilians will run around Paris trying to see the akumas” Alya looks sheepish at the Commissar Durand words “how to handle those people and other things, like emotional support for the victims are all frequently discuss…that sort of things. If the heroes are actually younger than what we have assumed so far, the police department might have to interfere in some aspects.”

Marinette’s feels a deep sense of dread, this is exactly what she doesn’t need right now. The Police Force or the Mayor’s office deciding to stick their noses in the fights was a disaster.

“Are you saying that the Paris police will step in if Ladybug and Chat Noir are minors? How will you interfere? Will you ask for them to surrender their miraculous?” Alya goes into full panic mode.

“No. Let me start by saying that even if this theory is confirmed, the police department has no interest in asking for Ladybug and Chat Noir miraculous.” Marinette breathes a sigh of relief. This
was one of her biggest fears, having to protect the miraculous from Hawk Moth, Mayura and Paris.

“Our main focus today and all days is to stop and catch Hawk Moth and Mayura. Make no mistake, even if Ladybug and Chat Noir started by being vigilantes, the police department and the Mayor office has given them special permits to operate in Paris. They have also dealt with treats outside of Akumas. If it’s confirmed that they are underage, we’ll have to take some steps regarding their current legal position.”

“Such as?” Nadja inquires, probably sensing a story there.

“First, we will ask them to cut down their patrol. In situations with akumas is inevitable for them to be needed, but they usually only take care of petty crime when they patrol. Occasionally they handle more…sensitive cases—”

“Can you give us an example?”

“No, we can’t discuss ongoing cases. Most of the patrol they do is also done by police every day. I won’t have two underage kids running around Paris at all hours of the night, doing work that my officers should do. This is not criticism to the heroes, this is just common sense.”

“They sometimes find akumas when patrolling. How will the police department compensate that?” Scientist guy asks again.

“Statistically the akumas that show up while they are patrolling represent less than 10% of cases. I believe that the akuma alert apps often inform the heroes of existing situations, there is no reason they need to patrol every night.”

“Is this the about the estimates of Lady’sChat7 of the loosing twenty hours a week patrolling?” ask Alya.

Before the Commissar Durand could answer the scientist - Marinette really needed to find out his name - says “Actually me and my colleagues have review that interpretation. We agree that statistically it’s correct, when confronted with entire period that Ladybug and Chat Noir have been active. However, over the last year there has been a significant increased over the amount of time that they patrol. If we consider only the last six months, their average time spent patrolling has actual increases to thirty hours a week.”

The Commissar Durand replies “We weren’t aware of that, but that actual just reinforces our position. Even if they aren’t underage, we will still be asking them to cut back the hours. I have seen several officers of the law suffer from burnout due to overworking. The police department can handle it, Ladybug and Chat Noir should focus more on the akumas. We will handle the rest.”

Marinette feels an overwhelming gratitude for Commissar Durand. She chokes down her feelings hyper aware of her parents in the room, but their eyes are still glued to the TV.

“What were the other steps the police are considering taking?”

“The second one is involved them in our search looking for the identity of Hawk Moth. Is no secret that the police department has been investigating the akuma attacks since they started, but for obvious reason this is one of the most secret investigation we currently have.”

“Will you ask what they currently know about Hawk Moth? I know that they are also looking for him—” Alya asks.

“You know for certain that Ladybug and Chat Noir are investigating the identity of Hawk Moth?”
Nadja interrupts.

“Yes. They told me, but when I ask them for details, Ladybug said that they couldn’t share.”

“That’s not surprising. For them it’s also an active investigation and an extremely delicate one.” Commissar Durant intervenes again. “The final thing we would like to do is actually an offer that they can accept regardless of age. We would like to offer the heroes the possibility of therapy. We have psychologists that are specialized in trauma cases while working in law enforcement, PTSD, and…” Commissar Durant stops for a minute and takes a sip of water. “We also have contacts with psychologists that have worked with Child Soldiers in war areas.”

Silence follows the last sentence. Every person on the panel looks like they are in deep reflection.

“Do you believe that would be necessary for Ladybug and Chat Noir?” Nadja asks softly.

“I would hope not. But realistically? Hawk Moth is a very special case. I could go on for hours speaking about this case from several angles…” He seems to be at a loss for words. ”I can tell you that even from my side of the issue - where I am not as involved as them - it’s an exhausting case. This has to have taken a toll on the heroes, even if we prefer to see them as invincible, they’re not. Everyone needs help sometimes and we have the means to help them. We’ll be here.”

The rest of the interview is a debate over the superheroes ages, workloads, magic, and how to give support to the heroes of Paris. Marinette fights back tears for most of it. She turns off the TV and faces her parents. She has no idea how to start.

“Now I see why you told us that you had a crazy day.” Her mom tells us “I could only imagine how your friends reacted to this.”

Marinette laugh nervously “Yeah.”

“I always thought that the media age the heroes up, but I never thought it was this much.” Her dad finally says, and Marinette’s heart beat does the tango.

“What do you mean you knew that they were aged up?”

“Marinette I invited Chat Noir for brunch after you declared your love for him.” Why did he have to lead with one of the most awkward moments of Marinette’s life? She groans and her parents smile at each other.

“It wasn’t love, it was just a crush.” A fake one at that. “Why are you bringing up that now? I thought we had agreed to never discuss that ever again” This day hasn’t been awful enough without going into the awkward moments of Marinette Dupain-Cheng’s life.

Her dad laughs and her mother smiles at her. “Do you think I would have invited him, if I thought he was a grown man? Around my little girl? Absolutely not, I would have gone for a stale baguette and beat that little shady cat across town.” Her dad makes a superhero pose and grabs the remote control to mimic a baguette.

She laughs at his antics. “How did you know? Or better yet how did you suspected?”

That was the most urgent question. How in the world had her parents dismissed the magic? Was this connected to her ability to do the same? A lot of questions start going to her mind, but one gains her attention. If her parents always suspected the heroes being underage, did they ever suspect her?
“I didn’t. It was you mother that first suspected and told me that they were probably younger.” Her dad replies.

“It was just something I noticed, when I first met Ladybug. She was really nervous and seemed a little panicky, I could have guessed it was from the akuma on the loose, but something felt off… She just seemed young.” Her mom explains. “Plus, when your dad was akumatized, Chat Noir blamed himself almost immediately, in a way that most adults don’t. As we grow older we start to realize that sometimes people get upset at our actions, even if we aren’t trying to hurt them. He rejected you and that probably hurt you. But it wasn’t his fault that he didn’t have feelings for you, and your father reaction was over the top.”

Her dad makes a sheepish face.”I should have handled that better.”

“You should be careful to not hurt other people, but sometimes things are out of our hands. That’s wisdom that comes from life experience; in that moment I could tell that Chat Noir just didn’t have it. From then on, I just knew. I’m still not sure how young they are and probably never will. But I have faith in them.”

Marinette wanted so badly to hug her mother in that moment for so many things. For accepting the heroes age - her age - for helping Chat, for being kind and loveable.

Marinette also accepted a few things in regards to this situation. She didn’t need her parent’s opinion on the matter, they already knew to a certain extent. So their opinion would have no influence on her decision. That actually took a huge weight out of her shoulders - Ms. Bustier crying face flashed again in Marinette’s mind - she could press and find out more about their opinions on teenagers superheroes, but it wasn’t need.

So, she spared herself the hurt and lets the conversation go. They start talking about Alya and her sudden TV appearances. They laugh when Marinette tells them about the coffee deal. They have a nice dinner, full of laughter and love. She doesn’t dare to bring up the topic again.

Before going upstairs to transform and meet up with Chat Noir, she hugs her parents. As she looks at them one last time she thinks ‘They can never know that I’m Ladybug.’

They are great parents and good people. Her dad is often times overprotective and tends to jump to conclusions, but he loves her above all things. Her mom is a more quiet influence in her life, often supportive and pointing out things that Marinette had never considered in the first place. Marinette always went to them with her problems.

It would crushed them to know just how much she suffered this last few years in silence, and never asked for their help. That every time they scold her for missing school, for being late, and other things, she was out saving Paris. When they took her coffee away - after they believed she drank too much - she still transformed into Ladybug and went to buy coffee, because she needs it to function. The sleepless nights, the panic attacks, the feelings she has to suppress. So many things she kept secret over the years to protect them.

She didn’t know how they would react if they knew, and she didn’t want to find out. She felt Tikki hugging her cheeks again, and notices that she’s crying. She quickly wipes her tears away.

“Do-does my mom…also have some type of magical resistance?”

“No, it’s not uncommon for the magic to work less, around people who live in the same space as you. For example, your parents don’t come to check up on you when you out fighting, that’s the magic covering for you. That means the magic is working more on them to hide you and your
identity, things like age aren’t that important. Besides, you’re mother notice something was off with Ladybug and Chat Noir’s maturity. She didn’t notice the physical changes, it was something else entirety.”

“I didn’t ask their opinion.” Marinette whispers softly. “I was too scared.”

“They gave you the opinion on the heroes. They told they have faith in you.”

“It wasn’t the opinion I needed.”

“I think it was exactly what you need to hear. This has been an emotional day, you deserved a break.”

“Thank you.” Marinette doesn’t agree with what Tikki said, but there is no reason to argue, she just heads to the roof and transforms.

…

As she swings across Paris her mind is a mess. So she takes a detour through the roofs and just runs. Runs to forget the nightmare that this day has been, runs to feel the cold wind on her face, runs to feel like she can control the situation. She just runs and for a moment she truly feels free. Right now she is just flying through the air and having fun. Marinette actually feels like a kid.

She arrives at the Eiffel Tower with a minute to spare, and the biggest smile.

“Good evening my lady.” Chat appears with a smirk.

“Hi Chat.” She smiles at him. They both take in the view and sit on the edge. “So what did you think of the theory?”

“They were not kitten around when they pawt that together.” She sighs, she has a feeling that tonight the puns are going to appear with a vengeance. She noticed that when he’s nervous, he starts to pun more.

“Yeah, it’s the only thing anyone can talk about. I actually have come up with two plans.”

“Of course, you have my lady paw-” He smiles at her, but she cuts him off before he can make a pun.

“Plan A: we confirm something that people suspect, the magic is affecting how they see us, as such we look like we are aging but it’s not truth. This plan as the advantage that they would stop worry about us, but it would take a lot of work to make them believe it. And there is no guarantee that people would believe us.”

“Sounds claw-ever.” She ignores him.

“Plan B: we tell them we started this, when we were 17/18 years old. Young, but not as young as we are. On one hand this is more believable, and it puts people’s fears away. On the other it brings into question why we were chosen so young? And the other heroes might also be put under a bigger scrutiny.”

“Another claw-ever plan bugaboo.” He pauses for a minute. “Purr-haps plan B would be the better one.”

“I think so too. Plan A, although it would be easier has a lot more things that could go wrong. Plan
B then?"

"Paw-sitive. Bugaboo did you notice that the magic also affects us? My kwami just said it was obvious."

"Actually I did. My kwami was surprised; apparently is not something that happens often?" She decides to leave out the part where Tikki nearly had a heart attack.

"Wait a meow-ment, are you kitten me?" She shakes her head. "Of course you did my lady you’re amazing." Chat Noir gives Ladybug a very soft smile.

"There is something else I want to talk about with you. Did you catch the sit down on TVi?"

"A little bit. A friend sent me a link after it was over."

"Did you see the part where the Commissar was talking about us and the police force?"

"Yes."

"I think we should consider the first and second option."

"Not the third?"

She hesitates for a second. "If you want to give it a go, I wouldn’t stop you. But I think right now is just too risky. There are a million things that could go wrong. We could accidentally reveal ourselves, we could endanger the psychologist, and Hawk Moth could find out about our sessions and used them against us."

"You’re right. I just thought…"

"I know." They have both considered therapy, but it’s risky. Not only opening up like that could akumatize them, they would put an innocent life on the line if Hawk Moth ever found out. Ladybug grabs Chat’s hand and squeezes.

"But the first and the second are different. On the first, we cut patrol back to an hour a night, on weekdays. Two hours on Friday and Saturday. How does that sound?"

"Purr-fect. I sometimes get a little overworked in my personal life."

Marinette knows that the Commissar Durant wanted them to completely cut patrol. But they can’t. Not only it’s the time they usually use to relax and plan things, it’s also important to show the citizens of Paris that they are always here.

"I know the feeling. The second one of sharing details with the police, I think that we should leave out things that involve magic. Details like where the miraculous are from, how we gotten the miraculous and stuff like that. I actually think that we need to talk to Master Fu, before revealing anything."

"Sure, we could find out who is doing the investigation. Perhaps we should ask a cop we trust like Lieutenant Raincomprix. He’s been to some akuma fights and seems like he’s good at his job."

"We would have to be discreet about it. We also might not talk with the police, if Master Fu finds the ‘association’ too dangerous. We’ll see."

"Purrfect. I was a lot more panicky before coming here. I was a little scared."
“Me too. But we have a plan now, and my kwami has been telling me that things will be fine. Maybe we could patrol for a while? Show people we aren’t really affected by this. Have a little race on the roofs.”

He gives her the goofiest smile and his eyes sparkle with amusement. “Lead the way, my lady.”

Just as Marinette was about to stand up, she hears a scream. “AKUMA”. She looks at Chat Noir and they both sigh.

Today really wasn’t her lucky day.

Chapter End Notes

Hello. Happy New Year if you celebrate it now. Thank you for all the comments. I was actually got around to update this chapter sooner than I believed possible. Fun fact for a while I considered to put chapter 3 and 4 together that I decided I like cliffhangers. So they are separate, but there is an advantage since they have basically been written and review together there is a strong possibility that the 4th chapter will come before the next month. Next chapter we finally get to the angst of the fic. I’m currently writing the last chapter of this fic - chapter 7 - it’s a beast of a chapter. I’m not kidding I’m 8000 words in and still have quite a bit left to write. I know some of you thought that the reactions from the parents would be pretty tragic but this is after Tom got akumatized and there is no way a father like Tom would invite a grown man to have brunch with his 14 daughter. So I had to write around that. This is near the Startrain episode but with Ikari Gozen and Party Crasher having already happen. Hey if the show schedule can be…challenging. So can my fic. Again thank you for reading this. Beware the mistakes and be nice in the comments. Blood Wolf
Chapter Summary

An akuma attack and PTSD is a mean bitch.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

They run towards the scream to look for the akuma. The good thing about this akuma it was very close to the Eiffel tower. The bad thing was that he seemed pissed and was firing some sort of beam/ray at random people. The akuma also had a good aim, which meant that he hit most of the people he targeted.

The people he hit would have a purplish glow. They would say something – Ladybug and Chat Noir were too far away to actually listening to what it was - and the glow would fade. Then the victims would run at top speed, in the akuma’s opposite direction. Ladybug was a bit puzzled by the reaction of the victims. Obviously it wasn’t a mind controlling akuma, but what did he do to them?

“Ladybug and Chat Noir, I am Truth Soldier give me you miraculous.” It was an overused sentence, but at least it was consistent.

The akuma was tall, dressed in a horrible purple camouflage that had Marinette designer instincts offended. The gun he was firing was a plastic toy - and the possible location of the akuma - it was the only thing green. Bright purple and lime green…seriously?

“Can you tell Hawk Moth that he really needs new material? And what type of soldier is a liar…” Chat cuts off, and evades the beam. It caught a young couple behind them.

The akuma shouted at them “What secrets have you been keeping from your parents?” Ladybug suddenly realizes that this akumatization could be related to them and that the theory. Today really wasn’t her lucky day.

“We aren’t supposed to be out alone, we didn’t tell our parents.” They responded almost immediately. They keep spilling things that they’ve kept secret from their parents. Once they are done, they just run out of there. At least it won’t cause a lot of damage to people, just really embarrassing memories.

“Chat Noir he has the power to make you tell the truth. That power could be very dangerous if it hits us.” Identities revealed level of danger. This was a pretty weak akuma in terms of powers, but an extremely dangerous one.

It was time for a little distraction. Chat Noir seems to read her mind and starts talking to the akuma.

“Why are you looking into people’s secrets? Did someone reveal one of yours?” The beam goes after him with a vengeance. A part of her wants to tell Chat this is exactly the reason you don’t aggravate akumas. The other part is just relieved due to the distraction Chat is providing.

Of course, that’s the moment the crew from TVi shows up and starts asking questions. It’s closely
followed by what appears to be all news crews in Paris. Does the magic of the akumas, make people forget they are very dangerous? Why does this keep happening?

“Ladybug are you underage? Ladybug do you parents know? Chat Noir how old are you?” Questions are bombard at them. A few of them get hit by the akuma, but that doesn’t even slow them down. A couple of them even start to make the akuma hit their competition to get an exclusive. Ladybug is so done with this.

Thankfully, the police department shows up, and Roger Raincompriz - Sabrina’s dad - starts pushing the reporters away. At least, there are still some reasonable people left in Paris.

Truth Soldier decides to start ranting when they don’t answer the questions “This is exactly the problem. You think you can do whatever the hell you want. Your poor parents probably don’t even know where you are. My daughter was the same way sneaking out to go to a concert, scared the crap out of me, and then has the nerve to tell me to relax. RELAX!? Absolutely not. Do you have any idea what could have happen? I didn’t know where you were.”

So this akuma was cause by family problems, even if the akuma was currently projecting a little bit of his issues on to them. Thank Kwami for small favors. It was more a private issue than him having a problem with their actual age.

Ladybug tries to calm him down. “You’re daughter should have ask for permission. But your reaction to her actions could have been a little exaggerated, maybe she told you to relax because of that?”

Marinette didn’t really believe that, mainly because his daughter sounded a bit unreasonable. When Marinette’s parents caught her skipping classes - because of the akumas - they ground her. It’s normal. Apparently this man’s daughter didn’t get the memo, and decided to aggravate her parent into an akuma.

The akuma was also not having it Ladybug’s explanation. “I want the truth. I command you to tell me. I’ll bear witness to all the secrets in Paris, and then I’ll keep my daughter home at all times.”

“That cat-titude is a-paw-ling. Keeping your daughter locked up, won’t solve anything. You need to relax or you daughter will just keep doing it…” Chat’s decides to antagonize the akuma a little more. This is not the type of akuma you want to antagonize. He’s too damn fast and goes after them with a vengeance.

“Chat the akuma must be in the gun. It’s the only thing that’s not purple.” Hawk Moth’s horrible fashion taste aside, it was time to call a Lucky Charm.

“Cover me.” Chat immediately starts pissing off the akuma even more. “Lucky Charm.”

“A police baton? Isn’t that weirdly forwards?” Yes, it was. It could also be from the strong desire that Ladybug felt the entire day of beating up Hawk Moth. Not that she would ever admit that to Chat Noir.

She surveys the scene. The police have gotten most of the journalists and civilians at a safe-ish distance. They are still shouting at them, but they’re more contained. She sees trees, benches, a few cars, and then notices the trash cans. They could use that to get close enough to the akuma and not get hit. Use her yo-yo to trip the akuma - Chat will be the distraction - and use benches to get the akuma’s gun stuck and break it with the baton. “I got it.”

Of course that’s the moment a civilian girl starts to run in their direction, and Truth Soldier aims
for the girl. Later, Ladybug would find out that the girl was the akuma’s daughter, and she was really worried about her father. She didn’t really blame her. If the situation were reversed she would also be super worried.

But right now? She was pissed off. After more than a dozen of requests to the public, to back the fuck off during akuma attacks. Tonight they had civilians and reporters glued to the police department, and civilians running towards the dangerous akuma. Was the universe kidding her? The girl didn’t even slow down, when Truth Soldier saw her.

Ladybug throws the trash can in the path of the girl, to protect her. It works the beam hits the trash can, and not the girl. Unfortunately that left Ladybug completely open, and the akuma takes the opening. Chat tried to jump in front of her, but the akuma was a lot faster. She gets hit by the akuma ray.

Chat Noir is on the ground in front of her looks really worried at what the akuma might ask. Ladybug is thinking that he might just grab her and run out of there. Akuma be damned.

Unfortunately Truth Soldier seems to take inspiration from the reporter’s questions. “How old are you?” Ladybug tries to fight like hell to keep her mouth shut, but she can’t hold in anymore.

“I’m fourteen years old.” The akuma freezes, Chat freezes, the entire crew of journalists that were following the fight freeze. Hell probably froze over. “FUDGE MY LIFE” Ladybug regains control of her voice. The akuma looks like it’s having an existential crises and a purple window appears. Inside Marinette starts panic in a way she couldn’t think it was possible.

As if things couldn’t get any worse, Chat Noir opens his mouth in front of a dozen cameras and says “Purr-fect, I’m only a year older than you bugaboo.”

Murder. Murder briefly flashed on Ladybugs mind, the baton suddenly makes a hell of a lot more sense. It wasn’t the akuma she needed to hit, it was her partner. Chat Noir seemed to read her mind, smile nervously and uses a cataclysm - on the still in shock - akuma. Truth Soldier doesn’t even try to fight it.

Apparently revealing to an akuma that you’re (probably) younger that his daughter was enough, to making it stop fighting you. Or at least shock them into temporary submission.

Ladybug catches and purifies the akuma, and uses the miraculous cure, but this akuma didn’t really leave a lot of physical damages. Yet, Marinette had a feeling that he would be the one with the biggest fallout. Closing her eyes and calming down, Ladybug takes a deep breath. Chat takes the lead and goes to reassure the victims.

Ladybug meanwhile still needs a moment to center herself. All the plans she and Chat were talking moments earlier, went down the drain. There is no way that she could play this off as anything, but the truth. All the work she had done today, all the planning gone. She just wanted to crawl into a ball and cry.

She looks at the cameras that are suddenly a lot closer, and swears violently.

“Language” a reporter screams, only for him to immediately look embarrassed. She glares at the man. Are you kidding me?

”Should you be out so late?” Another reporter asks. Again are you kidding me?

“There was an akuma.” She replies, like it's the most obvious thing in the world.
They all look hesitant at how to answer her. It was almost funny, after an entire fight shouting at her, and asking her questions, now they were completely quiet. Quiet reports, it was ridiculous. She briefly wonders what Alya would say, if she was here. She has a feeling that her best friend wouldn’t suffer from sudden “shy syndrome”, and just asks a million questions.

She decides to take advantage of the quiet reporters and make a brief statement. “I know that today there has been a lot of talk about mine and Chat Noir ages. I also know that right now you know my age. This changes nothing…” The public wakes up and roars at her.

“SILENCE.” She roars back at the crowd. Her scream so loud and powerful ends up scaring them into silence. For a moment the entire crowd realizes why she can go up against akumas so many times and win.

As Ladybug she often tries to keep calm, but this day as just been one thing after the other. “I don’t have a lot of time for public statements, this will be brief. Chat Noir and I will make another… statement later on, right now I don’t have time. I am Ladybug regardless of my age, I was chosen for a reason, and I am doing this to stop Hawk Moth and Mayura. None of the things you learn in the last 24 hours changes this.”

Chat Noir appears by her side and takes over. “I am Chat Noir, pun champion and local cat.” Some weak chuckles were heard. “I agree with Ladybug, none of the things you’ve learn tonight change the circumstances of what we are doing, of what we believe, and what we fight for.”

“That being said we know that it’s not an easy thing to hear. There been a lot of debate over the morals of using young heroes however there is a reason for that. One that we cannot share with the public. You’ll have to accept the reality of the situation, and let us do our jobs.” Ladybug says.

“We also ask again to stop running into the middle of akuma battles, it just makes our job harder.” All the people who tried to push through the police perimeter look ashamed.

Ladybug is so tired. Her earrings beep indicated that she has 3 minutes left. She decides to add something before going off to de-transform. Very softly she adds “Fighting is hard enough without all of you trying tell us what’s right, and what’s wrong. Please do not interfere.” She signals Chat Noir to meet up back in the tower, after their kwami’s are recharged, and leaves.

Later, when looking at the footage from the reporters, Marinette would notice that she looked exhausted while talking to the reporters. Most people would also pick up on this. What no one would notice because of the miraculous magic was the scared and desperate look in her eyes.

“All those plans…” Marinette looks at Tikki in complete defeat. She is hiding on a rooftop, while Tikki is eating the cookies.

“It will be alright. It’s out of your hands you just need to let the people react to the truth.” Tikki is glued to Marinette’s shoulder, trying to give her the most comfort possible.

“I don’t even know what to say to Chat.”

“You don’t need to decide now. Just tell him you need time to think about a plan.”

“I’m so mad at him. He…” she trails off, and swallows her anger. Her age becoming public knowledge was something they couldn’t avoid. Chat’s age was avoidable. What was he thinking when he open his mouth?
“I don’t think he did it on purpose. He probably got nervous.” Tikki tries to reassure her.

“The entire of Paris knows that Ladybug is fourteen year old girl, and Chat Noir is a fifteen year old boy. I don’t think our identities have ever been less secure. This is bad. We have no plans; no way to contain this, the public was already freak out by us possibly being underage, but now? Now they know our ages.”

“They already suspected that you were underage…”

Marinette cuts off Tikki. “Lady’sChat7 had theorize that we were between 15 and 18. Right now Paris knows I am even younger. I’ve been doing this for almost two years. They’re re all going to think I was 12 when I started this.” Marinette grabs her hair and pulls. Tikki immediately grabs her hands and stops her.

“You were 13…” She tries to be the voice of reason.

“Yeah, but I can’t really tell them that, can I? Still, most people thought that I was closer to 20 years old than 10 years old. I have no way to know how they are going to react to this.” Tikki just keeps whispering reassuring things to Marinette.

Marinette feels numb. There’s a part that’s still in shock over what happen. How did things get this bad, this fast? The day started so good. The reactions of the reporters keep playing back in her mind. “Should you be out so late?” 24 hours ago no one would ask Ladybug that question.

Now? Those questions might become commonplace. Would the people of Paris demand her miraculous? After all she did to protect this city, the sacrifices, the pain, the endless responsibilities, would it all be for nothing?

Ladybug and Chat Noir couldn’t give their miraculous to anyone. One of the first things they both learn is that the miraculous aren’t toys. Using them for personal gain would have consequences. Marinette thinks about the Ladybug and the Black Cat miraculous in the hands of governments and shudders.

They are weapons of mass destruction. Dangerous - even in their hands - in the wrong ones they are catastrophes wanting to happen. It’s something that she was aware the moment she put on the earrings for the second time. Marinette can’t recall the time she realized that she was wearing one of the most dangerous objects - known to man - in her ears.

Hawk Moth wanted the miraculous for a reason. He was willing to go to extreme lengths to guarantee his success. She recalls the fight with Syren, the millions of people that died with minutes. They don’t remember. The miraculous cure makes sure the victims of the akumas stay in permanent bliss.

Marinette doesn’t have that right; she remembers seeing the corpses of people, when going to Master Fu; remembers Chat Noir threatening to abandon her at the worst possible moment; remembers drowning on the amount of secrets she was keeping; remembers her fears that Syren, might be it, the akuma she can’t beat; remembers wanting to run back home to her parents and choking on the realization that they might not be there anymore. It was one of the worst days of her life.

“-nette, Marinette.” Tikki is calling her.

“W-What?”

Tikki is in front of her face, looking extremely worry. “You spaced out. I’ve calling you for
minutes. Marinette you have to transform and go see Chat Noir.”

“Right. Tikki spots on.” She stays in the shadows of the roofs and avoids busy streets. Marinette really doesn’t want to deal with anyone right now. Chat Noir is already there when she arrives, looking at the moon with a melancholic expression.

She has never seen him look like that. She guesses that the day has been hard for both of them. He looks at her and says nothing. Not a hello, not a single pun, just silence. Marinette is at a lost on how to start this. It feels wrong, even when Chat gets on her nerves for joking around during akuma fights she always knows what to say.

Chat Noir is the only one that she can always count to fill the silence. Well, was.

“All the plans…” Her voice comes out rough. She clears her throat before resuming. “The plans are useless. We don’t know how Paris is going to react to this. We need to be careful and go underground.”

“What do you mean?” His voice is hesitant, and he makes himself seem smaller.

“For the next month, we wouldn’t patrol. We’ll only come out if an akuma attacks. Tomorrow I am going to Master Fu, and ask him for advice. I don’t think he’ll have a lot of advices, but it’s worth a shot. I’ll text you his response.”

“No patrol for the next month? Isn’t that to long?” He looks really unhappy.

“I don’t know. Depending on the public’s reaction, it could be shorter or longer.”

“Why should we care about the public reaction? I mean they can’t take our miraculous away.” Chat pauses and smiles at her. “You can’t keep this cat down for long. I am paw-sitive that we could find a way to sneak around, and still patrol.”

He looks at Ladybug with eyes full of hope. Ladybug looks at him like he got hit one too many times in the head.

“Sneaking…Sneaking around? Are you insane? Did you completely forget what just happened?”

“No, of course not. I get why your worry, but the civilians might panic if we completely disappear. I know we’ll still be here for the akuma attacks, but they might think we got scared and ran.” He looks at her again with eyes full of hope, and this time she gets his point.

Chat’s right they can’t run and hide, and hope the problem goes away. In fact it might have the opposite effect, if the citizens of Paris stop seeing them it could become harder to get used to the idea. On the other hand, they might need to give it time, and space to process the news.

Both ideas had pros and cons. Still Marinette was leaning towards the pause in patrol, but not for a month. Her partner wouldn’t accept it, and would probably sneak out. Marinette didn’t know the details, but she had a feeling his home life was hard. Chat needs to get out, and making him sneak back behind her back, would probably just give him more stress.

The last thing they needed was more stress, this day was already nerve racking.

“What about a compromise? For the next week, we won’t patrol. Take a break from all of this. Next Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday we patrol for 1 hour, at night.”

“Why those three days?”
“There the days in the middle of the week, there’s less movement then. Most people are busy the following days with work or school. Plus, there is not a lot of movement on the streets. Next Thursday - depending on how this goes - we’ll discuss were we stand. I still want to skip the weekend: “Mainly because she wants to enjoy her birthday without too much stress.” -there will be a lot of people looking for us. In 3 weeks - depending on the situation - we might go back to patrol fulltime. However, I want to keep the previous plan of only patrolling one hour a night.”

“Oh.” He looks like he wants to add something, but remains quiet.

“We need to lay low for the next few days.”

“Be more paw-sitive, this will all be fine.”

“You say that like what just happen wasn’t incredibly dangerous. Chat our secret identities are on the line. If anyone wants to look for us, they know how ages. It’s a very good way to narrow down the search. Do you know who would like to know our identities? People like Hawk Moth.”

She takes a deep breath. “Why did you have to tell them your age?” She’s been trying to find a reason why Chat Noir thought that was a good idea. Marinette has tried to come up with a reason but so far? She’s coming up empty.

Any other day and she might find a reason, for Chat’s most impulsive action to date. Chat Noir is impulsive, but he usually has a reason for it. Aggravating dangerous akumas while fighting? His favorite distraction technique. Sacrificing himself for her? She’s the one that purifies the akumas.

Everything he does has a reason. Chat Noir is impulsive, but he has never been stupid. Stating his age, after the day they had? It’s not just impulsive or reckless, it’s pure stupidity. Chat called her first, about the article. Chat reach out to her to discuss the subject. Chat was relieved when she told him the plans.

All of these questions points to him being extremely worried about the situation. Why did he spit out his age in front of the world? It doesn’t make sense. What was the point? What was he trying to accomplish?

“Well, they already knew yours.” She glares at him. Is he serious trying to dodge the question? Marinette is not having it. Her day has already been hard enough. “There’s nothing we can do now…” He doesn’t finish the sentence.

Instead something inside Marinette snaps. The fear and frustration of the day just hits her hard. She doesn’t want to play right now. Marinette is tired, she wants to go home and try to rest. Not for Chat Noir to play hot potato with the truth. No. Absolutely not.

“Why did you tell them your age?” She screams at him. When his cat ears get flatten against the head, Marinette feels like a horrible person. “I’m so sorry…”

“No, I get it. This day is getting to you.” That doesn’t mean she has the right to scream at him, to take her anger out on him. Chat is her partner. She is not the only one having a bad day. The stress is also getting to him. He looks more subdue that usual, a melancholic expression graces his face, and the exhaustion of the day is clear in his movements.

A part of Marinette knows she should at least make him see that she doesn’t have the right to take out her anger on him. But the other part is so tired, so exhausted, so sad, and so broken that she doesn’t say anything.

“Why?” she whispers so quietly that only Chat’s cat ears were able to pick the words.
“Because you looked so scared, I never seen you look that scared. I just wanted to make you feel better any way I could. I didn’t even think…” He looks so lost, and Marinette doesn’t know how to make him feel better. “I wanted to take the spotlight out of you, so I open my mouth. I am sorry, I am so sorry.”

Marinette still doesn’t know what to say, so she hugs him. She feels his arms immediately wrap around her. They stay like that for a while no words exchanged, no explanations, nothing. There’s no need for it. They just hug each other, and somehow that eases the pain and stress of this day. When she finally pulls away, she makes sure to look him in the eyes.

He still looks tired, but he doesn’t look lost anymore. That’s enough. “I’m sorry.” Chat looks at her confused, probably wondering why she’s apologizing again. “I shouldn’t have taken out my anger at you…”

“It’s ok.”

Marinette takes his hands and holds them, looks back at him. ”It’s not. You’re my partner, and my friend. But that wouldn’t ever give me the right to take my anger out on you. This day hasn’t been just hard on me it must be pretty hard on you kitten. I should not have screamed at you. I should apologize for screaming at you. I’m sorry.”

He looks so surprise at being gifted an apology that a part of Marinette aches.

He takes a deep breath and looks back at her. “I’m sorry too. I didn’t handle the situation back there. I only made it worse.” He smiles back at her. “We’ll figure it out. No matter what. You have this cat’s word.”

She can’t help but smile back at him. They stay with each other just joking around and making some truly terrible puns. When she makes the first pun, Chat almost falls out of the tower. He looks at her in complete surprise, and then the smile he gives her could probably power up Paris. Chat takes her pun as a challenge and tries to out pun her anyway he can.

The silence that plague the beginning of the meeting disappears, and for a while both of them put the world behind them and just have a little fun. This will probably be the last time they see each other - outside of an akuma attack - for a while.

So they make sure to enjoy it. They stay up there until midnight, and they only go home, because they notice that a few news vans are starting to arrive at the bottom of the Eiffel Tower.

“See you soon, Chaton.”

“See you soon, bugaboo.”

….

She gets home late. Her parents have been sleeping for hours, so she’s careful not to make any noise. She detransforms in her room, and Tikki immediately goes for the cookies.

She decides to check her phone. Alya probably already heard the news, and is going ballistic.

You have 12 miss calls. You have 4 new messages.

From Nino: Hey Dudes and Dudettes, Alya ask me to send the class links for her interviews.
(Links)
From Alya: Girl, I told Nino to text you the links of my interviews. They brought me on board because they wanted the opinion of someone under the age of 20, but with experience in journalism. Nadja Chamack recommended me! I’m so happy! I’ll call you tomorrow.

From Alya: Marinette go see the Ladyblog right now! Ladybug got caught by an akuma and revealed her age. She’s fourteen, and Chat is fifteen. Damn it. I wanna call you, but my parents have threatened to take my phone away if I don’t go to bed. How can anyone sleep? WE KNOW LADYBUG AND CHAT NOIR AGES.

From Nora: Girl it’s me. I’m grounded. My parents are going to take my phone and my computer for the night. Until I sleep a minimal of 8 hours, I’m not allowed near the internet or the TV. THIS SUCKS. The biggest news of the year and my parents are grounding me. Don’t they realize what this could do? I’ll call you tomorrow afternoon. Hopefully I’ll have my phone back.

Marinette feels for Alya’s parents, there’s no way that Alya is going to fall asleep, unless she crashes from exhaustion. At least she has time off, before having to deal with Alya’s enthusiasm. She loves her friend, but sometimes Alya’s never ending energy about the heroes is pretty hard to deal with.

“-nette?” She realizes that Tikki is calling her.

“What?” It comes out harsher that Marinette intends. “Sorry. I’m just tired.”

Tikki just gives her a knowing look. “I know. I was just telling you to change into your pajamas, before going to bed. You can figure things out in the morning.”

Marinette simply nods. She looks at the closet and wonders. ‘Do I really have to change? I’m so tired and I can change in the morning.’ She is so tempted to just lie in her bed and close her eyes. She can’t, Tikki would nag her until she puts on the pajamas.

It’s a testament of how tiring the day has been that Marinette can barely summon up the force to put on a pair of clothes. She moves slowly towards the closet, every move she makes feels exhausting. Is it normal? To feel so tired in a day?

‘Is it possible for a soul to become tired?’ Marinette wonders. ‘How much is too much?’

She never talks about this exhaustion that sometimes settles in her. No one knows.

Marinette tries to convince herself that is because she takes on so many things at once. She’s always busy with school, babysitting, helping her parents, commissions, and being Ladybug.

The dark part of her brain whispers that is because she is burnout. ‘14 years old and already so tired.’ She has seen too much, and the responsibilities are still piling up. She ignores that voice.

A shiver reawakes Marinette. She looks in the mirror and notices that she hasn’t put on the top. Her skin feels cold to the touch, and Marinette wonders how long has she been standing there? Marinette has notice that she’s getting lost in her head. It’s happening more and more.

Why is that? She has always been prone to daydreaming, to panic and come up with the worst scenarios. Somehow this feels differently. Like something she only notices when someone breaks her out of it. When she breaks out of it, she often comes back to Tikki looking really worried. Tikki worries too much.

The dark part whispers again. ‘This is not normal, to lose yourself in your head over and over again. You know this. You just don’t want to acknowledge it.’
She ignores it again. It gets worse at night. During the day when she’s busy, it doesn’t happen as often. Thankfully it has never happen during an akuma attack. Marinette doesn’t know what she would do, if someone got hurt because she was daydreaming.

“Good night Tikki.” She whispers softly, feeling a familiar weight settling on her chest.

“Good night Marinette.”

Just as she’s about to fall asleep, the day’s events come back to her with a vengeance. Marinette loses herself in the what-if’s of the akuma, the wrong moves, the wrong words. Why? Why did it have to happen today? No answer comes to her. The fight with the akuma wasn’t really that bad. They won, no civilians were hurt, and they weren’t hurt. It was a battle under 30 minutes, a rarity. Then why does it still feels like a failure?

The question leaves a bitter taste behind. She can’t do anything about it. So decides to try to let it go, and sleep. She meditates (something she does with her mom) she tries to relax, and give in to the exhaustion.

Of course she can’t sleep, because since when has exhaustion helped her sleep? Never. Marinette wants to scream in frustration, but Tikki is already sleeping on top of her chest. So she chokes back her feelings…again. She stares back at the ceiling and waits for some peace of mind that never comes.

Chapter End Notes

Hello. Thank you for all the comments, kudos and bookmarks.
As promised this chapter came out sooner that the others did. Chapter 5 will probably only appear mid-February, it will depend on how fast I finish writing chapter 7 (last chapter).
This chapter has a little angst in it, and shows a bit of the PTSD that Marinette suffers from. Both Ladybug and Chat Noir show signs of cracking after the akuma attack. Ladybug by going into a panic and snapping at both Chat and Tikki. Chat Noir by going ‘internal’ and trying to act has a peace keeper something that he usually does as Adrien.
It completely destroys their plans and leaves them drifting. I also wanted to switch the trope of how Chat is always the one that gets hit by the akuma…so this time it was Ladybug. By the way the reaction of the akuma is exclusive to the chapter - I have other akumas attacks in the story - it was literally just the shock that stops the akuma. Again thank you for reading this. Beware the mistakes and be nice in the comments. Blood Wolf
The day after

Chapter Summary

Marinette tries to deal with it all. Is this the calm after the storm or is she in the eye of the storm?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tuesday - One day after the reveal.

Marinette wakes up to her alarm blaring, and Tikki shaking her. It’s routine by now.

“Tikki five more minutes…I’m so tired.”

“Marinette you have to wake up. I know that last night was…complicated, but you have to go to school.”

For a second she’s confused. What the hell is Tikki talking about? Then it hits her - the theory, the debates and the akuma. She groans and feels an intense need to never leave her bed again. She doesn’t want to face the world today. To see what type of reactions they might have. Did they change their minds? Do the police and the government want to take the miraculous away? Did the public opinion on her changed? Will the police now try to interfere during akuma attacks? Will her classmates and teammates follow Ladybug, now that they know she’s younger than them? Dozens of questions appear in her mind. Not a single one has an answer. She just wants to stay in bed, and try to sleep. She can’t.

Turning off her phone feels like a challenge, getting up feels wrong. Tikki is staring at Marinette again, her big eyes full of concern.

“Morning Tikki.” Faking a smile is the wrong way to start the day. But what else is Marinette suppose to do?

“Are you alright?” Tikki is not having Marinette’s fake cheer.

“Fine. Just have a lot of things to do today.” An understating. Go to classes, hear what her classmates think about the latest news, go to Master Fu, meet/talk with Alya, check every news stations, and find out what people are thinking.

It’s basically everything she did yesterday and more. Not to mention the lack of plan and the necessity of laying low. She finally understands Chat’s behavior the previous night when she told him no patrol for at least a month. At the time it made sense. Right now? It feels suffocating the thought of not being able to escape her civilian life.

Marinette sincerely hopes that Chat Noir will be able to avoid going out. He made a small resistance, but seemed to accept the compromise. Chat may also try to avoid going out for fear of...
how the public perception of him, may have changed. The public now has information about them that was precious unknown. Maybe they will be able to avoid going out in the next week, and regroup. Only time will tell.

There’s another thing to worry about - the akumas. Will there be an increase in akumas? From what she could see yesterday, most people were shocked or worry. That isn’t what Hawk Moth usually uses for akumas. Anger, rage, hate, and fear are what Hawk Moth seeks to make akumas.

Yet, time here may be the enemy. How will the citizens of Paris - and the rest of France - react after the shock? That question haunts her more than she would like and it keeps playing in her mind over and over again.

Best case scenario they could accept the news. This doesn’t mean they will be glad about their ages, but they’ll accept it. Worst case scenario the citizens could revolt against the idea, and turn that shock, into rage. That would give Hawk Moth an almost unlimited supply of new akumas.

Still, the resignation and mild acceptance would be better that anger. Marinette is also inclining to believe the former, rather than the latter, for two reasons. Number one, the magic is going to kick in before the shock ends. Marinette is not really sure how this will happen, but the magic will manifest itself. Number two, no matter what has happen in the last 24 hours, most people still know that anger causes akumas. At least they might try to be understanding.

Going downstairs the smell of baking goods is filling the house which is one of the best parts her of the day. Her parents are still down in the shop, which is not unusual the morning is one of the busiest times of the day for a bakery. Today is a great thing. It provides time to get ready for school in peace and gather her thoughts.

After a much needed shower, Marinette goes back to her room. “Tikki?”

“Yes?”

“Will the miraculous magic have any affect in this situation?”

“Absolutely. It will help calm people down.” That is both a relief and a terrifying thought. Just how much can the magic affect everyone around her? How much should have affected her?

“Will it still hide the other hero’s ages?”

“Yes, although people will pay more attention to them. Plus, since there is a bigger risk of people trying to follow you, it will help you escape faster.”

Marinette almost asks how, but decides it’s not important. “That’s good. Still, Hawk Moth knows.”

Hawk Moth knows her age. He knows her age. That is another thing that worries her. She needs to do something to make sure he doesn’t suspect her. Needs a plan to make sure, even if he has the means to find all the fourteen year old girls in Paris, he wouldn’t suspect her.

Right now there is nothing to do to throw him of. Marinette will have to wait a few weeks and hope it won’t be too late. She asks Tikki more details about the magic.

“The magic will protect you for now. It will make sure, that if people start to suspect you, things will happen to convince them otherwise. Plus, it will make the public focus on your age, and not on who you might be.”

“That’s good. I wouldn’t tell them the other heroes’ ages, but I’m thinking of telling them they are
all older than me. And imply that a few are older that Chat.” Which is sort of true, Luka is older than them.

“If you keep it vague enough, the magic might even make them seem older.” Informs Tikki.

“Good. Give me a moment to get ready or I’ll be late.”

She texts Alya a message about last night, but doesn’t get a reply. Alya is either asleep or her parents have yet to give her the phone back.

Looking at the time she realizes that she needs to grab something to eat before going to school.

“Good morning Marinette. The breakfast is on the table.”

“Good morning Mom.” Marinette greets her mother with a kiss, and starts to eat breakfast.

“Where’s dad?”

“He just needs to finish some things down in the bakery. He’ll be right back.”

Before she can reply her father arrives with his hands cover in flour and smelling of cookies. They have a helper in the mornings to help with the morning rush. Dad turns on the TV and Nadja Chamack is reporting the news about last night leaving Marinette with a very strong urge to bang her head against the table.

“Alya send me a text last night about that.” Her parents look at her. “Got grounded because she wouldn’t go to sleep.”

Her parents chuckled, even though they looked sad. “Well, if we grounded you because of late nights, you would be perpetually grounded.” Her mom jokes.

Her dad looks at the TV sadly. “I know that yesterday we talked about this, but I’m shocked at how young they are.”

“I know Ladybug is Marinette’s age.” Her mom looks at her with a smile. “Honey, I love you but you’re a bit clumsy…”

“I would probably trip on the akuma if I tried to fight it” Marinette cuts in and tries not to sound awkward.

“I just can’t really see you fighting akumas.” Her mom tells her.

Marinette laughs awkwardly and something inside her deeply hurts. “It’s probably for the best.” Last night thoughts ring in her mind again. ‘They can never know.’

“What do you think the police and Mayors office response will be?” Her dad asks. That’s another thing she has been obsessing over this since yesterday, and still has no idea.

“I don’t know about the police. But Mayor Bourgeois daughter is a superhero, he’ll be a lot more careful about what he can say.” The tantrum Chloe will have if her dad stops supporting the heroes, will be the stuff of legends…and akumas.

Her mom adds. “That and the superheroes are still very much needed in Paris. There might be some people who will argue against them having such powerful weapons, but they can’t take the miraculous away even if they tried. I think for the next few days there will be a lot of opinions on the matter. We should just wait for things to calm down.”
It’s pretty obvious that her parent’s opinions haven’t changed since last night, which is good. She still can’t count on everyone else’s opinions to remain the same. Her mind brings her back to Ms. Bustier. How will her teacher fell this morning, knowing the ages of the superheroes?

Marinette has decided not to ask for her opinion anymore, and try to avoid debates in class. She should try and do something nice for Ms. Bustier - even if she can’t change the reality of the situation - there has to be a way to comfort her teacher.

“Can I take some macaroons for Ms. Bustier?” Her parents look surprise, but since they know that Ms. Bustier cried last class - they don’t know that it was Marinette pushing the subject that made her cry - they agree.

“Take two boxes, one box for your friends and another box for your teacher. Today I think that everybody needs a pick-me-up type of snack” Her dad leaves to go pick up two boxes.

“I’m going to grab my backpack. I’ll pick them up downstairs.” She tells her mother. While upstairs she grabs a piece of paper and writes: “Every day is a good day. There is something to learn, care and celebrate.” It’s a quote she remembers seeing online, and it sounds like something her teacher will like.

She’s extremely sleepy, but decides against going looking for coffee. There won’t be enough time to do pick up coffee, and arrive in class in time to give everyone the sweets. That and her caffeine intake is starting to look like something out of a coffee shop advertisement.

Walking into the school she has a déjà vu. Most of the student body is doing what they did yesterday, but today the discussions are less heated. One can hope that the class will not be in total chaos, when she arrives.

“Good Morning.” The class is still pretty loud, but is not as bad as yesterday. Some even respond back with a “Good Morning Marinette”.

Looking at Nino and Adrien seats and frowns - Nino is there - but Adrien is missing. “Hey Nino. Do you know where Adrien is?”

“Hey Dudette, Adrien isn’t coming today.” That leaves Marinette disappointed, but she doesn’t say anything. ”His father booked him for a two day job, and Nathalie only told him this morning.”

“That sucks.” No Adrien, and no Alya. Well, Marinette did want a calmer day. “Want to sit with me for today?” Nino gives her a big smile and agrees. She notices some of her classmates looking at the bag she’s carrying. “I bought Macaroons today.”

Most of the class stops talking and goes to her desk. They eat while waiting for Ms. Bustier.

“Did you see last night’s akuma?” Nino asks with a mouth full.

“Yeah, Alya text me before getting her phone confiscated.” Nino chuckles and Marinette gets the feeling he also got a message from ‘Nora’. “I didn’t talk with her, although I did send her a text this morning. She just never texted me back.”

“I spoke with her yesterday, and she was really excited, when the akuma attack happen …she called me. It was kind of late, so I think she might be sleeping.”

“I figured that.”

“She went wild with the actual age of Ladybug. Ladybug is even younger than we thought…I
mean she’s you age Marinette…probably younger than you. It’s…”

“Mind blowing?” She suggests.

“Yeah…”

Max took that moment to steal a macaroon and join the conversation. “It’s really impressive that she has such analytical mind for her age. Not to mention she is extremely intelligent and resourceful.” Marinette nods - embarrassed by the accidental compliment - and decides to listen to the rest of the class.

“My dad was at the akuma attack. He’s shocked at how young they are.” Sabrina says. ”It was kind of insane. He told me that was one of the worst akuma attacks - in terms of trying to contain the situation - the reporters and the civilian were just too much to deal with.”

“You mean the daughter of the akuma running towards the akuma?” Kim asks.

“Yes. He also told me that after Ladybug and Chat Noir left, the civilians didn’t know what to do. They just had an improved debate about the issue…”

“What did they think about the situation?” Max interrupts.

“Most were shocked at their ages, and started a mini debate about what Ladybug had said after the attack was over.”

“You mean the running towards the battle?” Marinette asks, hoping that this will make people understand that running towards a battle is not a good idea.

“Kind of. It was more the fact that they said they were chosen for a reason and they won’t tell why.” Marinette remembers adding that in the speech, but didn’t expect people to focus on that. That could be a very good surprise or a truly nasty one.

“A lot of people basically created dozens of theories over night about why that is. I mean Chloe just found the miraculous-” Chloe looks like she’s going to protest, but Alix glares at her daring her to interrupt Nathaniel. “Shouldn’t there be a consequence if she had used it and not be chosen?”

“Chloe might have gotten lucky if that is the case.” Max responds. ”Anyhow most people seem to think, that the miraculous need to be used by younger people. If an adult wears it there could be consequences.”

“What if that’s why Hawk Moth and Mayura are super villains?” Kim asks. “The miraculous made them go insane.”

Marinette has a full body spasm at the thought of Paris feeling sorry for Hawk Moth. That’s not going to happen, when she addresses Paris - after things have calmed down - she is going to make sure that people know that Hawk Moth is a power hungry villain. This will not be up for any debate. Before she can even think of an answer, the entire of the class tells Kim that he’s wrong.

There are some truly colorful words coming out of her classmates - who knew that Rose could out swear a sailor - most seemed offended by the mere idea of placing the blame of the akumas, outside of Hawk Moth. The entire class basically agrees with her, which helps her relax. Also since this came from Kim, there’s a chance that he was trying to get a reaction out of them.

At least people aren’t going to start sympathizing with Hawk Moth - she hopes. When Ladybug and Chat Noir decide to address the public, they could drop hint that adults can use the miraculous.
However if they have dark intentions, bad things happen. She’s going to have to review this, but it should be fixable.

“Ok, letting that go. Sabrina what was the general reaction of the adults of the groups?” Max asks. Since he is also a superhero - although a part-time one - it’s no wonder he would be interested.

“Well, most were shocked. They didn’t really know what to think. My dad didn’t really go into detail, but he told him most of the citizens were just sad…sad that the heroes were so young.”

Marinette was relieved. Even if she didn’t want to make people sad, it was better than to make them angry. At least while Hawk Moth was still around. Also sadness would lean more into acceptance that anger. It’s too early to tell what the majority of people would end up thinking, but so far no one seemed angry at Ladybug and Chat Noir.

Before they could continue talking Ms. Bustier walked through the door, and they all went silence. The memory of their teacher crying over the heroes ages last class made them settle down. There was not a single person in the class that wanted a repeat of what happen yesterday.

“Good Morning class.” Although the words were the same has any other day her tone was off, and Ms. Bustier seemed tired. Her ponytail was still tight against her head, but a few hair were close to escaping. Her eyes had deep bags that the light makeup she was wearing couldn’t cover up. Everyone return her good morning and goes back towards their desks. Marinette stood up, and Nino grabbed her arm.

“What are you doing?” Probably remembering the last time Marinette asked Ms. Bustier for something. Nino was the type of person to give someone space when they were upset, there is a good chance that he would rather give Ms. Bustier a day or two before talking her.

“Just give me a moment.” She winks at Nino to make him relax, and walks up towards her teacher’s desk. Ms. Bustier smiles at her. It was a sad smile, the kind that you give people when you’re just too tired. Marinette recognized it all too well.

“Do you need anything Marinette?”

‘I’m sorry for yesterday. I’m sorry for pushing you. I’m sorry I’m Ladybug, and that would probably break your heart. I’m sorry that most of the part-time heroes are your students. I’m sorry that I chosen them. I’m sorry I haven’t stopped Hawk Moth and Mayura. I’m sorry that I still have no idea how to do it. I’m sorry that I can never be honest about it. I am so sorry about everything.’

She doesn’t say any of it. She violently chokes on her guilt and tries to swallows it down. Marinette smiles and gives her teacher the box, with the note.

“Just wanted to give you this.” Ms. Bustier smiles - a real smile this time - making her feel a lot better.

She reads the note and looks deeply touch at the words. “Thank You, Marinette.”

When she goes back towards her seat, Marinette notices that the entire class - even Chloe - is smiling at her. It brightens the day a little bit. Maybe things will get better.

…”

At lunch time her entire class - minus Chloe and Sabrina - gathers in one table. They were quiet during the class, but know they want to talk about what happen yesterday. In fact the entire student body is doing the same.
“The news networks and the internet are going crazy about last night’s akuma.” Nino says. “There are a lot of specials have been announce for this week.”

“They can’t seem to decide on what to focus.” Ivan sits down with Mylene.

“Ladybug and Chat Noir actual age is the main topic. But then there’s a bunch of sub-topics.” Mylene adds.

Max pulls up his phone and checks the specials. “That is correct. There are going to do a special on analysis of their fights, a special on the connection between the heroes and the city, another one about mental health, and a lot more, all related to the heroes ages.”

“There were a lot of people worried about their mental health.” Marinette half says, half asks.

“Did you see the special yesterday with Alya?” Juleka asks. They all nod. “Well, that police commissar said that if they were underage, the city would ask them to stop patrolling. Besides offering to help them search for Hawk Moth and giving them an option for mental support.”

“Yeah, but that was before their actual ages were revealed. Not to mention they turned out to being a lot younger that people assumed.” Marinette replies.

“He said the support would be offered regardless of their ages. Nevertheless I see your point, this was offered before the reveal. Thing may have changed.” Max looks at Markov. “Have any official statement by the police or one of their represented been give post reveal?”

“They have announced that later today a statement will be release at a press conference. The Mayor’s office says they will support the decisions of the police force. However they did state that the heroes will maintain the special status that permits them to interfere in akuma fights, and everyday situations.”

Marinette didn’t know that. When she left the house this morning no statements had been made. The Mayor’s office statement is pretty vague, they wouldn’t take the status away - which would be hard to do without at least a little backlash - but they will support the police. Basically they are leaving the decision on how to handle this almost entirely on the police force.

The mayor’s office is trying to cover their bases. On one hand, if the public decides that the heroes are too young, they can say they left the choice in the hands of professionals who specialize in crime fighting. One the other hand, if the public keeps supporting the heroes, the Mayor’s office will say that they always support them - they never took away their special status - and will still come up on top.

Marinette doesn’t really like Mayor Bourgeois for a lot of reasons, but she realizes why he has been Mayor for over a decade. He is a very good politician. He knows that criticizing them would be bad - his daughter is also a hero - Ladybug and Chat Noir have saved Paris a lot of times. The only reason they have become an issue is their ages.

So far no one has questioned their work, although there is sometimes questions about why they haven’t catch Hawk Moth. Most people understand that Hawk Moth doesn’t really appear - the only major exception was hero’s day - and there is little information about him. Plus, the police also can’t really find him, which takes the pressure out of them.

“I don’t think anyone is going to try to stop them. I mean what are they going to do? Let Hawk Moth win?” Alix asks.

A chorus of “No/Of course not” are heard throughout their table.
“No one can do the job they do.” Nathaniel says. “I’ve seen a lot of people saying that. Besides Ladybug and Chat Noir work perfectly together, who could they find that did that awesome of a job and work well together?”

“Not to mention the new super heroes. They are part-time but it’s pretty obvious they work well together.”

“Now that you bring up that…How old do you think the other heroes are?” Rose asks.

A few of Marinette’s classmates immediately look uncomfortable. It’s pretty obvious they don’t want to talk about the part-time heroes ages, but it’s a topic that’s coming up more, especially after last night.

“Well…I mean…now that the ages of Ladybug and Chat Noir are known. The other heroes ages have been put more on the spot…I mean Chloe is also underage.” Max replies.

Marinette decides to save him, Nino, and Kim the embarrassment of trying to talk about their superhero persona. “I find it kind of crazy that Chloe is older than Ladybug.”

“I know. It’s so weird Ladybug is younger than us.” Nathaniel says. “Well, not you Marinette.”

This was not what Marinette wanted, for them to direct the conversation to her. Before she can come up with an answer, Nino says. ”Not for long, Mari turns 15 in less than two weeks. What are the odds Ladybug also turns 15 in the next two weeks?”

Max looks at his phone and immediately tries to figure out the answer. He starts to spit out facts and statistics. From what Marinette can see most of her classmates are more excited about the news than worry. It’s a mirror of what happen yesterday, younger people worried about the magic, older people worried about their age. Today is her classmates excited about their age - they completely dropped the magical angle - although the adults are still worried about their ages.

Marinette finds it interesting that even though most adults have stayed on topic it has expanded beyond what it was originally. Also they rarely talk about the magic. Teenagers were the only ones that truly focused - even if it was just for a little while - on the magic.

Adults are trying to process the news, and figure out a game plan, and Marinette can sympathize with that - she is doing the same. Teenagers are different they focused on the likely hood of the akuma having hit Ladybug, on the skills of Ladybug and Chat Noir, on the awesome factor. They also comment on the adult reactions, some of them also acknowledge that them being so young is a pretty big thing. They don’t really think the government forces will try to interfere, which is an extremely optimist view that Marinette wishes she could share.

The rest of the lunch hour goes by pretty fast, and Marinette goes through the tables trying to see what her other schoolmates think. They just talk about last night battles, and the insanity that followed. From what Marinette can tell no one believes that Ladybug and Chat Noir should stop doing their jobs, in favor of trained adults. It’s a pretty big relieve, even if it’s only her pears.

She checks her texts and sees Alya has texted her about meeting up later to do homework.

“Hey Nino. Did you see the text from Alya?”

“Yeah, I told her I have to go home first, and wait for my mom. Chris is going to be home and I can’t leave him alone. I told her I would meet her later.”

“I have some things to do for my grandpa.” She has to meet Master Fu.”I’ll also be late.”
“I don’t think she minds. Alya wasn’t even sure she would get her phone back. Apparently she only fell asleep around four in the morning…basically slept the whole morning.”

Marinette chuckles at the image of Alya finally giving in to sleep. She also feels a little bad for Alya’s parents.

“I don’t think her parents are going to let her go to other shows anytime soon.” They both keep talking throughout the day in a way they haven’t done since Alya and Adrien showed up. It’s a nice callback to her early childhood and fills her with a rare feeling of nostalgia.

The rest of the school day is basically a repeat of yesterday. Marinette wonders if the lack of hard work is because the teachers are also rattle by the news. They have a little more homework than yesterday - she had Ms. Mendeleiev class today - but it’s manageable and not for tomorrow.

After classes she runs home to tell her parents her plans, and drop off her backpack. Since she has a bit of time before the meeting with Master Fu, she decides to bake some cookies. Her parents already gave her two boxes of macaroons, and she doesn’t want to ask for more. Half an hour later leaving her home with four boxes full of cookies - two boxes for Master Fu and two boxes for Alya and Nino - she goes to Master Fu’s house.

…. 

“Come in, Marinette.” Master Fu already has tea served, and motions for her to sit down.

“Hi, Master. I brought cookies.” Showing him the box, she waves at Wayzz. Tikki goes to greats her fellow Kwami.

“I assume you here because of the last akuma?” They start to snack on the cookies.

“Kind off. I was going to ask your opinion on how to handle it.”

“The only advice I can give you right now is give it time. The people need to deal with what happen, and what they learnt. You and Chat already told them you were chosen for a reason.” He pauses to fill her tea. “That reason hasn’t changed; the fact that you can do your jobs - better than I have ever hoped for - hasn’t changed. With time the people will come to accept it.”

He pauses again and looks at Wayzz. “Nevertheless I don’t think that they will be happy about the situation. Perhaps the public will get used to it, and until you defeat Hawk Moth they will accept it. After…I don’t know. The miraculous are powerful and there are always people after them, this is regardless of your age.”

Wayzz interrupts “I don’t think you have to worry about that Marinette, at least right now.”

“Correct. The most important thing is stopping Hawk Moth and Mayura, and getting the miraculous back. The people of Paris know this, with time things will go back to normal.”

Marinette already knew this. The conversation she had with Tikki yesterday was proof that this wasn’t something that happens a lot. She wasn’t really expecting Master Fu to have any advice about this, but was hopeful that Master Fu could help in some way. “I figured that would be the case.”

She takes a sip of her tea. “Chat and I also wanted to know your opinion in getting involved with the police, regarding the search for Hawk Moth.”

Master Fu looked like he was already waiting for this. He probably saw the news, and figured that
they would ask. “I think it’s an idea that has a little bit of potential, but not right now. Wait for the reaction of the police department before getting involved with them.”

“Of course. Chat and I were thinking about discreetly going to see an officer first. This was before the akuma, so we’ll have to wait for the reaction of the police department. The plan was more along the lines of seeing where they stood, and what they knew. We weren’t going to share details about the magic.”

“You can speak a little about the magic, just nothing that involves the kwami’s, and the guardian.” Wayzz informs her. “Tell them one of the reasons that you don’t follow the butterflies, is because after they never go back to Hawk Moth.”

“Yeah, that might help them.”

“Good. Anything else on your mind Marinette?” She looks at Tikki, and wonders about the magic immunity. Tikki seems to read her mind and looks back to Master Fu.

“Master, Marinette has gain magic immunity, the magic disguising her teammates from her, stopped working. She can tell it’s there, and can see through it.” Master Fu looks startled, Wayzz looks exactly like Tikki did the previous day.

Marinette starts to freak out again. If Tikki said it wasn’t a huge deal, why does everyone keep reacting like that? For the second time in minutes Tikki seems to read her mind again “Marinette is a little scared Master. I didn’t have the best reaction. But I told her it’s not a huge deal.”

Master Fu smiles at Marinette. “Tikki is right. There have been a few cases, where this has happen. Nothing really happens, most just become better Ladybugs. They were faster, stronger, smarter, and more creative. It’s not a bad thing Marinette. Quite the opposite, it’s a good omen for the future.”

Marinette looks at Master Fu and smiles. Another weight is lifted off her shoulders.

She looks at the hidden miraculous box, and an idea appears.

“Master is it possible to borrow the fox miraculous for a few hours?”

Master Fu looks at her surprise. “Why?”

“I’m going to take a few pictures of me and an illusion of Ladybug. Then I’m going to post them on my instagram in a couple weeks. I will also take a few other selfies with civilians, so it doesn’t look too weird. It will throw people of my trail, and show people Ladybug is still here.”

“That’s a wonderful idea. You will have to take Trixx for a few days. I have a few things I need to take care of.” That’s odd. Master Fu is usually so strict about returning the miraculous as fast as possible.

“I’ll also tell Chat to do the same. Not the picture with the illusion, he might get suspicious. But take selfies with civilians, and show he is still patrolling the streets.”

“Trust your partner. You two should always lean on each other, but for the next few weeks, I believe that you might need each other more than ever. After all he also revealed his age.”

“Yeah, he was trying to take the spotlight out of me. Instead he panicked and blurred out his age, I almost had a heart attack.” She chuckles. “But I know he was just worried. We decided to take a week of patrol…things are just too fresh right now and…”
“You want to give yourselves and Paris time to process what happen. I think it’s a good idea. It will allow you to reflect upon people’s reactions.”

Marinette tells him the rest of the plan for the patrol, how they are going to do it, and the new schedule.

“It seems you have a few ways to deal with this.” Master Fu smiles at her. “Marinette I don’t think your need advice, I think you just need time - like all of Paris needs - to process the news. Wait for the police’s answer, but I have a feeling that it’s going to be alright. Just have a little faith.”

“Thank you Master.” Even though Master Fu didn’t really give her any advice on how to handle this situation, she stills feels a lot better.

They finish their tea and cookies in a pleasant silence. When she looks at the time she notices that she is going to be late for Alya’s. She hurries up and says goodbye to Master Fu, and runs out the door.

She calls Alya in the hurry. “Hey Alya, I might be a little late.”

“Girl…first relax. I can hear your breathing over the phone, I don’t want you dying trying to get here. I called your parents. They told me that you can have dinner here, they will pick you up after. Nino isn’t even here so just slow down.”

Marinette stops running, tripping over her feet, smacking her arm against a wall. “Ouch.”

“Marinette are you alright?” Alya’s worried voice comes from the phone.

“Fine, just ran into a wall.”

“One of these days you’re going to give me a heart attack.”

“So you have you phone back.”

“Yes. Nora was home today, and made sure I didn’t have my phone before I’ve gotten enough sleep. I also did my homework while eating lunch. I spent the rest of the day updating the Ladyblog and keeping up with the news. Ugh. So many things happening and I had to get grounded…”

“I think your parents just wanted for you to sleep…” Marinette enters the bus.

“I could sleep later, besides this is too important. Have you seen how people are reacting?”

“With extreme shock?”

“Yeah, and they are blowing this up. It’s like they don’t know how to react to the news. They want to keep the heroes safe, and think they are too young for this. Yet, they know that the heroes are needed, and don’t believe anyone else could do their job.”

“I think that’s just it. They don’t know what to do. The adults are freaked out, but Hawk Moth is too dangerous. They both need them, and want to keep them safe.” Marinette is really glad that she’s having this conversation by phone. She is way too emotional for this conversation Alya would see something is up.

“Yup. Anyway I’m glued to the TV right now. There is a debate over the psychological effects of too much stress and pressure in teenagers. It’s kind of terrifying.”
Marinette really doesn’t want to listen to that. Something feels wrong about having strangers trying to discuss her mental health. Throughout the day she has avoid those “specials” as best as she can, but words like trauma, stress, insomnia, and others are coming up way too much. That could sway the public in a bad way. She decides to take the conversation in another direction.

“The police conference should be on later. We’re could watch it.”

“Of course, but it’s not for a while.”

“Alya I know that you did your homework already, but Nino and I haven’t.”

“Girl, it took me 20 minutes to do that, and I wasn’t in class.”

“Well, then you can help us. I’m getting off the bus. I’ll see you a second.”

“See ya.” She hangs up.

Marinette walks inside Alya’s building, and catches the elevator. Alya is waiting for her at the top.

“I bought cookies.” Marinette show her the bag.

“Girl. You spoil me too much.” Alya links her arm and they walk into the apartment. “Nino texted me is 5 minutes out.”

Before Marinette can reply, Nora appears and hugs her. “Hey Marinette. How are you?”

“Good.” She would have added more, but her ability to breathe was compromised by Nora. She was saved by the bell ringing.

“Hey girls.” He kisses Alya’s cheeks. He notices the bag she’s holding.

Nino chuckles at the cookies. “Marinette I think you’re trying to get me fat. First macaroons in class and now cookies.”

Sticking her tongue out Alya says “Well some of us weren’t in school, so they get more cookies.”

“You weren’t in school because last night you refused to go to sleep. You were acting like the twins.” Nora proceeds to embarrass Alya by telling them a very detail recollection of last night’s events. By the end of the story Marinette and Nino are laughing hysterically, and Alya is trying to blend in with the couch.

Nora stays with them while they do their homework. Marinette has a feeling that Alya’s parents ask her to make sure they actually did it, because when they finished, Nora leaves them alone.

“Tomorrow I need to talk with Max. The Ladyblog keeps crashing, no matter the updates.” Alya sighs and takes a cookie.

“Don’t worry babe. He’ll help you for sure he’s been on the site a lot. He said the forum part was really slow, and then starts giving solutions. I just didn’t get them.”

“Max has been looking at a lot of theories. A lot of people have gone back to the original theory. You’ll not believe the amount of people, who are still commenting on it.”

Marinette frowns. “I thought that since it was confirmed people would move on.”

“Only Ladybug and Chat Noir ages have been confirmed. The part time heroes are under a lot of
scrutiny.” Alya looks at Nino. They both look really nervous for a second. Marinette can sympathize, especially after having her age revealed.

Alya continues talking. “Plus, they are doing more specified studies about the patrolling time. The University of Paris did a new analysis about the amount of time they patrol and take to defeat an akuma. This time it was divided in month by month and how tough the akumas were.”

“How did they rate the akumas?” Marinette was actually really curious about this. She had a different perspective on the akumas than the civilians. She knew a lot of people were going back to see her first battles, but she didn’t know that the statistic and data were being reviewed.

Alya pull up her phone. “There were several factors they used to rate the akuma danger level. Things like how strong they were, how fast and their endurance where all taking into consideration, but so were akumas that had a different level of danger.”

“You mean the ones that could control minds?” Nino asks.

“Yes. They had two categories at the top of the danger level. Number one if akumas can influence over other people. For example, if they could brainwash other people like Zombizou or Princess Fragrance. Number two the impact they can have. For example, if they could affect the environment like Syren or Frozer.”

“They put a lot of work into that.” Marinette notes.

“Yeah. Plus, monthly evaluations of the amount of time they patrol. They have notice that the akumas have gotten stronger, but Ladybug’s and Chat Noir’s performances have gotten even better.”

“That’s good.”

Alya shows them another link. “This is an analysis of their time patrolling. The police force doesn’t go into details over the cases Ladybug and Chat Noir are involved, but they admit that most cases don’t involved akumas. Most people think they should cut out the patrol all together or at least reduce the time they do.”

Marinette thinks that taking a break from patrol for a week, was a stroke of genius. Not only they aren’t patrolling under less than ideal circumstances, but the public is also questioning their patrol time.

Chat Noir is not going to be happy. Ladybug knows that Chat patrols more than her, a lot more. He doesn’t talk about his home life - secret identities are too important - but unlike her, he seems almost hesitant to go home. To tell him that they might have to cut patrols…well, he’s not going to be happy.

Still, Marinette is not sure they need to take that route. She’s going to wait and see.

“Maybe they should just reduce the time they spend patrolling.” Marinette is actually really curious what Alya and Nino think about this. They are both superheroes, but they don’t patrol. It’s a thing unique to her and Chat.

“I don’t know. It’s weird. I think they should patrol less - especially after seeing the latest statistics - but at the same time…” Nino wanders off.

Alya finished for him. “It’s odd telling them what to do. I mean they are still the heroes. All these studies show that they have gotten almost perfect with time. Telling them to cut it out seems
“I wasn’t saying to cut it out completely. “They don’t want to freak out the civilians or appear to be hiding like scared little kids.” Just reduce the time…like one hour a day.”

They both look at her with contemplating looks. Silence reigns for a minute, both look to be in deep thought. Marinette wonders if they are considering her suggestion, or are thinking about their superheroes personas. If they did this full time how would patrol affect their life?

Alya breaks the silence first. “I think you’re right. I mean the estimative was 30 hours a week lost to patrol. The average part time job is under 20 hours a week. They are actually closer to working full time jobs than part time.” Marinette mind goes blank. That doesn’t sound right, maybe they are combining hers and Chat’s. They do patrol together often, but Chat does a lot of hours alone. Either way that just sounded wrong.

“That’s insane. They work too much, no matter the age. Is that without putting the battles in the mix?” Nino asks.

“Yeah, just patrol. The amount of hours is really bad. It’s also one of the main focuses of the news.”

That caught Marinette’s attention. “Really?”

“Yup. There have been a lot of topics being discussed. From their mental health to the ethics of having underage superheroes, but most people don’t really seemed to reach an agreement on the other topics.”

“What do they say about their mental health?” Marinette is really curious.

“In the mental health department a lot of the guest psychologists say that there isn’t enough information on the heroes to make a diagnostic. Some form of PTSD is expected, but it’s really hard to make a diagnostic without talking with them. They aren’t focusing on that, and they also have been avoiding talking about the ethical’s parts. Especially, after Mayor Bourgeois and a lot of other politicians gave a really vague answer on the matter.”

“Basically no one wants to touch that part.” Nino says.

“So far. The police department might be different but…”

Marinette get’s what Alya is trying to say. “Since yesterday they already told the public they want the heroes to cut the patrol…You think they won’t take another route?”

“No, besides Nadja Chamack told me that it would be a political nightmare. This entire situation is a political nightmare. She gave me a list of books about the relation between politics and journalism, and told me to read them. They all look really interesting, and some are actual books that are used in college classes.” Alya starts to tell them about advices that Nadja gave her.

In the mean while Marinette thinks that the patrol issue and the politicians wanting to avoid the topic will work really well for her. If the public is focused on patrol, they might just need to implement the regime that she and Chat had agreed. The public will be relieved if they start to do fewer hours - so will Marinette’s sleep schedule - and the magic might take it from there.

Plus, the lack of substantial political involvement in the issue will also calm things down. The police won’t go against the heroes if they don’t have the local government back up. Marinette is not entirely sure why, but most cops work in sync with politicians. They are probably going to
focus on patrol, because it’s the only topic they can actually discuss and try to influence.

The mayor’s statement about their special status was really vague. If the Police decides to put restrictions on their status, as a conditional for less patrolling the mayor’s office wouldn’t be in the wrong. Thinking about politics is making Marinette’s head hurt. She hates this part of the job, almost has much as the lack of privacy.

“Marinette?”

“Yes?”

“You spaced out girl.” Alya smiles at her. “The police force is making the statement in a few minutes. Commissar Durant is going to be there.” The TV was on.

“What was he like yesterday?” Information about the man could be helpful. They don’t know who is in charge of the police investigation, but that Commissar would at least be informed. Plus it would help knowing a police officer outside of Sabrina’s dad, before getting involved with the police department.

“He was open to questions, but also warned me against snooping around for private information. Every time he intervened in the debate he was very persuasive. But I think he was more of a listener that a talker, when Madam Chamack or Michael—“So that’s the name of the scientist. “He rarely interrupted, preferred to listen and then give an opinion.”

“So he’s a man would rather listen and see what people tell him then asks for answers.” Marinette will need to reign in Chat if they decide to talk with the man. He sounds like the type of person you get comfortable rather quick. That’s not a bad thing, but when you have a secret identity…it becomes rather complicated.

“Yup. Funnily enough I got the impression, that he already knew that the heroes were underage. Or at least suspect them of being young.”

Alarm bells rang in Marinette’s head. “What gave you that impression?”

“The offer he gave the heroes for mental health. I looked into it. It’s true that the Paris Police department gives psychological support to their force and work with a lot of psychiatrists. However, the offer for specialized therapist in trauma, particularly that work with child soldiers has to be requested, the staff is usually over worked. They would need extraordinary permissions for Ladybug and Chat Noir to attend. Even with their special status. It could take months before they could be seen.”

“They could just make an exception for Ladybug and Chat Noir, because of who they are.” Nino says. Marinette feels sick to her stomach at the suggestion that she is taking a spot in therapy of someone who actually needs it.

‘You don’t need it? Ms. Anxiety and Stress.’ The dark part of her mind whispers again.

“Perhaps, but after the interview was over I actually asked him. He told me that they could have access to this therapist within a week, and he had one volunteer to help them. That doesn’t sound like something that’s done in less than 24 hours, because on an online theory…” Alya trails off, but Marinette get’s what she’s trying to say.

“It’s like someone was already expecting Ladybug and Chat Noir to be underage. Especially, because he told you that he had one volunteer.”
Alya’s eyes light up. Oh-oh. “You’re right. He said one volunteer. One. Is like he already had a suspicion, and asked a therapist about the possibility. It would have to be someone he knew and trusted…”

“Alya you’re not thinking about publishing that in the Ladyblog are you?” Marinette immediately steps in this could be a very dangerous thing to publish. Her and Chat have decided against taking the offer, but the public didn’t know that. Hawk Moth didn’t know that, he could make the poor person into an akuma to see what he knew.

“No. The Commissar told me that he didn’t want to see our conversation - the one after the interview - in the website. Nadja told me this was a good way to cultivate connections for the future. By not publishing that today, tomorrow he could come to me with something better. Besides I don’t want to make the therapist a target.”

Marinette needs to see if she can get Nadja to allow Alya to shadow her for a while. It seemed to give Alya an insight to the Journalism world, and keep Alya on a leash when it came to publish sensible information.

“Seems like Madam Chamack, gave you a lot of advices last night.”

“Yeah, she was great…” Alya trails off. The Chief Commissar of the Paris Police Department appears on a podium it seemed like the police department was about to issue their statement.

He’s an older man, probably in his 60s. He’s in a clean uniform that looks new. His white hair is combed back, and Marinette thinks that he is looking more like a politician than a cop. There are a lot of officers behind him organized by ranks. It’s a show of power and unity. Maybe it’s the fashion designer in her, but Marinette finds it creepy seeing rows of man and woman in the same uniform, stripped out of any personality.

“Good Night. I’m here to speak regarding the akuma attack that occurred yesterday, and the information that was revealed by the attack. The police department has spoken with the victim of last night’s attack, the man is doing well.” He pauses and looks across the room.

“Now regarding the disclosure of Ladybug and Chat Noir ages. Yesterday in a talk show, one of my subordinates spoke about this issue a little. Of course, that was before we knew for sure the ages of the heroes. However the police department still retains the same position, our enemies are Hawk Moth and Mayura.”

Marinette feels a massive relieve at those words. She actually has to fight back the tears.

“This has not changed. And it will not change. Not now. Not Never. The city has not revoked the heroes’ special status and neither will the police force. Our offer for mental support is still in effect and will not have any conditions attach to it. Our offer for joining forces in the investigation into Hawk Moth and Mayura’s true identities has not changed.” He pauses again.

“However, we will ask the heroes to cut back the hours they spent patrolling.” The room where the conference is being held explodes with questions. Marinette was expecting this after her conversation with Nino and Alya, but it was still nerve racking. She notices that Alya’s sisters have joined them on the couch.

“Please calm down. We will be answering a few questions in the end. This was a decision taken after discussing with experts. We have notice that the heroes patrol is often during the night time, and often on week days. They are too young to be patrolling that much, in particular since they get up twice a week in the middle of the night to fight an akuma.”
“Ideally we would ask them to cut out all patrol, but I don’t think they would accept that.” Chat would probably riot, and even Marinette wasn’t completely comfortable with the idea. “We ask them to patrol less and if possible to talk with the police force before resuming patrol. We can help you organize your patrol thus it doesn’t tax you quite has much.”

Marinette actually likes that idea. She has to talk with Chat. They should put a video online telling the public they are going to take a break from patrolling for a week, to reevaluate their options. This shows they are listening to the public, and it also shows they aren’t leaving. Next Tuesday they should skip patrol and go to the police headquarters or something like that. It could help them calm down Paris, if they are willing to work with the police.

Marinette knows that this was something they couldn’t fight the police on. The public needs to be reassured that Ladybug and Chat Noir were safe. The police knew that they couldn’t demand the heroes to stop fighting akumas. They also couldn’t demand that Ladybug and Chat Noir give up their miraculous, not only were the miraculous would they have to fight the heroes and endanger Paris no one knew who Hawk Moth was. It was too risky.

The police would try to calm down the masses by dealing with the only issue they could without causing protests and riots on the streets. Namely the heroes patrol. It was a silent warning to the heroes, ‘work with us or we can’t help you’. Marinette was kind of relieved that this was the path they had chosen.

“There have been a lot of opinions voiced over the past 24 hours regarding the heroes. The overwhelming majority have been positive, although most have also been extremely concern. We ask the public to remain calm. We all have tools to help the heroes. Show your appreciation and love for them. Don’t let negative emotions get to you.” He pause then to let the message came across. Don’t let this turn you into akumas, and give the heroes even more work.

“It’s extremely unfortunate that the heroes are underage, but heroes come in all shapes and sizes and ages. It’s the attitude and positive influence on the community that Ladybug and Chat Noir have that makes them heroes. Defeating akumas and fighting evil is what makes them super. But it’s their lovable hearts and selfless souls that make them heroes. A lot of people - including me - would rather that such a heavy burden was not placed on someone so young. But we can’t always have what we want. So we have to make due of what we have. On behave of the Paris police department we thank Ladybug and Chat Noir and all the other part-time heroes for their efforts.”

Marinette is almost crying with relieved. By her side Alya is taking notes, and Nora’s and Nino’s eyes are glued to the screen. This was everything Marinette could hope for. The police department is standing behind them, and is still supporting them.

“I’ll answer a few questions.” The room exploded again. He points at Nadja.

“Does the Police Force have any plans to train Ladybug and Chat Noir?”

A murmur breaks out. “No. We have programs that the police force supports, such as emotional therapy, martial arts, self defense and others. Any training done by the Police Academy is for future agents only. That being said, if you are asking because of the Hawk Moth investigation, we’ll explain to the heroes our thought process, and how we investigate that particular case. However it will be one case. We won’t train them.”

He points to another reporter. “What will the police department do if the heroes refuse to cut down their patrol time?”

Marinette is actually curious about this. Although she knows that they will cut their patrol time, the
police doesn’t. It will be a good way to evaluate the police, and how they act.

“All of us agree that the heroes need to cut down there patrol time. This is something we feel strongly about. Firstly we have to talk to them, before making any more plans: Secondly if we see the young heroes out at an unreasonable hour without an obvious reason. We’ll give instructions to the agents to approach them, and ask if there is a problem. Depending on the answer we will either ask them to go home or help them with whatever problem they have.”

That’s reasonable. It’s also really vague, but it’s not something that will complicate things. Plus, telling them they will be cutting down patrol will probably help her and Chat with the police.

“Will the police force monitor the time that the heroes patrol?”

“Not actively. The heroes generate a lot of attention from civilians, who post a lot of photographs online. Since there are statistics done by credible sources we will just pay closer attention to those.” That was kind of obvious it would be stupid to put cops following them around.

“Regarding the part-time heroes will the police force ask Ladybug and Chat Noir to disclose their ages?”

She feels both Nino and Alya stiffen. They hold hands to try to give each other courage.

“No. We will be asking if they are also underage, but not there particular ages. We understand the need for discretion. We’ll ask very little about the part-time heroes for two reasons. One, we don’t believe that Ladybug or Chat Noir will answer a lot of questions. Two, we won’t ask personal questions of the main heroes and we will keep that policy for the part-time.”

Alya and Nino both breathe a sigh of relieve. It was almost funny.

“What are the police forces thoughts on Ladybug and Chat Noir being officially classified as Child Soldiers?”

The room goes quiet. It’s the first question that the Commissar has hesitated to answer. The journalist that asked looks unwilling to budge from getting an answer.

“What power has made that official?” The Chief Commissar of Paris is sweating profoundly. “Classifying someone as a Child Soldiers is a very serious thing to do with a lot of implications.”

The reporter doesn’t take kindly to the weak attempted of dodging the question. “The police force is working with Ladybug - a fourteen year old girl - and Chat Noir - a fifteen year old boy. Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child it would make them Child Soldiers. They work with the Paris Police Department. Does the department have no comment?”

“Damn.” Alya whispers next to her. Marinette can empathize. The Journalist just put the Police Force on the spot, and straight up asks the Commissar for an answer to a question that every government official had so far avoided.

“They don’t work for the police department. I’m sorry, but only one question for reporter allowed please.” The Commissar smiles an apologetic at the reporter. It’s sends chills down Marinette’s spine. It’s a threatening smile. Yet, Marinette knows that he lost this round, tomorrow the news will point out the obvious dodge. All he can do is damage control.

He looks back to the other reporters. “We have time for another couple questions.” It’s a warning, don’t ask about this.
“Will there still be an association between heroes and the police force after the defeat of Hawk Moth and Mayura?” It’s an extremely different question from the previous. It’s also an easy one to answer.

“We honestly don’t know. Ladybug and Chat Noir are voluntary heroes. No one - least of all the police department - makes them go on and fight akumas. We don’t know if they will continue to… be heroes after we arrest Hawk Moth and Mayura.”

The next question is also an obvious thing the remaining of the press conference is irrelevant, mostly obvious questions and vague answers. When it ends Alya switches channels.

“I have to update the Ladyblog.” Alya says. “He avoided the best question of the night.”

“To be fair everybody has tried to avoid giving a direct answer so far.” Nora tells her little sister.

Marinette decides to throw in her two cents. “I think everybody was expecting them to do something about the patrol. It was the only option they actually had.”

“Yeah. Somehow I don’t think that Ladybug and Chat Noir will be allowing the police to interfere a lot in their work.” Nora tells her.

“Probably not, but right now it’s not the important issue. The local government will keep acting the same way towards the heroes. The only thing they will try to do is cut off the amount of patrols.” Alya starts typing on her laptop.

“Do you think they can do that?” Nino asks.

“Possibly. Ladybug and Chat Noir aren’t going to try to rock the waters. There is already a lot of tension on this issue, so they might compromise. This press conference didn’t really give us anything. I mean the Mayor’s statement - that was actually shorter - said the same things. The only thing that stood was the question about their position on Child Soldiers…”

Nora interrupts Alya. “No one was going to answer that. I mean what did you expect them to say? ‘Oh, we need to rely on teenagers to fight terrorists because we don’t have any other way.’ People would riot. The cops aren’t stupid; they can’t come out and say that they support underage vigilantism. It would be too severe. So they smile thank the underage vigilantes for their efforts, and act concern. It’s the only option, anything else is career suicide.”

Alya looks thoughtful at her sister’s words. “Not to mention if they tried a direct approach to the problem and asked for the miraculous, the heroes would say no. Then what? Everybody would understand. I mean the miraculous are technically private property. The police would have to go after the heroes to get it.”

“It would be a nightmare. Cops going after underage superheroes, because they have magic jewelry? The public would riot.” Nino adds.

“I think there might be riots inside of the police force. A lot of them help Ladybug and Chat Noir every day. It’s just something that wouldn’t happen. Even after Hawk Moth is defeated, it would be a bad move.” Nora says. “Plus, all this would be without the support of politicians. The Mayor is staying out of this if someone forced his hand he would support the heroes because of his daughter. I doubt the police would try to impose their will. The cops would be fired, and prosecuted for abuse of power.”

Alya stops typing and looks up. “I would have been surprised if they took the “Give me your miraculous” route. Everyone would think that Hawk Moth works for the police. Avoiding the
question was also not surprising.” Alya starts writing the next article of the Ladyblog, asking for Marinette and Nino opinions. Nora goes to get dinner ready.

In Marinette’s opinion the press conference was extremely vague. Except the answers about patrol, there wasn’t anything different or new from what was previously stated. But she is not going to complain after spending the entire day stressing about this, she’ll take vague and boring over shocking.

Tonight when she talks with Chat she would tell him that they would stick with the original plan for patrol, but they would talk with the police department and inform them of the situation.

They would also do a bit of misdirection and put a video today in the Ladyblog telling Paris of the break. Telling them that they were going to take a week of patrol to regroup and then see what they would do. It would make everyone happy. The groups that think they are over worked the cops, the politicians, and the general public. It won’t do anything about the public knowledge of their age, but it will be a nice distraction. Plus, it will be stress free.

...

Marinette’s parents picked her up not long after dinner. It’s a little late. Normally on school days she didn’t stay out that late, but there was still two hours before the time she usually went to bed… or time her parents assumed she went to bed.

“How was Alya?” Her mom asks.

“She is still really thrilled about what happen, but a lot calmer. We actually watch the police force statement. The Chief Commissar didn’t really deviate that much from what the Mayor’s office said.”

“They couldn’t do that. Mayor Bourgeois ‘left’ the decision in the hands of the police.” Her mom replied.

Her dad snorted. “That man was only looking out for himself. He knew that with his daughter being a superhero he needed to be very careful how he phrased things. The Mayor just said that they will wait for the police decision, after saying that they won’t revoke the heroes’ special status. It was a warning.”

“Like if you condemn them, you’re on your own?” Marinette asks.

Her mom sighs “In the last two years the heroes have basically been political gold. You just need to endorse them and not criticize them. His daughter joining the fight actual helps him with ratings, even when most of Paris assumed that she was the youngest member of the heroes’ team. Now, everyone knows their ages and people are troubled by how young they are. How young they were when this started. Ladybug was probably twelve when Hawk Moth first appeared.”

Marinette looks down. Not twelve, thirteen. ‘You know her age better than anyone, after all you birthed her.’

“Yeah, but most people don’t want to take their miraculous away.”

“The public can see that they are a very good team. It would be too great of a risk to do something about it.” Her mom shakes her head. “But the effect it has on them it’s… I can’t even imagine. That’s why most people want to do something about it.”

“Since they can’t, the police is focusing on their patrol.” Marinette says.
Her mother nods. “Exactly. They can’t control the heroes patrol, and if they tried the heroes would probably refuse. Both statements are made of air. They don’t really mean anything, the heroes could reject the proposal - which I seriously doubt it - but it’s an option. The Police Force couldn’t really do anything to them without having a high cost and that cost might be Hawk Moth winning.”

“You would immediately start to hear politicians condemning the actions of law enforcement. How they are trying to control the heroes. How magical objects are outside of their jurisdiction. Never mind that Ladybug and Chat Noir are an exception. There is a reason that they have a special status.” Her dad adds.

Her mom opens the door to their home. “They could even go as far as saying that by trying to control the heroes’ actions, they would be making Child Soldiers work for the police department. It would be a mess. No one wants that, especially because it would lead to akumas. Meaning more work for the underage superheroes.”

Marinette’s heart is hurting again. She doesn’t understand why. Her parents aren’t really saying anything that different from her friends. So why does it hurt hearing this so much more? Is it because she is lying to them? Is it because if they knew they would be heartbroken? As usual the answer doesn’t come to her.

“Enough about politics. Marinette how was the rest of your day?” Her dad must have notice that the conversation was a little too much for her and changes the subject.

They talk for a while, before her parents leave to go to bed. They have to get up a lot earlier that her.

Tikki flies out of her jacket. “I think today went a lot better than yesterday.”

“Yes, definitely. I’m going to wait a while for my parents to fall asleep before calling Chat.”

Tikki beams at her. “That’s a good idea Marinette. Do you have any plans or are you just going to ask him how he’s doing?”

“A bit of both. I’m going to ask him how he’s doing and tell him what Master Fu told me. We have to make a video telling people we are going to take a break off patrol for the next week. Plus, I want to ask him his opinion on the Mayor’s and police’s reactions…”

Before Marinette goes on a rant Tikki speaks up. “You’ll be fine. Besides you already have a plan with Trixx.”

“Speaking of Trixx…” Marinette retrieves the Fox Miraculous from her bag. Trixx appears.

“Hi. Where’s the fight?” Trixx looks a little confused. Marinette gives him a brief explanation of what happens and why she needs him.

By the end of it Trixx just looks amused. “You’re going to do it now?”

“No. Probably tomorrow. Just wanted to explain things to you and let you and Tikki talk.”

Both kwamis smile at her and look happy. Marinette takes that opportunity to change into her pajamas. She has a feeling that she won’t be going anywhere tonight.

The kwamis talk for half an hour. She takes a white bed sheet and hangs it on a wall, so Chat can’t see the color of her room. Checks to see if her parents are asleep and gets everything she needs for tomorrow morning. It’s go time.
“Tikki?” Tikki nods her head. “Spots on.” She calls Chat Noir. Trixx goes to sit on her shoulder, since kwami’s can’t be seen on camera.

“My Lady how are you this fine evening?” Chat Noir asks with his usual smirk.

“I’m fine. And you Chaton?”

“Purr-fect.” He accentuates the ‘r’ sounding almost like he’s purring. “Did you miss this meow-velous face already?” He looks smug.

“No.” He pouts, and Marinette resists the urge to smile. “I talk with Master Fu…”

“And?” He interrupts, but Marinette doesn’t blame him. She would also be really eager to know what’s Master Fu had said.

“He didn’t really give me any new advice. Just that the magic would protect our identities and that it would help us. This is not the type of things that miraculous users usually worry.”

Chat Noir sighs. “I know my kwami told me the same. I’ve been checking out the things online… people are hyper focused on the patrol thing and the fact you told them we were chosen for a reason.”

“I know. I actually think we should make a more complete statement, but not right now. First I want to talk with the police force.”

Chat perks up. “About the patrol?”

“Yes. I’m thinking about sticking with the previous patrol plan. One hour a night, two on weekends. Next Tuesday before going patrolling we should go to the police headquarters.”

“To talk with one of the big bosses?”

“I don’t know. It’s just we don’t actually know the Chiefs and the Commissars. I was thinking more along the lines of asking someone we’ve worked before.”

“Like Lieutenant Roger Raincomprix?” Chat suggests. Marinette thinks about it. They have worked with him before. He’s dedicated, likes them and they actually know him. Plus, he’s one of the few cops she has seen refuse to give into the Mayors demands. Marinette also doesn’t see him refusing to help them.

“Yes. Chaton that’s perfect. Do you what station he works at?”

“I can find out. Next Tuesday we go meet up with Lieutenant Raincomprix. Should we do something else?”

“Yeah, I was thinking of making a short video telling the public we won’t patrol for the next week, to think about the conditions the Police gave us.”

Chat frowns. “But we were already going to reduce patrol. Why would we tell the public we are only considering it? Is it because the police ‘demanded’ it?”

“To some extent…yes. Also we need a break and this way it doesn’t look like we are tired. Or that this whole situation is getting to us.”

Chat nods his head. “So do a video telling them we are going to take a break from patrol. Purr-fect Do we put anymore statements on it?”
Marinette shakes her head. “No. We tell them we are going to do give the ‘complete statement’ after talking with the police. It will seem like we are working with the police force on this. Plus, it will give us time. We keep the patrol schedule for the next two weeks.”

Chat looks a little hesitant but he doesn’t say anything. He knows they need to let this die down. One week is not enough. But patrolling in the middle of the week will help. Starting the new regime a week later will also help. Marinette smiles at him “It will be fine Chaton.”

It’s a lie. She has no idea how this will play out, but she knows that right now they need to believe everything will be alright. Chat smiles at her. “Of course, my lady.”

Her day was a roller coaster of emotions and she’s not even sure what to feel right now. A part of her feels extremely relieved that the government has decided not to interfere. Another part can’t help but note that they all said something along the lines ‘until Hawk Moth is defeated’.

She knows they will have to go underground after Hawk Moth and Mayura are defeated. She has no idea how Chat will react to that. Maybe telling him who she is will help. After all they will be able to meet up more often and without danger. She’ll miss parts of being Ladybug, but she’ll probably be better off.

She feels Trixx nudge her shoulder. Chat looks concern. She probably spaced out.

“Ladybug are you okay?”

“Fine, just had a really long day.”

“I get it.” He smiles at her.

“What do you think we should tell the people about the ‘chosen’ thing?” Marinette asks.

“We can’t tell them about Master Fu. Maybe tell them we are more align with the magic?” He looks really unsure of his answer.

“I think we should avoid being too focused on the magic aspect.”

“A lot of people online focused on that.” A lot of young people. Sure the adults are also really fascinated by the magic, but it’s different. There is a chance that they won’t buy the ‘we are chosen by magic’ angle. It would raise so many questions about Hawk Moth. Marinette recalls Kim sentence about magical corruption, she feels her eyes twitch.

“We would have to be vague about the magic. The part time heroes would be really hard to explain. Not to mention a friend of mine told me that he saw theories online about magical corruption and how Hawk Moth and Mayura might be…victims.” She spits out the word with anger.

Chat looks offended by the word. “Victims?” He says the word with the same amount of anger as Ladybug. “No way. Absolutely not. That cannot be allowed to spread.”

“I agree. When we make the full statement we will inform the public that when miraculous are used with bad intentions it has negative consequences, but a person’s free will is not affected.”

Chat’s ears point up. “Bugaboo what if we tell them the reason why younger people are chosen is because they are less likely to misuse the miraculous?”

“That’s… a reasonable idea. We have to be careful how we phrased it. It might sound like only underage people can use the miraculous and that would be bad.”
“I know. But we can use Chloe’s as an example. Tell the public the first time she used a miraculous was with bad intentions and she got lucky at only being akumatized, even if she is one of the younger members of the team. It would also tell people that it’s not everyone that can use a miraculous. Make people think twice about asking for our miraculous. They wouldn’t dar-iry ask again.”

“Chaton that’s brilliant.” Chat looks really happy. “Can you take that part for when we talk with the public?”

“Paw-sitive bugaboo.” He smirks. “Are going to tell them anything else?”

“If they ask we’ll tell them, I’m the youngest member on the miraculous team. We’ll also age up all the other heroes, and tell them or imply that there are two heroes that are over 18. We just wouldn’t say which ones.”

“They will assume it’s King Monkey and Viperion.” Chat pauses and looks at her with a sly smile. “My lady, are you the baby on the team? Is this Cat robbing a cradle?”

She makes a face. She is the youngest member on the team, but there is no way she’ll admit to it, even if it’s kind of obvious. “Chaton are you going senile in your old age. I told you my age last night. Poor old kitty.”


Ladybug chuckles at his antics. “Sure.”

They tease each other for a while. Marinette doesn’t pun as she did last night, but she does tease Chat Noir a lot more. Eventually they record a five minute video saying they will take the week off and explaining why.

It has to be recorded three times. Twice because of Chat Noir breaking into puns, and another because Trixx laugh out loud at Chat’s lame pun. When Chat asked who the laughter was from she gave him a lame excuse of being the TV, which was mysteriously turned on. Then, told him the plan of taking photos with people on patrol to show they are still here.

Two hours later, Ladybug and Chat Noir say their goodbyes. They post the video on the Ladyblog, and crash the site. Marinette gets a text moments later from Alya with the link.

Tikki is munching some cookies and Trixx is just looking around the room. “Do you think the magic will help this blown over?”

Both kwamis look at her. Surprising it’s Trixx who answers first. “Yes, in fact it will make sure that things go your way. Since Hawk Moth and Mayura are misusing their miraculous, the magic doesn’t protect them quite has well.”

Marinette frowns. “Do you mean if people suspect them the magic wouldn’t protect them? Or will they have bad luck?”

“Both. They are lucky they don’t have Plagg has their kwami. Sometimes he ends with bad users, when the problems are fixed he curses them with bad luck. They usually don’t last too long. In fact I remember a time that…”

Marinette is disturbed by what Trixx is telling her. Tikki notices and interrupts. “What Trixx is trying to tell you-” Tikki gives him a look. “Is that the magic will always back you and Chat,
because you have good intentions.”

Marinette smiles at the kwamis. She is really freaking out about the magic aspect of the miraculous. A part of her really wants to ask, the other is just screaming to keep her mouth shut. She really doesn’t need to know.

A voice in her whispers ‘Maybe it’s the magic working on you. It makes you not want to ask questions, keeping you in the dark. Come on its magic and you’re not even curious?’

She just ignores it. She has more important things to do like sleep. She looks at her clock. 01:09. Marinette groans. Well, she already had a good night’s sleep this week, no need to get greedy.

She goes to bed and a familiar weight settles on top of her chest. Trixx looks at her.

“Do you want to sleep here…?” Before she can even finish the question, Trixx lies next to Tikki.

“Good night.”

Chapter End Notes

Hello. Thank you for all the comments, kudos and bookmarks.
As promised this chapter came out mid-February. The Chapter has been nicknamed “Frankenstein” due to his side, this baby monster has 13k words. I have officially finished writing this story…which funny story I now have a massive problem. The last two chapters are bigger than all the others put together. They are so big that it will take a ridiculous amount of time to sort out and organize - and correct any mistakes. I can’t even give you an estimate when the next chapter will appear. That leads me to a dilemma. Should I post the last two chapters in parts? Or should I take what will be a ridiculous amount of time before posting them?
If I post it parts it will have the advantage of updating coming sooner (Weekly) and the chapters will be a lot easier to process, not only for me but also for you. If I post them has they are you’ll get the full chapters and the story will end in the next two chapters. I would really appreciate feedback because I’m unsure on how to proceed. This chapter doesn’t have angst in it, but it does continue to show the PTSD that Marinette is suffering. This is the mid-part of the whole story, so things are relatively calm.
If you celebrate it - Happy Valentine’s Day. I personally don’t, but if you do I hope you have a nice day.
Again thank you for reading this. Beware the mistakes and be nice in the comments. Blood Wolf
Chapter Summary

Paris reactions and confirmed theories. Hawk Moth’s has perfected the art of bad timing. Lunch time debates.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tuesday - 8 days after the reveal. First try.

Last week has been insane, between getting her age revealed, and Paris reactions…Well, Marinette needs a break from this break. It’s been exhausting. Everywhere she looks there are debates, discussions and arguments about them.

From late night talk shows cracking jokes left and right to news specials with cops, politicians and psychologists, everybody was talking about them. On Saturday the pressure got too much and Marinette had just hidden in her room with Tikki and Trixx ignoring it all. Both kwamis spoke in soft tones and gave her words of encouragement while giving worried looks when they thought she couldn’t see. She gave Trixx back to Master Fu yesterday afternoon after school. He told her to relax, that no one was considering drastic measures, and then gave her a gigantic box of “relaxing” tea.

There were a few groups that kept saying that Ladybug and Chat Noir had to give their miraculous to ‘better train individuals’. However, most people were quick to point out that no one had any training handling miraculous except the heroes. Never mind the fact that most of the public was weary of having the miraculous falling into Hawk Moth’s hands.

The majority of people didn’t believe that the miraculous should be taken from them. That didn’t mean that the public was happy about them being so young. A lot of groups were worried about them and their mental health - they kept arguing about it. Still, no one seemed to reach an agreement about what to do.

The ethical debates on TV were something else. By Marinette’s count there were three specials that cut the transmission because of the chaos that the debate had caused. Marinette was actually surprised that no akuma came from them. It got to a point that some specialists had ask for breaks in the middle of the talks shows to prevent a possible akumatization, it was unreal.

Theo - Chat Noir’s copycat - had been invited to a dozen different talk shows to speak about the statue he had built. People asked him everything, from why didn’t he notice that their appearances changed, to how much he could see the changes. Some asked about his akumatization, and he told them that the reason for his akumatization was private, and if he had known that the heroes were underage he wouldn’t have been akumatized.

Since the public was convinced that something had happen with Chat Noir that caused him to have a beef with him, no one really thought about his refusal to talk about the subject. Although Marinette noticed that he sometimes looked a little green when someone brought her up. A part of her believed that if people knew he had gotten akumatized because he had a crush on her and got
upset when Chat implied that they were dating, Theo might have been skinned alive by the court of public opinion.

One talk show host tried to ask him about differences in the heroes’ bodies - creeping out Marinette to no end - but had the misfortune of doing that when a mother from one of those weird parents-protection groups was there. It was the stuff of legends, before the host could even finish the question to Theo - who looked seconds away from throwing up - the Mother jumped on the host with a tremendous amount of rage that would have put the Hulk to shame.

The woman screamed for the better part of 15 minutes at the host - who seemed to be trying to perfect the art of making himself smaller - Marinette believed that the only reason the mother didn’t turn into an akuma was because the talk show was the first thing in the morning and Hawk Moth must have been sleeping or something. It was simultaneous terrifying and quite satisfying to watch. It went viral almost immediately and there was a boycott on the program, plus a petition was made to fire the host.

Everybody was condemning the talk show from politicians to religious groups. It was like a scapegoat had been born in the middle of a perfect storm. The talk show host announced a ‘break’ from the show in the south of France, and a new talk show host was there in record time. Literally, the interview was on Thursday and on Saturday there was a new host. It was the station record.

On the plus side no one tried to analyze their growing bodies on TV anymore, most people just pointed out that Ladybug and Chat had indeed grown up. It would also be kind of useless to try to study their development because the magic would probably get in the way. Plus, it would be too creepy now that they were confirmed to be underage.

Every politician in the country was asked about them. The prime minister was asked about them. He just said he had faith in local government to deal with the situation accordingly, since it was a unique case. Marinette had no idea how, but the man had somehow made his statement even vaguer than the one from Mayor Bourgeois.

No government official answered a single question about them being classified as Child Soldiers. Several nongovernmental organizations had put Ladybug, Chat Noir and Queen Bee as Child Soldiers on their lists. When ask about it Mayor Bourgeois had said that his daughter had been ‘asked’ to lend a hand and like a good girl she had help them. The man actually framed it as his daughter being a Good Samaritan when Chloe had originally stolen a miraculous.

It was insane, he also pointed out that she rarely appeared - never mind that she had her identity revealed and Hawk Moth usually target her parents or Sabrina - he tried to down play what was happening. The public didn’t really know how to react to the statements, a few were outrage that he didn’t acknowledged the severity of the situation, but most pointed out that every time he was asked he only talked about his daughter. Ladybug and Chat Noir were never mention.

There was one akuma over the weekend and it was insane. The police showed up in record time, ask if the akuma could control minds - it couldn’t - and immediately set up a perimeter faster than Marinette has ever seen. There were a lot of reporters, but unlike before no one was able to pierce the police perimeter. That was a really good thing since that akuma took three hours to defeat (It could teleport).

By the end of that battle both her and Chat were drained and wanted to go home. The cops signal them down after she purified the akuma. They went down there to inform the cops that they couldn’t stay and chat (Chat Noir’s pun). But were surprised when the police officers just wanted to know if they were alright after what happen with the last attack. The cops also apologize for letting so many people get past the last perimeter.
Ladybug and Chat Noir were deeply touched. They didn’t stay long but thanked the police and informed them they actually liked the pause they were taking, but they missed being out there. It was a way of implying that they would probably cut down on the hours but they wouldn’t stop patrolling. Still, the cops just seemed relieved. They noticed a few news vans trying to follow them, but the police cars turn on their lights and stopped them all.

The news report of that attack was different from before. Usually most people would focus on the way they defeated the akuma (the Lucky Charm), the amount of time and the powers the akuma had. Now, the focus was on how tired the heroes seemed after the battle, the amount of blows they suffered - one particular image of Chat getting knocked out of balance was shown on repeat - and for the first time ever they talked about the police force intervention during the akuma attack.

TVi had a special with a specialist talking about the effects of long battles on teenagers. It was a child psychiatrist who works with former Child Soldiers in Africa. The psychiatrist talked about the stress this was having on their brains, which are still developing. He also put forward some theories on their ability to function post-battles.

Like many psychologists that came before him, he says that making any accurate guess on the impact of their mental health is basically impossible. However this one said something new. Since they are still at war with Hawk Moth the impact that the trauma has on their brains is very different than the one that occurs post-war. He also tells them it’s unlikely that Ladybug and Chat Noir will risk therapy while Hawk Moth is still around, but they should seek help after his defeat.

Furthermore they were intrigued about the choosing of the heroes. Ladybug implied they were chosen for a reason, and then proceeding to tell them it was private. Most people believed that Ladybug and Chat Noir were choosing the part-time heroes - which was the truth - but who had chosen the main ones? No one knew. A few were questioning if it was a person.

What if it was the magic that had chosen them?

That was another thing the magic aspect was barely focused on. It could be because they just didn’t have a lot of knowledge about the magic that wasn’t pure folklore. They knew it could change how they looked and how people perceive them, but that was it. Still, it was magic. Most people were fascinated by the miraculous and the abilities they granted. The fact that the magic aspect was being glossed over so easily was a sign. The magic was already working to protect itself and them.

The entire news circuit was basically a what-to-do and what-not-to-do, regarding the heroes. It was a mess, but it wasn’t all horrible. The amount of hate Hawk Moth was getting was nothing new. However the amount of groups that were thirsting after Hawk Moth’s blood was new. It actually confirmed a theory that Marinette had for a long time.

Hawk Moth doesn’t akumatize people who are angry at him. Although he can recall the akumas he doesn’t want to risk it. Last week, most people that had negative emotions were angry at him. It actually worked in Marinette’s favor - not only they didn’t have to patrol - she only had to fight one akuma.

If she wasn’t so stress about all that had been happening Marinette would say this was one of the easiest weeks she had in ages. Alas all good things come to us for a price, and Marinette was half convinced that something was going to go horribly wrong.

She sat in on of the towers of Notre Dame waiting for Chat Noir to arrive. They had agreed to talk with Roger Raincomprix today before patrolling for a little while.
“Good evening my lady.” Chat greets her as he lands with a flip. Looks like the break did nothing to calm his dramatics.

“Hi Chat. How was your week?” They actually talked over the weekend, but it wasn’t the same. Since Hawk Moth showed up she can’t recall a time when she went a week without seeing him. It was weird not seeing Chat Noir in person for a whole week.

“Dreadful without seeing your meow-velous face. But right now? Purr-fect.” He purrs a little while saying the last word. “And you bugaboo…”

“Don’t call me that.” She tells him irritated. She hadn’t missed that particular nickname.

“How was your week?”

“It was fine. A lot of planning but outside of that it was good.” She looks at Chat and gives him a smug smile. “Plus, not listening to you trying to pun your way through every single sentence, made me realize that puns can actually be funny."

He pouts, and she rings his bell. “My lady that’s aw-fur. You had to be deprived of my sweet puns for a week…such a cat-rostephy.”

She sighs. “Let’s…just go meet the police it will be a lot easier if we get this done tonight.”

They arrive at the station in record time. On the way there a few people saw them and to take pictures, but they didn’t make a big deal out of it. Over the week they had decided to go to the station that Sabrina’s dad works at for two reasons.

Number one, they want to talk with him. Show that they prefer to work with cops that are usually by their side during akumas attacks, and not the Commissars they barely know. They are willing to work with the police, but prefer to work with people they actually know.

Number two, they don’t want to deal with politics. Ladybug knows that she can’t completely avoid it, but choosing him shows that they don’t want to make this into a bigger deal then it already is.

They jump into the roof in front of the precinct. Some officers immediately spotted them and start pointing them out.

“Ready Chaton?”

“Always my lady.”

They jump into the street and start to walk into the station. Now every single cop in the street can see them. No one makes a move to stop them or question them. Marinette can’t help but wonder if this lack of action is because they weren’t expecting them to walk into a smaller precinct or if they had some kind of instructions about what to do.

Anyway they walk in, without anyone saying a thing. When they get inside, the room goes silent, there aren’t a lot of cops here - it’s the front desk - but it’s still eerie. They ignore it after all they had a week to prepare themselves for this.

Ladybug takes the lead and walks to the front desk. Chat is right by her side, her rock in black leather.

“Good evening. We are wondering if we could talk with Lieutenant Roger Raincomprix.”
The cop at the front desk doesn’t even blink. “Of course. May I inquire why?”

Chat decides to answer. “We want to ask the cats in blue what they think about our new patrol plan. Basically we just want to chat.” He gives the stone face cop a wicked smirk.

The cop for his part does look to be a little amused by Chat’s antics. “I will relay the message, please sit down on the room on the left, and wait a minute.”

“Thank you.” They both sit down. Marinette takes that moment to watch the police. They are trying to discretely look at her and Chat, but they are failing miserably. She doesn’t blame them. It’s pretty rare to see two underage superheroes walk into a police station asking for an officer.

“Dan, who wants to talk to with me? What are cats in blue...?” Roger Raincomprix appears and trails off the moment he sees them.

Marinette decides to take that opportunity and stands up. “Good evening Lieutenant. Chat and I want to discuss the request the police made a week ago about the patrol.”

Chat adds. “We made a new patrol plan and wanted to know what the cats in blue are feline.”

Lieutenant Roger stares at them for a beat and then seems to recover from the shock of seeing them. “Of course, I just need to talk with my Captain. Give me a minute, if you need anything just ask Dan.” Dan is the cop at the front desk. Sabrina’s dad walks towards a staircase and then runs up it.

Moments later he arrives with a man, who must be the captain of the station.

“So you’re here to discuss patrol.”

“Yes.” Ladybug says with a lot more confidence that she is feeling.

“Why me?” He asks a little confused.

Ladybug was ready for the question. “Well we actually know you a little, because of the akuma attacks. Lieutenant you aren’t a complete…stranger we have never meet. Plus, when you got akumatized it was because you were trying to up hold the law.” Not to mention you didn’t crack under the Mayor’s pressure to abuse your powers and that was a point in favor of coming here.

Chat Noir in a moment of absolute genius, puts his cats ears flat against his head. “Were we supposed to go somewhere else?”

Ladybug gives the Lieutenant a look saying ‘please don’t send us away we are tired’.

“NO...No you can go and talk with anyone on the police force. They will always help you. You have my word.” The cops behind him nod.

Ladybug and Chat Noir both breathe a sigh of relieve. It would be really bad if they got turn away and had to work with people they didn’t know.

“Ok, this is my Captain, Captain Proust. He will join in...on this...alright?” They both nod.

“So you made a plan about your patrol?” Captain Proust asks them.

“Yes...” Ladybug starts but doesn’t finish.

“AKUMA. AHHHH.” Damn it all to hell. Ladybug just groans. Why? Hawk Moth had an entire
week to send out akumas, why did he had to sent one in the exact moment they were going to deal with the police?

Everybody looks at them. Some cops start to shout orders asking to see if there is any footage of the akuma.

“Is it just me or does Hawk Moth have the worst timing?” Chat Noir asks while getting up.

“Is not just you…” Ladybug answers while getting up. “Lieutenant, Captain, we got to go, but we’ll come back later.”

Another officer answers instead. “Wait a minute. I think we can give you some footage from the akuma.”

All the cops around them are getting ready to head out - probably to build a perimeter to stop people from getting too close - they are just waiting for the footage.

They both pause and look at each other. They look back at the officer who points at a screen, and a picture appears. It’s from a news team in a helicopter. The akuma is shooting something at nearby walkers turning them into miniature versions of the akuma.

“It can make minions?” Chat half asks, half says.

“Yup. It’s going to take a while.” This is one of the akumas that take longer to defeat. On the plus side the minions don’t seemed to respond to the akuma, so they won’t have to fight them. “I can’t see the akumatized object from this footage, but we need to keep our distance.”

“Ladybug.” She looks back at the Raincomprix. “We are also going to head out. Depending on the amount of time it takes to defeat him, we’ll probably be back late. After defeating the akuma just go home…”

“But, we need to take care of the patrol…”

He puts his hand on her shoulder. “I know, but you’ll probably be tired and this could go on for hours and after we have to write reports about the attack. You can come back tomorrow, at the same time. We’ll be here.”

“We’ll make sure this place isn’t crawling with reporters and higher ups.” Captain Proust tells them. It seems that the police understood why they choose to come here and not the Paris Headquarters.

Chat opens his mouth to protest, but they hear another scream. He looks at her and probably thinks the same thing - now is not the time to argue.

“Ok. We’re going to trust you.” It’s a message don’t make us come back here and deal with people we don’t know. If we have to do that we won’t be coming back in good faith. “We’ve got to go. Bug Out.”

Chat leaves at the exactly same moment that she does. Turns out that Lieutenant Raincomprix was right, it takes almost two hours to defeat the akuma. It was close to midnight when they finally purified the akuma.

The victim looked a little worried when he saw them. He apologized profoundly for the trouble but Chat Noir told him that it wasn’t his fault - it was Hawk Moths. A cop takes the akuma victim to the paramedics nearby, it had become procedure to check over the akuma victims for shock, even
thought they were always fine.

“Ladybug, Chat Noir.” They look at the cop. “Lieutenant Roger asked me to tell you to go home. It’s really late.”

They both sight, they figured that. “Ok. Tell him that we are going home. Bug Out.”

“I’ll see you tomorrow Chaton. Meet me at the Notre Dame around the same time as today?”

“Purr-fect my lady.”

They each go their separate ways.

...

Wednesday - 9 days after the reveal. Second try.

The next morning was hard. She wakes up late, with Tikki having to actually steal her sheets. She eats breakfast in record time, with her mother telling her she needs to shallow the actual food and she’s half way to the school when she remembers she forgot Tikki in her room.

One race back towards her room and back to school at inhuman speeds has her arriving seconds before the bell rings.

She’s panting so hard that Ms. Bustier just tells her to take a seat and take a deep breath. She sits besides Alya.

“Hi girl.” Alya whispers.

“H-hi.” She takes several deep breaths to bring down her heart beat.

“You need a better alarm clock. Did you see my post last night on the Ladyblog?”

Still feeling the lack of air in her lungs, Marinette just shakes her head.

“There was an akuma last night.” Marinette nods. “It took a long time to defeat, but it was pretty tamed. Do you think that Ladybug and Chat Noir are going to restart patrolling now?”

“Maybe, didn’t they say they would be taking a break for a week to reevaluate their choices?” Marinette frowns. Wait what about their visit to the precinct? Didn’t that make news? “Was that all?”

Alya sights. “Girl, you could be a little more curious about this. I know you don’t really go nuts about the heroes but...come on. It’s the first time they’ve been out since their ‘break’ from patrol ended. Do you think that they will start patrolling again?”

So that means the news of them going to the police station didn’t spread. That’s good it means the police actually kept half of their promise. Tonight she and Chat will see if they kept the other half and the place isn’t crawling with every Commissar and Chief in town.

“I don’t know. Things have calmed down a little.” Meaning most news stations have run out of new things to say about the matter. “But I don’t know if that means Ladybug and Chat Noir are ready to go back on the streets. What about the police?”

“The police only ask for them to reduce their patrolling. They have actually done that. With this break and not counting the akumas attacks they haven’t patrol at all. Besides if they chose a new
schedule, Ladybug and Chat Noir will probably go to the headquarters of the Paris Police department to speak with the police.”

Fat chance. The Chief Commissar gave both her and Chat the idea of being more of a politician than a police officer. Everything that came out of his mouth this last week was either vague or paraphrasing his own initial statement. Marinette isn’t actually sure what his opinion on the matter is. She just knows that he doesn’t actual care about them he cares about the public opinion of the police force.

Commissar Durant is from another type of cops. The type that while thankful for all the work that the heroes do, isn’t happy about letting them interfere in actual police work. The type that believes they shouldn’t be doing any work outside of akumas. Marinette gets were he comes from. The police force is there for a reason, people should trust them just as much as vigilantes. Yet, unlike the Chief, Commissar Durant is worried about them and the effect this could have on them.

Still, Marinette doesn’t want to deal with him. While Sabrina’s dad is also a firm believer they shouldn’t be doing this outside of the akumas, he has been around them long enough that he knows them. Most importantly she and Chat know him, she in particularly has know the man for years. Commissar Durant is a complete stranger.

Besides the police could still turn against them. If the public opinion turns against them, things will get bad. The only reason this hasn’t been worse is due to the public wanting to help them and protect them. Also the magic wouldn’t allow the public opinion to turn now. Marinette has no idea how this will happen - and to be fair she doesn’t want to know how - but things will go their way.

The politicians opinions will only appear after the public opinion is establish. Sure, some have given their stand immediately, but most are waiting to see how this will play out. There is a reason 70% of the statements given by politicians are vague. No one wants to stand by a statement that could be taken the wrong way by the public.

After Hawk Moth’s defeat things will be different. Marinette can’t be sure they’ll still have the politicians support. They are vigilantes after all, the only reason they don’t have more problems with the police is due to the danger that Hawk Moth represents. They can’t completely trash them to the public, but they can claim that it will be unnecessary for them - especially if they are still underage - to still be doing this.

Also, Marinette is sure that there are a few cops that resent Ladybug and Chat Noir because of their position. For being able to do their work without mountains of paper work and for having the public's love and support. When Hawk Moth is defeated she can’t see them keep doing this.

Tonight she has to bring this up to Chat. It’s something she has been avoiding for a long time, but now the situation has made it too important. If the police ask them about what happens after the defeat of Hawk Moth, they need to have an answer.

“-nette. Marinette.” She looks up from her desk at Ms. Bustier. “Can you answer?”

“Huh?” She grunts confused. Her class starts laughing pretty hard.

“Maybe you should pay attention to the class and not daydream so much.”

“Of course. I’m sorry.” She says while going red. She has to stop spacing out during classes.

“That’s what you’re calling it? Spacing out?” the dark part of her brain sneers. She ignores it.

The rest of class takes an excruciatingly slow time to pass. Marinette has no idea how she stays
awake for most of the time. Maybe it’s the promise of coffee from the café on the outside of the school is enough to keep her awake.

“-te. Marinette.” She feels a hand on her shoulder. She looks up and sees an angel. Adrien.

“Adrien…er…how doing you…No…what needs I…I mean…” She babbles worse than usual. She receives an elbow to the ribs from Alya. “I mean what’s up?”

“You look pretty tired. I have to go have lunch at home. But I asked Gorilla to get you some coffee. How does that sound?” He smiles that angelic smile and Marinette’s brain stops working.

He got her coffee…could he be anymore perfect? “You’re perfect…No I mean your coffee sounds delicious…I would you drink up…NO…I…”

“She’ll take it. The girl is too tired to formulate complete sentences.” Alya to the rescue, sometimes best friends are exactly what you need to salvage an awkward situation.

“It’s ok. I hope the coffee helps Marinette.”

They all walk out of their classroom to see Adrien off. When Gorilla gave Marinette her coffee - Triple Espresso - she might have drooled a little. They walk back inside to eat. At the end of their meal Alya shoves her phone on to Marinette. “Here, this was fight from last night.”

Marinette looks at the video. The footage was from a more distant point that usual, but with the akuma making minions there weren’t a lot of people willing to get up close and personal. Alya is looking at her expecting some kind of commentary.

“It seems normal.”

Alya lets out a sight. “Girl…only you would describe an akuma as normal. Anyway do you think that Chat Noir and Ladybug will go to the police? Do you think they’ll talk about patrol? Or will they also ask about the akuma investigation?”

“All of it? Maybe?” Well, they are going for sure, but telling Alya that will only be fuel to a fire. And in the past week Alya has been burning brighter than the sun.

Before Alya can reply Max appears.

“I’m more interested if they are going to do the…” fuller’ statement they promised.” This is not helping calming Alya down, in fact Alya’s eyes light up.

“You’re right they will probably be making it soon.”

“Only after talking with the cops. Remember? They told that in the video.” Marinette really hopes they do.

“That’s not the point. What they are going to say in that statement is what matters.” Alya pulls up her phone. “Do you think they will talk about the dealings with the police? How the public is reacting to their ages? The debates if they are Child Soldiers or not? What about the Mayor’s response to it all?” Alya keeps spitting out questions after questions about what she wants to know.

“Have they been acknowledged as Child Soldiers by the Mayor or is it just conjecture?” Adrien asks. Marinette didn’t even see him arrive. “How do you classify a Child Soldier?”

Max perks up at the question. “Child Soldiers are any children under the age of 18 who are
recruited by a state or non-state armed group and are used as fighters, cooks, suicide bombers, human shields, messengers, spies, or for sexual purposes.”

“The heroes aren’t cooks, suicide bombers, human shields, messengers, spies and aren’t used for sexual purposes.” The entire table cringes at the last part.

“It’s debatable if Ladybug and Chat Noir can be classified as Child Soldiers because they aren’t forced by a state or a armed group to fight Hawk Moth and Mayura.” Max says. “That being said they are a unique case due to them being vigilantes and the magic aspect. A lot of people - including me - are unsure if they should fall under that category.”

“What about the special status they have from the city? Wouldn’t that qualified them?” Alya asks.

“That status was given when the government believed that they were adults.” Max adjusts his glasses. “However since it has not been revoked, I am inclined to accept that has proof of them being ‘recruited’. There is another aspect. Most Child Soldiers are forced into their roles, and the minority that volunteers is because they grow up in a culture that accepts and sees Child Soldiers as viable options. Ladybug and Chat Noir don’t seem to be forced into being heroes.”

“Ladybug and Chat Noir save Paris because they want to. If they do this voluntarily why would they be classified as Child Soldiers?” Marinette asks felling frustrated.

One of the worst things in the past week was hearing everybody giving their opinion on the matter. She chose this, when Stoneheart showed up she was unsure, but now? No doubt in her mind she can do this and she chooses to do it.

“You choose to this now, but after the first Stoneheart attack you wanted to quit. You knew you were over your head and someone else should be Ladybug. You were a child who gained responsibilities she never asked for and then had no choice but do the job. Quit or let Paris be overrun by stone man…yeah great choice.’ A twisted voice whispers.

Max nods at her previous words. “Exactly. Yet a lot of nongovernmental groups have said that’s an excuse used by a lot of governments. Paris case is special, but having literal teenagers fighting terrorists? The case being special doesn’t justify that.”

Marinette has no answer to that. Talking about this subject has been hard enough.

“What about the part-time heroes? Can they be classified as Child Soldiers?” Nathaniel asks. The part-time heroes on the table look really uncomfortable with the idea of being classified as such.

“It’s complicated because we don’t know their age. Plus, according to Mayor Bourgeois they asked Chloe to help them. That means they probably ask all the other part-time heroes, meaning they can refuse. They are vigilantes sure…but Child Soldiers? I have a lot of reservations to call them that.”

“Do you think they will address this topic in their statement?” Alya tries to change the subject.

“No. If the police and the politicians are avoiding the topic like the plague I doubt the heroes will touch on it.” Max answers. “The public perception seems to be that the heroes are indeed Child Soldiers, but almost every adult doesn’t want to talk about it, calling it too painful and hard to accept.”

Marinette thinks back to Ms. Bustier original reaction. How her parents even suspecting that Ladybug and Chat Noir were underage, had a hard time accepting the truth. How so many adults just seemed sadden by the news. The magic might be in effect here preventing anyone from pushing too much, but Marinette doesn’t think so.
It’s more likely that since no one can actually find a decent solution for the problem. They don’t want to talk about it. How many voices this past week has Marinette seen on TV reaching the conclusion that Ladybug and Chat Noir are needed? How many were satisfied with it?

Anything that is uncomfortable or painful people avoid like the plague. Is that the reason that the patrol issue and their statements have become such obsessions? The former is something that gives them the illusion of control over the situation, and the latter gave them hope that could help them deal with the truth.

The past week Marinette’s lunch time has been like this, the class debating a new curiosity about the heroes. There is a difference from last week most of her classmates are starting to put more weight on the reactions from the media, the government and other people.

There are some topics that are still having heated debates. Such as, the debate of the possibility of them being Child Soldiers or underage vigilantes, possible problems with their mental health, the future collaboration between them and the police.

It’s also worth noting that the magic angle has been completely dropped. Marinette really hopes that’s a sign of things calming down.

Chapter End Notes

Hello. Thank you for all the comments, kudos and bookmarks.
I’ve decided to divide chapter 6 into two parts. The first one is the smaller one. The second one will come out next week - either on Friday or on the weekend. It will depend on my capability to manage my life.
Since the writing part of story is finished I have been moving faster on the reviewing process. I’ve started to divide (the previous) Chapter 7 and it’s going well.
I want to give a massive thank you to everyone who wrote their opinions on the last chapter they actually helped me a lot and helped me figured out a way to organization the format of the story.
Again thank you for reading this. Beware the mistakes and be nice in the comments.
Blood Wolf
She leaves her house as Ladybug 20 minutes before she has to meet up with Chat Noir and hopes that he will be a little early.

Ladybug is going to have to raise the silent question - What will they do when Hawk Moth is defeated? She is not really expecting a complete plan, more along the lines of something to say to the police. That being said Marinette has no idea what Master Fu wants to do with the miraculous after they defeat Hawk Moth and Mayura.

He could ask for the miraculous and leave Paris to safe keep them. In fact he should do that, if people know that there are objects of extreme magic power in Paris, the safe thing to do is leave. Marinette heart is aching just thinking of having to say goodbye to Tikki, but she would gladly give the earrings up if it meant that Tikki would be safe.

Marinette has no doubt that Chat Noir would do the same for Plagg, even if it would be painful to have to say goodbye to his kwami.

She arrives 10 minutes earlier than they had agreed, but Chat is already there.

“Hello, Chaton.” He smiles at her."You're here early.”

“Just enjoying the night's view, my lady. It’s a beautiful night bugaboo, just like you.”

Ladybug just rolls her eyes. “Chaton before we go…I actually have to ask you something…unpleasant.”

“You’re can ask me anything.” Chat Noir says in a serious tone. It’s unusual for Chat to adopt a non-joking mode outside of akuma battles - and even then it’s a 50/50 chance - but this week has them on their toes trying to keep for being hit with more unpleasant surprises.

Ladybug just nods. “I…I’m not sure if you ever thought about it…but it can come out in a police conversation and that would be really bad…and then the police would think that we don’t know what we are doing and they could tell the media we are irresponsible or worse demand our miraculous and then we would have to fight them and Hawk Moth would take the change and…”

She starts to ramble, something she only does when she is Marinette.

Chat’s eyes have gotten bigger since the beginning of the rant. “Whoa. Whoa. My Lady breath, calm down…I’m a little lost. There is no need to panic, just tell me what the problem is.”

Ladybug takes a few deep breaths. “Alright. If the police ask us what we plan to do when Hawk Moth and Mayura are defeated, what do we tell them?”
A dawning expression appears on Chat’s face. “What are you planning to do?”

Ladybug shifts her weight from one foot to the other. “I’m thinking of taking a break.”

Chat looks sad, but he also doesn’t seem surprise. It’s obvious that he also has been thinking about this a lot. “I figured… I don’t know what to do yet. I also know that Master Fu may want to take Plagg away…and I understand…it’s just…”

“Painful.”

His smile is heartbreaking. “Yeah. I think we should tell the police we are going to take a break to think about what comes next…and if they need us to call us.”

Ladybug smiles. “I was thinking the same.”

“Besides I will know who you are. Meaning I will still meow-rvel (marvel) at your face every day.” He looks at her hopeful. She just nods and his face lights up.

That is technically a lie, since Marinette doesn’t actually know if they can reveal their identities after Hawk Moth is defeated. Master Fu may ask them to keep quiet or something may happen and it would be too risky. Still, there is no point in telling Chat it won’t happen when it probably will.

Marinette won’t mind knowing who her gigantic dork of a partner is, even if it could be challenging to deal with him every day outside of a mask.

“Ok, so we tell the police we don’t have plans yet, but we are going to take a break from it. We don’t have to specify the amount of time since we don’t know. If they need anything they can just say something in the media or social media.” Marinette summarizes. “We should get going, but we need to be discrete entering the police station, there are a lot more people looking for us after they saw us yesterday.”

“Discrete is my middle name.” He says while balancing his hands on top of his baton and spinning a little.

“…Let’s just go.”

They take extra care on the way to the building in front of the police station. When they arrive they notice that there aren’t any news vans or reporters, but there are a few more cops on the street. They hide behind a chimney and look at the street.

Yesterday, there were about five to eight cops on the street. Today it’s double that, but Marinette understand that, they are expecting them this time.

“Do you think we are going in there to meet the higher claw-missars?” Chat asks a little nervously.

“I hope not, but if we do, we’ll deal with them.” She says full of confidence. ’And if for some reason we have to deal with the wannabe politicians and a bunch of bureaucracy we will, with extreme displeasure and making it extremely dificult.’

Ladybug peeks at the street in front of them, she doesn’t know why but today going into the precinct is a lot harder than it was yesterday. For some reason they are a lot more hesitant to go in. Maybe it’s because they lost the element of surprise and the cops are waiting for them. Maybe it’s because yesterday they were sent them home and it could be for a different reason that the akuma attack.
There is just a lot more. She’s tired of this uncertainty and doubt. Before this happen Marinette wouldn’t have hesitated to go in there if the she needed help. Now? She is dreading go in there. Before she could look at Chat Noir and that would be enough to give her strength. Now she would see an equal hesitant partner looking for support. Before she could turn on the news and see a person discussing something that wasn’t her age. Now the debates and discussions make her want to hide inside her house.

Marinette can’t recall a time where she felt so uncertain of what to do as now. This is something she can’t screw up this is not a bully or a failed confession to a crush. If she screws this up the two of them might lose the support of the Paris Police Department and that would be disastrously bad.

“My lady?” She hears Chat Noir call her.

“Sorry, just getting my facts straight. We jump directly in front of the door.” Yesterday they didn’t jump directly, because they were trying to gouge out the reactions from the officers.

Today that isn’t needed. Today when they get up, all the cops on the street see them. Most just look at them with unreadable expressions, a few look hopeful and a few conflicted. Marinette makes sure she isn’t affected by their stares and jumps, with Chat right besides her.

He opens the door for her and just like yesterday most of the station goes quiet. Marinette turns to the front desk and sees it’s the same cop from yesterday.

She smiles at him. “Good evening. We are here to see if we could talk with Lieutenant Raincomprix and Captain Proust?”

“Of course. They are expecting you. They are in the conference area with a few other cops…”

“A few fat cats?” Chat interrupts.

“No. Just cops from this district. It’s just a more private room.” So the entirety of the police force of Paris isn’t in that room. Good.

“Thank you.” Ladybug says. It’s both a thank you for the information and a thank you for not burying us in bureaucracy.

“You’re welcome. Come on I’ll escort you to the room.” They head into a mostly empty hallway. The police have obvious cleared the way towards the room, so she and Chat Noir won’t get overwhelm. When they go up two flights of stairs it becomes clear that the police are being extra careful to keep them hidden. In a way it makes perfect sense, although yesterday they saw at least a dozen cops when they walk into the station, they didn’t see civilians or criminals.

It’s obvious that the jails and the interrogation rooms aren’t in the entry. The building is old but not old enough that it doesn’t have elevators, so them taking the stairs is an obvious way to make them go through the most ‘empty’ spaces.

Eventually the silence gets too much for Chat Noir. “I feel like I’m doing a feline walk.”

She groans. The cop leading them looks vaguely amused. “Better a feline walk than a perp. walk.”

“This cat wasn’t made for the kitty cages. He was made for the runways.” He does a pose. “Wild Chat Noir makes the ladies swoon. Of course this cat is already taken…”

“By what? The Paris Animal Control Department?”
Chat pouts at her. Before he can protest they see both Lieutenant Roger and Captain Proust standing in front of a door.

It’s time.

“Good evening.” She and Chat both say simultaneously.

“Good evening Ladybug, Chat Noir.” Raincomprix says. He looks at his Captain. “You remember Captain Proust?”

They nod. “Good he’s here to help. We didn’t tell the headquarters about your visit last night, but we did put it in the report of the akuma attack. The akumas reports are special. All the officers involved make a small report, and then the commanding officer writes a… summary for each station. It takes time to put the final report - that goes to Headquarters - together, we are still finishing ours.”

That explains why this place isn’t filled with higher ups, they haven’t finished the reports. Being informed of their visit by an akuma attack report is a unique way to buy them time and make sure they don’t break any protocols. They made the right choice in coming here. Today they are going to finish what they started yesterday.

Although they arrived shortly before the akuma attack, they didn’t get to talk with the cops, just inform that they wish to discuss the ‘offers’. It was the akuma attack that interfered on their ‘talk’. Marinette can’t see their superiors being happy, but since they are using protocol for this, the bosses’ hands will hopefully be tied. Plus, it seems that no one send a memo asking the other stations to inform if the heroes showed up there. Marinette doesn’t know if it’s a lapse in judgment or if it’s just arrogance by the Commissars.

“It takes time before they read all the reports of the different precincts. As a result for today it’s just us. However Captain Proust has a couple requests.”

They turn to Captain Proust. The man clears his throat. “There are a few cops in there from this precinct. They wouldn’t interfere in the meeting. Two are there to inform us of any akuma attack; one is there because they work with our PR department; another one is there because we will record this talk. We will need to provide something other than our reports of this meeting to the city.” He pauses and looks at them.

In other words they need to have something to hand to their bosses so they don’t all get fired or suspended after the Commissars realize what happen. Chat Noir looks at her and she nods. It’s something that they can deal with, after all the police have helped them so far. They can help them back.

“It’s fine.”

“Purr-fectly fine.”

The Captain nods. “We are mostly going to just hear what you have come up with, but I do have a request. Can you give us a small report on the akuma yesterday?”

Chat Noir looks at her. “Like what it was like? Or the things we did?” She asks somewhat confused.

“No.” This time is Lieutenant Roger who speaks up. "Not a report of your actions or the akuma’s actions. More like things that you’ve notice that we’re different from other akumas, and did the police force intervention seemed efficient or not.”
“Are you asking us for feedback in the performance of the police force?” Ladybug asks incredulous. Chat looks in disbelief at them.

“A little bit. The akuma that revealed your ages—“they both look away from the Lieutenant. ”…we had a really difficult time in dealing with him, the public, and the media. You suffered the consequences of that attack in a way you shouldn’t have to.”

Captain Proust adds. “We are trying to create an overall plan for certain types of akumas. For example, with akumas that can control minds the current protocol is just create a perimeter around the akuma and evacuate as soon as possible. This is not ideal, if we create a perimeter too close to the akuma our officers get caught, if we create one too far the civilians don’t get evacuated quickly enough.”

Ladybug realizes what they are asking. “The last akumas could create minions but it didn’t control them. You’re trying to create more protocols for different type of akumas.”

“Yes, exactly.”

“I think we can talk…I just don’t know how much it will help you. Chat Noir and I don’t have the same perspectives from the battle. I often look for a plan to defeat the akuma, and he protects me and distracts the akuma.”

“I’m your Chat-rning knight.”

Ladybug sighs. “We’ll tell you about the last battle, but it was pretty standard…just took a little more time.”

Lieutenant Roger looks at them with a worried expression “We don’t have to do this tonight. If at any point it becomes too much say something and we will stop.”

Ladybug smiles at him in gratitude. “Thank you, but we have been making plans for the past week. We’ve also been thinking a lot about this. We just want some feedback on our new patrol schedule, and maybe hear some ideas if you have them.”

Both of them nod, and lead the heroes into the room. It’s a big room, enough for thirty people to work comfortably. The cops that Captain Proust told them about are sitting in a corner. They greet them and after a few pleasantries they start to set up a few things. The two guys monitoring the akumas sit back in the corner with laptops. The PR cop just pulls out a tablet and nods at the captain. The cop recording the conversation makes a few adjustments to a camera and also nods at the captain.

“Do you want something to eat or drink?” Raincomprix asks.

“A coca-cola, please” Chat Noir replies. Raincomprix nods.

“Coffee, double shot of espresso please.” Ladybug asks a moment after.

Everybody in the room looks at her.

“My Lady…maybe it’s not the best time to advertise your coffee addiction.”

“It’s not an addiction. I drink more tea than coffee.” Ladybug protests.

“You drink black tea, white tea and green tea. Those have the highest quantity of caffeine out of any other tea…”
“I also drink chamomile tea.” The cops around the room look both worry and amused by the conversation.

“Fine bugaboo. How much coffee have you had today?” Chat asks with a grin.

“…” Ladybug keeps her mouth shut.

“I rest my case.” He puts his hands in the form of guns, and blows away the invisible smoke.

Ladybug decides not to answer him. “A bottle of water please.”

Sabrina’s dad looks like he wants to say something about her coffee habits, but keeps quiet. “Sure, coming right up.”

He steps outside for a few moments - to find a vending machine - and comes back with a few bottles of colas and waters and a lot snacks, most of them are healthy snacks. Marinette is starting to see where Sabrina’s attitude in always being prepare comes from. “All set.”

It’s go time. Captain Proust kicks off the discussion. “Ladybug, Chat Noir you have come here to discuss your new patrol arrangement correct?”

Ladybug takes the lead. “Yes. Over the past week my partner and I have discussed this topic extensively. We are aware that…some individuals would prefer if we stopped completely.” She pauses. “However, when we patrol we don’t just try to find akumas or watch the streets. We often discuss battle plans, sometimes we train some moves and other times we just talk with each other.”

Chat adds “After patrol…sometimes I just run around the city I find it very…liberating.”

“That means our patrol is not just something we do for Paris, we also do it for ourselves.” All the cops in the room nod. “As such our new plan goes like this - Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday we are going to do 1 hour of patrol. Friday and Saturday we do two hours. We might switch around Friday and Sunday, depending on our personal schedules.”

Chat adds. “We don’t have concrete plans for patrols, because it could create patterns and Hawk Moth could take advantage of that. We do the same for routes.”

Ladybug continues. “We also sometimes skip patrols if we have a…heavy week. Or if we feel that there is a risk for creating patterns.”

“I patrol a lot more than Ladybug, my patrols are more spontaneous. When I have a little time…it’s mostly running on the roofs.” Chat turns pink while saying the last part.

Raincomprix and Proust take a moment to write down some things. The Captain takes the lead again. “Are all your patrols at night?”

Chat answers this time. “No. On weekdays more often than not it’s on late afternoons or during the night time. On weekends it depends on things in our personal lives. As such they can be in the morning, afternoon or at night. Ladybug prefers to stick with the schedules she sets up. I’m more…unpredictable.”

“Why not patrol one hour on weekends since you could take the time to recuperate from the week?” ask Lieutenant Roger.

“Sometimes we do that… on weekends depending on our schedules, patrol is erratic. We start at the agreed hour - sometimes together sometimes apart - and then we…” Chat looks at her a little
lost for words.

“Almost always stay longer on the streets. Sometimes is because of an akuma or some crime relating incident. Other times are for events or fans we meet during patrol, so we have to stay longer to finish the route. Occasionally is just boredom, we don’t really have anything to do with our personal lives.”

Captain Proust smiles. “Running on the roofs of Paris is a cure for your boredom.”

Ladybug and Chat Noir look sheepish at the man and nod.

“What do you do on weeks that the akuma attacks are more intense? Do you cut patrol? Do you still do it but with less intensity?” Raincomprix hits them with a series of questions.

Chat Noir looks at Ladybug and she nods. “On weeks where there is an akuma attack almost every day, we don’t really patrol. We mostly just go around Paris looking for akumas, and talk with each other. We talk about the akumas, things that are bothering us and problems we had during the battles. We don’t cut patrol but…”

Captain Proust finishes. “You use it in another way. You use that time to figure out a game plan and relax. It’s partners bonding time.” He looks at the papers he has been writing since the beginning of the meeting.

“I have a few thoughts on your patrol. I would like to look at a few examples of your patrol plans. Lieutenant Roger do you have any suggestions?”

“Yes sir.”

“You can go first.” It’s a nod of respect at the fact that they came here to talk with Sabrina’s dad.

“I still have some questions. One, do you always patrol the two of you or do you do individual patrols? Two, how do you set up your patrol schedule is it depending on the hour you’re available or do you have another criteria? Three, do you use any device - such as a police radio - to help plan things?”

Ladybug answers. “The patrols I schedule are usually as a duo. Depending on the week we are having I sometimes split us up. For example, sometimes I patrol alone on a Monday and Chat patrols alone on a Tuesday, but on Wednesday we patrol together. This is to avoid getting too tired.”

Chat continues. “We don’t have other criteria’s for our patrols, because we have personal lives, and we can’t compromise our identities to patrol. It’s not uncommon for one of us to cancel patrol because of personal things coming up. On the last question we just use our magical items to communicate. They are untraceable and they can’t be fooled or hacked…we don’t know how they work.”

Chat has become more and more serious as the conversation has gone on. Ladybug has notice that Chat Noir (sometimes) has difficult standing up to authority figures. Sure he sasses a lot of people and akumas, but now he always looks at her before speaking up and he has dropped the jokes and the puns.

Marinette wonders if the cops have notice the change. Looking at Roger Raincomprix she thinks he has noticed, since he has been speaking in a softer voice that usual. Proust is harder to read because Marinette doesn’t know him. Yet he let Roger - his subordinate - take the lead on the ‘interrogation’. It could be an attempt at show them respect for their original wishes or it could be
because he is trying to keep them from feeling overwhelmed.

Marinette thinks it might be a little bit of both.

“Magic communicators…okay. Can you give us an example of a route you do?”

Ladybug looks at the camera. “Can it be one we don’t use anymore? I…”

Roger raises his hand. “I understand if you don’t want to talk about current plans on camera. You have a general plan for your new patrol and you’re sharing it with us. If any of this is made public, you won’t need a new plan. The only thing is that Hawk Moth and Mayura may know that you don’t keep patterns in your patrols and you patrol almost every single day, and that was already obvious. If at any time you want to stop the recording just say so.”

Ladybug nods in thanks. “Thank you. When in costume we have superhuman stamina and speed. So we cover a lot of ground. We had a path a few weeks ago from Sacré Coeur to the Louvre on Tuesday and Thursday. We would do the 1st, 2nd, 9th and 18th arrondissement of Paris. We only did this if we patrolled in late afternoon. After dinner there aren’t a lot of people there.”

Chat Noir takes a sip of his coke and continues. “We also have routes that depend on time of day and if there is a lot of movement on that place. If there are special events we also adapt the patrols. This cat also purr-fers to take the night shifts.”

Two cops in the corner of the room chuckled a little at Chat. He perks up happy that someone likes his puns.

Roger looks at them and says. “I think that your current plans are fine. You’re planning has a good base and it’s versatile enough that you can change it. You also plan ahead and take breaks when you have tiring weeks. You’re reducing the amount of hours from thirty hours a week to nine. I think you should cut some patrols on times of great stress and exams. Unless you need to unwind don’t patrol so much.”

Ladybug and Chat Noir nod. Roger doesn’t seem to have any more advice so they turn to look at the Captain.

Captain Proust looks at his notes before speaking. “The first suggestion I have for you is to take a day off every week. You should do it on a week day instead of the weekend. It will help you relax a lot. Maybe do it when Hawk Moth sends an akuma in the middle of the night.”

“We sometimes do that…but I guess we can try to make a habit out of it.” Ladybug gives Chat Noir an inquiring look.

“I agree my lady.”

“The second suggestion is to find a police officer during patrol and tell them you are going to start patrolling. Since the Chief Commissar wants to...make sure that there aren’t any emergencies, you can just inform dispatch of your patrol. Also if you patrol for more that the time you established just tell someone. We don’t want to panic the police force.”

Chat Noir immediately looks like he wants to protest and she gets it. It feels a lot like being followed and controlled by the police. Still the way he says it rings alarm bells in Marinette’s brain. Marinette feels like he is giving them an advice more than a suggestion.

Her mind flashes back to the press conference with the Chief Commissar saying that he would have officers asking them about being out late, and that they could be asked to go home. If they
informed the police of their patrolling it would give them an advantage. They could choose the
cop, someone that won’t send them home.

They have to play with this for a while. He didn’t say when they should inform the cops that they
were patrolling or who to tell. He’s giving them an out and helping them navigate a loophole that
she didn’t even see.

Ladybug takes a sip of water and nods at Chat. He nods back. It’s possible that he hasn’t seen the
advantage they have just been gifted, but he trusts her enough not to throw a massive fit over this.

“That sounds reasonable. We will approach random cops during our patrol. As a result it doesn’t
give away our patrol routes and our starting points, also to protect officers from being target by
Hawk Moth."

Captain Proust gives her a little nod. “I understand. Well, that was all for me. Roger?”

“I’m good Captain.” Roger turns back to the heroes. “Have you considered any of the other things
that were offered by the Chief Commissar?”

Ladybug takes a second to gather her thoughts. “We have. The third offer…would be difficult to
accept at the moment. It could compromise too much of our personal identities and it could
compromise the safety of any therapist we attend. We are not against the idea however we don’t
feel it would bring us any benefits as we currently are.”

“Do you think you could benefit from therapy?”

Ladybug considers her next words carefully. “I like the idea of having someone to talk with that
isn’t involved in the situation.” She looks at Chat who also nods. “I don’t think I need it. I don’t
think that I have any problem that I couldn’t resolve with my…the people in my personal life. I also
don’t think we would need any specialize psychiatrists, regular therapists would probably do the
trick.”

Chat Noir smirks. “I agree with my lady.”

“What about the second offer?”

“We are not against it. Still there are things we know about magic that would be too dangerous to
reveal…we would be a little limited about what we could say. We can still take a look and see if
we can help. I guess it would also depend on what you have.”

“I’ll try to set up a date with headquarters. We’ll tell you when we have something more concrete.”

“We’ve been looking into who Hawk Moth might be for a long time. One thing we know for sure
is that his interest with the miraculous is dangerous. Using miraculous with dark intentions is one
of the most dangerous things a person can do.”

Captain Proust frowns. “Is he aware of that risk?”

“Yes. I have no doubt the fact that he wants our miraculous is prove enough.”

Roger frowns at that. “Why are you miraculous prove of that?”

Chat answers immediately. “Our miraculous represent the power of creation and destruction. When
put together they give the user extreme power but at a cost.”
Ladybug can see the cops frowning more and more and has a feeling that they are about to ask for more information. This is a very dangerous topic. Yes, the public is aware that they hold very powerful jewelry and it has amazing powers. They also know that Hawk Moth and Mayura want that power, they just don’t know why.

What Chat told them is just confirming something they already know, but they can’t share more. If they do there is a big risk of someone finding out about the wish. That would attract even more dangerous attention. A pair of earrings and a ring that put together would give the user the power to wish for anything they want? Marinette doesn’t even what to think about the possible fallout of that particular bomb.

That means that she needs to put the police - and whoever watches this recording - on their toes. They need to fear the power of the miraculous in the wrong hands, but not become afraid of them. It’s a delicate balance.

“It also tells us that Hawk Moth had magical training or has sources regarding magic. You can’t just put on both of our miraculous and have instant power…” She pauses on purpose to give the illusion she is thinking carefully about her next words. “There are…things that one must do in order to obtain that power.”

Chat Noir picks up on what she is trying to do. “It means that Hawk Moth must have at least an idea of what they are.”

With any luck if this video ever becomes public - or Hawk Moth sees it - they will also confused him.

All the cops look at them with the same expression ‘I’m curious but I’m not sure I want to know’.

“I’ll just assume that you won’t answer any questions regarding the magic of the miraculous?” Sabrina’s dad asks.

“We don’t want to risk gaining more enemies. Any magic questions will be off the table.”

“What if they are pertinent to Hawk Moth’s powers?” Captain Proust asks.

“It depends on what you’re asking…we might not actually know the answer. If you have any questions now, you could ask. We’ll try to answer. It might give you an example or idea of what we can talk about.” Ladybug replies.

“On the first attack when you confronted him you said that he would end up handing his miraculous to you. He has a miraculous correct?”

They nod its public knowledge.

Roger looks at his notes. “He can manipulate people’s negative emotions and create super villains. His victims gain super powers and they have no memories after being ‘deakumatized’. He uses corrupt butterflies that are hard to track to akumatize people.”

Ladybug looks at Chat and then at Roger. “Are you trying to track the butterflies?”

“We try but they usually disappear quickly and pure white butterflies are surprisingly hard to find.”

“The butterflies don’t go back to him.” All the cops look at her. “We know that he raises them and that he probably has a space where he can grow them.”
Chat Noir adds. “Since heroes day we know that he has multiple butterflies with him at any given
time. We assume he uses some kind of magic to bind them to him. When my Lady purifies the
butterfly the spell is release so they don’t go back to him.”

“That’s actually really good to know. We can stop wasting resources on trying to find a way to
follow the butterflies and we now know that Hawk Moth raises his own butterflies. Do they take a
lot of space to create?”

“It takes the same space that it does with normal butterflies, but since he needs a lot of them. We
assume that he has some kind of private space to grow them…we just can’t really narrow it down.”

“Still it gives us information we previously didn’t have. We’ll talk with the detectives in charge of
the case and we’ll try to set a date - discreetly - to discuss other things. I think you might not be
able to give us a lot of information, but it could be more helpful than you think.” Captain Proust
informs them.

He writes a page full of notes and looks back at them. “Well the only thing left to discuss is what I
ask you when we entered the room. Can you give us a feedback on the latest akuma attack?
Namely the intervention of the police force. Maybe compare the latest attack with the attack of last
Monday. We know that akuma was…difficult for the police to contain, and if you have seen
anything that could help you fight more efficient or help civilians.”

She looks at Chat not really sure how to answer the question. It’s not easy to answer without
offending someone. Last akuma attack was an akuma that could make minions, so the police just
established a perimeter - Marinette has no idea if it was a good one or a bad one - and evacuated
people while fending off the brainless minions.

It gave them space to defeat the akuma and it helped the civilians. However the attack of that
cursed Monday was different. The police also established a perimeter but everyone was trying to
get in the middle of the fight, which meant that the police was next to useless in the fight.

They couldn’t maintain the perimeter, couldn’t risk arresting people with a super villain fighting
behind them, and couldn’t push back without hurting people or getting in their way. Basically they
couldn’t do anything. Marinette is not stupid, if she tells this to the police in the wrong way, she
will offend the police department. They have already pissed of the higher ups, no need to piss of
the people that are usually with them on the akumas fights. She’s going to have to mind her words.

Finally she takes a deep breath. “The akuma from last night wasn’t a unique one. Inside the
brainwashing ones she was a lower level threat. She could turn people into smaller versions of her,
but could not control them. That meant that it cause a lot of chaos, but it was a relatively easy one
to deal.”

She pauses to look at police reactions. They are writing something on the notepads, but don’t look
annoyed so she decided to continue. “We know that you set up a perimeter and stopped the
‘minions’ from causing havoc on the streets of Paris. We didn’t really have the opportunity to look
at what else the police was doing.”

She trails off and Chat Noir continues. “We were mostly fighting the akuma, but it was pretty
useful that by the end of the fight the minions were mostly separated from the main akuma. Also
since the civilians were evacuated we didn’t have to worry about more people getting hit. We think
the police intervention was pretty purr-fect.”

Of course he had to end that in a pun. Ladybug refrains from rolling her eyes.
Captain Proust writes some more things. “I see. Thank you. Can you tell us about the akuma Truth Soldier from 9 days ago? That battle was a little different.”

Ladybug opens her mouth and shuts it immediately. She is not sure what she can say about this. It’s not just the fear of offending the police force it’s also the deep shame she feels at being caught by the akuma, all the frustration and pain from last week. Still this is a small request from the police, who is trying to improve their response. It would be extremely rude not to answer, particularly since they have been very helpful and understanding for the entirety of the meeting.

She takes a sip of her water and answers. “It was a pretty tough fight. I mean the akuma wasn’t a strong or powerful one, but they were so many people on the street that it was just…”

“Cat-strofic.” Chat puns but he looks miserable. His ears are almost flat against his head and he’s avoiding eye contact with the police.

She grabs his hand under the table and squeezes. He squeezes back.

“There were just too many people on the street.” She tries to sound strong, but the last word could barely be considered a whisper.

All the cops in the room are looking at the two of them with concern expressions. Captain Proust opens his mouth but Lieutenant Roger speaks first.

“It was our fault. We couldn’t control the civilians and they got in your way.” Roger Raincomprix looks deeply ashamed. It makes Marinette’s heart ache and the shame at having gotten hit only grows. It wasn’t the police’s fault that the public went nuts.

“I don’t think it was your fault that the public decided to try running into the middle of an akuma fight.” She laughs bitterly. “I mean I saw reporters sacrificing other reporters for a change to get closer. I have no idea why so many civilians decided to watch the fight so closely. Maybe they were worried about the theory, but that didn’t give them the right to make our lives more difficult.”

She sounds so bitter by the end, but the truth is that she’s trying to fight the tears in her eyes. She feels Chat’s hand squeeze even harder.

“My lady is right. That night the public’s cat-itude was like a purr-ramide of claw-ful decisions. You did your best and we can’t really give you any advices, because it was a pretty wild night. The police force is always fur-midable when they help us. Fur real.”

Ladybug feeling more collected adds. “I don’t know if it’s possible to create a standardizing plan for akumas, unless they are someone that is reakumatized a lot, like Mr. Pigeon or Gigantitan. Most akumas are unique cases and even if there are similar akumas with similar powers they don’t behave the same.”

The room is quiet after she finishes speaking. She doesn’t have anything to say and Chat Noir takes the moment to open a bag of chips and starts to eat. Captain Proust is still taking notes, but Lieutenant Roger is looking at them with sadness in his eyes. He looks as tired as Marinette feels. She should have insisted on the coffee.

Captain Proust finally looks up from his notes. “Ok. Thank you for your honesty and for coming in. I don’t think we have anything more to talk about. I will have my officers to inform you when we schedule something with the detectives working the Hawk Moth and Mayura case. We are going to stop recording now.” He gives a signal to the cop that has been monitoring the camera, and she turns it off.
He nods once in thank you. “Alright now that’s off I want to tell you two a few things off the record. One what happen with Truth Soldier wasn’t your fault.”

He must have seen them their disbelieving expressions because he adds. “It was an extremely difficult attack. I was at the station organizing my department, so I was watching the life stream. Ladybug you saved the daughter of the akuma from getting hit by her own father, even if he was akumatized that would hurt the girl. Chat Noir you can’t be everywhere at once. I’ve seen dozens of videos of you sacrificing yourself for Ladybug and other people. Yet, you can’t save them all from occasionally getting hit. You just need to try your best.”

“But…” Chat Noir starts to protest.

“But nothing. You two are really young…and don’t argue with me this is a fact not an opinion. Ideally you should not be in this position. However the world isn’t made of ideal situations, it has problems and ugly truths that are complicated to accept. The truth is that you are good kids and great heroes. You have been doing this with no training and very little back-up for the better part of two years. You have been fantastic at it and have gone above all what people could ever ask of you. If you ever need any help - with akumas or something else - my station is always open - do not hesitate to ask for help.”

Roger adds. “If you think that would bring to much attention just try to find me or another cop from this station they’ll help you.”

The Captain nods at his Lieutenant. “If you just need a place to lay low you can come here. We won’t report back to the headquarters until you leave. I understand that you chose this place because you knew Lieutenant Roger from the akumas attacks. Also I get the feeling that you don’t want to deal with the higher ups because you don’t want to deal with a lot of politics. But I have to tell you that you won’t be able to avoid this completely…”

Ladybug interrupts. “We know. We aren’t trying to avoid it, but we need someone who would actually give us advice on this situation and not try to…”

“Stale you so they could show the media that they are working with you and taking this…new revelation seriously. I get it. Speaking of the media do you have a plan on how and when you’re going to approach the public?”

“We do. Next Monday… or sometime next week we are planning on holding an improve press conference. We’re going to seek out some reporters and discuss what happen.”

Chat Noir grabs a package of sandwiches. “My Lady is going to tell them about our new patrol plan, but she wouldn’t go into details because of Hawk Moth. We’ll tell them we’ve accept offers one and two that the Chief Claw-mmissar offered. Not the third one because we don’t find it necessarily. I’m going to go into a little bit of why we were…chosen for our miraculous.”

Roger perks up at the last part. “Can you tell why you were chosen?”

Chat grabs a tuna sandwich. “Not fully. We have good soul bonds for the miraculous. If a person does not have an affinity for the miraculous the power is weaker. Also if they misused it - like Hawk Moth and Mayura are currently doing - it will have consequences. Chloe was actually lucky when she put that miraculous on…it could have had worse results.”

“Does that mean that Hawk Moth and Mayura are suffering consequences from the misused miraculous?”
“Yup. We don’t know what they are but we are sure there are repercussions from misusing the miraculous with dark intentions. In addition we don’t actually know if their souls are align or not.”

Ladybug nods. “It’s one of the reasons we won’t go too much into the magic aspect. We aren’t sure of how much Hawk Moth and Mayura are aware of it. Not only can it attract even more dangerous individuals that can wreak havoc on Paris, it could also help Hawk Moth and Mayura. It’s just too risky.”

The Captain crosses his arms and considers their words. “I see. You’re right it’s really dangerous territory. Personally although I find magic a bit of curious topic I will admit that at times the amount of power is…”

He hesitates on what to say to them.

Chat Noir finishes for him. “Scary? Terrifying? Awesome? All of the above? We know.” He smiles at the Captain, “Our powers are very dangerous in our hands, in the wrong hands its nightmare inducing. We take this responsibility very seriously.”

Ladybug shudders. “I don’t ever want to know what will happen if Hawk Moth takes our miraculous…I shudder to think of what happen if he ever wins.”

“He’ll never win My Lady.” She smiles back at Chat.

“Of course, he won’t. I guarantee you that he and Mayura will face justice.” Roger says with all the conviction in the world. They smile happily at Lieutenant Roger.

“I know. It’s just scary thinking about the what-if we fail one time. Some akumas are more deadly than others.”

“What do you mean by that?” Captain Proust asks.

“Did you know that some Akumas have killed people?” The cops slowly nod. “My miraculous cure brings back people to life. They don’t remember what happen; they don’t remember their death…its part of the magic I don’t know how that works…”

She trails off, but Captain Proust softly asks. “Is it hard to deal with the weight of the responsibility?”

“It’s not just that. The people might not remember their deaths but we do.” She crosses her arms and looks at a wall unable to look at anyone in the room. “I know what would happen if I lost my miraculous because I’ve seen the lengths that Hawk Moth is willing to go to win. I wouldn’t be able to do anything about it because I won’t be there.”

“What do you mean?” Lieutenant Roger’s voice has a panic note to it. If Marinette had looked at the room she would’ve seen a lot of panicking cops and a partner that looks at her with an understanding expression. The cops all look at each other thinking ‘she’s not saying what I think she is saying?’

“I would probably be dead. Unless it’s a mind controlling akuma I don’t see myself surrendering the miraculous to Hawk Moth. And without the miraculous cure every single damage and death…it would be permanent.” She says while confirming the fears of all the cops in the room.

“NO.” Lieutenant Roger gets up looking deeply disturbed and revolted by the mere suggestion of them dying. “That is never going to happen.”
Captain Proust is still in his seat but doesn’t look good. He looks like a man that would rather never think about these things again. “You know this will end some day? Hawk Moth will be arrested and put behind bars.” His voice is very soft.

Ladybug gives him a bitter smile. “The world isn’t made of ideal situations it has problems and ugly truths that are complicated to accept.” She repeats his words back at him. “Ideally I agree with you, Hawk Moth and Mayura will be caught and trialed. Yet, I know that the world isn’t always fair and sometimes the good guys lose.”

“We…we don’t go into battle with that mentality…but it’s something that we accept as…” she trails off again.

Captain Proust finishes for her. “…something that can happen. You accept death as risk.” He looks sick to his stomach. All the cops do. Marinette knows she needs to change the course of this conversation or they might cause an akuma.

“Was there an akuma that made you realize that or did you always know?” Captain Proust softly asks. His tone has been very soft since they turn off the camera, but now it’s becoming even softer. His voice is barely a whisper, almost like he’s trying not to spook them.

“I…I always knew, but I think that Syren might have been the one that made me fear the loss of life.” She doesn’t tell them that she still has nightmares about that akuma, that some akumas have ever lasting effects on her. She recalls Sandboy and the following weeks of fearing falling asleep to a nightmare.

Chat looks away and thinks back to that akuma. During the attack he almost left Ladybug to fight Syren alone. At the time he was tired of secrets and wanted the truth, but now he knows he should have picked a moment during patrol to bring up the issue.

Lieutenant Roger is glaring at the wall and doesn’t look well.

Captain Proust looks heartbroken.

Marinette wonders if he remembers anything from the attack. Did he survive? Only to watch the rivers filled with death people all around Paris. Does he remember Dark Blade the akuma that killed almost everyone in Paris? Remember what he was doing before ‘waking’ up with the akuma already defeated?

Does he remember the millions of peoples she has bought back to life over and over again? No, he doesn’t and that’s the point of the magic. The innocents are always spared and Ladybug and Chat Noir always take the hit.

She wonders if Hawk Moth remembers dying. If he knows that the only reason his precious akumas haven’t killed them all is because she keeps saving them. A part of her wishes that Hawk Moth could feel the damage he causes people on a daily base. The other part of her is just tired from fighting and just wants this to end once and for all.

If they die who is going to fight? If Hawk Moth asks his wish will anyone even remember them? Will that even matter? They’ll be dead. A peaceful finish to a bad ending.

“-bug?” She comes back to Chat shaking her arm. She looks up and all eyes are on her, the room’s level of worry is a lot bigger.

“Sorry. I spaced out.” She smiles the fakest smile possible.
Lieutenant Roger looks like is ready to start crying, so do all the cops behind him. Captain Proust hands are covering his face.

Chat Noir just looks like he understands. Somehow that makes her feel even worst, that he knows that sometimes she gets stuck inside of her head in self-deprecating moods. They don’t talk about this…not because he doesn’t want to. Marinette just can’t allow herself to think about what all of this means, because if she does she will break.

How do you fix a broken thing?

Captain Proust finally takes his hands from his face. “Do you…space out a lot?”

“No.” It’s a lie. “Just…sometimes…when I’m tired. It’s…been a long week”

‘When aren’t you tired?’ a voice whispers in the back of her mind.

“Maybe you should go home?” Lieutenant Roger asks.

“In a bit. It’s still early. What do you say my Lady to a race?” Chat Noir challenges her.

Her smile is blinding. “Do you like to lose that much Chaton?”

They both smile at each other and the cops look somewhat relieved.

Chat picks up another bag of chips he has an endless stomach. “Do you need anything else? It might be time fur us to disappear like cats in the night.”

She groans. “Those puns were too forced.”

He smirks. “I prefer my puns intended.”

Captain Proust smiles at them. “I think that’s all. If you ever need anything…maybe just a place to rest you can come to us.”

“Thank you for everything.” They did so much for them. They didn’t turn them in to another direction when they showed up. Keep silent about their trip here and the fact we would come back. Got them into a private room and kept them hidden. Gave them actual advices for the patrol, accepted their decisions and didn’t treat them like idiots. Were honest with them, gave them food and drinks. Treated them so well.

“Thank you, for all of your help.” Chat Noir says in a serious tone.

“Always. If you need anything come to us, please.”

They nod and say their goodbyes. All the cops look like they are going to do some heavy think after they leave. Marinette is sure they are going to have a long discussion about this meeting.

They leave the station from a window in the back of the building.

She arrives at the Eifel tower first and smirks at Chat.

“Yeah. Yeah. You won, but I almost beat you.” He pouts.

“In your dreams kitten. Anyway that went well.”
“It went purr-fect. I don’t think we could ask for better. They aren’t going to interfere and actually gave us a solution for the patrols. Telling us to inform other cops when we are going to patrol instead of them asking what we are doing on the street.”

“Yeah they were great. I actually think we could incorporate that weekly break on weeks that we have more than three akuma fights. Or on the days were the akuma fights are in the middle of the night.”

“Yeah I wasn’t too happy about that. But that way sounds pretty good my Lady. Do you think that they will get into trouble for not telling headquarters about our visit?”

“I don’t know. Honestly they might get into a little trouble, but the higher ups can’t punish them. I don’t think there is an actual protocol for superheroes entering your station. They never said which cop we had to go to. Besides they won’t risk us pulling away from the force for petty reasons. Imagine the public’s reaction at the cops being punished because we choose to work with them.”

“Yeah the police department would look bad, especially after making such a big deal of working with us.”

“Exactly.”

Chat frowns as he remembers something. “No one asks us about how we felt on the subject of us being Child Soldiers.”

“It’s a very messy situation. I mean they don’t even what to acknowledge that Ladybug and Chat Noir might be Child Soldiers.” Ladybug tells Chat.

“I know but they didn’t ask us.” He makes the ‘us’ stand out.

“That was avoided. I don’t think I have seen anyone actually wanting to ask us. They all say it’s unfortunate, but they need the heroes due to Hawk Moth and Mayura. No one talks about what comes after.”

She recalls an early thought she had: ‘The politicians opinions will only appear after the public opinion is establish’. The police are in a similar position to that. They are bound by the French laws and the oaths they took. Right now there is a reason for an exception to be need. The special status they had is vague because the government might want to take their miraculous away some day. If they give too many rights to the two vigilantes the police would look bad.

There is a place for the police in their society, if they need vigilantes to keep people safe, something has gone terribly wrong. Hawk Moth and Mayura represent a danger outside of the norm - a magical terrorist is no one’s area of expertise - so their presence is somewhat easily justified.

Yet, they are vigilantes and the danger that Hawk Moth represents is hopefully temporary. After that is anyone’s guess to what might happen.

“You’re right, my Lady.” A small silence falls up on them, but it’s a pretty comfortable one.

“Should we have picked up our drinks before leaving? You know because of DNA.” Chat ends up asking.

“The magic changes it. If they test it all they will find is actual ladybugs and cats DNA. It’s a defensive mechanism…I don’t even know how the magic affects that. I mean DNA has only been tested for a few decades. Both our miraculous were inactive under that time period. Why do you
think that is?” She ends up rambling.

They spend the most part of the rest of the ‘patrol’ debating the weirdness of Magic. Marinette is 99% sure that Chat also has some type of magical immunity by the way he talks about the magic. Yet, it’s pretty obvious that unlike her he has never really cared that much about it.

Next Monday they still have to talk with the people of Paris but that isn’t that worrying. The police will probably have to issue a statement that they have talked with them or risk them telling the citizens that it has already been done but the cops didn’t say anything.

They end up saying goodnight around 10 pm, which means she has time to go home and get some quality sleep. A little more than a week after the incident things are starting to get on track.

The dark part of Marinette can’t help but wonder if this is due to the passage of time or the miraculous magic starting to affect the people of Paris. Is it bad that Marinette just can’t seem to care?

Worn out is the only way that Marinette can explain how she feels, after the last few days.

Where’s the hope? The hope she should feel at knowing that Paris is accepting the bomb that was dropped last week. Marinette has always been such a hopeful person. So why is she so afraid to hope?

The dark part of her mind answers. ‘You know what they say about hope? It might bring you internal misery.’

On her way home, under the cover of the night, Marinette allows herself to wonder when she has started to view hope has a double edge sword.

Chapter End Notes

Hello. Thank you for all the comments, kudos and bookmarks.
The second part of Chapter six is here. It’s bigger than the first, but I struggled to find a way to split it up without breaking their conversation with the cops. What do you think? Should I have spilt it or do you feel this flows better?
I know some of you wanted the cops to betray them, but I’m so used to seeing power hungry cops - in fiction - that I went with the “they are actually helpful”. Also it would be irrational for the cops to try to take their miraculous. If they couldn’t even imprison Chat Noir - literally he got bored of waiting and broke out - how would they defeat the two of them working together to take their miraculous?
The first piece of the former Chapter 7 will come in about two/three weeks - either on a Friday or on the weekend. I was trying to update sooner, but life got in the way and there is no way I will be able to post a chapter next week.
Again thank you for reading this. Beware the mistakes and be nice in the comments.
Blood Wolf
Saturday. 12 days after the reveal. Marinette’s Birthday.

When Marinette was little her birthday was one of the best days of the year. Her family was always surprising her with great parties, and it was a day that she could play/enjoy with her classmates and friends. They had often lasted hours on end and were full of laughter and love.

Marinette’s 15th birthday party was on a Saturday. It was mostly a sunny day. Her parents booked a room at arcade room - it was an imitation of the old fashion ones with a twist. On one side of the room there were the older games, on the other there were newer games and consoles. It was amazing they had a mix of old games and new games. The classics like Pac-man, Space Invaders, Galaga and Donkey Kong were packed. The newer games like Ultimate Mecha Strike III and Mario Kart were personal favorites of her. There were also dance games and shooting games.

She destroyed her friends and family in almost all of the newer games - setting an all time high score on Mario Kart and UMSIII, - had her picture taken and put on the wall of fame. Around mid-afternoon her grandma beat every single person on a dance revolution game and joined Marinette on the wall of fame. Her friends were shocked.

The cakes and sweets her parents had prepared for the day were perfect, all her friends - from her class and outside of it - showed up and they stayed until the place was closing. Even Adrien and Kagami who couldn’t stay for long were there for a few hours. It was one of the best birthdays of her life and came very close to being the most perfect birthday of her life.

Nevertheless, it was the second year of her being Ladybug. On the first birthday after she became Ladybug, she didn’t even think about akumas or akumatizations. Then her grandmother had been akumatized. It was a lousy thing, to have to fight a family member that got akumatized at the idea of you growing up.

That meant that this year she was on the lookout for possible exits in case of an akuma - which hopefully wouldn’t came from her party - and she had also prepared a list of excuses to run in case of an akuma. The entirety of her 15 birthday party was a nerve racking affair.

Occasionally she would lose herself in the games and the fun, but every so often there was some type of sound that would trigger a reaction out of her. A game being too loud, some kid screaming, a phone beeping, the simplest things would make her tense and worry.

This was aggravated by the incredible level of stress that she had suffered in the last two weeks. She just couldn’t relax. It was like someone had push a button inside of her and no one was able to turn it off. No amount of sense and rational thinking could calm her down.
Marinette’s levels of paranoia were at an all time high, the mere reference to the heroes had her wishing to go back home and hide in her room. Every time her parents would make a comment about the news, about the superheroes ages, a sad expression would appear on their faces and would haunt Marinette’s nightmares. The level of guilt she had was also at an all time high. It seemed that everything in Marinette’s life was at an all time high.

Yesterday the Police Department had informed the public that the heroes had already approach them and talked about the new ‘conditions’. The statement wasn’t as empty aired as the previous ones and had a little bite with the phrasing. Marinette’s personal favorite was the ‘regretfully the heroes aren’t going to stop patrolling, but the police has persuade them to reduce their hours significantly and talk with any patrolling officer.’

They hadn’t lied per say. They were going to reduce patrol and were going to talk with officers on the streets, but only one of those was an actual advice from the police. It was amazing the way they changed some aspects of what had happen in that meeting. They were trying to show even more results with the public that the ones they got. Marinette was sure if she hadn’t told the police and the public they would issue a statement after the meeting, it would be even worse.

The Chief Commissar would probably modify what the heroes said. She was starting to think that recording the meeting wasn’t just to help the local cops. It also tied the hands of the higher ups of the Parisian police department. At least it would tie the hands of the ones that were looking for a way to use this for personal or political gain. They couldn’t change their versions too much if there was a chance the video from the meeting could leak.

The Chief Commissar had actually tried to throw Lieutenant Roger and Captain Proust under the bus by saying their names on the press release, which was pretty dangerous considering that Hawk Moth may try to akumatize them. Captain Proust had a brilliant response to that saying ‘Ladybug and Chat Noir just choose to come to the people who fight alongside them on the field. They came to this station because they know several cops from the akuma fights and trust them.’

Meaning we fight along them every day and try to help them anyway we can. You only appear if there is a political crisis. Why would you think that they would go to you?

She and Chat Noir had both decided that the choice of going to the station was an act of pure genius, especially because the Police Department decided to inform the public that Ladybug and Chat Noir had rejected the offer for therapy. That’s not a bad thing, but the way they phrased seemed to them - and a lot of people - like they were saying that Ladybug and Chat Noir were ungrateful for rejecting their help and maybe the offer wasn’t something they could keep open.

The public was not happy. Immediately loud groups started to go on rants about pressuring teenagers into going to therapy was not the way to go. That threatening kids into going to therapy was dangerous and could backfire. It’s true that some people need therapy and refuse, but usually the State or a therapist intervenes. It’s not through blackmail that people go to therapy.

Also didn’t help that most people could see that some of the Commissars and Chiefs of the police department weren’t happy that the heroes choose somewhere other than the headquarters. It raised questions on why the Chief Commissar was so displeased with his lower forces being of service to the heroes of Paris. It turn into a debate on elites in the police force and took away the focused from them.

Marinette felt both relived and guilty by the public focus shifting because of the cops that had helped them. Ultimately she just decided that this is a pretty important issue that needs to be discussed.
Journalists and commentators both agreed on how Ladybug and Chat Noir made a smart move. It both gain respect from the cops of Paris - by choosing cops that fought with them - and the citizens of Paris by accepting the help offered. They also were open to working with the police by talking with officers on the streets when they were patrolling.

There was some debate if the heroes should have a more direct line of communication to the police, but in the end no one could agree on a plan. On one hand some argued in favor of Ladybug and Chat Noir going to the headquarters of the police every time they had to patrol. Several people pointed out that was a bad plan - not only would it take time and leave the heroes feeling even more tired - Hawk Moth would probably take advantage of this.

On the other hand, people were arguing that the heroes were not compelled to work with the police. Also making them have to ‘report’ to the police was going dangerously into the Child Soldiers territory that everyone was trying to avoid. A lot of people pointed out that if the heroes would select random cops when patrolling, Hawk Moth would have no one to go after. Plus, they had already showed that they preferred to work with cops who were on the streets.

The police had told the public that the heroes were reluctant to share information over the Hawk Moth investigation. A journalist - the one that didn’t get an answer in the first police conference - pointed out that the heroes were actually smart in doing so. Not only did it prevent information from falling into the wrong hands, it also made sure that the magical aspect of the miraculous wouldn’t attract even more dangerous individuals.

The only people who came out better in the second statements were the politicians. Mayor Bourgeois had told the press that the police should go easy on the heroes. They were young and shouldn’t be pressure by the police into doing things they didn’t want to. It was a political move. He played the concern father figure - Chloe being his daughter actually help him not sound too condescending - and agreed with the public.

Marinette was actually started to realize how the man had survived so many political scandals. He wasn’t the only one. Several politicians had the ‘same opinion’ and the public liked that. The heroes were back to being political gold, even if now it had to be handled more carefully.

The Paris Police Department had stated that they wouldn’t release anymore statements until the heroes had the opportunity to speak. Confirming that Ladybug and Chat Noir would indeed be making a statement soon enough and protecting them for the negative press.

There were also talks about doing a manifestation or a protest against Hawk Moth and Mayura next Saturday. Marinette was feeling extremely conflicted about this. On one hand she fully supported the anger of the people of Paris towards the super villains. On the other she had a pretty good idea that someone was probably getting akumatized.

That much anger and hate being released sounded like Hawk Moth’s dream come true. The only positive thing was that if it was exclusively against him, he would need to be very careful about who he akumatized. On the plus side, it would be hilarious seeing Hawk Moth fighting one of his akumas.

Marinette chuckles out loud at the thought and Alya looks at her in annoyance.

“Girl I know that you are some kind of video games wizard, but you don’t need to laugh at me losing. Not all of us have your playing ability.” Alya nudges her arm and winks. “Still, I’ll let it go for today. You are finally turning 15.”

Marinette smiles brightly. “This has been an epic birthday. Even better than last year since I didn’t
have to run from an akuma.”

“I actually think that was more…cool. I mean it sucks having akumas at birthday parties, but you get to see the Ladybug and Chat Noir. That is always a plus in my book.”

Marinette laughs. “Speaking of Ladybug… now no one can tease me of being the only person in class…that’s 14 years old.” Besides you are all at her fifteen birthday party, she thinks but doesn’t add. Sometimes the irony is hilarious.

Alya chuckles and grabs a controller for Mario Kart. “Well, next year we can still tease you for two weeks…Too bad that we don’t know when her birthday is.”

Marinette bites the inside of her cheek to stop from laughing. It was the running gag in her party that she was finally older that Ladybug. It took all she had not to burst out laughing every time someone decided to tell a joke or make a pun about it. It was the first time in two weeks that she was able to laugh at the problem.

In that respect Tikki and Master Fu were right, by giving time and space to the citizens of Paris, things were starting to normalize. Sure, there were still a lot of debates, but a lot of people had progress to the acceptance phase of this thing.

“…Sure…Now pick a character I’m going to teach you how to win in Mario Kart.”

Alya just sights and finishes a lap behind Marinette cursing bananas. Alya calls Max to help her defeat Marinette, and Adrien offers to be on Marinette’s team. They destroy Max and Alya.

Adrien smiles at her. “We make a pretty good team Marinette.”

“Ah-Perfect Team…I mean us good players…” An employer shows up behind them.

“Kids I don’t know how you’re doing this, but you broke another record. Come on birthday girl you know the drill.” He looks at Adrien. “You too kid.”

She and Adrien end up taking a photo for the wall of fame. Alya got her a copy of the photograph and winked at her.

“I think we broke a record of how many records were broken before…err…”

Adrien chuckles. “I get what you’re trying to say. You’ve dominated the console games.”

Nino shows up and puts an arm around Alya. “Dude you broke the record for the Galaga and Donkey Kong. You and Marinette spent the day destroying records.”

“Max also set the record for the Ms. Pac-Man and two shooting games and let’s not forget about Marinette’s grandmother.”

They all laugh. Alya pulls out her phone. “I recorded your grandma, she got moves girl.”

Nino chuckles. “And your mom and dad were also kicking everyone’s butts in Ultimate Mecha Strike III…by the way I think your mom just took the second place on the wall of records.”

“My parents are going to join the multiplayer of the Ultimate Mecha Strike III.”

“You’re not playing?” Adrien asks.

“I won a tournament already. It feels a bit unfair.”
Adrien smiles at her and her heart skips a beat.

Max shows up behind them holding a piece of cake. “An employer told me that they have gaming competitions every two months. If we form a team we can enter in a tournament in three weeks.”

Marinette’s eyes light up.

…

Three hours later and the party was over, everybody was sent home with enough sweets to put Halloween night to shame. All the employers at the arcade were also gifted a bag full of Dupain-Cheng bakery goods, leaving them happy. A few went out of their way to make sure that she knew that they wanted a rematch, not only with her but her entire family. Her parents were also introduced into the wall of fame in the two player mode of the Ultimate Mecha Strike III.

It was a nice way to end her birthday.

“Did you like your birthday party?” Her dad asks. He always asks, afraid that she was unhappy or displeased in anyway. Marinette thinks it’s ridiculous her birthdays are perfect, even with her grandma getting akumatized last year it was still an amazing one. This one had no akumas making it even better.

Speaking of akumas there were two akumas on Thursday and Friday - two teleporting akumas - and she needed a break on her birthday. Technically, it was the same akuma that got akumatized for the same reason, they missed the bus. The second time it actually took less than ten minutes to defeat it, but it still counted as a battle.

Hawk Moth was on a streak of teleporting akumas and it was annoying, but at least it wasn’t mind controlling akumas. There was nothing worst that mind controlling akumas, the out of control rage, the chaos they caused, the way they moved often hurting themselves and didn’t stop. Couldn’t stop. They never remembered. It was the only positive thing to come out of the horrifying experience.

Some days when she finds out the akuma is a brainwashing type she wants to run. Run from the fight, run from her duties, run from her family and her friends. Just wants to get as far from Paris as humanly possible. It makes her feel like the world biggest coward.

“-nette?” Her mom calls out to her.

“What? Sorry I spaced out for a moment.” Marinette can’t help but notice that her mother looks at her for a little longer than her dad. It’s like her mom knows something is up, and was deciding if it was the time to bring it up or not.

Her parents look at her with concern. “I asked if you had a good time at the party.”

She smiles. “It was perfect.” After the last couple of weeks it was more than perfect. Her friends were all there, Adrien was there, parents and grandparents. She had fun, doing one of her favorite things in the world. It was all she needed.

Her parents give her a massive grin. “We’re really happy, honey.”

Her grandmother looks at her. “I’m just disappointed that we didn’t get to dance together Marinetta.”

“I’m not that great with dancing games. Maybe…next time?” Her grandma gives her a beautiful
smile.

Her dad laughs. “Besides if we broke any more records and I don’t think they would allow us to come back. Between us and Marinette’s friends we must have broke close to ten records.”

“Dad…they actually told me that if we came back we should do a rematch with them…all of us.”

They laugh while her mom opens the door to their home. “They told us about tournaments they do every two months…there is one in a few weeks. Max wants to form a team with me and Adrien.”

“Are you going to do it?” Her mom asks.

“We need four people to form a team for the next one. Adrien wasn’t sure if he was free…so we are still thinking about it.” Her parents nod.

“Does anyone want dinner?” Her mom asks.

They all groaned. “Mom…no more food. Please.”

The rest of the night was tame compared to the day. Her parents were obvious exhausted and they had to get up early; her grandmother was also suffering from some type of jetlag even if she would deny it. So around 9pm Marinette started to ‘yawn’ a lot and was ‘convinced’ to call it a night.

She didn’t even steal any cookies to bring to Tikki. Her kwami had spent the day eating sweets. Can kwamis get fat? How would that even work?

“I think that this birthday was a lot better than the last.” Tikki said.

“Absolutely no family members akumatized, I had a really good time and you ate your weight in sweets.” She tickles Tikki’s belly. Her kwami laughs happily.

“I’m glad you had fun Marinette. After the last few days you deserve it.”

“Yeah. It was a great birthday.” She feels deeply happy in a way that she hadn’t in a while, and for the first time in weeks she falls asleep with a smile on her face.

Sunday.

13 days after the reveal. Akuma Attack.

This year she had been spared of fighting a birthday akuma. So of course the day after her birthday there was an akuma attack. After all Hawk Moth couldn’t take a few more days off, there were people to akumatize. They almost made it to two full days…but someone got angry at the end of the night and …well, akuma.

Fun fact she fights the fewer akumas on Sundays and she fights the most on Mondays. Yet here she was on a Sunday. The akuma she has been fighting is a gym rat that got angry at being kick out of the gym…2 hours after closing time.

It sometimes happen, people that get akumatized by being absolute dicks to others and then blaming the harmless person for their own selfish decisions. It was pretty rare, mostly because they usually just made angry akumas that were pretty rash and not smart at all.

The most dangerous akumas were the ones that got wronged by someone. That got actually betrayed, hurt and wronged make the most powerful akumas. The better the person is, the more powerful the akuma they become. Plus, the more emotional a person is during their akumatization
the more powerful is the akuma.

Marinette thinks that’s why Hawk Moth keeps akumatizing teenagers and children. They are the ones that can get extremely emotional over small things. While they don’t make the smartest akumas - Gigantitan here is looking at you - they make some of the more powerful akumas.

This one…was strong no doubt about it. Yet, he was an idiot. He had the power to pick any object up - a tree, a rock, a feather - and throw it at them hard enough to leave massive dents in metal. It was extremely dangerous to get hit by anything that he could throw. Even so the akuma had chosen to stop, pick up one object and throw at them…They have superhuman reflexes.

Normally, they would destroy this akuma in record time, but he got akumatized in a really busy street, right next to a mall and a few buildings. It meant that thousands of people needed to be evacuated, and were serving as target practice for the akuma.

While Marinette was sure she could survive getting hit by him - it would hurt - the civilians didn’t have that guarantee. When she watched him throw bread hard enough to overturn a car, she knew that he could easily destroy the walls of the buildings. The people weren’t safe in the buildings that they had originally taken refuge when the akuma appeared. One hit would be enough to kill a person or a few dozen depending on what he hit.

The police had appeared and Chat Noir had told them to take everybody out of the buildings that it wasn’t safe. The cops were helping the civilians, but they also made themselves targets. It was double edge blade. It reminded Marinette of telling the cops that most akumas were hard to contain no matter what. It also didn’t help the news media helicopters were pointing shiny lights at them, making them even more visible.

The battle had been going on for about an hour now and there were people still coming out of the buildings. On the plus side most buildings were now empty meaning that anytime now she would be able to call a Lucky Charm and end this once and for all.

At least this akuma wasn’t on her birthday. It would only be a matter of time before she could defeat it, not bad for the first akuma after turning fifteen.

Or so she thought. What she didn’t know was that a seven year old boy that had gotten lost in the crowd and decided to go up on a roof and watch the fight. It was bad because no one knew he was there. It got worse when the kid watching the heroes of Paris fighting a ‘villain’ started to scream at the top of his lungs.

“Kick his stinky monkey butt. Ladybug. Chat Noir.” Ladybug froze when she hear the voice.

“Why you little…” roared the akuma. He picked up a park bench - where did that come from? - And aims at the kid.

Chat was on the other side of the street too far from the kid but she wasn’t. She runs at full speed towards the little boy, not knowing if she can even get there in time. The thought of watching a kid get eviscerated by an akuma, makes her sick to her stomach. There isn’t a chance in hell that the kid would walk out of that without some serious issues. He wouldn’t remember it but the footage from the helicopters above would be bad enough.

She lands near the boy just as the akuma throws the park bench and she knows that one of them is going to get hit. Marinette doesn’t even think about it. She just pushes the kid out of the way and gets hit by a park bench on the right side of her body. She goes flying out of the building to the other street and hits the ground hard enough to make a crater in the ground. Everything hurts and
her vision goes white.

For a couple seconds Marinette actually thinks that she’s going to pass out, and then the pain settles in. It’s excruciating, it takes everything in her not to not scream out loud. The right side of her body feels like it’s on fire and at the same time like it’s just been crushed.

If not for the suit every single bone on the right side of her body would have shatter by the sheer force of that hit. Even with the suit Marinette thinks that she might have - at least - a few cracked bones on her right side. She is not sure how that could even be possible. As Ladybug she rarely gets hit hard enough to get seriously hurt. The suit protects them too well and helps with the pain if they do get hit.

Her body is still throbbing with pain, it’s diminishing by the second but she’s still left reeling from the hit. Getting up slowly to her elbows, she looks around the street and freezes.

Dozens of cops and civilians are looking at her with terrified eyes. That street hasn’t been evacuated. The helicopter light is on her making her stand out even more. Panic and fear strike her hard and fast. She starts to get up, even if she feels dizzy and nauseated - like she might throw up her diner. The pain disappears almost immediately like magic, or an ungodly amount of adrenaline.

Ladybug can’t have people panicking about her. The last time that happen it was heroes day - Volpina’s illusion was a killer for them, they almost lost that day - it was disastrous. She has to get up.

She gets up because she doesn’t have any choice. She gets up because she hasn’t saved Paris yet. She gets up because Chat Noir must be worried, scared, terrified. She gets up because if she doesn’t this is the end and what other choice does she truly have?

The pain is still there, but the magic is making it easier to deal with. The entire street looks relief at see her get up. A few of them still look terrified for her, but they don’t say anything. A blood curling scream is heard and everyone turns to the source.

“LADYBUG.” Chat Noir shows up looking completely out of his mind. The suits are resistant, but that doesn’t mean they can’t get hit hard enough to hurt them. Chat must be panicking like crazy.

“I’m good.” She shouts back. She can’t see him, but she can almost feel him breathing out in relief. The people on the street also breathe out in relief. She tries not to feel like a liar.

It doesn’t work.

She rejoins the battle after that, the street where they were originally on had been evacuated, which meant they don’t need to worry about civilians. It only takes a Lucky Charm to defeat the akuma.

The miraculous cure passes over her ribs and she can breathe again. Chat also gets the cure on his knee and almost instantly Marinette knows he got hit after her. It’s probably the reason he didn’t immediately appeared by her side. A bittersweet smile is shared between them when they pound their fists together.

She reassures the victim after the fight - a bit of a task since the man is…a bit self centered - but doable. Chat Noir takes over her when her earrings give the two minutes warning.

Chat also tells her he got the boy to a police officer. So before she leaves, she detransforms in a public WC and let’s Tikki recharged, before retransforming.

She finds an officer quickly.
The officer notices her and frowns. “Ladybug you’re still here?”

She smiles. “Yeah. I just wanted to know if…Chat gave a small boy to an officer and I wanted to know if he was alright.”

“The boy you saved right?”

She nods.

He reaches for his radio and asks for information. He looks up at her and frowns again. “Are you alright? You got hit hard back there.”

“I’m fine. There suits are really tough and the miraculous cure would heal any injuries I might have. I’m just a little tired.”

The cop gives her a smile. “I’m not surprised…it’s after midnight. Do you…err…have school in the morning?”

She groans. “Yup. It’s going to suck.” She answers honestly. The officer is doing her a favor and it’s pretty obvious that she’s still in school, even if the Parisians don’t know the grade.

The cop gives her an understanding look but before he can say anything the radio comes to life. They found the boy’s parents and he’s safe. She lets out a sigh of relief.

“My Lady. You’re still here?”

She turns and sees Chat. “Yeah I was just seeing if the police had any news on the boy.”

He smiles at her. “How’s the little man?”

She returns the smile and tells him about the boy. Most of the officers are close to them but giving them space. A new cop arrives on scene and gives her a cup and Chat a bag of chips. ”Here, is chamomile tea and some chips. Lieutenant Raincomprix said you might need it.”

She blushes a little. Chat outing her coffee addiction had a weird side effect of the cops from that station giving her tea, and trying to give Chat food. They aren’t sure on how to deal with it yet.

“Thank you.” Marinette takes the tea and basically inhales it. The cops stare at her and she goes red.

The officer smiles at her. “That should help you sleep. Chamomile is great for relaxing.”

“Thank you.” She repeats. “I’m going home now. Hopefully we…” She trails off watching Chat inhaling his bag of chips.

He notices them looking and turns red. “Want some?”

She looks at him in amusement. “No. I’m good kitty.”

“Do you want more?”

She and Chat both turn down the offer and tell the police that they don’t need to keep give her and Chat food. The cops just look amused by this and promise them to keep the snacks for only special fights. Marinette has no idea if that’s a joke or not, but they both leave in a good mood.

When they leave the entire police force watches them go. A few cops stare at them with concern
looks and heavy hearts.

Chapter End Notes

Hello. Thank you for all the comments, kudos and bookmarks. So, I finished the revision for the chapter a lot sooner, because Europe is basically on lockdown. As such I’m working from home and have a lot of free time. The next chapter will come in the next two weeks, I can’t be sure when because, as I said, lockdown.

I divided the last chapter in four parts, this is the first part. There isn’t a lot of “action” on this chapter but that is because it’s the first part of a massive chapter, next part will have the press conference. This chapter was more of a way to show how stress is affecting Marinette, and how people are reacting to the heroes getting hit now that they know the truth.

Trivia: Did anyone get the reference to another animated show (not meant for kids)?

Again thank you for reading this. Beware the mistakes and be nice in the comments.

Blood Wolf
One Week Part 2

Chapter Summary

A frustrated Tikki, and a sad Marinette. Confused people and Hawk Moth continues on his campaign to be the worst. Plus, a press conference.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Monday. 14 days after the reveal. The press conference

She gets home just before 1am, exhausted and feeling the need to just sleep till next week, even if it’s Monday. She has so many things to do today.

She has to see what the news are going to say about this battle - lately they have been more concerned about them getting hit - and a magically enhance park bench is a pretty painful thing to get hit by. She also needs to see if there is any footage of Chat Noir getting hit. Then go to school and try not to fall asleep and deal with the class usual madness. Come home, help her parents, do her homework, review her speech for the press conference and try to take a power nap.

Then she and Chat will meet up at 6:30 pm on the Eiffel tower and put a video online announcing that they will do a press conference at 7:00 pm near the Eiffel tower. Do the press conference and answer a few questions. Come home, try and fail to relax. See the fallout from the conference and go to sleep.

That’s only the things she knows for sure she needs to do. It’s not counting akumas or surprise visitors. She really wants to hide in her bed and ignore the world.

’15 years old and you have the responsibility of the world on your shoulders.’ The dark voice laughs sadistically at her. ‘The last few weeks have been torture to the point you have become a paranoid mess that spent her birthday party jumping at noises. Your parents, your friends, and Chat Noir can see that something is wrong. You can try to hide and ignore your feelings, but the truth will always come out.’

Shut up. Shut up.

‘Why? Aren’t you the one that hates liars? You’ve been lying to yourself for weeks, trying to prove that everything is alright, while you get more and more paranoid, get stuck in your head and lose all hope that things will get better. You refuse to acknowledge your problems and then tell yourself to shut up.’

The voice laughs at her. She has no energy left to tell it to shut up. It’s not lost on Marinette how she has never told the voice it’s wrong. She either ignores it or tells it to shut up. She can’t accept what is being whispered, because if she does how will she deal with it?

How will she deal with being tired and broken? How will she deal with fighting Hawk Moth? How will she deal with the pressure she feels? How will she deal with her feelings? Or worst…how she will deal with the fact that this is it, the thing that sticks with her. What if defeating the villains and
wining won’t fix her?

Is she just destiny to break?

“Marinette are you okay?” Tikki asks breaking her out of her mental meltdown.

“Yes, of course, the miraculous cure healed me. No pain at all.” She does some circles with her right arm to prove her point.

Tikki looks at her with a concern stare that makes Marinette think that she was asking about something else. Another thing she refuses to discuss. Tikki is perfectly aware that Marinette is struggling and has tried to talk about it. Yet, Marinette refuses and Tikki is not a pushy kwami.

Marinette knows that she can’t keep pushing this away, because Tikki might be patient but she’s not about to let Marinette drown.

“I’m tired.” Marinette says hoping to avoid this conversation.

“I know.” Tikki whispers softly. “But you’re not alright. I’ve tried to give you space, but…you’re not coming to me. My chosen isn’t obliged to tell me everything, but Marinette you’re struggling…badly. You are losing sleep and you’re a lot more paranoid. You are also more hesitant to trust other people…And worst of all you’re trying to ignore all of this.”

“I…I’m fine.” She can’t see Tikki’s reaction to her lie because her eyes are filled with tears.

“Marinette…” Tikki sounds like she might cry. Can kwamis cry? “I’m sorry. I’m so sorry, but you are not fine. You have started to disassociate. I had notice it happening a few times before…everything came out…but now it’s so much worse. You can’t keep burying you feelings.”

She has no answer to give to Tikki, at least no answer that won’t hurt the kwami. What does she say? ‘Sorry Tikki that my mental health went to hell the second that I put on my miraculous.’

It would be unfair to put that on Tikki, who also didn’t choose this.

‘Master Fu did. He chose you and Chat Noir to become heroes when you were barely teenagers. Maybe he thought it was okay because he started his training as a child, but that doesn’t make it right. Why haven’t you ever confronted him?’

“Marinette…” A soft broken whisper calls her back to the present. Tikki looks at her with pity and desperation in her eyes. Marinette turns away she can’t stand that stare.

“I don’t know what to tell you. I don’t even know what I feel half the time it’s like…one minute I am overwhelmed by everything and the next I can barely feel anything, because I’m so tired.” Marinette is trying to share what she has been feeling lately.

Tikki gives her a knowing look. “You feel too overwhelmed by what you’re feeling so you shut down, you go internal.”

Marinette just nods. “I can’t risk an akumatization.” How would Paris survive?

“You try to bury your feelings so you don’t get akumatized…Marinette I get it, but that isn’t healthy. If you sacrifice your mental health and stability to try to defeat Hawk Moth and Mayura, you will lose.”

“What am I suppose to do then? If I allow myself to feel all the worries I have there is a risk I’ll
get akumatized. If I push it back and ignore what I’m feeling I am doomed to fail.” She spits out bitterly.

Tikki flies up and stands in front of her. “Those are not your only options. I’m here. Chat Noir - who probably has the same issues - is here. You need to talk about what you’re feeling. There is a risk, but you are more important Marinette.”

Marinette chokes on her emotions. She can’t get a word out. It’s not lost on her that Tikki just told her to speak about her feelings and the first thing she does is choke down her emotions. Marinette’s first instinct has become to bottle up her emotions and hope they don’t overwhelm her - it fails more often than not.

“Besides there are ways you can deal with this…Hawk Moth and Mayura have hurt all of the Paris, but you and Chat Noir are their biggest victims. For that I will never be able to apologize enough…”

“It’s not your fault.”

Tikki looks even more heartbroken. “Oh Marinette it’s also not yours. The actions of Hawk Moth and Mayura on Paris are not your fault. You can’t try to carry that…you’ll crack.”

“I don’t know how to deal with all of this.” Marinette whispers, so low, with her voice dripping with so much guilt that she might as well have confessed to murdering someone.

Tikki kisses her forehead. “I know. I’m so sorry. But I have dealt with this too many times… and I know how to help you. Please don’t shut me out by telling me everything is fine when clearly it’s not.”

“I’ll try.” Her voice goes even lower. “I’m tired Tikki…so tired. I’m so tired of fighting…”

“This fight should never have happen and should have never been put in your hands.” Tikki says with a sorrowful tone that Marinette has never heard coming off the kwami. “You are a wonderful Ladybug, but I wish that I would have met you under better circumstances.”

“I don’t think we would have met under any other circumstances. Your friendship to me is one of the best things that as ever happen to me. Besides don’t the miraculous usually go to people in the beginning of puberty?”

“The holders of the miraculous are better when they start young. That is a fact. Yet, most don’t ever see battle before being fully grown… or are use more rarely like the part-time heroes. This is to ensure that they don’t have to deal with too much too soon. Ladybugs and Black Cats always started younger than the other holders, but they were usually 16 or 18 before they were given the all clear to become full time heroes by the guardians. You aren’t the youngest Ladybug I had, but you are one of the youngest I had in full time.”

“I didn’t know.” Marinette whispers feeling lost. She is so tired.

“It’s partially Master Fu’s fault. He should have tried to train someone when he started to get older… he didn’t… and I understand why… but that doesn’t mean it didn’t have consequences. You and Chat are currently suffering because of that.”

“I don’t think you should blame Master Fu. He couldn’t have predicted Hawk Moth.”

“I’m not. Hawk Moth and Mayura are the ones in the wrong.” Tikki sighs. “We are getting off topic. I want you to come to me when you’re getting overwhelmed. Can you promise me that?”
Marinette smiles and it feels so fake that her face hurts. “I can. I promise.”

Tikki snuggles her cheek. “Good. Now it’s time for bed. It’s late and we can talk later.”

Marinette was already in her pajamas before the akuma’s attack, she just gets in bed and sleeps. It’s not a peaceful slumber.

…

She wakes up before the alarm clock rings, from a nightmare. Completely exhausted and covered in sweat, Marinette just knows that today is just going to be difficult, or maybe she just miserable about having to get up an hour before she needs to.

“Morning Tikki.” She grunts out at the sight of her kwami.

“Good morning Marinette. Bad dreams?” She asks with a knowing look on her face.

“A weird one, I had a dream that the Eiffel tower got akumatized because akumas kept destroying it.”

“…” Tikki just looks at her.

“Anyway I think I’m going over my speech now and try to take a power nap when I get home.”

“You’re going to see the public’s reactions regarding the last akuma?”

Marinette nods. “Yes. I’ll see it, while I eat breakfast.”

She reviews the small statement she’s going to give today and checks her messages. No one has texted her, it’s still too early. She decides to take a shower and go see what the news are saying about them.

Marinette sighs in frustration. “There are too many things to do today.”

“You’ll be fine. One task at a time and it will be over soon.” Tikki encourages her.

She goes down the stairs to the kitchen, this week her parents are busier than usual to compensate for taking the weekend off, as a result they won’t have a lot of free time. Marinette decides to just eat breakfast with Tikki. She turns on the TV.

Nadja Chamack is giving a briefing on the akuma from last night and it shows the footage captured by the helicopters. Marinette is not really surprised that they got the footage of her getting hit by the bench since they were basically glued to them from the beginning of the fight. The footage is tough to watch.

It clearly shows her running to save the little boy and pushing him out of the way. He falls pretty hard and Marinette winces.

“She’s fine.” Tikki says. “The miraculous cure healed him, and a hard fall doesn’t compare to getting him by a park bench.”

She smiles at Tikki and gives her a macaroon. “I know it’s just hard to watch.” In more ways than one.

Marinette didn’t realize last night but when she got hit by the bench she literally flew back 200 meters (656ft). She must have been airborne for at least ten seconds. She hit the ground so hard
that the cars next to her were left shaking and beeping. The crater that was left behind was big both in length and dept. You could actually hear from the recording the impact that she made, which would explain why everyone was so freaked out seeing her get up.

“It looks…” She looks at Tikki in search of way to complete the sentence.

“It looks bad. The suit protected you from the impact but that doesn’t mean you weren’t hurt.” Tikki looks up at her with big worried eyes.

“Miraculous cure remember?” She teases the kwami. Sure, that hurt like hell but she’s fine now.

Tikki smiles at her, and they keep watching. She only takes a few seconds to open her eyes, and from the recording you can clearly tell that she is groaning. Thankfully you can’t really tell that she is in pain, it looks more like she is groaning because she got hit. Since there are no wounds on her, it seems like she is shaking off the attack.

The moment Ladybug gets on her elbows, and sees the street you can tell that she panicked a little. Getting up faster to show that she was alright, even if she swayed a little on her feet, but that could be associated with being disoriented and having to get up fast.

Chat Noir scream came almost immediately after, and the footage caught her response. From this recording she could see that the civilians and officers that heard her reply visibly relaxed. She focuses back at what Nadja is saying.

“Both Ladybug and Chat Noir were hit last night by the akuma—“Marinette almost groans, where was the footage for Chat Noir? “They both seem fine and carried out fighting.”

Another reporter adds. “That might be because the suit protects them from injury, but they must have been in pain…I mean hits like that must be painful.”

Michael the scientist guy was back. “Hits like that are fatal. If a normal person got hit by that park bench thrown at that speed…pardon the image but there wouldn’t have been anything left of them. They would be in literal pieces. Chat Noir’s hit would have taken out the leg…“

They spilt the screen in two and show Chat getting hit. She was right it was almost immediately after. He made the move to go after her, but the duchy akuma picked up a rock and aimed at the kid. Chat Noir - like her - didn’t even hesitate. He picked up the kid gets hit in the knee, and is thrown off balance. Still with the kid in his arms, he does an acrobatic flip mid-air and lands on the un-hit leg. Puts the kid on his back and uses his baton to reach a police officer faster, passing the kid off.

Chat Noir picks up a few rocks and throws them at the akuma to distract him, while the cop and the kid get away. While distracting the akuma he runs back into the building and screams for her. The moment she answers back you can literally see the stress and worry vanish out of his body.

“I think your hit was worse Marinette.” Tikki tells her.

“Yeah, but that doesn’t mean Chat wasn’t in pain…I mean that akuma was stupidly strong.”

Marinette frowns looking back at the TV. “It’s funny although they are focused on us getting hit, they are more focused on if it hurt us or not.”

“They have never seen you bleed, and hopeful never will.” Tikki pauses for a second worried. “They aren’t sure how much that could have hurt you. A hit like that would have hurt a normal person, but you two didn’t show signs of pain.”
Tikki looks at Marinette with a judgment stare. What was she suppose to do? Show the amount of pain she was in and made the public worry? She gives Tikki a look back.

Tikki just sighs. “The akuma only hit you two, everyone else was fine. They aren’t sure how much that hurt you, and since you were healed less than ten minutes later. The public is confused. They also focused on if you can get hurt when hit, instead of having to think about the amount of times you and Chat Noir might have gotten hurt.”

“Oh, fair enough.” She smiles. “That means no damage control needed.”

“See one less thing to do.” Tikki gives her a brilliant smile.

Marinette makes herself a cup of tea to go, even if she is pretty sleepy. The amount of coffee she would need would be huge, and going to class jittery is not something she likes. No to mention, Tikki and Alya would annoy her for the massive consumption of coffee.

“Good Morning Marinette.” Her mom calls out as she enters the room and Tikki hides in her jacket.

“Good Morning, mom. I thought that you and dad would be busy with the bakery?”

She would have waited and eaten with her parents if she knew that they would come up.

“One of the part-time helpers we hired agreed to help out for the rest of the week. She is a very nice girl.” Her mother tells her about the new helper and how they are considering hiring someone full time. It also means that she won’t have to help them later in the day.

…

At school things are back to normal, although after today with their statement tomorrow will probably be chaotic. Her teachers are still a little on edge with the news, but none of them looks like someone kicked their puppy anymore. Marinette takes that has a win.

Things were starting to look up when at the end of the morning someone pissed off a student at the end of the hall. Normally if there is an akuma attack while she is at school - it happens, but is not that common - they are suppose to go to the gym area and stay there. There is a certain order in how things are done.

When the attack is at school the ‘order’ goes to hell, depending on the class and the akumatized person you have everyone running out and screaming. Her class, which at this point in made out of almost every superhero in the city, actually calms down and exists calmly. Ms. Bustier tries to lead them towards the back exit, but the akuma rounds the corner and the class scatters.

Marinette takes advantage of that to transform and Chat Noir shows up not even a minute after that. It’s close to two hours before they finally defeat the akuma and things go back to normal. Since most of the students had to run and had scattered, it was difficult to round up the students for classes again, especially since they all had skipped lunch because of the akuma. By the time things were back to normal Marinette had one class left and the teacher just sighed and dismissed them.

Probably a good idea since most of the students were both tired from the running around and hungry, not a good combination when trying to teach someone. Most of her class ate at her house. In fact most of the school - students and staff - snacked at the bakery.

The pro of a day like this is no homework - a few teachers send them things to read and reviewed it in class so they don’t fall behind, - but they usually preferred not to overwhelm the students. If it
happens a lot they usually did little pop quizzes to make sure the students weren’t falling behind -
considering that akuma attacks couldn’t be predicted and students were almost always disturbed by
one - it was a good system.

The con of a day like this is that it isn’t an off day for her. She just spends the day fighting an
akuma and if it’s early in the morning she might have afternoon classes, although those are lighter
classes. Today she had little sleep, no coffee and still had a press conference to give. She had hope
that the class would distract her from that…no such luck. Instead she had just spent the day battling
an akuma in her school.

When Alya asked if she wanted to go do something Marinette didn’t even try to lie to her friend,
just told that she was going to take a nap. It also gave Marinette an alibi for when Alya would
inevitably call her about the press conference.

At 6pm she woke up still feeling like she was hit by a tractor, but the alarm and Tikki made sure
she got up. A special mix later - coffee and Red Bull - she was off to meet Chat Noir.

She arrives at the tower with a couple minutes to spare but Chat is already there.

“Hello my lady.” He does a little bow choosing to start the dramatics.

“Hi Chat. Ready?”

“Paw-sitive.”

They record a short video and post online, basically calling an improved conference on the street. Although the police knew they were planning to speak with the public this week, possibly today they didn’t know how or where.

“Want to go to André’s for ice cream bugaboo? He is down the street.” Chat Noir winks his eye at
her.

“No. We don’t even have time for that. Plus, I don’t want to be here when the press starts to arrive
it could be…challenging.”

“As you wish, my lady.”

…

Ladybug and Chat Noir arrive back at the Eiffel Tower five minutes before 7pm. Chat Noir has two
water bottles with him, and Marinette asks about that. Chat Noir winks and tells her to take a sip if
she needs a minute to think. Marinette knows that Chat is more comfortable in front of the cameras
than she is, and she gets the feeling it’s because of something in his personal life. They had agreed
on a dozen signs for this, in case something unexpected happens, all Chat Noir’s suggestions.

The police had set up a perimeter and the news crews are all organized and ready. Dozens of
cameras were pointing at them. Someone had built a podium for them to stand. Marinette had no
idea how they had done that so fast. A lot of civilians were on the streets looking at them, probably
curious about what they were about to say after two weeks of silence.

She looks at Chat Noir who is also staring at the crowd. He notices her looking and nods. It’s go
time. They jump down and stand on the podium.

She takes the lead. “Good evening Paris we’ve asked you here to give you a full statement
regarding the events that have happen over the last two weeks.”
Chat continues. “We will disclose our talk with the police department, and we will reveal a little of why we were chosen.”

Several people get excited at the second part and Marinette smiles. “That being said we will be limited on what we can inform you on that front, due to the risk that Hawk Moth and Mayura currently represent.”

“We don’t want any more claw-ful enemies. We’ll also answer a few questions that you might have…just be sure that they are reasonable. Don’t ask me the color of my socks…that’s just aw-fur.”

A few chuckles could be heard from the crowd.

“So, first thing is the conversation we had with the police department about their offers. They already told you we accepted the help that they offer for the new patrol plan. We had a meeting with them last week, and the officers were very helpful. They actually gave us a lot of good advices and suggestions. We obviously won’t be discussing what they are, but we are still very thankful for them.”

Marinette pauses and looks at the reporters. Alya is in the mix and Marinette makes a mental note to answer at least one question for her best friend.

“At the request of the police department we’ll be informing the police when we patrol, but we’ll be doing this in a way that Hawk Moth and Mayura won’t be able to predict any patterns. We’ll choose random officers on the streets, during patrol and just inform them we are out there. We won’t give them more information because it could fall into Hawk Moth’s hands.”

A few journalists makes notes on that statement and Marinette has a feeling they might ask more about it. Originally she wasn’t even going to mention this part, but when the Chief Commissar decided to inform all of Paris it left them with no other options. Chat Noir agreed that they need to say something about it, but there was still a risk. They agreed on telling the public that the selection will be random and there won’t be a schedule for it, all of it will be random.

“On the second offer we informed the police we would be willing to talk with them, but we won’t reveal a lot of the magical aspect. They understood why and I’m sure that you will also understand. It’s the danger of the information falling into the wrong hands, may they be Hawk Moths or someone else. This is also the only statement we will issue about this point. Not only is the police investigation a secret, we don’t want to accidentally tip off Hawk Moth.”

Chat takes the moment. “We won’t be chatting too much…it could be a cat-strastrofy.”

A few laughs are heard but Ladybug just sighs. “Finally, we decided to refuse the final offer for therapy. We talk about it and decided that it wasn’t needed. We both acknowledge that therapy is very important and in some cases fundamental for an individual to function. We don’t need therapy at this stage and we understand that the offer might not be permanent and that’s alright. In any case I don’t believe that specialized therapy is what we would need.”

It’s a dig at the Commissar’s comments after the police help them. It’s not an attack on the police force, but it will give the Chief Commissar some troubles. It will hopefully also send the message that they don’t need therapy, but that’s more of a long shot. No one can force them into therapy; almost all the professionals she has seen speaking about this have said that it would be a bad idea.

At the same time, the public can still worry about their mental health and argue with the decision, but since they don’t want to pressure them too much, they back off. Them being teenagers is
actually a good thing here, since teenagers aren’t exactly famous for responding with well with being pressured. It’s a subtle balance but they have the advantage.

She nods at Chat to start his part. “I got the short end of the stick—“he swirls his baton “and have to do the dread-fur part of the magic while being sneaky. The cat in me is ready for the challenge. As Ladybug said last time we told you we were chosen for a reason and that’s true.”

He smiles and Marinette can feel the frustration coming from the crowd for him to continue. She feels a little vindicated that the audience finally knows what is like dealing with Chat Noir when he is in an ‘I’m very funny’ mood at the worst moment possible.

“The miraculous are the jewelry that we use…you know those things Hawk Moth spends the days demanding like a second rate drama Queen? I mean has the guy ever heard of private propriety? Like why you got steal dude? Just get a job, I mean he must be unemployed if he—”

“Chat I think they get it.” She decides to spare the crowd who seems to be growing more agitated by Chat Noir telling them jokes instead of the what they want to hear.

He pouts. “Ok. Let’s fur-get Hawk Moth’s a-paw-ling cat-titude for a meow-ment. So the thing you have to know is that we were chosen because our miraculous resonates well with our souls. What does that mean? I have no idea.”

The crowd looks confused. “Well, I do a bit. Like my miraculous and Ladybug’s are the miraculous of destruction and creation, which means I have a chaotic soul and my lady is a creative type. It would explain my love fur being a wild cat and her brilliant plans. The better the soul alignments, the better is the outcome of the miraculous powers. It’s pretty complicated and if a miraculous is used with bad intentions - like Hawk Moth and Mayura are doing - it could have claw-ful results.”

He pauses and looks thoughtful. “In that line of thought Queen Bee actually got lucky in only being akumatized on her first outing…it could have been a cat-astrophy, especially if the Bee miraculous hadn’t found a good balance in her soul. Miraculous aren’t meant to be used for evil or for shell-fish intentions. Not to mention the balance aspects of the things…it’s claw-ful.”

He looks at her and she knows that he’s finish. It was a good speech, not only did it bring attention to Hawk Moth’s and Mayura’s actions having negative consequences he sounded like the magical aspect - even for him - was complicated. It was a stroke of genius letting him handling this part.

The public would have expected her to be more careful and informative while talking. He on the other hand they expected a lot of jokes and puns, and that’s what he gave them. Chat Noir knows how to work a crowd a lot better that she does. Not for the first time Marinette thinks of the ease he has dealing with the media.

They agreed that they would divide the questions put forward by the reporters, but depending on what was need, Chat Noir will answer the ‘difficult’ questions. He has the charisma and ease needed when talking with the press.

“We decided to do this…press conference to inform the public of the outcome of our meeting with the police department. On the day of the akuma we were thinking of just giving a statement in the form of a video and post it online. After…all that happen we believe that this is a more prudent solution…”

Chat Noir interrupts. “Paw-sitive solution, especially because some of you start to try to put up theories that left this cat in a cat-tonic state.”
Ladybug gives a slight twitch. “Right…so one of the things that we’ve heard these past weeks were the questions about magic. As mention we aren’t going into that much detail but there is something that we need to make clear. Even if Hawk Moth and Mayura decided to use their miraculous for evil purposes, it does not mean that the miraculous is affecting their ability to think.”

She says the last part with gritted teeth.

Chat Noir nods seriously “Ladybug is saying that a person’s free will is not put into question by disturbing the balance of the miraculous. Hawk Moth and Mayura are doing this because they want to. We don’t know why, but you have our guarantee, we will find out.”

They smile at the public and the media, and hope that gets the message across. They will not tolerate people coming up to them feeling sympathy or pity for the villains. From the looks of the crowd they don’t have to worry, the crowd looks like they took their words to heart.

She looks at Chat who nods at her, time for the questions.

“We will take some questions but please keep them…”She trails off.

“Bear-able. We won’t kitten around with weird questions. Meow let’s get started.”

Dozens of reporters put their hands up almost immediately. Marinette doesn’t even know where to start, thankfully Chat does.

“You with the cool sweeter-“it was a save the marine life shirt.”Whale hello there!”

Although the choice seems random, the reporter is part of one of the biggest news crews in Paris. Chat Noir was very smart in his choosing.

“Can we ask how you got chosen?”

Ladybug gives her an apologetic smile. “Sorry, but that information is private. So is the choosing of the part-time heroes. We can tell you this. Every single person chosen is for a reason. We know that there are a lot of questions regarding the origin and magic of the miraculous, that information is all private or unknown to us…”

The report nods. The woman doesn’t seem to upset at her inability to answer the question, it’s like she was expecting this but still tried to find out the information. Chat Noir keeps picking up several other reporters, since he has a knack for it. Some asks more than one question, but if they start pushing too much Chat makes a pun and picks someone else. Most reporters are somewhat reasonable and stay within the topic, the ones that ask personal questions are usually on a receiving end on a pun.

“How involved do you expect to be with the Police Department?” asks an older grizzly man.

Chat takes that question. “Purr-haps a bit. I mean, we don’t know how their investigation is going…we told the cats in blue that we might not answer all their questions.”

Another reporter fires a similar question. “The Chief Comissar insinuated that you were reluctant to give information about Hawk Moth and Mayura. Can you tell us why he had that impression?”

Ladybug decides to take that one. “We didn’t talk with him in person and have never met him so I can’t tell you why he might have that impression. We told the police we would help them the best we could but to keep two things in mind. The first is something that has been said here a few times
now…we won’t disclose a lot of information about the magic. That said some things we can tell them, it was decided that we would talk with them and see what we could do.”

“And the second thing?”

“We might not know. We don’t have all the information in the world about magic. There might be things we know that Hawk Moth doesn’t and vice versa. The police could have questions we might not be able to answer, because we just don’t know.”

“We know a bit about magic, but we aren’t purr-fect. When talking with the police if we tell them some piece of information that’s...sensitive it might be aw-fur. We can’t dai-ry (dare) leave sensitive information in the wrong claws. Can you imagine the cat-sequences? It would be too dangerous.”

Chat Noir picks Nadja Chamack next. “We know your ages and Queen Bee’s. There is some prove that the other part-time heroes are also growing up. Will you disclose the ages of the part-time heroes?”

It’s a question they have been waiting for. The part-time heroes and their status have been debated to death over the last few weeks. People don’t know their age - outside of Chloe - and most have assumed that they are also underage. Her first instinct was to tell the press that they were all adults, but that would bring too many questions. Why are all the part-time heroes’ adults and the main heroes teenagers? It would be too hard to explain.

They decided to wait for the public’s reaction. The problem was that the public focused a lot more on her and Chat. This might be because their ages were actually confirmed. Sure the part-time heroes’ ages were a lot more suspicions, but only Rena Rouge and Carapace were truly suspected of being minors. Chloe was confirmed, but most people were more focused on her father’s reaction. The other heroes didn’t have enough appearances and King Monkey and Viperion were actually believed to be adults. That didn’t mean their name didn’t came up a lot, but considering the insanity that were those first days, the part-time heroes were kind of a lesser topic.

Also since the magic was in effect, the part-time heroes’ ages weren’t the main topic. Ladybug and Chat Noir were. Chloe was brought up a lot, due to being the only one without a secret identity and the Mayor’s daughter, but there wasn’t a lot to say. The public figured out pretty fast that the miraculous of the part-time heroes are return to Ladybug and Chat Noir, arguing if the part-time heroes should be teenagers or not would be useless. After a while they decided on telling the media that a few of them were underage - not specify which - and that a few were adults.

Ladybug smiles at Nadja. “We aren’t going to tell anyone their ages it would be a breach of confidence. We can tell you that some of them are close to our age and some are older.”

“How much older?” Nadja asks.

Chat decides to take the reins. “A couple of them are old enough to drink.”

It’s a half truth. Master Fu is more that old enough. Luka’s mother lets him have a glass of champagne at parties, since he is turning 17 soon. Marinette is also sure that a few of her friends have at least drunk beer or champagne to try it. Are they at the legal age of 18? No, but the media and public doesn’t know that. It’s a weird way to put it, but since they are trying to avoid telling the actual ages the public might not care.

Chat smirks like the cat that ate the canary. “Did you know that Ladybug here is the baby of the team?”
She scowls at the comment, even if they had previously agreed on telling the public she was the youngest one that could have been phrased better. Some of the reporters look torn between finding her reaction funny and looking depressed at the news.

Chat continues smirking. “Yup. She is the youngest on the team…”

She softly elbows his side not liking the way he put that, but still takes the opening he gives her. “Like you’re the oldest one?”

He puts a hand dramatically on his chest. “Betrayed by my own partner. How will I ever recover?”

“You’ll manage.”

Chat looks over at the crowd and looks directly at Alya. “Ladyblooger? Do you have any questions that will leave this kitten feline better?”

Alya laughs at Chat’s attics and asks. “Do you have any plans after defeating Hawk Moth and Mayura?”

It’s not a surprise that Alya decided to take things away from the topic of the part-time heroes, but this question was completely different from what has been asked so far. Chat looks at her and the attention of the crowd focuses on her. They had talked about this before meeting with the police, but it didn’t come up then. Still the principle was the same.

“We’ve talked a little about it. Not in great detail…but the main plan is take a break…go on a vacation. I mean if there is an emergency or something we will of course help…but we’ve been doing this for close to two years and we will welcome a break.”

Alya looks surprised with the news. “What about the part-time heroes? Will they also take a break?”

Smooth Alya. Real smooth. “We can’t talk for them, but they usually only show up when akumas are around…with Hawk Moth and Mayura defeated things would be a lot slower. It would be only petty crime and that’s the polices job…sure we like to help them with it, but at the end of the day the main reason we are out here is to stop Super Villains.”

Chat pipes in. “We would have to chat with them. Us on the other hand…we already agree to take a break. I mean don’t we deserve one?”

He puts on the kicked kitty look and the crowd melts. Alya laughs and doesn’t look to worry about what they just told, even though Marinette is sure that her best friend will go home and reflect on what they said. Maybe the part-time heroes’ thought that they would be gifted the miraculous permanently after Hawk Moth’s defeat, but what would be the point? She and Chat aren’t even sure they will keep their miraculous after the defeat, even if it’s one of the most painfully things that Marinette can think about.

Her mocking voice is back. ‘A great reward after years of trauma and hard work, take one of your rocks away, take Tikki away. Paris and Good will win, but somehow you’ll still lose. You’ll lose if you defeat Hawk Moth, you’ll lose if Hawk Moth defeats you.’

As usual Marinette chooses to ignore that voice.

Alya looks like she wants to ask a million more questions, but it wouldn’t be fair for the other reporters after she already asked two questions. Chat moves on to the next reporter that tries to ask about their mental health. Neither her nor Chat want to talk about private thoughts, thus Chat
makes a joke and moves on to the next reporter.

“What do you think of the Mayor’s and other politician’s refusal to acknowledge you as Child Soldiers?”

That’s a bomb of a question. Marinette isn’t even sure why she’s surprised, the media spent the last two weeks hounding every politician in the country about them. Why wouldn’t they ask the heroes? She feels Chat bump his knee or her knee, it’s one of their signals for ‘How do you want to play this?’ She bumps back to let him know that she will handle it.

“That’s a…complicated question, because we don’t know if we see ourselves as Child Soldiers.”

The entire crowd goes quiet and Marinette thinks she has screwed that up, but the reporter that made the question fires back another.

“Why do you think that?”

Ladybug shifts and takes a sip of her water. “I actually look up the definition of Child Soldier when all of this started and I just don’t think I fit that description.”

“I completely agree.” says Chat Noir. “I know a lot of you think that we are too young for this responsibility and we won’t argue with that…we already told you that we were chosen for a reason. We’ve told that twice now. The point is your asking our personal opinions on a very weird matter.”

“Do you believe that your opinions may change as you grow?” Another reporter asks.

“Maybe…” Marinette answers. “I mean things change, our perspectives on life changes a lot, due to experience. We can’t tell you that tomorrow we won’t reconsider this answer… especially because we find it odd to think about it…err…”

Chat sees that she’s getting lost and jumps in. “Ladybug is right as always. Purr-haps our opinion on matter may change, but it has been weird seeing everyone discuss this on TV. Right now we are going with we don’t know what to think. It’s the most accurate thing this cat can promise.”

The reporter looks like he’s seconds away from another question, but Chat moves on.

“You, with the pink umbrella.”

“Can you tell us if you were hurt by last night’s akuma when it hit you?”

Another unexpected question, but somehow they should have expected it since today there was a lot of confusion about them getting hit. With the akuma in the middle of the day, they didn’t have a lot of time to discuss last night’s hits.

Chat Noir answers while she is trying to come up with her own answer. “It was claw-ful getting hit by that rock, but it didn’t really hurt that much. Our suits protect us from a lot of damage, we won’t lie it did hurt, but between the protection of the suits and the magic healing us, we are purr-fectly fine.”

He ends up purring the last word.

“Ladybug you got hit by a park bench–“the reporter winces at the words. “And thrown off the building…do you agree with Chat Noir testimony or was it worse for you?”
Ladybug looks at the reporter. “Hmm. I agree with Chat Noir, there was some pain at first…but we were fine.”

The reporters don’t look convinced with good reason, since it’s not the full truth. They can’t exactly say that it hurt like a bitch, but telling them they are fine and dandy is leaving the public doubtful. They can’t risk the public thinking they are being untruthful or false, it would make this entire press conference a disaster.

She sighs. “Look…it was painful getting hit we won’t hide that. Any person that saw the hit could probably tell that, but these suits are magical. I was more disoriented by getting hit off the building that in pain.” She chuckles. “When I got up I was more panicky that I got hit into a street full of civilians, than in pain. Any residual pain also passed pretty quickly because the miraculous cure took care of that. We weren’t in too much pain, if we got hit by that outside of our suits we would be…”

Chat Noir finishes. “Goners. Ladybug is right. As the member of the team that gets hit most often I can guarantee that these suits are magic. We never fight beyond our physical capacities that we can assure you. Trust us to know our limits.”

The public seems a lot more convinced with that, Marinette is not surprised after all this is pretty close to the truth. “By the way, we would like to ask you - the reporters - to stop point literal spotlights on us, when we are fighting. Please keep your distance from the fight, and follow police instructions.”

“Yup. I know this Cat looks good under any light, but during akuma fights we would prefer to remain covert.”

Marinette truly hopes this time it will stick. Looking at a few reporters she can see some took their words to heart, and might talk with their bosses. Hopefully they will be able to fight without having spotlights following them everywhere.

A beep comes from her yo-yo and the crowd focuses on her. Perfect timing. She and Chat had set a timer to make sure this press conference wouldn’t go on forever. It would give them a reason to have to leave without an akuma attack. It was also Chat Noir’s idea.

“Pardon me, we have to end this soon…we have a private matter to attended. Final questions…please keep them brief.”

The press explodes screaming out questions. Chat picks up the reporters that haven’t got the change at asking any questions, which are only a few of them. One reporter asks what they need to do and just gets a short answer that is a private matter.

“Final question. You the lady with paw-some shoes.” She was wearing Chat Noir theme shoes.

“The Chief Commissar of the Paris Police Department recently showed his disappointment on you going to lower ranking officers for help. Can you tell us why you choose those cops and not the cops at headquarters?”

The dig at the Chief was not lost in anyone and Marinette actually has to bite the inside of her cheek to stop from laughing out loud. “It’s simple. We knew a few cops from the akuma attacks. We also know a few of the cops at the headquarters, but not the bosses. We felt more comfort going to talk with cops that are often by our side and know us, rather than complete strangers.”

The cops keeping the line and the order in the crowd smile at her words and look thankful.
Chat Noir smiles at the crowd and finishes the press conference. “Whale that was the final question. We have to go, but we thank you for the claw-peration from the crowd and for meeting us here on such short notice. Good Night Paris.”

Marinette arrives home feeling great. From what she can piece together the first response to their press conference is positive. The amount of information they told them is not completely new and some - the magic - was actually pretty vague, but since they added things that they have never talked about it the press was going wild. Specials have already been announced based on their statements.

The general feeling that’s coming out of the public is great. The civilians are a little happier now that the heroes have spoken, the police is on good terms with them, the media is happy to get this press conference considering that they are normally unwilling to talk with the press, and the politicians have already capitalized on them saying that they are not Child Soldiers.

The last part is one of the most talked topics of the press conference. The comments are divided, a few think that the heroes are just in denial about their situation or are not ready to confront reality. Others have pointed out that the heroes weren’t even sure on what to think and admitted that their opinion may change and that they should give the heroes’ time. Then there were the ones that are of the opinion that underage vigilantism is not the same as Child Soldiers, which actually sparked a few debates.

Informing them that she was the youngest person on the team and Chat wasn’t the oldest had a weird effect. One on hand people were even more stress that she was so young and that she and Chat had been doing this for the longest time. On the other hand it reinforced the belief that she and Chat were choosing the part-time heroes and that they were choosing older people.

How old? They didn’t know, but the heroes had implied that a few of them were at least adults, which relax a lot of people. It gave the impression that they had chosen at least some adults that could keep an eye on the kids. It left Marinette feeling oddly guilty to make the people of Paris believe a lie. It was meant as a way to reassure the masses, but it doesn’t extinguish the feeling of guilt that Marinette had.

A few people complain that they wouldn’t reveal anything about the magic aspect or why they were chosen so young, but most seemed to understand that the heroes didn’t want to risk informing Hawk Moth of magical aspects that the villain wasn’t aware. Incidentally the information that they gave regarding the collaboration with the police investigation on Hawk Moth had the effect of calming a few worries that the heroes were afraid to work with the police.

The Chief Commissar was also under fire after they had basically closed the door on the police force offer for therapy. Most people seemed to think that the reason they had rejected the offer was because it might come with strings - which wasn’t truth - and the heroes were hesitant to work with people they didn’t know. Their comments on the reason they choose a station and not the headquarters also pleased the people that were angry at the Chief Commissar’s words over the past week.

A lot people were worried when she and Chat admitted that the hits from yesterdays akuma had hurt them, but most assumed that the suits had protect them from the pain - which wasn’t totally false - and they would have stop if the pain was too much. A few didn’t like them being hurt at all and had suggest that on Saturday’s protest - it was confirmed - there should be piñatas in the form of Hawk Moth and Mayura to relieve rage.
All in all it could be considered a success.

“That went great Tikki.” The small kwami was finishing a cookie.

“Of course it did. You and Chat Noir had planned that press conference to the last dot.”

“Still I was a little nervous…”

Tikki smiled. “It went great.”

Marinette checks her phone and sees that Alya has been bombarding her phone for the last hour.

Marinette sighs. “I have to call Alya. Do you think she is going to mention the part-time heroes bit and the break bit? I want her opinion on the matter but I’m afraid of how she might react…”

Tikki sits on Marinette’s shoulder. “She might rant a bit now, but I think that with time she will come to understand your point of view. Just give it time she only found out about the break, and her ideas will be all over the place. Listen before you say anything and if she’s too affected just let her rant.”

Tikki tends to give pretty solid advices. She calls Alya.

“Girl, where have you been?”

“Asleep? I already saw that Ladybug and Chat Noir gave the press conference.”

Alya groans from the other side of the phone. “Yes they did. Only you can sleep during the biggest press conference of the year. Anyway have you seen it?”

“A few parts…” It was true she had seen a few parts on TV. “I saw that you asked them a couple questions.”

“Yeah…they were pretty liberal and willing to answer questions if we didn’t asked them personal questions, which fair I guess this was a ‘professional’ thing. I was surprised by how they answer my question…I never really consider them wanting a break you know?”

Marinette suppresses a snort. “I know…but it could be good for them…I mean…”

“I get it girl. Just…where does that leave the part-time heroes?” Alya whispers the last part and Marinette heart aches.

“Ladybug said that they would need to talk with them first. I guess they might also take a break or become the full time heroes while Ladybug and Chat Noir are on vacation?”

“Yeah, maybe…” Alya doesn’t sound convinced.

Marinette decides to take a different approach. “I just don’t think that now is the time to wonder about that. Hawk Moth and Mayura are still in the picture. After those two are defeated that question will probably pop out a lot…but now? I think the media is more focused on other things.”

Alya sighs. “You’re right.”

“Are you worried about Chloe’s reaction? Of her going full on…Chloe?”

Alya snorts. “No, but now that you bring it up. I think that tomorrow we need to be ready for the tantrum that she will have.”
She succeeds in taking the focus off the part time heroes which relaxes Alya. After a while Alya tells her she needs to edit a few things for the new articles on the Ladyblog. Marinette gets the impression she is also running out of battery on her phone, and takes the opportunity.

Before coming home she and Chat took a lot of photos with civilians thought the city. She was waiting for Alya to get distracted or busy so she could call her and knowing that it wouldn’t be answer. She would take the chance to post the selfie she took with the help of Trixx and post it on Instagram. Hopefully Alya wouldn’t be disappointed to lose the chance to talk with Ladybug, which would be the impression that she would get from the missed phone called.

It will give Marinette for once the chance of teasing Alya for not picking up the phone. That was a pretty sweet bonus.

Chapter End Notes

Hello. Thank you for all the comments, kudos and bookmarks.
We arrived at the point where things are wrapping up. The press conference is something that was mention back on chapter four, but the need the heroes had to talk with the public comes from chapter two. Marinette and Tikki confrontation is something that has been a long time coming. I added that point about the heroes ages, because looking at images from past users, they all look to be older than Marinette and Adrien. So, I had this idea of the miraculous holders being trained from a young age, but only being “full time” when they are a little older.
Two chapters to go. The next chapter will come in the next two weeks. Ideally I will be able to published it next week (Friday or the weekend), but since we are in the middle of a pandemic, promising things is just a bad idea. Be safe, be smart, and be kind.
Again thank you for reading this. Beware the mistakes and be nice in the comments.
Blood Wolf
Tuesday.

15 days after the reveal. Night Time

Marinette honestly thought that after giving the press conference her anxiety would lower to manageable levels. Yet, she spent the entire day swing between exhaustion and stress. It wasn’t only her fault, Hawk Moth decided to answer their statements with two akumas. One at 6am that left all of Paris cranky, and one at 10pm leaving people cranky for tomorrow. It’s close to 11pm when she and Chat defeat the second akuma of the day, they were suppose to start their new patrol schedule today, but no one in their right minds would want to patrol after two akumas.

Chat Noir looked dead on his feet, and Ladybug wasn’t feeling much better. It was obvious that Hawk Moth had finally taken advantage of knowing that the heroes went to school. An akuma on Sunday night, one in the middle of the school day on Monday, and two akumas on Tuesday that had awaken them up early in the day and prevent them from having goodnights sleep.

The only comfort that she had was the people getting angrier at Hawk Moth, and if the man didn’t stop sending out akumas he would inevitable akumatize someone who wanted to kill him. At this point Marinette wasn’t even sure she would prevent the akuma from killing Hawk Moth, she was so freaking tired. The cops that usually shadow them during the fights were starting to look just as tired. Every time they looked at the heroes Marinette got the feeling she was minutes away from being kidnapped and forced to take a break and drink warm beverages.

She started the day only needing to hear what people were saying about last night’s conference and talk with Chat about it during patrol. She wasn’t even awake before that plan went out the window. It took two hours to defeat the akuma and when she got back home, Marinette had 4 minutes to shower, get dressed and eat breakfast. She didn’t even try, accepting that there was no way in hell that she could make it to school in time.

When she arrived at the school - forty minutes late - somehow she was not the last person in class. Not by a long shot, half the class was missing when she arrived, making her give a perplexed look to her teacher. Ms. Bustier informed her that the traffic jam that the akuma created was so big that most of her classmates were stuck in traffic with their parents.

Marinette had smiled at her teacher, but inside she was groaning. Nothing caused akumas like road rages. That meant she might have to fight another akuma today, which turned out to be true. Although it took longer than she might have guessed, at 10pm a woman was akumatized by a flat tire.

She had to resist the urge to bang her head against the floor when she heard the reason for the
akumatization. As the akuma started to rant about spending the entire day late because of a massive traffic jam, Marinette seriously considered just leaving and going home. Chat Noir had made a comment about that, and Marinette honestly couldn’t tell if he was kidding or not.

When the woman was deakumatized and looked horrified at the heroes, which was a reaction that was becoming more and more frequent. The lady explain that she was late for work and had to stay behind to make up for lost time, she lost the chance to tuck in her daughter who had been sick. She and Chat shared a look of understanding and did their best to comfort the woman with the limited time they had. A couple of officers helped the woman by changing her tire.

Marinette didn’t have enough time to get home so she went into an empty alley and waited for Tikki to eat.

She falls asleep against the building for a moment and is immediately awaken by Tikki.

“You can’t sleep here. Just give me a moment.”

“I’m so tired Tikki.” Marinette whines.

“I know, don’t worry I’m almost finished.” The little kwami tries to reassure her. Tikki keeps her word and two minutes later she gets to transform, and then her luck strikes.

“AHHHH.” Marinette hears a scream coming from the street.

“Please not another akuma.” She whispers to no one.

She approaches the scene via rooftops, and inspects the scene. There is a man with a knife pointing at a woman on an ATM, telling her to hurry up. It doesn’t take a genius to know that this is not an akuma case, but Marinette is not about to walk away when she sees someone getting mugged.

She picks up the yo-yo, aims at the guy’s waist and tosses. The man feels something grabbed him, but by the time he looks down, Marinette is already pulling him away from the woman.

Marinette has to be careful how hard she pushes, this guy - although a questionable one - is still human, and if she pulls to hard she might seriously hurt him. The guy hits the ground and drops the knife, he tries to reach for it but Ladybug is a lot faster and puts her foot down on the knife. It’s incredibly satisfying seeing the oh-shit look that comes from the would-be thief when he spots Ladybug.

“Stay down.” She warns the thief who starts to nod his head frantically. He looks jittery and has a wild look on his eyes, but stays on the ground so she doesn’t restrain him further than the yo-yo tied to his waist. Marinette picks up the knife.

Ladybug looks at the woman - who is probably in her early twenties - and looks both happy and sad to see Ladybug. “Ms. Are you alright?”

The woman takes a few moments to respond. “Yes. Thank you Ladybug… Are you alright?”

Questions like those have always been frequent, but lately Marinette gets them almost daily. Doesn’t matter if it’s in her civilian form or hero one, everyone asks her that.

“I’m fine.” It oddly feels like a lie even though it’s the truth.

Before the woman can reply they hear a car coming, a patrol car shows up at the end of street. Either someone must have heard the screamed and called the police or they were patrolling in the
The car speeds up when they see them and it only stops a few meters away from them. Two officers quickly get out of the car, and Marinette recognizes one of them.

“Officer Dan?” It’s the cop that was at the front desk of the police station.

He gives her a small smile even though it’s a little strain. “Hello Ladybug. What happen?”

She looks back at the woman - who just nods at her - then turns to Officer Dan and his partner. “I was going back home after the akuma attack, when I heard a scream. I went to check it out and saw this man—” She points at the guy who is still held at the waist by her yo-yo. “—threatening this woman with a knife.”

Dan’s partner looks at the woman. “Ms. Are you okay? Do you need medical assistance?”

“No, I’m fine.”

The cop nods. “Can you come over here and tell me what happen?”

The woman nods leaving her, Dan, and the mugger near the ATM.

“Ladybug.”

She looks back to Dan who pulls a pair of handcuffs.

With a concern voice he asks. “Are you al-“

Dan doesn’t finish the question because the thief reaches down his waist and pulls another knife. He makes a move to try to stab her leg, which she easily dodges.

Dan pulls out a gun and looks murderous.

“Drop it.” Dan lets out a hiss and looks ready to tear apart the man, making Marinette low-key afraid of a butterfly showing up.

Ladybug pulls on her yo-yo and the man lets out a grunt of pain and drops the knife, which she picks up. Out of the corner of her eye she sees Dan’s partner with a gun out pointing at the thief looking angry.

Dan moves fast and cuffs the thief and roughly brings the guy to his feet. Marinette disentangles her yo-yo and gives both knifes to Dan’s partner. The officer takes both knifes, and puts them in an evidence bag.

The woman that almost got robbed is watching the scene unfold glaring at the thief. When she arrived on the scene the woman was crying and looking truly scared. The relief she showed when seeing Ladybug was almost palpable and now Marinette gets the feeling that if the police wasn’t here, she might have tried to hurt the man. Gone was the fear the woman had, it was replaced by a look of pure loathing.

Dan searches the man and finds two more knifes. He stills looks angry, but less than when the thief first pulled the second knife.

Marinette winces at that. “Sorry…I didn’t have time to check him, should have told you.”

Dan looks softly at her. “Don’t worry is not your fault.”
“But…”

“But nothing. You did well. We should have asked you when we arrived on the scene. Its protocol when arriving at a crime scene with a potential suspect in restraints by a…civilian or a superhero in your case…to apprehend the suspect and ask what happen. We should have restrained him, and searched him immediately.”

She nods. “Ok. Next time I’ll restrain the arms, before the police shows up.”

Dan looks troubled by her words and Marinette knows that he would rather that it wouldn’t be a next time, but these things can’t be avoided. No one expects Ladybug to walk away when she sees someone get mugged at knife point.

Dan opens his mouth a few times before speaking again. “Just be careful…I know you are faster and stronger than humans, but you have to be careful.”

Ladybug nods and when she goes to reply she yawns.

She turns deep red. “I’m sorry, just a little sleepy.”

Dan has got that look in his eyes like he wants to hug her but is not sure how she would respond. A second cop car pulls up and Sabrina’s father steps out of the car.

He looks at her a little confused. Marinette realizes that when the officers asked for backup when they apprehended the suspect, but they didn’t tell anyone she was at the scene.

“Hello Ladybug. What are you doing here?” He asks kindly.

Dan answers for her. “She was first on scene. She was going home from the akuma attack and heard the victim scream.”

Roger Raincomprix gives him an understanding look. “You want me to take her statement while you get the suspect back to the station?”

A dark look shows up in Dan’s face. “No. When we arrived at the scene Ladybug had that…criminal-” he spits out the word with a great amount of hate that confuses Raincomprix.”We asked if they were alright and what happen. Officer Collette took the civilian to the side to get her statement while I moved to restrain the suspect.”

He stops to glare at the back of the police car where the thief is just staring at the ground. He takes a deep breath and continues. “The suspect decided that it would be the best time to make a break for it, pulls out another knife, and tries to stab Ladybug…”

“WHAT???” Roger roars turning red with rage. He looks at her trying to see if she was hurt, completely forgetting that even if he had hit her nothing would happen. The suits would need to take a lot more damage to tear.

“I dodge.” She tries to reassure him. Roger Raincomprix looks somewhat relieved at her words, but he is still red in the face.

Dan intervenes. “It was my fault. I should have searched the suspect…”

“No.” She interrupts not wanting him to get blame for this. “I didn’t search the guy and I didn’t tell you that. I was…”
Dan interrupts her. “Not your fault, it’s not your job to know protocol to deal with suspects or criminals.”

“It’s my job to keep people safe.” She protests.

Roger puts a hand on her shoulder. “You did. That girl is safe thanks to you. Now I have a couple of snacks in my car and bottles of water. We are going to take the victim’s statement and I’m going to talk with my officers. Then I want your side of the story. Do you want to press charges on the attempt assault?”

Ladybug frowns. “I can’t show up in court…”

“Actually you can, but that doesn’t matter in this case. He did this in front of witnesses and that ATM must have a camera. If he doesn’t confess, we should have enough evidence to convict…”

She is still confused. “I never press charges before.”

“Akumas don’t count…” Dan begins.

“Oh. I know, but when I dealt with muggers before, some try to fight back, and no one ever asked about pressing charges.”

Roger and Dan both twitch at her words.

“They never told you that you can press charges?” Dan asks softly, although his face is stone.

“No. But the suspects are usually restrain by the time the cops arrive…today was the first time that someone tried to come at me after I had them wrap by the waist with my yo-yo.”

Lieutenant Raincomprix nods. “Have they ever hurt you? Or Chat Noir?”

“They can’t. We have superhuman reflexes, they are simply too slow. If they could hit us the suits would prevent any damage, we are too durable for non-super threats.”

“Ok, well you can always complain and press charges no matter the physical advantage you have on the assailant. For future references, if you are attack before the officers arrives inform them after. They should always know these things. Do you want to press charges?”

Ladybug hesitates. “I don’t know. I don’t know how…”

She trails off feeling stupid. She has looked up a few things about the law since she became Ladybug, but most of them are crimes that Hawk Moth and Mayura might get charged with. Now, she doesn’t even know what to do with a simple mugging, it makes her feel useless.

Lieutenant Raincomprix looks at her and softly says. “It’s alright. Go wait in my car I’ll explain things to you. How this works and what you normally need to do. You can decide later if you want to press charges. Okay?”

She nods and Dan takes her to the car.

“We’ll be right back. The snacks are probably in the glove compartment if you’re hungry.”

“Thank you.”

Dan smiles. “Any time little Lady.”
She snorts at his nickname, there was a reason he kept smiling at Chat’s puns. She closes the door and rest against the window, while waiting for Lieutenant Raincomprix.

She falls asleep almost instantly.

... Wednesday 16 days after the reveal.

Marinette wakes up with someone gently shaking her.

“Ladybug?”

She looks up and sees Lieutenant Raincomprix. Ladybug looks down and notices that she is cover by a Paris Police Department blanket. Dan must have put it on her.

“Sorry. Yes?”

Roger Raincomprix hesitates for a second. “We’ve taken the statements from both the victim and the assailant. My officers have also given their accounts on what happen and your original statement. I want to revise that statement and ask you to tell me what happen when the officers arrived on the scene. I can explain to you the usual process to press charges.”

She looks at the central console and sees that it’s after midnight, and represses the urge to groan. She has been asleep for over an hour in a police car. If anyone has seen her this is going to be hard to explain. She pulls the blanket over herself making sure that only her head is visible inside the car.

“Ok. So we revise my statement first?”

Lieutenant Raincomprix nods and tells her what the other officers had written down. She adds some details that she didn’t get the change to tell them including the arrival of the officers. Roger just hears what she has to say and writes down everything, occasionally asking to clarify some details.

“Now about the attack what could you tell me?”

“I was talking with Officer Dan. He was asking me if I was alright and the guy took the opportunity to grab another knife…he was hiding it in his waist…I didn’t get the change to search him before the officers had arrived…” She shifts uncomfortably at the thought of someone getting hurt, due to her negligence.

Roger like Dan protests. “You did the best out of a stressful situation.” His voice left no room to argue. “Then what happen?”

“I saw him try to shift to stab my leg and I just dodged. Officer Dan pulled a gun and told him to ‘drop it’. His partner…Officer Collette also pulled her gun and aimed at the man. I pulled on my yo-yo and squeezed him a little…he dropped the knife. I picked it up and gave it to Officer Collette while Officer Dan searched the man.”

Raincomprix nods. “Did he give any indication why he would try to attack you?”

“I think the cuffs were the reason he tried to attack. When I got on scene he was…jittery but he
didn’t say a word after I pulled him away from the woman. Didn’t move, didn’t try to fight. I didn’t see a reason to tie his hands.”

Roger finishes writing down what she told him. “Now about pressing charges…”

Ladybug hesitates. “I’m not sure I can risk people freaking out about Ladybug being attack…”

“Since you’re a minor your name can’t be release.”

“Really?”

“Yes. The only people who would know are the Judge and the legal teams. Since he attacked a minor the process is kept private.”

“Oh…Do you think I should…I mean he didn’t hit me…”

“Doesn’t matter. An attempt at stabbing an individual - even if said individual isn’t hurt - is a crime. He didn’t hit you because you have superhuman powers, but another person wouldn’t be so lucky. The intent he showed is very dangerous, especially when you consider that he knew that he couldn’t break out of your yo-yo. He wanted to scare you and that is not alright.”

“Did he say why he did this?”

Roger sighs. “He didn’t gave us any reason…most people don’t. That being said he’s a suspect on other thefts in the area, and tonight he tried to attack you. Normally an attack with a knife could be considered an attempt of murder, but since he told us that he was just trying to scare you into you relaxing the grip on the restraints to run. He was aware that he couldn’t hurt you…it’s an attempted aggravated assault on a minor.”

“Why aggravated assault?”

“He used a deadly weapon. Use of a deadly weapon during an assault is considered an aggravated assault. Pocket knives aren’t usually considered deadly weapons, but he used it to hold that girl at knife point - he used it with malicious intent - making it a deadly weapon. After he tried to attack you…it’s the escalation of the suspect and his behavior during the duration of the crime that aggravates the charges.”

“Okay. I think I want to press charges. So what do I do?”

“Normally we would get in contact with your parents-“He holds his hand up when she panics. ”we’re not doing that because your status given by the Mayor’s officer assures the right to keep your identities a secret - unless you committed a crime. If you had to appear in front of a court you’re name would be Ladybug, and the court couldn’t ask for personal details. There is no need to call your parents.”

Marinette breaths a sigh of relieve.

“You already gave me your statement and we have other statements from the cops and the civilian - that’s the testimonies - we also have the camera on the ATM and the police dashboards that shows what happen…with the amount of evidence you wouldn’t have to testify. In this case the offender has given a full confession, so you don’t need to worry about it. He will be presented in front of a judge after more questioning regarding other possible crimes.”

“Thank you.”
“You’re welcome. I told you any time you have a problem you can come to our station. We’ll help…Do you have school in the morning?”

Marinette hesitates for a second, and then slowly nods. “Today’s akumas were ridiculous…but the time that they showed up…” She looks at the dashboard that shows 00:47.

“It must be pretty hard keeping up with school. I have a daughter a year older than you and I think if she tried to do what you do, she might implode with the amount of work.”

‘Yeah that and she basically works for Chloe full time.’ Marinette resists the urge to tell him.

He keeps going. “You slept for over an hour…Dan covered you with a blanket when he saw you had fallen asleep. Do your parents know you’re not home?”

“No. They get up pretty early so they were already asleep when I left home. If I’m back before six am they don’t usually notice I’m gone. Today was the exception because of the akuma. My dad panicked and went to check on me when he heard…about the akuma…I left after.”

“Sounds like a worried father.”

“Yeah, he and mom worry too much.”

“A parent’s job is never done. What about Chat Noir…how do his parents react?”

“I don’t know. We don’t talk about personal details or our home lives too much. It’s a way to protect ourselves and our loved ones.”

“Makes sense.” Roger replies but looks vaguely frustrated with something.

“I need to get going.”

He nods in acknowledge. “Have a good night and get home safely.”

“Good Night Lieutenant Raincomprix. Bug out.”

She gets home just before 01:00. “Spots off.”

Tikki looks at the clock and then back at her. “Marinette why are we home this late?”

Marinette sighs and explains the ordeal to Tikki.

...

Thursday

17 days after the reveal. Coffee Shop

Marinette was sure that Hawk Moth had decided to test their human limits by giving them six akumas in four days. Sunday and Monday there was one akuma each day. On Tuesday there were two akumas. On Thursday (today) there have been already two akumas. It has got to be some kind of record. Marinette could barely think, between the hours of sleep she lost try to keep up with class, and the insanity that was fighting akumas. She was beat and also in great need of coffee.

After another akuma fight - a short one - she heads to a coffee shop because she still needs to finish her homework. It was close to midnight but she knew of a 24 hours coffee shop run by a couple of insomniacs that served great coffee.
Ladybug walks half in a coma into a coffee shop. It’s close to a university so there are a lot of people studying there. Depending on the time of the year it might be packed or have only a few night owls. It must be close to exams season or something because the place although not full, has a lot of students. They all stop what they are doing to look at her. She ignores them and just goes to the counter. The barista behind the counter looks at her with wide eyes. Normally when she enters a business the employees tend to freeze, but by the time she starts talking they usually relax.

“Hi. Can I please get a double espresso?” She smiles at the man behind the counter and takes out money from the yo-yo.

The man takes a few moments to process what she says. “Isn’t that a little strong for this hour?”

Ladybug just smiles at him. She has been expecting these questions since her age was revealed. The concern for her and Chat Noir’s wellbeing has also increased in the last few weeks. She doesn’t mind as long as she gets her coffee. “Trust me I can handle it. Besides Hawk Moth has been a working mood lately and I need something to keep me awake, while I’m studying.”

Something dark flashes on the barista’s face at the mention of Hawk Moth. It’s been happening more and more often, people are getting angrier at the mention of Hawk Moth. It makes her wonder what will happen on Saturday’s protest. Will she have to fight an akuma or will Hawk Moth try to avoid making akumas that are angry at him? So far he seems to avoid making akumas that might be angry at him, but the protest might prove to be the right opportunity to risk it.

“No, thank you. It always tastes weird when I try it.”

The barista sighs, he pauses trying to think of a way that he could weaken her coffee. “Okay. It’s on the house.”

“But…” She immediately starts to protest. This actually happens a lot, all types of business try to give them free things. Sometimes when they convince the owners that they can pay, civilians that are around will pay for it. She and Chat always protest, but in the end nothing can be done. Most people are too stubborn and refuse the money.

“Just consider it a thank you for all of your hard work in the last few days.” He smiles. “Besides I think my boss would fire me if he knew that I charged Ladybug.”

“I can pay for it.” Someone yells behind her.

“No need on the house.” The barista yells back. She has no choice but to stop protesting or the entire coffee shop will get into an argument. It has happen before, she or Chat convince a business they can pay, but the costumers get in the way and they end up with free stuff.

She smiles a pretty big smile. “Thank you so much.”

“What are you study?” He asks while moving around to make her coffee.

Marinette pauses. Technically this is the type of question that could reveal something she doesn’t want to the public - her grade - but if she keeps it vague enough she wouldn’t have any problems.

“Physics and math.” She is a little behind of everything because of Hawk Moth’s latest attempts, but the homework for tomorrow is only on those two subjects.

“Today you’re burning the midnight oil. That sucks.” He comments.
“I’m used to it.” She smiles while he gives her a cup of coffee. “Thanks.” She starts to head towards the exit, feeling all eyes still on her.

“Hey Ladybug.” She pauses with her hand on the door. “Good studies…just don’t forget to take care of yourself.”

“I won’t…”

“AHHHH. Akuma.” Seven akumas in four days. Its official Hawk Moth has set a new record. Marinette has a theory that he’s angry he wasn’t able to take advantage of having the public knowing their ages to make akumas. Either that or he’s angry that most of the anger of the last few days has been directed at him and he would need to risk himself to create an akuma.

Ladybug groans loudly, and so do a few people in the coffee shop. She drinks the entire cup in one go, and turns to the people inside the coffee shop. “Everybody please remain here and stay calmed. I will deal with this as fast as I can. Check the news for any updates.”

Some students have their phones pointed at her, and she knows that tomorrow the news is going to have a special on ‘Ladybug’s favorite coffee shop’ or something like that.

She leaves the coffee shop groaning knowing that there is no way she is going to get any sleep tonight…again.

…

Friday

18 days after the reveal. Home

The akuma turned out to be Mr. Pigeon and Marinette thank all the deities in the world. She could literally feel Chat Noir’s relief at seeing who the akuma was, and he is allergic to the akuma. The fight - if you could call it that - took less than ten minutes, and by the time the police had showed up she and Chat were already leaving the scene. The few cops they saw just looked relieved at the heroes finally going home.

She was beyond tired and the coffee she had drunk wasn’t working. She briefly debate over the pros and cons of going back to the coffee shop and ask for more coffee. But what would she do if the barista refused to sell her more coffee, especially because the man was already hesitant to sell her coffee. Sighing she just went home.

“Spots off.” She whispers as she goes into her room. Her parents are sleeping, and will be for another few hours. Marinette doesn’t have that luxury. She needs to get her homework done.

“Are you going to bed?” Her eternally concerned kwami asks.

“I still have Physics and Math homework to do…”

“Marinette the Physics homework isn’t until next Tuesday.” Says Tikki.

“Really?” She checks her calendar and the Tikki is right for today she only had to read some theory. “Good I think that I can do the Math’s homework tomorrow in class.”

“Great. Marinette go to sleep.” The little kwami tells her in a tone that doesn’t leave any room for arguing.
The problem is that as soon as her head hits the pillow she can’t fall asleep, it’s probably the coffee.

‘This coming from the girl that can fall asleep with killer cocktails made from coffee and energy drinks that would probably kill most people. You can’t sleep because your insomnia - you know that thing you pretend you don’t have - is acting up. The coffee obviously doesn’t help, but it’s not the main reason you can’t sleep.’

She groans out loud. Tikki is still eating some cookies on her desk, but looks at her.

“Can’t sleep?”

“Yeah…probably the coffee.”

“I doubt it. The effect the coffee had on your body probably disappeared with the miraculous cure.”

“Wait the miraculous cure can affect what we drink?” She sits on the bed feeling perplex.

“Kind off. It can affect the user of a miraculous…in this case you. If you drink or eat something that is detrimental to your health…”Tikki gives her an annoying look, the kwami has never like her coffee habits.”Then the miraculous cure will remove the harmful effect as long as you were wearing the suit. That means the coffee you had is no longer in effect. It’s not just when you use the miraculous cure, when you transform the suit protects you from basically anything that could potentially be harmful.”

“That makes sense…it’s to protect the health of the user.” That means she needs to start drinking coffee outside of being transformed. Tikki ‘failed’ to mention this before today, but it does explain some things.

“Exactly. So tell me what seems to be the problem?”

Marinette hesitates, she might have promised Tikki on Monday that she would come to the kwami if she started to struggled, but is not sure what the problem is.

“I’m not sure…I just feel like this was too easy.”

Tikki frowns. “This…as the way you dealt with people knowing the truth?”

Marinette nods. “I’m still waiting for the other shoe to drop…if that makes any sense…”

Tikki takes a deep breath and sits on Marinette’s shoulder. “Marinette…I know that the last couple weeks caused you a lot of stress. I know that you were constantly obsessing over the worst case scenarios. I know that even after you did the press conference on Monday you were hoping that your brain would slow down. I know that didn’t happen. I know things have been complicated and turning off the alarms going in your head sounds impossible, but Marinette you have do it. You need to let it go.”

“How?” Marinette asks in a small voice.

“Slowly. That’s not what you want to hear but is the best advice I can give you. The amount of stress you suffered over the last few weeks doesn’t just disappear from one day to the other. The first thing you need to do is accept that the worst part is over…and Marinette the worst part is over. I promise you the magic wouldn’t allow things to turn now.”

Marinette feels tears sliding down her face but doesn’t wipe them away. “I just…Tikki I’m so tired.
Most things went our way the majority of the public did what we needed. The police are still on our side, the politicians didn’t get involved and Hawk Moth didn’t have time to take advantage of the situation. It went great almost perfectly…but I feel so lost like I’m losing and I don’t know why.”

Tikki grabs a tissue and wipes her face. “The pressure you had to endure over the last two years is not easy to handle. You are allowed to be tired, Marinette you and Chat Noir handled a very difficult situation with an enemy breathing down your necks. You did…beyond great. You didn’t lose and you should not believe that, but I understand why you do. The pressure you felt was…tremendous, your body and mind need to catch up with the reality of the situation.”

“Sometimes I just feel like that will never happen.” Marinette admits feeling even more ashamed.

Tikki kisses her forehead. “You will be fine.” The kwami looks so sure that Marinette just nods and doesn’t argue.

A part of Marinette truly believed that she would get better after the press conference, instead, somehow she feels worse. Now the weights that were pulling her under have disappear, and she’s left struggling to adjust to their absent. She’s blind moving forward and every possible outcome is out of her hands. The little control that she had over the situation is gone and that’s theoretical a good thing, they don’t need any more plans. They can just go back to their usual routine.

On Tuesday with the robber incident she honestly kept waiting for photos of her in the cop’s car being leaked or the charges being made public. Instead none of that happen, and she just felt lost. How did something bad not happening left her with more anxiety?

How do you fix a problem that is not there? How could she explain to Tikki that she felt worse now that most of her problems were solved after weeks of feeling an unbearable pressure?

‘What’s wrong with me?’

She comes back with Tikki whispering soft words in her ears and wiping her tears. It makes Marinette feel like a small child waking up after a bad dream. She tries to talk but her throat hurts.

The sound of someone coming up the stairs, forces Tikki to hide in her desk. Her mom opens the door.

“Marinette are you okay? I hear crying…” Her mom looks at her and the words fade.

“I-I had…a nightmare…pretty creepy one…just…” She is still struggling to talk and her mom just comes to sit next to her bed.

She grabs Marinette’s hands. “Breath honey. Just focus on breathing. It’s alright it was just a dream.” It takes a few minutes but with her mom next to her and soothing words Marinette calms down.

“Want to talk about it?”

She hesitates not sure what to say, she didn’t have a nightmare but she did have a panic attack. “Not right now…it was about akumas.”

Her mom gives her an understanding look. She is not the only person in Paris that might be afraid of akumas, and nightmares about them are not rare things. Having so many of her classmates akumatized helps with the idea that she is afraid. In reality it just makes her hate Hawk Moth and Mayura more that she already does.
“It’s fine honey. I’m going downstairs to make some tea. Can you keep calm or do you want me to stay here a little longer?”

“I’m fine…”

“Ok. I’ll be right back.”

Tikki flies out of her hiding place and sits besides Marinette on the bed. She doesn’t say anything but her presence reassures and helps Marinette. When her mom comes back Tikki hides in the covers and pretends to be a plushy.

“Here’s some chamomile tea with a drop of honey.” Her mom gives her a cup while seating on the bed.

“Thank you. Sorry I woke you.”

Her mom puts an arm around her. “Always wake me if you are scared…no matter the hours. Do you think you can fall back asleep?”

“I’m tired, but…”

Her mom nods. “Ok, want to do some breathing exercises with me?”

It’s a rhetorical question her mom wouldn’t leave until she is asleep and sometimes those exercises do help her sleep. Sadly this wasn’t one of those times, it takes until 4am for Marinette to fall asleep and she wakes up with an actual nightmare twenty minutes later.

“Breath honey.” She hears her mother’s voice and calms down a little. The last thing she remembers is falling asleep with her mom by her side.

“I--I can-can’t brea-“

“Don’t try to talk, just focuses on breathing. Follow my lead.”

Marinette calms down. Her mom pulls the covers over her and stays seated by her side. She feels Tikki gently grabbing the hand that’s under the covers.

“Marinette…I’ve been meaning to talk with you about something, I’ve noticed…” Her mom pauses and looks at her accessing her mental state.

It doesn’t take a genius to figure out what her mother wants to ask. “Yeah?” It comes out weak.

“I’ve noticed that you’ve been more tired lately…Your father and I know that you don’t always go to sleep when you should, but you have maintain a balance that prevents you from…being over tired. But lately it seems that you don’t even sleep anymore…”

What can she say? Her mother has no idea that lately she has been struggling to fall sleep. Her mom obviously doesn’t think that tonight has been the exception, and things have been complicated for longer. Yet, mom like Tikki had given her space, but tonight seeing Marinette in distress had made her take action.

“Honey.” Her mom’s voice is soft and Marinette know she spaced out again. “Are you okay?”

No judgment, no anger, no disappointment, just a worrying tone. It makes Marinette feel like crap. The weight of every single secret is hard to carry, but tonight she feels a deep burden on her very soul.
“I...” She trails off. Tikki squeezes Marinette’s hands in support. “I’m tired.”

Her mother smiles but its strain. “Of course honey. We can talk another time...”

“No.” She surprises herself by the outburst. “I mean...I’m tired, that’s what I’m trying to tell you... I don’t know why but I haven’t been sleeping well.”

‘You don’t know why?!?’ The dark voice asks incredulous.

She ignores it and continues. “I’ve been worried about a lot...stupid stuff mostly and I haven’t been sleeping well.”

“What stuff?” Her mother asks.

She decides to be a little honest. “Akuma attacks, by friends and family being turn into monsters... I don’t know why but this week has been worst.”

Her mother has an understanding expression. “On Monday there was an akuma attack at your school and your birthday was the anniversary of your grandma akumatization. Honey you should have told me.”

“I didn’t want to worry you or dad...”

“We understand, but honey the entirety of Paris has been afraid of akumas at one time or another. What you feel is normal...do you want to see someone?”

“Like a therapist?” Why does everybody keep trying to send her to a therapy? “No. I’m anxious about it but I don’t think it’s that bad. Outside of this week things haven’t been that bad.”

Technically that’s the truth...this week she had turn fifteen, then got hit by a park bench the next day, had to calm down Paris again, a record number of akumas attacks, very little sleep, and nightmares.

It was a bad week.

“Ok. I’ll trust you judgment for now, but Marinette if things get worst...”

“They won’t.” She promises.

“Ok.” Her mother kisses her forehead.

“Can you not tell dad? I mean he...” Has been turn into an akuma and I don’t want him to worry about having traumatize me. Although she didn’t really fought him, more like search for the akuma object while Chat and her dad fought.

“Don’t worry. I won’t tell him. But honey you can always talk with him or me if things get too hard and...” Her mom is interrupted by her dad arriving. She squeezes Marinette’s shoulder in a comfort sign.

Her dad looks at her with worried clouding his face. “Good Morning. How are you honey?”

“Tired.” She replies honestly. Telling her parents she is fine after spending half the night up due to nightmares is not an option.

Her dad nods. “I’m going to call school in a couple hours and tell them that you’re not feeling well. You’ll stay home today.”
“No school?” In the back of her mind Marinette knows that this is a good thing, but the responsible side of her brain panics a little.

“Just for today, try to sleep. It’s Friday you have the weekend to catch up.” Her mom gently tells her. “I’m going to get you something warm to eat and a little more tea. If you fall asleep I’ll leave it on your desk okay?”

Marinette sleepily nods. Her parents go down the stairs and leave the trap door open. Tikki’s head peeks up towards her.

Very softly the kwami whispers. “How are you?”

Marinette looks back at the door before answering. “I’m really tired.”

Her mom appears with some more tea and a gigantic plate full of sweets - that was obviously prepared by her father.

“Your dad went a little overboard with the food.” Her mom chuckles. “You should try to eat a little, but don’t force yourself no need to get sick. If you need anything just call us okay?”

“Yes mom. Thank you so much.”

“Of course honey.” Her mom kisses her forehead and leaves.

She eats in peace and quiet on her balcony. The sun is starting to appear over the buildings, but a few street lamps are still on. There are a few people on the streets, but most of Paris is still asleep. The night is turning into the day and it calms Marinette. It feels like the aftermath of something that she can’t explain, instead of the calm in the middle of the storm she felt hours ago.

The stress and anxiety over the last few days fades a little, it doesn’t disappear but it helps her calm down in that moment. Tikki stands right next to her not saying a word, but her presence feels warm and powerful. The Goddess of creation often emits a warm and protectiveness aura that calms and centers Marinette. Maybe it’s the miraculous in her ear, or maybe it’s just how Tikki is, either way it doesn’t matter.

When she goes back inside that warmth doesn’t fade, she feels at peace and finally falls asleep.

Chapter End Notes

Hello. Thank you for all the comments, kudos and bookmarks. This chapter addresses the more human problems in the Fic. It starts with Marinette fighting a crime that isn’t akuma related. It shows an inexperience she has that most people don’t realize. Not searching the suspect, and not knowing that she can press charges, when she is attack. It follows with the coffee shop episode, which was meant to showcase people becoming more aware that the heroes are overworked. It culminates in Marinette breaking down due to the pressure being too much for her. Her inability to stop being in battle mode it’s tragic. It’s not the happiest chapter, but it’s something that was a long time coming.

Over the next two weeks, probably next week (Friday or the weekend), the final chapter will be post here. Since we are in the middle of a pandemic, things may change. Be safe, be smart, and be kind.
Again thank you for reading this. Beware the mistakes and be nice in the comments.
Blood Wolf
One Week- Part 4

Chapter Summary

How easy it is to cross unspoken lines. Ladybug and Chat Noir deal with an asshole. Marinette and Adrien have a nice talk. Relaxing is always a must.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Saturday.

19 days after the reveal. Protest

Yesterday Marinette ended up sleeping for the entire morning. She woke up during lunch time starving, which was something she probably shouldn’t have told her parents. Her mom literally made a meal that was enough for six people. Alya, Nino and Adrien had showed up during their lunch break to check on her and ate with them. Or more exactly her mother made sure her friends ate with them and didn’t take no for an answer. It was a miracle no one went home with leftovers.

Alya spoke about Ladybug going into a coffee shop before an akuma attack, but didn’t go into full fan girl mode. Nino and Adrien told her what she missed in classes, which wasn’t much. Alya informed her parents that she would drop by the homework, after seeing Marinette nearly falling asleep on a plate of macaroons. Alya also told her she couldn’t stay because of the protest against Hawk Moth the following day (today). Apparently there were a lot of things that need to be done.

Today she woke up bright and early. Usually on the weekends she would try to sleep in, but yesterday she slept for most of the day and she needed to check on how the protest. The structures, what the people were planning to do, ideas on how to evacuate civilians and more. She texted Chat Noir telling him, they would patrol today but it would be at the protest.

Marinette had hoped that the first patrol they did with the new schedule and new arrangements would be a calmer ordeal, but they couldn’t ignore the protest, especially when it could cause a lot of akumas. On the plus side the citizens would see them working with the police, which could only be a good thing. It might even calm those groups that believed the measures taken by those in power were too soft.

The protest was schedule to start at 3pm and would go well into the night. It had morphed into something more than an anti-Hawk Moth and Mayura thing. It would have workshops of calming techniques and positive coping mechanisms. A few places had workshops where people would share with an audience their akumatized experiences, what happen, how it wasn’t their fault, and how to accept that.

The police spent the day telling people where to arrive. A lot of streets were closed to traffic and public transports like the subway would work on special schedules to deal with the exceptional foot traffic. There were specials on how to calm themselves and not rail up people, turning them into akumas. The police had put up a map of possible evacuations points in case of akumas, and warn the public to keep calm.
A few groups were there to protest the lack of political responsibility and how the situation was handled, which worried Marinette a little. It was the exact type of thing that Hawk Moth would use to make akumas. It also told Marinette that although things mostly went their way, not everybody was happy how this was handled and wanted more action. Those groups had special places to go with strong police presence.

There was a lot of backlash against that decision, because a lot of people felt like they were being discriminated for what they were protesting and how their protests would be handled. The Chief Commissar told them that they were the groups most likely to get akumatized, and the police had to take precautions for the safety of everybody.

It sparked a debate on how far the Police and the government had the right to intervene on people’s right to protest. Everybody was going to a protest. Emotions were going to run high no matter the place. Why were the people that disagreed with the actions taken by the government the ones that were censored? The protest was meant to be peaceful. They were protesting a terrorist that used emotions to magically turn upset people into akumas, people knew that would need to stay calm.

Did the police force really believe that they wanted to get akumatized? Why were they the group with the most chances of getting akumatized? Some people ended up going further and asking the ethics behind policing someone because they believed that individual had a higher change of getting akumatized. Where was the line? What proof did they have that some individuals/groups had more chances of turning into akumas?

It was a mess and Marinette was sure that it would be a hot topic for the days to come.

Hawk Moth didn’t attack again on Friday, which didn’t really surprise her since Mr. Pigeon usually showed up when Hawk Moth was running low on potential akumas. Or he could be waiting for the protest today to raise an army of akumas. Mayura also might make an appearance. It could turn into an absolute disaster.

Still Marinette doesn’t want to alarm people or tell them what they can and can’t do, that means she and Chat didn’t give out statements about the protest. There is a lot of speculation about them showing up, even if it’s just to watch the protest. She and Chat Noir would be there for the most of it, depending on how long it would last they could possibly have to start taking turns or shifts. They haven’t exactly made a plan for this, it will be more of a wait and see situation.

Her class wanted to meet at some point, but due to the amount of people who were going and the fact that not everybody could meet at the same time, nothing was set in stone. Alya and Nino are going to be there before the start of the protest, Adrien wasn’t sure he could be there. Marinette had told her classmates that her parents might need help, - which was true there were a lot of orders for today - and would probably be there later in the day.

Speaking of parents Marinette was heading down the stairs to have lunch, after finishing her homework and catching up with the missing classes. Tikki had helped her, and was making sure that Marinette kept busy and didn’t despair before the protest. When she started to obsess over the possible problems and situations that might occur, the little kwami would distract her or point out just how insane of a scenario she had come up with. All the scenarios that could spell disaster were making her head hurt.

“Mom? Dad?” She calls out as she goes down the stairs. Her parents were so busy they might not have time to eat with her.

“Marinette are you feeling better?” Her mom asks, while her dad sets the table.
“Much better.” She smiles at her parents. “I had a goodnight’s sleep and feel a lot less stress. Plus, I just finish my homework.”

“That’s fantastic honey.” Her dad replies. “You’re still going to the protest?”

“Yes, but I don’t know if I will be able to find Alya. She is doing a lot of things for the Ladyblog so she’s already there. With that many people there it might be tricky to meet up… I guess it will depend on how it goes.”

“We are going to swing by later. We’ll close the shop and take the subway. Keep your phone charge and text us if something happens…” Her dad starts to ramble out advice while her mom just smiles at her.

“Dad, don’t worry. I’ll be careful and I’m going to try to go find my friends at the protest. It might just take a while.”

“Did you see the exits advice to take in case of an akuma?”

“I have it on my phone. Dad relax things will be fine. If there is an akuma I’ll text you and hide.”

A part of her wants to laugh at how freaked out her dad is at the thought of her being too close to an akuma. The other wants to cry at how hurt her dad would be if he knew just how close she has been to akumas. Her usual solution is to smile and deflect the subject, that way she doesn’t have to think about it. Also she can’t take the guilt over keeping this from her parents.

Will she ever stop feeling like that? Even after they defeat Hawk Moth and Mayura and she goes back to being a normal teenager, will the guilt over lying to her parents fade?

‘Do you think defeating the big bad will be the solution to your problems?’ the dark voice whispers. ‘Will you ever be normal again?’

She ignores it with an old ease and practice. It shouldn’t be that easy to run away from ourselves, but sometimes the only thing that keeps us sane is doing exactly that. She is not ready to face certain truths about her situation and as long as those truths don’t actively affect her. She will keep ignoring them.

It’s not healthy and she accepts that. This entire situation is not ideal. She works with what she has and hopes for the best. Tikki makes sure she doesn’t drown in her responsibilities and Chat Noir makes sure she is never alone.

Her kwami makes sure every single day she has someone that knows the truth; that can coach her; that reminds her other Ladybugs also struggled with problems. Tikki makes sure she doesn’t spiral, and helps her grow. She is almost like the angel on her shoulder versus Marinette’s dark inner voice.

Chat Noir is the one that keeps her going. He is the one that understands her on a human level, the one that fights besides her and keeps her sane during the battles. His lame puns told at the worst possible moments are (occasionally) a source of comfort when the battles are just too hard. He is her counterpart. Even when he doesn’t say a word, his presence is comforting, he keeps her grounded and she hopes she does the same for him.

Looking back to her parents, who where the ones that usually kept her grounded and made her feel safe, she feels deeply sad. When she was little her parents made her feel safe, protected, like she could take on the world and if she failed, it would be alright. The creativity, the drive to be better and the hard work all came because of her parents and their encouragement.
Her parents are the reason Ladybug is the person that she is. She wasn’t always Ladybug, but she was always Marinette and the values they taught her are the reason that her superhero persona is successful. Yet, they can never know just how much they have shaped her. How by raising her, the way they did she became a hero. Would it make them proud or break their hearts? Would they tell her if the truth hurt them?

Marinette doesn’t think she could be honest about all that has happen. She hates lies, but sometimes the truth is too hard to talk about. All the hours she lost, all the battles fought, all the problems that her double life caused, all the panic attacks, all the sleepless nights, everything she suffered…How could she bear to tell them? Could she be that cruel? No. It might be the coward’s way out, but Marinette doesn’t think she could ever tell her parents all that happen.

The rest of the lunch with her parents is a quick affair since they have to go back to reopen the shop. Marinette spends half of the meal haunted by dark thoughts and regrets.

“I think I’m going to have to be detransformed for most of parade…won’t I?” She asks Tikki while washing the dishes.

The kwami sighs. “Probably…but I don’t think that is a bad thing…I mean people are expecting to see you and Chat. They wouldn’t be pleased if you spent over ten hours basically patrolling the protest after a week full off akumas. One of the most…protest points is the overwork of underage heroes. Doing exactly that the day there is a protest…even if they aren’t protesting you…it would be a bad idea.”

“After the last weeks it won’t be a good idea.” Marinette takes a deep breath. “We don’t have a plan yet. Maybe we should patrol for a couple hours…like our new patrol schedule two hours on the weekend. It might be better to show up in the beginning and then disappear. The public will know we are around, but since we aren’t transformed…we aren’t technically working.”

“Exactly and if something happens Ladybug will show up. It will give you time to spend with your friends and family. I saw some interesting events happening.”

That’s Tikki way of making sure she doesn’t spend all of the protest working. It’s hilarious that the original protest was only meant to last a couple hours. It was a march against Hawk Moth and Mayura, and to show the heroes support. Now is an entire day event with dozens of family friendly events spread out through the streets of Paris.

“I’ll ask Chat. He might want to keep patrolling for a little bit more. I mean we technically haven’t patrol for over two weeks. If it wasn’t for the insane number of akumas of last week, he might have hit the streets after the press conference.”

“He must be tired. You got enough sleep yesterday, but Chat…”

“-is probably sleep deprived.” Marinette finishes the sentence. “I’ll ask him to meet me at the top of school to see what he wants to do.”

The kwami nods in approval.

…

14:30

She had arrived a few minutes ago and was sitting behind an air vent on top of her school, making sure that if anyone looked up they wouldn’t spot her.
“Good evening, my lady.” Chat purrs as he lands.

“Hi Chaton. How are you?”

“Feline chatty.” He says while sitting right next to her. She knows immediately that he’s lying.

He looks like he normally does, an over energized kitten that is ready to take on the world and drive her up the wall with ill timed puns. Under that he looks tired. Chat Noir is usually always moving a part of his body - occasionally it’s just his tail or ears - but he’s never really still. Currently his tail is around the waist and his ears aren’t twitching. He doesn’t look as bad as she expected - he probably had a good night’s sleep - but you can see he hasn’t been sleeping well.

Ladybug sighs. “I talked with my kwami and we decided that spending all of the protest patrolling would be a colossal bad idea.”

Chat tries to disguise his relief, but it’s still clear as day. “Yeah…that would be bad…Do you have a plan?”

“Yeah. We patrol for the first two hours of the protest…like if we were doing our normal schedule for today. Before we start patrolling, we find a cop and tell them we are going to be around, but not all the time…”

Chat interrupts. “Like we are going to be around in our civilian forms or do shifts?”

“The first one. If there is an akuma we have to transform…no doubt, but if there is none we stay detransformed. We should take advantage of our patrol to map out possible troubled spots and places to transform.”

Chat Noir nods and looks pleased. “Good. I’m going to meet some friends at the protest, I wasn’t sure if I could see them or not…on weekends I…don’t always get the opportunity to meet up with friends, but today my…normal life is on hold…I don’t have anything schedule for today…it’s rare."

Marinette almost wants to ask, but Chat is being vague on purpose. It could be something that could expose his identity and he’s being careful. “I get it. I have plans with my friends, but so far I’ve keep them vague.”

Chat tittles his head to the side looking remarkably like a cat. “Should we patrol for the first two hours or later on?”

“The first two hours. I think that people seeing us there will be good.”

Chat Noir nods and gets up. “I think we should get going. We still have to find a random cop before the protest.”

He offers his hand and lifts her up with ease.

They head out towards the protest, running on the rooftops. A lot of civilians going in the direction of the protest spot them. The little kids wave and scream in happiness. The teenagers and young adults take out there phones to check if there are any akuma attacks, when they don’t see anything they just start to take pictures of them. The older adults look at them with a bittersweet expression, one of understanding and sadness. They have accepted that there is nothing they can do. It makes most of them sad. It’s funny how you can clearly see the difference of opinions that plagued the early debate of their ages.
Marinette remembers think that the best outcome possible would be a reluctant acceptation by the public. That’s exactly what has happen and it feels odd. The way most adults look at them with pity and a need to help them, the way that some people divert their eyes from them and look at the ground with shame. It makes her heart ache. She knew this would not be easy, whatever outcome would come from this reveal would not be sunshine and roses.

Still, she didn’t quite anticipate how hard it would be facing the fallout. It makes her wonder about the fallout from defeating Hawk Moth. It will be different from this situation, but the truth is sometimes a bitter pill to take. Hawk Moths and Mayuras fall will be complicated and will leave lasting impressions on Parisians. Their defeat will not solve every complication that has arisen from their appearance, but the people will move on and learn to cope. It doesn’t mean it will be an easy process.

“My Lady?”

She turns to Chat. “Yes?”

He points at a small police barricade in front of a station. It’s not the one they went when they talk with the police, but it’s about the same size. It’s perfect.

She nods back at Chat and they jump into the street. An officer runs inside probably calling a higher up to inform them, but the rest just smiles at them. Some civilians take pictures of them and a few kids wave at them.

When they get close to the barricade the cops open a barrier to let them through.

Ladybug shakes her head. “Hi. There is no need for that we won’t be long.”

“My Lady is right. We just wanted to inform you that we’ll be patrolling for the next couple of hours.” Chat adds.

“We figured that.” A deep voice comes out from behind the officers. They step aside to reveal Commissar Durant.

Marinette is surprised at seeing him here, since most of the Commissars are at headquarters organizing every cop in the city. The amount of people on the streets, plus the risk of emotions running high has the police on high alert.

“Hello Commissar…” She trails off not knowing what to say.

“Ladybug. Chat Noir welcome. We would like to ask you to come inside. We have a few tactics and plans for the protest that could be useful for you.”

She and Chat look at each other and have a silence conversation. The police hasn’t ask to talk with them since the press conference, and they are still waiting back to hear from Captain Proust about the Hawk Moth and Mayura investigation. It’s unexpected but today is an exceptional day.

“Alright, but we can’t…”

Commissar Durant holds out a hand and interrupts her. “It won’t be long. We just want to show you some spots that might be troubled and some places that might become overcrowded.”

She looks at Chat Noir. He smirks and nods.

“Alright.” The cops let them pass inside the barrier. Commissar Durant motions for them to follow
Durant clears his voice. “The reason you’re here is to inform us that you would be patrolling… correct?”

“Paw-sitive.” Chat Noir answers immediately. “We’re going to head up for the Champ de Mars and start form there.”

“Are you going to patrol for the entire protest?”

Ladybug answers. “Just a couple hours, though we’ll be close by in case of an akuma attack.”

“That’s good. There was some…fear you might try to patrol for the entirety of the protest. We are predicting the protest to end a little after two am in some places… you patrolling for that long…”

Ladybug interrupts. “Might put people on the edge?”

Durant looks at her. “It would also be extremely exhausting for the two of you. You had a hell of a week from what I heard.”

Marinette gets the feeling is not just talking about Hawk Moth’s one man campaign to akumatize as many people possible. Does he know about the thief? She looks at Chat Noir - who was furious when he heard about the incident - he looks at the Commissar with a pondering look.

“Yeah. Hawk Moth has been particularly annoying this week.”

Chat pipes in. “He’s been drawn to making akumas like they are the last flame on planet.”

Ladybug suppresses a groan at the pun. “We did consider doing the entire protest, but that might backfire…in more ways than one.”

Commissar Durant just nods and opens a door. Inside there are a lot of cops, computers and maps of the city, it’s a command center. They step inside and all eyes turn to them.

“Hi. How are you feline this afternoon?” Chat puns at them. A few chuckles can be heard across the room, and thankfully so can a few groans.

Commissar Durant looks at his men and women. “Ladybug and Chat Noir are here so we can show them some strategic points on the city that could be beneficial in case of an attack.”

The cops in the room nod at Durant and go back to work.

He motions at a big map on the right wall of the room. “Here this is a map of the city. We divided the main command centers into four points.” He points at four stars on the map. “Each is run by a Commissar. The Chief Commissar is with the mayor at city hall.”

He pulls out a laser to show them other points, but Marinette stops him. “Maybe a pointer would be a better idea.” She looks at Chat Noir from the corner of her eye.

“Oh come on. That was one time and I was hit by an akuma.” He protests looking like a grumpy cat.

She turns to the Commissar. He already has a pointer in his hand and he’s looking at them with an amused expression. Chat Noir sighs dramatically, but nods.

“Here are six points that will probably be overcrowded for most of the day.” He points at a few
spots. “Here are a few that have a higher risk of akumatization.”

“What are the bases for the increase risk?” Ladybug asks.

“Anger. This spots here are the people who are protesting how the situation was handled, the more vocal groups and the bigger ones.” He points at a couple of circles on the map. “Here are the ones that oppose Hawk Moth and have some people with violent tendencies on recorded.”

“You should cut the last group.” Chat intervenes.

“Why?”

Ladybug answers. “We have a theory...this is not confirmed but we think that Hawk Moth doesn’t akumatize people who are angry at him. At least he has never done it and most people get blind rage at Hawk Moth and Mayura at least once. Since he doesn’t akumatize anyone we think…”

“That he is reluctant to akumatize people that could turn on him. Doesn’t he control the people?”

“A few can resist him, but it’s near impossible. He can call them back by deakumatizing the person. I think it’s more like a risk assessment of the situation. Akumatizing someone takes time and energy, it makes no sense to akumatize someone that might become an obstacle to his goal. He can akumatize them it’s just not worth it if they might fight him.”

Commissar Durant nods at them in agreement, which makes Marinette think they might not be the only ones that have notice the pattern. “I understand. There have been some people wondering about the subject… Anyway I’ll communicate what you told us to Headquarters. We’ll still signal it as a dangerous spot… Hawk Moth might risk it with the amount of people on the streets. Still we’ll pull back a bit and focuses on other points.”

Marinette remembers the debate over the way that the police was handling this and wonders what the citizens would think about how the police have organized this. She focuses back on the map and immediately files a few spots that they will be able to transform and meet up, plus places where she could run to, when she’s with friends.

Durant finished showing them the map and asks them if they have any questions.

“No. We’re good. We’ll check out the places that you showed us.”

Chat adds. “Maybe chat a little with the people.”

Commissar Durant nods. “If you need anything ask any officer you see. They will help you.”

A cop runs up to them. “Commissar, Ladybug, Chat Noir the Chief Commissar is on the phone wondering if you might swing by City Hall to have a talk?”

What? She looks back at Chat Noir and Commissar Durant. Both have an annoyed expression on their face, Chat’s she gets - he is probably feeling the same thing as her - but Commissar Durant reaction confuses her for a second. Then it hits her, no one knew that they were coming here, Commissar Durant asked to speak with them so he could help them. The Chief Commissar got word that they were here - which could have come from civilian photos or cops informing him - and interrupts the conversation. He doesn’t seem to like being interrupted by his boss on trivial matters.

“What does he want?” She decides to see if it’s something important before rejecting.
The cop looks pleased at being the one to deliver the message to them. Marinette gets the feeling he personally informed the Chief Commissar. “He just wanted to see how you were doing…”

“We’re fine.” She interrupts. “We won’t have time to speak today, and we have been really busy.” Meaning leave us alone, we’ve dealt with enough of this crap for the entire year.

The cop looks scandalized at them. He looks at Durant who is looking back at the map keeping busy. “But…I mean the Mayor and the Chief Commissar would appreciate if you showed up.”

“Today we can’t. We need to start patrol. We are busy with personal things later on.” She replies bluntly. “If they need to talk with us, they need to wait.”

“But it’s your duty…your job…”

“Not their jobs.” Commissar Durant interrupts bluntly. “The Police and the City don’t employ underage people.”

The entire room goes silent probably thinking about their unconfirmed and highly debated Child Soldier status. The cop turns pale realizing what he just implied and drops the argument.

“Ladybug, Chat Noir that is all. The precinct you picked will eventually inform you of a good time to talk with the detectives in charge of Hawk Moth and Mayura investigations. Until then stay safe.”

“Thank you.” They replied at the same time.

They say their goodbyes and head for the exit. Marinette thinks back on how Alya described the Commissar. A man of few words that only speaks when he has something to say. Her friend’s perception of the man was spot on. The few times he spoke where straight to the point, he listens to them when they were talking about the Hawk Moth theory. He told them the information would be considered and would adjust the plans.

He didn’t ask them for any help with the protest and looked happy when they inform him that they wouldn’t patrol for long. That last part confirmed the impression she had on the man being one of the cops that didn’t want them patrolling at all.

Outside of that cop barging in to try to get them to City Hall, things went fine. She liked Commissar Durant’s reaction to the cop, and got the feeling the man would be task with unsavory jobs for a while.

She thinks the Chief Commissar didn’t actually want to talk with them about anything important. It was more the gesture of them appearing at City Hall to talk with him and the Mayor, which appealed to him. It was a political move, Marinette thinks the man isn’t expecting them to show up it was more of a let’s-try sort of thing.

They jump back on the roofs and start running in the direction of the Champ de Mars.

“That didn’t take long…” Chat comments. “Not counting that cop it went well.”

“Yes, and I saw a few spots that could come in handy. We should stop by a few of the… most dangerous points and see how things are going. If they are… tense we jump into the crowd and talk with them for a while.”

“Yeah I was thinking the same my lady.”
They patrol for close to an hour, checking several of the spots that the Commissar had pointed out to them. She and Chat had severally underestimating the ground they had to cover. If they had not gone into the station and be shown the spots of higher tension they would have easily had to patrol for another hour and a half besides the two hours scheduled. Those 15 minutes had been worth gold.

They had already checked the most ‘tense’ spots and things were going well, plus people seemed to relax when they saw them. Chat had posted a video online telling the public, they would patrol for a while to check on things, he didn’t say the exact amount of time but implied they wouldn’t spent hours out here. It calmed a lot of people and had the effect of not stressing out the people protesting.

They had just left the Louvre and were coming up near the Tuileries Gardens where one of the most stressful protests was. It was a group protesting the way the government dealt with the issue. They were part of a group that didn’t believe that private citizens should have access to dangerous weapons. They believe that the heroes should have turned their miraculous over to the authorities after their first appearance.

The group had always been there but they aren’t a lot of them, so they are easily ignored. Since their ages have come out the group gain a few members, but they are still a pretty small, less than 250 official members and not all were confirmed to attend the protest. The only reason they had been considered a point of tension was due to the fact that Hawk Moth usually took great pride in finding the most obstinate people in Paris and turning them into superpower monsters.

There was another reason why this group was considered such a risk. Another group that supported the superheroes had been clashing with them for the last few weeks. When the first group announced that they would do the protest near the gardens the other one schedule their protest near the garden. Technically they would be in different places but Marinette was willing to bet a week of coffee cups that they were screaming at each other.

She was right when they arrived the police was trying to keep the peace between the two groups. They were shouting at each other and the tensions were escalating to a point that an akuma might be already on its way.

Chat Noir whistle upon seeing the scene. “I think we have to stay here, by the looks of things we’ll soon need a butterfly net.”

“Let’s see if we can calm things down.” She whistles loudly to the crowd gaining their attention.

“Citizens calm down. What’s the problem?”

“The problem is that they are toddlers running around with weapons and the government is giving them illegal benefits.” A rude high voice replied.

“I can assure I haven’t been a toddler in over a decade…”

Before Chat can start aggravating the man - which she gets the guy is an asshole - she intervenes. “We don’t have any benefits, and we aren’t children. We understand that you might be angry…at certain situations but that’s not our fault.”

“You are vigilantes that have rights given illegally by the Mayor. The police should be trying to take your weapons away, not help you keep them.”
Chat Noir bristles next to her and she has to take a deep breath to calm down. “We have explained why we were chosen. We find the police’s work to be commendable and honorable, yet they are not the best option to use a miraculous…”

“THAT IS BULLSHIT. You just want the power and attention that comes from being Ladybug. I bet that’s a lie. Hey guys I have an idea let’s go to city hall and do a hunger strike until they make the babies give up their miraculous.” Is this guy Hawk Moth’s cousin or something like that?

The cops look done, the other group looks done and they are so done with this idiot. She feels Chat Noir stifle by her side and she feels furious with the man’s words. They touch a deep part of her. The part that is afraid that she’s never doing enough that she has already failed. No matter what they do they’ll still lose. After all they sacrificed for this city…they just…try to cast them aside. The dark part of Marinette is raging.

Before she can reply back an old woman hits the man on the back of the neck with a black umbrella. “You good for nothing little ape. This is what happens when your parents don’t raise you to think for yourself.”

He rubs his neck. “Grandma that’s not true.”

Marinette almost chokes on her spit when the man calls the lady grandma. Chat Noir looks ready to burst out laughing.

The woman snorts. “You literally just repeated the words that have been shouted for the last hour. Fun fact shouting louder will not make the words any truer no matter what you think. And that go hungry talk…I bet my house you would be eating a burger before the night sets in. The only thing you and your stupid little group might achieved today is turning yourself or someone else into an akuma you moronic child.”

The elderly lady turns out to be right. The man turns red, then purple, then red again, and then someone screams. Ladybug turns to see a purple butterfly going for the man and thanks her lucky stars at being at the right place at the right moment. She catches the akuma cm (inches) away from the man.

An officer that had been observing the scene - trying to contain the situation - lets out a deep breath. “It’s time to disperse people.”

“We have a right to be here.” A man next to the would-be akuma victim - who was looking ill - decided to argue some more, because an almost akuma wasn’t enough…they should go for an actual akuma.

Marinette whistles loudly before anyone can come up with something else. “Alright here is how this is going down. You all are going to calm down so that Hawk Moth doesn’t send out another butterfly to turn someone else into an akuma. You’re going to follow the police instructions to disperse because this has been going on long enough. You’re going to calm down and keep yourselves collected. The Louvre has a special exposition about different types of meditations and some places are teaching meditation techniques. I suggest that you all attend them.”

She looks at Chat and sees if he wants to add something else. “I would like to remind you that this is a protest against Hawk Moth and Mayura. If you get akumatized protesting the man and woman you are missing the point. You’ll only help them. Your group wants us to give the miraculous to the government because you believe they would be in better hands correct?”

A lot of them slowly nod. Chat Noir continues uncharacteristically serious. “I disagree with that,
but it’s not important. Every time we fight an akuma there is a small risk that Hawk Moth might win, which is something that I assume your group doesn’t want.”

They shake their heads. “Purr-fect. So let’s keep ourselves calm. There is no need to turn into akuma for you to be heard. So disperse for a while and relax. I’m sure you can come back later if you have calmed down. Let’s keep the protest akuma free.”

She smiles proudly at her partner. There are a lot of cameras pointed at her and Chat, and there is no way there isn’t an army of reporters and police coming here. She hopes that people seeing the videos will think twice about letting situations escalate during the protest.

She leaves to purify the akuma and let Tikki recharge, even if she hasn’t use the Lucky Charm. After that she truly needs to breathe and relax, and a kind word from her kwami might help her calm down.

Tikki just nods at her short explanation. “Were there anymore incidents?"

“A few places had high tensions, but appearing on a spot usually calmed down everybody… that last place was different.”

“They were protesting Ladybug, Chat Noir, the Mayor and the cops. The other places were protesting Hawk Moth and Mayura, and although some were protesting how this was handled… they weren’t angry with you or Chat Noir. I don’t think you need to worry about the situation repeating…you’ve seen almost all of the groups and only one was…problematic. Finish the patrol and go meet with your friends.”

“Shouldn’t we recheck the other spots they might..?"

Tikki interrupts. “No, the police can handle that. If there aren’t any problems on the other spots, there is no need to go look for trouble.”

“I know.” Marinette sighs. “We should go. I don’t want Chat to think I ditch him. Spots on.”

Chat is waiting for her. He had kept watch while she spoke with Tikki. “My kwami doesn’t think that we should recheck the spots where we’ve been.”

“What do you think?”

“I think she is right, back there it was just a few people aggravating the conflict. If we are going to look for a few people in a sea of thousands…”

“We’ll never finish patrol.” He finishes for her.

“Exactly, I think we should just finish patrol and go. We got lucky in finding a spot where an akuma was headed. The chances of that happening again aren’t great. The police have dispersed the groups from the park, which will reduce the chances of akumatization. How many spots are left?”

“There are just three spots left to check and they aren’t far away from each other.”

“Great I don’t want to deal with any more…guys like that.”

Chat Noir looks at her like a cat that ate the canary. “My lady?” he asks in a singing voice.

“What Chaton?”
“How hard was it to contain your laughter when his grandma hit him with the umbrella?”

She snickers at the memory. “I think it was harder to contain my laughter when I realized that his grandma was reaping him a new one. It was hilarious.”

“I think we should give that lady a miraculous…at least people would stop asking us if we have anyone older than thirty on the team.”

She laughs. The man was a class-A asshole, but his grandmother was awesome. Chat couldn’t contain himself and spent the rest of patrol making jokes and puns at the man expense.

Tikki was right for the rest of patrol they didn’t have a problem with anyone. It was calm and they finish patrol at around 5:30, which is great considering that they had a small hiccup.

They parted ways and promise to meet up on Monday to resume patrol. Chat didn’t even put up a fuss over skipping Sunday, he really needs to rest. Marinette gets the feeling that he didn’t get a free day like she had yesterday, and this week has been challenging.

Checking her phone she sees a few messages from her friends and her parents. Texting her parents telling them she’s fine and going to meet up with Alya. She calls her best friend.

It rings for less than a second. “Girl, where have you been?”

“I went to the Louvre to check out the expositions with meditation techniques, but that thing on the Tuileries Gardens made a lot of people show up. By the time I got there the place was crawling with people and I just decided to quit.” That wasn’t a lie she detransformed near the Louvre to see if the groups had taken her advice, but there were too many people, even more that on a regular day.

“Did you see the videos? That guy was a major jackass. His grandma rocked though.”

“I did. Where are you? I want to see if we can meet up.”

“I’m with Nino, Alix, Max, Kim and we’re waiting for Adrien near the Alexandre III bridge on your side of the river.”

“Ok. I’ll be there in a bit.” She turns off her phone and runs to meet up her friends. She needs to unwind from the patrol. It wasn’t that bad, she was expecting way worse results, more stress and more akumatizations. One near miss is a good result in the middle of a protest.

The recording of the near miss has had a positive influence on the behavior of the crowd. She has seen people calming themselves down when they are getting worked up about an issue. The media is asking people to keep calm and showing the incident nonstop. Using the footage as proof that Hawk Moth is just waiting for the right moment to ruin the protest.

The police have informed the public that if they turn violent or start to get too railed up they will be asked to disperse and calm down or go home. They don’t want a never ending stream of akumas or a big battle. For the most part the public agrees and there haven’t been a lot of backlash for trying to disperse crowds. She wonders what would have happen if the public hadn’t see an almost akumatization on video? Would they still be somewhat understanding? Or would they have been an akuma already?

She is so distracted by her thoughts that she trips on a stone and falls. Strong arms wrap around her keeping her from eating the sidewalk.
“Marinette are you okay?”

It’s Adrien. That wonderful boy just saved her.

“Yes angle…I mean angel…NO…I’m fine…just clumsy.” Behind him is Gorilla - Adrien’s body guard - she waves at him. He nods at her.

Adrien smiles. “That’s good. You’re meeting the class by the bridge right?”

She nods not trusting her tongue.

“Me too. It took a while to leave home…my father is upset that the protest is interfering with possible business.”

“You had modeling today?” Is not the best sentence, but at least the words are making sense.

“No, I have a free weekend because of the protest. A lot of photographs are taking the weekend to get some pictures of the protest. My father wasn’t happy about that, but he let it go. I did get more sleep in the morning than I usually do, but Nathalie woke me up at around ten. Tomorrow I still have fencing, but I have the rest of the day free.”

“What are you going to do with a free day?”

Adrien scratches the back of his neck. “I don’t know. Father told me that I had to stay home, so I have to figure out something …probably catch on some sleeping…my week has been a little…over scheduled.”

“As someone that had to stay home yesterday to catch on sleep I can say that would be the right choice. Enjoy today and sleep tomorrow. By the way how long can you stay today?”

Adrien smiles brightly. “Longer than usual. I have to be home by 10.”

She smiles back at him. “That’s great.”

They fall into a comfort silence that is extremely rare for them. Marinette doesn’t babble as much as she did when she first meet Adrien and it’s a lot more comfortable around him, especially after the first few sentences are out of the way. He became a good friend of her, and even though she wants to be more than that. His friendship means the world to her.

They are half way there when a group of pre-scholars goes running pass them and startle Marinette out of her thoughts. She avoids accidentally hitting any kid, but falls into the ground.

Adrien immediately helps her back to her feet. “Are you okay?”

“I’m fine. I just had my head in the clouds.” She smiles. “You know…I’m just a spaced out sort of girl.”

Adrien looks at her like he doesn’t believe that. “I’ve notice you been…more distracted lately. Yesterday…You didn’t look good.”

“I couldn’t sleep.” She blurts out a half truth. “I mean…I did have a busy week with…some commissions. But I was doing alright up to that point…and then…I just could not sleep.”

“You were doing alright!? On what planet? Since when is suffering through three weeks of what could only be called an anxiety festival, alright?” A voice in the back of her head asks perplexed.
Adrien looks like he understands what she is trying to transmit which makes feel worse. She doesn’t want to think that Adrien’s schedule is as bad as her own. She is Ladybug for goodness sake.

He gives her with a soft look. “I know you are always busy with commissions, school projects and a million other things but…you got to take care of yourself…”

“I think you have a worse schedule than me.” She blurrs out interrupting him.

“W-what?” He looks nervous for a second.

“You have school, fencing, Chinese lessons, martial arts, modeling, and whatever other thing your father can squeeze in your schedule. I’m busy but you are overworked.”

He relaxes. “I guess it’s a good thing I have a free day tomorrow?” He tries to joke.

She snorts. “You need more free days. The city shouldn’t have to throw a massive protest for you to get some sleep.”

Behind them Gorilla grunts in a way that almost sounds like he agrees with her.

“I guess…” He scratches his neck again. “I just like to be busy…the house gets sort of lonely sometimes.”

Marinette’s heart hurts and she feels a hatred for Gabriel Agreste that oddly enough reminds her of her hate for Hawk Moth. “You are never alone. You have me.” Her brain catches on what she just said and she blurrs out. “And Alya, Nino, Kagami…”

He gives a brilliant smile. “I get it. I have friends.”

Marinette could never know how such a simple sentence could have such a deep meaning for Adrien. They smile at each other.

“MARINETTE. ADRIEN.”

They look at Kim who is shouting their names and waving a flag. She and Adrien look at each other confused. Her friends are next to Kim. She, Adrien and Gorilla make their way towards them.

“Hey dude. Hey dudette. Took you long enough.” Nino and Adrien do some type of handshake.

“Girl, you founded Adrien?” Alya wiggles her eyebrows.

She goes red and replies. “He prevented me from falling face first on the side walk…well on the first fall.”

Her friends laugh. She notices that Nathaniel and Marc are also there.


“You mean the flag?” Ask Adrien.

Kim proudly shows it up. The flag is printed ad for Moth extermination with a few things added. It has a spray can killing a Moth that has purple x on the eyes. A Ladybug and a Black Cat holding the spray can with gas masks, and the small print says it might also work on peacocks. Adrien and Marinette burst out laughing.
Marinette has to wipe a tear when she finally calms down. “Oh…Kim I think that might be the best flag I’ve seen so far. 20/10 for creativity.”

Kim grins looking proud. “I didn’t do it alone, Alix and Nathaniel helped.”

Nathaniel turns red with the complement but looks pleased, Alix just smirks.

“There is a drawing competition in a comic book shop going on the other side of the street. There might be more flags and paintings like that. Want to come?” Marc asks.

An entire competition of making cartoon versions of Hawk Moth in bizarre and ridiculous situations sounds amazing. “That sounds perfect.”

Marinette gives her friends an ‘I’m trying to be innocent’ smile.

Alya looks at her. “Girl? What are you planning?”

“Nothing…I’m just wondering…Is the competition close?”

Nath looks at her and she swears his eyes twinkle. “Oh, no. It’s open until 8, after the people can vote on their favorite. I was thinking of drawing something else I’m just not sure what to draw yet.”

Marinette’s smile turns wicked. “I have a few ideas…Do you want to team up? I’m good at designing but my drawing is still not where I need it.”

Alya snorts. “I’ve seen you doodle literal art work in your textbooks, but sure…You still need to improve.”

Marc smiles next to Nath. “He’s the same way. Anything he draws could always be better.”

Max fixes his glasses. “Statistically speaking artists are some of the most perfectionist people in the world. There are artists that have tried to destroy their work, because they don’t believe its good enough.”

Adrien laughs. “I think in the fashion world that’s even truer. I mean look at Marinette she does amazing work and I’ve seen her rip out pages from her notebook because she doesn’t like them. Most of them are beautiful.”

Marinette just whispers gibberish in reply. She is better at talking with Adrien but receiving compliments is another story.

“Are we going to the comic book shop?” Nino asks.

“Yeah, I wanted to check out the Louvre expositions, but Marinette told us there are a lot of people. The place is overcrowded.” Alya replies.

Alix snorts. “The place is overcrowded on a normal day. After Ladybug told the asshole group to go there and take the stick out of their asses, the Louvre is basically impossible to visit. Between the people who took her advice, the police and the media the place is packed to the brink. My dad texted me, saying that he is going to stay late and try to help organize stuff.”

“Is the exposition only for today?” Adrien asks.

“No. It’s a monthly exposition. It starts today, but with the protest people are trying to cram in there.”
Nath frowns. “That might cause an akuma.”

“Doubt it. The Louvre hired employees to do meditation sessions in a bunch of places. The lines are being told that due to inflate of people there might not be an opportunity to see it, but they can come back tomorrow. There is also entertainment for people waiting there - music, art and movies for anyone that might become agitated. My dad told me that they are super prepared.” Alix replies.

“Great. I wanted to check it out for the Ladyblog, but I don’t think it will be worth it. I’ll do a special later.”

They arrive at the store it’s not at full capacity but it’s nearly full.

A woman in her early twenties shows up, she has a printed vest on her. “Hello. Do you need help?”

“We wanted to participate in the contest.” Nath says.

The girl laughs. “Hi Nath. That’s a popular request today. Just you?”

“No. Marinette and I will be a team. Are there any rules about what we can draw?”

“The theme is the protest against Hawk Moth and Mayura. It has to be related to the theme, for example you can draw the heroes but there must be a reference towards the villains. You can draw with any type of materials. It has a minimal size of 11x14 and a max size of 18x24. We have some examples if you want to see or buy canvas. You can also use cloth or some type of fabric. Nothing offensive or explicit will be allowed. You can use mockery towards the villains, but no explicit stuff.”

“Has that happen a lot?” A disturbed looking Max asks.

The employee looks just as disturbed. “More than we would like.” She shivers. “Anyway things like that flag you’re holding are fine. Just don’t try to draw porn, especially about the underage superheroes. You have to submit the drawing until 8pm. We are putting the drawings there” She points at a half filled wall “and on the store’s Instagram. You can vote here or there from 8pm until midnight. The results are posted online tomorrow morning.”

“Do you have any prizes?” Alya asks.

“Yes. First place gains a coupon for 100 Euros for the store and five graphic novels at the winner’s choice. Second place has a coupon for 50 Euros and a couple of graphic novels. Third place has a coupon for 25 Euros and one graphic novel. Between forth place and tenth you get a 10 Euros coupon. The first ten also have the option to sell their work at the gallery across the street.”

“Hi. I’m the Alya Césaire aka the Ladyblogger. Can I put this contest on my blog? Can I do a small interview?” Alya bombards the employee.

The girl goes pale but she doesn’t look overwhelmed. “You have to ask my boss. I only work here part-time, but I think he’ll say yes.”

Her voice is a little high when she answers, but she doesn’t look troubled by the questions. Yet, she is a little nervous. She looks at Nath and Marc who look like they are trying not to laugh, is the girl a follower of the Ladyblog?

“Hey guys Rose, Juleka, Ivan and Mylene are coming.” Kim yells and distracts Marinette from her thoughts.
“Marinette should we start?” Nath asks.

Marinette beams at her friends. “Absolutely. I have a few ideas.”

She and Nath start brainstorming ideas. Kim, Alix and Marc keep adding ideas and it’s not long before they have a plan for what to do. They probably wouldn’t win the contest, but her classmates are confident that they will place in the top ten. The stress from patrol and the fears she had due to the protest fades a little. As her friends keep coming and helping them she let’s herself fall into easy conversations and let’s her creativity flow.

Marinette knows that the next few hours she is going to be tense, just like her birthday. Jumping at loud sounds, every text she gets might be an akuma attack, trying to find quick exits spots or places to transform. She won’t fully relax, a good night’s sleep and a stress free afternoon doesn’t cure anxiety. Her mental issues - she refuses to acknowledge them as problems - are still here.

They more or less fixed the problem with their age, but the rest remains. The theory, the akuma and the problems that arose make the past two weeks feel like an overly long akuma battle. A problem occurs and they had to fix it, in the long run it won’t help them win the war, but it’s one less obstacle. They didn’t win the war, but they didn’t lose the battle. They live to fight another day. Tomorrow there will be another battle, but it will get them closer to their objective - defeat Hawk Moth.

But that is tomorrow’s fight. Right now she just wants to be happy, to laugh with her school mates, her friends and trip over her words because the boy she likes smiled at her. She wants to be Marinette Dupain-Cheng, Ladybug can wait a while. So she takes a deep breath and for a second all her pains fade with the sound of laughter and happiness.

Chapter End Notes

Hello. Thank you for all the comments, kudos and bookmarks.
It’s the end… but hopefully the journey has been a good one. When I started this Fic the plan was for it to have a sort of open ending. This was due to two things. First a lot of the psychological problems that this story addresses are difficult to solve, without therapy. Since I decided against doing an identity and a HM reveal, Ladybug and Chat Noir couldn’t truly work on cause of their problems. It would be a little like this FIC, one problem appears and it’s about fixing it, but not the overall cause.
The second one is the main plot of the story that I’m exploring was how the miraculous society would react to a situation like this. It was exploring how these issues are very delicate and hard to address in a satisfying way. There is a lot of Ethical Dilemmas throughout the fic - some of you have asked me about them in the comments - and it’s hard to deal with them. The open ending helps addressing that.
The heroes have an ending, but is it good enough? Should the people in charge have done more? Should the adults in their lives? All those questions matter.
For the future I’ll still be working on this fandom. The next fic in the miraculous fandom (I’ll be working on others) is going to be a one shot companion to this with Adrien’s POV in chapter 4 and a bit of chapter 5. I have another two fics in the fandom plan, but only Adriens is actually half-way written.
So for know I leave you here. I hope you enjoyed the ride and this different take on an age reveal.
Be safe, be smart, and be kind.
Again thank you for reading this. Beware the mistakes and be nice in the comments.

Blood Wolf

End Notes

Hello, first fic. I'm deslexic, so if you see any mistakes, just let me know.
I won't update that much, at least once a month, because I am an extremely slow writer. I finished all my fics, so don't worry. I have other miraculous fics that I will put here, but not before I finish Growing pains.
I have another two chapters of this fic complete, and a third started. However I'll stick to the schedule mention above.
This will probably have 5-7 Chapters.
Thank you for reading, be nice in the comments.
Blood Wolf

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!