Wherever I Go

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Summary

Marinette accidentally gives her class the impression that she has a crush on Chat Noir.

Adrien decides it's time to get over Ladybug.

Notes

i have no idea what im doing
Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

in which marinette Messes Up™

Marinette panted as she rushed up the stairs. She silently urged her legs onward, wishing she had Ladybug’s speed and endurance all of the time. She flung open the door and rushed to her seat, relieved to see that class hadn’t started yet. However, her relief dissipated rather quickly at the sight of her entire class huddled around her table.

Marinette narrowed her eyes. If Chloe just stuck more gum on my seat.... She grumbled inwardly, but she soon realized that they were crowded around Alya’s side of the table, not hers. “Marinette, you have got to see this!” Alya squealed, glowing. There was only one thing that got her excited like that…

“–the Ladyblog! They are so in love!” The redhead ushered her friend over and pushed the phone in her face. It was a picture of Ladybug and Chat Noir atop one of Paris’ many buildings. The moon cast a glow over their hero suits and faces, and their legs hung over the sides of the roof. Ladybug’s eyes were looking straight off into the distance, the moonlight reflecting in her eyes. Chat Noir, however, was staring at her, as though she were the moon herself. The expression of pure adoration and emotion made Marinette’s stomach go in knots.

She pushed the phone away. “Nice picture,” she said, reaching down to unpack her bag. She knew, however, that the two simple words wouldn’t be enough to get out of an entire conversation over this.

Alya folded her arms. “‘Nice picture?’ Girl, did you see the way that he was looking at her? Oh my God, I will die if they don’t date!” She grinned and passed her phone to Adrien. “Don’t you agree, Adrien? Totally made for each other,” Alya crowed, zooming in on Chat’s starstruck expression. Adrien grinned, making Marinette frown. Ugh, he agrees?

She thought sourly, watching his face light up as he stared. I thought he at least would see right through Chat’s flirting!

“Yeah, they are,” he said, smiling at her as he handed her the phone again. Marinette noticed with a jolt that he’d been blushing. Adrien? Blushing? What was going on?

Rose tapped Marinette on the shoulder, looking just as enchanted with the picture as everyone else. “Why don’t you like them together, Marinette?” She asked, evidently concerned. Marinette sighed. How could she even begin to explain? Chat’s feelings for her were nothing more than a silly crush. Most likely not even that.

“They’re just partners,” she said, looking around at the class. “If they started, um, dating, it’d mess that up. They need to focus on their missions, not on each other. Besides, how do you know they’re made for each other?” She spoke defiantly, but no one seemed swayed. In fact, most of her classmates were exchanging meaningful looks.

“What?” Marinette asked defensively. Even Alya was fighting back a small smile.

It was Max who spoke. “Well, it seems like you’re making quite an effort to keep Ladybug and Chat
Noir away from each other. Which begs the question, do you have a crush on Chat Noir?"

A spluttering noise, but it didn’t come from Marinette. Wheeling around, she saw Adrien red-faced. “What?” She said indignantly, turning to face Max again. “I’m not—” “Do you really have a crush on Chat Noir?”

She turned again to see Adrien, who appeared to have regained some of his composure. Now it was Marinette’s turn to splutter, but he silenced her with his next words. “Because that’s awesome if you do! I totally get it! He’s so cool and really brave! And didn’t he save your life once?” So, naturally, all she could say was, “Oh! Um, yeah! Yeah, he’s great!”

And with that, the whole school decided that she had a crush on Chat Noir.

The bell rung before she could further try to defend herself, but Alya was scribbling her a note as soon as the lesson began.

*Girl, did you seriously just say to the entire class that you have a crush on Chat Noir??????*

Marinette slumped in her seat, her pen hovering above the paper before she responded.

*Maybe?*

Alya rolled her eyes, crumpling the note and stuffing it into her backpack. “You’re hopeless!” She lamented. “Absolutely hopeless.”

Marinette grimaced. “How am I going to get out of this?” She groaned.

Alya drummed her fingers against the tabletop before responding. “Don’t worry, girl,” she said finally. She tossed a wink Marinette's way, then bent to take notes on water molecules.

Adrien had a new spring in his step when he threw his designer bookbag on his chair and jumped onto his bed.

“Ouch!” Plagg yelped, disentangling himself from Adrien’s earbuds. “That hurt! I will, however, forgive you if you get me some camembert.” He opened his black mouth wide and pointed to it. “Just toss it in here.”

Adrien waved him away. He wondered idly if all kwamis were like Plagg-- that is, lazy and unhelpful. Then he wondered suddenly if Ladybug had a kwami. He smiled, imagining her bickering with her own Plagg, but his thoughts eventually drifted back to Marinette’s outburst before science. He told Plagg so, but the cat only rolled his eyes and flopped beside Adrien on the bed.

“Yeah, yeah. So what? You’re a model! Aren’t girls supposed to like you? How come you never like this over Chloe?” His voice was teasing.


Adrien continued, “Everyone likes me when I’m Adrien! But no one likes Chat Noir. I’m always expected to act a certain way as Adrien. There are certain things I can and can’t say. But I feel more free when I’m Chat. Does that make sense?” He turned to face Plagg, hoping that the kwami could prove useful for once in his life and actually give some helpful advice. However, he was met with a long, loud snore.
Adrien stood and pulled idly on the joystick of one of his many arcade games. Even though Plagg hadn’t listened, he still felt better after speaking his thoughts. He was about to begin playing the game when a snide voice said, “Are you done with all the sappy love stuff? And can I finally have my cheese? I feel faint! How would you feel if I died?”

“T’m not giving you camembert until you help me out,” Adrien said, pulling the joystick again. It made a satisfying click as it moved back into place.

The small black cat groaned frustratedly. “Fine, whatever. Now, I’m going to be honest: I didn’t hear a word you said. However, I suggest some cheese. Cheese fixes all of your problems!” He spun in circles around Adrien’s head, but the blonde deftly caught him and held him in his palm.

“I said, what should I do, Plagg?” Then it occurred to him how bizarre this was, asking Plagg for advice. “Never mind,” he muttered, letting the kwami drop to the floor.

“I still have no idea what this is about,” Plagg said cheerfully, flying onto Adrien’s shoulder. “But I personally hate these lovey-dovey conversations about Ladybug, and another girl in the mix is going to make my life even harder. I can’t imagine! Hearing about two girls.” He shuddered. “So just call Nino, and let me sleep!” He huffed loudly and a second later was curled up on Adrien’s pillow, snoring again. Adrien rolled his eyes and placed Plagg in his breast pocket.

For once, he was right.

It was time to visit Nino.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

aka the chapter where nino is the whole fandom :')

Chapter Notes

still getting the hang of this but :^)
i love adrien/plagg interactions so get ready for a ton of them lol

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Dude! Hey! I’d say you could come in, except my house is kind of a major mess right now. Wanna chill at the park?”

Adrien grinned. Just the sight of Nino was enough to make all of his worries melt away. The two headed down the street to the park and eventually sat on the bench with the most shade. “What’s up?” Nino asked him, pushing his headphones off his ears. Adrien shrugged, not sure how best to word it. Nino’s mouth formed an O. “Is it your dad?” He asked in a low voice. Adrien shook his head, feeling his face heat up slightly. He never thought he’d be having this conversation with Nino. “No, it’s um… It’s a girl.”

“Whoa, seriously?” Nino said, reeling backwards. “My boy likes someone!” He shouted triumphantly, raising a fist. Adrien grimaced, grateful that no one was around to hear his friend’s announcement. “Yeah. Well, kind of.” Nino lowered his fist, the grin melting slightly. “Kind of?” Adrien sighed frustratedly. It would be very difficult to explain the full story to Nino without revealing that he was Chat Noir. So he began slowly and deliberately.

“There’s this girl,” he said, careful not to let her name slip out, “that I’ve liked for a long time, but she never liked me back.” Like is an understatement, he thought in spite of himself. He hastily pushed the thought away. “And now there’s this other girl… and she likes me. And, I mean, she’s cute. And I might like her back, a little bit. I don’t know. But I don’t want to use her to get over the other girl, either.” He smiled, the muscles feeling strained. “Sorry to dump this on you.”

Nino shook his head, his smile returning. “No sweat, man! I have a solution. Remember when I liked Marinette?” Adrien froze. He knows it's Marinette? Nino chuckled at Adrien’s face and continued, misinterpreting it. “Yeah, I know. It was pretty bad. But then Ladybug shut me up with Alya up in that dumb animal cage, and we really bonded! I wasn’t using her to get over Mari, but once I got to see how cool she was, it just happened!” His smile turned more meaningful, and he nudged Adrien’s ribs. “I mean, Marinette is pretty cool too…”

Adrien felt his worries clear a little more. Nino always knew how to cheer him up. “So,” his friend continued, dark eyes glinting mischievously, “who is this lucky girl?” And after a second’s hesitation, Adrien told him. Not Ladybug, because then he would seem like a crazed fanboy. But Marinette.
Nino’s eyes were incredulous. Adrien didn’t know what he expected him to do, but laughing wasn’t it. “Dude! Are you kidding me? Oh my God...” he buried his face in his hands, shoulders still shaking as he chortled. “What?” Adrien said defensively. “She’s really nice! God, even you had a crush on her! Stop laughing!” Nino shook his head emphatically, still chuckling. “No, man, it’s just that she’s liked you forever! Trust me, if you asked her out there is no way she’d say no. Go for it, bro!” He took a few deep breaths to calm himself. “Sorry, I’m not laughing at you. But you gotta trust me on this one. Marinette is obsessed with you!” Adrien was about to thank him-- Nino had helped, after all-- but his friend’s phone began buzzing.

“Sorry, dude, just a sec,” Nino said, rummaging through his pockets. “--Hey, sorry, babe. I’m with Adrien right now. Wait, what? Who’s screaming in the background? Al, I can’t understand anything you’re saying. Geez, is she okay? Uh, we’re at the park. Okay... Oh, by the way, I might’ve told Adrien about Marinette-- Yeesh!” Nino wrenched the phone away from his face. Adrien could hear the tinny screaming of girls ripping through the phone at Nino. "You trying to make me go deaf? No, he’s fine. In fact..." he tossed Adrien a sly smirk before continuing, "He’s better than fine. He’s like, super-fine." Nino wiggled his eyebrows. Adrien groaned. The last thing he needed was for everyone to find out about this. He wasn’t even sure if he liked Marinette; he just needed a break from thinking about Ladybug so constantly.

“Babe, I really need to go. We were having a deep man-to-man conversation. Yes, I saw your picture from this morning! Ask Marinette if she’s seen that picture of Chat shirtless that Nath drew--” he cringed and held the phone away from his ear again as more screaming erupted from it. “Calm down! I was kidding, I was kidding. Mostly. I gotta go.” He shoved his phone deep into his pocket again and grinned at Adrien. “You may be a model, but Chat Noir is hero of the city! And even I gotta say he looks good in leather…” Adrien rolled his eyes and pushed Nino playfully.

“Alright, I’ll take your advice. Should I ask her out?” Nino grinned. “No need to look so scared, dude. Trust me, there’s no way she’ll say no.”

Marinette was losing her voice.

“Girl, please calm down! Seriously, this isn’t that bad!” Alya shushed her. She pushed up her glasses. “Okay, you’re gonna sit here. On my bed.” She pointed, then guided Marinette to it. “And I’m gonna update the Ladyblog.” She gestured to her awaiting laptop. “And you’re gonna take deep breaths, and you’re gonna think, ‘I am the second best person in the whole world (after Ladybug) and I’m gonna get through this.’” Her tone was smooth, calm, soft-- as if she were speaking to Manon instead of Marinette. The latter groaned. “Oh, and drink water. You’re really losing your voice.” Alya’s normal voice was back. She spun around in her chair to face her laptop, keyed in her password, and fired up the Ladyblog. Of course, that picture of Ladybug and Chat Noir adorned the front page. Alya hummed as she edited it, expertly blurring the background to really focus on the two heroes. Just seeing Chat’s lovestruck face was enough to make Marinette scream into her friend’s pillow again. What have I done? I’ve totally ruined my chances with Adrien! He thinks I like Chat! Oh no oh no oh no oh no

Alya sighed dramatically, closing out of the picture. “Girl, get ahold of yourself! Okay, so you might’ve made a fool of yourself today. But so what? Nino told me some exciting news!” Marinette opened her eyes to see the redhead peering down at her, her eyes flashing excitedly. “Great,” she muttered hoarsely, burying her face again in another of Alya’s fuzzy pillows. Alya sighed and
wrenched it away. “Look at me, girl! Look at me! There is a big surprise for you tomorrow! A big Adrien-sized surprise!” She grinned, and Marinette hesitantly smiled back. “Now you can sit there and pout. Just let me update the Ladyblog.”

Marinette closed her eyes, occasionally hearing small clicks and the sound of fingers dancing across the keyboard. She imagined herself liking Chat Noir. Actually liking him. *He’s not that bad*, a tiny voice in her head whispered. *He’s not exactly unattractive, and he’s always so sweet and loyal…* Ugh, gross! *Was she* seriously thinking this way? Marinette scrunched up her nose in disgust. Alya caught the look. “What? The layout isn't that bad! You don't like the green and red hearts?”

“He’s not that bad, a tiny voice in her head whispered. *He’s not exactly unattractive, and he’s always so sweet and loyal…* Ugh, gross! *Was she* seriously thinking this way? Marinette scrunched up her nose in disgust. Alya caught the look. “What? The layout isn't that bad! You don't like the green and red hearts?”

“Huh?” She stared. The picture of her and Chat was littered with brightly colored hearts, each with white cursive writing inside. *Ladynoir. Ladynoir. Ladynoir.* “Alya! What the heck are those?” Marinette exploded, voice cracking at the end of the sentence. Alya winked. “Don’t worry!” She said, flapping her hand at Marinette in a *shoo* gesture.

“I'm not going to school tomorrow,” Marinette announced croakily, facing away from Alya. She felt a hand on her shoulder and looked up to see the redhead looking at her with such intensity that Marinette felt faint. She let out a stream of curses, half of which Marinette had never heard before, then--

“Marinette, I swear to God if you don't go to school tomorrow I won't speak to you for a month. This will be the best day of your life. Now please let me edit my Ladynoir pictures.” She pointed to her water bottles. “And drink those. You might want to have your voice tomorrow.” Then she smirked and added, “That is, if you're able to say anything.” With that, she turned on her heel and began repositioning the hearts around Chat’s face.

Marinette knew this was the end of the discussion, but she couldn't wait to see what tomorrow had in store.

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Adrien had never felt more stressed in his life. Even preparing for a world photo shoot was minor compared to this. A chem exam? Piece of cake. Getting the Talk from his cold father? Easy. But asking out a girl? Adrien was sweating heavily just thinking about it.

Plagg was retching in his room, apparently unable to stand the strong fumes of cologne pervading the bathroom. Adrien had put too much on today in his nervousness, then had showered twice to get rid of the lingering smell. He glanced unhappily at the pile of shirts on the floor-- which one would be perfect for today?-- and fingered more gel through his hair, trying to make one strand stay in place. He brushed his teeth for the third time and stared at his reflection: flushed cheeks, expression tense, and dressed in a plain black tee and jeans. (He didn't want to look as though he had dressed up for this.)

“You done?” Plagg called, whizzing into the bathroom. “Ooh, very snazzy! I'm sure Marinette will approve. Y’know, I'd been saying since day one that I thought you two would make a great c--”

“Aw, shut up,” Adrien retorted, though he could feel his lips quirking into a smile. He opened a tin of camembert for the kwami, who pounced on it immediately. “I hope this goes well…”

“What?” Plagg asked, disgusted. “I said, ‘practice on me’! I'll be Marinette.” Adrien nodded and cleared his throat. “Marinette, I like you. Will you go out with me? We could see a movie or something.” Plagg gave him a Cheshire grin, before fluttering his green eyes wide. “Huh? Oh, uh! I’d, yeah! Y-yes! Yes! Yes! I loooove you, Adrien!” The blonde batted Plagg away, trying to ignore his constant chatter. “I worship you!”
Adrien opened his jacket expectantly. Plagg gave an irritated moan before complying and burying himself in Adrien’s pocket. Then, with a final once-over and squaring of his shoulders, Adrien was ready. *After all,* he reasoned with himself as he climbed into the car and looked out at the window as the Gorilla drove, *How hard could this be?*

Alya shoved another water bottle towards Marinette. “Drink!”

Marinette laughed and shook her head. “My voice is back now! And stop taking my things,” she said, snatching her bag from the redhead’s hands. However, her response was teasing, as was Alya’s. “Oh, I’m a thief? At least I didn’t try to sneak into your room to delete pictures from your computer!” Marinette giggled. It was true. She’d tried several times to delete Alya’s picture, but it was as if that girl had eyes in the back of her head. “And,” Alya continued, “at least I’ve never stolen someone’s phone before! *Two* someones, actually—” She broke off, laughing. “It’s fine, girl. I’m thrilled for you!” She and Nino exchanged beaming looks, as though Marinette were their little girl who was finally growing up.

“Is this about Chat Noir again?” She asked, rolling her eyes. Nino chuckled into his fist, and opened his mouth as if to respond. However, the teacher walked in at that moment, and he swiveled to face forward again, leaving Marinette confused and suspicious. She stayed confused for the entire hour, staring absentmindedly at the back of Adrien’s beautiful head. He seemed more distracted than usual, passing notes under his desk to Nino, who had a perpetual smirk on his face that Alya mirrored next to her.

Marinette ripped a page from her notebook and scribbled a note to the redhead.

What’s going on??

Alya grinned innocently.

*You’ll see :)*

Marinette felt Tikki shift in her pocket and looked down. Even the little kwami had the same expression as Nino and Alya! Her periwinkle eyes twinkled and she looked excited beyond belief. Marinette was up as soon as the bell rang, but Nino and Alya left without her, heads bent in to each other and laughing. She shoved her notebooks back into her bag, then stood to throw her note to Alya in the trash, miffed that they’d left without her. But someone was blocking her path. Someone extremely handsome and, if his bright red cheeks were any indication, extremely nervous.

“W-what-- y-you’re--?” She managed to sputter intelligently. Adrien’s hand crept to the back of his neck, a nervous habit of his. “Hey, Marinette,” he said, and Marinette froze, the crumpled ball of paper still in her hand. *Am I making him nervous?*

“Uh--I’m, um, g-gonna, um--” she gestured wildly to the door, tripping over a pencil as she went. In an instant, she’d tumbled to the floor. “This is so embarrassing,” she grumbled, standing up and feeling her face flame in shame. “I’ll see you later,” she threw over her shoulder, practically running from the room.

Later that evening, as she flopped onto her bed and settled down for a much-needed rest before night patrol, she once again bemoaned her inability to speak around him. “I don’t get it, Tikki!” She sighed exasperatedly. Tikki giggled. “Adrien’s very nice, Marinette! I’m sure he doesn’t mind that you stammer.” Marinette bit her lip. Maybe he didn’t, but she sure did. “It doesn’t make sense, though! I can talk to literally everyone else just fine! Even, like, celebrities like Jagged Stone! But as soon as he looks at me with those gorgeous green eyes…” She sighed again, but this time it was more
dreamily. Tikki smiled knowingly. “...you’re a goner.” She finished. “Marinette, Adrien looked as though he were going to ask you something today after school! Maybe you should visit him tomorrow and ask him what it was!” Marinette immediately shot upright. “No, I can’t do that. Ugh, can you imagine?” She pictured herself tripping again, only even more dramatically and embarrassingly. She shuddered, and was about to continue speaking to her kwami when her phone buzzed. It was her alarm, reminding her that patrol started in five minutes. In a flash of pink light, she was swinging across the city to the meeting place.

Chapter End Notes

this ended up being rly long idk i didnt plan this
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

where ladybug finally realizes her partner is *fire emoji*

Chapter Notes

i made this short to balance out how long the last chapter was lol

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Eiffel Tower was too obvious. That’s what Ladybug had told Chat, at least, when he suggested it as their meeting place. So he leaned against the dilapidated building instead. It was dirty, but Ladybug was right: it was inconspicuous and no one would sneak up on them here. He heard footsteps now, light and soft on the roof. “My Lady?” He murmured without turning. Then he heard a rustle and she was sitting next to him. His legs dangled off the side of the roof; hers were crossed neatly in front of her. They were quiet for a moment, listening only to the buzz of traffic around them, but soon Ladybug broke the silence. “Should we head downtown more?” Chat swung his head to look at her intently. She seemed distracted, and much less like her usual self. Maybe some playful banter would help.

“That would be purrfect, my Lady,” he said, taking her hand in his. She tore it from his grasp. “Silly kitty,” she said, shaking her head and laughing. Her laugh was incredible. It lit up her entire face, brighter than the Eiffel Tower at night. There was the Ladybug he knew. She tossed her yoyo out into the darkness and swung away. Chat wasn’t far behind, leaping from building to building with the help of his staff. Eventually, they dropped down to the ground. No akuma in sight. Ladybug sighed. “Well, clearly there’s no point in being out here,” she said, and wound up to throw her yoyo again when-- “Wait!” Chat shouted suddenly. “I, uh… I don’t know, Chat.” She silently cursed— why couldn’t she speak around adorable, green-eyed, blonde boys? And then she froze, having located the problem.

Ladybug reeled. Her fingers caught at her yoyo, which she clutched in a too-tight grip. She felt as though her gut were being twisted, as if there were something in there trying to escape. Chat was watching her anxiously.

Of course, you idiot. He wants an answer. Ladybug hastily tried to compose her face into a mask of indifference. Oh, if only she could summon the derisive laugh she’d given only a minute ago! What is wrong with me? “I, uh… I don’t know, Chat.” She silently cursed— why couldn’t she speak around adorable, green-eyed, blonde boys? And then she froze, having located the problem.
Half of her wanted to vomit; the other was fluttering in glee. Oh, God. Her head was spinning. “My Lady?” Chat was hovering above her. “Uh, are you okay? You look--” Ladybug tossed her yoyo and flew away from him before he could finish his sentence.

A flash of pink light. She collapsed on her bed. Immediately, Tikki was in front of her. “This is okay, Marinette!” She soothed. “This almost always happens. The ladybug and cat miraculouses were meant to be together.” She pressed her tiny red arm onto Marinette’s finger. “It's really nothing to be upset about!”

Marinette slowly sat up. Her limbs felt like ice. “The only thing worse than the whole class thinking I have a crush on Chat Noir is actually having a crush on him!” She groaned, burying her face in her hands. Tikki tugged on one of her blankets, bringing it up to cover her body. “And why’s that?” She asked. Marinette had the feeling that the ancient bug had had this conversation many times before. “Because he’s-- he’s--” Marinette wildly gesticulated, making Tikki giggle. She zipped across the room to the door, tugging on it until it closed with a gentle click.

“You should get some sleep,” she whispered softly.

Marinette tossed and turned, but when she finally fell asleep she dreamed of blonde hair and green eyes.

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“Will you stop that?!?” Plagg hissed furiously. Adrien looked up. “Stop what?” He asked innocently. Plagg covered his eyes with his paws. “The pacing! The muttering! All of it!” He moaned. “Why did my chosen have to be a lunatic?”

“I just want to make sure that Ladybug’s okay,” Adrien shot back. “All you care about is your smelly cheese!” Plagg glared and protectively hugged his tin of camembert.

Adrien spun on his heel and continued to pace. What was up with her today? The stammering, her leaving without saying goodbye… He sighed. Maybe she had to go to the bathroom. Maybe she had some urgent business that her civilian self needed to tend to. Maybe she liked him. Adrien snorted. Right. Ladybug liked him. Then he remembered that he wasn't supposed to be thinking about Ladybug anymore, and hurriedly tried to think of something else, anything else… Nino. Nino would know what to do. Adrien fumbled for his phone, quickly dialing his best friend.

“Hey, Nino?”

“Mmfngm.”

“Nino?”

“Mnhghm.”

“Hello?”

Finally, a long, loud sigh. “Dude, it’s three in the morning. I'll talk to you t…” Nino’s voice trailed away and Adrien was met with the sound of something rustling and a deep snore. Adrien hung up. He tried to imagine what Nino would say, but all that came up were long streams of nonsensical phrases ending with the word “dude”. Adrien felt his eyelids eventually become heavy. He realized belatedly that he'd had homework, but there was no time to do it now...
Adrien tossed and turned, but when he finally fell asleep he dreamed of dark hair and blue eyes.

Chapter End Notes

YOUR COMMENTS ARE SO SWEET AWW I LOVE READING THEM
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

!!! finally

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

A long, boring day at school. That was what awaited Adrien. A day of Chloe aggressively flirting with him, of Nino drawing obscene things in his notebook, of watching the teachers point to the board and drone on and on about subjects Adrien couldn't care less about. Alya was home sick according to Nino, but the day would be as predictable as always. Adrien rounded the corner of the hallway and threw open the door, already knowing what would happen.

But seeing Nathanael sitting in Alya’s seat? Definitely. Not. Expected. Even less expected was how he leaned in a little too far to Marinette, his red hair swinging in front of his eyes as he pointed to something he'd drawn in his sketchbook. And how Marinette giggled and covered her mouth with her hand, a blush creeping across her face. What is it this time? Adrien wondered bitterly. Another picture of him saving Marinette as the Illustrator? He turned quickly to face forward. Nino nudged him and pointed to the crude drawing of a penis he'd doodled in Adrien’s notebook, grinning. Adrien faked a laugh and erased it. In reality, he didn't know what had him so angry.

Maybe that Marinette never laughs at your jokes, a snide voice in his head told him. It sounded remarkably like Plagg, but the kwami was fast asleep in Adrien’s backpack. Adrien couldn't resist. He slid his pencil into his bag and turned around.

“Sorry, can I borrow a pencil?” Nathanael abruptly shut his notebook and pulled it protectively away from Adrien. “Sure,” he said, reaching into his bag to get one. Marinette hadn't moved. She was apparently frozen, staring at Adrien with her mouth open. Her mouth worked for a moment. “Uh! A-Adrien! Hi! Hey! Um, how's it, um, going? Uh…” She looked down at her hands, which were fidgeting. Adrien debated for a moment, then took her hands and separated them, pressing her palms flat to the tabletop. Marinette’s eyes were so wide they looked like they'd pop out of her skull. “I, um, thanks!” She squeaked, turning her face quickly away from him. Adrien sighed. Nino was wrong. Marinette didn’t like him. If she did, she wouldn't always act so scared around him. But she likes Chat Noir, the voice in his head said again. Adrien faced forward again and tuned out the lesson on chemical compounds.

“Do you think he saw?” Marinette whispered to Nathanael, who shrugged. He flipped his sketchbook open again to reveal the drawings he’d made of Adrien. “Thanks so much, Nath,” Marinette whispered gratefully. He smiled and tore the page from the book, handing it to her. “Careful not to smudge those,” he said quietly, “those will be ruined if the graphite smears.” Marinette stared down at them.

Nathanael had captured Adrien’s gorgeous smile perfectly. She knew he'd given up on her months ago, and now claimed to have a crush on someone else, though he wouldn't say who. So she'd felt perfectly fine asking him for a drawing of her future husband.
...Well, future husband if she ever got around to asking him out. She missed Alya, but her friend had claimed that she had major scoop on Ladybug that she was determined to uncover. Marinette hoped she hadn't gotten pictures of her “moment” on patrol last night.

“Hey, Marinette!” She looked up to see Nino. “Oh! Hey, Nino,” she said, trying to hide Nathanael’s drawings from his line of sight. The smirk on his face told her she’d failed. “Nice drawings,” he remarked casually, pushing his hands into his pockets. She blushed, unsure of how to respond.

“So, my boy and I were going to work on that project together, but I noticed you were a little… distracted.” His eyes hovered meaningfully on the drawing, which Marinette pulled even closer to her. “So anyway, I took some pretty good notes and I was gonna help Alya catch up. So, you wouldn’t mind working with Adrien, would you?” His grin was so knowing that Marinette knew she didn't need to answer.

Her heart leapt. Doing a project with Adrien? This was purrfect. Marinette felt her heart stop for a moment. Perfect, she corrected herself. That’s what she’d meant. “I’m taking that as a yes,” Nino said, tugging his headphones back on his ears. He shuffled through his phone, and Marinette slipped past him out the door.

She looked back for only a moment to see Adrien looking crestfallen, but dismissed it. He probably wanted to work with Nino.

As soon as she was home, she rushed up the stairs and stared in horror at her room. Her pink walls were nearly completely plastered with posters and advertisements featuring the one and only Adrien Agreste. She taped the corners of Nathanael’s drawing and hung it up in some of the remaining free space.

“Um, Marinette?” Tikki began, perching on her chosen’s shoulder. “Shouldn’t you be taking these down?” Marinette pushed a stray lock of hair behind her ear and shook her head. “I would, but there’s no time! We’ll have to stay in the bakery. I can’t possibly take these all down so quickly… He’ll be here any m--”

With that, the doorbell rang. Marinette shrieked, shoved her kwami into her bag, and rushed down the stairs, tripping on the last one. She looked up from where she was sprawled inelegantly on the ground. The only spot of relief was that Adrien was so busy talking to her fawning parents that he hadn’t noticed her klutziness. Or else he was being polite and ignoring it, which was far more likely.

“Adrien! Yes, Marinette talks about you quite a bit! In fact, she--”

“Dad!” She began to pull Adrien away, but jumped and released him as soon as she realized what she was doing. *I’m touching him!*

“Why don’t you two head up to your room, Marinette?” Sabine asked, gesturing up the stairs. Marinette felt faint. “No! That’s um, a really bad idea! My room is, uh, really, um, messy. Yeah. We should stay here.” Adrien cocked his head to the side, evidently confused. “Uh, sure, Marinette! I don’t mind where we sit!”

Sabine, however, shook her head. “Marinette, the bakery is so busy at this time of day! Don’t you think your room would be a little quieter? A better working environment?”

After a short arguing session, the two headed off to the park. Adrien unpacked his bag. Marinette didn’t listen to a word he said, far too distracted by the adorable way he put his pencil behind his ear when his hands were busy. “So? What do you think?” He asked, smiling. “It looks really nice on you,” Marinette said dreamily. “What?” Adrien laughed, pulled the pencil out from behind his ear,
and opened his notebook to write. That is, he was clearly planning to write before Marinette caught sight of what was scribbled all over the paper. “Is that…?” She asked, staring. Adrien blushed. “Oh, yeah. That’s a penis. Nino drew it. He’s quite the artist, huh?” He laughed nervously.

Marinette blinked. She hadn’t been referring to the crude art in the margin of the paper, actually. “I meant, the-- the-- is that Ladybug?” Sure, the anatomy was a little off, but there was no mistaking her bangs and spotted suit. “What? Um, no! No, it’s not.” Adrien said, hurriedly flipping to the next page. Marinette noticed hearts inside, all adorned with LB. Who’s ‘LB’? She wondered, feeling a flame of jealousy ignite inside her. “Ladybug,” Adrien mumbled. Marinette felt her face flame, realizing she must have said the words aloud. Then she blushed deeper, realizing that she was Ladybug. Adrien had a crush on her. She felt a small smile creep onto her face, watching as Adrien searched in vain for a blank page to write on. Every one seemed to be adorned by a heart here, a ladybug there, and a pigtailed heroine every so often consuming an entire sheet.

“Maybe we should use your notebook for the project,” Adrien said, stuffing the incriminatory notebook back into his bag. Marinette opened her own bag and pulled out a spiral-bound pink notebook. She handed it to Adrien, who opened it and almost immediately pushed it back towards her.

“M-Maybe I should let you keep this,” he laughed, hand creeping up to the back of his neck. Marinette forced a smile. I didn’t give him the one with all of my fantasies with him, right? She took it back from him and flipped to a random page.

She had given him the one with all of her fantasies with him.

Colorful hearts doodled in gel pen jumped from every corner of every page. Pictures from his various modeling shoots were washi-taped in and adorned with little notes. “I WANT TO KISS HIM”, “ABS?? AAAA”, and “HE’S SO HOT” were some of the tamer ones. Marinette snapped the book shut as if doing so would somehow prevent Adrien from seeing it. She covered her face with her hands and clutched at her scalp with her fingertips. “You probably hate me now… Oh God, this is so embarrassing,” she mumbled, although through her palms she doubted he understood. But he did.

He placed a hand on her shoulder, and stared at her straight in the eyes. His were greener than the grass around them. Greener than anything she’d ever seen. Not greener than anything… she thought suddenly, thinking of another pair of equally green eyes with catlike slits for pupils. She silently reprimanded herself for thinking of Chat. Again. “Marinette, I don’t hate you at all!” He said emphatically.

The hand was still on her shoulder. His hand was warm and might have been comforting if it didn’t send sparks searing through her skin. “But…? But what? I’m such an idiot! She cursed herself. Writing all that sappy stuff and bringing it along with me...

“But… I want to be more than friends. So,” a deep breath, “would you like to go on a date with me?”
Her face turned pink, then red, then back to pink. Her blue eyes were huge and wide, even wider than they’d been earlier. He shifted slightly. Several minutes had passed and Marinette still hadn’t responded. He gently removed his hand from her shoulder and let it fall to his lap.

“She said softly, a huge smile growing on her face. “Yeah, I’d love that.”

They stood staring at each other, both apparently unsure of what to do. Then Adrien remembered they had a project to work on. The next few hours passed uneventfully. Marinette didn’t talk much, but instead squirmed in her seat and blushed and smiled whenever they established eye contact. However, they had a fairly successful project by the two hours, and Adrien was pleased with what they’d accomplished. Moreover, he was pleased with what he had accomplished. Nino was right. Marinette was exactly what he needed. She was pretty in a shy, unassuming way, and Adrien knew she was capable of being very funny and talkative when she was comfortable. Furthermore, she had some incredible clothing designs, according to Alya.

So I have a girlfriend, he thought, smiling as the realization hit him. He was sure his grin was as goofy as Marinette’s, who was twirling her pencil and smiling from ear to ear as she stared fixedly at the fountain. His phone buzzed and he looked away from her, but not before he noticed she had a small spatter of freckles that dusted gently across her nose. Now there’s something Ladybug doesn’t have.

His phone buzzed. Nathalie. He was late to his piano lesson. “I have to go to a piano lesson!” He told Marinette, rushing to pack his things while simultaneously trying to avoid squishing Plagg, who was in his bag somewhere. Marinette smiled. “It’s fine,” she replied.

Adrien was ecstatic that her stuttering had stopped. “I’ll… see you around, I guess,” he called over his shoulder. She nodded very fast. Adrien was scared she’d gotten whiplash. “Maybe we could get smoothies after school on Friday?” He added hopefully. Her face lit up. Adrien was painfully aware of how similar she looked to Ladybug the night before, when he had made a pun and she laughed. But he pushed the thought aside so he could deal with it later, and rushed into the awaiting car. Nathalie didn’t speak to him, but drove him home in silence. Home to his cold mansion.

Good thing Adrien didn’t plan on staying there long. In a few nights, he would be somewhere else.

As a morally upright guy, Adrien felt slightly apprehensive.

As a teenage boy, Chat Noir couldn’t wait.

Chapter End Notes

lol the plot twist w nath
An akuma was exactly what she’d needed to mar the best day of her life. That was sarcasm. Ladybug scowled as she swung through the streets of Paris, wondering bitterly whether she would ever have time to go on a date with Adrien. Because if Hawkmoth had his way, she wouldn’t. The akumatized villain hadn’t been particularly difficult, but it took away time she could have spent admiring her pictures of Adrien.

“What’s got you down, Bugaboo?” Chat teased, spinning his staff in wide, show-offy arcs. She sniffed. It was none of his business. “Nothing,” she answered shortly, alarmed to hear the word come out in a snarl. They dropped onto the roof of a building. Chat froze, then slowly lowered his staff.

He cocked his head to the side, his blonde locks gently swinging in front of the sides of his face. Ladybug tore her gaze away. The last thing she needed to be doing right now was thinking of sweeping those locks gently out of his eyes, of leaning in so their noses brushed, of reaching a hand up to cup his face and draw it closer to hers...

The next thing she knew, he was beside her, his head stooped to be on the same level as hers. “Doesn’t sound like ‘nothing’,” he pressed. She faced him again, and was met with the greenest eyes she had ever seen. His catlike pupils were wide and dark, and the iris was deep green. Her heart felt as though it were going to explode from her chest, and she took a step back. And tumbled.

In an instant, Chat’s powerful arms were around her body, lifting her up to safety. Ladybug’s face burned as he dropped her gently onto the ground. He smirked. “Falling for me, milady?” She snorted, but it didn’t come across as derisive as she’d hoped. He leaned in even farther, no doubt to flirt even more, but jerked backwards as soon as he heard the familiar beep.

“Oh, until tomorrow,” he said, with a sweeping bow. His ring was flashing too. “That is,” he added suddenly, leaning in again, “unless… we… you know…” he looked up at her hopefully. “You know I wouldn’t tell anyone.” Ladybug shook her head. No. Never. “It’s… better this way.” She said flatly, looking down at her scarlet feet. Chat’s ears drooped slightly. “As you wish, milady,” he murmured.

Their miraculouses beeped. Neither moved.
They beeped again, faster and more urgently.

Chat sighed deeply and ran off into the alley. Ladybug saw the green flash, but turned away from the silhouetted figure running away.

“I was so close!” Adrien groaned, waving his pencil in the air. Plagg cocked his head to the side, a gesture that Adrien had picked up without even noticing it. “I thought you were going to forget about Ladybug!” He said, rummaging through Adrien’s bag for cheese. Adrien ran a hand through his hair. “I know, I know. I’m working on it!” He waved his hand frustratedly, the pencil flying from his grasp. Plagg rolled in midair to avoid it. “You’re going to take my eye out with that thing!” He complained, throwing it back at Adrien, who caught it deftly. “And you have a girlfriend now! Forget about Ladybug.”

Adrien glared at his kwami, who glared back. Green and green. Finding that he had no response, Adrien huffed and returned to his math homework. But the numbers seemed to swim on the page and he couldn’t focus. He rubbed his eyes, erased an answer he was certain he’d done incorrectly, and, with a rueful smile, pulled out his notebook, the one that Marinette had seen earlier in the park. He rested on his stomach with his legs in the air, sketching. He didn’t even know what he was sketching. He was vaguely aware that he’d drawn eyes… eyebrows… a nose and grinning mouth...

He began to draw faster. A crude attempt at bangs, at dark pigtails… a neck sloping down from the face…

He stopped after he’d drawn the shoulders. The drawing looked like Ladybug. Well, as close as anything he drew would look like Ladybug. But… Adrien tilted his head. It also looked like Marinette. “You forgot the mask,” Plagg told him after tossing the notebook a glance. Adrien nodded and quickly drew it in. Now that looks more like Ladybug, he thought with satisfaction, drawing in her hair ribbons.

Then it hit him.

_I know why Marinette looks like Ladybug._

_Oh my God, I know why Marinette looks like Ladybug._

“Plagg!” Adrien exclaimed, dropping the pencil again in his excitement. “Yeah, Butter Fingers?” The kwami replied lazily, throwing it back to him again. “How didn’t I see this sooner?”

He stood and began to pace, his pajama pants swishing with every step he took. “Marinette is a Ladybug fan!”

Then he froze. Because Marinette wasn’t a Ladybug fan. In fact, she’d said pretty adamantly that Chat Noir shouldn’t date her. He told Plagg this, and the kwami moved his head from side to side, processing it.

“That’s so sad!” He said suddenly, rifling under Adrien’s pillow, presumably for cheese again. His bag must have been empty. “What?” The blonde replied, pulling a tin from on top of his closet. There was silence for a moment as Plagg scarfed down the camembert inside.

“Marinette must not have very much confidence,” he explained, already on the lookout for more food. Adrien rolled his eyes. _Marinette? Why wouldn’t she? She’s cute, she’s nice, and she’s very creative!”_ Plagg shook his head. “Clearly she’s trying to copy Ladybug!”

Adrien’s mouth formed an O, drawing the connection between the superheroine and the schoolgirl.
That probably explained the attraction he felt to both of them. He related to Marinette in a way. He assumed it was a teenager thing, to not have self confidence.

Adrien turned off his light and climbed into bed. He tried to plan his excuse for not completing his homework, but soon his eyelids felt heavier and heavier. With a soft sigh, Adrien fell asleep.

“Look at that! Poor Marinette doesn’t have a seat.”

Marinette’s hands balled into fists. Her eyes narrowed furiously at the blonde girl before her. Chloe’s mouth was quirked in a mocking smile, but her eyes were scathing as she continued. “Guess you shouldn’t have sat with Nathanael, huh?”

Nathanael’s face turned as red as his hair as the whole class turned to look at him.

“Hmm…” Chloe made a show of scanning the room, then laughed cruelly. “Doesn’t look like you have a seat…”

Marinette glared at Kim, who was sitting in her usual spot by Alya. He looked down, avoiding her gaze. She next glared at Max, who was in Alya’s usual seat, then spun around to glare at Chloe.

Marinette was beyond words. Her hands clenched and unclenched angrily at her sides, her breath coming in short pants. Then--

“Hey, Marinette, sit by me!” Adrien.

Marinette’s heart was beating so quickly she thought she might pass out. “Wow! Um, I, uh, yeah! Haha…” She skirted around Chloe, who looked ready to murder her, and watched as Adrien brought a chair out from the hallway, letting her sit between him and Nino. She had to be dreaming. She was sitting next to Adrien Agreste, who was smiling hesitantly at her.

“Th-thanks,” she said gratefully, hating her stutter. Chloe made a noise of disgust and flounced to her own seat. She leaned into Sabrina and whispered something furiously to the redhead, who gave Marinette a dirty look. But for now, she didn’t care. She could barely concentrate when the lesson began, and found her fingers itching to get back to writing “MARINETTE AGRESTE” in her notebook.

Not while he’s here, you idiot! She thought, panicking as she imagined how creeped out he’d be if he saw. If he thought the things he saw yesterday were bad… Yikes.

Nino’s head was bent and he was texting frantically beneath the table, his fingers flying across the keyboard. As the teacher came by to inspect their notes so far, he quickly flipped his phone over, then motioned for Marinette’s notebook when she’d passed. He tore a sheet from it, then began to scribble her a note.

Alya’s sick today. For real ;/

Marinette sighed, then pulled out another notebook. She didn’t look forward to taking twice as many notes. However, with a shake of his head, Nino pushed the notebook back into her bag.

Don’t worry!!! I got it ;)

He pointed to his own notes, where he’d copied everything. It’ll be a wonder if Alya can even read that! Marinette thought, staring at the small, spiky handwriting. She glanced to her right. Adrien’s handwriting was much smoother, almost cursive.
Thanks!!!! Are you sure she’s actually sick, or is this Ladyblog business again?

Nino’s answer was immediate.

Sick. But don’t worry, she’s pumped about you and Adrien.

Marinette blushed and looked down at her lap.

The next few weeks passed with ease. Marinette and Adrien received an A on their project, Hawkmoth kept a surprisingly low profile, and the weather was beautiful and sunny. Alya was now sitting with Nino and Adrien regularly sat with Marinette. She’d opened up more to him and he could now way that, without a shadow of a doubt, he really liked her. They’d even gone on a few dates, all of which had been extremely fun.

He’d taken her a few times to his house. Nathalie barely spoke to her besides polite necessities, but his father… well, he had been enchanted with Marinette. He showed her several of Adrien’s most recent shoots, and oohed and ahhed over her book of fashion designs. He even suggested that she send some of them to him so he could develop a clothing line from it. Adrien had to admit, he was a little jealous. Fifteen years of trying and his father had never acted so welcoming to him. But he was also proud of her. Yeah, that’s my girlfriend, he felt like telling the world. My girlfriend made those incredible designs. My girlfriend is capable of getting the unfriendliest man alive to like her.

Spring break was approaching. The weather was now especially warm, and the students often found themselves lounging outside the school and eating ice cream whenever class ended. Today, Nino was especially excited because he had plans to go to Spain for a week with his family. Alya was thrilled and asked him to send pictures if Spain had their own superheroes.

Adrien was thrilled too, but for other reasons. The weather was warm enough that windows were left open at night in order to let the cool night air in. Which meant it was time for his plan. He hadn’t spoken to Marinette about her crush on Chat Noir, but he hadn’t forgotten what had drawn him to her in the first place. He intended to find out tonight if she still had those feelings.

“Why are you smiling like that?” Marinette asked him now, shielding her eyes against the blazing sun. Adrien shrugged nonchalantly. “No reason,” he lied, leaning a little closer to her. He felt warm inside every time he did this, because she blushed whenever he did it. Her stammering had gotten much better, but she never ceased to blush whenever he was close to her, and Adrien adored it. Nino passed him a frosted cookie, all of which Marinette had decorated. She had brought several with her to the park, since the bakery had had extras from the day before.

Adrien inspected his closely before eating it and assuring her that it was delicious. It was black with green polka dots on it. He smiled.

Yeah, tonight was going to be fun.

Chapter End Notes

yeah i know show-offy isn’t a word leave me alone

the plan is actually a terrible plan
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

wink

Chapter Notes

this is a rollercoaster

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I will not doing anything weird today. I will not do anything weird today. I will not d--”

“Marinette? What are you doing?”

Marinette sighed. She was standing in front of her mirror, hands on hips, reciting the mantra over and over. Tikki giggled. “Oh my goodness, is this about Chat?”

Marinette turned redder than her kwami. “What? No! Pfft.” She folded her arms angrily, then let up. “Okay, yeah,” she admitted, plopping onto her chair.

Tikki flitted onto her shoulder. “Marinette, don’t fight this! I told you, this almost always happens. You know, if you like Chat, maybe you should break up with Adrien.” Marinette closed her eyes so hard she saw stars. “I can’t, Tikki. I really, really like Adrien. But I also like Chat. I guess the good thing is that he doesn’t like me, right?” She gave a humorless laugh. It was true. On patrol earlier that evening, Chat told her that he had a girlfriend and that she was fantastic. And she was happy for him. But sorry for herself.

She’d finished her homework hours ago, and her plan was to work on some designs before going to bed. In a few minutes, she’d forgotten all about Adrien and Chat. “Which shade of red, Tikki?” She asked the kwami, showing her the two colors. “They look the same, Marinette!” Tikki giggled. Marinette rolled her eyes and chose the darker shade, zooming in on the dress and tapping it to color it red.

“And which shade of green, Tikki?” She asked, but her kwami was slowly drifting off. Marinette smiled and was about to decide for herself when--

“I’d say the lighter shade, Princess.”

Marinette screamed. That was definitely not Tikki’s voice. In fact, it sounded more like…

Marinette slowly turned. There he was, leaned against her window frame, his hair fanning gently across his face in the breeze.

“Chat Noir, what are you doing in my room?” She demanded furiously, turning off her tablet. Chat shrugged, then let himself in, sitting on her bed. “Do you usually let yourself in to random people’s houses? That’s called breaking and entering, by the way,” she added, watching as he stretched.
He glanced at her walls. “Interesting,” he commented. Marinette assumed he meant the posters of Adrien. “Friend of yours?” His green eyes glinted. Marinette stammered, “Um, y-yeah.” Great, so I’m stammering around Chat Noir now? She wanted to kick herself.

Chat was watching her interestingly, and Marinette found herself watching him back. It was strangely comfortable. The dimness of the lights in her room, the hum of the cars buzzing in the streets below them, the pattering of rain outside…

The pattering of rain outside? Marinette rushed up from the bed and shut her window. Thankfully, nothing had been damaged. Chat’s eyes were wide. “Thanks, Princess!” He said. “It would’ve been clawful if I’d gotten wet. Cats don’t like water, you see.”

Marinette gave him a strained smile. It was 10:43 and she had school tomorrow. “Yeah, anytime.”

Chat leaned in a little more. “So, since it’s raining… And it’s so nice and warm in here…” He was practically on her lap. Marinette couldn’t breathe.

“…can I stay for a bit? Just a bit, I promise.”

Marinette was a goner.

An hour later, the rain hadn’t let up. Rather, it had worsened. Lightning and thunder struck outside. And she was rubbing Chat behind the ears, listening to him purr. Distantly, Marinette knew what they were doing passed a boundary. They were lying in her bed, after all, and Chat’s face was buried in her neck, purrs emanating from him.

But it’s wet outside, she reasoned. He can’t go out in this; he’ll get sick. So they stayed like that, even after Chat’s breathing deepened and his body went limp. Within minutes, Marinette was sound asleep beneath him.

Oh no.

Chat blinked a few times to help himself wake up and looked at the sight beneath him. Marinette, fast asleep, her chest rising and falling as she breathed. She shifted slightly, made a noise of content, then her blue eyes opened, focusing on him. She frowned, blushed, then quickly sat up. “Oh, Chat, I’m so sorry! I’ll let you go.” She ducked her head shyly. Chat felt the strange urge to kiss her.

She gently pushed him off of her, hurried to where her phone was charging, and yelped when she saw the time. “I’m going to be late to school! Chat, I’m really sorry, you need to go.” She was like Ladybug in that moment: no nonsense. Chat really wanted to kiss her.

But instead, he opened her window and climbed out of it. “Goodbye, Princess,” he called. He thoroughly enjoyed the blush that got out of her.

Overwhelmed by confusing thoughts, Marinette decided to spend some time in the bakery to clear her head. Something about kneading dough and icing pastries always seemed to cheer her up. So here she was, with the task of icing five batches of cookies fresh out of the oven. She worked mindlessly, letting her hands work without paying any real attention to what she was doing.

“Everything okay, Marinette?” Her mother called, poking her head into the room.

“Yeah, it’s fine!” She answered, stepping back to let her see what she’d done. Sabine took one look at the cookies, then placed both hands on Marinette’s shoulders, steering her away from them.
“Maybe you should rest for a bit in your room,” she advised, smiling kindly. Marinette turned back and paled. Each cookie was black and green. Some had swirls, others stripes, and some were even decorated with “CN” in bright green sprinkles. She looked down at her hands, both of which were splattered with green frosting. “That sounds like a good idea,” she said dazedly.

Sabine slipped past her into the room to clean up the mess. “In fact, you should get some sleep!” She continued, opening a box to put the cookies in. “It's getting pretty dark out!”

Marinette nodded silently and trailed upstairs to her room. She flicked on her lights--

Chat Noir flashed her a Cheshire grin.

“You have got to be kidding me,” Marinette fumed, hating the way her face turned red and she felt a warm tingly sensation all through her body. In an instant, Chat was in front of her, green eyes mischievous. “You mean kitten me,” he corrected. He leaned in even further. Marinette could even see his eyelashes.

Oh my God.

Is he going to…

Is he going to…

He was. He was leaning in further and further and--

And Marinette took a step back. “I can't,” she mumbled, so quietly she could barely hear it. Chat’s fingers twitched at his sides. “Why not?”

She blinked. Every fiber in her being was saying to kiss him. I can still do it, she thought, leaning forward slightly.

Every fiber, except one. I'm dating Adrien!

“I'm dating someone, Chat,” she sighed. He bit his lip, looking mildly irritated. But then he blinked and the moment was gone. “Really? I’m so sorry, Princess! Forget this,” he said, smiling easily. She blinked and looked down. His tone was lighthearted, playful. Of course, she thought, why would he like me? He’s just shamelessly flirting. He probably does this to every girl in Paris.

“Leave, Chat,” she told him with finality, pointing to her open window. Her partner gave her one look, then silently left. He wouldn’t be back.

He wouldn’t be back.

“Plagg, I’m so dumb! Of course she wouldn’t kiss me! She doesn’t know I’m me!”

“One, stop pacing. Please. And two, that sentence sounded ridiculous. No offense.” Adrien grabbed his kwami, holding him at eye level. “Plagg, I’m serious. I’ve really messed up. Now Marinette definitely doesn’t like Chat Noir anymore!”

Plagg shrugged. “I don’t know why this is such a big deal,” he said, stretching his tiny body. “I think you should just go on that date you have planned, and forget about trying to seduce her or whatever.”

Adrien bristled. “Wh– I’m not– Seducing her?!” But again, the kwami was right. He’d probably only been confusing Marinette.
So he called her.

“Hey, Marinette!”

“Adrien? It’s one in the morning.”

He glanced at the clock on the wall.

*Crap.*

She yawned.

“I was just wondering if you want to go to a movie with me tomorrow?”

He could almost hear the smile in her voice as she responded.

“That would be great, Adrien.”

More silence.

“Adrien, I’m going to go to sleep now. I’ll see you tomorrow! I’ve had… a really long day.”

*I know,* he thought, but he only said goodbye and ended the call.

*Tomorrow’s Saturday!* He realized. It was his last thought before falling asleep.

---

The sun was hot, burning down on Ladybug’s back as she swooped in to the meeting place. As she had predicted, Chat was already waiting for her. He always seemed to arrive first.

“Akuma?” She asked. He shook his head. “Hawkmoth’s been quiet lately.”

It was true. There had been no akumas since… well, since Adrien had asked her out, which was a few weeks ago.

She still loved him. He was incredibly sweet to her, and had a great sense of humor. The model aspect of him helped a little too, but Marinette had really grown to love his personality as well.

Chat was the fly in the ointment. He was just as loyal and sweet as Adrien, and certainly wasn’t unattractive. It was terribly confusing.

“Maybe we need to look somewhere else,” Chat offered. Ladybug realized she’d been lost in thought. “Yeah, that’s a good idea,” she replied quickly.

Again, neither moved. Chat spun his staff awkwardly.

“Oh, should I…?” She began, gesturing to her yoyo.

Chat nodded wordlessly. She gripped his waist, and flung the yoyo towards another building.

If only Alya had been there to film what happened next.

Ladybug’s yoyo caught on something and the two tumbled.

Chat made a sound of alarm, looked up at the girl atop him…
It all came crashing back. All of the feelings he thought he'd lost for her. Marinette was the dam and Ladybug was the water.

She blinked down at him, her blue eyes wide with surprise.

Chat didn't think.

He leaned up to her and his lips caught hers in a kiss. Hers were warm, and soft, and tasted like cherry chapstick. He expected her to pull away at any moment, but she didn't; in fact, she leaned down into the kiss even more, flyaway hairs tickling Chat’s cheeks. He opened his eyes and saw that hers were closed, the long dark lashes fluttering.

She pulled away first, leaving him gasping for air.

She reeled in her yoyo.

She ran away.

Chapter End Notes

LADYNOIRLADYNOIRLADYNOIRLADYNOIRLADYNOIRLADYN
Guilt. White hot, overwhelming guilt.

Ladybug looked down at herself, at her bright red suit, and collapsed against a chimney. *I’m no hero, What kind of hero cheats on her boyfriend?*

A flash of pink light. Tikki spiraled out of her earrings and watched her in silence.

It was all too much.

Adrien, with his adorable laugh and constant kindness and eagerness to make her happy. She shut her eyes, trying to keep tears from escaping. Last week, he’d bought her flowers.

And Chat Noir, who had always been by her side, who had loved her unconditionally for all this time...

Too much. Too much. Too much.

“I can’t do this, Tikki,” she whispered, letting her face fall into her hands. Her cheeks were slick with tears. Her kwami was at her side at once. She still said nothing.

“What do I do?” Marinette whispered. She rubbed her eyes, leaving a line of mascara on her hand. She wiped it on her jeans.

“You need to tell Adrien,” Tikki told her, looking just as sad as Marinette felt. “You can’t do this to him, Marinette.”

Her chosen cried then. Real tears. Real sobs.

“When?” She asked, dreading the answer. Tikki looked at her gravely.

“You have a date today, don’t you?”

“Stop hitting your head against the wall!”

“Go away, Plagg.”

“I’m serious. Stop doing that.”
Adrien drew his head away from the wall, letting it fall into his hands. “I have a date with Marinette today,” he said suddenly, then swore.

“Watch your language!” Plagg snapped, but his gaze softened a moment later. “You have to break up with Marinette,” he told Adrien, green eyes serious.

Adrien looked away, at his computer. The Ladyblog was open.

*Ladybug.*

He’d thought it was over, but how could it be over? How could he ever forget someone like Ladybug?

And she’d kissed him back. Maybe--

Maybe she liked him back.

He shook his head, as if doing so would clear it. He squeezed his eyes shut, the image of Ladybug above him burned into his mind. He could never forget her. He didn’t know if he even wanted to.

But Marinette. Marinette with her sweetness and enthusiasm about the world, with her beautiful smile and freckles--

Nathalie opened his door, her face impassive as always. “Adrien, Marinette is here to see you.” She turned and left, leaving him with his girlfriend.

Marinette tucked a few strands of hair behind her ear, looking fixedly at the floor. They spoke at the same time.

“Marinette--”

“Adrien--”

“Oh, sorry. You go first--”

“Sorry, you go--”

“I…”

“We should…”

She knew. He could tell she knew by the hurt in her eyes, by the way she was nervously tugging at the straps on her bag. By the way she was biting her lip, and wasn’t moving any closer to him.

“Maybe we should take a break.”

It was his voice, which cracked at the end of the sentence. Her fingers tightened on her strap.

A shaky sigh. “Yeah.”

She stood, looking at him. Feeling awkward, Adrien invited her to sit down. She dropped her bag next to his and did so silently.

She was biting her lip pretty hard.

She was blinking pretty fast.
She’s trying not to cry, he realized, and fought the instinct to run to her and hug her tears away. What do you do with someone you’ve just broken up with?

She sniffled, still pointedly not looking at him. “I guess I should go, then,” she said, very quietly.

She walked slowly and stiffly to the door, turning to offer a wave and an extremely fake smile. Her eyes were filled with tears, and her nose was red. Adrien had never felt so terrible in his entire life.

She could barely see through the tears, but she wasn’t about to let him know that. She grabbed her bag and left, nearly running out of his house. She tossed the bag onto her shoulder, racing home, where she slammed her bedroom door shut.

Then she cried. Truly cried.

She looked at her walls, where every square inch was covered with a picture of Adrien, and tried to forget how he’d looked when she’d first walked in. That sad, broken look.

“Tikki,” she called, voice muffled through her sleeve as she wiped tears from her cheeks, “can I have my tissues?”

“Tissues? Can I have my camembert?”

Marinette froze, then blinked until she could see again. “What? Tikki?”

“Tikki? I haven’t seen Tikki in years! Where is she?”

She screamed. Something small and black was hovering in front of her face, eyes large and green.

“Oh my God! Someone help me! There’s a-a bat or something-- a bat in my room! Help!” In an instant, the thing had covered her mouth with its tiny paws.

“Shut it! I’m Plagg. I’m a kwami.”

“You’re a what?”

“A kwami. It means that I--”

“I know what it means. Why are you in my bag?”

Plagg cocked his head to the side. “That’s not your bag.”

She took a closer look. The bag was black, like hers. However, hers was worn, and this one looked nearly brand new.

She felt faint. There was another small difference.

This bag said “Agreste” in curling, fancy-looking script.

“Plagg…” she began slowly. The kwami looked up.

“Whose… um, whose…” She pointed to the bag.

“Whose kwami am I? Chat Noir’s.” His response was immediate. He then began exploring her room.
“What’s this?” He asked, poking his head into a bag of sewing materials. It tipped over and he rolled out, along with a cascade of scissors, cloth, and bobbins. He screeched, zooming way from the scissors, which were poking threateningly into his side.

“Hey, stop!” Marinette called to him as he opened her drawers. “You’re Chat’s kwami?” Plagg rolled his eyes and nodded. “Yeah, I just said that,” he said testily, continuing to look through her room.

“Seriously, stop! Why are you in an Agreste bag?”

Plagg narrowed his eyes. “You’re kidding me.”

She shrugged.

“Why do you think?” He said, then groaned. “You don’t have any cheese in here? I’d even settle for cheddar at this point!”

Marinette grabbed him before he could make a bigger mess of her room. “You’re in an Agreste bag…” she began, piecing things together. Her eyes widened.

“No. Way. Gabriel Agreste is Chat Noir. Oh, that’s so gross. That’s really, really gross. I kissed him! Ew, ew. I knew I shouldn’t have--”

“Whoa, whoa. What?” Plagg looked dazed trying to keep up. “Good grief, you’re worse than Adrien. I’m telling you, Fu always picks the weirdest people as his chosens--”

“You know Adrien?”

Adrien opened his phone, trying not to look at all of his texts with Marinette. He felt as though something huge had been carved away from him.

He also felt kind of hungry.

A few minutes later he was thumbing through channels on his TV, munching on chocolate chip cookies. He pretended they didn’t remind him of eating cookies from Marinette’s bakery last week. Then a tear fell on one of the cookies, and he knew he wasn’t doing a very good job of pretending.

Adrien prided himself on not crying. He hadn’t cried in years. Not since… well… he glanced at the photo of his mother, then his eyes snapped back to the TV.

He reached for another cookie, not taking his eyes off the poorly animated show before him, but there was nothing there. Annoyed, he glanced down at the plate.

Don’t tell me I ate eighteen cookies in ten minutes.

He shrugged, returning to the TV, but his hands absentmindedly reached for a cookie.

This time, they collided with something soft.

He yelped, wrenching his hand away and looking down at the plate. Something small and red was sitting on his plate, looking up at him with an expression of terror.

“Um…” He said, unsure what to say to the small creature.
“Hi, Adrien!” It chirped. Its voice was high and soft, leading him to believe it was female. “I’m really sorry for eating your cookies! I just haven’t had any for a few days and Marinette’s been too busy to feed me and I’m really sorry!”

Adrien’s mind was reeling. “You’re Marinette’s?”

The thing nodded.

“What are you?” He asked. It didn’t look like anything. Too small and rounded to be a dog or cat, too big to be a bird or bug.

“I’m a kwami!”

He put a hand to his head, feeling dizzy. “A kwami. Marinette has a kwami.”

Tikki beamed and nodded. “Exactly! I help her become Ladybug!”

It was the last thing Adrien heard before blacking out.

Chapter End Notes

tikki is totally soft fight me

plot twist gabriel agreste rly is chat noir
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

buckle up kids, it's about to get angsty

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I’m Adrien’s kwami.”

Adrien’s kwami.

Plagg was Chat Noir’s kwami.

Plagg was Adrien’s kwami.

Adrien was…

“Oh no. Oh no oh no oh no oh no oh no.”

It couldn’t be. Adrien couldn’t be Chat Noir. She screwed her eyes shut, trying to will away her thoughts. But they wouldn’t stop.

Has Adrien ever been akumatized?

Have Adrien and Chat Noir ever been in the same place at the same time?

Maybe there’s a reason why Adrien’s obsessed with Ladybug…

No, no, no.

“Why are you crying again?” Plagg asked, appearing beside her. He was nothing like Tikki; her kwami would have comforted her at a time like this. Instead she got, “Ugh, I hate girls! Always so dramatic. Cheese is much better.”

But the tears wouldn’t stop. Because she was too late. Because now, Adrien didn’t like her anymore, at all. She curled her knees up to her chest and sobbed into them.


Adrien sat up very fast, his head colliding with something hard.

“Ouch!” His eyes focused on Nino, who was frowning and rubbing his forehead. “I wanted to see you and Nathalie let me in. I didn’t realize you’d be… sleeping?”

Adrien shook his head. “Sorry, I just had the weirdest dream.” He thought back to it. It had all seemed so vivid: Tikki on his plate of cookies, hearing that Marinette was Ladybug… He laughed. It was pretty ridiculous.
Nino was grinning at him. “What?” Adrien asked. Nino sniffed the air pointedly, reminding him of Plagg. Where was Plagg? It was unusual for the kwami to sleep for this long.

“I smell cookies! Do you have any left?”

“Cookies?!” Adrien spluttered, heart stopping for a moment.

“Um, yeah? Cookies?” Nino blinked confusedly.

Adrien’s head whipped to the table next to his couch. An empty blue plate sat innocently, a few brown crumbs left behind.

*Tikki. The cookies. Blacking out.*

“Nino, I’m really sorry but I really can’t hang out right now. I’ll see you, uh, at school tomorrow! I have something important to do.”

Nino shrugged and left with a, “Later, dude!”

Adrien slumped on his couch. In an instant, Tikki was on his knee. She was the opposite of Plagg, with her big, caring eyes and girlish giggle. But she wasn’t giggling now. She watched him in silence, waiting.

He finally spoke. “I think it’s time to give Marinette her bag back.”

______________________________________________________________________________________________

“I’m sorry, Adrien. Marinette isn’t home right now! Did you have something for her?”

Marinette peeked at Adrien from the safety of the stairs. He looked at her bag dejectedly, then pulled it back onto his shoulder. “No, Mrs. Cheng. I’ll give it to her at school tomorrow.”

She watched him leave, his expression morose, and felt a flurry of complicated emotions. She wanted to hug him, and kiss him, and she wanted to cry and never speak to him again. *He doesn’t like me anymore. It doesn’t matter.* She’d repeated the phrase to herself several times that day. Marinette trudged back to her room, catching a glimpse of her swollen, puffy eyes in her mirror. She laughed humorlessly. No wonder Adrien didn’t like her.

She wondered painfully if he liked someone else. It could be anyone. Rose, Alix, Chloe… She kicked an upturned box, which landed hard, spewing thread everywhere.

“And you say I make a mess!” Plagg commented from across the room. She shot him a withering look and watched as teardrops landed on her pink flats.

Marinette’s eyes shot to her alarm clock. 9:32. She might as well go to bed now. Usually she would be on patrol...

“Goodnight, Plagg.” she told the kwami, wishing Tikki were with her instead.

Tomorrow would be hell.

______________________________________________________________________________________________

They need to shut up. They seriously need to shut up. Nino wrote, flinging the paper across the table in irritation.

*I know!! I’m not the one doing it!!* Adrien responded.
It was all Nino had talked about all hour. Behind them, Alya and Marinette were both whispering as fast as possible.

*How do girls talk so fast??!!?!!??!!*

Adrien shrugged, not in the mood for conversation. Tikki was sound asleep in Marinette’s bag, which was next to Adrien’s foot. He hadn’t gotten an opportunity to talk to Marinette because she’d avoided him all morning.

“How’s it going?” He’d said.

She’d swerved away from him as if he’d said he wanted to murder her in her sleep.

“How’d you do on the French literature exam?” He’d asked.

She’d coughed and turned quickly away.

He didn’t know what to do. She had his bag, so clearly she’d met Plagg. Maybe his kwami had told Marinette weird things about Adrien, like how he sang in the shower or obsessively checked the Ladyblog every few seconds.

Then again, maybe it was something else.

The whispering had gotten slightly louder and angrier, like hushed bees. Adrien could make out phrases like, “--talk to him!” and “likes someone else”. *Maybe they’re not talking about me, then, he decided, because I definitely don’t like anyone else. I can’t believe I cheated on Marinette with herself!*

The bell rang. Nino packed up his things and immediately turned to Alya, telling her that it was impossible to get work done when she was constantly chattering. As their bickering turned into flirting, Adrien backed slowly away…

And bumped into someone.

“I’m so sorry--”

“No, I’m such a klutz--”

“Marinette?”

“Adrien?”

They stared at each other, blinking. Adrien opened his mouth, preparing to tell her everything. That he still loved her. That this was all one giant mistake. That he needed her.

But in a flash of dark pigtails, she had turned and was moving swiftly out the door and through the hallways. The crowd of students swallowed her. Adrien’s head dropped with a sigh.

Chapter End Notes

#marinette needs to stop running from her problems 2k16

i like how they still have each other's kwamis lol
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

akuma akuma akuma akuma

Chapter Notes

they actually stop being dumb in this one ok

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*It was perfect.*

*Hawkmoth watched as the girl began to sob, her auburn hair draped over her knees to hide her face. He could sense the emotions in her: rage, embarrassment, fear.*

*It was perfect for a new villain.*

*He gently cupped his hand over one of his butterflies, staining it a deep, murky purple. He watched as it embedded itself deep in the palette the girl held in her left hand, then spoke.*

*“Hello, Painter. I am Hawkmoth. I’m going to help you exact revenge on the students who ruined your art project. But there is one condition…”*

“What was that?” Marinette asked, stopping.

“That’s my stomach grumbling. I’m starving! How can you have no camembert in your house?”

Marinette shook her head, ears straining. “No, I definitely heard something,” she said. “That… wet sound.”

Plagg shrugged, but Marinette still felt uneasy. She turned wildly, trying to catch a glimpse of whatever was making the noise.

Without warning, something huge and orange splatted against the wall, and Marinette heard a maniacal laugh.

*Akuma!* She thought, and ran as fast as she could.

Adrien hummed and drummed his fingers on the table, spinning in his chair. Having nothing to do, he turned on the TV, expecting more of the show he’d been watching yesterday.

“A new villain is terrorizing Paris! She calls herself ‘Painter’ and has turned much of Paris into, well, paint. When will Ladybug and Chat Noir show up?”
Adrien’s eyes slowly moved to Tikki, who was watching the TV looking terrified.

He thought of Plagg, who was probably (hopefully) eating camembert right now.

He stood, knowing what had to be done.

“Come on, Tikki,” he said, opening his jacket. The kwami flitted inside.

Adrien ran out of his room without bothering to turn off the TV.

Marinette’s breathing was fast and shallow.

She didn’t know what to do.

Sure, she could buy time as Marinette, but the only way to capture and release the akuma was with her yoyo.

She clenched and unclenched her fists. She eyed the paint splatters on the ground-- green, purple, and red. She squared her shoulders.

She didn’t know what Marinette should do in this situation, but she knew what Ladybug should do.

She began making her way to the Agreste mansion.

He began making his way from the Agreste mansion.

And for the second time that day, bumped into someone.

He was experiencing extreme déjà vu.

“A-Adrien!”

“Marinette!”

“I’m, um, I’m just…”

“No, I’m… I’m just…”

Both stopped, looking at each other wordlessly.

Then Adrien took a step forward and without thinking of what he was doing, hugged her tightly. His hands curled gently on her waist, and hers pressed his shoulder blades, pulling him closer. She buried her face in his neck.

Adrien closed his eyes.

Finally.

He breathed her in, enjoying the smell of vanilla and bread, and felt her sigh.

“Hey lovebirds! You may have forgotten but there’s an akuma out there!”

“Right,” Adrien said, stepping away.
A flash of green. The familiar exhilarating feeling of his clothes melting away to become a black skintight suit, of his hair ruffling itself to become messier, of his eyes flashing from green to even greener.

And, simultaneously, a pink flash as Marinette’s clothes became scarlet and black, and her hair ties elongated into ribbons.

He didn’t know how he’d never noticed the similarities between them before.

She smiled shyly at him, and he felt his heartbeat quicken as she pressed a kiss to his cheek.

He didn’t even want to know how hard he was blushing.

The streets were quiet as the two looked for Hawkmoth’s newest victim.

Quiet, that is, except for the laugh. It was high and lilting, but as threatening as it was inviting.

Ladybug watched as the Painter appeared. Her eyes were a deep, rich brown, framed by equally dark lashes. Her auburn hair was streaked liberally with red, blue, pink, yellow… as if someone had splattered her with paint. Her suit was an array of colors set on a plain black suit. She whirled her long brush in one hand, then dipped it into her paint pallette, an evil smirk on her face.

Ladybug felt a surge of adrenaline course through her body as she scanned Painter. The akuma had to be in either the palette or the brush.

“You don’t have to do this!” She yelled, even though saying such things never helped. As predicted, Painter scowled. “You’re wrong!” She screamed. Her voice was high. She couldn’t be older than fourteen.

“Now give-- me-- more-- paint!” She punctuated each word by dipping a brush in the paint and throwing it at the pair like a dart. When Chat dodged one, she’d reach behind her as if she had a quiver there and throw the next one.

"Meowch!" He squealed as he dove face-first into the brick wall behind them in an attempt to dodge the latest brush. "Milady, I'm in painter!"

Ladybug rolled her eyes. *I may be in love with him, but his puns still suck.*

“Chat, go over there!” Ladybug told him, pointing to a spot above Painter’s head. “I’ll use my Lucky Charm!” Chat nodded wordlessly and sprung to the area above Painter’s head, Cataclysm rippling from his fingertips.

Ladybug used her Lucky Charm, watching as a fan dropped into her hand.

“A fan…?”

But she narrowed her eyes and looked from Painter’s palette to Chat, and knew what to do.

She turned on the fan, watching as it blew Painter’s hair.

The girl laughed. “You think a little wind will stop me?” She giggled, pulling a brush from behind her and dipping it in more paint.

But the paint had hardened. Painter swore and tried several more times, but to no avail. “Fine!” She said angrily. “Hope you like getting poked in the eye!” She wound up and threw the brush, tawny
hair swinging in front of her face like a brown veil.

Ladybug tensed, waiting for the pain.

But it didn’t come.

The fan blew the brush backward towards the Painter, who screamed and turned her head away from it, screwing her eyes shut.

Ladybug grabbed the palette and broke it over her knee, watching in satisfaction as the akuma fluttered out of it.

Chat watched in admiration as Ladybug cleansed the akuma, released it, and restored peace to the city. Immediately, the paint blobs became people. The Painter became an ordinary girl again, who blinked and frowned at Ladybug and Chat.

“What am I doing here?” She asked, looking down at herself in confusion. Instead of answering, Ladybug held out a fist expectantly.

But Chat couldn’t stop himself from grabbing her and hugging her again, arms looping tightly around her waist. Her skin was warm through her suit.

She released him quickly, most likely because of the people snapping pictures of them, and rolled her eyes at him familiarly.

This time, however, she punctuated it with a wink at the end.

The two walked off alone, leaving the girl to sit dazedly on the pavement.

They had a lot to talk about.

Chapter End Notes

should i end it here orrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

i actually rly like this chapter HERE WE GO
GOOD THINGS HAPPEN IN THIS ONE

Chapter Notes

im a sucker for sunsets & if i could this whole chapter would just be about the sunset

See the end of the chapter for more notes

They stopped and Ladybug felt her cheeks flame slightly; they’d walked to their patrol meeting place without noticing where their feet were carrying them.

The sun was setting, casting a beautiful golden-orange glow over Chat’s hair and face. She cursed herself for not noticing his attractiveness sooner.

*How could I have been so blind?*

Their miraculouses beeped in tandem, and she turned to get away-- habit. But Chat’s gentle grip on her arm reminded her to stay.

*Stay.*

She watched as the transformation wore off on him, the mask melting away and gray hoodie replacing the black suit. He gave her a lopsided grin, much unlike his fake model smile. By the way his eyes slid down her body, she could tell her transformation was wearing off as well. At least, she *hoped* that’s why he was staring. She coughed and pushed the thought from her mind, watching as Plagg spiraled out of Adrien’s ring.

“Plagg!” Tikki giggled, a huge smile on her face.

“That’s the most excited I’ve ever heard someone to see him,” Adrien snorted, folding his arms.

Plagg stuck out his tongue and drifted away from him and Marinette, with Tikki not far behind him. The two were talking a mile a minute, most likely about how difficult it was putting up with two dramatic teenagers.

“So…” Marinette began, unsure what to say.

*What should you say when you’ve cheated on your ex-boyfriend with himself?*

*Wait, was Adrien still an ex-boyfriend?*

She slid down the wall, resting on the floor.
“I know,” Adrien said, reading the look on her face. “It’s… confusing.”

She gave a shaky laugh. “That’s a vast understatement.”

He laughed too, hesitantly at first, then more surely of himself.

It reminded her of how he’d laughed long, long ago, when she’d closed an umbrella in on herself.

When she’d first fallen in love with him.

Then, Marinette Dupain-Cheng stood up, walked towards the love of her life, leaned up on her tiptoes and--

Kissed him.

Kissing Adrien was different than kissing Chat. Their lips were essentially the same: warm, soft, and gently sliding against hers, but where Chat’s had been urgent and needing, Adrien’s were soft and slow. She felt his nose brush against hers, felt his smile as he leaned in after breaking away for a moment to draw breath, and she smiled too. Her fingers wound in his soft hair, dragging his head down slightly farther to meet hers, and his hands wound around her waist, gently thumbing up and down her side.

The butterflies in her stomach were becoming too much.

Too much.

She gasped and pulled away, eyes flying open to reveal the most beautiful boy in all of Paris standing in front of the brilliantly setting sun.

Purples, blues, and pinks streaked boldy across the sky, as if Painter had thrown her brushes at the clouds themselves. The sun was a brilliant orange, sinking lower and lower into the horizon. And to top it off, the Eiffel Tower lit up as it disappeared slowly, its tiny lights bathing the two in its golden glow.

“Wow,” Adrien breathed.

“I know,” Marinette sighed, “I love the Eiffel Tower.”

He laughed and shook his head. “I meant you,” he said softly, and her cheeks burned as she blushed. Thank God it was too dark for him to see it.

“I should have known it was you,” he continued musingly. “How could I ever forget someone like you? Wherever I go…” he shook his head again, winding and unwinding his fingers in his lap.

“What?” Marinette asked, but he didn’t have to finish. She knew.

You’ve affected me very, very deeply. So deeply that wherever I go, you’re there. I should have known better than to think I could get over someone like you.

She heard the words as he said them. Her throat felt tight. She nodded.

“Just so you know, you’d better not make any bad puns as Adrien now,” she warned him, only half-joking.

She could almost hear the smirk in his voice as he replied, “But Bugaboo, how could I pawsibly give it agreste with the puns? My jokes are clawsome!”
“Ugh,” she groaned in response, “that was way too many puns in one sentence. And 'clawsome'? More like 'clawful’!”

He chuckled.

The next hour passed easily, with similar banter going on between the two. But as time stretched and the pair began to yawn, Marinette reluctantly suggested that they go their separate ways. Another kiss, this one broken short when Plagg demanded camembert.

"Goodbye," she said, biting her lip. She really didn't want him to leave.

Adrien hugged her again. She melted into his touch; her face hurt from smiling so much.

"You're always with me." He told her quietly, his breath tickling her ear.

"Always." The hug became tighter.

"Wherever I go." He whispered, then his grip loosened and he turned back home.

Chapter End Notes

 tfw the fic title finally makes sense

 since im trash im doing a few more chapters even though this works as an ending
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

back at it again

Chapter Notes

this is more descriptive than usual but o well not a lot of dialogue

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He didn’t see it coming.

Adrien had just rounded the corner to the Agreste mansion and was preparing to come up with a lame excuse for being out so late when he heard a rustle, felt a brief flurry of panic, then felt something sharp digging into his sides. He flailed, trying to thrash away from the… gargoyle?

Whatever it was. It was a dusty beige, cracked along the sides, and its huge batlike wings were loud as they cut thickly through the air. It lifted him high into the air, claws tightly gripping his shoulders, and hissed intelligibly. He craned his neck to see its face and stared in horror.

Malicious stony eyes glowered at him behind half-lowered lids. The gargoyle’s nostrils flared threateningly.

It was flapping noisily away from the mansion. Its path was jagged, erratic; Adrien felt sick to his stomach. As Chat Noir he would use his staff to push the gargoyle off him and make a pun, but now he could only look miserably down at the ground below him and hope that something could save him.

Something.

He saw something.

Red and bright.

Another gargoyle, he thought, tensing his body and closing his eyes. He heard an angry hiss, an “Oof!” that sounded oddly human, and experienced a swooping sensation in his stomach.

The wind whistled around his ears.

He was falling.

But then he was flying back upward, a kinder grip on his waist than the other gargoyle had had on his shoulders.

“You okay there, handsome?”
He blinked, then his eyes went wide. A red spotted mask, brilliantly blue eyes, pink lips quirked in a flirty grin…

“Whoa.” It was all he could say. Even though the mystery of Ladybug had been solved, he still would never get over her beauty. Especially now, with determination marking her face and the night lights of the city reflecting in her sapphire irises. She soared through the air, finally releasing him and reeling in her yoyo. Adrien was slightly disappointed it hadn’t tangled them together again.

He watched as she scanned the air, presumably for the new akumatized villain, and he marveled again. Her dark hair reflected gold and blue against the city and blew around her face, her red ribbons fanning out behind her like banners proclaiming her beauty.

*She’s mine,* he realized, the thought unbelievable but true. *Mine.*

“You going to help at all?” She asked, looking down fondly at the blonde boy sprawled on the ground. His eyes were wide and his lips were slightly parted, just enough to make her think of kissing him again. But she only held out a hand, pulled him to his feet, and watched as he fumbled for words, much like how she’d done the same before, months ago.

“W-what? Oh, yeah, of course!” He said, green eyes still wide. She released his hand and turned, feeling a laugh bubble in her chest as her body filled with adrenaline at the prospect of taking down another villain. She held Adrien firmly around his waist, trying to ignore the muscle she could feel through his shirt. Then with a flick of her wrist her yoyo went flying, a flash of red in the velvety black night.

And with the air flying through her hair and stinging her eyes behind her mask, she was off in search of the gargoyle.

Adrien ducked his head into Ladybug’s neck as she leapt over cars and whizzed around buildings. Chat Noir would have no difficulty navigating the streets at night; heck, he even had night vision! But for Adrien, everything was too high and too dark and too loud and he was scared.

He could feel himself slipping slightly. Ladybug’s fingers scrabbled for his waist again, but to no avail…

Even worse, he could hear the hisses, caws, and growls of the gargoyles beneath him. His fear intensified as he imagined himself plunging hundreds of feet to his doom.

“Oh, whatever,” he heard Ladybug mutter, and felt the grip of her fingers on him again as she continued to navigate.

But now Adrien was red-faced and spluttering profusely, because she’d…

She’d…

She’d grabbed his *butt.*

And it didn’t seem like she intended on letting go. She didn’t move her fingers back up to his waist; she kept them there. He hoped Alya wasn’t out there somewhere, taking pictures.

Suddenly she released him, her hands moving to her yoyo and spinning it in arcs around them like a shield. As Adrien’s eyes adjusted to the darkness, he saw why.
Gargoyles. They were all stone gray or beige, and all were equally ugly, with large, menacing fangs and thick batlike wings.

He squinted harder. One of the gargoyles was skinnier and smaller…

It was a human. An akumatized villain.

“Hand him over, Ladybug,” he said, his voice low and raspy. The gargoyles screeched in agreement.

Ladybug glared. “Why are you doing this?” She asked. Adrien cringed. *This never works*…

The man snorted, crossing his arms. “I showed Gabriel some of my fashion designs and he told them they were terrible!” His voice was dejected and furious at the same time.

Adrien grimaced. *That’s my father*, he thought, *bluntly honest to the point of cruelty*.

Ladybug shook her head slowly, pigtails bouncing. “That’s too bad. But you can’t let one man do this to you! I’m sure your designs aren’t terrible!”

The man glared, looking alarmingly like the gargoyles with their twisted snarls. “He told me that my designs would never be featured! That they were fit for gargoyles!”

And with that, the herd of them began flapping their wings, ears twitching in anticipation.

“Get him!” The man yelled, and the air was filled with the flapping of wings.

Adrien saw claws coming towards him.

Then it all went black.

Chapter End Notes

sorry i had intense writer's block but here i am again

if u thought the breakup was angst honey u got a big storm comin
Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

u want more chapters? u get more angst

Chapter Notes

hope u all like amnesia lol !!
I'm sorry Marinette, but my son cannot attend school in this state. And he shouldn’t have been out so late at night

She crumpled it hard into a ball.

Girl, I’m so so sorry. Want me to come over later today? I’m always here for you and I

She slowly walked to the white trashcan. She tossed it inside, hating the sterility of the waiting room, and wiped away her remaining tears. She had to be strong. She was Ladybug. But it was still her fault. She should have seen the gargoyle reach for him, should have seen him stumble away from it and bump his head badly and freeze. But she’d been busy releasing the akuma from the man’s fashion design book and hadn’t noticed until it was too late. Alya had been there and had been filming when Adrien blacked out. She’d called the ambulance immediately and they were on the scene within minutes. Yes, the city went back to normal and the gargoyles had gone immobile back at Notre Dame Cathedral, but one thing had remained the same. Adrien had been in a stretcher, brow slightly furrowed and a nasty bump on his head. And now here she was, twiddling her thumbs in the hospital while Adrien couldn’t even remember his own name.

And it’s all my fault.

He was confused.

Confused by the bright lights and the boy with the headphones.

Confused by the girl with the dark pigtails who wouldn’t stop crying and talking to herself.

Confused by the strange toy in his pocket that talked, telling him things about cheese and ladybugs. He'd looked for an off switch but hadn't found one.

Was he going insane?

A stern-looking man with an immaculate suit and perfectly combed hair looked at him disapprovingly. He could feel the waves of coldness drifting from him, and turned away instinctively.

“You have a photoshoot next week, and I do not want to cancel it.”

“A photoshoot? Why?”

An irate sigh. The man spun on his heel and left, closing the door with a sharp click.

Later that day, a blonde girl visited him. Her eyes were deep blue and she was beaming.

“Adrikins!” She squealed, running to his side. “You remember me, right?”

He shook his head. Who was she? A sister? A friend?

“I’m your girlfriend, Chloe! You know, we’ve been dating forever–”

“That is so not true! Get out of here, Chloe!” The black-haired girl had gotten to her feet. Her swollen eyes and red nose made her look sickly from crying. The blonde laughed, examined her nails, and pushed her out of the way.

Adrien’s head started pounding after that, so he went back to sleep.
“He’s been sleeping a lot. Do you think he’s okay?” Marinette asked nervously. She’d taken her friend up on her offer and the two were in her room.

Alya touched her shoulder reassuringly. “Girl, I promise he’ll be back to normal eventually. Mr. Agreste told me that he um, that he…” She looked at Marinette apologetically, and sighed.

“That he won’t be at school. I know,” Marinette finished. Her voice was flat, almost rude.

Alya paused, then continued. “I was thinking, maybe we should go over and try to jog his memory. Like, we could show him his books and things, or you could tell him about your relationship with him, or… Or Nino could ask if he--”

“No thanks.” Her words came out cold and hollow.

Alya fell silent, twisting a lock of her curly hair in spirals around her finger. “Okay,” she said finally. Then--

“Look, I know you’re hurting right now. God, we all are. We all love Adrien. But I can’t help you unless you open up to me. That’s what friends are for.” Her hazel eyes pierced through Marinette’s, knowing and no-nonsense.

Eventually, Marinette sighed and let Alya pull her into a tight hug, her glasses scraping painfully against her cheek. With a note of surprise, Marinette realized she was crying again.

“Stop talking to me,” Adrien said irritatedly, pushing the black thing away.

It spiraled back towards him, making a noise of impatience. “You need to listen to me,” it said again. “I’m starving and you need to save the world.”

“Save the world? Pfft. No thanks,” Adrien replied, stretching an arm above his head. He then absentmindedly twirled the silver ring on his finger, wondering why he wore it.

The black thing, who called himself Plagg, drifted upwards to meet Adrien’s eyes. “You’re a superhero named Chat Noir, and your partner is Ladybug. You’re madly in love with her and I’m a little disgusted to say she feels the same way about you. Now can I please have some camembert?”

Adrien shook his head slowly. Chat Noir? Ladybug? He didn’t remember anything, but he couldn’t be a superhero. Surely he’d remember something like that.

Plagg grumbled (or maybe it was just his stomach) and whizzed away to rest under a blanket. Adrien bit his lip. Plagg was very drowsy and had complained several times about being sick. And it wouldn’t hurt to get him some cheese, right?

He stood from the unfamiliar bed, left his room, and wandered around the mansion. At least this would help him get used to his surroundings again.

“Adrien? What are you doing?” A woman asked. She had a frown on her face and sported a bright red turtleneck, which was partially obscured by the large clipboard in her hand.

He blinked, trying and failing to remember her name. “I’m getting, some, um… I was kinda hungry, um… Do you know where camembert would be?” He fingered the bump on his head, wincing as it gave a sudden throb of pain.

Her face softened slightly and her breath blew out in a short relieved puff. “Of course, Adrien,” she
said smoothly. “I’d forgotten how much you liked camembert.”

*I like camembert?* He thought, following her down the hall. *What else did he have to relearn about himself?*

“I’m Nathalie, by the way,” she told him, leading him to the vast kitchens. “Next time you need something, just ask. You don’t have to get it yourself.” A small cupboard was stocked floor to ceiling with tin after tin of the smelly old cheese. She handed him a few of them and led him back outside.

Adrien walked dazedly, camembert in his hands. Vaguely, he wondered if things would ever go back to normal. If he’d ever remember his old life again.

Chapter End Notes

chapter 13: plagg makes adrien his personal cheese slave
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

u thought i was kidding about the cheese slave thing lol

Chapter Notes

i love master fu

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It’d been two weeks.

Marinette’s grades were slipping.

Alya came over three times a week in a valiant attempt to help her, but it didn’t matter.

Nothing mattered.

Her curtains remained drawn, keeping the sunny skies out of her room, which was piled with clothes and empty plates of food. She’d halfheartedly worked on some designs, but everything looked the same and she hadn’t touched her tablet since.

Her mother came in, trying several times to cheer her up.

“Marinette, why don’t you go to the park? Jagged Stone is doing autographs there!”

“Marinette? Want to help us fill these croissants? I know they’re your favorite! If there are extras you can eat them yourself!”

“Marinette! Alya told me that Alix and Kim are racing today! Would you like to make a banner for them?”

Her response was the same every time: a dry, emotionless, “No thanks.”

Tikki had been down too. The kwami was naturally drawn to sun and the outdoors, being a ladybug, and being cooped up for so long hadn’t rested well with her. Tikki’s usually twinkling eyes were dull and lethargic, and her ecstatic giggle had lulled to a snore as she slept all day.

Marinette herself was a mess. She didn’t bother with makeup anymore, and threw together mismatched clothes. She no longer cared about Chloe’s scathing remarks. All she cared about was Adrien.

She didn’t want to visit him. She’d seen him once in the hospital and he’d been kind, but not the same.

No spark of recognition.
No laugh, no hug, no kiss, no… anything.

It was as if they were strangers.

“Who are you?” He’d asked politely, as if he’d never seen her before in his life.

As if she wasn’t in love with him.

Marinette looked over at Tikki, who was pale and sleeping again.

Is she sick? She wondered, watching her tiny chest rise and fall.

She scooped up the kwami, hurriedly tied up her unbrushed hair, and rubbed her tired eyes.

She knew where to take her.

“It smells terrible!” Adrien commented, watching as Plagg hungrily downed more camembert. He couldn’t believe how much he ate. Plagg only reached for another tin, winking as he swallowed it whole. Adrien turned away, disgusted. It was a wonder he hadn’t choked on the smelly cheese by now.

“Do I really watch you eat this all day?” He said, handing Plagg yet another wheel of camembert.

The cat nodded. “Yep!” He said cheerfully, giving a contented sigh after finishing. “You need to give me cheese because I need lots of energy to help you turn into Chat Noir.”

Adrien rolled his eyes. “Yeah, Chat Noir. That’s gotten old, alright? I’m not a superhero. This isn’t funny.”

Plagg grumbled something about Adrien being stupid, and the blonde rolled his eyes again.

Then he brightened, remembering something Plagg had said.

“Hey, tell me about Ladybug again!” He had made the same request every day for the past two weeks.

Minutes later, he was lost in Plagg’s tale of the beautiful superheroine with the crimson spotted suit and beautiful raven hair.

“My, um, cat is sick again,” Marinette fumbled, holding her kwami up to the old man. He took Tikki and held the red bug up against his bright purple floral shirt.

“Your cat,” he repeated skeptically.

Marinette gulped and nodded, self-consciously smoothing one of her pigtails.

The man shrugged and set Tikki down on a wooden table.

“She’s not getting enough sun,” he told Marinette as he reached into a drawer below him and pulled out a ziploc bag.

Chocolate chip cookies.

Tikki’s favorite.
Marinette was ashamed of not thinking of it sooner.

Of course: Tikki was starving! She’d been so caught up in thinking about Adrien that she’d forgotten to feed her poor kwami.

The man gently prodded Tikki and smiled as she nibbled delicately on the cookie. Then she began to eat faster, until the bag was empty.

Marinette watched open-mouthed as the man returned Marinette to her with a mysterious smile. Tikki looked brighter than ever, and the familiar sparkle in her periwinkle eyes was back.

“Thank you, sir,” Marinette told him, relieved. He inclined his head and smiled again.

Kwami in hand, Marinette left, the sun enveloping her in heat. She’d forgotten how it felt to squint through the brightness, to hear the birds singing joyfully. She looked up, smiling at the building nearest to her. It was their patrol meeting place, where she and Chat Noir had first kissed.

*Chat Noir.*

*Patrol.*

*Oh no.*

Chapter End Notes

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it's pretty lucky that hawkmoth hasn't made any new akumas lately i guess........... coincidence??
“Patrol? What’s that?”

Plagg sighed, his green eyes shutting in annoyance. “You need to go on patrol. With Ladybug. You know, the girl you make me tell you about every freaking day. You’ll meet her and then you’ll go looking for an akuma. Remember what that means?” His voice was slow as though he were speaking to a small child. Adrien scowled.

“Yes, of course I remember,” he said impatiently, twisting the ring on his finger. “It’s when the bad guy puts his butterflies into civilians, turning them evil.”

“Hawkmoth. He’s important, you should remember his name,” Plagg corrected, flitting up to meet Adrien’s eyes. “And then what do you do after that?”

“I help Ladybug!” Adrien gave a dreamy sigh, wondering what the superheroine looked like.

Was her hair curly or straight?

Was she tall or short?

Were her eyes really brighter than the summer skies?

Was her laugh really enough to make anyone smile?

“Help her do what?” Plagg continued in an annoyed tone. It was clear he wanted this to be over with.

“Help her capture the akuma,” Adrien finished, drawing his thoughts away from Ladybug.

“And what are the magic words?” Plagg concluded, bracing himself.

Adrien grinned.

“Plagg, Claws Out!”

Ladybug closed her eyes against the sun, the insides of her eyelids burning orange.
She missed Chat Noir.

She sat alone on the top of the building, legs dangling off the edge, pigtails brushing her cheek as a cool breeze drifted by. She removed her yoyo from her hip, spinning it in shining red arcs around her.

_I’ve missed this_, she realized as she maneuvered around the top of the building. She jumped, landing featherlight back on her feet in a crouch. She spun, her red ribbons dancing all around her. She tiptoed forward, enjoying the warming sensation of her feet on the ground.

She began to laugh. She undoubtedly looked ridiculous, hopping along the roof of an abandoned building like this. But she didn’t care. Weeks of being cooped up inside led her to swing away from the meeting place, latching her yoyo to another building. People stopped to stare on the ground below, most of them astonished to see her again. They hadn’t seen her in weeks, after all. Marinette was clumsy, ordinary, confined to the ground. As Ladybug, she forgot about Adrien and Chat Noir as she swung through Paris, attracting the attention of the civilians below.

She grinned, her blue eyes shut tight as her stomach fluttered from the sensation of flying through the air. She heard camera shutters below, heard one reporter calling out to her. “Ladybug! Do you have a minute?”

_I have nothing better to do_, she decided, landing gracefully in the grass. She looked up at the reporter, eyes widening as she recognized her.

It was Alya, phone in hand, already recording. Ladybug had no doubt this would be on the Ladyblog within minutes.

“Hey, Ladybug, um... My best friend has been really down and I was wondering if you could say a quick message for her!”

Ladybug’s stomach dropped.

Oh.

“Of course!” She said, plastering on a fake smile. “Ready?”

Alya nodded.

“Hey, Marinette! I know you’re going through a tough time right now, but always remember to stay strong and take care of yourself! Adrien would want you to be happy.” The smile was hurting her jaw and she was grateful when Alya stopped recording.

“Whoa, thanks so much!” She grinned. “Marinette will love it.”

Ladybug’s heart softened. _I’m so lucky to have such a caring best friend._ “Hey, come here,” she said in spite of herself, and pulled the girl into a hug. Alya hugged back without hesitation, then Ladybug heard a click as the redhead took a selfie of herself enveloped in her arms.

“Whoa! Oh my God! Thanks, Ladybug!” She gasped. Ladybug had never seen her friend’s eyes so wide. The superheroine only laughed and waved goodbye. “Anytime,” she said, a real grin on her face now. “Bug out!”

“This is sick!” Chat squealed, looking down at himself.
His fingertips had been replaced with black-clawed gloves, and, catching sight of his reflection in a car window, he could see his eyes were now entirely green.

And he had cat ears.

And a tail.

Giddily, he wondered if he could now scale buildings and trees like a cat would.

To his excitement, he could.

A grin spread over his face as he spun his staff, watching the gray blur as it wheeled through the air. Then he leapt from one building to the next, thoroughly enjoying the space in between where his heart sped up and adrenaline coursed through his veins.

Oh, he had to do that again.

Plagg had explained that Adrien would become more like him when he was Chat Noir, but Chat was relieved that he hadn’t developed a sudden taste for aged cheese. He was, in fact, disgusted by the thought of it.

Again, he wondered what Ladybug looked like. Plagg had said that when she wasn’t a superhero, she was a normal girl just like him.

Was she the girl with the pink hair, reading a book at the park?

The woman selling crepes at a stand?

The little girl wrestling with what looked like her brother?

He hoped not. He felt uncomfortable at the thought of Ladybug being that young.

Chat inhaled deeply, the scent of bread filling his nostrils.

*Bread*…

Something tugged at his memory.

Bread. It was something about bread.

He turned, looking at the white bakery behind him.

Of course! That must be the source of the smell.

He watched as a woman with short dark hair bustled about, bagging pastries for customers. Something seemed very familiar about her, but Chat dismissed it. He had probably passed her on the street earlier.

Still, he watched as her significantly taller husband kissed her on the forehead and helped her reach a box on the highest shelf above their heads.

The man wiped flour from his cheek and boxed some donuts for the boy on the other side of the counter, and the woman smiled, her lips moving in what was likely a thank-you.

Then he heard a very loud *whoosh* and tumbled to the ground.
Chapter End Notes

the bread thiNG

i love alya so much honestly
Chapter 15

Marinette was known for being clumsy, but this was on a whole new level.
What kind of superhero crushed innocent civilians beneath them?
Ladybug hastily hooked her yoyo back on her hip and held out a hand to help the poor person up.
She felt terrible, and cringed as they turned.
She just hoped they wouldn’t be too angry with her.
Then they turned in a whirl of golden hair and her heart stopped.

Blue eyes.
Bright blue eyes.
And they were staring right at him.
Chat’s jaw dropped and his hand left the throbbing bump on his head, taking hers.
Ladybug’s.
Then he blinked, and saw everything as if it were in front of him.
The whirl of wings, the snarls of dozens of gargoyles, claws outstretched.
Ladybug, pushing him out of the way.
Ladybug.
Her mouth parted in surprise, and she breathed, "You remember?"
"Of course," he murmured, eyes latched on her bright blue ones, "I'll always remember you.
Wherever I go."

And he was on his feet, and his arms were wrapping hard around her petite frame, and he could feel her heart beating fast in her chest. She gave a deep sigh, her breath fluttering out of her like a
cleansed akuma. It was a sigh of relief, one that Chat repeated himself.

Wait, that wasn’t a sigh--

Something was rumbling deeply through his throat, escaping in a low hum.

“Are you…?" Ladybug began, covering her smirking mouth with her spotted hand.

Chat blushed.

Yes. He was purring.

Ladybug’s nails dug into his waist as she dragged him even closer to her. Her heart really was beating insanely fast. Her hands skirted up past his shoulders, past his neck, and nestled in his hair. She began to rub him just behind his ears, and another involuntary purr escaped him. But he was beyond caring. He leaned in, eyes shutting lazily as he focused on the sensation of her fingers pressing gently into his scalp. His shoulders went limp, and he bent his head down to her, allowing her better access to his head.

She pulled away and his ears twitched in annoyance. “What was that for?” He asked, noticing he sounded like Plagg when the kwami was cheese-deprived.

Ladybug laughed, her shoulders shaking.

“What?” Chat asked, leaning in again.

She pushed him away. “Silly kitty,” she said, her voice teasing, “if you want me to do that again you’ll have to catch me!”

With those words, she threw her yoyo and disappeared in a flash of red.

With a smirk on his face, Chat spun his staff and was after her, leaping from building to building with ease.

She detransformed, giggling, and sat at the park.

She watched as Chat rushed by her, his face exhilarated and breathless.

He hadn’t seen her.

She reached into her purse and took out her phone, pretending to be busy texting someone. Her black bangs hung in front of her eyes, obscuring them. Then:

“Aha!” She looked up to see Chat, looking very pleased with himself. He held out a hand to her, emerald eyes wild and joyful. She took it. The material of his suit was cool to the touch.

He held her around the waist and was off a moment later, black-booted feet running along the windows of buildings. Chat had a grin on his face, one that said that she was his and they both knew it. And as Marinette looked up at the ecstatic look on her hero’s face, she had never been happier.

He stroked her hair, enjoying the way she’d burrowed her face into his chest. They were at the park on a bench, and the antics earlier had caused Marinette to fall asleep. Adrien pushed her bangs out of her eyes, loving the spatter of freckles on her nose and the way her eyelashes occasionally fluttered as she breathed.
They hadn’t stopped talking.

She’d told him that Tikki had gotten sick and someone had known to feed her cookies, that Alya had wanted a video, that she’d been too tired and upset to help her parents in the bakery.

He’d told her that he’d done a photoshoot and had to relearn everything about modeling, that he had had trouble navigating his own house, that Chloe had successfully convinced him that she was his girlfriend for two days.

Marinette hadn’t found the last one funny, and had made a noise of disgust and scowled.

Then he’d flirted with her using excessive cat puns, and to his delight she’d flirted back, even throwing in a ladybug pun or two.

She’d still given a derisive snort when he called her Lovebug, though.

And now here she was, breathing deeply against him. His fingers were curled around her waist, and soon the lull of the fountain and Marinette’s soft exhalations were making his eyes heavy with fatigue.

Adrien gently shook her awake, thoroughly enjoying how her blue eyes widened in surprise before settling on him. Her lips dissolved into a comfortable smile.

He kissed her.

The chapstick was different this time-- watermelon, maybe? But the sensation was the same: the warmth spreading from his head to his toes, the sparkling feeling as their lips slid together and apart, his heart beating impossibly fast. He never wanted it to end. His hands moved to grasp the back of her head, fingers tangling in the dark locks, and the kiss deepened, becoming more needing.

Oh, he’d missed this.

Marinette let out a soft sigh, scooting slightly closer to Adrien. He felt as if he would explode.

*Definitely not tired anymore.*

His hands slid down from her hair, down her neck, down to her waist, where he kept them. One of her hands rested on his knee.

It wasn’t enough, and yet it was too much.

The kissing.

Kissing Marinette.

*M Marinette.*

Reluctantly, he pulled back, head spinning. She did the same, gasping slightly for breath.

And he was leaning back in for round two when:

“Dude! Whoa! Gross!” Nino stood in front of the two, a disgusted look on his face.

“Oh please, I’ve seen you do much worse with Alya,” Adrien retorted angrily, miffed at his friend for interrupting what was quite possibly the best moment of his life.
Nino’s brown eyes bulged and he grabbed Adrien, enveloping him in a not-so-manly hug. He squeezed him far too tightly, patting his back and muttering that Adrien had broken their Snap streak and had forgotten to help him with his project.

“So you’re back?” Alya said, appearing beside them.

Adrien nodded, grinning. *I’m back.*

“Good,” she said in a businesslike tone, her arm looping around Marinette’s, “because we have some business to attend to.” The redhead spun on her heel, dragging Marinette alongside her.

The poor girl spun to give Adrien and Nino a terrified glance.

Adrien gulped.

Whatever this was, it wasn’t good.

Chapter End Notes

adrienette is so cute & i hadn't put v much of it in the fic yet so !!!!!!
Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

ALYAA

Chapter Notes

sorry for not updating ive been rly rly busy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alya’s hands were on her hips, and her eyes were narrowed suspiciously. She looked Marinette up and down, making her self-conscious.

She glanced down at herself. “Did I spill something?” She asked in an attempt to prompt her into speaking her mind.

Alya didn’t answer, but reached into the back pocket of her denim capris and took out her phone. She keyed in the password and held her phone out to Marinette wordlessly. Marinette took the phone, noting with a sigh of relief that all Alya had wanted to show her was the video she’d taken earlier.

She clicked play, feigning surprise and amazement.

“Hey Ladybug, um… My best friend has been really down and I was wondering if you could say a quick message for her?”

Marinette watched as Ladybug’s blue eyes darted to the side before responding.

“Of course! Ready?”

Alya was watching her, arms folded, eyebrows raised. Marinette quickly glanced back down at the phone.

“Hey Marinette! I know you’re going through a tough time right now, but always remember to stay strong and take care of yourself! Adrien would want you to be happy.”

God, I sound so cheesy.

“Wow, Alya!” She said, reaching to hug her best friend. “A message from Ladybug! Thanks so much!”

But Alya didn’t hug her back, and instead took her phone and rewound the video, pressing play again.

“Hey Ladybug, um--”
Marinette pressed pause again, laughing nervously.

“What is this about, Al? I get it, it’s a cool video, but--”

“I never told Ladybug to say something about you. Heck, Ladybug doesn’t even know we’re friends, or that Adrien had amnesia,” Alya said, hazel eyes boring into Marinette’s blue ones.

She gulped.

Her throat suddenly felt very tight.

Alya didn’t seem to have noticed. The redhead jabbed a finger towards the tiny pixelated blush on Ladybug’s cheeks as she spoke, her blue eyes still looking far right. She raised her dark eyebrows at Marinette, then clicked the phone off and shoved it back in her pocket. Then she sighed: a deep sigh that seemed to reverberate through her.

“Marinette, why didn’t you tell me sooner?”

Marinette bit her lip. She should have told her. It was wrong to make Alya agonize over Ladybug’s identity when it’d been right in front of her this entire time. As her gaze finally shifted from her flats to her best friend’s eyes, she saw the emotions flash in her expression.

Hurt.

Betrayal.

Disappointment.

“I’m sorry, Alya,” she said, her voice low with shame. She was beginning to feel uncomfortably hot in her dark blazer.

“Sorry? Huh?” Alya’s face contorted with confusion, then she laughed, punching Marinette’s arm lightly. “Relax, girl! I think it’s totally cool that you’re friends with Ladybug. Like, that’s awesome! I’m so glad you told her about your Adrien troubles!”

Marinette gave a sheepish grin. Thank God.

“Plus,” Alya continued, beginning to pace, “this is amazing news for my investigation!”

“Um… investigation?” Marinette asked nervously. She didn’t like the look in Alya’s eye.

The redhead grinned determinedly. “Of course! You know I’m trying to find out who Ladybug is under that mask! Now I know that you know her, so she must be a tenth-grade student at our school!”

Marinette’s insides froze. No no no no no no

“A-Alya, we’ve been over this! Ladybug is thousands of years older than us!”

Alya narrowed her eyes, drumming her fingers against her sides. “Well, maybe,” she said mysteriously. “But I have evidence that points otherwise.”

______________________

“Al, babe-- you gotta let this go.”

“No way, Nino! I know I’m right about this. This could be my chance to find out who Ladybug
“But Ladybug wants her identity to remain secret. Don’t you respect that?”

“No!”

The four were seated at one of the bakery’s tables. Adrien, Marinette, and Nino shared a helpless glance over the heaping plate of croissants before them. Alya was getting impatient, and waved her phone in the air.

“Are you guys seriously going to ignore this? This is a major breakthrough!”

Nino grimaced. “Hey, babe, maybe we should let this rest a bit… Um, who cares? Right? Haha…”

It had been the wrong thing to say. Alya fired up immediately, leaning across the table to get right in her boyfriend’s face. “Rest a bit?! REST A BIT?! God, Nino!” She put her face in her hands and turned away from him, her wavy hair flying.

Nino was staring very hard at the croissants in front of them. Adrien knew he hated when Alya was mad at him. Nino's mouth worked for a moment, and his hands curled protectively around his headphones, as if they would keep him safe.

“Okay.”

“Okay?” Alya repeated, folding her arms.

“Okay, I’ll help you.”

Marinette paled visibly and her mouth formed a hard line.

Alya smiled warmly at him, then turned to Marinette.

“And you?”

She could see it in her friend’s eyes how badly she wanted this. Alya had been trying all year to find out more about Ladybug, and now she had finally come closer to solving the mystery. And she was Marinette’s best friend.

What kind of best friend denied happiness to the other?

“Okay, fine,” she said to her own surprise. “I’ll help you.”

Adrien cocked his head to the side, looking questioning, but he made no comment to her. All he said was, “Me too.”

Alya grinned eagerly and opened up an app in her phone, then slid it across the table to Adrien.

“Rose, Juleka, Chloe,” Adrien read aloud. “Wait, why am I on here?”

Marinette giggled. “I think you’d look great in pigtails,” she said, and Nino held up two bunches of Adrien’s hair. “Yeah, dude, that looks great!” He said. Adrien scowled as Alya snapped a picture of him.

“So we can rule out anyone who’s already been a villain, right?” Nino asked, taking a look at the list himself. Alya shook her head slowly. “Maybe, but maybe not.”
The talk went in circles; Alya added more and more ridiculous suspects to the list, and by evening was convinced that Sabrina was Ladybug.

“Let’s meet tomorrow at school and investigate this!” Alya said, a look of determination on her face.

As her best friend, Marinette knew that look wouldn’t leave her face until she knew the truth.

She was in for it when Alya found out.

Chapter End Notes

sabrina is actually ladybug !! (& gabriel is chat)

hey guys. i’m going through something right now so i probably won’t update for a while.
Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

spoiler alert: chloe is not ladybug

Chapter Notes

im back!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“So Sabrina,” Alya said, leaning casually against the girl’s locker to keep her from getting in, “where were you yesterday at 4:23 pm?”

Sabrina gave Alya a disgusted look, trying to push past her. “You’re going to ruin the expensive new shirt Chloe got me! What a klutz.”

A tinkling laugh.

Marinette watched as Chloe entered the scene, her blue eyes flashing as she pushed Alya, hard.

“Ew, she left her dirty germs all over your locker, Sabrina!” She snickered, pulling a wipe from her purse and scrubbing the gray locker.

Alya was back in front of Sabrina a moment later. “Where were you at 4:23 pm?” She repeated, fingers hovering above her phone, ready to type.

Sabrina shrugged. “And why would I answer you?” She giggled, turning her combination lock.

Alya huffed angrily. “You know what? Marinette was right. Ladybug would never be someone like you.”

Marinette cringed. Alya was asking to get crushed.

Chloe smoothed her hair and cast Alya a vicious glare. “If you don’t leave my friend alone, I will call Principal Damocles and you’ll be suspended! Again! Does that sound fun?” Her voice was a mocking coo and Alya rolled her eyes and spun around, hands balled into tight fists. Marinette was astonished she’d refrained from punching the smirk right off Chloe’s face.

“Al, babe, leave them alone. It’s not worth it,” Nino said, appearing at Alya’s side.

“I know,” she muttered. Her expression was stormy.

“Hey,” Marinette said softly, pulling her best friend into a hug. Alya’s red curls brushed her cheeks. Her hair smelled of coconut shampoo. “Chloe and Sabrina aren’t worth your time.”

Alya glared at the pair, who were laughing loudly. Chloe’s giggle turned to a sneer when she caught
Alya, Marinette, and Nino staring. Marinette glanced quickly to the side and saw Alya’s scowling mouth ready to make a scathing comment. She hurriedly spun her friend around and started walking in the other direction.

“So, it’s not Sabrina, right?” She said. “That’s a good start!”

Alya brightened a bit. “Yeah, you’re right!” She exclaimed, reaching for her phone again and furiously typing her findings. With a swipe, she’d pulled up the picture of Ladybug again.

The picture of her and Chat.

The one that had started this whole mess.

Marinette’s insides burned.

But this time, it was different. It wasn’t the uncomfortable scorching sensation she’d had before. This feeling was softer, more welcome. Sparks dancing along her arms and the tips of her fingers, flames licking gently at her sides.

Or maybe it was just the feeling of her cheeks burning as she blushed at Alya’s phone.

Alya laughed. “Girl, you okay? I haven’t seen you this red since you accidentally walked into the boys’ bathroom!”

Nino chortled. “That was pretty memorable,” he laughed, bending his head to get a better view of the picture. “Yeah, you’re right,” he said, straightening. “Ladybug doesn’t look anything like Sabrina! She looks more like…” His eyes cast around, landing on Marinette--

His eyes widened.

Marinette gulped.

“Whoa, babe,” Nino breathed, tapping Alya on the shoulder. She looked up from her phone at Marinette, agape.

“It’s you,” she said, her hands limp at her sides. Her phone clattered to the ground beside her, thankfully undamaged.

Marinette swallowed thickly, feeling her legs shake.

“You should’ve told me,” Alya continued. There it was: the look of hurt, betrayal, and embarrassment that Marinette had always feared would appear when her friend discovered the truth.

Nino shook his head sadly at her.

“I-I’m sorry,” Marinette stumbled, “I couldn’t-- you know--” She looked down at herself ashamedly. “Will you forgive me?” The words came out small and tight, due to the sudden constriction of her throat. “Please?”

Alya and Nino looked at her dolefully for a moment longer, then cast each other a look and burst out laughing.

“What?” Marinette demanded, feeling herself blush. Alya wiped tears of laughter from her eyes. “Oh, girl, we were just teasing!” She said, clapping Marinette on the back. She stooped to pick up her phone and tossed it into the back pocket of her shorts.
“Huh?”

“We know you’re not Ladybug.” Nino explained, his words punctuated with laughter. Marinette tilted her head, confused.

Alya continued for him; Nino was laughing too hard to finish. “We didn’t think you’d act like it was for real! Girl, you’re too funny! You’d be a killer actress: if I didn’t know any better, I’d totally think you were Ladybug!”

Marinette gave a hesitant smile.

Oh.

Alya slung her arms around Marinette’s and Nino’s shoulders, guiding them away from the lockers. “Don’t worry, we’ll figure out who Ladybug really is,” she told them as she kicked the door open. The three were hit with a sudden burst of sunshine.

“In fact, I already have a new suspect,” she said proudly. “Is it just me, or do Ladybug and Mireille Caquet have the same hair color?”

Adrien silently packed up his piano books, nodding unsmilingly at his piano teacher, who left without a word.

His father was upon him immediately.

“I’ve told you not to be hanging around with those-- those hooligans,” he said, his pale blue eyes flashing icily.

Adrien turned away from him, spending extra care on pushing in the piano bench. “I know,” he said finally. “They’re my friends.”

His father snorted. “‘Friends,”’ he repeated scathingly. He shook his head and was walking swiftly away from his son when he turned: “You have another photoshoot. Next Saturday.” His footsteps were sharp and precise as he walked up the stairs, leaving Adrien alone.

The mansion was huge.

Huge and cold.

Adrien sighed deeply as he imagined what Marinette, Nino, and Alya were up to right now. He smiled slightly. Most likely on one of Alya's ridiculous quests to discover Ladybug’s identity. She hadn’t been close yesterday, and he doubted she’d be close now. After all, how had he gone nearly a year without knowing who the love of his life was? That she was the girl who’d sat behind him in class all year, who fumbled to speak to him and was known for her klutziness?

But there was something similar between Ladybug and Marinette.

They both had a certain kind of infectious strength: one that said they knew what they were doing. That said they believed in themselves so much that one couldn’t help but believe in them too.

And they were both kind. Incredibly kind. Adrien’s mouth quirked upward in a smile as he thought of how Marinette always tried to be as fair as possible, and how Ladybug sought nothing more than justice and happiness to the people of Paris.

And-- he sighed again, this time more dreamily-- they were both beautiful. Marinette, with her shy
giggle and sprinkle of freckles dashed across her nose. With her slender build and soft, gentle lips. Her pale hands that felt amazingly feather-light as they traced his face after kissing, pressing gently over his cheekbones, his nose, the curve of his chin. And *Ladybug*. Ladybug with her fiery personality and dark bangs and sparkling sapphire eyes. With her scarlet suit and tinkling laugh. And her burning lips, that had pressed so hard into his the first time they’d kissed--

“Aw, gross! Don’t tell me you’re thinking of Ladybug again! I think I preferred you when you had amnesia.”

Adrien snapped out of his reverie to glare at Plagg, whose eyes were half-lidded and bored.

“What do you want?” He snapped, the words coming out harsher than he’d intended. At the Agreste mansion, Plagg was all he had.

The kwami glared at him reproachfully. “I was just going to tell you that Marinette texted you, but clearly you’re too busy--”

Adrien leapt across the room, snatching up his phone and turning it on immediately. Sure enough, Marinette’s name was just under the time, with the words:

*We’re in the park. Hurry!!!!*

Adrien fought internally. On one hand, his father had given him pretty explicit instructions not to wander off with his friends again. On the other hand, he was madly in love with Marinette and was dying to see her again.

A split second later, he was headed down the street, his backpack bouncing as he ran.

Chapter End Notes

nino & alya are my world & i love them
Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

the saga continues

Chapter Notes

beep boop

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*On my way*

*Can he come a little faster?!*

Marinette was sweating heavily, and it wasn’t because of the weather.

Alya leaned in even closer, her hazel eyes narrowed suspiciously. Marinette offered her a nervous grin.

“You really shouldn’t be smiling,” Alya chided, drawing her phone out of her pocket again. She held the picture closer to Marinette’s face. The picture was dark, and hard to see with the glaringly bright sun beating down on the three. But, squinting, she could make out the shape of something red… something white…

She paled. Of course Alya would have the picture of her holding Adrien’s butt, a smirk dancing across her lips. Adrien’s face was possibly redder than her suit, and his eyes shone wide with surprise.

Alya zoomed in on Ladybug’s hand, as if Marinette could have missed it. "Care to explain this?"

“Uhhhh…” She began, words refusing to come out of her slack-jawed mouth.

“Yeah, girl. ‘Uhhh’ is right. Your boyfriend is cheating on you! I didn’t want to tell you because I knew it would hurt you. But you had to know.” Alya wrapped Marinette in a hug, patting her back gently.

Marinette disentangled herself, head spinning.

Of course, Adrien chose that moment to appear, a huge smile on his face and his hands shoved into his pockets.

If Marinette could’ve made herself invisible, it would have been at that moment.

“What’s up?” He asked casually, feeling warm and tingly as he caught sight of Marinette. His face broke into a huge smile.
“‘What’s up?’ ‘What’s up?’ I’ll tell you what’s up. The cat is out of the bag.” Alya looked furious, her eyes flaming with fury.

Adrien froze.

The cat? Out of the--

They know I’m Chat Noir.

“They know?” He said quietly. Marinette’s blue eyes were bulging.

“Yes, you moron. We know. You’re a scumbag. I can’t believe I let my best friend pine over some jerk who-- who-- Arghhh! Just leave,” Alya raged.

Adrien opened and closed his mouth soundlessly. How could this be? Alya liked Chat Noir! Not as much as Ladybug, but enough to devote a subpage on her blog to him. He tried to remember if he’d ever wronged Alya as Chat. Maybe not showing up for an interview?

Nino was looking at him too, eyebrows furrowed accusingly. Of course. Adrien had lied to him.

“All those times you said you were up late because of homework, and you were actually sneaking around with Ladybug?” Nino’s voice cracked in desperate anger.

Adrien winced.

“Yeah,” he mumbled. “I’m sorry.”

Alya made a noise of disgust, moving to hug Marinette.

What did I do?

“You deserve much better than him, Marinette,” Alya told her, punctuating the sentence by giving Adrien a vicious glare.

He shrunk back slightly. “Really, Alya, I don’t know why this is bothering you so much--”

“Shut up.”

“I thought you liked me!”

“I did, until this.”

“I know, you’re right. I should’ve just told you in the first place--”

“Yeah, no kidding! Sorry, Adrien, I don’t like liars.” She turned away from him, arm still draped protectively around Marinette. It had begun to rain, and Marinette’s pigtails drooped soggily.

Adrien’s heart drooped as well.

Until Marinette turned back to him, breaking free of Alya’s grip.

“I can’t do this anymore,” she said, water dripping from her bangs.

Her face was determined.

Her pale hands were balled into fists.
“Alya, there’s something we have to tell you.”

Chapter End Notes

boi she bout to do it !!!!

its time
Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa

Chapter Notes

ive barely had any time to update so im sorry for the wait

by the way, if you're interested in following me, my tumblr is senpop.tumblr.com & my instagram is @senpopi!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

She hadn’t handled it well.

Alya’s eyelashes fluttered and her mouth opened and closed. She was shaking her head very quickly, as if in denial.

For the first time, Alya looked at a loss for words.

Marinette’s hands were still balled into fists, and her nails dug painfully into her palms.

_How could I do this to my best friend?_

Nino went after Alya when she turned away from Marinette and Adrien, muttering something about needing time to think. But she pushed him away, walking silently away from the trio.

“Um…” Nino began, tugging awkwardly on the collar of his t-shirt.

Marinette looked away from him, staring hard at the ground. The rain masked the tears beginning to pool in her eyes. She blinked, forcing them down her cheeks. When she looked up, Nino had left as well.

For once, Adrien’s gentle gaze didn’t calm her. Her shoulders shook as she cried, even after she was pulled against his warm chest.

“It’ll be okay, Marinette,” he murmured into her hair. She was shuddering: shaking with sobs and from the cold rain, which seeped through her thin shirt into her bones.

Adrien looked at her worriedly. His own hair was plastered to his forehead with rain, and he blinked away drops that fell into his eyes. “Let’s take you home,” he whispered. He carried her back to his mansion bridal-style. Marinette burrowed into his chest, trying to shut out the thoughts of Alya’s betrayed face and the claps of thunder, losing herself in Adrien’s steady heartbeat.

Confused.
Angry.

Betrayed.

Oh, it was almost too perfect.

Hawkmoth rubbed his gloved hands together, preparing to create his most dangerous akuma of all. His gargoyles had failed, but this wouldn’t. He quietly invaded the girl’s mind, pushing until he reached the deep, dark pit of emotion swirling within her.

He laughed, the sound masked by thousands of wings fluttering around him. Then--

“Hello again, Lady Wifi…”

“I just don’t know what to do, Adrien,” Marinette said quietly around her spoon of ice cream. “Alya won’t respond to any of my texts.”

Adrien patted her arm consolingly, and she leaned into him, grateful for his support. Plagg retched loudly and Tikki shushed him, drawing a small smile to Marinette’s lips. However, the humor was short-lived and her mouth fell flat again a moment later.

She looked back up at Adrien’s huge TV, where a movie was playing. The steady pour of rain outside made it difficult to hear, and Adrien reached for the remote, turning the volume up higher.

Without warning, the screen went black.

Adrien swore.

“Power’s out,” he explained, standing from where they’d been sitting on the couch. “I’ll call Nathalie.”

“No, it’s not,” Marinette said slowly, her eyes flicking up to the lights, which were still turned on.

Adrien’s brow furrowed in thought. “But--”

He was interrupted by a high-pitched cackle that had unmistakably come from the TV.

The screen flickered pink, then showed a face for a split second. Then with a hiss it went back to black.

But the image had been unmistakable.

Marinette’s insides had suddenly turned to ice; she’d know that face anywhere.

“Adrien, Alya’s in trouble.”

The rain made it hard to see. Chat blinked water out of his eyes, shaking from the cold.

“What’s wrong, kitty? Cats don’t like to get wet?”

He grinned back. “I should think you’d be the one getting wet, Bugaboo,” he said, his eyelids lowering suggestively.

Ladybug blushed hard and looked away.
He was grateful she was in a good enough mood to joke. After all, they’d defeated Lady Wifi before. This would be a piece of cake.

“She won’t be outside, of course,” Ladybug yelled over the sudden thunderclap. “Her phone would get wet. She’s mad at us. Should we check the bakery?”

Chat nodded, thankful to get out of the rain. They decided to wait at the bakery until Alya showed up.

Several minutes later, Marinette’s mother was bustling over to him, carrying a large yellow towel in her hands. She handed it to him, smiling in a motherly way as he rubbed his hair dry. His heart ached. *I miss Mom.*

“Thank you,” he said politely, returning the now-damp towel to her. She smiled and left, leaving him and Ladybug in silence.

The lights were off, given the late hour, and Mrs. Cheng had just returned to her husband.

“Why aren’t they looking for you?” He murmured. “I-I’m supposed to be at a sleepover with Alya,” she replied, looking down. “She… wanted help uncovering Ladybug and I’d helped convince her it was Mireille.”

Chat laughed in surprise. “Mireille? The weather girl?”
Ladybug nodded, a small giggle escaping from her lips.

He needed to hear that giggle again. Desperately.

“Are you ticklish, my Lady?” He asked playfully, leaning in and brushing her rib cage with his thumb.

She jerked back immediately, convulsing with suppressed laughter. “O-of course not!” She replied unconvincingly.

“Oh? So it’s okay if I do this--” he brushed his fingers over her neck, making her twitch--

“Oh this--” her waist, causing her to squirm--

“Or this?” His hand skirted over her lower back, and she giggled, still squirming.

His hand slipped.

His eyes widened.

“Chat-- that’s my--”

“Yeah, I know, I--”

“Um--”

His brain stopped working, some weird impulse urging him to grip Ladybug’s butt even more tightly.

She squeaked. “Chat--”

He kissed her.
This time, it was different. The gentle butterflies in his stomach were replaced by something darker, deeper, harsher. He kissed her hard, eyes closing tightly as his lips explored hers. Ladybug went very still, as if shocked, but then she responded, kissing Chat back, arms winding around his waist and pulling him closer. Her body felt feverishly hot and Chat let some animal instinct take control of him, kissing her harder and harder, until he was certain her lips were bruised.

He only pulled away when he could no longer breathe. But as the moon lit up Ladybug’s face, illuminating those captivating blue eyes, he was upon her again, his hands on her hips and his heart beating very fast against hers. Chat couldn’t think. All he was aware of was the softness and harshness of Ladybug’s lips crashing against his, the feeling of her flyaway hairs tickling his jaw, the pleasurable tightening in his stomach as she made a noise and pulled him flush against her. Her hands drifted up from his waist, gliding over his chest and finally settling in his hair, where she dug in her fingers. Her eyelashes fluttered against his cheek and she whispered his name.

*Chat.*

“Well,” he started. He could almost feel her blushing.

“Well, you don’t have to say it back.”

He shook his head, feeling his hair whip his face. “No, no! Not at all! I-I love you, Ladybug. I love you, Marinette. *I love you.*”

And suddenly he could feel her breath on his cheek and they were kissing again, slowly and softly. It lasted for only a minute.

Chat wrapped Ladybug in a hug, closing his eyes as he felt her heartbeat slow and her shoulders go limp with content.

If he could have frozen time, he would.

Chat was purring again. Ladybug chuckled, rubbing him behind the ears. Everything was so quiet and peaceful.

Something was wrong.

“Chat,” she said, disentangling herself from him. “Why is it so quiet?”

He swore.

“Let’s go!” She told him, reaching for the door to the bakery and opening it. The rain had stopped.

She heard the laugh before she saw the face it belonged to.

But there she was, with one hand on her hip and the other on her phone. Lady Wifi’s eyes flashed and she smirked, holding up her phone.
“This isn’t you, Alya!” Ladybug shouted, fully aware that saying this would change nothing.

Lady Wifi laughed again, shaking her head. “You’re right. I’m not Alya. I’m Lady Wifi now! And now that your dirty little secret’s out, it would be shame if I let the whole city know, wouldn’t it?”

Ladybug gasped. “No! You can’t.”

The villain laughed again, coldly and mercilessly. “Okay, I won’t. On one condition.”

Ladybug’s hands balled into fists. “Yeah?” She asked through gritted teeth.

“Give me your Miraculous.”

Chapter End Notes

whenever ladybug's hands ball into fists i think of that arthur meme oh my god
lol tfw u """"'accidentally"""" grab someone's butt
Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

im sad bc this is the last chapter but hey !!!!!!!! oh well

Chapter Notes

i got writer's block when i was doing this & i didnt proofread or anything so im sorry if this sucks

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It wasn’t a new line. In fact, Ladybug would even go so far as to say it was overused. But hearing it from her best friend’s mouth in a voice dripping with hatred and malice scared her.

Her hands twitched involuntarily, reaching for the small red studs.

Chat’s clawed hand flashed out, grabbing hers and holding it back. “Don’t,” he said insistently. Something in his eyes made her listen to him and drop her hand at her side.

The pair turned their attention back to Lady Wifi, who was tapping her foot impatiently. “You’re not going to give it to me?” She pouted, crimson eyes glaring and hateful. “Fine. Looks like the cat really is out of the bag now!” She turned and disappeared, her harsh laughter fading as she left.

Ladybug felt weak.

She shouldn’t have told Alya.

She shouldn’t have let any of this happen.

“She used my pun!” Chat fumed, pacing back and forth. “That’s clawful!”

Ladybug grabbed her yoyo from her hip, inhaling deeply. The smell of the night, combined with dampness from the rain, invaded her nostrils, clearing her head. She squared her shoulders, lifted her chin, and reeled her yoyo out into the distance.

“Come on, Chat. We have work to do.”

He loved when she took control like this.

He followed her as she soared over Paris, her arms flying as her yoyo spun in elegant arcs in front of her.

*I’m so in love with her,* he thought as Ladybug’s ribbons streamed out wildly behind her.

She stopped and he crashed into her, landing on top of her.
“Hey, Bugaboo,” he whispered, leaning in close to her. She made a noise and pushed him away, but he noticed with satisfaction that she was blushing slightly.

They were at the TV Station.

Ladybug held the door for him and they walked silently down the hall.

Of course, Chat thought. Lady Wifi needs to broadcast our identities. What better way than to take control of all of Paris’ televisions?

For the first time all night, Chat felt a small flicker of fear. Lady Wifi had gotten smarter.

He watched in horror as he heard a voice, amplified by a microphone.

Much smarter.

“Hello, people of Paris. I’m Lady Wifi, and do I have a treat for you! I’m sure you’ve all seen everyone’s favorite superhero, Ladybug… now get ready to see her on camera!”

As if on cue, Ladybug bust the door open, yoyo spinning in her hand. Beside her, Chat held out his staff threateningly.

Lady Wifi laughed, and flung pink buttons from her phone. Ladybug and Chat were forced to bounce off the walls and ceiling to avoid them. A pause button whizzed past Ladybug’s head, rustling her hair.

“Stop this now, Alya!” She shouted, sounding more confident than she felt. If only her heart would stop pounding…

“Alya? I’m Lady Wifi now! Which reminds me…” She gave the camera a devilish smirk, putting a hand on her hip. “Would you all like to know who the real Ladybug is?”

Ladybug swung her yoyo at the villain, who calmly rolled out of the way to avoid it.

She’s gotten better, Ladybug noted, stomach dropping unpleasantly.

Lady Wifi flicked a button towards Chat Noir, who very narrowly missed it. He stumbled back, his staff clattering loudly to the ground. Lady Wifi stood in front of him, an evil smirk playing across her face.

“No!” Ladybug shouted, racing towards her. They crashed together and fell, black and red limbs tangled. Lady Wifi was upon her immediately.

“Game’s over, Ladybug,” she said quietly. “Or should I say, M--”

BANG.

Chat had swung his staff very hard at Lady Wifi’s head, and was staring in horror as the redhead blinked slowly, eyebrows knotting in confusion.

She didn’t move.

Ladybug did, though.

She knelt down beside Lady Wifi, hands shaking as she smoothed her hair and felt the hard lump where Chat had struck her.
“Alya…?”

Lady Wifi blinked, magenta eyes dazed and crossed.


Then she was hurtled very fast to the ground.

“Ladybug!” Chat cried out as he heard Lady Wifi’s laugh. The villain shot small pause buttons on Ladybug’s wrists and ankles, holding her firmly to the ground. Then she got to her feet and turned towards Chat with a malicious grin.

“Ready to play, kitty?”

“Sorry, I only let my Bugaboo call me that,” Chat responded, keeping his tone light as he spun his staff at Lady Wifi. Ladybug groaned from where she lay sprawled on the floor.

Lady Wifi rolled her eyes, shooting stop buttons at Chat. He slid to the floor to avoid them.

It was a mistake.

Lady Wifi stood over him again, slowly dragging her gloved finger across the phone--

“*Lucky Charm!*”

In a burst of blindingly pink light, Ladybug flicked her wrist, sending her yoyo flying.

Lady Wifi swore. “I shouldn’t have let her keep that yoyo,” she muttered.

Chat didn’t even have time to see what the lucky charm was.

The room went black instantly.

“What the--”

Chat squinted until his night vision kicked in. He watched as Lady Wifi stepped cautiously away from him, hands outstretched to feel her way around. He stood silently, and snatched her phone in one smooth motion.

“Stupid cat!” She immediately fumed, whirling to find him. Chat rolled out of her way, handing the phone to Ladybug, who tried and failed to smash it.

Chat supposed it was difficult, with her being so close to the ground.

He broke it himself, watching in wonder as the akuma fluttered out of it.

“Catch it!” He urged Ladybug. Her wrist flicked towards it, but the akuma flitted out of her reach.

“No--!”

“Come on, my lady--”

“Just-- a little-- farther--” She grunted as her body twisted with the effort of catching the little butterfly. “Chat, I can’t see it--”

He watched as the akuma fluttered slowly past his face, almost as if taunting him.
And he didn’t think.

Some strange feline instinct kicked in and he snatched it out of the air, cupping it in his clawed hands.

He knelt beside Ladybug, held it out to her--

With a beaming, confident smile, she caught it, her yoyo glowing white in the dark studio.

Lights flooded the room again, Lady Wifi’s suit disappeared to reveal a thoroughly discombobulated Alya, and Ladybug sprung to her feet, catching Chat’s fist in their familiar fist bump.

They stared each other, blue and green eyes conveying more than words ever could, and it was only until they heard the camera shutter that they broke eye contact.

“Ladybug! Chat Noir! Can I get an interview? It’ll be quick, I promise.”

Ladybug looked at Chat, giving him a wry smile. They both grinned at Alya.

“Sure,” she said, leading the girl out of the studio.

Remarkably, Alya put her phone away, and instead leaned against the wall of the building. The air was thick and dark. Ladybug could hardly see her best friend’s face.

“Okay, just one question,” Alya said. “Girl, why didn’t you just tell me?”

Ladybug sighed. “It wasn’t that easy, Alya. It’s called a secret identity for a reason. Besides, I wanted you to like me because I was Marinette, not because I was Ladybug.”

She felt Alya’s warm arms wrap around her shoulders, enveloping her in a tight hug. She hugged her back.

“Girl, how could I not like you as Marinette?! You’re awesome, and I’m lucky to have you as my best friend. I just…” her voice trailed off.

“Yeah. I know. And… I’m lucky to have you too.”

They hugged, eyes closed and smiles on their faces.

Ladybug felt as if a huge weight had been lifted off her shoulders.

Alya would love her no matter what.

“Thank you for understanding,” she said, voice muffled in Alya’s plaid shirt.

“Of course, girl. Remember, I’m always here for you! Wherever you go.”

Ladybug heard the warning beep and felt the transformation wash over her.

Alya stared at her in wonder.

And, Marinette noted, blushing, so did Chat.

She felt his arms around her waist, felt his warm breath against her cheek as he leaned in to whisper to her.
“As am I, Marinette. Wherever you go.”

Chapter End Notes

the end

comment other fic ideas!!

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