Heart and Home

by lc2l

Summary

In an alternate Paris, werewolves occupy the majority of the ruling classes, making and adjusting policy to suit their interests. The punishments for a human attacking a werewolf can be brutal, unless they have the protection of a wolf pack.

How this translates to 'claim Grantaire as your mate to get him out of prison' is something Enjolras is still trying to get his head around, but he's never been one to give up on a cause even when it's sleeping on his sofa.

Notes

This fic has been a long time coming and has travelled great distances to be here. This was originally written for the lesmisBB (for which my posting date was..uh...June) so thanks to them for all the support and I'm sorry I missed out. Also so much love to my artist Eirene who Got Enjolras so well and drew the amaaaazing picture of Wolfjolras. Go to her tumbler and give her allllll the love because it is BEAUTIFUL (and maybe she will draw us some more :) )

Shout out to my Twitter feed for putting up with me moaning about this fic for over a year now (sorry!). And all the love in the world for croissantkatie (KATIEKATIEKATIE) without whom this fic would have been abandoned back in the UK. Katie has done
cheerleading, plot advice, support; as well as beta-ing the first chapter and fixing the ao3 sign up. She is a superstar and the best person anyone could ask for <333

So this is chapter 1! I haven't numbered the remaining chapters but this fic is 90% finished so updates will be fairly regular (aiming for weekly). I am looking for a beta for future chapters so drop me a comment if that's something you'd be interested in.

This fic has come with me from the UK, through Australia and now here in New Zealand I finally get to share it with all of you. I hope you like it :)

Warnings: in this part, there's one instance of (consensual) biting. Future parts will have more violence, I'll give more specific warnings as they occur.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Chapter 1

The day of the full moon, Enjolras's skin itches. It starts somewhere around where his hackles would be and spreads out through the day until a few hours before sunset, when he feels ready to burst open revealing the animal underneath. It's like the rest of the month he manages to be a wolf and human in parallel, never the two shall meet, but when the moon is full and tugging at his consciousness, his skin suddenly gets two sizes too small.

-by Eirene
None of the other wolves he knows feel it: Combeferre just looked confused and said 'you don't tear off your skin to change' like logic might fix everything. Jehan commented once that on moon days, his shoes felt two sizes too big, as though they would fall off his feet. Enjolras has never found out if this was supposed to be comforting, or just Jehan being Jehan.

It never goes away. Most months he has learned to ignore it, to put it to the back of his mind, but if he's stressed or if anything bad is going down it surges up again stronger than ever.

By the time he's reached the Musain, forcing his bike through the swing-door so as not to waste precious moments locking it to the stand outside, he has fielded five texts and three phone calls from his family telling him that they understand his whatever is important but could he please calm down a little because he's making the whole pack shake.

He drops his bike in the doorway. Combeferre is at the bar, he has his back to the door but his head lifts when he feels Enjolras come in and he turns on the stool to face him. "You need a car."

Enjolras lives five minutes ride from the Musain. It would have been slower to drive in Paris traffic and he's had that argument with Combeferre a hundred times already. He doesn't go for a reprise today. 'Ferre's fingers are white around his glass and the water in it is trembling.

Of course, it would have been quicker still to run - four paws are faster than two wheels and it's not like Enjolras can't afford the toll - but with just over an hour to the full moon and his skin vibrating like a leaf on the wind, Enjolras has no faith in his ability to change back.

"Come on," 'Ferre says, already off his stool and moving towards the door by the bar marked Privé. "She's in the back."

The text Enjolras had got had just said 'code red bar now' which was their standard alert for 'someone is in more trouble than I can deal with without you.' Or - as Combeferre liked to put it - everything has gone to shit and you'd better do something because I'm sure as hell out of ideas. But Combeferre had said 'she', and disasters didn't usually get their own pronouns.

Enjolras casts his eyes around the bar as he follows Combeferre. Marius is curled up in the corner with Bossuet and Joly hovering around him in a way that suggests Cosette has already been called. Enjolras isn't usually the one called in for the emotional disasters though, and 'Ferre is ignoring Marius and pushing through the door.

Enjolras follows and finds Musichetta sitting on a crate of beer with a human girl. He doesn't recognise her by sight - brown hair tucked mostly away under a stained beret, faded grey blouse hanging too loose on a slim frame - but she smells of cheap alcohol, unwashed drunkards and the northern sewers. The same scents that seem to cling permanently onto Grantaire.

She looks up at him, eyes sharp as a wolf. "You must be Enjolras." She throws it like an accusation, as though he's supposed to answer for it in some way. "I thought you'd be taller."

Enjolras turns sideways to Combeferre, trying to fit all his questions into one quizzical expression. This girl doesn't look like a disaster, although she's eyeing him up like she wants to cause one.

"Enjolras," Combeferre says. "Meet Éponine." He turns from him to the girl. "Enjolras might be able to help Grantaire, if you tell him everything you told me."

Musichetta stands up. "I'll just -" she says, heading past the two of them and out the door. Éponine watches her go, then gives Enjolras another searching look, like she might find something in him she didn't the last few times.
Enjolras resists the urge to bare his teeth and turns from her to Combeferre. "What's happened to Grantaire?" Enjolras hasn't even seen Grantaire since the meeting last week. If this girl has lost him he isn't going to be any help. He doesn't know where Grantaire lives, what he does day to day. All Enjolras's attempts at conversation have crashed and burned in pits of embarrassment. Has he vanished? Combeferre is better at scent tracking than Enjolras, but maybe he thinks Enjolras has a better memory of Grantaire's scent?

Combeferre waits a moment, in case Eponine speaks, then sighs. "He's been arrested. Apparently."

"That's right," Éponine cuts. "You can't trust the human girl. Maybe she walked all the way across town to trick you into thinking your pet human was in trouble just for kicks. Seems like the kind of thing us humans do, right?"

"No one's accusing you of lying," Combeferre says, in the tone of one who has said this over and over and is still not believed. "It just doesn't seem like Grantaire, he's never done anything like this before."

"He'd never have done it at all if it wasn't for all you, if it wasn't for this." She waves a hand at the room, accusing a few crates of beer and a barrel of wine. "He threw a rock," she says, aiming her words at Enjolras. "And they arrested him. He's been in a cell since this morning."

"Why?" is the first question that comes to Enjolras's mind, followed by at what? and then this morning? but he holds down those two.

Éponine fixes her glare on him. "I don't know, do I. Message I got was pretty garbled. Apparently when he called he got through to Dad who mentioned it in passing to Gav who made Mum promise to give me the message immediately, so obviously I only got it three hours later. By the time it got to me it was 'your brother says Grantaire's thrown a rock at someone, go see if he'll be working tonight when you've finished clearing glasses.'"

She kicks at the crate of beer she's sitting on. "There's no bus to the police station, and little to no chance they'd let me in to see him. Figured he'd talked about this place enough, one of you do-gooder dogs might be hanging around. You're supposed to give a crap about humans, right? Or is that just a load of old horseshit."

"We care," Combeferre says stepping in before Enjolras can do something stupid like get angry. If he looks beyond the bravado and the death glares, he can see Éponine's hands are shaking almost as badly as his and this close to the moon he can hear how fast her heart is thumping.

How bold does a human girl have to be to walk into a nest of wolves and ask for their help? Enjolras focuses on breathing slowly, steadying his own heartbeat, resisting the urge to scratch at his palms. "Was it an accident?" he says. "I could call my lawyer."

Éponine's mouth twists. "He was pissed off about something when he left. Normally he just gets pissed enough to get pissed, if you know what I mean, but maybe he did something."

Grantaire never came to the Musain without smelling strongly of wine, and never sat through the meetings without a bottle or more to hand. Feuilly sold him the dregs of barrels, bottles past their prime, anything he couldn't sell to anyone else but Grantaire never complained and he got a fair discount.

He spent entire meetings sitting at a table at the back of the room drinking or sketching something on any scrap of paper he could find. Some meetings he showed up, sat at his table and promptly fell asleep, only waking up as everyone left.
He always came though.

Éponine looks over at Combeferre. "That's all I've got, same as I told you before, now can I go? This place is giving me fleas."

Enjolras bites down his snarl. "Considering you're here asking us for help, you could be a bit politer."

She bares her teeth right back at him, as though she was a wolf herself. "You think I want to be in your den begging you for help? With your dogs and your traitors, I'd be happy for you all to go to hell but Grantaire's mine and god forbid but he likes you. He comes to your meetings and does whatever the fuck you want. He never had problems until he met you dogs, so far as I'm concerned you owe him."

Combeferre always says Enjolras's temper will get them all into trouble, and the pull of the moon definitely isn't helping. There's few enough humans in their group and if he manages to alienate Grantaire's friend, they might lose one of the few they have. "We're on your side, Éponine," Combeferre says, while Enjolras bites down on apologies that - judging by her face - will only make this worse.

"I didn’t mean -" Enjolras says. "Helping you, that's the point of all this. We're on your side and his side, we want to help."

Éponine stands upright. Not that it helps, she's still a good head and a half shorter than Enjolras. "You've probably got a pack in the city with a big house and half your cousins are in parliament."

She leans forward to look directly in his eye. "You're about a million miles, and more than a million euros away from my side and I'm pretty sure you've forgotten that." She steps back, turning away to grab her purse from the floor beside the crate. "But they won't let me in, so I guess you're all he's got."

Combeferre steps aside obligingly to let her storm out.

"She's... interesting," Enjolras says. "I'm guessing we believe her?"

"Marius vouched for her trustworthiness," Combeferre says. "Of course, then she called him a mongrel and a traitor so I'm not sure he'd do it again." He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his phone. "But I found this while I was waiting for you."

Enjolras takes the phone. It's open to a news story: Senator Tholymès has been admitted to hospital with a concussion from an object thrown with force colliding with his head. A suspect was in custody and had confessed.

Enjolras sits down on the recently vacated crate. "You think that was Grantaire?" It seems unbelievable. Sure Tholymes is one of the men they have come back to over and over in the fight for equality, but he was always struck off lists of people to take action against. Too powerful, too well connected. The idea that someone might take him on alone beggared belief, the idea of it being Grantaire, well.

"I know it's hard to believe, but we have to act for the worst case scenario. Even if the Senator makes a full recovery tomorrow, he's not going to drop this. A human raising a hand against a senator? That would be amazing for his campaign, and the press would have a field day. A bad judge could get Grantaire in max security for years." Combeferre is kicking his foot against the ground, not meeting Enjolras's eyes. It doesn't matter, this close to the full moon they don't really have any secrets.
"You think I should claim him."

"We always discussed it as an option. Your pack would take him a lot further than a lawyer could, further than any amount of money. If Grantaire was claimed before he threw the rock, any decent lawyer can prove he wasn't responsible." He glances up, drags a hand across the top of his head. "I can't see another way out, and believe me I've been trying."

"He wasn't claimed before, any wolf will be able to tell that."

"He was picked up by the Saint-Denis police." Combeferre says, then rolls his eyes at Enjolras's confused expression. "They don't have a werewolf on permanent staff. Day of the full moon, there probably hasn't been a wolf there all day." His fingers tap impatiently against his thigh. "If you can get in there tonight, claim him and get him out there'll be no way to prove that he wasn't yours before he threw anything. You can take full responsibility."

And where a human would get life in prison, Enjolras gets a slap on the wrist and a fine. Justice for all. "Are you sure about the station? If there's one wolf there we'll all get done for fraud."

"I'm sure. The place is led by a man named Javert. He's a werewolf sympathiser but he's never found anyone willing to turn or even claim him. He's sent about a hundred letters to different pack leaders, including your father. Play up the rich young pack heir and he'll be falling over himself to please you."

Enjolras feels a sharp pain and glances down to see he's been scratching at his palms hard enough to graze the skin. He shoves his hands in his pockets and tries to ignore them. "This is the ultimate last-ditch solution, we said. What if something happens to Bahorel tomorrow? Or Feuilly?"

"I don't know," Combeferre admits. "All I know is we can worry about Feuilly tomorrow, tomorrow. Right now Grantaire is sitting in a cell wondering if anyone's going to come for him and what are we supposed to say? Yes, we could've got you out but we chose not to?"

Enjolras gets off the crate. He needs to pace. "I could say he's a friend of the family, give him the name without the connection. Maybe if I suggest to Javert that I'll turn him if he let's Grantaire go."

"Oh that's sure to work. Just roll up to the station and try it. 'Yes, I know he's committed GBH and if you let him out there's no way of tracking him but he's a family friend and I'd really like it if you didn't shut him up in prison.'"

Enjolras turns on him. Combeferre has a single eyebrow raised as though daring Enjolras to contradict him. "This isn't a joke," Enjolras says. "He doesn't even like me, he's hardly going to agree to be bound into my pack."

Combeferre shrugs. "He might like it more than prison."

"Not much of a choice, is it."

"Right now the only options are letting him make that choice, or you making it for him. Believe me, I've been trying to think of another option. I know how you feel about him, if there was any other way -"

When they first started the group, Combeferre had been in charge of creating contingency plans if any member got in trouble. He'd asked then if Enjolras would be willing to claim a member in dire need, and then put that at the bottom of a very long list of options. If he's bringing it up, there's no other way. "I know." Enjolras glances at his watch. "The moon's going to rise in an hour."
"Take my car." Combeferre starts unbuttoning his shirt. "And get that hoodie off. When you show up at that station you need to be the kind of wolf that screams 'my uncle plays golf with the supreme justice and my mother is more powerful than god' not 'I only own three items of clothing and all of them are red'."

Enjolras opens his mouth to object then looks down. He's wearing a zip up hoodie (red) over yesterday's T-shirt (also red). He holds out his hand for the shirt. "He still might say no."

Combeferre shrugs. "We've got to try."

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Grantaire looks awful. It might be the halogen bulb in the little room the receptionist had led Enjolras to - after a fair amount of yelling and a call to a superior officer. The white light casts off Grantaire's dishevelled curls, leaving dark shadows twisting across his face, only matched by the thick bands under his eyes when he looks up to see Enjolras standing in the doorway.

"Fuck." He sounds tired, his voice grating a little. Enjolras should've brought him some water, some wine, *something*.

He's sitting in a metal framed chair, but isn't handcuffed. Javert had offered all too eagerly to sit in on the meeting, an offer Enjolras had hastily declined. He'd had to point out multiple times that werewolves rarely had trouble in competitions of strength against humans, and if some miraculous escape did occur, he could just shift forms to deal with it.

"You look awful," he says, which is not a good start but he can't stop staring at Grantaire's T-shirt, old, grey and stained and hanging loose on his shoulders.

Grantaire cracks a smile. "Pick-up lines like that, it's a wonder you're still single."

The first time Grantaire had come to the ABC he'd stumbled through the door, interrupting Enjolras mid-speech - right at that perfect moment when, after several minutes of build up, Enjolras had finally figured out his point and was ready to talk about it all day - and stared around at them, as though he'd expected to find something else beneath the fluorescent sign reading *Le Musain*.

Enjolras never found the thread of that speech again. He said something about unity then returned to his seat, let Combeferre deal with plans and strategies and didn't turn in his chair to look at the human in the back slouching as he watched with a bottle of wine in one hand more than twice. He was a distraction, maybe, but he spent most of the meeting more focused on his hands and the wine than the speeches so Enjolras figured he wouldn't come back.

But he did. Showed up to every meeting with his hair in various states of disarray, his hands at various stages of shake. He started leaving sketches on napkins - each of their faces picked out in perfect detail, hints of wolves lurking in the shadows of their eyes - and tapping his fingers in time to Enjolras's more rhythmic speeches.

He came for three weeks without saying anything at all, and then his first contribution was a "that's what she said" that sent Enjolras's entire train of thought off the rails and a smile that hit Enjolras somewhere else entirely.

Enjolras pulls out a second metal chair and sits down, even if he doesn't urgently need to be seated now, he has a feeling he'll need to before this conversation gets much further. "Why?" he says.

Grantaire shrugs, like he honestly can't remember. "He was being a dick." He reaches up to brush curls out of his eyes. "I'm guessing you being here means that I shouldn't have."
Javert had spent a solid fifteen minutes going over all of the evidence in his case of Grantaire Vs. the entire Government senate. Enjolras had had to point out that his dad was best friends with the senator in question's boss just to get him to shut up long enough for Enjolras to turn the law back around on him. Any claimed human has the right to meet with the wolf that owns them.

Lucky Javert was a human. A werewolf would have spotted the blush, the raised heartbeat, the total lack of any shared scent between them and sent Enjolras packing without so much as a wave goodbye.

"He was a pretty important dick," Enjolras agrees. He's tired, itching all over and he has half an hour at best to get Grantaire out before the full moon hits in earnest. "Javert wants to prosecute you for Grievous bodily harm, conspiracy to commit assault and possibly attempted murder, he was fairly adamant about it all." Right up until Enjolras had claimed Grantaire as part of his pack, when Javert had suddenly got very quiet and bug-eyed. Funny how that worked out.

Grantaire's mouth opens, stays open for a moment, then closes again. He's staring as though still trying to make sense of the words coming out of Enjolras's mouth.

Enjolras isn't doing so well himself. He's looking at Grantaire and trying to imagine bonding with him. The whole exercise seems futile, even in his head. He couldn't convince Grantaire to get coffee, let alone to surrender his life and liberty.

"Well," Grantaire says, when the silence has stretched entirely too long - the moon is coming and Enjolras needs to get this done, but he can't find the words when Grantaire keeps looking at him. His eyes are green, did Enjolras know that before? "Thanks for coming, I guess. And for - letting me know. I'll be honest, I wasn't even sure Thénardier would pass on a message. Did Éponine call you?"

"She came to the Musain, caused a bit of a stir." He decides not to mention the assorted insults or the way Marius had been huddled in the corner of the bar.

Grantaire seems to get it anyway. "Yeah she's not such a big fan. I meant - I didn't expect you to come."

Enjolras blinks. "Who did you -?"

"Feuilly," he shrugs. "Maybe Jehan. Someone who actually likes me." He offers up a smile as though this is some solid fact that they're supposed to bond over.

Somehow, Enjolras manages to resist the urge to laugh hysterically. "You think I don't like you?"

Grantaire tilts his head a little. "I'll be honest, until you walked in here I wasn't sure you knew my name, so -."

"You're a member of the group."

"Am I?" Grantaire visibly brightens. "Cool."

"I mean," Enjolras steels himself. Twenty minutes to moonrise. "You've officially won the 'most reckless member of the ABC' award." He half reaches out to take Grantaire's hand, then realises they're almost definitely not at that stage of friendship, and his palm drops awkwardly onto his own knee, trying to pretend like that was what it intended all along.

"Is the prize multiple years in prison?" he says it with his customary grin, but it doesn't come anywhere near his eyes and even in human form Enjolras can smell him starting to sweat. "Because
I don't win many contests, but I think maybe I will regret winning this one."

"We have a back-up plan, of sorts." This is it then. Make or break. "Combeferre and I, we planned out different levels of what we could do to help out. It's - my pack, my family are pretty high up, in government. My name is worth a lot."

Grantaire's forehead folds into a slightly confused frown. "Are you suggesting we get married?"

"No," Enjolras says quickly. "Nothing that - not like that. I mean, my pack." He stands up, he has to move. "There's this wolf ritual, it's called 'claiming' or 'bonding'." Also 'mating' but no need to bring that one up at all ever. "I claim you and that would give you the protection of my pack. So where a human would serve multiple years of jail time, with my name and a pack behind you there would be different expectations from the courts. They'd be more lenient, it would be as if I had done it, or as if you were a wolf."

Enjolras stops pacing and turns back. Grantaire's expression has gone from confused to guarded. "I know what claiming is," he says. "Humans as things. I thought that was everything you were fighting against. Bit hypocritical, isn't it?"

Enjolras drags a hand back through his hair. "Yes," he says simply. "Yes, I disagree entirely with the system, it's a horrible system and it's been abused endlessly to force people into all kinds of awful situations but right now it might save your life."

Grantaire looks down at his own hands, silent for a long moment. "You said this is your last ditch emergency plan."

Combeferre claimed Courfeyrac after an incident with a warehouse and a fire. Joly and Bossuet both put their names forward for Musichetta after she was caught spray painting slogans on the overpass. They had been saving Cosette for emergencies, but then she met Marius and no one could bear to tell her she couldn't turn him. Not when they clearly wanted it so much. Enjolras was the last ditch plan and somewhere along the line he seems to have become the only plan.

"Maybe you should save it. I'm sure anyone in the ABC would make better use of it than I would."

If he was a wolf, Enjolras would press up next to him, nip his ears and push at him until he brightened up. Emotions are so much easier to deal with when they're wolves. "You're in the ABC. It's yours, if you want it."

Grantaire hasn't asked what a claim entails, just sits there tearing apart the cuticles of his fingers. "If I don't, I get at least five years in prison. What happens if I do?"

"We have a pretty good lawyer. And Javert - he's one of those humans who likes to suck up to us, to wolves. When he found out who I was - " he'd been one step away from bowing and scraping. Being from an old wolf family had its advantages. "A fine, maybe some community service. My family might have to throw some parties." He glances down at Grantaire's hands and adds, with a confidence he doesn't quite feel but is getting better at faking. "You could walk out with me right now."

Grantaire looks around himself at the grey walls, the plain metal tables like he's actually contemplating a lifetime of it. "Ok," he says it soft, like Enjolras might not have the ears of a wolf, might not catch it. "If you're sure you want to bond with me."

Whether Enjolras wants to bond with Grantaire is a question that could keep a debate team going for a month, but he definitely doesn't want to leave him here a moment longer than he has to.
"Okay." He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his phone. Fifteen minutes to moonrise. He should've looked this up in the car on the way over, but Combeferre called so many times with last minute advice on how to play the 'rich young wolf' card that Enjolras had just left him on speaker.

Grantaire leans over his arm to get a look. "Are you looking up how to claim a human on wikihow?"

This close, Enjolras can sift past the booze and the piss-stench of the smells down to something underneath, rich and earthy that's all Grantaire. His weight is warm against Enjolras's arm and Enjolras tries to ignore the way his face is heating up. "I've never done this before."

"That's what she said?" Grantaire offers with a vague attempt at a grin. "Isn't it just a bite? I'm sure there's biting involved."

"That's the gist," Enjolras says, scanning the article quickly as he can. "There's a ritual you can do so the bond is a bit more equal, I have all the supplies in the car." Probably. It's Combeferre's car and he doubts Combeferre would go anywhere without at least one emergency medical kit stashed in the trunk.

His phone pops up a notification letting him know it's fifteen minutes to moonrise and he should be finding a safe space to change.

"Shit," Grantaire says when he sees it. "Just do the quick one."

The quick one is one hundred percent what Enjolras is fighting against and he scrolls quicker. The ritual just needs a few sacred knives, a splash of blood from both parties, five minutes of chanting but if he rushes he might be able to get through it in three. Still not enough time. "I could use it to take advantage."

Grantaire raises one eyebrow at him. "I really, honestly don't think you could." He kicks Enjolras in the ankle. "Either do the quick one or come back tomorrow, fearless leader. I haven't spent a night sober in a while, but the beds here are uncomfortable enough that I probably won't need to worry about falling asleep."

Nine minutes to moonrise and Grantaire's right, they really don't have time. "I need to bite you somewhere they haven't seen, they have to believe you've been claimed for months."

"Lying to the cops, I like it." Grantaire says, standing up and pulling his T-shirt up. "Hip? Lucky for you I haven't been strip-searched or this could have got awkward fast."

Enjolras is definitely not thinking about that, also trying hard not to think about what he's about to do. With the minutes literally flashing by to the full moon, doing a controlled shift is going to be hard enough without the distraction of Grantaire's slightly shifting stomach, the newly exposed triangle of dark skin, the way his jeans are sitting low where they confiscated his belt. "Are you sure?" he asks again.

"I'm not getting less sure," Grantaire says, and it's not exactly eager assent but it's going to have to do because Enjolras's teeth are already shifting, his jaw stretching out to make extra space. He can feel the moon running under his skin, pushing him towards a full change. Everything would be simpler, everything would be easier. Wolves don't have to worry about rules and rituals, they see something they want and they take it.

He remembers at the last moment to keep the bite small, enough to break the skin but not enough to require medical attention - does Grantaire have insurance? They'll need to add him to the pack
policy - and as soon as he tastes iron and warmth in his mouth he breaks off, tearing his face away and turning his back until he can push the call of the moon down. A pressure pushes somewhere at the back of Enjolras's mind, like something's making space, and then eases off.

God, he wants to break down on all fours. He wants to run. Behind him Grantaire smells of sweat and booze and something new, spreading out from his hip. A low thrum of fur and forest and pack.

Enjolras breathes in the smell of home, and his mouth shrinks back to human size, delaying the change just a little longer. "Are you alright?" he says, a little muffled through oversized teeth as soon as he has a mouth that can form words. "I didn't hurt you too bad?"

He turns around. Grantaire still has his T-shirt hiked up. He’s not looking at Enjolras, just watching his own blood slowly dripping down to his jeans. "I'm fine.” He tugs his top down sharply, presses his hand over the dark area where the blood starts soaking through. “You said something about walking out with you?"

Enjolras can smell the blood, but right now it's not too visible to the casual observer. Grantaire's right though, they need to leave right now.

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It takes everything he's got in him to stay upright. Javert catches them before they've taken two steps out the interrogation room, saying something about how he's not sure this is in line with official protocol. Enjolras shrugs, playing the disaffected rich boy role as well as he knows how. "I need him with me."

"He threw a rock at a senator," Javert says.

Enjolras glances over his shoulder to where Grantaire is still following, determinably not limping, one hand pressed against his side. "A rock? Really?"

Grantaire grins back. "It just sort of came to me."

"I may need to question him further," Javert says.

Enjolras rolls his eyes and gives a long sigh. "What is there to ask? He threw a rock, he just admitted it. Case closed. Any wolf could tell you that he's mine, I'll keep him with me. You want to hear from him -" he reaches into his pocket and pulls out a card, flicking it in Javert's direction. "The number of my family's lawyer. Give that a call, we'll make sure he comes in."

"With all due respect -"

Enjolras turns on him, lets the moon creep a little further under his skin so his eyes flash and his hackles shiver. "Are you implying that my pack might break faith with the law?"

Javert makes a valiant attempt at meeting Enjolras's gaze for all of half a second before he folds. "Of course - I mean - I hold your father in the highest regard. As always I can only strive to reach the heights to which your people may attain."

He'd always known that some humans idolised wolves, desperate to join them. He'd just never actually met one. He turns on his heel and keeps walking.

"Paperwork," Javert says, with the air of one playing an ace, half jogging to catch up. "There are some release forms, and of course I'll need to run a test to confirm the bond between you." He cast a suspicious look towards Grantaire. "He didn't mention it at all when we brought him in, or during
"I didn't want to bring shame on the family," Grantaire said easily, as though he'd been holding the excuse ready for some time. Not that it was even an excuse, really. At least half the bound humans were given strict instructions not to bring up their packs in times of trouble so as to avoid situations like this one, where Enjolras could be named as responsible for Grantaire's actions. But how would Grantaire know that?

Enjolras looks down at his watch to cover his surprise. Ten minutes. "Are you aware of the time, officer? I am in somewhat of a hurry."

"Perhaps if we kept him in a cell overnight, you could collect him in the morning when you have - ah - recovered?"

By which time Grantaire will have had no choice but to reveal the brand new wound on his side and the whole ruse will be dead in the water. "I need him tonight. He grounds me."

Javert glances back at Grantaire in surprise. Not exactly unwarranted. Grounding humans are known for being solid, dependable personalities. Unemotional, definitely not prone to random acts of violence. "You need to sign his release papers," he says, this apparently being the one hurdle he will not skip around. "There's a lunar hotel two minutes down the road, you'll be able to make it."

Enjolras resists the urge to scratch his arms against the nearest wall. "I suppose we'll have to."

* *

He has to break the first rule of politics: Never sign anything you haven't had at least three lawyers read in full. Javert keeps pulling out more and more pieces of paper. The bond test - a quick blood sample from both of them - flickers orange for a moment longer than normal. Long enough for Enjolras's claws to scratch at their beds from nerves, but before any human would notice the delay the LEDs turn bright green. Bond confirmed.

Grantaire gives Enjolras a rueful 'guess you're stuck with me' half-smile and Enjolras has to force his eyes down to the signature box before his hand starts growing fur. His fingers are already twitching which is a pain for holding a pen but he has to sign for Grantaire's release, the release of his personal property (a mobile phone from about fifty years ago, two shoelaces, a belt, three pencils and a rock) and the guarantees that he would remain in Enjolras's custody until such a time as he was summoned to trial.

Finally Javert pushes a ten page document on the correct treatment of a prisoner under house arrest into Enjolras's hands with a final 'mention my name to your father, won't you?' that Enjolras is determined to ignore, and they're allowed out into the street where the last glimmer of yellow light is just fading off the horizon.

He tosses Combeferre's keys to Grantaire. "You can drive, right?"

"I... can?" Grantaire's got his phone in one hand, hitting the first speed dial without looking down at it.

Enjolras doesn't offer further explanation, just slides into the passenger seat. His vocal chords are starting to twist and he's not sure how to explain that it's taking all his focus to make sure his hands remain hands, let alone remember how to work a steering wheel.

"Hey 'Ponine," Grantaire is saying as he gets into the driver's seat and starts the car. "Yeah, he got me out but I'm not gonna make it to work. Full moon. No, I'm not but unless you've made a friend
with a car in the last twelve hours, I'm stuck here."

Enjolras tries to calculate distances to the nearest bus stop - if he really forces the change down they could have five minutes - but his brain is running at about 20% human and isn't great at maths at the best of times.

Grantaire smells really good. If they'd waited five more minutes on the bond test Enjolras wouldn't even have been nervous, the way the pack scents are mixing into the familiar weight of Grantaire's presence.

"You'd think jail would be a valid excuse," Grantaire has managed to balance the phone between his shoulder and ear so he can reverse the car out. "No, yeah I get it. I think until sunrise? I'll give you a call when I'm headed back." He lets the phone drop into his lap, pulling onto the main road. "Éponine says thanks."

Enjolras looks at him.

"Okay she actually said 'guess he's good for something' but that's, like, Eponine for thanks." He squints through the window. "Was she awful at the Musain? I wasn't sure what to do, I didn't know any of the emergency numbers."

The emergency numbers were permanently on a blackboard at the Musain with instructions for every member of the ABC to memorize at least one of them in case of an emergency. Enjolras snarls a little.

"Yeah," Grantaire agrees. "But, like, I wasn't expecting this any more than you were."

Then why did you do it? the question sits somewhere at the back of Enjolras's mind but he doubts Grantaire would understand that one in snarls. He opens the glove compartment instead, digging around as Grantaire pulls off the main road. The hotel card is under a few packs of biscuits and an over-engineered breathalyser, but at least it's there.

The Lunar Hotel is an island of blue lights, the same bland cream-and-pastels decor that's present in a thousand identical buildings nationwide. They don't stop to park the car, Grantaire cuts the engine in front of the steps and Enjolras holds himself upright long enough to get into the lobby. A flash of the pack loyalty card gets a man in a concierge jacket to come running.

There's a big clock on the wall counting down which is something Enjolras could definitely live without since it's well into the seconds.

"Um -" Grantaire has come in. Enjolras pulls himself to a stop, letting the concierge run on ahead to open the nearest suite. "I need to park, I guess."

One of the bellhops walks over, clearly not sure what to make of him. "We have a valet service and -" His eyes flick down to the blood soaked into Grantaire's T-shirt, then he turns to Enjolras "Your bond will be staying with you?"

Grantaire rubs the back of his neck. "With the wolf? Me? Is that - do we normally do that?"

Enjolras pushes back at the change, fighting for control of his own throat. This close to moonrise every word cuts but he can't leave Grantaire with any doubts. "The claim, I'll feel it, I won't -" he swallows, clarifies. "The wolf won't hurt you."

Grantaire hesitates half a heartbeat longer, then drops Combeferre's car keys into the bellhop’s hand and follows Enjolras into the suite.
It's fairly basic - has to be, with wolves running wild every full moon. There's a small cot in the corner, a bathroom with a sign on the door reading 'please lock during transformation'. Normally there would be food provided, but then every time Enjolras has stayed in one of these before they've given the desk staff more than thirty seconds warning.

Speaking of. There's a metal sheet that can be pulled across the window, but it's been left open and the moonlight is spilling out over the frame. Enjolras grits his - human - teeth against it long enough to push half of Combeferre's shirt buttons free and then loses the battle and has to pull it off over his head.

Grantaire coughs behind him, shutting the door to the suite with a bang. "Stripping. Right. Should have considered that. I'll just - uh - find something for this bite."

Enjolras should care, should say something but he's been fighting this off for too long. It's all he can do to get his belt and flies open before he's kicking off his shoes and jeans into a heap on the floor.

And he changes.

There are essays, theses, books on the subject of how wolves fit inside human skins, how the shift breaks and rebuilds every bone in the body, how fur grows at an impossible rate, teeth don't replace but simply change shape, adapting to fit a muzzle growing where there was none before. Lifetimes of research have gone into basic details: where does a tail go when not in use, where do claws come from, why - why - does rebuilding the entire human form in the space of a few minutes not go hand in hand with the kind of intense agony usually reserved for victims of particularly brutal torture.

It doesn't hurt at all. Switching shape is a hard stretch after a long day, kicking off an uncomfortable pair of shoes after walking a mile, dropping a heavy load - finally - to the floor. Everything relaxes, settles and is simpler.

Enjolras shakes himself to dislodge any stray strands of fur, stretches his forepaws out before him, lifts his head to catalogue the smells in the room. They clean these chain hotels well, there's barely a hint of whoever shifted here last. Even the walls are almost odour proof, he can just about detect a female wolf next door, but no more. There's no food, not within his sense range, and he bares his teeth, growling to himself at the idea.

His colour vision has faded out, blurring at the edges but his sense of smell has increased more than enough to compensate. A door opens behind him and he lifts his muzzle to smell the warmth of a body, faint traces of alcohol, a low underlying note of self as though he was duplicated and part of him was resting under Grantaire's skin.

He turns to watch Grantaire shutting the bathroom door carefully behind him. If he breathes deeper, he can smell traces of Eponine on Grantaire's skin, as well as Javert, the iron of the handcuffs they used to arrest him, the dried piss stench of the holding cell.

"Right," Grantaire says, the human words taking their time to trickle down into Enjolras's consciousness. "Wolf."

He's holding a towel to his hip, but Enjolras can smell the fresh blood underneath it. More than that, he can feel the mark of his teeth in Grantaire's skin, the slight shadow in the back of his mind where Grantaire has settled into place.

In wolf form, his head is a little higher than the bite. He pads forward - the rough scattering of
twigs and pine needles they scatter in these places is no substitute for earth - and touches his nose against Grantaire's hand. Smells like home, wine, cheap hotel soap.

Slowly, the hand moves to touch his head, smoothing the fur down between his ears. Grantaire is mumbling something but his wolf mind doesn't waste time understanding it. He touches his nose to the cuts instead. They're well done, shallow enough that the blood flow is already stopped. *Mine.*

Satisfied, he pads away from his human towards the window where the moon shines down on his fur. In the light, he lets his eyes slide shut and tilts his muzzle up to join the howl. He's distant, too far from home, but he can still feel his pack slipping in behind him, their voices echoing just behind his eyelids, filling out the sound. Some of the pups start poking at the new branch in the pack web, trying to work out why Grantaire isn't howling with them.

‘Really, dear?’ his mother sighs. Wolves don't have words, but the feelings that go with them come easy enough.

Enjolras bristles a little ‘*had to, justice!*’ and she lets him go, with the vague knowledge that they will have *words* as soon as they have the bodies to go with them.

There's a press of familiarity and Combeferre is in the howl, closer than any of the others. Through him, Enjolras can feel the warmth of a sofa, Courfeyrac nearby, can almost hear Courf laughing. Combeferre touches the connection to Grantaire very briefly, and there's a flare of understanding. ‘*Good.*’

He's pulled back out into the real world with a jolt, a press of warmth against his shoulder and his eyes flash open, nose lifting to smell - *homesweatsweetmine* - and Grantaire, sitting next to him watching the moon.

Enjolras stops howling, lets his pack slip off into their hunts or - for Combeferre - their monthly naps. Grantaire is speaking, soft human sounds that quiet down the urge to follow the pack into forests, running down deer between the trees.

Enjolras turns his muzzle into Grantaire's neck, to breathe in the familiar smells of him now mixed up with the underlying thread of *minemenemine* and after a moment he feels warm fingers threading back through his fur, running warm down his back.

Emotions are easier for wolves. He sinks his head down onto Grantaire's knee in the moonlight and his tail brushes back and forth behind him.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

"I know what a claim is," Grantaire says. "I am a person who exists in the world."

Chapter Notes

Thanks to croissantkatie for doing a beta on this chapter. I am still looking for a beta for the rest of the fic, it is about 80k total, I'm trying to post 5-10k a week and should just need a general spag check.

The last few paragraphs of this chapter feature references to graphic violence by wolves against humans (not main characters).

Waking up in a different body to the one you fell asleep in is a disorienting experience, however many times you go through it. Waking up on the floor is similarly unpleasant. Enjolras has apparently been using his arm as a pillow since shifting back, because he's numb from the elbow down and hesitant to move it because then there’ll be pins and needles and it's too early for that kind of torture.

Also the sun is blazing in his face so he can't even put his head back down on his numb limb and sleep until the world stops conspiring to be awful. He's just going to have to lie here and relive with agonising clarity the moment last night where he rolled over and let Grantaire rub his belly.

He's got good hands. Artists' hands as Enjolras has explained to Combeferre probably too many times and it turns out he uses them for solid stroking work and really top notch belly rubs that should not feel as good as they do.

Wrong floor, numb arm and thinking about Grantaire’s hands running across his body in this form is getting him hard. Oh, and also he's naked. God, if every human saw a werewolf during a Morning After the whole 'superior species' concept would die a quiet, embarrassed death in a corner.

Enjolras cracks an eyelid open against the bright light of the sun and gets his first glimpse of good news all morning: Grantaire is still asleep, ignorant of the shambles that Enjolras's life has become. He's on the pallet in the corner, a formerly-white towel pressed to his side and Combeferre's shirt acting as a somewhat sparse blanket.

Enjolras closes his eyes and takes a long breath through his nose. Smells are always weaker in human form, but he can't pick up any injuries outside of the obvious one. Which is a relief, yes. It's one thing to know objectively that a wolf will recognise and not attack a claimed human, it's a whole other thing to lock said human in with the wolf on a full moon with no prior experimentation.

Not that the hotel staff had hesitated.
He rolls onto his stomach and pushes himself upright, moving as silently as he can as he opens the bathroom door.

It looks exactly like every other Lunar Hotel bathroom. A few small bottles stamped with the hotel logo, an opened bar of soap. There's a small table with a sign over it reading 'Bedding materials for post-transformation sleep (please remember to check-out prior to 1pm)'. The table underneath has no bedding on it - curse of not booking ahead, he supposes - but Enjolras's clothes are folded on top of it.

He showers, letting hot water pound away the last few urges to howl, to run through the forest. If he thinks about running his fingers through dark curls and pressing his knuckles against a scar in the shape of his own teeth while he jerks off - well - there's no one to know. He can compartmentalise, he can deal with this and it's not going to be weird. They don't even have to see each other, not outside meetings. This one night will pass and then it'll be just like before, Enjolras watching Grantaire more than he should, only now he'll have the perfect excuse for not doing anything about it.

He's tugged his jeans up to his thighs before he remembers that his shirt is currently performing duties as a makeshift blanket. Grantaire's T-shirt is hanging over the towel rail, the stain largely soaked out, so he tugs that over his head instead. He's taller, but Grantaire has broader shoulders and it seems to even out.

His phone buzzes in his pocket as he's stepping out of the bathroom and he pulls it out. In the - he checks the time - three hours since sunrise, he has managed to miss three calls from his mother, one from Combeferre and receive a text from Bahorel that just says 'lol.'

Apparently he doesn't have to worry about how to explain this situation to the rest of the ABC. He wonders if Courfeyrac saw Bahorel this morning, or decided to save time and just send a group text.

Grantaire is sitting up, reaching up one handed to push his hair back off his face and yawning. "More disasters?"

Enjolras glances up at him, getting a solid view of Grantaire's chest which - hello - he probably didn't need but has nevertheless been imprinted on his mind forever. "Not unless you count having to explain all this to my mother."

There's a flash of something in Grantaire's eyes, then it's gone. "Don't tell her?"

Enjolras answers, "I could smell it on you. Last night." That's worse, that's definitely worse. Enjolras is a public speaker, son of a politician, he is supposed to be good at words.

Grantaire's mouth twists. "I've got to get home, dude. And shower, those cells were not full of roses."

"No," Enjolras agrees, realising a moment later that maybe that was weird, since he was never actually in them - "I could smell it on you. Last night." That's worse, that's definitely worse. Enjolras is a public speaker, son of a politician, he is supposed to be good at words.

Grantaire just gives him a slightly strange sideways look, that turns into a familiar half-grin. "Well now I feel bad for not showering sooner. You call mama Enjolras, I'll wash off prison and then you can drive me home."
Which conveniently leaves no time for them to actually talk. Enjolras should be annoyed by that, but given that he still has no idea what he's going to say, possibly it's for the best.

He waits for the bathroom door to shut and then calls his first missed call back. There's a moment of dial tone and then his mother picks up. "Really, dear?"

*

He'd promised his mother that he'd have a proper talk with Grantaire as soon as they were alone, but he manages to drive all the way back into town without thinking of any way to break the awkward silence that came over them when they realised they would have to both strip or go home in each other's shirts.

Grantaire's T-shirt is still a little bit damp, it's soaking into the waistband of Enjolras's jeans. "Are you sure I can't take you to a hospital?" It's not a long discussion on consent and equality in a partnership and all the benefits Grantaire can expect from his new position, but at least it's words.

Grantaire pulls up Courf's shirt and pokes at his side. "It's scabbed over, should be fine. Anyway, They might get a bit suspicious of your 'we've been bound for months' plan if I show up in hospital the morning after with fresh bite marks."

Enjolras has never heard of a werewolf bite becoming infected but that doesn't mean it's impossible. He tries not to imagine what his father would say if he found out that Enjolras had just let a bite victim go without any kind of aftercare. "Bites close up fast, it's an evolutionary thing, I think. Can't have a new were bleeding out before they get to their first full moon."

Grantaire traces his finger across the shape of Enjolras's jaw on his skin. "Do people ever turn into werewolves during a claiming ritual?"

"You're not susceptible."

"Immune to lycanthropy, I know." Combeferre insisted on checking every member of the ABC, so as to draw up a comprehensive list of possible solutions to any troubles. "I just meant generally."

Enjolras tries to think through all of the weird 'I bit this one guy who...' stories he's heard in his life. "It's different. Biting to claim and biting to turn. Intent matters, I think."

"You don't seem sure." He lets the shirt drop back over the bite.

"This is the first time I've ever done either." He looks down at his hands on the wheel and steels himself. "We should talk about what this means."

"Left up ahead," Grantaire says. "Is the traffic in Paris always this bad? When we have equal rights and all, can you start a campaign against slow cyclists?"

"Grantaire-"

"I know what a claim is, dude. I am a person who exists in the world." He drums his fingers against the car door. "And you basically saved my life so yeah, I'm cool with whatever. Anything you want. Take a right."

Enjolras swings the car around the corner. He's never been this way before, the buildings have shutters that look one solid gust of wind away from dropping down into the street. Painted facades are peeling, entire buildings listing carelessly to one side or another. Combeferre’s shiny silver car - a gift from Enjolras’s father - stands out a mile on the narrow street. “That’s not what I meant.”
“Pull in down here, on the left.” Grantaire points at an alleyway that’s dark enough it seems to exist in a sunless universe with no similarities to Enjolras’s own. Enjolras resists the urge to put on his headlights as he pulls in. The alley turns out to be a road, there’s a short line of cars pulled over vaguely into the gutters, leaving a hairsbreadth of space for others to squeeze through.

The buildings on each side look halfway to leaning against each other, more like a house of cards than functional architecture. “You live here?”

“What?” Grantaire glances around at him. “Oh, this is the back. Uh - they’re not super happy about me missing work last night, so ‘Ponine said she’d sneek me in.” He taps his fingers on the armrest, looking around as though just realising he’s sitting in a six month old Mercedes, parked next to three rust buckets and a skip that looks as though it’s just been abandoned here. “Right... if anyone comes by, try to look like you stole the car?”

Enjolras wonders if he’s supposed to walk Grantaire to the door - it seems like the kind of thing Combeferre would tell him to do - but he can’t see an entrance anywhere. “I can talk to your… employer? Landlord? I can explain the situation.”

Grantaire laughs weakly. “Yeah, that would - let’s not.” He glances out the car, looking up at the open window over the skip and runs a hand through his hair. “Look, do you want to come in? Not to talk to anyone, but there’ll be breakfast and everyone likes pancakes, right?”

Enjolras should definitely say no. He’s spent too much time with Grantaire already. He needs to hold at least three emergency meetings and only one of them is allowed to involve him shaking Combeferre’s shoulders while saying ‘what have I done’ repeatedly.

Unfortunately, his stomach is much quicker on the uptake than his brain, letting out a rumble that there’s no way Grantaire misses. He blames the full moon. For this specifically, but also for everything else. “You don’t have to give me anything,” he says, somehow finding the exact phrase he should’ve been using the whole drive over.

“Pancakes are literally the least I can do, and if you ever figure out what the most I can do is you should let me know and I will get right on it.” He punches Enjolras lightly in the shoulder and Enjolras tries to pretend that he doesn’t know this is the first time Grantaire has voluntarily touched him in human form since Enjolras sank his teeth into Grantaire’s skin.

Enjolras focuses on the simple things, cutting the engine, getting out of the car where something sticky he’s trying not to look at too closely immediately coats his shoes. He locks the car, wincing as it lets out a loud ‘bleep bleep’ casually alerting every would-be-car-thief in the area to it’s existence. Then he takes another look around. The skip is still there - full of damp plaster, the paste of cardboard soaked one too many times and a level of slime that he’s not even going to think about. Somehow outside of the car, the buildings seem even closer. “You live here?” he says, again.

Grantaire stretches out and walks over next to him. “Up there.” He points to the open window, looking out over the skip. Not the most pleasant view, definitely not the best smell. “You might need a boost up, if it’s your first time.”

“A boost -?” Enjolras starts, then he looks again and sees the skip edge, positioned neatly just beneath the one open window. Right. Back entrance. “Is it safe?”

Grantaire comes up beside him and shrugs. “For you? Safer than the front door. If you don’t fall in, the pancakes are worth it.” He laces his fingers together, crouching down.
“And if I do fall in?” but he’s already putting his less-sticky shoe into Grantaire’s hands and a moment later he’s hoisted up. The edge of the skip is bigger than it looked from the ground, it’s easy enough to walk around to the window. Grantaire just grabs onto it and pulls himself up, somehow contriving to keep Combeferre’s shirt clean.

The open window is wide enough that he only has to duck a little. The smell inside is overwhelming, stuffy and warm, wine and smoke. Éponine and Grantaire are threaded through every inch of it, or more likely it’s the other way around. This is home, then.

He opens his eyes. The room has six beds, two down the far end are occupied but the rest are left sloppy and unmade with sheets and blankets piled haphazardly and unevenly between them. There’s no other furniture, no decoration, walls painted some shade of beige that probably didn’t come out of a can labelled ‘ancient and nicotine-stained’ but could have done.

Grantaire ducks through the window after him, nudges him in the ribs. “Home sweet home, am I right?”

Enjolras opens his mouth to reply, but all that comes to mind is ‘you live here?’ and he doesn’t really think third time would be the charm. Grantaire shuts the window behind them, touches his finger to his lips like he thinks Enjolras might start yelling with two people sleeping three meters away.

“Did you want a shower or something?” Grantaire walks over to one of the beds at the far end, climbing up until he’s balanced on one foot on the headboard, fingertips scrambling in the rafters. After a moment his hand catches a strap and he tugs, bringing a rucksack that probably used to be khaki but is now mostly duct tape and sharpie tumbling down on top of him. “A clean shirt?”

Enjolras looks down and - oh yeah - he’s still wearing Grantaire’s faded grey T-shirt. Grantaire is digging through the bag, pulling out a couple of black tops and a hoodie. “Sorry, do you need it back?”


She looks right through him. “Why did you bring him?”

“He saved my life, he earned pancakes.” Grantaire strips off the white shirt, replacing it with a black one not quite quickly enough to hide the bite on his side judging by the sharp sucked in breath from Éponine.

“What was that? Let me see that,” she says, already crossing the room and tugging the fabric clear of the bite. “What the fuck, R?” She spins on her heel to face Enjolras. “You fucking asshole, what the fuck?”

Grantaire tugs the shirt back down, reaching out to grab her arm. “It’s not like that, I said he could. Éponine, Éponine, I’m okay.” He turns her back to face him, both hands on her shoulders and Enjolras pretends he isn’t a werewolf and can’t hear every word of the murmured conversation. “It was this or prison.”

She’s still tense, hands balled into fists but she’s not pulling out of his grip. “Should’ve picked prison. He’s just another dog, R. I can’t believe you even brought him up here.”

“There’ve been wolves up here before.”
She snorts. “None that looked at me like I was a Cause.”

Grantaire lets his hands drop, but apparently she’s off the warpath because she doesn’t instantly turn back on Enjolras. “You don’t have to like him -”

“Lucky.”

Enjolras clears his throat because he can hear. “I can leave, it’s no problem.”

Grantaire glances over his shoulder to meet Enjolras’s eyes, and it’s like he forgets to look away again. Enjolras can hear his own heart thud, feel the red rushing to his cheeks because he can hold his cool in front of half of parliament but a boy looks at him and he’s good as gone.

“I trust him,” Grantaire says.

“God,” Éponine punches Grantaire hard on the hip where he doesn’t have a werewolf bite and the look breaks as he turns back around to rub it with an exaggerated frown. “He can stay for pancakes, but only because you’re not in fucking prison.” She turns away from him, walking back towards the door, only pausing as she gets level with Enjolras. “Breakfast is five euros.”

“Three,” Grantaire says.

Éponine’s eyes narrow as though daring Enjolras to contradict her. “Five for wolves and assholes. Which I guess means for you it’s ten, but I’m feeling generous.”

Contrary to Courfeyrac’s widely shared belief, Enjolras is entirely capable of knowing when it is best to stay quiet. Éponine gives him a long moment to consider and discard any number of unsuitable responses, then calls Grantaire an idiot one more time and storms out.

Does it say something about him, that he's doing all this to try and make life better for humans and the first one he meets outside of the ABC instantly hates him?

Grantaire doesn't seem at all surprised, just swings the door shut and hovers beside it, messing his hair up with one hand like it needs some kind of outside assistance. It doesn't. It looks like three birds have made nests in it and then he's been electrocuted for good measure. Enjolras definitely should not find anything about it endearing, but what he should feel never matches up with what actually happens when Grantaire is around.

"Sorry about -" Grantaire waves a hand at the door Éponine left through. "She's a bit protective."

"She doesn't like me, I get that. I’m guessing to change it I’d have to start by changing species." That gets him a wry half smile. "I got off lightly, though. I'll take 'asshole' any day over what she called Marius."

Grantaire is across the room in a heartbeat, his hand pressed against Enjolras's mouth like that's a thing they do. His fingertips are calloused, rough against Enjolras's cheek and Enjolras bites down on his bottom lip before he can think anything stupid like what does his skin taste like?

It smells like hotel soap, car doors, acrylic and it's gone too soon, tugged away like Enjolras's skin suddenly grew hot enough to burn.

"Sorry - I shouldn't have. We don't say the 'M' word in this house."

It actually takes Enjolras a moment to remember back past Grantaire's hand on his skin and remember what he'd been talking about. "You mean Mar-?" he starts, which earns him a snarl, a
pointed look and a moment when he thinks Grantaire's going to grab him again.

"Don't say it again." Grantaire turns away, dragging a hand back through his hair. Enjolras was wrong, it turns out it is possible to mess it up further. "You can't judge 'Ponine for M - for him, okay. It's more complicated than you know."

"She called him a traitor and a mongrel."

"And a lot of people around here would agree with her." Grantaire pulls away and slumps down onto his bed. "Did you never wonder why Marius doesn't have any human friends?"

He's never actually thought about it. He knows Feuilly has human friends, sometimes they come to meetings but none of them have ever committed. Courfeyrac doesn't, but he fell in with the ABC as soon as he arrived in the city and has been living with Combeferre ever since the claim. Grantaire obviously does, although before Éponine stormed into the Musain Enjolras might have believed Grantaire only existed for the two hours every week they spent in the same room.

But Marius hangs out with them on weekends, he comes to movie nights in Joly's flat and is in the Musain almost as often as Enjolras. Has he ever mentioned friends outside the group? Friends from before he met Cosette?

Grantaire sighs, like the silence is answer enough. He kicks the bed opposite him in invitation and Enjolras sits. It creaks and sways alarmingly, feeling like at least half the bedsprings aren't pulling their weight. "He used to live around here."

"Here?" Enjolras tries to imagine Marius going home by skip. No luck.

Grantaire grins, like he can read Enjolras's mind. "Not here specifically. This area. His family was rich, lots of sucking up to local packs. His dad was trying to arrange for him to be bitten - it would be a real feather in the family cap - so he ran away. Stayed here a few nights, but some washerwoman down the road took him in, you know Marius."

Combeferre had mentioned the Pontmercys being an influential family, for humans, when they were coming up with contingency plans. A week later, he'd struck them off the list of allies. Enjolras had just assumed they wouldn't approve of Cosette, but apparently he'd got that backwards too.

"He and 'Ponine go way back. She used to - Christ, don't you dare tell her I told you - she liked him. Don't laugh."

The girl with the wolf eyes and the wolf who once admitted that he wouldn't kill deer because it made him think of Bambi. Enjolras can't even picture it enough to find amusing.

"Everyone knew, except him. I don't know how bad it was, most of it happened before I came to Paris. Everyone just assumed that at some point someone would tell him and they'd finally get around to making it work. Like it was a done deal, despite them not even being together." He smiles as though remembering something. "When I first came I asked a lady down the road if 'Ponine was single. She said 'she's spoken for, if that boy ever takes his head out of the clouds and looks at what's in front of him.'"

Enjolras doesn't need to be psychic to know how this story ends. "And then Cosette."

Grantaire's mouth twists. "And then Cosette. And suddenly he's gone, living in a mansion on the west side and turning into a wolf once a month. He can be a bit dense sometimes, but even he knows better than to come back here."
"And now Éponine hates wolves."

"Oh, no, she always hated wolves. She just has an extra special level of hate for that one, so we don't say his name if we don't want something unpleasant in our pancakes."

"Seemed like I might not have much choice in that. I don't know what she wanted when she came to us for help, but I'm pretty sure it wasn't what I did."

Grantaire shrugs. "If you gave her the choice, she might have taken prison. Hell, she might have chosen death over tying herself into a wolf pack but you didn't go to save her." He looks up suddenly, intense like he needs to convince Enjolras of something. "You gave me the choice, I chose. You can't -"

He's interrupted by the door opening, a skinning boy dangling off the handle. There's something of Éponine in the tilt of his chin and stronger in his scent. He fits in with her, with Grantaire, with the room itself. His eyes are sharp like hers, examining Enjolras for a brief moment, before stepping into the room and ignoring him entirely for Grantaire. "Ep's pissed at you," he says. "So she sent me to get pancake orders. Can I see the bite?"

The boy can't be more than thirteen. Grantaire said he'd stopped bleeding, but it's not exactly going to be a small mark. "I don't think that's -" he starts, but Grantaire is already standing up and tugging on his shirt.

Enjolras looks away. The kid has no such hesitation, crossing the room quickly to poke a curious finger at Grantaire's hip. Avoiding looking at the bite leaves Enjolras staring at Grantaire's face. Grantaire raises one eyebrow with a half grin that makes Enjolras's hands itch to touch, to press fingers against the bite.

"You've got big teeth," the kid says, glancing behind. Enjolras tears his gaze away from Grantaire's smile. What does he say to that? The kid sounds more thrilled than scared, which Éponine would probably hate. "My mate Pierre has a wolf tooth on a necklace that his brother gave him. It's smaller than this though, you must be massive."

"Enjolras, meet Gavroche." Grantaire says over both their heads. "Gav, this is Enjolras. A werewolf."

Gavroche pokes the bite again, apparently unfazed. "Yeah, 'Ponine said you brought him home with you. Better make sure mum and dad don't see him, they'll be up here -"

"Pancakes," Grantaire cuts over him, tugging his shirt down over the bite. "Enjolras, there's nutella, cream, bananas, lemon, we might be able to rustle up some syrup."

"Got some of that sickly sweet fake maple shit you like." With the bite hidden, Gavroche suddenly has more interest in Enjolras, squinting at his face like he might be able to make out the fangs. "Pierre's brother says if you knock out a tooth in human form, it'll still change on the full moon."

Éponine clears her throat loudly from the doorway. "I bet Pierre's brother never said that to a werewolf. Back in the kitchen, now. Dad wants you."

"It's not true," Enjolras says. "Once it's no longer connected, it loses whatever it is that makes us change in the first place. Otherwise werewolves would still be shifting in the grave."

Gavroche considers this for a moment. "Could be cool." He holds out a fist behind him and Grantaire bumps it. "Shitty syrup pancakes for two coming right up."
Éponine holds the door open for him to dart down it, then crosses over to the two occupied beds. For a moment Enjolras thinks she’s going to tug the blankets up over the two men sleeping, then she reaches into her apron and pulls out a metal ladle, slamming it hard into both bedframes with a clang that makes Enjolras’s ears ache from the other end of the room. "Come on, fuckheads. Wakey wakey, check out was at nine."

One of the bodies rolls over with a groan, sending a distinct cloud of alcohol fumes wafting out into the room. "Ah, Éponine. How I love waking to your dulcet tones."

She hit him firmly on the head with the ladle. "Damn right you do."

The second lump is sitting up, blankets falling down to reveal a shirt covered in wine stains of various ages and the scratchy beginnings of a beard. "Éponine! When will you let me steal you away from this life?"

"Ask me again when you wake up in your own bed more often than mine." She turns back to man number one. "Are you going to get up and out, or should I tell Gav to come up with the ice bucket?"

"R!" says the second man, spotting Grantaire across the room. "We missed you in the bar last night." He looks beside him at the sleeping man. "Did you get a bed? You should’ve woken me up, told me to shove over and make room." His eyes fall on Enjolras. "Or did you get lucky, hey ‘Parnasse looks like R is finally going up in the world."

Nevermind that the bar owners would apparently kill him, Enjolras would quite like the floor to open up and drop him through to the kitchen and - more importantly - a possible escape right now.

Éponine is one step ahead of him, giving the man another resounding whack with her ladle “Nose out, asshole, or I’ll tell your alpha exactly where you’ve been sticking it.”

She chases them both out, in nothing but the shirts on their backs and their boxer shorts. Neither man seems surprised or particularly disappointed by this arrangement. “They live here?” Enjolras says, when the door’s swung shut.

Grantaire is already climbing up onto the headboard to shove his bag back into the roof and he glances over, balanced so precariously Enjolras could have believed he was a wolf. “What? No, not even - no.” He waves a hand at the beds. “They keep these up here in case anyone’s too drunk to get home, charge an arm and a leg for the service but if folk are pissed enough they’ll take them up on it.”

Enjolras looks up at Grantaire’s bag. “They asked if you got a bed - do you stay here often?”

Grantaire drops down onto the bed with a thud, then the floor. “I live here, Ep and Gav and I.”

“How often do you get a bed?”

“I don’t know,” he glances around at the beds. “Mostly. At least, like, half the time. I mean sometimes I give it up for Ep and Gav because he’s a kid and they share, but it’s decent.”

Enjolras has a bedroom this size with a king sized bed. His spare room is three quarters of this and the queen bed in that has been gathering dust since Combeferre moved out, he only uses the room to keep track of the news.

How does he phrase that in a way that doesn’t sound horribly privileged? A stupid question because he is but he’s never felt it cut so far to the core as right now.
He’s saved by Gavroche (who is - what - thirteen? and lives above a bar in a room with drunkards where he regularly lacks a bed) who swings in on the doorway and announces with a grin that the pancakes are ready.

* 

“So,” Courfeyrac says. "Most important question: were the pancakes worth it?"

Enjolras slumps down on the sofa and regrets not waiting for a time when Combeferre was alone to have this conversation. Courfeyrac ruins the motion by following and perching on the arm, peering down at him. “He doesn’t have a house,” Enjolras says. “He literally lives above a bar.”

“You know, that actually doesn’t surprise me.”

Enjolras lifts his head long enough to send an imploring look into the kitchen where Combeferre is chopping something that looks far too green to be unhealthy at the same time as scanning over all the documents Enjolras signed at the police station. This is why stealing Combeferre was worth a pack war. “This was a mistake, I should have kept my distance.”

“Buried your head in the sand?” Combeferre says, with a single raised eyebrow. “You know a lot of humans live in awful conditions, you’ve given more speeches on the subject than I could count.”

There is a big difference between knowing that one in five unclaimed humans will spend at least five weeks homeless and actually seeing your own mate keep his belongings on a rafter because he doesn’t know night to night if he’s going to have a bed.

God, Grantaire probably wouldn’t even list himself as homeless. Enjolras’s skin is itching like sunset on a blue moon, he wants to burst onto all fours and go hunting and he has to keep reminding himself that wereism and the concept of injustice are not enemies that can be defeated tooth and claw. “I can’t leave him there.”

“Such a pity you can’t just ask him to move in with you,” Courf says, cracking open one eye. “I mean, I’m sure he’d hate to live in your swanky apartment that has a whole spare bedroom and is paid off by your fantastically wealthy parents.”

He says it like a joke, but Enjolras can’t stop seeing Éponine’s face whenever he tries to picture raising the issue with Grantaire. ‘You’re a million miles and over a million euros away from his side.’

“He probably gets those pancakes every day,” Courf pokes Enjolras’s shoulder. “There’s a brightside to every hovel.”

Courfeyrac moved in with Combeferre, but before that he had a flat share over a boulangerie. Sometimes he claims to still pine for the croissants. He wasn’t homeless, they never called it charity. It made sense, someone makes a space for you inside their head, room in their apartment is small fry after that.

“The law might actually be on your side.” Combeferre clearly has some kind of Courfeyrac immunity built up from years of living with and mating him and is therefore able to ignore everything he says and does. Enjolras considers this option for all of half a second and concludes that it is not worth it and Combeferre is a saint.

“I thought the law hates him.”

Combeferre lifts up one of the many sheets of paper. “When you took him from prison, you didn’t
release him from custody, he’s still technically arrested and the government is required to provide a minimum standard of care. When you took responsibility for him, you agreed to uphold that standard.”

Enjolras lifts his head up a little from the sofa cushions. “Does minimum standard include a bed?”

“Bed, food, water, basic human rights.” Combeferre glances down, eyes skimming across the page again. “It’s unlikely to happen, but technically you could be charged with neglect if the conditions he was living in were found to be unsatisfactory.”

“Because ‘live with me or go back to prison’ is definitely a better way to deal with this,” Courf says.

Enjolras is not good at ignoring him. He snarls lightly which might have some effect on any human that doesn’t spend half their lives with a pack of werewolves. Courf rolls his eyes and sticks his tongue out. “Dad could buy him an apartment,” Enjolras says. “Something small, private. He’s pack now.”

Combeferre fixes him with a Look. “If you think he’ll be opposed to moving into your entirely unused spare room, why would he ever be okay with you just up and buying him an apartment? Start small and work up.”

Enjolras groans and buries his face back in the cushions. “It’s more complicated than that, I can’t just ask him to move in. There’s… things. Difficult things. They make it awkward.”

“Right,” Courfeyrac says as though he could possibly have any idea exactly how fucked Enjolras has managed to get. “Because you liiiiiike him.”

Enjolras’s head jerks up, eyes narrowing because he has been carefully not telling anyone that so it doesn’t disrupt the group and so Grantaire doesn’t feel pressured and so Courfeyrac doesn’t grin pointedly at him exactly the way he is doing right now. “What - I don’t - how -”

“I told him,” Combeferre says.

That is exactly what Enjolras doesn’t want to hear. He should have gone to Cosette for advice, at least he would have got chocolate out of it. Except he’d have had to sit through Cosette and Marius being Cosette and Marius at each other, so maybe not. “I never told you,” he says, a moment too quickly to realise he could have denied everything.

Combeferre gives a vaguely apologetic shrug, tipping something from his chopping board into a pot. “I lived with you in freshman year, Enjolras. Hipster artist who’s entirely unimpressed by you? He couldn’t be more your type if they’d bred him in a lab.”

Enjolras opens his mouth to protest that he doesn’t have a type, then thinks back to the guys he took home in college. Lucas used to paint murals on the freeway, Ethan had an emo fringe and played acoustic guitar songs about the shadows in his soul. The less said about Sébastien, the better. “Grantaire is - it’s nothing, really. He’s hot.”

Courf laughs hyena like behind him. “You’ve got it bad.”

Enjolras meets Combeferre’s eyes and gets an apologetic shrug for his trouble and an, “Objectively, he’s kind of not.”

“He’s got terrible hair,” Courf says, lying on the back of the sofa to watch Enjolras upside down and tick things off on his fingers. “His nose looks like he’s broken it in three places, he dresses like
a drug addict.”

Could Grantaire be on drugs? No, Enjolras would have tasted it when he bit him. “He’s got nice eyes! And he’s fit, he’s got –” Enjolras waves vaguely at his stomach to indicate abs and realises a moment too late what this implies.

Courfeyrac, who can always be trusted to notice everything you’d rather he missed, crows loudly and rolls onto his stomach. “You’ve seen him naked! You’ve been staring deeply into his eyes!”

Enjolras hits him in the shoulder. “It’s not like that.” Then he hesitates. “I mean, he’s my mate. That means something, doesn’t it? We have some kind of connection.”

He gets a cool glare from Combeferre in response. “Before you continue down this stereotypical, entirely erroneous line of thought that equates a bond to some kind of romantic or sexual relationship,” Combeferre says. “Might I remind you that I am claimed by your father.”

Not only that, he’s ace/aro and in a bonded pair with a guy dating somebody else. Combeferre, busting stereotypes wide open since ’92. Enjolras claimed Grantaire to save his life and he needs to focus on that, Grantaire doesn’t owe him anything and if he thinks he does, Enjolras needs to dispel that notion not encourage it. “He feels indebted to me, I saved his life and he knows it and I think he’s had some experience with unequal werewolf-human bonds. What if he thinks I want it to be… stereotypical?”

“Did you do the ritual to equalise? I know I had some equipment in the back of my car.”

“No time.” Enjolras reaches up to push his hair back, realising too late that it’s a mirror of the gesture Grantaire kept making. “I don’t want him to feel pressured into anything. But I can’t leave him living where he is now I know, for starters dad would kill me, then mum would resurrect me so she could give me a three hour lecture then kill me again.”

Courfeyrac taps him on the shoulder. “I have been considering your moral dilemma, and I believe there is actually one simple solution to your myriad of hilarious problems.”

Definitely risky, but he has to ask. “What?”

Courf pokes a finger sharply into his chest and grins. “Tell the boy you like him.”

Enjolras bats him away. “I don’t like him. I mean, it’s not serious.” He glances over at the kitchen. “’Ferre’s right I have a type, if he moves in with me I’ll get over it.” He always has before. They smell wrong or their wolves don’t like him or they drink milk from the carton. Grantaire is constantly drunk and everything he’s done for the ABC has been done late so there’s no way this will last more than the time it takes to convince Grantaire to let Enjolras buy him a flat.

“I’ll tell him he has to stay with me or we both go to prison,” he says, looking over Courf’s arm to talk to Combeferre without distraction. “He’ll agree, I’ll hang out here more until I can be impartial and we can revisit the situation in a month or so.”

Combeferre rolls his eyes and mutters something that might be ‘sexuals’. Courfeyrac falls down onto the cushions of the sofa and resumes his poke-war against Enjolras’s arm. Enjolras lets himself be distracted at least until after dinner when Courfeyrac has gone and he can force Combeferre to help him draft a suitably legal-sounding speech.

* *

“You really don’t have to do this.” Grantaire says, for approximately the hundredth time since
Enjolras pulled him aside after the meeting to talk. “I work at Thénardier’s most nights, really it makes more sense for me to stay there.” A smile thrown out at him casually like they’re the type who can share a joke. “These days I can fall asleep literally anywhere.”

“I told you I’ll drive you.” Enjolras pushes open the door to his apartment and drops Grantaire’s backpack on the sofa. “It’s no trouble.”

“You don’t even own a car,” Grantaire says, following him inside and turning slowly on the spot to take it in. “It’s not so far, I can steal a bike.”

Enjolras - owner of a bike in a big city - can’t help flinching at the thought. “You can borrow mine, or I could buy you one.”

Grantaire glances back at him, surprise on his face for a moment before it clears. “I didn’t mean it like - Éponine has one.” He takes a few more steps into the apartment and lets out a low whistle. “I guess I shouldn’t worry about you not being able to afford it.”

Enjolras tries not to feel self-conscious, looking at the apartment and trying to see it the way Grantaire must. It’s a reasonable size, he supposes, fairly large by Parisian standards. The main room has a kitchen area set off to one side, a breakfast bar with stools where Enjolras always eats since Combeferre took the big dining table when he moved out.

There’s still a big empty space by the doorway where it used to be, as well as the TV chest opposite the big sofas that is bare except for a wifi router and a few magazines. Enjolras always intended to buy a new one, but he can get the TEDx youtube channel and DVDs on his laptop so he kept putting it off.

When they first moved in, Enjolras left all the furniture buying to Combeferre which is why his sofas are the big soft kind that four people can melt into. When Combeferre moved out and took half his furniture with him, Enjolras still couldn’t be bothered to go shopping so he just liberated things from home. His bookshelves have claw and tooth marks from years of puppies teething on them and his lamps all have cages rather than shades even though he rarely changes in the apartment, preferring to go home where there are forests or to Combeferre’s where there’ll be breakfast after.

Enjolras’s wolf is savage when locked inside and left to itself. His pack can take him hunting, Combeferre can fight him down and out on the streets he can run, but shut in alone he will destroy a whole building given half the chance. If he changes at home, he takes strong sleeping pills.

Still, the sofas are a little clawed at the bottom and the wallpaper in his bedroom is unsalvageable but mostly he’s kept it in good shape. He should probably replace some of the things Combeferre took now he has a housemate again. There might be a TV or something at home that he could steal for Grantaire, there must be an old wolf-proof one from when they were puppies somewhere.

“The rent must be crazy,” Grantaire says, running the fingers of one hand across the wood of the breakfast bar and Enjolras remembers all of a sudden that Grantaire has been living in a single bed over a skip. He’s probably not so concerned about the absence of a TV.

“It’s - alright,” Enjolras says, chickening out at the last minute from saying that he doesn’t pay rent because when he announced he wanted to move to Paris, his father insisted on buying him a place so ‘at least he won’t be living in squalor, dear.’ The apartment is soundproofed with solid walls and locks in a were-owned building, Enjolras never asked how much it costs.

He heads into the kitchen to distract them both. He’s never been much good at planning and
stocking food in advance, so it’s not hard to empty a handful of sugar packets and instant coffee sachets out of a cupboard for Grantaire to store his food.

Grantaire follows him in, opening a couple of other cupboards to poke around. Enjolras bites down firmly on the territorial snarl that wants to come out, reminds his wolf firmly that Grantaire is not a stranger invading his privacy, he’s a pack. It’s hard as Grantaire finds the set of non-stick pans still in their plastic wrap, the rusty grater that Enjolras uses to make nachos then forgets about in the sink for weeks after, the single plate, mug and bowl (“because if I leave you with more than one, Enj, you will stack dirty plates until there are new civilisations trapped between them.”) and Enjolras can see him judging. What’s going through his head? Spoilt rich boy, never has to cook? Lazy son of a bitch can’t be bothered to stock a kitchen?

Enjolras makes a mental note to buy another plate, and then realises he has no idea where you go to buy such things. Do they sell plates in Intermarché? Is there a special plate shop?

“Wow,” Grantaire says, twisting the taps on and off again and turning to look at him with a raised eyebrow. “How do you live like this? It’s like an ikea catalogue kitchen.” He opens the cutlery drawer to take in Enjolras’s spoon, knife, fork and his extensive take-out chopstick collection. “No, scrap that, ikea at least try to make their kitchens look like a place a human might live. Where’s your spice rack?”

Enjolras shoves his hands in his pockets and tries to keep it casual. “I’m not good at fancy food, I mostly eat microwave meals and take out.” He has salt and pepper somewhere because Combeferre insisted and there’s a jar of mustard in the fridge, although it might have been in there since Combeferre moved out.

“Right,” Grantaire kicks his cupboard closed with one foot. “At work tomorrow I’m going to steal you some mixed herbs and a potato peeler.” He paused, looking around the kitchen, eyes narrowing. “Do you even own a kettle?”

Combeferre had taken the kettle when he left with strict instructions to Enjolras to purchase a new one. But Enjolras warmed his milk in the microwave and cooked his pasta on the stove and coffee and tea were disgusting lies of drinks that people should stop trying to force him to drink so he’d never actually bothered. When Combeferre came over, Enjolras ran next door and borrowed a kettle and tea bags from his neighbour.

She always looked at him with an expression a lot like the one Grantaire is giving him now.

“I’ll show you your room.” He leads the way out of the kitchen, away from the judgement. “Bathroom,” he says pointing. “My bedroom. And this one’s you.” He pushes open the door to the spare bedroom, reaching around for the light switch.

“I can sleep on the sofa,” Grantaire says, following him in. “Or the floor or something, I don’t need .” he trails off.

Enjolras glances around from checking the sheets on the bed - still made up by the cleaner his mum sent when Combeferre left. Grantaire is standing in the centre of the room, staring at the far wall. “Oh yeah, that’s - this is my planning room.”

The newspaper clippings cover the entire left wall, and have recently started expanding across the two adjacent walls and the ceiling. Enjolras cleared the desk when Grantaire agreed to stay, sweeping the next load of clippings into a box on the floor, but he hadn’t got around to taking any of it down.
“I guess you’re a big fan of collage,” Grantaire says, taking a slow step towards it, lifting his hand to touch the clipping in the centre about a pack in Iowa who picked up a group of homeless kids and locked them in the pack forest during the full moon.

His fingers followed a line of red thread to the pack in Bordeaux who wouldn’t let new members join unless they’d claimed three humans. Grantaire flinched a little reading the headline, so maybe he knew that a wolf could only maintain a claim on one human at a time. Breaking a bond was supposed to be the worst pain a human could be forced to endure, normally it wasn't done for sport although in the next article along a pack from Lyon were doing just that.

Put together, it’s possibly a bit much. He’d used coloured thread to connect articles linked to the same pack - originally they'd all been together, but then there kept being more and he couldn't reorganise every time. Threads had been based on something he saw on CSI and now it looks like a crime scene, everything tracked out in webs on the wall.

Grantaire pauses at an article about a pack just outside the city who filled their local forest with humans on a full moon night and promised to turn any that survived, going so far as to have them sign waivers absolving the pack of all responsibility. None made it through. “Are you planning a war?”

He's got another stack of papers in the kitchen, with articles highlighted to cut out and add but he's running out of wall. He never seems to be running out of stories. "It reminds me of how much further we have to go to fix it."

"Right," Grantaire says, leaning in to read a fragment of an article about a girl in Bordeaux who bound herself to a wolf pack to protect her little brother. Once she was claimed, the pack killed him anyway. "Because you can totally fix this."
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

"You're pack, Grantaire."

"I'm just saying -"

"You're pack."

Chapter Notes

As always, Katie is the greatest <3

Additional warnings for this chapter and also the rest of the fic:
Grantaire drinks a lot.
There's dealings with a pack of wolves who are killing humans in a legally sanctioned way.

Four days later, Grantaire’s cupboard is still empty. Enjolras can’t exactly judge, since all his cupboards are pretty much empty too, but he does skip a lecture and go home early. The first day, Enjolras had to drive Grantaire to the skip about half five, so he assumes the schedule will be the same and gets home at five. Sure enough, Grantaire is stepping out of the shower, jeans hanging loose on his hips and towel drying his hair.

There’s a faint sheen of moisture on his chest, droplets caught in the line of hair running down from his stomach. After four days, the bite has healed into a heavy scab, settled just above the dark elastic of his boxers and sharply contrasting against the skin around it.

Enjolras spends a moment too long staring and gets a raised eyebrow for his trouble. “Are you moving back in?” Grantaire asks, dropping the towel on the back of the sofa and picking up his shirt.

Enjolras blinks. “What?”

Grantaire shrugs, tugging the shirt over the bite. “I haven’t seen you.”

Enjolras carefully schools his face flat. It’s not that he’s been avoiding Grantaire, he’s just been spending a lot of time on campus and at Combeferre’s and popping home in the evenings while Grantaire’s working to shower and change clothes before going out again. “There’s been stuff. Things.”

“Ah,” Grantaire grins at him, reaching down into his backpack - still on the sofa, with all his belongings in four days later - and pulling out his bike keys. “Stuff. Very important.”

How did this conversation become about Enjolras, anyway? “I gave you that cupboard to keep food in, you know. And there’s a chest of drawers in your room, you can unpack.”
Grantaire glances at the door to his room, then shrugs. “I get food at work, it’s fine.”

A tiny suspicion takes root in Enjolras. It’s not like it can be true, but something about the way Grantaire is not meeting his eyes means he has to ask. “You get paid, right? At work.”

Grantaire is definitely not looking at him now. “It’s fair, it’s all good.”

Enjolras takes an aborted step forward. “If they’re taking advantage -”

“I’m covered,” Grantaire snaps, turning back on him with his jacket held loosely in one hand. He meets Enjolras’s gaze fiercely for a moment, then his shoulders fold in a little. “Used to be bed and board, now it’s just board I guess. Food, drink.”

Enjolras lets the wolf-glare drop, but can’t stop staring. “Grantaire, you work there every night. You’re saying they don’t pay you for any of it.”

Grantaire shrugs. “A bed and a hot meal,” He glances around the apartment, as though taking in the fact that the living area was bigger then the room he’d previously shared with four or more strangers. “I guess it seemed like a lot.”

Enjolras follows his gaze to the sofas that he never even considered the cost of, the apartment that’s probably worth more than Grantaire has seen in his life. There’s a lot to unpack and this isn’t the conversation he came in here prepared for. “I can give you money for food.” Grantaire’s already going defensive, quick he needs another angle. “It makes sense since you’re not there for breakfast and lunch anymore.”

“I don’t need your money, I’m fine.”

Enjolras pulls out his wallet, flicking through his credit cards. “Sure, and then you can be starving when the police come and check on us and the criminal neglect lawsuit will cost me a lot more than a couple of weeks groceries.” He holds out a card. “The PIN’s 9430.”

Grantaire shakes his head, but doesn’t punch him which is what he imagines he’d get if he made the same offer to Éponine. “You’ve already given me a house, I’ll get a second job, there must be someone in this town who’ll hire a high school drop-out with no qualifications to speak of.”

“You dropped out of high school?” Enjolras’s makes a mental note to never mention this fact about Grantaire to his parents or he’ll suddenly find himself enlisted in the best private school in Paris alongside thirty up and coming wolves before he can say ‘thanks, but…”

“At fifteen.” There’s that rueful little smile that invites the listener to grin along. A shared joke that isn’t actually funny. “I wanted to see the world.” He shrugs again, his smile settling in. “I have three years of bar experience now, so I’m in a better position to bargain. I wash dishes like a pro, not that that’ll matter to you since you don’t have dishes you have dish.”

Enjolras has a thousand questions he wants to ask about what happened when Grantaire was fifteen and what happened between being fifteen and three years ago when he presumably started working at Thenardiers. Grantaire is his mate, they’re supposed to know everything but instead every day that passes Grantaire becomes more of a mystery.

But Enjolras just smiles back and lets the serious moment slip away because that’s what Grantaire wants, because they’re both heading out soon, because it’s just easier. “Take the card, until you find a job. You’re my guest, I should be providing for you.”

Grantaire laughs. “I’m not a guest, I’m an idiot who you accidentally became responsible for.” He
sighs. “I know you mean well, I know you want to save everyone but can you appreciate that this is a difficult situation for me. I don’t like owing people, and you just keep piling on the debts.”

Fuck society and its endless implications that it’s not okay to get help when you need it. Enjolras wants to growl at something, wants to run and tear at something. “I don’t see it like that.”

“Maybe not, but I do.” He shoves his hands in his pockets, fixes Enjolras with a solid gaze that’s all too human. “You promised me you’d try to make this an equal partnership.”

Enjolras’s idea of equal involves everyone getting three square meals, a room with a bed to themselves and comprehensive medical care; but of course Grantaire has internalised the ‘pull yourself up by the bootstraps and don’t accept charity’ version of equal paraded by the media like any human could even imagine the difference between growing up human and growing up pack.

He glances over at the kitchen and has possibly his first good idea since Éponine entered the Musain. “How about we make a deal. I’m terrible at cooking, I literally don’t know how to boil an egg. I either eat at a friend’s or spend a fortune on take out so let’s trade. I’ll pay for the food if you pick it out, do the shopping and cook it. Even feeding two, it’ll be cheaper than ordering in every day.”

Grantaire’s mouth twists sideways as though he’s conflicted but trying to work out how to graciously turn Enjolras down. “You can’t honestly eat take out every day.”

He’s in. He may not know it yet, but if his only defence is doubting Enjolras’s terrible diet then he has no defence at all. “True, sometimes I eat leftover take out. Today I had sweet and sour pork for breakfast and for lunch and I was thinking about ordering pizza for dinner from that place on the corner that literally calls their mince ‘mystery meat.’”

Grantaire winces. “You wouldn’t seriously -”

“They have a magic sauce,” Enjolras says. “I’m hooked, I order from nowhere else.”

“Jesus Christ how are you still alive,” Grantaire mutters, rolling his eyes, but he takes the card from Enjolras’s hand - finally - so it counts as a victory. “Only until I find a second job.” He shoves the card into his pocket, glances at the clock and swears. “Assuming I still have my first job when I get there half an hour late.”

Enjolras frowns. “If you’re not sleeping there and you’re not eating there, surely they’ll have to pay you?”

He laughs. “You clearly haven’t met the Thenardiers.”

Enjolras’s wolf would dearly love to meet the Thenardiers. Luckily for them, it’s three weeks from the full moon and he’s capable of being objective about the idea that his mate committing murder won’t help Grantaire at all. “Then why keep going? You could quit and find another bar job, one where the owners obey laws like taxation and minimum wage.”

Grantaire pulls open the door and shrugs. “Everyone needs a hobby,” he says letting the door swing shut behind him.

Some people have long, in depth conversations with their mates about feelings and philosophy. Enjolras picks up a blanket off the sofa and folds it to dump it back on the arm where it lives for when he’s on his laptop on the sofa and can’t be bothered to get up and turn the heating on. He should tell Grantaire where the switch is, he thinks, if Grantaire’s been using the blanket.
Then he pulls out his mobile to call Combeferre. “Meet me at central forest. I need to run.”

*  

It’s two o’clock in the morning a couple of days later. Combeferre went home for the weekend, Courfeyrac is with Jehan (“they’ve finally progressed to overnight stays,” as Combeferre had put it. “I get whole nights without him bothering me.”), Enjolras stayed at Cosette’s for poker as late as he could but eventually they had to acknowledge the not-so-subtle looks she was throwing at the door.

“We’d invite you to our place,” Bossuet says jovially as he and Enjolras half carry Musichetta out. “But we only have one bed and the rule is drunk people have to sleep on the sofa.”

Musichetta buries her face in Enjolras’s shoulder. She’s a little more muzzle-y than is strictly human and he wonders if he should warn Joly to stay away tonight because her teeth could switch form mid-bite. But they’ve lived with her for years, and if her boundaries get fuzzy when she’s drunk, they probably already know.

She growls something about shots poker being the worst invention and them all being filthy low-life betas with no compassion. Joly pats her hair as best he can from where he’s walking behind. “Should’ve known better than to go all in when Enjolras was wearing his justice eyes.”

Enjolras helps maneuver Musichetta into the car, but waves them off when they offer him a ride home. Its walking distance and walking is slower than driving. If asked - and Combeferre has done so, many times - Enjolras couldn’t really say why he was avoiding his own apartment. Not wanting to put pressure on Grantaire was part of it, but as Courf had pointed out (over and over again) it wasn’t exactly like Enjolras was repeatedly propositioning him when they were both in the same room.

Knowing the number of serious conversations they had to have that he was putting off was another thing. He had a stack of forms in his satchel for putting Grantaire on the pack insurance but whenever he considered pulling them out, he couldn’t stop thinking about how long it had taken to talk him into something as basic as groceries and chickened out again. It was a blue moon this month and he hadn’t even mentioned that Grantaire would need to take time off work, and work was a whole extra conversation that he didn’t know how to have.

There’s the sound of running footsteps behind him and he turns to see Marius. He must’ve waited for the others to leave in order to run out and catch Enjolras alone, which is unusual. They’re both in the ABC and they do poker nights pretty much weekly and Marius is a werewolf but Enjolras isn’t sure he can remember the last time they spoke with just the two of them. “Hi?”

Marius rests a hand on his shoulder, and Enjolras remembers that he was also a good ten shots down. He’s swaying very slightly. “Enjolras.” He rests his other hand on Enjolras’s other shoulder so they are very much face to face. “Are you okay?”

Enjolras wonders if Marius is trying to be supportive and if maybe he should say that he has Combeferre for this and if Combeferre can’t solve a problem, it’s not something that can be solved. “I’m - yes?”

He’s mostly okay, right? He’s shifting most nights, and sometimes during the day he’ll go for a run through the streets but there’s a lot going on in the ABC at the moment and he’s fielding a lawsuit and stress always gets to him like this. There’s the whole thing where he spends all his human hours trying to stay away from the apartment but the first thought in the wolf’s head is always to run home but he’s managing. He’s getting by.
Marius pouts. His sad face is a thing of legend around the ABC with reactions varying from ‘makes me want to hug him’ to ‘makes me want to run far away and never return.’ It mostly makes Enjolras uncomfortable. “You have a mate now. Mating is a wonderful and fulfilling thing, you should be more than okay.”

Enjolras carefully extracts himself from Marius’s hands. “It’s fine, Marius. Not every bond is you and Cosette, and that’s okay.”

“Is he still friends with Éponine?” Marius asks, and Enjolras realises that maybe the sad face is not entirely on his behalf. “I saw her, at the Musain. She looked - I just wanted to find out if she’s okay.”

“She called you a mongrel and a traitor,” Enjolras says slowly, because Grantaire’s explanation of Éponine’s history may explain her action but he’s not ready to forgive that just yet. “You vouched for her trustworthiness and she repaid you with insults.”

Marius lets his hands drop to his sides, rocking back and forth on his feet in a way that makes Enjolras wonder if at any moment he’s going to have to catch him. “Someone can dislike me and still be a good person.” His head drops a little so he can stare at his shoes. “A lot of good people do.”

“Marius-”

“I'm not sorry,” he says quickly, then pauses head tilted, thinking. “I am. I'm sorry to them, I wish I could explain that it doesn't have to be us vs. wolves. I mean, them vs. us. That's why the ABC is important.” it's strange to hear him originally put himself with the humans, then correct but on a scale of his life, Marius hasn't been a wolf for that long. Enjolras should invite them for a full moon, Cosette and Valjean used to come regularly but he's been less fussed about having friends join the pack since Combeferre became a permanent fixture.

“I'm glad you have Grantaire,” Marius says, cutting through Enjolras’s musings. “It's good to have someone.”

Enjolras could give one of a whole host of sarcastic replies he has been running through for Courfeyrac’s benefit for the last week, but Marius is swaying and sadfacing and looks more than a little like he might throw up on Enjolras’s shoes, so Enjolras just pats him on the shoulder and says, “yeah, thanks,” in a way that might be convincing.

“Tell Éponine I said hi,” Marius says sadly. “Or don't. Maybe don't. Check if she's okay, I had something I wanted to tell her about the bar, something important -” He grabs Enjolras’s hand suddenly, grip inhumanly tight as though he’s just reached drunk enough to blur. “The Thenardiers, they're not good people. Look out for them, for him.”

Enjolras’s skin starts to tingle just at the name. He grits his teeth, gets an arm under Marius’s and starts to half carry him back to his apartment building where thankfully Cosette has come down to hold the door. “Goodnight Marius.”

“It's good. Grantaire. That you have each other.”

Enjolras leans him carefully on Cosette and reaches up to start unbuttoning his shirt before he bursts all the way out of his skin. “Goodnight, Marius.”

* 

He pushes open the apartment door at three o’clock in the morning, kicking his shoes off and
dumping his jeans and socks on top of them. The lobby has a no animal policy even for residents but there’s no actual rule saying you have to pull on more than boxers and an unbuttoned shirt to reach the elevators.

He tugs the chain off over his neck, flicks off the e-tag that identifies his wolf to checkpoints and tosses it into the bowl by the door with the kind of night vision that comes from familiarity. The smell of alcohol, sweat, Éponine, mine is strong which means Grantaire is home, but quiet. Asleep or unconscious, the wine smell is strong enough that it could be either.

The urge to shift again burns inside him, to crawl on all fours into Grantaire's room and push his head against Grantaire’s hand until everything went calm. It's happened once before. He grounds me, Enjolras had said and it turned out to be true but that doesn't mean he can act on it.

Maybe he had one or two shots too many. He's got one hand held out in front of him to find the corner of the sofa (follow the back down the room then three steps to the far wall, drag your hand along the wall to find your bedroom door) but he misses it somehow and slams into it with his hip instead, pushing it askew.

Grantaire lets out a low murmur and there's a thud of something heavy, a glug, glug, glug. Enjolras freezes still, waits, opens his eyes properly until they adjust to the faint silver light coming in through the uncovered window.

Grantaire is on the sofa, Enjolras’s blanket falling off his legs where he's still wearing his work jeans and his trainers. His hand has fallen down to the floor, the sharp tang coming from the cheap bottle of wine spilling its contents across Enjolras’s floor.

In sleep he's almost still, hair falling across his face and tickling his nose as he breathes, Enjolras has pushed it back halfway behind his ear before he remembers that they don't do this. That stillness and moonlight isn't permission. “Grantaire,” he says, in the soft voice people use when they don’t really want the other person to wake up.

Grantaire's hand flaps half heartedly beside the floor. “Not tonight,” he mutters, barely opening his eyes, barely moving his lips. Enjolras's fingers are still hovering, barely an inch above his cheek. He can probably feel them, still warm from the change. “Sleeping. Not now, ‘Parnasse.”

Enjolras swallows down the - whatever. Feeling. He can't have expected anything else, shouldn't have - they barely know each other (mine). He pulls his hand back, hesitates. “Grantaire?”

Grantaire shifts over, sending the blanket all the way to the floor, and doesn't speak again. Enjolras sighs and goes to fetch a cloth, pulling out his phone to google getting wine stains out of carpets. The light from the screen is almost blinding.

He uses the torch to find salt (behind thyme and rosemary and about a thousand other tiny glass jars) and water, fights the stain with all wikihow has to offer for five minutes while Grantaire snores behind him before giving up and going to bed.

If he hesitates in his doorway and goes back to pick up the blanket and lay it back over Grantaire's sleeping body, that's between him and the moonlight. Nobody has to know.

* 

The next day he stays home. He has no lectures that aren't missable, texts Jehan a quick apology for missing coffee and sits at the counter with his tablet propped up in front of him and a notepad beside him, reading over a contract between a wolf pack and a human that guarantees a turning-bite
if the human stays in pack lands for the duration of a full moon and survives.

He reads it three times but can't find anything to contradict Combeferre's assessment. It's legal. Disgusting, horrific and vile; but legal. He's drafting an email to his eldest cousin to ask her to give it a read because you can never have too many lawyers look over a document (and unlike Combeferre and Enjolras, Cora is actually qualified) when a groan indicates Grantaire has returned to consciousness.

Enjolras saves his email and flicks the kettle on, listening to Grantaire's litany of swear words and waiting for - "Enjolras?"

He looks around. Sofa cushions do nothing for Grantaire's hair (a herd of angry wildebeest would do nothing for Granteir's hair) and he's sitting up with half of one eye cracked open, a hand frozen halfway through sweeping chunks of curls off his forehead.

"Morning," Enjolras says. "Or, afternoon, just about."

Grantaire squints over his shoulder at the clock, then thumps back onto the sofa with a, "fuck." Then he embellishes to an "oh fucking hell, shit," when he sees the carpet, scrambling to push down the blanket and pick up the bottle of wine that's still lying on its side on the carpet. "Shit, I'm sorry, fucking - sorry."

Wikihow and salt have not really done anything to the red stain other than spread it around a bit. Grantaire stumbles to his feet, drinking a mouthful from the bottle in his hand, as though the idea of holding a bottle and not drinking it doesn't occur to him, and fumbles his way into the kitchen.

"I'll sort that, sorry, I'm -" he hesitates by a cupboard and narrows his eyes at Enjolras. "You're here."

Enjolras folds his tablet shut, reaching for the boiled kettle and pouring it onto the cup where he'd put a sachet of instant coffee three hours ago. "It's my house," he says.

Grantaire takes a spray bottle of something out of a cupboard that definitely wasn't full a week ago and turns to fix Enjolras with a searching look. "Never stopped you before."

Enjolras takes the wine from his hand and puts the mug of coffee in it instead, choosing to ignore the statement. "What's that?"

"Stain remover, Ep swears by it." He takes a sip of coffee and makes a face. "God, even your crappy instant coffee is the extra specially crappy kind. Do you want crêpes?"

Crêpes come from crêperies or sometimes from packets in the supermarket, Enjolras has never considered that they might be things a person could make in their own home. "For lunch?"

"Brunch?" He glances at the clock, and amends, "Brinner?" He's already moving, pulling things Enjolras didn't know he owned from cupboards he's possibly never opened. "I'm assuming you didn't skip lectures just to enjoy my cooking hot for a change?"

The conversation has gotten away from him somehow. Again. Grantaire is not supposed to be this active, cracking eggs and whisking and talking double speed when not five minutes ago he was comatose on Enjolras's sofa.

Enjolras taps his fingers against the side of the wine bottle. He should say something about the sofa, should care more about the floor. For a week or so when Grantaire joined the ABC, Enjolras had had the naive thought that maybe he drank because of his shitty situation - self medicating, self indulging - and that Enjolras could save him. He’d gone to talk to Feuilly about maybe not selling
it to him.

Feuilly had given him a pointed lecture on how he didn’t actually know the realities of anyone’s situation and Grantaire would not want his sneaky underhanded attempts at being charitable which - Feuilly pointed out - was a polite way of saying interfering. Grantaire was a grown ass man who should know his own limits and in Feuilly’s experience seemed to. Thoroughly chastened, Enjolras had returned to his seat and promised himself that he wouldn’t get involved unless he saw clear signs of a problem.

He reminds himself firmly of that now. Stick to problems that you know about, don’t try to know his business. “You shouldn't cycle home drunk, I could've picked you up.”

Grantaire is already frying, the warm smell enough to overpower the cloy of sweat and alcohol and Enjolras’s metaphorical hackles settle back a little, he relaxes on his stool, picks out Éponine and Gavroche mixed in with Grantaire, familiar. Safe.

“No one ever pulls over a bike.” The first crêpe flips up and over with a flick of the wrist. “You’re covering my bed, I’m working here for my food.” He slides the perfect disc onto a plate and sends it spinning across the counter to Enjolras. “It’s only fair that they give me something.”

Enjolras pours syrup - the cheap ‘maple flavoured’ kind - over his crêpe and rolls it with his fingers. “Or you could stop going.”

Grantaire slides the bottle away from him, managing to take a swig with one hand while simultaneously flipping a crepe with the other. “I could spend my days sitting alone on your sofa watching the blinking light of your modem and occasionally cooking meals for you to not eat, you mean?” His tone is deliberately not accusing, but there’s still a challenge in it.

Enjolras lets it go. What else can he do? Grantaire is some kind of cooking machine and in five minutes there’s a stack of crepes on the table and he’s swiped a plate, taking the stool opposite Enjolras. He pretty much drowns his in syrup and starts eating, cutting chunks out of the pile as Enjolras takes them one at a time and rolls.

“You don’t have to cook,” Enjolras says, because his mind has been replaying Grantaire’s last statement over and over.

“We had a deal.” He shrugs, “I like cooking. It’s not so bad, as long as I’m staying here.” He glances up. “Have you heard anything about the trial?”

Right. Enjolras almost forgot that Grantaire is only here as long as the law is forcing Enjolras to take care of him. The minute the trial ends, he’s going to need to find a new excuse or go back to an empty apartment, in which he’ll be tossing and turning unable to sleep from worrying about where Grantaire is spending his nights. “You need to speak with Katie, I thought we could do that tomorrow night.”

“Katie?”

“Your lawyer,” Enjolras clarifies. “Well, she’s the pack’s lawyer but you’re in the pack which makes her - anyway, she’s been talking with the police and Tholymes on your behalf. It still might not go to trial, but she needs to talk to you.”

He looks down at his breakfast (brinner?), swirling his stack around in a sea of fake syrup. “Tomorrow?”

Oh yeah, that’s a thing Enjolras definitely should have mentioned sooner. “A couple of pack
members are coming into the city, Mum and Dad have a party to attend, they want to meet you—"
he trails off because Grantaire still isn’t looking up but his face got tighter the more Enjolras spoke.

Enjolras mentally reviews, looking for the problem. Late notice, yes. Meeting the parents, always
awkward but probably more for him than for Grantaire. There may be baby pictures, but he doesn’t
know that. The lawyer?

A mini tidal wave of syrup rolls off the edge of Grantaire’s plate. “Why did you even tell them
about me?”

Enjolras blinks, his mental checklist hitting a wall of confusion. It takes him a moment to
remember that Grantaire isn’t a wolf, maybe doesn’t realise that the idea of keeping secrets isn’t
any part of being in a wolf pack. “They can sense you. You’re -” he waves a hand vaguely at his
head, though he couldn’t say physically where Grantaire is sitting (MRI scans of bonded pairs
reveal no unusual neuron clusters, yet another part of being a werewolf that science can’t explain)
he knows that he’s somewhere.

Grantaire is only looking more appalled. Enjolras has to figure out this thing where every
conversation they ever have turns out awful sooner rather than later. Or he could move out of his
apartment and hope Grantaire doesn’t realise it’s his now until too late. That sounds like a better
plan. “And Katie needs you to sign some forms. For the bond.”

Grantaire stands up suddenly, picking up his plate and turning his back on Enjolras to scrape
everything into the bin. “You shouldn’t have to pay - the state gives lawyers to people who don’t
have them.”

“You have one,” Enjolras says, before he remembers that he’s supposed to be stopping and
thinking about the whole culture clash he’s already failing at.

“I don’t want -” Too late, Grantaire’s shoulders are tense as boards. “For fuck’s sake, can you just
stop.”

“And send you back to prison?” Enjolras is shouting because stop and think is still not a strategy
his mouth is keeping up with.

Grantaire slumps. There’s no other word for it, his shoulders dropping and his head droops a little,
hands no longer tight enough on the plate for the knuckles to go white. It’s like Enjolras has all
four paws pinned and Grantaire’s dropping his head down to bare his neck.

No, is Enjolras’s instinctive reaction. I didn’t mean surrender.

“Fuck,” Grantaire says again, softer, reaching up to rub his eyes with the back of one hand.
Enjolras’s sofa may be soft but it can’t be a great night’s sleep, and Grantaire’s already hungover.
He reaches for the bottle, draining the last few mouthfuls. Enjolras’s eyes are caught by the way
his throat moves as he swallows. “I know,” Grantaire says, even though Enjolras hasn’t corrected,
can’t correct when his whole body feels caught, like he couldn’t make words even if he knew what
to say. “I’m grateful. I’m trying to -” He half turns, and Enjolras tugs his eyes away from his throat
to look into his face.

His hair is falling in twists across his eyes, his chin is covered in stubble and he looks exhausted
and all Enjolras can think is yes. This one. Stop and think. Enjolras is already the only reason
Grantaire is out of prison. It can’t be normal for that kind of offer to show up in Grantaire’s life
unannounced, and it just keeps growing from there.
“Okay, fine, I’ll meet with your -” Enjolras can’t help the small snarl at the back of his throat and Grantaire cuts himself off, corrects - “my lawyer. Whatever you want.”

Giving up and giving in is a thousand miles from what he wants, but he can’t bring himself to turn this back into an argument. “I’m trying to help you.”

Grantaire drops back onto his stool, picking up his mug of coffee and making a face as he sips it. “There’s a lot of people needing help more than I do. Éponine -” he cuts himself off, shaking his head.

“Does she want to stay here?” He has a camp bed in a cupboard somewhere, he’s pretty sure. They could get a sofa bed if she wanted to bring her brother.

“No, God, she’d shank you for offering.” He looks around him. “And, what, are you going to shove the whole of the slums into your spare bedroom?” He taps his fingers against the counter. “I know, you have the ABC, you want to save everyone. Normally I’m better at being selfish when people try to give me things.” He flashes a smile, but there’s nothing real in it. “I know you think this claim means you’re responsible for me but I want you to know that you’re not. I’m not going to report you for mistreatment or sue you for poor bond maintenance. You did your white knight, you saved me. You’re allowed to leave me to figure out the rest on my own.”

He lifts his head to look Enjolras straight in the eyes and says, carefully, “I am not your responsibility, or your problem.”

Which is not one of the thousand things Enjolras was thinking. Grantaire was too proud to ask for help or too unused to help being offered, sure. But Grantaire not wanting to put Enjolras out. Like he doesn’t realise what bonding is, what claiming is. It’s not about responsibility it’s about being... he only has one word for it.

“You’re pack, Grantaire.”

“I’m just saying -”

“You’re pack.” One word for it, and Grantaire has no idea what it means. “It’s no trouble,” Enjolras says, letting it go. “She’s on retainer.”

“Oh,” Grantaire perks up a little. “Cool.” He drops his empty coffee mug on the counter and stands up. “I’m going to take a shower, will you be around to give me a lift to the meeting?”

“Sure.” Enjolras rolls his crepe across his plate and watches Grantaire leave wondering how the hell he’s supposed to deal with this.

* *

“So I’m pack,” Grantaire says in the car. He’s covered up the wine with Enjolras’s soap and toothpaste but a fundamentally fermented smell is still hanging over him. Maybe it’s permanent. “Is everyone in the group pack?”

It’s such a human question that Enjolras can’t help laughing. What’s the human equivalent? Walking into a bar full of strangers and assuming they’re related, perhaps, particularly if they all look completely different.

He realises a minute after he should have that laughing could be construed as insulting, but when he glances sideways at a red light Grantaire doesn’t seem appalled. “I thought, since they’re your friends.”
“No,” Enjolras says, taking slow breaths and trying to stop imagining Marius in the same house as some of his cousins even though it would be hilarious. “I’m pack and you’re pack, then Combeferre,” Grantaire nods as though that one’s obvious. “And Courfeyrac.”

Grantaire frowns. “I thought Courfeyrac was human?”

“So are you,” Enjolras points out. “He was claimed by Combeferre.”

“But he’s dating Jehan.”

For a moment Enjolras is surprised that Grantaire noticed, but then he’s been told in the past that he can be dense where other peoples’ relationships are concerned. “Not all bonds are… that’s a stereotype.”

“Course,” Grantaire flashes him a grin. “I mean, look at us.” So funny, the very idea of the two of them ever potentially being anything and Enjolras swallows, keeping his face firmly towards the road as his lightheartedness dies in his stomach. “So what about the rest of the ABC? I know there’s more wolves.”

Enjolras takes a turn, trying to work out how to explain pack dynamics to someone who can’t instantly tell every were, their pack and their hierarchy just by lifting their nose. “The others have their own packs, but they’re not our pack.” He drums his fingers on the wheel, pulling up into another line of traffic. “Packs tend to run in family lines, since the wolf is hereditary. My pack is my family: parents, uncles, cousins. Cosette has a small pack with her foster dad, she claimed Marius. Jehan’s family is a whole big pack of whatever Jehan is.” Courfeyrac probably knows. Would it be rude to ask? ‘You smell like were but also unfamiliar, what’s up with that’.

“Musichetta and Bossuet are loners.”

“Loners together?”

“A bonded pair,” Enjolras clarifies. “And they have Joly.”

“You guys should make a chart,” Grantaire sketches interlocking lines across the condensation on the window. “Put it on the board. What about Bahorel?”

Enjolras pulls into the parking lot at the musain and glances over at him with a frown. “Bahorel’s human.” He supposes, looking at it from a perspective of just sight Bahorel’s size and weight might imply, but he doesn’t smell anything like a were and it’s still strange that Grantaire won’t pick up on that.

Grantaire considers this for a long moment, then leans back in his chair to fix Enjolras with a questioning look. Enjolras waits for the next deep question into the kind of pack dynamics he’s never had to think of because he’s lived with since he was born.

What he gets is, “Does this mean Courfeyrac has me in his head?”

Enjolras is not sure which of them he’d feel more sorry for. “No, it’s a wolf thing. We can sense each other when we’re shifted. Courf is like you, you’re connected but you’ll never have to feel it.” Except in certain situations that Enjolras is going to go to any lengths to make sure Grantaire never has to know about.

* 

Enjolras finds himself taking a backseat at the meeting. Combeferre hands around copies of the contract but he’s been reading it all day and just looking at it now makes him want to bury his
head in a hole or run fifty miles through the streets.

Grantaire split off from him as soon as they entered, went to the bar where Feuilly sold him a bottle for the change in his pocket - It can’t be Enjolras’s money because Enjolras gave him a card and it can’t be Thenardier money because they don’t pay him but he sits down at the front by Combeferre and doesn’t ask and pretends like he isn’t watching.

“The waiver as far as we can tell is legal, myself and Enjolras have looked over it and we’ve sent it to a lawyer, but there can never be enough eyes so if any of you spot anything, speak up.”

Grantaire took a copy when they were being passed around. He’s turned it over and found a pencil somewhere, moving it across the back in wide strokes.

“The crux of the legal matter is that they’ve classed ‘locking people into a forest full of wolves on a full moon’ as an extreme sport,” Combeferre explains, turning on the projector to bring up his highlighted copy. “Therefore, participants are allowed to sign a waiver that absolves the pack and associates of any responsibility for death.”

Bahorel has already flicked through. “How extreme can a sport be and still be classifiable? Surely if every participant dies, that stops being a sport and starts being murder.”

There’s something taking shape beneath Grantaire’s pencil, but from this angle Enjolras can’t tell what it is. He focuses on it, eyes following each stroke of lead until he can smell paper, lead and detergent-stained fingers stronger than any other shape in the room.

The urge to burst onto four paws and chase down wolves until his teeth can close around their filthy, murdering necks is easier to suppress with Grantaire filling up his senses. Combeferre’s words echo around him instead of pushing through him, the words on the projector are just lines with no meaning. He is a wolf and he is owned and Grantaire is here and that’s what matters.

“There have been survivors who have received the bite. The majority of them have turned out to be immune and a surprising number have subsequently mated with members of the pack that was hunting them. For those humans among us, if a wolf scents their mate no matter how feral they may be, they will not attack.”

On a full moon Enjolras’s wolf normally claws whatever room it changes into shreds. Even on other nights he goes running through the city instead of tearing down the walls. He has hurt his friends, his family, anyone who stayed in a room with him - however briefly - during the change. Grantaire stroked his fur and sat down beside him.

“Backwards,” says Grantaire, and it sounds like a shout in Enjolras’s ear his focus is so strong. His head jerks up, the table swings up on two legs and crashes down and the whole room is looking at him.

The whole room minus one person. “Grantaire?”

He looks up from his drawing, pencil poised in one hand. “Huh?”

Everyone else seems just as confused, but Enjolras knows what he heard. “You said something.”

Grantaire tells jokes, he makes wise comments, more often he sits at the back and says nothing. Called upon, he’s frowning, half shuffling his chair back as though wondering if he should stand. “I guess - backwards? They’re doing what we did in reverse, pretending the bond doesn’t exist when it does.”
Bahorel turns from him to Combeferre. “Can we verify that?”

“Not unless they were tested.” Enjolras should look away from Grantaire, now he has his attention they’re both staring at each other. “And the tests were public record.”

“We can look into it,” Combeferre makes a note. Musicetta volunteers, the meeting continues behind them. Grantaire holds his gaze for a moment longer, then quirks his mouth and drops his eyes back to the drawing.

Enjolras tugs his knee up against his chest, rests his cheek on it and keeps his eyes on the screen until the end of the meeting. The familiar noise starts up, everyone discussing next steps and the horrors of the world somehow alongside weekend plans and Bahorel’s much speculated upon girlfriend.

Combeferre sits down beside Enjolras, waits until Courfeyrac is out of earshot jumping on Jehan before saying, “How are you holding up?”

Enjolras is definitely opening his mouth to say ‘fine’ but what comes out is, “he doesn’t want me to feel responsible for him.”

Across the room, Grantaire has folded whatever he just spent an hour and a half drawing into a paper aeroplane that he’s occupied himself throwing at Feuilly’s head. The bottle of wine is empty. Feuilly is cleaning three glasses so maybe other people had some, but maybe not.

Combeferre frowns in the same direction. “He knows that you claimed him, right?”

“I told him he’s pack, I thought maybe he needed it stated.” Enjolras toys with a hole in the knee of his jeans. “He said ‘cool.’”

“Oh.” Combeferre rests a hand on his shoulder, solid and reassuring just like a ground should be. The tension in Enjolras’s back doesn’t ease, he still feels like he’s going to explode. “He doesn’t get it.”

“He’s human.” Enjolras watches Marius walk up to Grantaire and Feuilly and fights down the urge to go over there and get between them. “I don’t know how to explain it. You switched packs, what changed?”

“All the same.” Combeferre sighs. “I think you should talk to Courfeyrac about this.”

That is enough to pull Enjolras’s attention away from Grantaire. “Why would I do that?”

“He’s sexual, human, in a bond and in a relationship with a were. You’re not going to get someone closer to what Grantaire’s going through. Your situation is about as far from my experience as it gets. All I can recommend is take him home, show him rather than trying to tell him.”

Grantaire at home. Grantaire in the middle of the whole wolf pack. Is there a way to avoid it ending in disaster? Courfeyrac goes home, sure, but he can laugh off small children poking his ears (“you mean you can’t hear anything from the other end of the house through three concrete walls?”) and the polite but still condescending interest of the adults (“Is that really what it’s like in the state schools? Well, I’m glad our boys stayed local.”). Plus the whole thing where the pack is dealing with the fallout from Tholymes and Enjolras doesn’t want to put Grantaire in the same room as some of the people he’s been having Conversations with.

But leaving Grantaire alone in an apartment for a week isn’t a good demonstration of what ‘pack’ means either. Two out of ten, Enjolras, must try harder.
“Hey.” He must’ve been deep in thought for Grantaire to get all the way next to him without him realising. “You’re off the hook, and you can finally give Combeferre his car back. Marius is giving me a ride to work.”

Enjolras drops his knee and turns in his chair. Marius and Cosette are still at the bar, clearly waiting. “Marius? I thought you didn’t like him.”

“Éponine doesn’t like him. Give me some credit, I hardly know him.” He shrugs, sitting on Enjolras’s table and swinging his feet inches from Enjolras’s knees. “I tried hating him on her behalf and liking him on yours, but it all got confusing. He lives closer to Thenardier’s than you, and my bike’s at yours so I’ll stay over there.”

Not again. “We’re supposed to stay together.”

Grantaire grins. “Worried I’ll run off?”

Worried he’ll get lynched, worried he’ll have permanent back problems, worried the Thenardiers will somehow convince him not to come home. “I don’t really know you that well.”

“If you did, you’d be really worried.” He kicks Enjolras’s knee lightly. “I’ll get a bus home in the morning. Scout’s honour.”

“If you don’t get a bed to yourself, call me and I’ll pick you up. Don’t sleep on the floor or with - I can come and get you.”

“It’s cool, it never fills on Mondays.” Grantaire glances at his face, and rolls his eyes at whatever expression he sees there. “Okay, sure. If I don’t get a bed. But don’t wait up, okay.” He claps Enjolras’s shoulder once and slides off the table to go back to Marius. Enjolras watches him smile as though as a joke, rock back and forth on his heels. Maybe his face is a bit uneven, but his grin is contagious and his jeans are nothing but complimentary when he walks.

Combeferre clears his throat gently. “So,” he says, pointed. “Are you over him yet?”

Enjolras is doomed. Actually doomed. “Don’t even go there.”

Combeferre tosses his car keys to Courfeyrac. “Are we running home?”

“Yes.”
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

"So," Jehan says, pointing his taco at Enjolras’s chest. “Are you here for my contract analysis skills or my fabulous dating advice? Because you have probably chosen the wrong person to get lunch with for either of those things.”

Chapter Notes

Love you Katie (A-16!)

Sorry for the delay, this chapter was a bit of a pain to edit. Thanks Rai for being awake and consulting on Enjolras's language :) I'm still looking for a beta for future chapters, mostly just need a second paid of eyes on it.

Usual warnings, this chapter contains drunkenness and discussion of murder.

He runs all the way to Combeferre’s. Courfeyrac went home with Jehan so they have the apartment to themselves. Enjolras switches back to human to eat dinner and listen to Combeferre talk about this lecturer he has for a module Enjolras isn’t in who has a really interesting perspective on pack dynamics in combat.

Enjolras tries to let himself be distracted, but he can’t get the contract or Grantaire’s rueful grin at the thought of going back to Thenardiers out of his head. He checks his phone ten times during dinner and it’s on the eleventh when Combeferre rests a hand on top of his. “You feel like a full moon.”

He’s restless, tense and everytime he runs across the city it seems too short, but he can’t change in his apartment where Grantaire could come in at any moment. He wants to go home, spend three days in the forest without needing to think but this isn’t the time.

Combeferre takes the phone from his fingers. “Go on,” he says. “I’ll keep watch.” He lets Enjolras stay on four paws all evening, his mind steady and calming as Enjolras curls up on the sofa. He doesn’t even complain that Enjolras will shed on the furniture, not during the movie and not afterwards when he goes to bed and Enjolras follows, curled up at the foot with his tail between his forelegs.

They used to do this when they lived together. Enjolras would read something or talk to someone that made him so angry only teeth and claws would do. Combeferre could have been as mad as Enjolras, but he was always better at holding himself together, keeping Enjolras settled until he was calm enough to change back.

He spent all of finals week in second year watching Game of Thrones with Enjolras sleeping beside him. He’s never once complained about it.
It doesn’t take that long this time. In the morning, Enjolras stretches out of his skin and feels settled. He can make a plan, he can fix things. In the shower his hands stay hands, there’s no growl in the back of his throat and he holds his head under a cold spray without thinking of anything until everything calms down without him having any… thoughts, he might regret later.

Combeferre gives him a lift to class. Enjolras doesn’t know what time Grantaire counts as ‘morning’ but since he doesn’t seem to wake up until noon, sitting through a lecture on lunar majoris liability is preferable to sitting on his sofa reading news sites and waiting. He spends the lecture spinning his phone between his fingers but he’s had no calls or texts by the time it finishes - and he’s going to have to copy Combeferre’s notes later because he didn’t listen to a word - so he calls Jehan to see if he wants to grab that coffee after all.

Jehan only has a break at noon so they make it lunch with tacos from the canteen and seats outside on the wooden benches in the sunlight. Jehan kicks off his shoes (it’s three weeks to the full moon, are they feeling too big?) and stretches out on the bench, basking in it and Enjolras considers the possibility that he’s a were lizard.

“So,” Jehan says, pointing his taco at Enjolras’s chest. “Are you here for my contract analysis skills or my fabulous dating advice? Because you have probably chosen the wrong person to get lunch with for either of those things.”

Enjolras fights the urge to put his head in his hands and moan. “Courfeyrac told you about Grantaire?”

Jehan nods, managing to look sympathetic but also like he’s laughing inwardly at the same time. It’s a very particular look. “You stare at him a lot,” he says. “I think we all thought you were trying to get him to contribute in meetings through sheer willpower, but I guess a world ending crush also makes sense.” He tilts his head to the side. “Who was that guy you dated before? The one who liked to paint people naked -”

“Please don’t.” God, everyone needs to forget about Sébastien. “I don’t need romantic advice, we’re not - I can’t do that, not after I’ve claimed him. He thinks he owes me. He’s weird enough about me giving him a room and trying to pay for his food.”

Jehan frowns. “He’s pack, though.”

Screw contract analysis or fabulous romantic advice. Jehan’s confused expression is exactly why Enjolras wanted to talk to him, because if anyone in the ABC was going to understand pack in the same way Enjolras does, it’s Jehan. Jehan who is a were-something and has a pack of Japanese relatives in a big house near Rouen. Back when the ABC was in early days, when Feuilly was still convincing his parents that wolves could maybe be helpful and Combeferre was fighting with his entire pack every night, Jehan’s alpha would drive him to meetings. His aunts would come when they were in the city and bring biscuits.

They’ve never been to each others homes, but they bonded over having all your aunts, uncles and cousins crammed into one building every month; mealtimes that are like a school cafeteria; and the clearing out front of the house being covered with enough clothes for a brocante every full moon.

Jehan has never had to doubt that whatever he does there will be people standing behind him. He taps his fingers against his taco pensively. “Have you told him he’s pack?”

“I got the verbal equivalent of a shrug. He doesn’t know what it means and I’ve been trying but I don’t know if I know either.” Pack is pack. He’s never not had it. He’s never thought about it, except for during those long months with Combeferre and even then the question was never ‘what
is pack’ it was just ‘how do I extend it to mean him too.’

Jehan considers for a long moment. “When you’re hunting with them, and you know exactly where everyone else is and how you’re going to bring your prey down,” he says. “That’s pack.”

“You’re suggesting I take Grantaire out chasing deer?” Enjolras puts his taco down, giving up on the pretense of actually eating it. “He looked nervous enough about meeting my parents, I don’t think he’s ready to be presented to the entire pack. He’s human, he doesn’t need all of it he just needs to relax more.”

“What did you do for Courfeyrac?”

“He was already friends with me and Combeferre, he’d met my parents. He came down for the weekend and everyone loved him but that’s Courfeyrac, he’s different.”

Jehan smiles a little. “He is.”

“He’s started staying over,” Enjolras grins. Courf must be rubbing off on him. “Am I going to have to give Grantaire my flat and move back in with Combeferre soon?”

To his surprise, Jehan doesn’t laugh. His frown comes back instead and he looks over at Enjolras, thoughtful. “Because Combeferre’s pack, and he won’t want to live alone.”

Wolves are not naturally solitary. That’s a given. Combeferre stayed tied into his family pack long after he was fighting with them every night and they were refusing to listen to a word he said because even a broken up pack was better than being alone. “Yeah?”

Jehan shakes his head. “Well I can’t tell you everything about joining a pack, but I do know that Grantaire won’t believe it until you do.”

It still takes Enjolras a minute to catch up. “He didn’t live with me before.”

“Did he live alone?”

Enjolras thinks of six beds, Éponine furious with all of them but still coming to the Musain, turning on Enjolras like a wolf the moment she saw the bite on Grantaire’s skin.

The answer must show on his face, because Jehan nods knowingly. He puts down his taco and leans forward, smelling at something. (Which means he’s probably a canine, which doesn’t really narrow it down beyond dispelling the lizard theory because ninety percent of weres are). “Where did you sleep last night?”

Enjolras frowns. “At Combeferre’s, but it’s not like that. Grantaire wasn’t home, I couldn’t settle in my skin. Sleeping near him as a wolf it keeps me calm, helps me change back.”

Jehan nods thoughtfully. “Did you ask?”

He had changed with Combeferre, followed him home without really questioning it, eaten whatever Combeferre was cooking and shifted as soon as he could. He hadn’t said anything really, but they’d done it so many times it would never have occurred to either of them that he needed to.


Enjolras frowns and shakes his head. “That’s not some big thing I can explain, that’s just us.”

Jehan shrugs, popping the last mouthful of taco in his mouth. “I guess pack is what you make it.
Doesn’t have to be big, but it has to be yours.” He picks up his napkin, crumpling it. “I have class, sorry I couldn’t be more help. You should talk to Courfeyrac, he’s had the joining a pack experience.”

*  
He gets home at two, and Grantaire is there, kicked back on the sofa and reading one of Enjolras’s trashy crime paperbacks (a woman visits a grizzled werebear’s detective agency. Her brother has been murdered and - shock! horror! - there is a bite mark on his skin in the shape of her fiancé’s teeth). He looks up when Enjolras comes in, “I thought you’d be here.”

Enjolras hesitates for a moment, then remembers what Jehan said. Pack is what you make it. He can do that, pretend that Grantaire is one of his cousins who he doesn’t see so much but they can still be normal together. “Did the police come knocking?”

“Sure,” Grantaire says easily, responding to Enjolras’s tone with a smile as though it could genuinely be this simple. “A whole squadron came by, said they had to make sure you were treating me right.”

Enjolras drops his bag by the door, kicks off his shoes. “What did you say?”

“I gave the accommodation a solid seven. You can’t cook and your sofa eats all of my change, but it’s better than the last place.”

Enjolras hesitates, before taking a seat on the sofa beside him. It’s a two-man sofa, this is normal. “The last place being a bar that sometimes let you sleep on the floor.”

Grantaire grins, shifting so he’s sitting sideways on the sofa, one of his feet inches from Enjolras’s knee. “Yeah, but I didn’t have to make my own dinner.” He reaches under his feet and pulls something out. “Is this one of mine?”

It’s a coaster, the cheap cardboard kind from the Musain, with something sketched on the back in marker. There’s a pretty much zero chance that it’s not one of Grantaire’s drawings, but Enjolras makes a show of taking it and looking it over anyway, to buy himself some time. Its an old drawing of him and Combeferre at the ABC. Someone else must be presenting because they’re both sat at a table watching, Enjolras sitting forward looking focused as an arrow, and Combeferre half a beat behind. Somehow although they’re not looking at each other, the picture conveys a closeness. The way Enjolras’s chair is slightly turned in Combeferre’s direction, Combeferre’s foot almost touching Enjolras’s ankle.

He remembers he saved this one because of that, and also because somehow - even though it's a picture of two humans - there’s something in the shade of their faces, the curve of their shoulders that reminded Enjolras of what they’re like as wolves. Grantaire picking up on something that he couldn’t smell, see or hear but that is always undeniably present.

All that on a coaster advertising the joys of Stella Artois. “Combeferre,” Enjolras says, tapping the coaster by Combeferre’s foot, the one point of contact between them. “He’s pack.”

“I was meaning to ask about that,” Grantaire says. “Because you said packs were family, your pack is your family etcetera etcetera so is he a cousin? A distant cousin? Adopted in? You don’t have much of a -” he waves a hand to presumably encompass Enjolras’s general whiteness. “Resemblance.”

“We stole him,” Enjolras says, unable to fight down a little smile at the thought.
Grantaire raises his eyebrows. “Let me guess, you snuck into his mansion under cover of darkness and smuggled him out in a sack over your shoulder? You waylaid a carriage by the side of the road and said you’d take his money or his life and he was all out of cash?”

Enjolras surprises himself by laughing. “Not quite so dramatic. My dad claimed him. A wolf can only have one pack so now he’s ours.” Glossing over the pack war, the six months of them voting down Enjolras’s father on every single issue in parliament, the time they got into the grounds and Combeferre had to face off against his own father.

“Your dad claimed him,” Grantaire considers this. “Does that make him like your -”

“Brother,” Enjolras says before he can finish. “Yes.”

Enjolras’s father had never hurt another human being before that night. Combeferre’s father still walks with a limp. There’s a scar down the side of his face, even in human form. He lost his parliament seat the moment it went up for election and Combeferre publically denounced him.

They stole him.

“I was thinking,” Enjolras says, because he’s been doing nothing else. “We should hang out.” God, is announcing you want to spend time with someone always this awkward? Grantaire has raised one amused eyebrow. “Because you’re pack and my parents are going to ask about you so maybe I should have some answers. We need to connect a bit, I think, if that’s alright with you -” God he’s rambling. He shuts his mouth firmly, before he has to transform his vocal cords just to stop himself prattling some nonsense about how it’s not like a date it’s just that Jehan said they needed to find a way to become more of an ‘us’ if that makes sense.

Grantaire shrugs as though this whole internal dilemma is entirely unnoticed (of course he can’t hear a sped up heartbeat and he can’t smell Enjolras’s palms sweat but he must know Enjolras is blushing.) “Sure.”

Why couldn’t asking him out have been that easy? “We could get a pizza, watch something.”

“Your modem blinking?”

Enjolras is halfway to annoyance before he realises Grantaire is laughing at him. “I have a laptop, you know. Of course, if you’d rather I leave you to Bitten in the Shadows -,” he nods at the paperback abandoned on the sofa and gets it thrown at his head for his trouble. “We’ve got all day before my parents arrive, movies?”

There’s a moment of hesitation, then Grantaire is smiling again as though it never happened. “Nothing too long, I have to run some errands later.”

*

Grantaire has been running errands for two hours when Enjolras finally accepts that he isn’t coming back. He’s sent two texts, the first one: ‘Mum and Dad are here, we can pick you up on the way to the restaurant, where are you?’ got a reply: ‘sorry, my suits at the cleaners.’

Enjolras’s reply - ‘no need, its just dinner’ - hasn’t been dignified with a response. His first two calls rang briefly before being cut off. His third attempt went straight to voicemail.

“Is he working?” Mum asks. She’s drinking tea from a mug that Enjolras had never seen before Combeferre pulled them out and occasionally offering advice to Dad and Combeferre trying to set up the television they brought up with them.
Enjolras’s laptop has a small screen, they’d balanced it on a cushion between them and Grantaire’s leg had been pressed against Enjolras’s thigh for the duration, his laughter soft and close in Enjolras’s ear. His arm rested across the back of the sofa but didn’t once drop down onto Enjolras’s shoulders. So now Enjolras has a television.

“Does his bar serve food?” Dad leans out from behind it. “We could go there?”

Grantaire probably doesn’t even own a suit, not that it matters. Sure, Dad is wearing a crisp white shirt over black slacks and patent leather shoes and the audi parked out front is even sleeker and silvery-er than Combeferre’s but that’s not what matters. “I don’t think he’s there tonight,” Enjolras lies. “We should go, I made reservations.”

They’re clearly disappointed, but they don’t push. Enjolras keeps checking his phone through dinner - pushing his steak absently around his plate without really tasting it - lets Combeferre carry a conversation about how their modules are going and whether they think they’ll manage to pass everything this year.

Walking back to the car, Mum links her arm through Enjolras’s and he tries not to look too hard at her frown as she deliberately slows his pace to let Dad and Combeferre outstrip them. “You did tell him we weren’t holding his crime against him?” she says in a tone that makes it clear she is absolutely holding it against him.

He can hardly blame Grantaire for not coming, but it would be easier to defend him with him there. “It’s not a big deal.”

Her mouth compresses into a thin line. “Katherine says he’s being accused of attempted murder, and you’ve brought him home. How much do you really know about him?”

Nothing. “If it had been me, if it had been any wolf, it would have been written off as an unfortunate incident or a slap on the wrist for a minor offense. He’s human, no one cares so they prosecute for anything they think they can have.” He has sent his mother at least fifty articles proving the conscious, active bias the police and justice system have against full blooded humans. It’s nice to know none of that has sunk in.

She purses her lips. “I wanted to get a read on him. You’ll be bringing him home when you come.” It isn’t a question. Enjolras nods anyway. “Good. Tell him we’re sorry to have missed him.” She glances at her watch. “Our session starts in an hour, we need to get moving.”

They drive to the city centre forest where Dad has paid the required fortune to get them inside. Four wolves isn’t a full pack, but it’s enough to pace through the trees and bring down a small boar. It’s enough that when they howl, Enjolras can feel surrounded by it, can lose himself in it. He feels his mother pressing in close to him, pushing through him to find Grantaire. I wanted to get a read on him.

Enjolras slips out of the howl, closing the connection down. Mine.

She lets it go.

*

He’s exhausted by the time their session ends and they have to switch back. Mum and Dad give them both tight hugs then call a taxi back to their hotel so Combeferre doesn’t have to drive back and forth across the city. Enjolras curls up in the passenger seat and considers falling asleep there. The city lights flash across his face until they blur, cars and humans and the occasional wolf all
“You’re right,” Combeferre says, when he pulls up in front of Enjolras’s apartment. “She doesn’t know him.”

Enjolras lifts his head to focus on his window. The curtains are open, but beyond it’s just shadows. Grantaire hasn’t texted, hasn’t called. Maybe he’s stayed over at Thenardiers, it wouldn’t be the first time. “He didn’t say he was busy, he didn’t say anything. I thought -” what had he thought? That spending one afternoon watching shitty Channing Tatum movies on a laptop changed anything? That they could be close without him fucking it all up?

Combeferre’s hand rests solid and warm on his shoulder. Enjolras rests his cheek against it for a moment, summoning the strength to drag himself to his feet and into the building.

It’s four am, properly dark in the way midnight never is. Enjolras drops his keys on the floor - the hall table’s moved - and stumbles through the shadows, kicking off his shoes as he goes. He sees the shape on the sofa a moment before collapsing on top of it and catches himself.

Grantaire moves anyway, rolling onto his back and blinking up at him.

“You turned off your phone.” You’re on the sofa. Again. You didn’t come.

Grantaire waves a hand weakly in front of his face. He breathes out and it smells like sour vinegar. Enjolras looks around for a bottle and finds two on the side table. Both empty.

“Fucking hell.” He drops the second bottle back down with a thud. “You lose your bedroom too?”

Grantaire catches his wrist in a surprisingly strong grip before he can pull it away, eyes flicking to the closed spare room door. “Your guest room? I thought -” His head thumps back onto the cushions, dragging Enjolras’s hand with him. “The room is spinning, should’ve stayed. Tell them I’ll wake up early. Before.”

Enjolras looks over at the door, sees Grantaire’s backpack back in the lounge at the end of the sofa, clothes scattered haphazardly around it. He sighs, using his second hand to pull Grantaire’s fingers loose one by one. “They have a hotel.”

Now he’s holding Grantaire’s hand - part of it, at least. He hesitates for a moment, Grantaire has callouses on his fingertips and his nails are ragged and his hands are warm. Enjolras wears two pairs of gloves in autumn and he’s still never this warm.

He swallows and places the hand down carefully on top of the blanket that’s covering the rest of Grantaire. “They wanted to meet you.”

Grantaire barks a hah that scrapes out like half-changed vocal chords. “Your mate,” he says. “Not me.”

Enjolras is too tired to even begin to unpack that. He should find some reassurances or wake up Grantaire properly so they can talk about what he means. He should stake a claim, mine.

The smell of cheap wine is making his head ache. He turns his back on Grantaire, tugs the cheap curtains across the window to shut out the last of the faint light and goes to bed.

* 

By the time Enjolras drags himself out of bed Grantaire must have consumed a pack of alka-seltzer and a gallon of coffee because he’s bright eyed and smiling, sketching something on the inside of
the pizza box with a shiny silver biro advertising Richmond at Law. Enjolras’s eyes catch on it. “Katie stopped by?”

Grantaire rests his free hand momentarily on a pile of papers that must be at least an inch thick. “Apparently being pack means I get free dental. You didn’t mention that.”

Do humans pay for dentists? Another thing Enjolras has never thought about. He's one of those adults who moved out to study but still saves up all his teeth and eye tests until he's home and someone else can organise them. Pack bulk rates on dental cover, health insurance are those areas Enjolras always overlooks because they seem so small but it all stacks up on the great scales of structural inequality.

The fact that it's the one thing Grantaire raised suggests that it's not such a small detail.

“I had other things on my mind.” There’s a stack of cinnamon toast on the counter like a peace offering. Or like breakfast. He has to open three drawers before he finds a fork, his whole kitchen has apparently been rearranged while he wasn’t looking and how Grantaire can do that and still not get that he’s welcome is too much to deal with again. “Combeferre wore a T-shirt, by the way. My mother wore jeans.”

“We’re pleading innocent of attempted murder,” Grantaire says. “Katie thinks we can pass it off as a moment of wolf rage. There’s precedent for transference in a grounding bond. That makes it accidental injury, which won't carry jail time, just a fine. I guess I should start saving.”

“It’s covered,” Enjolras says without thinking, then hesitates. “I mean... I know you don’t like handouts.”

“Handouts are like my favourite things.” He glances at the stack of papers. “She said I don’t have to stay here, the state would be obligated to put me up somewhere if you terminated your responsibility. Not necessarily prison. I know you thought you had to give me the bed, but you don’t.” He trails off as Enjolras fixes his eyes on him. “You knew that.” He reaches up to drag a hand back through his hair. “I don’t get - I’m no one to you.”

Enjolras shrugs, looking back at his breakfast so his face doesn't show the way the casual statement is like a punch to the gut. “Don’t sweat it.”

“Oh sure. Easy.” He adds a few lines to his picture. “Have your parents gone? I assumed they'd be staying here.”

“I don’t have a spare room.” He pauses for a moment in the hope Grantaire will use the time to let that sink in. “They’re leaving today, but they would stop by for breakfast if they knew you were going to show up this time.”

Grantaire’s hand stills for a moment, he might even be considering it, but then he shrugs. “I’ve got a lot on today. Work, shopping, naps.”

Enjolras bites his lip, but forces himself not to push. He can’t force Grantaire to meet them, but he can keep working on making him feel like pack. “That’s a shame,” Enjolras leans back in his chair. “Because I just got us this shiny new TV and I was thinking popcorn, bruschetta, M&Ms and a solid twelve hour Lord of the Rings marathon; but if you have work -”

Grantaire eyes him as though trying to see if he’s serious. “All that food could make a person nauseous,” he says slowly, giving Enjolras plenty of time to retreat. “I could call in sick.”

Enjolras had been vaguely thinking he would take leave, but of course his job isn’t the kind where
you get paid leave. “Won’t that make them mad?”

“They’re always mad about something.” Grantaire tosses his picture to one side, coming over to the kitchen and fetching a mysterious bag of tiny seeds out of a cupboard. “Do werewolves have it salted or sweet?”

They don’t talk about why Grantaire skipped dinner. Enjolras could make a list, things they Do Not Talk About (but probably should). Being mated, Grantaire’s drinking, Enjolras’s ability to not go home for days at a time, why Grantaire threw the rock, why Grantaire even goes to ABC meetings if he’s not going to pay the slightest bit of attention, the blue moon which Enjolras hasn’t worked out how to bring up in conversation.

They don’t talk about any of it, but they do talk. Enjolras is counting that as progress. They watch all three Lord of the Rings films and the next day Enjolras gets up earlier and they watch the Hobbit. On Friday Combeferre texts to remind Enjolras that he has a mandatory test worth 30% of a unit and Grantaire rolls his eyes and points out that he doesn’t actually need constant babysitting.

Enjolras goes back to class. He gets home mid afternoon and they grab a couple of hours to sack out with movies or play videogames or just talk before Grantaire has to leave for Thenardier’s. Enjolras goes to bed before Grantaire gets home, but when he wakes up in the morning Grantaire is already up and about. Enjolras would be the first to admit he isn’t great at mornings, but it still doesn’t seem like enough. He doesn’t talk about it. Somehow Grantaire is quiet enough getting in and going to bed that even Enjolras’s werewolf hearing doesn’t pick up on it. Enjolras doesn’t ask about that either.

Grantaire can talk for hours about nothing important, as though amusing anecdotes about customers at the bar or his adventures in Nice at some ill-defined point in his past are as worth going on about at length as some of Enjolras’s wordier speeches on change and social mobility. He talks about art, music. He knows everything in the world about videogames, as long as they came out more than five years ago. Enjolras buys a wii, he buys a PS4, he spends an hour on the phone with his credit card company talking about ‘unusual, possibly fraudulent, purchases, not in your usual patterns.’

And he’s great. Enjolras has never moved in with a boyfriend, never lived with anyone other than Combeferre since he left home. When Combeferre moved out he had commented that Enjolras wouldn’t last six months on his own, and Enjolras has spent the last year happy to have proved him wrong but… he’s better, now. It’s nice, leaving class with someone to go home to. Waving Grantaire out the door then clearing the dishes in the kitchen, sweeping junk off the sofa and unfolding scraps of receipts, newspapers to see half finished sketches of reality TV stars or all the politicians that Enjolras had circled as targets adorned with glasses, cartoon moustaches and speech bubbles saying things like ‘I are so evil’.

Other times Enjolras will find full pencil sketches on the back of his lecture notes - his face picked out in perfect detail, his hands the way they move when he’s fallen into a rant. (And he’ll keep talking, even when he can see Grantaire has zoned out and is just nodding idly along while his pencil moves because this matters damn it and he should care.) Grantaire draws all the furniture in the apartment, draws members of the ABC from memory, draws sharp animalistic eyes and paws - endless paws on the edges of everything as though he’s trying to get something right.

The first picture he actually gives to Enjolras is Combeferre done in biro, his face caught perfectly in the fondly exasperated look he wears a lot around Enjolras. Enjolras buys a fridge magnet just so he can put it up in the kitchen, because it makes Grantaire roll his eyes and call him an idiot,
turning his head away as though trying to hide his smile.

Enjolras finds himself chasing that smile. Gifts don’t work - new pens and a sketchbook are just met by a wary look and a ‘you shouldn’t have’. Trying to cook them a meal got a smile initially, but then Grantaire ended up correcting him so often he just took over, shooing Enjolras back out of the kitchen. Losing spectacularly at Mariokart gets Grantaire grinning ear to ear, crowing, “You have magical werewolf reflexes and I’m still kicking your ass.” Enjolras could practice as soon as Grantaire leaves in the evenings. He doesn’t. He reheats whatever Grantaire cooked for lunch for dinner and opens his iPad to look at the latest links from his feeds, his friends.

He’s stopped working on ABC stuff when Grantaire is home. He tells Combeferre he needs more time to focus on building a pack relationship, and it’s not quite a lie. The first few times he got caught up in it all talking to Grantaire, he was met by casual nods and a few ‘mmhmms’ but after the first couple, Grantaire just started ignoring him completely. He would shut down, wouldn’t say anything. If Enjolras asked his opinion - the voice of the humans - he just rolled his eyes. “I don’t care, Enjolras.”

After the fourth repetition, Enjolras looked up from his article. “What’s the problem? You come to meetings, you care there.”

“Do I?” He shrugged his shoulders, unpausing his game.

“Why else would you -” Enjolras started, but cut himself off before he could finish, switching his iPad off and throwing it onto the other sofa. No sense ruining the tentative peace between them by bringing up everything they needed to talk about, right?

So it’s tentative a week later when he puts down his wii controller - after coming twelfth, again - and says, “I got a text from Musichetta.”

“Was it the collection of doctor doctor jokes, because I already got it from Bahorel, Feuilly and Jehan.” Somehow in the time it’s taken Enjolras to pull out his phone, Grantaire has put down his controller, found a pen and started drawing a long looping line up the inside of his wrist.

Enjolras pulls his eyes back up to Grantaire’s face. “It was about what you said at the ABC.” Despite his best efforts at steering the debates to human issues and human/pack relationships, Grantaire has kept his mouth firmly shut at the two meetings since his bonding comment. “About the ‘extreme sport’ survivors being mated before they took part in the event. She’s been doing a lot of research, and she might have made a breakthrough. One of them was arrested, for drink driving, way before they signed the waiver.”

Grantaire’s eyes are still fixed on his own wrist, where the looping line is transforming into a vine twisting up his veins to wrap around the base of his thumb. Combeferre had literally cheered when Enjolras told him. Grantaire doesn’t react.

“She can get a copy of the arrest report,” Enjolras elaborates. “It’s public record. If they performed a blood test, we can find out if the bond was already there. Prove reasonable doubt for survival rates of unbonded humans.”

Grantaire starts to draw roots, twisting down his arm and around his wrist.

Enjolras hesitates, but pushes on. “This could be huge, it could make our whole case and you suggested it.” He tries for a grin, but doesn't quite reach it with Grantaire still so carefully not looking at him. “You should talk more in meetings.”
Grantaire’s pen goes still on the inside of his wrist for a long moment, then he drags it sharply sideways, cutting across the neatly curling lines. “It won’t help. Are you really so fucking - god.”

Enjolras finds himself fighting conflicting urges to hold him still or to shake him and say don’t you get how important this is. After a moment he leans over to take the pen, trying to ignore the single straight line on Grantaire’s skin. “We can use this.”

Grantaire laughs, Enjolras shivers. “Whatever loophole you think you’ve found, it won’t change anything. They won’t fix the system, they’ll close the loophole.”

Enjolras can feel the lines of the pen imprinting on his palm he’s holding it so tight. “These people are committing murder and getting away with it.”

“Not legally.” Grantaire turns his head - finally - to meet Enjolras’s eyes. “And they can’t let it be, because too many powerful men would become murderers.” He shakes his head, reaching up to push his hair back, blue ink on his wrist catching in the light. “You always talk like you can save the goddamn world but what have you done?”

All Enjolras’s retorts die in his throat. For the first time someone’s asking him to talk about the Cause and he’s speechless, staring at one of the humans he desperately wants to save and how is he supposed to do that? One man can’t save the world, however much it makes them want to scream.

Grantaire pushes a cushion off his lap onto the floor and stands up. “I have to go to work.”

It’s two hours until he normally leaves, Enjolras doesn’t say anything as he gets up, finds his converses under the sofa and grabs his bike keys from the hook beside the door. It’s only when it opens that Enjolras finds his voice. “If you don’t believe in change, why do you bother coming?”

Silence for a long moment, and then the door shuts and he’s gone. Enjolras holds still for a count of twenty - give him time to get down the hall and into the lift - then swears loudly and punches the sofa cushions.

He reads an article on human children of werewolves - genetic anomalies, generally a result of one or more humans somewhere further up the gene pool - and what rights they have to their family pack. A senator in Lyon is campaigning for them to have no birthrights, saying they should be claimed in like any other human. The debate has been ongoing for weeks and there are hundreds of essays on both sides. Enjolras retreats into it, forcing himself to reread phrases over and over until they sink in, taking notes on a reporter pad in blue biro and not thinking about sharp lines on Grantaire’s skin. He works until he can’t keep his eyes open and Grantaire still isn’t home.

He texts Éponine, you’d tell me if he was bad, right? but he doesn’t expect a reply and he falls asleep watching his phone screen and waiting.

* 

He’s awake. It’s a strange kind of instant, like being woken by a gunshot, but silent. The orange glow of the streetlamps comes through the edges of the shutters but there’s no sign of dawn. He pats the bed until he finds his phone, but the screen doesn’t light up. Dead battery.

Enjolras closes his eyes for a moment and does the smallest shift. When he opens them again the orange glow has faded into grey but he can pick out the detail of the room and crawl to the edge of the bed, reaching down into the crack to pull out the bright white phone cable and plug it in. He’s tapping the case waiting for it to charge up enough to switch on when thunk.

His head jerks up, wide awake again. Drops his phone onto the sheets and places his feet on the
floor, three silent steps across to the door. He moves it slowly to stop it creaking, holding still in the doorway as his wolf eyes scan the main room. The front door is slightly open, swaying millimeters back and forth in the breeze coming in from the open window. Enjolras does a quick mental rewind, his iPad and phone both went into the bedroom last night. Thieves couldn’t have got anything important without waking him, although how they got in at all without waking him is a different -

His eyes fall on a lump on the sofa, picking out dark curls, moonlight shining on a glass bottle and big dark eyes turning to face him. “Shit,” Grantaire’s voice comes out as a slurred and cracked whisper. “Sorry, fuck.” He’s holding a cushion in one hand, a wine bottle and Enjolras’s favourite blanket in the other. He’s swaying worse than the front door and there’s a smell coming off him, sneaking around into all the nooks and crannies in the apartment. Sour grapes and vodka, sweat and vomit.

Enjolras blinks his eyes back to human and shadows rush in to hide most of the apartment in darkness. He switches on a small light on his way to the sofa, illuminating heavy dark shadows under Grantaire’s eyes and the bird’s nest of his hair. Grantaire looks at him for a moment, then drops heavily onto the cushions, placing the empty bottle down. The light catches blue ink smudged across his palm and fingers. “What are you doing?”

Grantaire looks from the cushion to the blanket then up to Enjolras with a wide lopsided smile ruined by the way his eyes can’t focus. “I drank a bit.”

“You threw up.” He doesn’t have to ask, the smell is getting stronger every minute.

“In the toilet,” Grantaire glances over at the bathroom. “I aimed, it’s been a while but I’m pretty good.” He aims a thumbs up haphazardly at the table a meter left of Enjolras. “I’m ace at self-care, you should tell Ep, I’m fine I can absolutely come back and take care of myself.” He laughs quietly to himself and then his head snaps up, eyes fixed on Enjolras’s face. “Sorry I woke you. I tried - I’m a bit unstable.”

Enjolras sits down on the table next to him, pushing three empty bottles aside to clear space. Grantaire has already cleared the back cushions off the sofa onto the floor to make a larger space and folded up his jacket at the end where his head would go. Enjolras reaches out to take the blanket from Grantaire’s limp grip and holds it up to his nose. It smells of Grantaire, the way his clothes do, the way his bed should. “How about you come with me and go to bed?”

Grantaire’s backpack is sitting beside the television. How long has it been out? Long enough for Enjolras to overlook it, so used to it being there that he stopped wondering when Grantaire was going to get around to putting it into his bedroom.

Grantaire pats the sofa, already rolling onto his side. “Nearly all set up. Just got to set an alarm so Enjolras - Enjolras -” he squints at Enjolras. “Oh.”

God, it’s been nearly a month. How has Enjolras missed this? “Why aren’t you sleeping in your room?”

Grantaire slumps back into his makeshift pillow, eyes fixed on the door to his bedroom. “The justice cave? It’s intimidating.”

Enjolras closes his eyes, takes a deep breath so he won’t start shouting. “You should’ve said, I would’ve taken it down.”

Grantaire yawns, rolling onto his side so he can reach out and rest a palm on Enjolras’s knee. His
hand is warm through Enjolras’s thin pyjamas, his eyes wide and serious staring up at Enjolras’s face. “Then it wouldn’t be your room.”

There’s a feather from the sofa caught in his hair and in the dim glow of the lamp in the corner with Grantaire’s eyes fixed on him, Enjolras finds himself reaching out to run his fingers through Grantaire’s curls and pick it out. They’re softer than he expected, fine black strands sifting through his fingers. “It’s your room.”

Grantaire curls on the sofa, his hand leaving Enjolras’s leg but his head pushing further against Enjolras’s fingers. “I like the couch.”

He’s like a cat. His eyes are already falling shut as though he’s going to sleep there without a pillow or a blanket and with Enjolras’s hands still in his hair. Enjolras takes a handful between his fingers and pulls. “You’re not sleeping on the sofa.”

Grantaire opens his eyes to deliver what should be a killer petulant look, but is ruined by the mess of hair over his eyes and the overall kitten impression.

“I will carry you if I have to.” Enjolras pulls his hand free before it gets stuck there. “But if you go on your own, you can have water.”

Grantaire looks at him for a moment longer, then sighs and - with effort - pulls himself into a sitting position, eyes casting wildly around until they fall on the blanket. He grasps it carefully in one hand and rises in a slow motion, ten step process that involves a lot of stumbling until Enjolras stands up too and lets Grantaire lean the majority of his weight on Enjolras’s shoulder. “You’re burning up.”

Grantaire rests his head on Enjolras’s shoulder and lets himself be guided in a stumble towards the closed bedroom door. “I’m a warm blooded creature,” he says. “You’re a lizard.”

Enjolras wastes thirty seconds trying to figure out if this is an insult, before realising that Grantaire is probably not anywhere near sober enough to compose insults based on biology and thermodynamics. He props Grantaire on his shoulder to open the bedroom door and kicks himself internally for not doing so before. He’d thought he was respecting Grantaire’s privacy, but one ten second glimpse would have made it very clear that Grantaire didn’t live here. The bed was still pristine, the desk was covered in a thin layer of dust. Grantaire’s backpack still lived beside the TV in the lounge and the only thing of his that had made it through the door was the sketchbook and art pens that Enjolras’ had bought him and he’d dumped on the side table.

“I should not,” Grantaire mumbles into Enjolras’s neck.

“It’s your room.”

“It’s going to smell, I could shower -” considering he can’t stand, his ability to wash himself is definitely in question.

“We can clean it.” Enjolras pushes him lightly and he falls onto the covers without argument. “How much did you drink?”

“I don’t know.” Grantaire falls onto his back, looking up at the play of car lights on the ceiling. The dancing nature of the light in the room hides the shadows, smoothing his face into something mysterious. “Thenardier was mad, it must have been a lot. I dropped some.”

Enjolras tugs the blankets out from underneath Grantaire’s legs and starts tucking him in, focusing on his own hands and the layers of sheets. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have pushed you.”
“I’m never good enough for you.”

Enjolras stills, stops trying to tuck the sheets in at the sides and turns a head to look at Grantaire. His eyes are still open, even though moments before he’d been on the verge of sleep. “What?”

“I’m not trying to be.” He sighs softly, but in the silence it seems to echo. “I don’t want to be. I’m not Feuilly, I’m not Courf, I can’t even be Éponine. I don’t want to fight a war, I don’t see how anything can change, I don’t believe.”

Enjolras is suddenly very aware of his hands resting on the blankets over Grantaire’s chest. He pulls them back, takes half a step away thinking water, sleep. But something stops him, the old familiar urge to keep pushing, to keep sending his mum articles and quizzing his dad on policy. To scream, how can you ignore this.

“If you don’t believe in anything,” he says. “Why did you throw that rock?”

Grantaire’s head lifts, turning from the lights for the first time to fix his eyes on Enjolras. His ambivalence has always been frustrating, like Enjolras has been constantly fighting for his attention. Having it, having that dark gaze fixed on him to the exclusion of everything else is too much and too little all at once. “I believe in you.”

He says it with such conviction, that for a moment Enjolras accepts it as an answer. For a moment Enjolras wants to lean in and promise to try and be worthy, to do whatever it takes, to fight until the end. Then Grantaire’s mouth falls into a half smile and he’s drunk and it isn’t any kind of answer.

Enjolras shakes his head. It’s the middle of the night, he’s too tired for riddles. “That doesn’t make any sense.”

“Oh,” Grantaire looks back at the ceiling, frowning like there might be an answer in the headlights. “I believe in… rocks?”

Enjolras sighs and leaves him, takes the first mug he finds in the kitchen and fills it with water. He pauses in his own room to grab his phone - now 5% charged - and sees a single message on the screen. Éponine: I got him to take a cab home. Rest is on you.

When he returns, Grantaire is curled on his side facing the far wall where the streetlight outside casts shadows across Enjolras’s collage of articles and misery. In the half light, only the headlines are dark enough to read: Moonlight Murder, Pack in Claiming Scandal, Human Equality: Myth or Reality?

Enjolras turns away from it to put the mug down on the little bedside table, and as he does Grantaire’s hand lifts up to catch him, fingers curling warm and unusually strong against his neck to hold him in place. He lifts his head and Enjolras braces himself for a waft of wine breath as Grantaire whispers whatever his drunken mind has decided is so important it can’t wait until morning.

What he gets is chapped lips almost dry on his skin, rough stubble brushing his cheek and a kiss impossibly soft that just catches the edge of Enjolras’s mouth. What he gets is his heart beating ten times a second, the floor falling out from underneath his feet and all the air disappearing from the room.

Grantaire’s fingertips are touching the short hairs at the back of Enjolras’s neck. His breath is warm and slow and it’s all Enjolras can do to swallow down the desire to pull him back, to see what his breath tastes like inside his mouth. When he finds words, his voice comes out rough like five
minutes to a full moon. “What was that for?”

Grantaire’s face relaxes into a smile as though until that moment he wasn’t sure what reaction he’d get, and he sinks his head back down onto the pillow. His eyes are already drifting shut. “For thinking you can fix it.”

The whole room feels like a bubble that could explode into a thousand shards of glass at any moment and Enjolras shouldn’t press on it but he can’t stop himself. “Fix what?”

Grantaire’s thumb drags agonisingly slowly across his cheek as he pulls his hand away. “The world,” he says, words starting to slur as his breathing evens out. “Me. Your apartment.”

The corners of Enjolras’s eyes sting as he reaches down to flatten the blankets under Grantaire’s hand, blue ink blurred on his skin in the dim shadows. “There’s nothing wrong with my apartment.”

Grantaire’s lips curl into a smile but he doesn’t say anything more, his breathing coming deep and even, streetlight casting dark shadows of his eyelids across his cheeks.

Enjolras watches him until his own breathing has evened out to match, and then stands up and pulls a box out from under the desk, reaching out to pull the first piece of string loose from the wall.
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

All the puppies come home to roost.

Chapter Notes

Thanks so much to McKenzi for coming on board to beta, she gets all the cookies and appreciation :) <3 & love as always to Katie for enabling, cheerleading, first reading etc.

Also thanks to all of you reading along! I've been writing this for so long, it's awesome to be sharing it! <3

“You’ve got to stop skipping class every time I do something stupid.” Grantaire reaches past him for the cafetiere and a mug. “You’re going to fail everything.”

Enjolras shrugs, putting his pen down on top of the list of ways to make sure Musichetta’s arrest report can’t be swept under the rug. He has an uncle who owns a couple of newspaper companies, surely one of them would be willing to publish the story and once it had an audience there would be no stopping it. “Wouldn’t be the first time.”

Grantaire sips his coffee, and grimaces because Enjolras made it when he stumbled out of his bedroom and into the shower, which was at least an hour ago. Enjolras had been on the verge of going in to make sure he hadn’t drowned when he’d emerged, dressed in a dark green t-shirt over sweatpants, his hair dripping wet. Hanging straight, it brushes his shoulders leaving dark patches on the cotton. “Thanks for -” he waves his mug, indicating everything and nothing. “You didn’t have to take the wall down.”

Enjolras shrugs. “Would you sleep in there again if I hadn’t?”

Grantaire’s face answers for him a moment before his mouth can even open, and he seems to see this reflected on Enjolras’s expression because whatever he was going to lie never comes out.

“You should’ve told me you were sleeping on the sofa.”

“You would’ve given me that look,” he points his mug at Enjolras’s face, snagging a stool to sit down at the bar. “That one, with the judging and the disappointment.”

‘I’m never good enough for you.’ Enjolras tries to school his face into something neutral. “I’m not judging you, I’m mad at myself for not noticing and doing something sooner.”

Grantaire waves this off with one hand. “You weren’t supposed to notice at all.”

“You always woke up before me,” Enjolras reaches up to push his hair back, realises what he’s doing and forces his hand back down onto the counter. “You must be exhausted.”
“I slept while you were in class.” He reaches out to snag Enjolras’ plate, picking up the second slice of toast that has been sitting cold for several hours now. “Are we going to talk about this?”

“What -?”

Grantaire kicks his foot into the counter, his eyes fixed on the toast. “I know there’s like a million things we’re not talking about. You haven’t even mentioned the blue moon and that’s this weekend so if we’re going to add last night to the list, could you let me know now so I can stop waiting for you to yell at me?”

For a moment all Enjolras can do is stare at him. It would make a great painting, werewolf stares at human stares at toast. “When have I ever yelled at you?” which is not one of the million things he should have brought up (what do you know about the blue moon?) but his mind keeps catching on it.

Grantaire shrugs at his toast. He looks small, hunched in on himself, and Enjolras realises too late that he’s either horribly hungover or still partially drunk. He smells like Enjolras’s shampoo and about a gallon of mouthwash, so at least he hasn’t started drinking yet today.

This isn’t why Enjolras stayed home, this isn’t how it was supposed to go and he needs to stop assuming Grantaire will be predictable. “I’m sorry about yesterday. I shouldn’t have pushed you. I thought - it felt like we’d achieved something, like you’d achieved something and I thought you’d be glad.” He glances down at his notes. “How much did you drink?”

He gets a dry laugh for that. “God, who knows. I remember leaving for work, Thenardier yelling telling me to get out and never come back so I might be fired. I think Éponine pushed me into a cab.” His face screws up in concentration. “She said ‘tell your wolf ‘you break it, you bought it’, ’ I was trying really hard to remember that the whole way home in case it was important. Then a blur-’” He glances up to meet Enjolras’s eyes. “I woke you up.”

“Werewolves wake up at the slightest sound,” Enjolras says. “I’d be more interested in how you manage to get in every other night without waking me up.”

That gets him another shrug. “Then morning, pounding headache, your bed, bare wall.” He takes a bite of toast.

“I was worried about you.” Feuilly had been very clear on letting Grantaire make his own mistakes but Enjolras had been on the verge of calling him all night to say ‘does own mistakes include coming home with three empties of wine and one of vodka? should I get him to the emergency room?’

“Yeah?”

It sounds like a challenge, and Enjolras has never been great at resisting those. “We were fighting, you practically ran off and then come home so out of it you think you can just -” his cheeks heat up, not a good line of thought, not when Grantaire can’t even remember.

Enjolras hasn’t washed his face yet. It’s not quite early morning enough for that to be innocent. “You didn’t stop to tell me what was up, you didn’t call, I was up half the night wondering if you were okay.”

Grantaire put the rest of the toast in his mouth and chews slowly. Enjolras lets the silence drag, waits for him to make the next move. “You’re the one who picked up a stray and brought me home. Sorry I’m not good enough.”
When all they talked about was mariokart, they could go days without having a single fight. Now Enjolras has managed to stumble into their second in two days. “That’s not what I meant. I’m not saying I’m mad, I’m saying I was worried, there’s a difference.”

Grantaire’s expression holds fierce for a moment, then he slumps, shaking his head. “I’m not worth - I don’t know what you want from me.”

Enjolras glances down at his notes again, twisting the pencil so he doesn’t have to see Grantaire’s slumped shoulders. Systematic cultural issues, no problem he’ll start a campaign and give a speech under the Eiffel Tower but a basic miscommunication and he’s struck dumb. “Can I ask you a question?”

“Sounds ominous,” he reaches out a hand to swipe the pencil and pad out from Enjolras’s fingers, flipping to a new page. “What’s it about?”

He’s not sure, he hasn’t picked one yet. “Will you be totally honest with me?”

The pencil freezes half a centimeter from the page, Grantaire’s eyes flicking up from it to meet his. “That’s different.” He considers for a second. “How about we make a deal, a question for a question. You can go first.”

He has a million and one questions on the ever growing list of mysteries about Grantaire, but there’s one that has been pushing at him since last night and it’s that one that comes out first. “Why do you go to ABC meetings?”

Grantaire spins the pencil once between his fingers, considering. “Can I ask my question before you answer?”

“What if you change your answer based on mine?”

He gets a dry stare from that, because he’s treating this like some kind of top secret exchange of spy data but somehow it feels like that and he can’t quite make himself back down. After what feels like at least five minutes, Grantaire shrugs and touches the pencil to the paper, scrawling something too messy for Enjolras to read upside down. Then he tears the page off, folds it in half and slides it across the counter. “No peeking.” He point his pencil at Enjolras’s chest. “My question: why that one? of all the things you could have asked.”

Enjolras picks up his glass and takes another drink, pulling his thoughts into order, reminding himself to keep his voice calm. “Do you have any idea how frustrating it is to start an organisation dedicated to human rights where the only humans are your friends or your friends’ friends. You’re doing all these things but you don’t know if you’re doing it right or if you’re being insensitive and fucking everything up more.” He glances down. “And then one day, finally, a human comes along and joins and keeps coming. You could well have the best attendance of anyone but whenever there’s an issue, whenever we’re doing anything you just sit there. I don’t even know if you’re listening. I - sometimes I just want someone to say ‘yeah, you’re doing good.’ and I don’t know.” he’s cut off by Grantaire’s hand on his arm, his eyes caught by the contrast of dark skin against light.

Grantaire reaches out with the pencil to pull his note back. “Pretty sure you’re doing good.”

It feels like he’s been running a marathon, he just wants to rest his head for a moment in the damp area on Grantaire’s shoulder where his hair is springing back into curls as it dries. “You’re not allowed to change your answer.”
Grantaire taps his pencil against the note, then flips it open so Enjolras can read the *'I don’t know'* clear as day. “I cheated.”

It shouldn’t be a surprise, definitely shouldn’t make Enjolras feel hollowed out inside. “Okay.”

“Sometimes - “ Grantaire’s hand is still on Enjolras’s arm, his thumb moving slowly back and forth against the skin. Enjolras wonders vaguely if he’s noticed. “Sometimes it’s nice to know that people care about you. Even if it’s just the collective ‘you’ of your whole species.” His eyes drop and he must notice, because his hand pulls away leaving a fading warmth on Enjolras’s arm. “I’m sorry, it’s not what you wanted to hear.”

Enjolras is tired and his chest aches and Grantaire is so close he could reach up and kiss him before he could think to pull away. For a moment he wants to, wants to desperately as much as he normally wants to shift or run. Urgent, restless, wanting.

He thinks, *I could fall in love with you and is that what you wanted to hear?* and in that moment it’s the truest thing.

He turns his head away, presses his forehead against the cool skin of his shoulder. “You know about the blue moon?”

There’s a moment of confusion on Grantaire’s face at the sudden shift of subject, but he just shrugs and says, “All the puppies come home to roost.”

It’s too certain, too ‘obviously’ to be something he’s just looked up, which is another clue to something Enjolras would have to admit he’s known for a while now. “You’ve been around a pack before.”

It’s not a question, but Grantaire nods anyway. “I mean I was never -” he waves a hand at his hip where a thin layer of cotton covers an almost healed line of tooth marks. “But I lived with them.”

“When?” It slips out before he can remind himself not to ask questions, and he has to hope Grantaire doesn’t notice the slight hint of jealousy in it. Because Grantaire is *his* and other packs can’t have him.

A half smile. “Until I was fifteen.”

Which rings a bell, but it still takes Enjolras a moment to remember Grantaire casually throwing out that he was fifteen when he dropped out of school and by then Grantaire is turning away, picking up his glass and saying, “So the blue moon, this weekend?”

Enjolras lets the topic drop. Enough Conversation for one day, he can get over his hang-ups about Grantaire having another pack some other time. “It’s on Saturday. Combeferre’s picking us up on Friday after class.”

“No.”

Enjolras blinks, lifting his head from his shoulder. “You have to come. Mum and dad want to meet you, everyone wants to meet you. The whole pack comes together on a blue moon and you’re -”

Grantaire shakes his head. “I’m working Friday night.”

“You don’t have a job,” Enjolras starts, then stops when Grantaire pointedly raises an eyebrow at him. “I mean - you’ve called in sick every other time we’ve wanted to do anything. There’s a big dinner on Friday night. On Saturday we’re wolves, on Sunday people will have to get home for
work, Friday’s important. Anyway, I thought you said you remembered Thenardier firing you.”

Grantaire continues looking at him, gaze perfectly even. “Is this an equal bond?”

Enjolras frowns. “Of course it is, I promised you -”

Grantaire nods as though Enjolras has committed to something. “Then I’m working Friday.” He says it flat out, no room for negotiation or questions.

“I’ll have to talk to Combeferre,” he says, even though it feels like he’s already agreed. “We might have to leave late on Friday, after your shift.”

“Cool with me.” Grantaire picks up the Cafetiere. “You can go over there if you want. I am going to go back to bed with this and moan about my head for a few hours. Enjoy staring at my murder-free bedroom wall, live the high life, you know.”

Enjolras nods absently, still feeling wrong-footed somehow, like he missed a trick. He finds himself running over the whole conversation in his head, trying to pick out key points.

“Grantaire?”

Grantaire pauses in the doorway to his room, the cafetiere cradled in his arm like a caffeiney child. “Enjolras.”

“You’re not just another human. We care about you.”

It should be obvious, shouldn’t even need to be said but it gets a bright smile from Grantaire anyway. “Good to know.”

Enjolras waits for the door to close, then reaches out to snag his notepad so he can go over to Combeferre’s.

* *

It’s one of those hours just past midnight when the night goes a little indistinct around the edges. Up North the buildings are dark shadows looming over them, cracked paint caught in flickering streetlights, the occasional burst of sound and colour as a door opens, gone when it shuts. The clubs are open, the bars are closed, a girl on a street corner in leather trousers and a red ribboned corset shrinks in on herself as the sleek chrome car slides quietly through the streets. Doorways full of indistinct shadows, lit by the red gold glow of cigarettes. Every cracked and broken moment screaming you don’t belong here. You in your shiny battery powered car. No one comes forward, no one says anything, but it’s like walking through another pack’s territory, they don’t have to say it for you to know you’re not welcome.

In the passenger seat Courfeyrac is snoring lightly, oblivious. He fell asleep during Mad Max, just about got upright for the short stumble into the car and promptly dropped right back into unconsciousness. Combeferre’s eyes are sharp. He has a giant thermos full of coffee and is blasting some kind of hip hop album that he insists Enjolras will love if he listens to it properly. Twenty minutes in and Enjolras hasn’t heard a note. The lyrics are all in English and it could be about anything. His skin is thrumming, coiled like a spring, can’t stop picturing Grantaire standing beneath the chandeliers of the manor house where Enjolras grew up. It’s huge, it’s ornate enough to be gaudy, he’ll hate it.

It’s full of memories, it’s family, it’s home he has to love it.

Enjolras points Combeferre down the side alley. The skip is still there, caught in the headlights, a
little fuller perhaps. Someone has tagged *wolf lovers* on the side in red spray paint, and below it in smaller letters and different handwriting, *fuck you too Babet.* Then Combeferre shuts down the engine and the only light is a dim secondhand glow from the little window, casting the alleyway into shadows and shapes.

“I’ll stay with the car,” Combeferre says, his eyes on Courfeyrac. “Go in and let him know we’re out here.”

Outside the car there’s a breeze that picks up strands of Enjolras’s hair and toys with them, the smell of gutters mingles unpleasantly with the smell of alcohol and the sound of a guitar echoes around him. He pulls his jacket tighter, gives the skip a dark look, and heads around to the front. The door is cracked open, spilling a line of golden light out onto the street and casting smokers’ faces into shadows. The music is coming from inside, the soft notes of an acoustic guitar slightly twanged by a cheap audio system - not wolf made - and the smokers outside are speaking softly as though not to drown it out. “You’re late,” one of them tells him.

Enjolras shrugs, letting them believe whatever they like and pushes the door open. He has envisaged Thenardier’s a thousand times when falling asleep, when sending Grantaire off to work. The one time Grantaire let Enjolras drive him, he could hear thumping music from three streets away and Thenardier screeching drink offers from two. Mrs Thenardier had been outside to whack Grantaire around the shoulder with a ladle for being late and in the same breath smile at Enjolras and tell him they were having a special run on werewolf cocktails half price just for him, one night only. Grantaire had laughed it off and pushed him back to the car with a “she grows on you, I promise.”

Tonight there’s a stillness in the air. The music twists up around Enjolras, soft notes seeming to match his heartbeat and the voice catching through him like a howl. He steps through the doorway, sticking to the wall. The tables are spread out across the floor, the customers filling every seat, standing where there’s no chairs to spare. A single table has been pushed against the far wall, a chair stacked on top of it and Grantaire is sitting with a redwood guitar resting in his lap. It should be a surprise, but it's not. As the door swings shut the last note rings out and the silence bursts into noise, people hammering on tables and someone beside Enjolras cheers.

The smile that Enjolras has been desperately fighting for a glimpse of sits easily on Grantaire’s face, breaking into a laugh as someone in the front row shouts for an encore. “That was the encore, dude, my ride is going to be here any minute.”

A rousing chorus of ‘boo’s from the assembled crowd. Grantaire laughs again. “We’re about a million miles past curfew guys, but maybe you should be trying to convince someone else to get their ass up here. As I’m sure some among you have realised, I have somewhere to be tomorrow.” He taps his nose with a grin, inviting any werewolves to pick up Enjolras’s scent. For the first time Enjolras lets his senses spread out into the crowd and realises that for all Éponine’s posturing against wolves, the mix tonight is almost fifty fifty.

One of the smokers comes back through the door and Grantaire’s head turns to the light, his face furrowing in confusion for a moment before his eyes find Enjolras standing just beside. His smile gets a little wider, his face a little more open and Enjolras feels himself smiling back a moment before every head in the place turns to see what’s happening.

“You’ve gone and got yourself a fancy one,” calls a werewolf in the corner that it takes Enjolras a moment to recognise. “He’s more wolf than man.” The last time Enjolras saw him he was half naked in one of the beds upstairs and hardly able to stay upright, now he’s wearing a shirt and chinos but still sporting several weeks of untrimmed beard and a man bun.
Grantaire rolls his eyes, standing up before Enjolras can figure out a way to say it’s okay, play another one without the whole room listening in. “Maybe if you spent more time as a wolf you’d be able to get that foot out of your mouth, Montparnasse,” he says it with a grin though, and the room laughs as though this is old news. It’s a reasonable distraction though, there’s less eyes on Enjolras as Éponine works her way out from behind the bar and hoists herself up on stage, claiming the microphone.

Enjolras checks the room. He can see Gavroche collecting glasses - empties only, he’s pleased to note - in a plastic washing up bowl. Without Éponine, the area behind the bar is empty although there’s a fair queue in front of it. No sign of any elder Thenardiers. “I’m afraid we’re about two hours past our curfew,” Éponine says, her voice echoing through the mike around the room. “And Madame L’Airbodie has just given me a very pleasant phone call to say she’s glad we’re enjoying ourselves but if we could find our way to an ending soon it would be much appreciated.”

Someone calls out a toast to Madame L’Airbodie and the room erupts into cheering for another solid minute. Grantaire uses the opportunity to pull Éponine back from behind the mic into a quick one-armed hug, whispering something in her ear that makes her smile and then punch him.

Possibly punching Grantaire runs in the Thenardier family. Something about the ease of the smile, the familiarity of the touch, makes Enjolras realise that mr and mrs Thenardier aren’t the reason Grantaire keeps coming back.

“As you may have heard,” Éponine continues, shouting a bit louder over the dying noise. “There is no poker night next week.”

A chorus of ‘boo’s and ‘chuck ‘em out’s starts up. Grantaire sits down on the table and slides off the stage, grabbing a plastic box off the front and walking over to Montparnasse with the guitar held up high to avoid knocking it on any tables.

“If you want to come out anyway,” Éponine says. “I’m sure dad would love to see you all.”

The room erupts into laughter preventing Enjolras from hearing whatever Grantaire says to Montparnasse before passing over the guitar, but whatever the reply is it makes Grantaire laugh, a proper full throated laugh, and then lean in to kiss Montparnasse’s cheek. Gentle, their free hands close enough to be almost touching and Grantaire’s lips lingering a heartbeat too long.

He is free, Enjolras claimed him to save his life but Combeferre is right, that doesn’t mean anything. A single kiss in the dark when Grantaire was too drunk to stand and it doesn’t mean anything. Enjolras has no right to feel hurt, to feel lied to, to feel like he’s going to shuck his skin in the bar and howl at the so-close-to-full moon.

Knowing that he shouldn’t doesn’t help. Not when Grantaire claps Montparnasse on the shoulder, pulls a few crumpled pieces of paper from the box to give to Éponine as she steps down from the stage and slips through the crowd to Enjolras with his hair mussed and his smile still glowing. “I figured you’d text me when you were outside.”

The box rattles with several generous handfuls of change and a stack of notes. A brief glance is enough to spot more than one €50. That explains… some things. “I didn’t know you played guitar.”

Grantaire shrugs, grabbing his rucksack off a hook behind Enjolras’s head and shoving a handful of notes and coins into a zip pocket on the front. “I gave you one question, you could’ve asked.”

He turns back with a teasing grin that doesn’t help Enjolras’s growing sense of displacement, of all the things he was certain of shifting to something else around him. “I also make a mean paper plane.”
He’s perfectly stable, his breath smells like sugar sweet lemonade and a little bit like the macaroni bake from hours ago. Enjolras tries to remember if he’s ever come home drunk on a Friday, fails. Everything blurred together, sometimes he’s better at hiding it, sometimes he’s worse. “You have a weekly gig,” he says, following Grantaire back outside into the cold and not sure why he’s pressing the point beyond trying to pull his world back into order somehow. “You could’ve invited us.”

“Technically it’s an open mic,” Grantaire shivers and pulls his jacket tight across his stomach. “But somehow I always end up doing two hours. Hey, Floreal.”

The girl they’d passed earlier is hovering on the corner in her corset and six inch heels, watching Enjolras warily. Now they’re not whipping past her in a car worth more than she’ll see in her life, Enjolras can see the silver lines of scars, two across her face and four thick running down her arm. Perfectly parallel. Claw marks. Enjolras swallows and takes a deliberate step back, palms against his thighs fingers spread. “I’ll just - the car.”

Grantaire glances at him, seems to realise what’s going on and nods, holding out his backpack. Enjolras takes it, grateful for something to do with his hands, and ducks back into the alleyway, opening the boot to add Grantaire’s meager backpack to the three suitcases already inside.

He’s no stranger to claw scars. He’s looked at a thousand pictures, started at least fifty campaigns emblazoned with images just like those on Floreal. He’s never seen them in real life before. He gets into the car on autopilot, and instantly has Combeferre’s eyes on him frowning you’re not okay? as if he needs that point reinforced.

The door across from him opens and Grantaire slides in, sans box of money. “Thanks,” he says. He doesn’t need to give details, Enjolras’s skin is crawling enough just thinking of the look on Floreal’s face at seeing him.

Was she being paid for services rendered? Enjolras can’t stop himself wondering as Combeferre starts the car up again. Was it just a ‘your life sucks and I’m sorry’? There had been maybe fifty euros, what does that buy? Who would go to the person in the shittiest position in the world and decide that they needed was their arms clawed open and their face cut up?

He couldn’t even bring himself to anger. Not when they’d been so matter-of-fact about it, when Grantaire thought he might need thanking for trying to not traumatise a person who couldn’t be any older than they were. He wanted to pull his knees up to his chest, to curl up around his tail and have someone stroke his ears and tell him they were going to tear the whole damn establishment to the ground.

A hand touches his, resting on the seat between them. Hesitant to start with, firmer when Enjolras doesn’t immediately pull away. Grantaire’s palm is warm, always warm, the callouses that must be from guitar strings rather than too many 2B pencils catching slightly on Enjolras’s permanently moisturised skin as he runs his thumb back and forth across Enjolras’s knuckles.

Enjolras closes his eyes, rests his head against the cool glass of the window and lets his vision blur until all he can see is flashes of light and dark keeping his world stable for a little while. If you didn’t believe in anything, Enjolras thinks at the hand touching his. You wouldn’t believe in her. But Grantaire can’t read his mind, and he stays silent, letting the night pass by outside this little circle of warmth, undisturbed.

* 

It’s four hours down dark roads to Honfleur. Enjolras must sleep some of it, because between
flashes of light his jacket moves from the seat to thrown lightly over his shoulders like a blanket. He might still be sleeping when he hears Combeferre say, “I didn’t know you were a musician,” and Grantaire reply, “It wasn’t a big secret. I was writing this song… I can’t get it to sound how it does in my head.” and he’s definitely sleeping after because then the car is crumbling over gravel and he blinks wolf out of his eyes in time for them to sweep around the first bend and bring the house properly into view.

It’s a lot. Enjolras would’ve been the first one back in Paris to put his hand up and admit he lived in a big house. Their estate spans five hundred acres of woodland, the driveway alone is a solid two mile hike away from the main road. They always say they live in Honfleur but realistically they’re a good half hour drive from anything approaching the city itself. The house itself though, Enjolras only ever pictures it in slices. The trellis where the honeysuckle died but the ivy flourished across the whole west wing, allowing generations of puppies to sneak out at night. The top left window that got smashed by a flying cricket ball and was replaced by a pane of glass just slightly yellower than anything else in the house.

Whenever Enjolras thinks about it he doesn’t picture three rows of ornate carved windowsills, a front door that’s actually two doors and wouldn’t look out of place on a monastery, the whole front lit even at four am by golden lights set into the veranda that brighten tastefully on their approach. He doesn’t quite picture how the ornate gargoyles and the spires and the little gothic structures all add up into something a little more chateau than maison. This place is half the reason the Enjolras pack hasn’t split up and broken off as it grows like most other families. No one wants to say goodbye to the pack house.

Grantaire lets out a low whistle, dragging it out all the way from the oak tree to the chess lawn, both hidden in the darkness but solid enough in Enjolras’s mind that it’s like he can feel them. Combeferre’s head is tilted slightly up, eyes presumably scanning for that slightly off-colour glass. It’s like a ‘Where’s Wally,’ no one spots it immediately but once you know it’s there, it’s all you see.

“No one’s going to care if I don’t park tonight,” Combeferre says, decisive, swinging around the end of the drive and stopping the car directly at the bottom of the steps up to the front door. “If anyone has a complaint, they can take it up with me after I’ve slept for a week.”

The first time Combeferre came here, he was constantly stepping on eggshells, asking Enjolras every thirty seconds how this or that was done and how he could avoid causing offense. Enjolras had said ‘treat this place like your home’ at least fifty times before he realised that Combeferre was.

Enjolras’s hand is cold. He glances at Grantaire, who has reclaimed his own hand to lean on the windowledge, craning his neck to try and see the roof. Does he like it? Does he hate it? Hard to tell, he’s not shouting yet. Enjolras wants him to like it. “Well,” he prompts, a little too needy, as Combeferre starts the twelve step process of waking up Courfeyrac. “This is home.”

Grantaire reaches up to drag a hand through his hair. It looks like he might be trying to flatten it into something presentable but his fingers get stuck after about an inch of motion so it can’t be going well. Enjolras is practically bouncing on his seat, he wants Grantaire to say it’s great. He wants him to say it’s ridiculous and gaudy and an offense to everything the ABC stands for. He wants Grantaire to get it.

“Heyyyyy,” Courfeyrac squirms around in his seat to beam at them. “We’re here! That was super quick.” He kisses Combeferre quickly on the cheek before anyone can point out that it was normal length for everyone who wasn’t sleeping the whole way, and opens the car door instantly
surrounding them all with freezing night air. “I’m tired, I hope someone found us some hot water bottles.” He hops out, Combeferre rolling his eyes and following. Doors slam, the boot opens, Grantaire is still looking up like he might find the yellow pane without knowing it’s there.

Enjolras’s throat is one massive lump. The fresh air makes his fingers feel even colder where Grantaire isn’t touching them (hasn’t returned to touching them.) “You don’t like it.”

“I didn’t say that.” He worries his bottom lip between his teeth, twists a curl around his finger, gives Enjolras plenty of time to not hear what he has to say before he speaks again. “I mean, it’s beautiful. I’d love to paint it.”

“But.”

A half self-conscious shrug. “It’s big.” He drops his hands, keeping his face turned away. “I could do with a bed, if there’s a room somewhere in your giant castle for me.” He turns back to flash a grin, as though they can be past this that easily.

Outside the wind is biting but they’re only there for a moment, catching the bags tossed out by Courfeyrac and then darting up the steps to the front door which swings open wide at their approach. “Come in quick before you let all the warmth out.” Mum is in her pyjamas, Enjolras can’t blame her for that, with a japanese silk dressing gown thrown over the top and pink uggs probably stolen from a cousin but necessary on the tiles of the entrance hall.

Combeferre gets a tight hug, a quick kiss on each cheek. “Hey Maman,” he says, in a voice so soft it might be inaudible to Courfeyrac right behind him. Enjolras bites down on his grin, but mum does no such thing, beaming wide and hugging him even tighter.

Courfeyrac gets a double kiss and a moment of scrutiny. “Still human, I see.”

He beams as though this was the best possible greeting. “Just about, Madam Enjolras. Thanks for waiting up.”

She waves this off as though she hasn’t come down in her nightclothes at four in the morning. “If you will decide to show up in the middle of the night. I’m sorry dad couldn’t be here, he’s had a big day.” She kisses Courfeyrac one more time for good measure then turns to Enjolras.

“Hi Mum.” Grantaire pulled the front door shut behind them, but now he’s doing his best to hide and Enjolras can feel himself edging over to put himself more firmly between his mate and his mother. “Missed you.”

She raises her eyebrows like she knows exactly what he’s doing, but pulls him into a hug anyway. “You’re on the inflatable. Your father wants you to know he fought for you, but apparently Micah has back problems and the Pelier’s are looking at breaking off so we have to suck up.” She rolls her eyes like the complicated mechanisms of maintaining fair pack dynamics between what are essentially five branches of one rapidly expanding family is a minor annoyance to be handled between dinner and drinks. When he was a kid, Enjolras used to think his mother could arrange world peace between emerging from the shower and selecting her make-up.

He’s still not sure he was wrong. He pulls back from the hug, forces himself to step to the side in one movement, the pulling-off-a-plaster method of exposing Grantaire. “Mum, this is Grantaire. My mate.”

Grantaire’s face twists and Enjolras curses himself silently. Shouldn’t have said mate, should’ve gone with bond or just ‘this is Grantaire’. Would correcting it be better or just digging himself into
a hole? Mum is already holding out a hand, Grantaire fumbling the straps of his rucksack to free up his hand to be shaken. It falls to the floor, drawing everyone’s eyes to the silver tape covering the ink-stained fabric. Grantaire’s hand, when he holds it out, is similarly marked up all over in smudged black pen and Enjolras finds himself surreptitiously glancing down at his own knuckles to see if any of it transferred to his own skin.

“Hi,” Grantaire says, a drawn out moment later when they’re still shaking hands and the whole moment has fallen out of sync. “Nice to - I mean, thank you for having me.”

Apparently this is enough to get Mum back onto solid footing, bringing out her best politician smile and freeing up both their hands. “Of course, you’re always welcome. Everyone was sorry they couldn’t stay up and meet you, but we have a big day tomorrow.” Her eyes catch momentarily on the way Grantaire’s T-shirt is stretched at the neckline, exposing patches that he missed shaving and more ink stains up behind his ear. Enjolras wants to explain that this particular T-shirt was the only one he had clean and that he toys with the hair behind his ears when he’s sketching and that his jeans tore only a couple of days ago and he hasn’t been shopping since.

But he’s not supposed to notice that stuff. Is he? Grantaire didn’t let go of his hand once for a whole four hour drive, what does that mean?

“I have -” Grantaire bends down, spinning his bag to find the opening and digging through his belongings. “A present, to say thank you for -” a vague wave of the hand. “And sorry I missed dinner.”

Enjolras meets Combeferre’s eyes over his head and they have a moment of -what is it?, I don’t know anything about it, what do we do?, I have no idea. Enjolras can envisage Grantaire reemerging with a bottle of Thenardier’s finest €3 rosé. Mum is impossible to buy presents for at the best of times. She won’t eat chocolate, flowers make her sneeze, even the fanciest bottles of wine get politely dumped into a cupboard ready to be re-gifted to someone else.

Grantaire straightens up with a roll of paper, held shut by a black hairband that still has a single dark hair caught up in it. “I was, I mean, something came up. Enjolras said you wanted to see me so this is -” his eyes catch on the hair and he snatches the hairband back, stretching it over his wrist. “Sorry, and thanks.”

Mum takes it slowly, crossing to the cedar side table where a glass bowl is overflowing with car keys, and pushing it aside so she can unroll it. Grantaire is hanging back, avoiding everyone’s eyes, hand shoved into his pockets as though to stop himself snatching it back and Enjolras is torn between going to him to comfort and looming over Mum’s shoulder to try and figure out what exactly Grantaire thought would be an appropriate gift.

He’s still hovering between them when Mum’s breath catches in her throat. That decides the issue, he cranes his neck and - it’s a sketch, on fancy art paper with thick and thin lines as though from fancy art pens. Not abandoned entirely, but perhaps saved and he recognises the picture immediately. It’s him, caught in motion, muzzle raised and eyes sharp on something in the distance.

Wolves aren’t good at mirrors. If asked to describe his wolf form, Enjolras would um and ahh a little. He knows he’s golden, a little on the skinny side for a wolf of his size. A scar on his thumb from a broken bottle at a protest-turned-riot transfers to a small patch of bare skin on his forepaw. On his street-change permit it says golden brown, 80kg, 1.2m. He knows his wolf form in a series of lists, facts and descriptions from strangers.

And yet he recognises it instantly in this picture. Caught in motion, it’s like staring at a small part
of his soul captured and outlined in black ink for the world to see. Mum has a hand up to her mouth, unable to tear her eyes away. “Enjolras,” she says it so softly, closing her hand tight over his. “Oh, it’s - I’ve never seen anything like it.”

Mum turns to pull Grantaire stumbling forwards into a hug. “It’s wonderful, wherever did you find someone to draw it?”

There’s a single stylised R in the corner where a signature should be and it still takes Enjolras a moment to put it together.

Grantaire barely lets himself be hugged for a moment before pulling back, tugging awkwardly at a strand of hair. “It’s nothing, just a sketch. I know it’s hard to get a decent photo of a wolf form.” He shrugs. “No time at all, really.”

Grantaire, Enjolras remembers belatedly, has seen his wolf form once. He remembers endless paws, ears, rough sketches on the edges of newspaper and how long has Grantaire been planning this? While he was sleeping on the sofa, playing mariokart for hours, not giving any sign. “It’s amazing,” Enjolras says. Because he can’t say ‘you’re amazing’ and he can’t return the kiss that Grantaire doesn’t even remember.

“We’ll get it framed first thing in the morning,” Mum says, still with one hand on Grantaire’s shoulder. He’s almost hunched over with the effort of avoiding everyone’s eyes on him, which is probably good because Enjolras can’t stop staring. “It’s beautiful. Thank you.”

Grantaire looks one moment away from saying it’s nothing again, but Courfeyrac rescues the moment by swaying on the spot and having to be caught by Combeferre. “We should get moving,” Combeferre says, resting a hand on Courfeyrac’s back to push him gently towards the stairs.

“Oh of course, you’re all shoved in together, if you don’t like it you can go downstairs.” Mum moves as though to hug Grantaire again.

Enjolras moves into her arms, pulling her into another tight hug. “We’ll see you in the morning, okay?” he says, maneuvering her back a little to give Grantaire space to grab his backpack and retreat after Combeferre.

She holds on tight for a moment. “I love you.”

Enjolras can feel Grantaire dragging his feet waiting for some direction, so he resists the urge to say look, I was right. Isn’t he amazing? although this close to the full moon, and judging by the look he gets when he finally pulls away, she heard it anyway.

* Enjolras can’t stop thinking about the way Grantaire had caught his wolf’s expression in a moment of focused intent with none of the feral predator-prey glint that normally accompanies it so he forgets until he’s actually outside his bedroom door that he hasn’t updated the decor since he was about fourteen.

He doesn’t come home much. When they were claiming Combeferre, the two of them shared one of the big spare rooms downstairs. He comes back for Christmas, Easter and the blue moons but he spends college holidays in the city organising protests, attending sit-ins and trying to catch up on all the work he skipped during the semester because he was too busy with protests and sit-ins.

There is a big poster of Gerard Way behind his bed, is what he’s saying. Because fourteen-year-old Enjolras would tell anyone who listened that here was a guy who really got it who was a wolf but
who really wanted to support his fans of all shapes and literally everyone Enjolras spoke to atourteen knew he was gay but apparently they were enjoying themselves too much to tell him. Also
he insisted that they let him paint a whole wall red only he failed at the paint shop so now it clashes
with all his clothes and his bedsprea.

He remembers all this a moment after opening the door and letting Grantaire go in first because
4am is a breeding ground for bad decisions. Really the Enjolras’s room: KEEP OUT sign on the
door should have been his first clue. “Sorry, it’s a bit -” he gets inside properly and sees
Grantaire’s grin. “Shut up.”

“Orange walls. It’s a bold choice, but I can appreciate your artistic vision.” He climbs over the
airbed that’s taking up the majority of the available floor to properly examine Enjolras’s pinboard.

Enjolras tugs down the Keep Out sign, a signed print of a celebrity activist and a poster he made
out of school detention letters before Grantaire can turn around. “So I need to redecorate.”

Grantaire taps his knuckles on the slanted ceiling. “You need to move, are we in the roof?”

Enjolras considers explaining that when he was eleven he desperately wanted to live in the attic
like Ron Weasley and refused to move even after it was proved the mansion did not contain a
single ghoul, and then doesn’t do that. Any hopes that Grantaire would be falling asleep by the
time they got here would appear to have been dashed, apparently sleeping until 2pm every day now
he has a proper bed makes up for not sleeping in the car on the way down. “Do you want to go
downstairs?”

“Your mother said that with the same tone of impending doom. Are there bodies down there?
Rats?”

“It’s the servants quarters. Or, that’s what they were designed for. We use them as box rooms, so
they’re pretty crowded but when the whole pack’s here all the upstairs bedrooms are full.”

Grantaire pauses, turning around to look at him. “You’re part of the only pack in Europe that
doesn’t have human servants?”

Enjolras feels his mouth twist, as though trying to get out of explaining. “We - no, I guess. We have
a cook, a few cleaners, some people help out with the garden but they live nearby or in town, not in
the house. Dad doesn’t believe in claiming humans just to make them work for you, he thinks pack
should mean something more than that.”

“Plus, then you can fire them whenever you want.”

Enjolras is reminded, belatedly, that Grantaire is not unfamiliar with wolf houses. He knew about
claiming before Enjolras could even start to explain. “The non-equalised claims that wolves use on
staff can be broken by the wolf anyway.”

Grantaire frowns as though realising at the exact same moment as Enjolras what that means. “So
you could -” He flicks his finger between them, as though trying to point at the bond.

How did Enjolras forget to mention that? Oh yeah, because the idea of breaking the bond is so
completely abhorrent to his wolf side that he doesn’t want to even consider it. Plus, there’s the part
where it causes the human agonising pain, but maybe Grantaire would take that for a connection he
didn't want in the first place. “If you want. After the trial. Not unless you want me to.”

Grantaire considers this for a moment, but doesn’t comment either way leaving Enjolras with no
cue what he’s thinking, his wolf chomping at the bit to demand an answer one way or the other.
“Your dad thinks wolves and humans are equal?” he asks instead, turning back to examine some of the papers on the pinboard.

They could be here all day with Enjolras trying to explain that his family sits in a position of privilege that he’s spent ten years trying to get them to see let alone do something about, but it’s half past four in the morning and he can’t face it. He shrugs instead. “What are you looking at?”

“Baby Enjolras’s Wall of Justice: ‘Human school pupils feel more isolated,’ ‘Do human children have more attention problems?’ ‘Humans in wolf schools report lower grades and life satisfaction’ - wow, flashbacks.”

Enjolras sits down on the bed, watching him. “You went to a wolf school?”

“Yup,” he turns to flash a quick smile. “Lived with a pack, remember?” He kicks the airbed. “I guess with this pack I have to get used to sleeping on the floor again.”

“No, you’re -” Enjolras points to the bed instead of trying to figure out a way to explain that Grantaire is a guest, but also family and also pack, and therefore gets the better things but also belongs here. “And if you try to insist on swapping, my mother will actually kill me so you’re going to have to accept the bed.”

Grantaire shuts his mouth on the objection he’d clearly been about to raise and smiles instead. “No, you have converted me to beds. I am one hundred percent pro-beds. I even think I will be able to sleep around your Wall of Justice despite it featuring such heinous crimes as -” he squints at the centre of the board. “Human pupils found to be worse at playground games from a young age in intensive study.”

“They had a very small sample group,” Enjolras says.

Grantaire shrugs. “I can believe it, I was terrible at catch. I used to spend breaktimes sitting in the classroom drawing what I would look like as a wolf.” He grins. “I had a lightning mark on my flank and claws made from adamantium.”

Enjolras swallows. “Your picture, it was amazing. I didn’t realise you studied me as a wolf.”

Grantaire laughs. “I used to do them for the pack, you get good at looking. It took me so long to figure out that patch on your paw, I assumed you’d figure it out.” He bends down to his backpack apparently to rummage through it but since he’s never seemed to own pyjamas, there’s not a lot he could be looking for beyond a way to avoid Enjolras’s eyes. “Do you think she liked it? I wanted to do something, after that dinner.”

“I didn’t realise you felt that bad about it.”

“Yeah,” Grantaire re-emerges, holding a sharpie with a rueful half smile. “Éponine reamed me out pretty much as soon as she realised and she can definitely pile on the guilt.”

“I thought she hated everything me and my parents stood for.”

“Oh yeah, course, but I got a whack with the ladle and a loud lecture on how these people were providing my home, my lawyer and how I’d essentially wolf-married their son and all they wanted in return was to meet me for one dinner.” He points the sharpie at Enjolras. “She believes in paying off debts.”

Enjolras opens his suitcase, digging out his wash bag and his pyjamas. “Mum loved it, it was amazing. It’ll probably get pride of place in the front hall.”
“Aw, I was aiming for the fridge,” but he’s blushing a little under his grin and Enjolras – Enjolras’s eyes catch on his smile, caught under the light of his bedroom with it’s stupid walls and it’s stupid posters.

Grantaire kissed him. He was drunk but it happened and he knows Enjolras’s wolf better than Enjolras himself and his hand was warm for three hours drive through the night and surely something, one of those things at least means something.

“If you want me to sleep in the bed, you’ll have to get off it,” Grantaire says, tossing his toothbrush onto the desk. “I could sleep on top of you but you’re made of ice and I think it would take a lot of pictures to apologise to your mother for melting her only son.”

It’s nothing. It’s nothing. It’s nothing.
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

“People don’t sit around all day waiting for you to save them.”

Chapter Notes

Thanks so much to McKenzi for beta-ing, you are a lifesaver! <3
Love you Katie
Thanks for all the amazing comments and kudos! <3

The day of the full moon, Enjolras’s skin itches. It starts down the bottom of his spine when he wakes up stiff and aching on an airbed that got significantly less airy during the night and then instantly spreads to an everywhere discomfort when he rolls over to see the sun glaring down from the tiny skylight and the bed unmade and empty above him.

He silently counts the number of aunts and uncles currently in the house, and the chances that any of them were paying attention to his carefully worded email that Grantaire and him weren’t like that and anyone who scared him off would be the subject of much displeasure. The odds are not in his favour. He kicks his way out of the sleeping bag, shoves it and the airbed in the corner to deal with later and hunts through his wardrobe for some clothes that might still fit him.

In the kitchen, Sabine claps her hands together and says that he looks too thin and that he can’t possibly be feeding himself right. There are six puppies around the table who must be from one of the new pack branches because they’re still in awe of the unlimited cupcakes and haven’t considered that there’s going to be a big lunch in under an hour. Enjolras finds out that she hasn’t seen Grantaire, and escapes with a bacon sandwich and a milkshake.

The house is too big. Enjolras has ducked his head into three sitting rooms - Uncle Lucien: “You’re getting tall!” Grandmere Lucile: “Where’s that young man of yours?” and Aunt Celine: “How’s the revolution?” - before he even finds Combeferre and Courfeyrac. They’ve holed up in the library, Ferre with a thick book on the history of extreme sports in France and Courf with angry birds. “Do you think we should search the grounds?” Combeferre asks before Enjolras can even start to explain. That’s one definite upside to full moon days.

Enjolras dumps his empty milkshake glass on a tray beside them. “He might just be hiding. I would be. I don’t understand how no one could have seen him though.”

Courf tilts his head back from his phone. “I heard some of the little puppies saying they were singing in the music room, try there?”

Enjolras nods. “Sabine says lunch is in an hour.”
It takes him a moment of pause outside the library to remember where the music room is. It’s a fancy name for what’s really an old bedroom where they dumped the grand piano after his grandmere passed away and no one could play it anymore. It’s way down in the west wing, past all the bedrooms that are empty most of the year and then full of kids for a few days every blue moon as the most soundproofed and out of the way part of the mansion. There are puppies watching movies on phones in the hallways and someone’s dug out a wii, Enjolras pauses in the doorway to watch the two twelve year olds who are already better at mariokart than he will ever be.

He doesn’t have to get close to the music room to hear it, a crowd of voices singing about a fish swimming in a river to the plink-plonk of a piano, Grantaire’s voice hanging underneath them all as the sole carrier of the tune. He’s sitting at the old grand, one kid next to him and three more standing beside the piano. He must have got up early, he’s showered and dressed in one of Enjolras’s red T-shirts over his own jeans, hair curling damp around his ears.

He smiles when he sees Enjolras in the doorway, easy and uncomplicated. “You’re awake.”

The full moon is getting closer every second, but Enjolras feels the hairs on his arms start to settle back, his hands stop shaking, his back smooths out the hackles and everything stills. “I couldn’t find you.”

Grantaire pats the shoulder of the puppy sharing the piano stool. “We got caught up. Did you guys want to go show Mama Enjolras what you learnt?”

The kids cheer and run for the door, ignoring Grantaire’s cry after them of, “the polite version!” and then the room is still again. Grantaire smiles and gestures to the stool beside him.

It is technically big enough for two, but Grantaire isn’t exactly squashed up down one end so they end up thigh against thigh, Grantaire’s arm brushing against his as he places his hands back on the keys, picking out notes. “You have a lot of relatives.”

Enjolras touches his fingers to the keys but doesn’t press. “You play piano, you play guitar, you sing. Were you ever planning to tell me?”

Grantaire presses the keys out from under his fingers, picking out a simple little tune that Enjolras half recognises. “Are you really this thrown by me playing guitar?” he asks casually. “Or is it the part where I have a whole life without you in it?”

Enjolras swallows, touching his fingers to several keys and letting his silence speak for him. He’s not angry, his wolf is possessive but that’s fine, he’s a person not a wolf and he gets to have his own feelings. But it’s strange, when you want someone completely in your life and it turns out you aren’t even touching on theirs.

Grantaire rests his hand on top of Enjolras’s, pushing his fingers down and letting the chord ring out. “People don’t sit around all day waiting for you to save them.” He moves their joined hands, picking out slightly different notes. *Dum-dum da-da-dum.* The ink stains on his fingers are faded, the skin around red like he scrubbed as best as he could.

“I know.”

*Dum dum da-da-dum,* Grantaire rests his head all too briefly against Enjolras’s shoulder. “That doesn’t mean you should stop trying.”

If he did it, that means it’s a friends gesture and Enjolras can rest his head against Grantaire’s shoulder, pulling his hands free so Grantaire can play his piece, the music filling the room and
wishing over them. “Sometimes I think I should,” Enjolras says, watching the keys and the hands so he doesn’t have to meet Grantaire’s eyes and see the truth in them. “I think, what if this is the least efficient way to help anyone. I could stop spending all my time trying to change things, I could actually finish my degree, get a very highly paid job in the city, donate money to someone who’s capable of actually making a difference.”

His grandmere used to play this song, he recognises the tune. There’s still threads of it running through the pack howl, picked up and twisted by her children and grandchildren into something new, that still echoes with her. “Most of the highly paid jobs work to make the world worse, don’t they?” Grantaire says.

“I don’t know. Maybe it balances, using the money for good.” Enjolras closes his eyes for a moment. “I don’t know. I walk past people on the street and I think I could give this one person all the money I have on me but would it be enough? And why this person and not the next one? Then I think if I was rich, if I could give ten thousand euros to every single person I passed.” He shakes his head. “It wouldn’t be changing the whole world, but it would change everything for those people. Maybe that should be enough.”

Grantaire’s fingers are moving faster, fumbling notes here and there. There’s no piano in Enjolras’s apartment, he didn’t see one at Thenardier’s. The piece comes to a thudding crescendo and stops. “That’s something I was wondering, you said your dad was a senator and I assumed it would be like Combeferre. A senator you barely talked to, passing legislation you could protest to your heart’s content but it’s not -” Grantaire’s mouth twists a little. “Clearly everyone here loves you. If you want a bill raised in parliament, what’s stopping you from just going up to him and asking for it.”

“It wouldn’t work.”

Grantaire frowns. “If he loves you -”

“He loves me,” there’s never any doubt of that, and - yes - Enjolras knows how lucky he is for that, but nothing is ever so simple. “If I asked him to raise it, maybe he would. If Combeferre and I drafted one, he’d glance over it and because it was us he’d put it on the floor but he doesn’t believe in this. He’s lived his whole life in this werewolf bubble and he won’t see how it really is, or he can’t see. He’d raise it, he’d defend it but he wouldn’t ever believe in it and it wouldn’t pass, we’d be right back to square one only next time it would be even harder.”

“So you don’t try.”

“I am always trying.” Enjolras stands up, feeling the urge to pace just to pull his thoughts back into line, but turning back to look Grantaire straight on because this is important, this matters. “You’re right. They love me, they respect me, they do their best to listen to me.” He shakes his head. “So if I can’t convince them that this is a cause to support, what chance have I got of convincing anybody else?”

* 

It’s easy to lose track of time out away from the noise of the house, and by the time Enjolras remembers to check his phone they’re already late for lunch. When they make it to the dining hall, everyone is already seated and it becomes a whole production, as much as they try to sneak in. “Grantaire,” Mum says, loud enough that everyone’s attention fixes on him. “We’ve saved you a seat up here, everyone is dying to meet you.”

‘Everyone’ by the looks of things meaning Dad who does at least pretend to be interested in
Enjolras, standing up to give him a hug. “She’s put you further down,” he says apologetically. “She’s determined to grill him, since you didn’t even mention he was an artist.”

There’s a mild rebuke there. Enjolras wonders if it would help if he pointed out that apparently all his previous partners have been, so really they could have done a Combeferre and guessed. “Try not to scare him away.”

He ends up sitting a little bit further down the table, next to Aunt Florence. She works in healthcare and always has a new anecdote she heard from someone who heard from someone else that completely proves the five thousand participant study on bias in the health service that Enjolras sent her three years ago is wrong. “Now they haven’t run the figures, they don’t note that sort of thing, but Cecily said her friend on the front desk would swear there’s more humans coming in on drugs and driving under the influence. She says were children just don’t seem to do that kind of thing. I’m not being wereist, you can’t argue with facts.”

Enjolras has considered in the past recording his response - you don’t have facts you have biased data, weres are more likely to attend private hospitals, they can afford taxis when they’re slightly tipsy - and he’s wishing he had now because that was he could set it to play and focus on shamelessly eavesdropping on Grantaire and his Mum. There are about four people between him and them, but the conversations are happening in a disjointed fashion in low voices as everyone pretends they’re not trying to figure out the newest pack member.

“I’m twenty two,” Grantaire says to a question Enjolras missed. “I’ve been working at the bar for three years now, thanks to my friend.”

“And what do your parents do?”

“Well, my dad sleeps with people without leaving his contact details.” His eyes are fixed on his plate, so at least he’s not noticing members of the pack taking it in turns to stare at him. “Mum passed away. A while ago now.”

“I’m sorry to hear that, she must have been a wonderful person. If you ever want a bit of home life, you’re welcome to come stay for the weekend. Enjolras hardly visits, but there’s always room here for any pack member who needs it.” Mum looks as though she wants to put an arm around him, but is at least smart enough to read from his hunch that he wouldn’t want it. “I don’t suppose this house is much like where you grew up though.”

Not true, if Grantaire grew up in a pack. But Grantaire shakes his head, “No, I haven’t been anywhere like this.” He catches Enjolras’s eye for a moment, and winks. Is he trying to make a good impression? Why lie about that, and tell the truth about everything else.

“It was ninety-nine, wasn’t it, that study,” Florence says, pulling Enjolras’s focus. “I’m sure if they repeated it now, the results would be very different.”

Enjolras’s fingers itch to pull out his phone and bring up ten recent studies showing the same trends. “Werewolves are more likely to have the support of families reducing their need to go to a public hospital and their likelihood to have an emergency. There was a study last year proving that recreational drug use is higher in were teens but hospital admission is higher in humans because they have to take cheaper deals, cut with worse substances. Not to mention a werewolf can switch forms to lessen a trip, humans don’t have that luxury.”

She shakes her head in a ‘kids these days,’ fashion that makes Enjolras want the full moon to get a move on. “If they can’t afford it, they should know better than to get into it in the first place.”
“It’s not optional for people living in -” he stops, ears pricked back to the head of the table where his father is speaking.

“So I know Tholymes is a dreadful bore, but we have to wonder whatever possessed you to throw a rock at him?”

The whole top half of the table goes quiet, conversations stilting into silence as everyone stops pretending they’re not listening in and just listens. Enjolras should have known better than to hope that the pack wouldn’t have to find out how Grantaire ended up in their company. Secrets don’t keep well in this sort of crowd.

“He was -” Grantaire falters, lifting his head to take in the forest of eyes carefully looking not quite at him. His own gaze hesitates for a moment, before finding Enjolras as though to check that he’s listening.

He was being a dick, that’s all Grantaire had said in prison. Enjolras can just picture Grantaire saying that to this crowd, his mother’s lips pursing, the pack looking away, Florence taking the opportunity to point out that without a regular monthly outlet, human aggression rapidly got completely out of control.

“There was a girl,” Grantaire says, talking directly to Enjolras’s face, but soft enough that Enjolras’s wolf hearing only just catches it. “He was… hurting her. A human girl, so I knew no one would step in, they’d be too scared of the consequences and I -” he looks down at his hands for a moment, then back at Enjolras, speaking so directly to him that for a moment it’s like there’s no one else in the room. “I was so tired of doing nothing.”

The moment is too deep, the silence too cutting in the bright lights of the lunch hall with everyone frozen over their gammon. Even down the far end, the kids have stopped messing around and are craning their necks to see what’s going on. Enjolras can feel the questions in the air, any moment someone’s going to try to play devil’s advocate or ask if the girl was claimed and he won’t be able to stop himself from shouting.

“And the rock?” Dad says, his bright and carefree tone completely at odds with Grantaire’s gaze and for an instant Enjolras is mad. They could hash this out, he could plant a flag labelled systematic inequality and fight until the moon came up.

Grantaire laughs, brittle and fake but enough to break the stillness. “I was trying to get his attention, but I have terrible aim.”

People laugh. Uncle Pierre says that reminds him of a story from his travelling days. Conversation resumes and the moment passes. Enjolras clenches his fist around his fork for five minutes before excusing himself to disappear into the hallway and sink down against the wall, knees up.

He was hurting a human girl, and Grantaire said it so matter-of-fact like it happens all the time, of course it happens all the time. And now they’re supposed to brush that fact under the rug, oh Tholymes he’s such a bore. The story will be remembered as ‘that time when Enjolras’s pet human tried to get his attention and accidentally gave him concussion,’ the inconvenient fact of the girl carefully cut from the narrative.

His hands are shaking, his wrists are sore and he doesn’t even realise why until he looks down and sees he’s been scratching at his own skin. The full moon is still five hours out but he could go down to the woods now, run through the trees until his mind slipped all the way away.

The door opens again and Grantaire comes out of the hall. He hesitates for a moment in the
doorway, before walking over and sitting on the floor beside Enjolras, legs pressed together. “Your
dad sent me out here, asked me to try and keep you out of the woods.”

Enjolras chokes a laugh, pressing his forehead against his knees. Grantaire smells like fabric
softener, wine, Enjolras’s leg has stopped itching just in the place they’re touching and he thinks *if I
kissed you, would that stop everything.* “You don’t have to do what he tells you,” he says, and his
voice comes out impressively human if he does say so himself.

“It gets me out of twenty questions with your mum.” He stretches his legs out across the hallway,
the holes in his trainers catching on the twenty thousand euro carpet. “If you run off into the
woods, I’ll have to go back in there.”

Enjolras turns his head against the fabric of his jeans, trying to find a cool spot. “Sorry it was
awful. I didn’t know your mum - sorry.”

“Well, the wine was good. Bordeaux, 2005. Good year.”

Considering all the wine Enjolras has seen Grantaire drink seems to come from bottles marked
‘bargain’ this seems a bit excessive. Enjolras raises an eyebrow at him and Grantaire grins.

“We had one at Thenardier’s once. Sold it to a very rich businessman, but they skimmed a bit off
the top first and let me taste it. Kept the bottle, I picked the Super U box wine that tasted closest
and I think they sold it to about twenty more rich businessmen before it smashed.” He nudges
Enjolras with one elbow. “Difficult to be a wine connoisseur living off musician tips but I picked
up a few things.”

Enjolras is fairly sure wine connoisseurs don’t go through three bottles in one night, but he lets it
slide. If he lolls his head to the side, he can rest his temple on Grantaire’s shoulder and that’s
enough to still his hands and stop them scratching. “Did your pack have wine?”

“Not my pack,” Grantaire corrects quickly. “I guess they were mum’s pack, but not like -” he
waves a hand toward the dining hall. “They didn’t like her. I don’t mean, they didn’t not like her,
she was just -”

“Human,” Enjolras finishes for him. Beneath their notice. He’s been to houses like that, spoken to
young wolves at parties who don’t know their cook’s name despite them being claimed into the
pack.

“Yeah.”

“But they never claimed you.”

“No,” he shakes his head. “I was born while she lived there, they were great about it, I was
basically raised as one of the puppies. Right the way through, they even sent me to the same
school.” He smiles ruefully. “Human pupils underperform in wolf schools, that was your article
wasn’t it? Doesn’t mention that it’s difficult to focus and do your homework when you’re helping
out with the house cleaning and food prep half the night.”

“So you dropped out?”

Grantaire’s mouth twists a little. “Mum died. I was fifteen and they were… they were pretty cool
about it, I guess. They knew she’d been taking me with her on her rounds so they gave me the
choice of taking her job - one of them would claim me and I’d get to keep the room, the pay,
everything - or leaving. I was young, I knew she’d always wanted more for me so I decided to
leave, thought I’d see the world.”
"And did you?"

"Bits of it. Gutters mostly." A little self-depreciating laugh. "I was naive, you know. I had no experience, no real skills, not sure what I thought was going to happen. By the time I'd burned through all Mum's savings I couldn't find anyone to take me on. Some packs - they're territorial, they regarded me as property even though I'd never actually been claimed. I ended up going back to her pack but they already had a replacement, didn't need more." He kicks Enjolras lightly on the shin. "Came to Paris in the hope that it was far enough away, fell in with Thenardiers, pretty much literally, and that is my entire life story."

Enjolras has a thousand things he wants to say but can't articulate any of them. Mostly he wants to push this story at his family, the ABC, everyone who says humans haven't got it that bad. He wants them to hear Grantaire's laugh, like he was stupid for ever expecting the world to be better. God, he wants to build the world that Grantaire thought he was walking out that house into.

"What's up?" Grantaire elbows him in the ribs again. "You've got your Justice face on again."

Enjolras looks down at his clenched fists and pulls his thoughts into something like an order. "They left you on the streets. You were raised with their kids, you lived with them and they abandoned you to the world. You were fifteen, your mother had just -" he cuts himself off.

Grantaire hesitates for a moment, then reaches out to rest one hand lightly on top of Enjolras's fist. "I'm not special, you know that, right? Pick five kids off the street and they'll have the same stories, probably worse. I lived with a pack until I was fifteen, people would kill to get that chance for their kids."

If Grantaire's life story is a best case scenario, how can Enjolras even be surprised that he doesn't believe the ABC can help. They're so focused on trying to change government policy but when attitudes are so entrenched that throwing a kid onto the streets is a perfectly reasonable response to the death of their mother, what will a government bill demanding equal pay achieve?

"Are you going to run off into the woods?"

He's still vibrating, but it's not the wolf wanting to burst out, it's a solid ball of anger and determination forming somewhere in his chest. "No," he says sharply, leaning against the wall to pull himself up. "I'm going to google sixteen independently conducted hospital surveys and then go inside to talk to my aunt about drug treatment reform."

Grantaire laughs, letting his head thunk back against the wall. "Here comes the Righteous Avenger."

Enjolras kicks him. "You have to come back in with me. For moral support."

Grantaire makes a face, but hauls himself upright. "Why not. it's only -" he peers over Enjolras's shoulder to look at his phone. "Four and a half hours until moonrise. Please tell me there's another bottle of that Bordeaux."
He’s warm, pressed against Enjolras’s back like he has no real intention of moving away anytime soon and Enjolras finds himself smiling. “We can probably find you something.”

*

The grass is silent under his paws. They’re a long way from the den - in the bushes behind, out of earshot, the puppies are panting heavily and it’s going to be an even longer run home - but as he pads forward he gets his first glimpse of the prize.

It’s a herd, as promised by the scents on the wind, the moonlight catching on many coats, many hooves. He has no concept of how many, not when one is enough and there’s the scent of old blood from an injury already calling attention to the buck at the edge of the clearing.

His brother steps up beside him, also silent, the wind blowing his scent back behind them away from the herd. They stand for a moment, then touch muzzles - agreed - and he’s alone again. No, not alone. Not with the pack behind him, moving out amongst the trees to flank. He can see them, no, not see. He can feel them, their positions.

There is a space. Not in the formation, in the feeling. *Mine.*

They strike. A single wolf can hunt down a meal, but it takes a pack to break up a herd, to duck and dodge the flying hooves and antlers, push the prey away and away alone and strike. It was a long trip, but a successful conclusion and on this night when the pack is at full strength there will be enough food for everyone.

The howl starts quiet, and builds as the wolves finish eating, settle on their haunches and tilt their heads back to the sky. *Good hunt,* echoes through the voices. Reassurance that no one has to run back, there’s time to sleep.

Enjolras finds the space in the sound and pushes into it. For a moment he’s up high, looking down at the forest in shadows and colours as though through a lens. For a moment his ears are silent except for the faint echo of a howl in the distance.

*Mine.* He drops out of the howl, back on four paws, back in the clearing, snatches up the remains of his dinner and starts to run.

*

*Bing.*

He is warm. He feels warm, solid, *present* in a way that switching bodies during sleep never normally allows for. There’s something rubbing lightly on his head, soothing. His limbs are long and hairless, his sense of smell is diminished but he is content, comfortable, like he wouldn’t even have to open his eyes to fall back to sleep.

A soft *bing* comes from beside him, he vaguely recognises that the same noise would have woken him up, and then a voice follows it. “Shut up, come on,” a frustrated whisper.

Enjolras reluctantly opens his eyes to confirm that he is indeed naked in bed next to Grantaire. He takes all his sleepy thoughts back, waking up in a different shape to how you fell asleep is *always mortifying.* He must have come back as a wolf, sensed Grantaire in the room and crawled in next to him with not a care for what would happen in the morning.

The warmth on his head goes still and he realises an instant too late that Grantaire’s arm is pointing over that way. “Are you awake?” Grantaire asks, in hardly more than a whisper.
Enjolras could snore and pretend his eyelids were just flickering, except that he’s trapped Grantaire against the wall so he can only delay the inevitable not avoid it completely.

He opens his eyes fully, rolling onto his back in the small amount of space available for getting further away from Grantaire on the bed. It’s a queen bed, because when they went shopping everyone told him a king would be too big for the room. Enjolras should go back in time and punch all of them because a king would put another foot between Grantaire and Enjolras’s naked body.

“Sorry,” Grantaire turns his phone so Enjolras can see the screen. “I was trying to put it on silent. Done now, you can go back to sleep.”

He still has a hand caught in Enjolras’s hair. If Enjolras thinks back really hard, he can almost remember nudging his muzzle against something warm until a hand came out and started stroking the fur between his ears.

He is getting hard. His face is so hot Grantaire is at risk of heat stroke if he stays too close and to top it all off his body is utterly betraying him just because he happens to be sharing a bed with someone who does not want him back.

“You were actually more talkative as a wolf,” Grantaire says, conversationally, as though waking up in bed with a naked ex-wolf is how he regularly spends his mornings.

Enjolras is reminded forcibly of the cheek kiss with Montparnasse and has to fight down the urge to roll over and pin Grantaire to the bed. He stares up at the ceiling instead, forces himself to take three long breaths until he’s sure his vocal chords are normal. “I’m sorry, I’ll get out of your way. Give me one minute.”

His airbed is still a deflated pile in the corner of the room, but if he can get some clothes within reach he can at least get out of the way so Grantaire can escape.

Grantaire’s fingers rub across the top of his head again and Enjolras fights the urge to whimper. This is not fair, not on the morning when he has the least control and Grantaire is leaning over him with his hair in all directions, a smudge of charcoal on his cheek and Enjolras ran until his chest ached last night to get back to him the least he could do is allow Enjolras to escape with a fraction of his dignity still almost int-

Grantaire kisses him. Grantaire kisses him and Enjolras -

Stops.

“Okay?” Grantaire asks and Enjolras could have gone his whole life without knowing that after a kiss Grantaire’s smile is soft and nervous and he asks like he’s waiting to hear a no and this close up, Enjolras can see his eyes have rings of yellow around the pupil.

Enjolras reaches up to touch Grantaire’s cheek. Grantaire’s hand is still in his hair, this is allowed, he can feel two day stubble rough on his fingertips and leave imprints of his fingers on Grantaire’s skin. He can pull him down and kiss him again, this time opening his mouth to it and finding familiar scents transform into unfamiliar tastes.

Grantaire settles his thighs on either side of Enjolras’s knees, and Enjolras can feel bare skin and cotton. He reaches up to rest his free hand on Grantaire’s hip, on the line of his boxers where warm skin and muscle disappears under fabric. For a moment Grantaire hovers over him, intent, as though committing Enjolras’s face to memory, but when Enjolras tugs at his hair he laughs and acquiesces, leaning down to kiss him again.
The sun comes through a crack in the curtains. There’s a roar of engines as the land rover goes out to pick up the rest of the pack, some time later there’s another roar of them returning. Grantaire’s cheeks are rough as sandpaper on Enjolras’s lips, his hair is smooth from fingers running through it, he tastes like him and Enjolras and the two of them mixed up together.

The first time Enjolras comes, he doesn’t even need to be touched which should be embarrassing but Grantaire laughs like it’s a joke they’re both in on, kissing Enjolras’s cheek and neck with the laugh caught between their skin. He leans across the grab a tissue (from the Power rangers themed tissue box because this is Enjolras’s childhood bedroom).

He tries to imagine what teen-Enjolras would have said if someone had told him that in less than a decade he would be in this bed well on the way to having sex with a boy who was beautiful and talented and incidentally also his mate.

Grantaire is only just touching him with the tissue and he’s already hard again. Teen-Enjolras would probably be losing his mind right now, and the current Enjolras wouldn’t be able to blame him since he isn’t far behind. “Wait, wait we should -” he catches Grantaire’s hand. There’s definitely something going on in Grantaire’s boxers and Enjolras could probably literally do this all day but he does need to - “What is this?”

Grantaire’s hand stills for a moment, and when Enjolras lifts his head he sees Grantaire’s mouth quirked a little to the side like he’s not sure, he’s thinking, he’s delaying long enough for Enjolras’ heart to start rocketing around his stomach. This question should have come first, he should never have let himself - is it because Grantaire knows the full moon makes wolves desperate? Is it a sense of obligation? Is it pity? Is it real?

Do you like me, do you like me, do you -?

“Does it have to be anything?” Grantaire’s voice is a little stilted, his other hand still curved through Enjolras’s hair like he hasn’t quite figured out how to let go. “You’re here, I’m here, can’t we just -”

Which is not what Enjolras wants to hear, but the wolf has heard enough to know there’s no objection and that’s the equivalent of an invitation to kiss him again.

*

Enjolras props himself up on his side because he can, because the covers are pushed down and Grantaire’s chest is there and there’s no rule that says he can’t kiss it. Grantaire’s fingers tangle in his hair, which he was going to cut but is now realising that that would be a terrible idea when it's curling around his ears, just the right length to hold. He lifts his head to see Grantaire looking down at him, his smile indulgently amused. “I’m serious, you’re not going to get anything until I’ve had a power nap.”

Enjolras rests a palm against his stomach, letting his hand move up and down as Grantaire breathes. The moment of stillness is enough for his brain to come back into play, instinct and desperation taking a back seat. Grantaire kissed him. Again. With no three bottles of wine, no swaying on his feet. He tasted like morning breath and toothpaste and he smells like Enjolras and sweat and he’s breathing slowly and easily, Enjolras can feel his heartbeat thump... thump...
Grantaire makes no move to touch him again. “I’m sorry,” he doesn’t quite manage to pull his hand away, but he sits up a little, so their sides are no longer touching. “I can stop, I’ll go.”

Grantaire laughs, but it’s slightly more forced, just a ‘heh’ really as his head slumps back onto the pillows. Enjolras’ hand is left hovering where his chest was, but after a moment Grantaire’s fingers twist into it. “You’re coming down from a full moon, I get it, but I’m only human. I’m just catching my breath.”

The come down from a full moon is a documented phenomenon in puberty books and features prominently in werewolf ‘birds and bees’ conversations that Enjolras would rather not relive. If Grantaire knows about it, and if he’s lived with a pack he’d have to know, does that make this pity? “You shouldn’t feel obliged to do anything just because you’re my mate and I snuck my way in here last night.”

Grantaire turns his head to the side. His eyes are amused, not angry. Not brimming with desperate urges either, but you can’t have everything. “It’s fine. I’m not filled with the need for romance every time I have sex. It’s good, we had fun, you didn’t taste like raw meat and wolf fur.”

Enjolras swallows. The curtains are still drawn, despite the bright daylight sneaking in the edges it’s unlikely Grantaire can see him blush. “It’s a different mouth, I don’t know how to explain it but things like that never.”

Grantaire squeezes his fingers. “Like I said, we’re cool. Write it off to extreme circumstances if you want, it doesn’t have to be a big deal.”

Two months after Grantaire started coming to meetings, Enjolras screwed up all his courage to corner him after everyone else had gone. He had stayed late chatting to Feuilly at the bar, but Feuilly had gone in the back to close up the storeroom and Enjolras had walked over to Grantaire and asked if he wanted to go grab a coffee.

Grantaire had laughed the smell of wine and cigarettes into his face and said, ‘it’s like the middle of the night, don’t you have a den to go home to?’

That was months ago now, of course. He probably doesn’t even remember, not if he can write all this off as a nothing. Not when he laughed at the implication that their werewolf bond could ever be anything more than a get out of jail free card and some health insurance.

Last night, before they changed, Mum had asked him to forward ‘that article you sent me on bias in the justice system.’ Grantaire is changing things, just by being here. “What if -”

There’s a knock on the door. Grantaire moans, releasing Enjolras’s fingers to fling an arm dramatically across his eyes and Enjolras jolts, moving his hand to cover Grantaire’s mouth before he can even think about it.

He blames the teenage decor. Twenty-three year old Enjolras is an adult and is allowed to have boys in his room. “Yes?”

“Well, are you coming down for lunch?” Courfeyrac. Someone must have sent him. “Everyone else is up already, even ‘Ferre is less lazy than you.”

Enjolras pushes himself up on Grantaire’s stomach to check the time. It’s almost 2pm, they’re supposed to be leaving by 4. Over his fingers, Grantaire gives him an amused look. “I’ll be down in a minute, don’t wait.”

“Okay,” Courfeyrac says, dragging it out a moment too long. “And, uh, if you see Grantaire tell
Grantaire’s eyes are grinning, as he licks Enjolras’s palm, making him jump, pulling his hand away from the amused smile. “I will,” he calls to Courf, his voice notably too high. “If I - see him.” He successfully holds still until the footsteps have faded away, then whacks Grantaire on the arm. “We need to move, I need - I need a shower. God, this was -”

“Not a big deal?” Grantaire offers, propping himself up on one arm to watch Enjolras stumble to his feet.

“Enough of a deal that we should talk about it.” It’s easier when he’s not looking at Grantaire in the face. He can pretend that he’s flustered by Courfeyrac interrupting, by the wet patch on his palm, by anything that isn’t the desperate desire to do this again when he isn’t half out of his mind. “I don’t - it was fun.” He’s just parroting Grantaire back to him now. “We could -” he doesn’t know what word to put next. Get coffee. Go out. Date.

“Try again when your entire family isn’t downstairs?” Grantaire shrugs. “Sure, why not.”

_Because we are coming at this from wildly different places, because we live in the same apartment, because now that I know how it feels I only want you more._

Enjolras shrugs back, twisting his face into some approximation of a casual smile and does not say any of these things. “Why not.”
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

“Do you never stand back and realise that you’re better?”

Chapter Notes

sorry this ones a bit late, I had a longer work week and then general chaos for a few
days but it's here now! :) 

Thanks McKenzi for beta-ing, despite also having a hectic week, she's the best! :) 

Katie you are wonderful and amazing and everything exists thanks to you <3 

More alcohol, more discussion of wolves attacking people, more Feelings and Things.
To all the commenters and kudosers, you guys are amazing and I love you all.

The next three weeks Enjolras learns the following things:

1) There is a pack of werewolves in Versaille who practice “extreme sports.” It's a pack of mostly young headstrong men who broke off from their family packs to go to the city and start new business ventures funded entirely by trust funds. They had promptly discovered that on a full moon in the city there’s not a lot of room to roam and decided to make their own fun.

2) Grantaire laughs during sex, and his forehead crinkles and he tugs his fingers through Enjolras’s hair like Enjolras is still a dog that needs petting. Enjolras is a lot more into it than he would ever admit.

3) The pack leader has a tiny scar from the plastic surgery he had when he was twelve and Enjolras smashed his nose after he made a pass at Sabine during a party. (Enjolras had a bruise for three months from Sabine letting him know that she could fight her own battles thank you very much. Him going to hospital for a broken nose meant he wouldn’t appreciate the extra helping of laxatives added to all his food.). His name is Henri Valance. He likes fast cars, expensive scotch and cheap dates. His father has a team of lawyers on retainer to keep his waivers legally binding and his name out of the press.

4) Grantaire does not believe in dating. He likes it casual, which is why sometimes they’ll spend three days only getting up for work and meals and other times he’ll stay over at Thenardier’s and Enjolras will stare at contracts and start petitions and not think about the easy way Grantaire kissed Montparnasse.

5) Henri is recruiting. Combeferre finds out through one of the few cousins he still speaks to (she stated when he left that she knew he was a blood traitor and a mongrel but he should still call her to grab coffee whenever a new marvel movie came out). They’re looking for people like them: young, rich wolves with the right names and something to prove.
6) There is a feeling in the bottom of Enjolras’s stomach that is growing a little bigger every day and occasionally it lurches and for a moment it’s like he’s caught between forms with neither giving him anything solid to hold onto. It happens when Grantaire smiles, or laughs at something Jehan said, or throws himself onto the sofa exactly on top of Enjolras’s very important papers, resting his head in Enjolras’s lap like he’s never doubtful of its welcome. It’s a feeling that doesn’t come with words or any way to address the “I know I said I was fine with casual sex but I want to keep holding your hand when we walk through the door of the musain,” that is growing like a mountain every day between them.

There are two distinct problems there, and Enjolras is not having his usual luck finding solutions. He stays up late with Combeferre looking up seedy haunts around the city where Henri could be canvassing for humans desperate enough to sign. He stays up even later after Grantaire is sacked out on the bed next to him, watching him breathe, wishing he had even the slightest idea of what to say.

Its Sunday night. In less than twenty four hours he has to stand in front of the ABC and tell them that with under a week to the full moon they still have no idea how Henri is going to run his hunt. They don’t know who’s involved, they don’t know where they’re meeting, at least a handful of humans are going to die and there’s not a damn thing they can do about it. Enjolras has three cans of red bull left on the table, a bin of empties by his feet and he’s ready to trawl message boards all night if he has to. Even though it’s the same message boards with the same people and anyone who knows anything isn’t talking.

He rubs his eyes with the back of one hand, blinks into wolf sight in case that makes things easier but the backlight hurts so he blinks back. There are other people out looking, an activist who goes by LouLou_15 is desperately seeking a young woman, last seen in Paris talking about doing something stupid. Enjolras has seen her around the forums before, but she’s anti-wolf on Éponine levels so he’s always kept his distance.

But if he could get to her and get her sister’s scent… the city is a difficult place to track so it would have to be within a couple of days of the full moon. It wouldn’t give them much time, but it would be better than doing nothing. He’s writing and rewriting his message, trying to find the right tone,

Hi, this is Enjolras, you’ve probably heard of my family. I run a small activist group in Paris and I believe we might be able to work with you to help your sister. Please reply. He’s not sure if it sounds too desperate. She must be desperate, surely, if she thinks her sister is signing her life over to a pack of wolves. He takes a photo and sends it to Combeferre with the caption ‘good idea? y/n’ and then thinks to look at the clock.

It’s two am. He has an exam in seven hours and he’s not even entirely sure what subject it’s on. He cracks open another can and starts scrolling down LouLou_15’s thread.

She’s probably already in a ditch somewhere. Wolf lovers get what’s coming to them.

Salt the earth and move on, lady. No wolf fucker like that is worth your time!

It’s nice to know that humans can be awful too. Makes the whole world seem like such a happy, wonderful place to live.

The front door clicks open and Grantaire stumbles in. Right on time, not that Enjolras was counting the minutes from the text that simply said in cab with no details given as to why he wasn’t cycling or why he was coming home at all since all he’d said when he left was that he’d see Enjolras at the
next meeting.

Not that Enjolras was annoyed. They weren’t dating, apparently they weren’t even friends since he’d had to find out the result of Grantaire’s trial from Feuilly. He’d been planning to go, had rearranged meetings to be free, but Grantaire had ummed and ahhed until Enjolras went over his head to Katie who told him on no uncertain terms that he was not going to be attending. “Your bond is on file from just after the scene. You weren’t present at the incident, you’re too biased to be a character witness. If you attend, Tholymes will feel like he has to attend and the whole thing will be blown out of proportion. You treat this like a tidal wave, it’ll pick up media attention and blow huge. You let it go and it’s a drop in the ocean.”

She’d been right. The fine is already paid off, something Enjolras’s Mum took care of, again without Enjolras even knowing. Grantaire hasn’t left, but Enjolras has no idea if that means anything more than that he hasn’t got around to it yet. He might not even know that Enjolras knows it’s over. It’s like they’ve been living in limbo and now neither of them are quite ready to break it.

“I owe you.” Grantaire collapses on the sofa beside him, pressed up against him like he has no doubt of his welcome. “Twenty euros for the cab, don’t let me forget.”

Enjolras turns his face away from Grantaire’s kiss, gets stubble scraping across his cheek and barely a brush of lips for his trouble. “Don’t worry about it.” He should be used to the smell of spilled wine and spirits by now, but tonight it’s enough to make his head ache.

“Somebody stole my wallet.” Grantaire’s fingers linger at his ear for a moment as though considering trying again, but he decides not. It's a relief, the smell is bad enough in his nose Enjolras has no desire to taste it.

“She’s mine.” Grantaire collapses on the sofa beside him, pressed up against him like he has no doubt of his welcome. “Twenty euros for the cab, don’t let me forget.”

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“Should I call the police?”

“Nah,” Grantaire rests his head against Enjolras’s shoulder instead. He’s probably too drunk to keep it up, Enjolras should push him off. “It was probably Thenardier, I took my eyes off him for at least thirty seconds.”

It is two in the morning and the sugar high hasn’t kicked in yet and Grantaire is never going to stop being a mess of contradictions. Enjolras closes his laptop and stands up, letting Grantaire topple.

“Is water okay, or do you need coffee?”

He gets a betrayed stare for his trouble, but forces himself to ignore it, crossing over into the kitchen and pulling out mugs with probably unnecessary force. He has to open three cupboards to find the instant coffee because no one gets their coffee made in a press at two in the morning.

Grantaire had been fine earlier. He’d whined at Enjolras’s alarm, given a sleeping morning kiss when Enjolras left to meet with Joly and Bousette to chase down a lead that turned out to be more dead ends. Enjolras had been back by lunch time, his bad mood chased away by beef casserole and kisses up against the fridge. Mum had called after Grantaire left, one of her book club friends had seen the drawing of Enjolras and wanted to commission the artist.

(“But he’s ours,” had been the first words out of Enjolras’s mouth.

“I know dear, that was my reaction too. But I remembered you saying he worked in a bar and I’m sure the tips aren’t as good as they used to be so I thought perhaps he would appreciate a little extra income. She’ll pay whatever he’s asking.”)

Enjolras fills the kettle, flicks it on, sends a silent hah to Combeferre who once implied that he
couldn’t boil water without assistance. It's a habit now, like putting on his shoes left side first. Only when it’s going does he turn back to look at the sofa. The top of Grantaire’s head is visible, so he didn’t stay fallen. He’s sitting with one leg crossed underneath him, sketching. No surprises there.

Enjolras has to tell him about the commission. A werewolf from Mum’s book club would be capable of paying a lot, if she really thought Grantaire’s pictures were worth it, and they are definitely worth it. And if word spread, it could become a career. He could move out, get his own life. If that’s what he wants.

“Do you ever think maybe the propaganda is right?”

Enjolras stops fighting to tear open the coffee sachet. Grantaire hasn’t moved position, but his hands are still. He looks smaller. “Right?” Enjolras asks, wondering if he missed some earlier conversation that gave this some context.

“You’re stronger than me, you’re faster than me.” In the window, Enjolras can just about make out the shape of him, his face frowning in concentration. “Wolves, you’re - you see better, you hear better, you smell - you spend all this time fighting to say we’re equal but we’re about as far from equal as it gets. Do you never stand back and realise that you’re… better.”

Enjolras swallows. “I’m not better than you.”

Grantaire barks out a laugh. “Biggest lie you’ve ever told. You’re smart, you’re strong, you can tell everything I’m feeling by listening to my heartbeat.”

There’s instant coffee on the bench top. His hands are shaking. He drops the sachet and presses his palms against the surface, staring at the back of Grantaire’s head and wondering how to explain how many hours he has spent desperately trying to get the slightest clue to what Grantaire is thinking.

If he focuses, he can hear Grantaire’s heartbeat. It goes thump...thump...thump and sometimes when he’s sleeping, Enjolras presses a hand to it. It’s never given him any answers.

There is a feeling in his chest that’s too big, too terrifying, to name every time Grantaire kisses him but Enjolras lets them go on pretending this thing between them is a nothing because it’s easier. Because he’s afraid. The wolf doesn’t make him smarter, it doesn’t make him brave, it simply means when he feels like he’s going to burst out of his skin from rage or frustration he can.

He’d always assumed humans didn’t have that feeling. Looking at Grantaire, he wonders for the first time if they do, but they have no way to release it. Does it build up and build up and build up until eventually it drains away, taking something else with it.

Alternatively do you find yourself one day on a street corner with a rock in your hand and “I was so tired of doing nothing.”

"You're looking at me,” Grantaire says.

Which is true, but Enjolras is looking at the back of his head, so - “How would you know?”

“Magic werewolf bond. Also, reflection.” He points to the window with its backwards shadow image of the room. Grantaire on the sofa, face no more than a blur, and Enjolras behind, clearly watching.
He forces himself to turn away, pick up the boiled kettle and pour two mugs, instant coffee and cheap just add water cocoa. “What do humans do,” he says slowly, stirring one mug then the other until all the tiny flecks of brown have dissolved. “When you’re so angry you can’t even breathe with it, you need to tear off your skin and run a mile with the wind in your fur and -” he cuts himself off before the thought of it pushes him onto all fours.

“Can’t speak for all humans.” Enjolras turns to see Grantaire is kneeling on the sofa now, resting his chin on the cushions to watch the process.

There’s the dregs of a carton of milk. Enjolras debates internally for a moment, but concludes that Grantaire’s need is greater. “You’re the one I’m asking.”

Grantaire shrugs. “Well, I drink. But I wouldn’t exactly recommend it.”

He should probably have guessed that one. “I thought you were a wine connoisseur.”

He gets a smile for that. “Sometimes I like being a wine connoisseur. Sometimes I like being so drunk I forget my own name. It’s a delicate balance.”

Enjolras carries both mugs back to the sofa, Grantaire lets out a soft moan of gratitude as he wraps his hands around his cup, leaning over it as though he can inhale the caffeine through the steam. His breath when he exhales smells like coffee and cinnamon, momentarily cutting through the spilt wine and vinegar that clings to his clothes.

He’s been coherent, Enjolras realises. He stumbled coming in but it’s two in the morning, and he left for work at 4, he’s allowed to be exhausted. Enjolras should apologise for assuming - but he didn’t say anything about it, so perhaps it would be more awkward to bring it up now. Is there a way to go back in time and reclaim that kiss? He wouldn’t know where to start. “What’s it like,” Enjolras asks instead, sitting sideways so he can tuck his toes under Grantaire’s thigh where it’s always warm. “Forgetting your own name.”

Grantaire taps his fingers against his mug, thinking for a long moment. “Have you ever closed your eyes and fallen backwards into a pool of water?”

Enjolras blinks. “No?”

Grantaire takes his first sip of coffee, resting his warmed hand against Enjolras’s ankle. “Well, that’s the best metaphor I’ve got so you should try it some time.”

They lapse into silence. Enjolras tries to imagine falling backwards into the swimming pool at the mansion. It sounds disorienting, requiring of a level of trust in the body’s ability to float that Enjolras has never quite accomplished. He does drink, has even been drunk a handful of times but he mostly remembers needing everyone in his vicinity to understand the true level of inequality currently experienced by a majority portion of the population and also the strong urge to throw up. It’s something he did in first year for parties, but then Jehan introduced board game nights, Sébastien... happened, and mad alcohol fueled parties lost their appeal.

“Are you still looking into that murdering people as extreme sports thing at the ABC?”

Enjolras is halfway through his cocoa and starting to feel like even after three red bulls he could sleep, but this still seems like a bit of a non-sequitur from the previous conversation. “Why?”

“I might have a thing.”

He makes an encouraging sound, but Grantaire doesn’t elaborate. He finishes his coffee, leaving
the mug on the coffee table and picks up Enjolras’s pad where an indistinct human figure is emerging from his notes. Enjolras means to ask him to elaborate, but his eyes get caught by Grantaire’s pencil moving surely across the page, adding rays of light falling around it, the curve of something in the crook of an arm, the starts of shadows suggesting a face that’s almost familiar.

Enjolras is thinking about asking *is that me?* when he falls asleep

*

Grantaire’s ‘thing’ turns out to be Éponine. She shows up like a forest fire halfway through opening remarks, pulling everyone’s attention away from Combeferre’s carefully constructed powerpoint by slamming the door open and stomping over to Grantaire’s table where she pulls out a chair and sits right on the edge, as though worried touching it might bring her out in a rash. Her hair is pulled up under a beret again, and her dress doesn’t look like it has enough pocket space for a ladle but her eyes seem to say she could find one if she thought you deserved it.

It’s a very distinctive look. “Well?” she says, after a solid five seconds of everyone in the room staring at her. “Is there some kind of meeting going on or not?”

Marius is staring open mouthed, Cosette’s lips are a thin line, Bahorel - who as far as Enjolras can remember has never even met Éponine - looks entranced. Grantaire shrugs an apology at Enjolras but he’s trying not to laugh as he pushes his wine glass to Éponine. She gives it a suspicious look before knocking it back in one swallow.

Combeferre clears his throat. “As I was saying, the full moon is fast approaching. We have one lead, there’s a woman, we don’t know her real name but she goes by LouLou_15. She believes her sister is planning to partake in the event. If we can get her sister’s scent we may be able to track her down.” He clicks onto the next slide, which is a screenshot of the thoroughly humiliating conversation Enjolras has spent the day having. Jehan winces. “As you can see,” Combeferre continues. “She is not keen on the idea of working with wolves.”

The phrase ‘nut-brain, mongrel son of a wolf-fucker’ may have been used. Enjolras had got slightly irritated and pointed out that it wasn’t like she had any better options so maybe she should give him a chance and had got himself blocked and banned for his trouble.

“Wow,” Éponine says dryly, cutting over the background noise.

Enjolras looks away from the screenshot. She’s found another chair somewhere to rest her feet - in heavy workboots - on. “You have a comment?”

“Oh.” She glances around at them. Grantaire is all of a sudden very focused on his drawing. “You guys really have no idea that you’re the bad guys, do you?”

Enjolras grits his teeth and reminds himself that more humans in the ABC is supposed to be a good thing. “We’re trying to help.”

“How does she -” Éponine points to the screen. “Know that? To her you’re a farm group at best, could be trying to put her in the same place as her sister. You know how many wolves she’s ever trusted? I bet you anything if she did, she regretted it. You can’t go to her, that’s an attack.”

Enjolras glances at Grantaire, trying to get a read on whether Grantaire’s been sharing his secret fears about the ABC or if it’s simply that they’re all true. “We have days, are we supposed to wait for her to come to us?”

“She’d never go to you,” Éponine says dismissively. “Too much risk.” She leans back, picking up
her refilled wineglass. “You don’t need her, they’re meeting tomorrow at the bar.”

Enjolras has his mouth open to say which bar before he realises that to Éponine Thenardier there is only one.

“How do you know?” Combeferre asks, raising both hands as her glare fixes on him. “I’m not saying I don’t trust you, but there are lives at stake here.”

Her eyes narrow. “It’s my bar.”

Grantaire looks up then, to arch one eyebrow at her. “Ep.”

She throws him a dirty look, then folds her arms back at Combeferre. “Gav heard them talking. They’re meeting with a pack representative there tomorrow, he’ll tell them where they’re going and give out the waivers.”

“Why your bar?” Musichetta asks.

Éponine hesitates for a moment, her eyes inexplicably flicking to Cosette. “Dad’s pretty good at avoiding law enforcement. We have a bit of a… reputation, among the wolves. I figured if we encouraged it, something might come out of it.” She shrugs, as though a human girl convincing the most dangerous wolves in the city to drink in her home is no big deal.

“Thank you,” Combeferre says, and strangely that seems to be the first thing that gives her pause, forehead creasing into a frown. He doesn’t notice, already going back to the board. “So we’ll be able to find them, now we need to figure out how to stop them. Unfortunately, there are no loopholes in the contract beyond the obvious fact of making sure everyone who signs it survives the night.” He stops. “Éponine?”

Enjolras turns his head in time to see her lowering her hand from the air. “I don’t get why it’s legal. It’s a human killing another human, that’s murder and I don’t see what shape has to do with it.”

All of the weres relax very slightly at the mundanity of the question. Combeferre, of course, looks delighted to have the chance to enter teacher-mode. “It’s a particular loophole of the full moon,” he explains. “We - that is, werewolves - although we generally keep to human form, there are no actual limits and we can change back and forth at will. We aren’t strictly locked into either form, or either mindset. Even at our most human, we are a little wolf on the inside hence why we retain enhanced senses and some strength.

“However, we are constrained somewhat by the moon which strengthens the wolf and weakens the human. This is why during the day on a new moon, a wolf cannot change and why at night in a full moon we have to. For that one night, the human side is locked away somewhere untouchable and the wolf is - to all intents, purposes, and law - a wild animal. Thus for that one night, the wolf is not restricted by the same rules as their human counterpart.”

Éponine actually seems to be listening. “If I have a dog,” she says. “And it bites someone, I can be convicted for not controlling it.”

If Combeferre is surprised she made this leap so quickly, he does a good job at not showing it. “That is one of the fundamental points of a campaign we’re running at the moment with the society for the prevention of violence in lunar form, unfortunately it’s been a key point of law for so long that it’s difficult to affect change. If you want to help out, we’re always looking for more support. It’s a long term issue that’s easy to delay while we work on saving lives in the short term, but I agree that it’s vital to reducing injuries in the future.”
It’s a miracle, Éponine actually looks half impressed, and half like she’s considering the issue. She offers no further comment, sitting back in her chair with a wave of her hand as though to say ‘you may continue.’ Grantaire is trying to keep his focus down, but there’s a smile touching the edges of his mouth.

They both seem content to sit and listen when the debate starts. At least, Éponine kicks her chair around to Grantaire and watches him draw offering occasional under-her-breath comments and Enjolras has to assume they’re listening. Either that or Éponine has a sixth sense because when Joly suggests calling the police on the bar and getting the group of victims arrested - “only until after the full moon, to give us more time” - her head snaps up like a rocket.

“You are not sending cops to the bar.”

Combeferre frowns, turning to look at her. “It would be a suitable short-term solution, much safer than some of our other options.”

Éponine kicks her feet down as though preparing for a fight. “No.”

“Nothing is decided,” Combeferre says quickly, raising his palms to her. “This is a debate, can you give us a solid reason why not?”

“Because she doesn’t want to put her asshole parents in the firing line,” Cosette snaps, and the whole room goes quiet because… Cosette. Cosette wears fifties dresses with birds on them and braids daisies into her hair as soon as the weather is warm enough for flowers. She bakes cupcakes for fundraisers and gets more signatures on petitions than anyone else and she doesn’t get angry. Ever. About anything. Enjolras always sort of assumed on full moons her, Marius and Valjean dropped onto four paws, had a quick howl then spent the night watching Disney movies. “Because she’s a coward.”

Éponine’s eyes fix on Cosette with all the threat of a laser sight. “Shut the fuck up.” Éponine used to be in love with Marius, Enjolras remembers belatedly. There’s a level of venom in the glare that goes far beyond heated debate. “You don’t know anything about us, not anymore.”

Cosette meets her gaze head on, arms folded. “There are people who are going to die, we are talking about saving lives and once again you’re happy to stick your head in the sand -”

“It could ruin lives,” Éponine interrupts. “Specifically: mine, and my brother’s.”

Cosette purses her lips. “Obviously we’d help out, but you can’t say your parents don’t have it coming.” Enjolras tries to meet Grantaire’s eyes, if there was some bad history between Marius and Éponine’s family, Grantaire is the only one who might know about it.

“Oh obviously.” Éponine has her whole body turned to Cosette now and Marius is great, really, but no years-old crush should inspire this level of anger. “You’re great at helping out. Gavroche is fine, by the way, you know, since you asked. He’s twelve, sometimes he attends school and I think on average he’s getting at least one whole meal a day.”

“Éponine,” Grantaire says, finally looking up from his picture, but whatever he was going to say is lost when Cosette gets to her feet, shoots a dagger look at Éponine and walks out of the bar, head held high.

Éponine opens her mouth to shout something after, but Grantaire puts a hand on her arm and she subsides. After a moment, Marius throws an apologetic glance at Combeferre and runs out after Cosette. Combeferre turns to Éponine. “What was that about?”
Whatever goodwill he had, apparently he’s lost it. She scowls at him. “You’re not sending the police to the bar. My name is on the lease, I can’t have them poking around. I came, I gave you this info, you owe me.” She sounds so fierce, Combeferre actually takes half a step back, raising his hands again in surrender.

“Okay,” he says. “We’ll take it off the table. Which leaves the table with only one plan.” He looks over at Courfeyrac. “If you’re up for it?”

Courf is pale, has been since the start of the debate, but he nods anyway. “Sure. Sounds fun.”

They move over to the big table in the middle, where Jehan is clearing a space to make room for a map of Paris, pulling out the timeline sheets that they normally use to allocate times for a street campaign or a minor heist. Enjolras hesitates for a moment before heading over to Éponine and Grantaire at the back.

“It’s not fair,” she’s saying fiercely as he approaches. “She’s a wolf so she gets everything. I can’t believe you stopped me from punching her.”

“I’m not sure you can actually blame Cosette,” Grantaire is saying gently, and Enjolras can appreciate him sticking up for her while also being a bit disappointed that he’s apparently fine to throw Marius under the bus.

“Well, I can’t punch dad,” Éponine says, derailing Enjolras’s line of thought entirely. “So I have limited options.” She swings her chair back to look at Enjolras. “Fearless leader. What’s the plan?”

Enjolras glances at Grantaire, but naturally there’s no reply forthcoming. “Combeferre is going to join Henri’s pack,” he says, instead, focusing back on Éponine. “Temporarily. Then on the full moon we send Courfeyrac to where the humans are waiting, he says hello, shakes some hands. That way, during the night when the pack hunts them down, Combeferre will smell his mate and stop them from attacking.” It’s a very simplified version of the plan, but they’re still working on the exact details.

Grantaire frowns. “That sounds risky. What if Combeferre attacks?”

“Combeferre’s wolf is a lot less feral than mine, than most really. He’s unlikely to be willing to attack humans at the best of times, with Courfeyrac’s scent there there’s no chance.” Combeferre has the best sense of smell in the ABC. It’ll be fine. It’ll be fine. Wolves don’t usually attack their own kind, not even to get at prey. It’ll be fine.

He turns to Éponine. “All we need you to find out is where they’re going to be on the night of the moon.”

She nods. “I can do that. I’ll text you tomorrow.” Her eyes are caught on the doorway where Cosette and Marius are coming back in, arms around each other and heads tilted in close. “And with that, I am going to go home and throw up. It’s been fun.” She punches Grantaire on the arm. “See you tomorrow.” She grins. “Two weeks and six days.”

Grantaire punches her back, pointedly. Then she grabs her bag off the floor and heads to the door, keeping her eyes fixed on anything except Cosette and Marius. Enjolras hesitates a moment before taking her chair, sitting backwards so his hands are resting just inches away from Grantaire. “What was that about?”

Grantaire’s eyes are still on the door and his cheeks are pink, as though he’s embarrassed by something. Enjolras supposes he did drag Éponine along only to have her start a fight with the
nicest member of the ABC, that could be worth a blush. “You get a lot of money for fostering a werewolf,” he says, which makes absolutely no sense in the context of any conversation they’ve ever had. Then he turns back from the door to his Enjolras with a wide smile that doesn’t go past the ends of his mouth. “A few more meetings like that and she might stop calling the group a useless people farm. Maybe she’ll join if you give it,” he considers. “A year? Let’s say two to be safe. She says she’d never have let me come in the first place if she knew I was going to stay.”

Enjolras tries to figure out a way to tactfully say, ‘she seems to care a lot more than you do,’ but has no luck. “Why did you come?”

"I think we saw a poster or - no - someone came to the bar. Older than the rest of you, said there was this new group starting up, human rights and all that jazz. Ponine said it was a trick - they do that, some wolves, start up these groups only they’re not looking for human rights, just humans. They convince enough to join, and then they start to convince them that the best thing for humans is working with the wolves, only by 'with' they mean 'for' and by working they mean doing whatever they're told for low pay and very few benefits. There's always a wolf willing to pay a finders fee for a human willing to bond and willing to work.

“But I’m ever the optimist, so I went anyway. Got through the door and thought 'damn, she was right' because there was you and your band of wolves.” He shrugs. "But then Jehan cheered or something, and you had Bard's list of human rights up on a blackboard with fucking annotations and Feuilly sold me a glass of wine for the change I had in my pocket." He pauses to think for a moment. "A Chateau Saint Jacques. Good vintage."

“And?”

“Well you cared, didn't you. Sometimes that's all it takes.”

Enjolras taps his fingers on the table. “These people farms, how do you know about them?”

Grantaire shrugs, as though it should be obvious. “We joined one, me and Ep. That’s how we met Montparnasse, he was running it.”

Enjolras always knew his dislike of Montparnasse was justified. "I didn't know about this. Tricking people into being claimed, it can't be legal."

"It's not on the justice wall?” he yawns. "I guess they don't write news articles about things that aren't news." He glances over to the group loudly planning in the middle of the room. “Should you be over there caring about things?”

Enjolras wants to take his hand, but he’s not sure if he’d be allowed. He settles for swinging his foot forwards so their ankles are just touching. ‘I’m fine here.” He reaches out for Grantaire’s sketch. It’s a page torn out of his notebook, but his notes have been entirely obliterated now by the addition of three horses and a chariot behind the figure standing head held high, hair caught a little around the ears by a stray breeze. “Is this me?”

“It’s Apollo,” Grantaire says. “Greek god of the sun, lord of music and lover of wine. Probably throws one hell of a party.” He raises an eyebrow at Enjolras. “I don’t know, doesn’t sound like you. You’re more of an Artemis.”

The idea of being the patron god of wolves does have some appeal, but, “The virgin huntress,” Enjolras says. Grantaire grins back as if to say ‘you said it, not me.’

Enjolras taps the face, the short waving blonde hair. “It looks like me.”
“There may be some superficial resemblance,” Grantaire picks up his pencil, adds a swirl of decoration to the chariot. “He’s supposed to be inhumanly handsome, I suppose your face makes a reasonable model..”

“I think that’s the nicest thing you’ve ever said to me.”

Grantaire laughs, reaching up to push his hair back with one hand, and incidentally kicking his chair backwards in the process so their feet are no longer touching. “Go plan your revolution.”

There is a feeling in Enjolras’s stomach. It isn’t showing any sign of going away.
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

“I guess we shouldn’t be surprised that the asshole werewolf supremacists are racist.”

Chapter Notes

Love as always to my beta McKenzi for being awesome and my Katie for being the best Katie a girl could ask for ;)

Comments and kudos are so appreciated <3

(This chapter references a racist incident but it’s pretty much just what’s in the summary. If you thought the last chapter ending was a cliffhanger, this one is probably worse <3)

He has to stay back after class. He’s spinning his phone over and over between his fingers because he spent all lecture checking it obsessively for news of Combeferre’s meeting with Henri and now that the meeting might be over, his battery is dead and the powerpack that Combeferre bought him because he was always letting his battery die is on the kitchen table at home, probably also dead.

Enjolras is not good at charging things. He’s trying not to vibrate out of his skin at Professor Rosier’s desk, biting down on the urge to tell her to just get on with it as they wait for three hundred students to slowly locate all dropped pencils and file out of the room.

He’s not interested. He’s had this lecture, whichever one it is. Wasting potential, wasting money, must try harder. “Look, professor, I have somewhere important to be .”

She sighs, dropping the folder she was organising onto a pile and looks up at him. “You’re smart.”

She stops there. Enjolras gives it a moment before, “thank you?”

She shakes her head. “You could be a lot smarter. You could be graduated by now, if you stopped having somewhere ‘important’ to be.”

Enjolras can only grit his teeth so much. “There is a whole world out there that it tearing itself apart. People are dying and you’re telling me to do nothing so I can get some qualifications?” He hasn’t gone off at a lecturer since he got kicked off Full moon Law 101 and it’s almost a relief to fall into a stride, which is what makes it so disappointing when she immediately raises a hand to cut him off.

She sighs, pulling a sheet of paper out of the folder and handing it to him. It’s his grade sheet for the term. It’s somewhat sparse. “Combeferre is on track to graduate at the end of this year.”

Enjolras flicks his eyes down the numbers. He’s skipped about half the assignments, which would still push him just over the pass grade - he’s smart, yeah - except for the class test worth thirty
percent that he didn’t show up for. Last Wednesday. He had been canvassing squat sites with Bahorel and had missed ten phone calls from Combeferre. Shortly after that, Combeferre presented him with the powerpack. “I’ve been busy. Right now I am trying to save lives from this senseless group.”

“I’m not saying those things aren’t important,” she says calmly, reaching across to her desk and picking up a post-it. “I’m saying there will always be something standing between you and your future.” She places the post-it on top of his sheet. It’s a make-up test, the Saturday after the full moon. “At some point you have to prioritise the rest of your life.”

Enjolras stops talking. (If he had a job, if he had money, if he wasn’t wasting half his life sitting in lecture halls spending his family’s money and not doing anything with it…) That whole conversation with Grantaire comes back to haunt him at all the worst moments.

Combeferre is on track to graduate. He hadn’t said anything, maybe because he knew that it would take a miracle for Enjolras to be in the same position. He folds the post-it into his backpack, re-straps it for the wolf and ducks into a changing room to strip off and switch forms. It’s rush hour, the toll on the central Paris wolf lanes is going to be appalling but it’ll get him home quicker and let him shut off his brain for a little while.

He wants to get home, to wrap his arms around Grantaire and try to convince himself there’s at least one thing he hasn’t fucked up yet.

* There is a picnic blanket laid out in the entrance to his apartment, where the dining table was back when he owned a dining table. Combeferre is there - Enjolras feels a tiny weight fall off his shoulders, however bad the meeting was to merit an emergency apartment meeting, he’s still alive. Courfeyrac is next to him, sides pressed together in a way that could be incidental but isn’t. Across the mat, Marius and Cosette could be under a tree in a park, hands clasped and heads together. Perfectly innocent except Cosette’s face is still set like she’s looking at Éponine and planning to cut a bitch.

Jehan waves a hello. He’s opposite, with Joly and Musichetta, who are holding an iPad with Bossuet on facetime.

“These guys showed up,” Grantaire calls, pulling one hundred percent of Enjolras’s attention. He’s on the sofa - too far - playing some kind of game that appears to involve running around with wolf claws slashing at zombies, but he’s playing it on mute presumably out of respect for the guests. “They promised they weren’t here to rob us. I told them as long as they left the playstation it was cool, but mostly they’ve just been cooing over the kettle.”

Something big has probably happened, something important. Enjolras wishes they would all leave, put it all on hold for five minutes, for ten. He wants to sit down next to Grantaire, rest his head on his shoulder, say, ‘my lecturer just gave me the chance to graduate this year and I’m already planning what I’ll say when I fuck it up.’ He wants to hear Grantaire snort, roll his eyes, wants to kiss him anyway.

Half an hour, maybe. A half hour break before everything starts up again.

“You have a kettle,” Jehan coos obligingly. Enjolras drops his backpack by the doorway and sits down opposite him on the picnic blanket. Everyone has mugs - Enjolras owns more than one mug now.
“What did you used to use?” Grantaire asks, leaning back over the sofa to watch them upside-down. Enjolras is tired. He’s never slept better than the two hours after when Grantaire stays, but every time he’s woken by Grantaire sliding out to his own bed he spends half the night lying awake wondering if he could go in there. If he confessed everything, could they keep that or would Grantaire run a mile.

Courfeyrac beams at him. “We had a rota. Someone brought a thermos, someone else a picnic blanket. For big presentations, Combeferre brought a TV.

Okay, Enjolras is prepared to admit that maybe his apartment wasn’t the best place before Grantaire moved in. “Can we quit judging my life choices and tell me what the emergency is?”

Combeferre - thank the gods - is always willing to be derailed back to the cause. “To cut right to it: Henri Valance is just as much of an asshole as when we were kids. He is in his parents city house, we were right about that, he has three or four other wolves there, not sure if that’s the full pack or a small selection.” Over Joly’s shoulder, Grantaire’s head disappears and the TV screen unfreezes. Too much to hope he’d be curious enough to come over. Combeferre sighs, “To cut a long boring drinks meeting short, they were all white and, to quote their esteemed leader, they ‘don’t really have a diversity quota.’”

“Shit,” says Musichetta.

“I guess we shouldn’t be surprised that the asshole werewolf supremacists are racist,” Bossuet muses. “But it still seems wrong.”

Bahorel turns to look at Enjolras. “Courfeyrac’s in your pack, would Henri take you?”

Enjolras hasn’t seen him at all in the years since the punch, but in that time his pack has gone from strength to strength while Henri’s has faltered. “I don’t think he could turn me down,” Enjolras says slowly, holding up a hand to forestall the next comment. “But my sense of smell isn’t as good as Combeferre’s and my wolf is nowhere near as restrained.” He glances at Courfeyrac who shrugs as if to say ‘might as well tell them.’ “I did attack Courf one full moon, Combeferre had to physically get between us. There’s not a high chance that Courfeyrac’s scent would be enough to stop the wolf from attacking.”

A silence follows after this, as everyone puts together exactly what would happen if Enjolras’s wolf was faced with a group of defenceless humans on a full moon. Enjolras hates thinking that he would be capable of it, hates acknowledging that part of himself but when he’s fully wolf there’s pack and prey and not much in between.

“Maybe if I could get in with the humans,” Combeferre says slowly. “If we were both there, we could protect them.”

“They don’t release the humans until after the wolves are already changed,” Musichetta says, pulling the notes Éponine sent from the pile of resources. “If you shifted in the waiting room, they would call the whole thing off and I doubt Enjolras would get a second chance.” She glances at Joly. “Could we sneak Combeferre into the place beforehand?”

Joly is already frowning at the blueprints for the construction site where the hunt is due to happen. “I don’t see how we could do it without any of the wolves catching his scent. What if Combeferre went to the humans and bit them before? If they all turned, there would be enough to put up a fight and we know they’re willing, that’s the point of the game.”

“It violates the waiver,” Enjolras says, pulling out a familiar pile of waiver notes in Combeferre’s
Grantaire sits down beside Jehan, pulling Enjolras’ s attention entirely from the notes with a frown. By now, he should be attuned to notice the moment Grantaire moves, it shouldn’t keep being this easy for Grantaire to sneak up on him. “What about my scent?” he asks, proving that he can blindside Enjolras twice in five minutes. “I’ve been with you at night on a full moon twice now, you’re more like a puppy than a feral beast.”

Jehan beams. “Does he lick your face and ask to play fetch?”

Full moon memories are always somewhat hazy, but Enjolras has a feeling Jehan is not far wrong and his face is rapidly going the colour of his hoodie. He turns back to his notes, determined to avoid Grantaire’s eyes.

“He likes scratches behind the ears and belly rubs.” Grantaire holds out a mug, not one of the ones from the mat. Enjolras is about to remind him that he doesn’t drink coffee when he gets a waft of chocolate flavoured steam.

He takes it. “I didn’t think you’d want to be involved.” Taking the mug involves looking up, involves meeting Grantaire’s eyes and seeing the easy half-smile like discussing going up against a pack of rabid human-killers is easy drinks conversation.

Grantaire holds his eyes for a moment, then shrugs and picks up his own cup like it’s nothing. “I’m a part of the group.”

Enjolras shakes his head, more to settle his thoughts than any really objection since he can’t think of a single logical reason why they couldn’t use him. “Normally you don’t want any part of our plans.”

Grantaire puts down the page he’d been holding without reading it. “Normally it’s ‘break into a secure compound’ this or ‘spend three hours selling pension reform on the street’ that.” He tugs the blueprint away from Joly. “I think ‘go to a room and exist near some people’ is probably within my capabilities.”

That’s true, and when it was Courfeyrac, Enjolras had accepted that it was the safest, the most logical option. But it feels more real when it’s Grantaire, like they’re dragging a civilian into a war. Nevermind that Grantaire is a human, that before Enjolras he would’ve been the perfect target for one of these groups, that it’s more his war than anyone else’s.

“If we’d had the emergency meeting at our place there could have been snacks,” Jehan says, as Combeferre starts going over the whole operation again from scratch.

Grantaire is already halfway to his feet. “I made cookies yesterday, there’s probably still some left.”

Macadamia and white chocolate. Enjolras definitely hadn’t been getting through every lecture on the promise that when he got home he could collapse dramatically on the sofa and whine until Grantaire brought him some.


“That’s cool,” Jehan says as the smell of cookies reaches every canine in the room. “I’m going to marry him too.”
Enjolras swallows and scrambles to his feet, gives some kind of vague explanation - “plates?” - for following Grantaire into the kitchen area, taking his wrist to pin him against the wall around the corner and out of sight.

“Hey,” Grantaire says on an exhale, curved into the shape of a surprised smile and for a moment Enjolras just touches his forehead to Grantaire’s neck, breathes him in.

“You don’t have to do this,” he says. His mouth is right by Grantaire’s ear, there’s already some kind of fight going on on the picnic blanket so probably no one hears.

Grantaire’s free hand is warm against his hip. “Is that why they call it volunteering?” he says, and he can probably be heard on the mat but he’s easily casual. There’s nothing in his tone to suggest that he’s probably got a mouthful of Enjolras’s hair. “I always wondered.”

Enjolras find himself letting out a breath that’s almost a laugh, giving him the strength to take a step back, push his hair back out of his eyes. “I’ll find a plate for those.”

“Enjolras knows what a plate is,” Jehan has arrived by the kitchen, peering around at them with his nose twitching towards the box in Grantaire’s hand. “Grantaire, how does it feel to have corrupted the national idol with kitchen supplies and baked goods?”

Enjolras takes another step backwards even though they weren’t touching, and Grantaire’s hand only looks like it’s hovering in thin air to people who know. Grantaire clears his throat, moving the hand to push his own hair back. “I also filled his drinks cabinet,” he says, stepping past Enjolras without touching him at all. “We could have mimosas.”

“This is a planning meeting,” Combeferre calls back from the front room.

Jehan considers Grantaire for a moment before concluding, “I can plan with mimosas.”

“I would even say,” Courfeyrac announces. “That I plan better with mimosas.”

It’s lucky the plan is largely unchanged from when it was Courfeyrac and Combeferre because the meeting deteriorates rapidly from there. Enjolras sits to the side with Combeferre, pulling important documents out of spill range and quietly arranging for Enjolras to coincidentally bump into Valance at the gym. Then on the full moon, Feuilly will drive Grantaire to the victims, he goes in, makes physical contact with as many as he can and then leaves when they try to make him sign the waiver.

Enjolras wants to ask if Combeferre was this nervous about it when it was Courfeyrac tricking a pack of murderous werewolves. Instead, he collects up the used mugs and heads into the kitchen. Combeferre follows. “Are you okay?”

Enjolras hesitates, worrying his lip between his teeth as he runs the sink. “You’re graduating.”

“Ah,” Combeferre opens a drawer and pulls out a tea towel - does everyone in the world know Enjolras’s kitchen better than he does? “I guess I figured it was about time.”

Enjolras wipes out two mugs on autopilot. Objectively he knows they can’t be student revolutionaries forever, but gainfully employed revolutionaries really doesn’t have the same ring. Combeferre has an apartment that isn’t this one, he’s going to have a job to work at all day and the ABC will be a little side project for evenings and weekends.

“You could still pass most modules, if you study for the exams. Then you make up Rosier’s class next semester and it’ll be almost like we finished at the same time.”
Enjolras swallows. “She gave me a make-up test, I could scrape through.”

Combeferre elbows him in the ribs. “That’s awesome. I’m looking at some graduate roles, I’ll send you the links. Did you know we’ll be qualified to get a position in government? It would be a minor aide role to start, but there are real opportunities -”

He stops talking. Either because of the psychic link, the lack of encouragement, or the fact that Enjolras’s hands are actually shaking.

Combeferre isn’t as warm as Grantaire, but he’s taller, more solid. It’s like leaning on a tree, solid and secure. Safe. “Change isn’t a bad thing,” he says.

He said that when he moved out. A year later Enjolras still doesn’t have a dining table.

He has a TV though. And a kettle. And over the counter he can see Grantaire lying on his back on the sofa with Jehan pretending to plant a flag in his chest and calling, “claimed for the kitsune empire.”

Jehan is a werefox. Four years and Enjolras finally has an answer to that question. “I know.”

“So you’re going to go to that test,” Combeferre says.

“Rain or shine.”

*  

“Can we steal your spare room?” Courfeyrac asks. Jehan is already half asleep on the picnic blanket, it’s probably overambitious to try and get them down the stairs and into a taxi now. Not when Enjolras accepted at least several glasses from Grantaire and is having trouble calculating distances in his own lounge.

“Is Grantaire alright on the sofa?” Combeferre asks, taking charge of the situation. Normally this is why Combeferre is the best, although not so much when he’s assuming that he’ll be in Enjolras’s bed because Enjolras has been avoiding giving any indication that he might want someone else there.

Why is that again?

“Sure thing,” Grantaire salutes. “It’s my home away from home.” He slumps down onto it and his eyes immediately close. Courfeyrac and Combeferre disappear to carry Jehan into Grantaire’s room leaving Enjolras to shake crumbs off the sofa blanket and tuck it over Grantaire’s shoulders.

Grantaire smiles, but his breathing is slowed out and steady like he’s already asleep. He smells like mimosas, but so does everything else. He hadn’t even mentioned the plan once the alcohol came out, no sign of nerves or unease. Unless that was the drinking.

There’s movement and Enjolras looks up to see Combeferre watching him. He’s hovering, he realises. The blanket’s in place and Grantaire is sleeping and he’s just standing there watching. He should be able to play it off as something, something other than him being creepy.

*It’s okay that I’m watching him sleep with my unreciprocated crush because we give each other handjobs sometimes now,* is thankfully something his brain realises to be a mistake before it makes it to his mouth.

“We don’t have to do this,” Combeferre says, and it actually takes a minute for Enjolras to connect
that statement to the entire purpose of this evening.

He forces himself to step away from the sofa. “There’s no one else.” Musichetta and Bossuet are going to be too black for Henri’s little pack project. Bahorel and Feuilly are unclaimed.

“Your sense of smell isn’t that strong,” Combeferre pauses, clearly getting his thoughts in order. When he speaks again it’s in an undertone. Enjolras could tell him that once Grantaire is asleep, nothing wakes him until he’s ready to be awake again, but he doesn’t. This feels too much like a conversation that should happen quietly in a dark room. “If the secondhand scent isn’t enough, there’s going to be blood on your paws. Are you prepared for that?”

Enjolras casts one final look at Grantaire before following Combeferre to his bedroom. “If we know it’s happening and we don’t do anything, it’s on my hands anyway. We have to try.”

*

Henri Valance is an asshole and Enjolras’s skin is crawling. The full moon is fifteen minutes away, Grantaire is probably already in Feuilly’s car heading for the warehouse and Henri fucking Valance is explaining his exciting new tech start-up which is neither of the above adjectives.

Enjolras is counting down the minutes until he can tear Henri’s throat out. Luckily the ‘I am so bored and your company idea is stupid’ look bears a strong resemblance to the ‘I am so much better than everyone in this room,’ that Combeferre told him to aim for. It’s not difficult, thus far Henri’s recruits are largely lower status sycophants desperate to ride his coattails to the top. There’s enough uncertainty in the room that Enjolras would almost be prepared to call the whole thing off and just talk them out of it, if not for the force of Henri’s single minded devotion holding them all together.

There’s a blessed silence in the Henri Valance happy hour. He’s distracted by enjoying it so it takes him a moment to realise everyone is looking at him.

He probably didn’t need Combeferre directing him to stay aloof. He’s sitting on a table at the edge of the room, letting the pack wolves talk themselves around in circles. He’d started out picking his nails, but he ran out of dirt pretty quickly and it might have ruined the image to start tearing the edges off. “Sorry?”

Henri fails to hide his scowl. “I was saying how we’re looking for investors, more contacts in parliament. For the start-up, the right person could stand to make a fortune -”

“Remind me why we’re doing this in a construction site,” Enjolras says, turning away from them to look out of the window. Somewhere across the way is the room where the humans are being kept. Is Grantaire there yet?

Henri visibly pulls his temper under control. “It’s my father’s site, completely deserted and fenced in. Everything’s legal but you know how it is when politics is involved. Collateral damage would be bad press.” He steps closer to Enjolras, bringing a cloud of overpowering cologne with him. There’s more than one reason Enjolras stuck to the far side of the room. “Think of this as the future of city living, a new wild and new prey for the liberated wolf.”

“Henri,” says one of the sycophants, tapping his watch pointedly. “It’s time.”

“Of course,” Henri turns back to Enjolras, salesman’s smile back in full force as he pulls a pill bottle out of his pocket and shakes it, the contents rattling like percussion. “Visitors first?”

Enjolras darts his eyes around the room, but no one else seems surprised. “What is this?”
Henri tips two bright blue pills out onto his palm, smiling a cheshire smile as he offers the choice to Enjolras. Enjolras takes one slowly, still weighing it in his palm as Henri knocks back the other, no hesitation. “It stops this -” he taps his temple. “From getting in the way.” He tosses the bottle to the other wolf without breaking eye contact with Enjolras.

If he doesn’t take it, he’ll be escorted out the building no pain no foul, Henri can’t afford to get on the bad side of Enjolras’s father. The human victims won’t be so lucky. They have one shot, he has to trust that Grantaire will be enough. “No chance of a glass of water?”

Henri laughs and snaps his fingers at an underling. A moment later there’s a sealed bottle in Enjolras’s hand. Enjolras tosses the pill into his mouth, takes a gulp, tries to project I do this all the time when in reality he still hates swallowing aspirin. “It lowers inhibitions.”

Henri grins. “Makes things simpler, yeah. There’s predator -” points at himself. “And prey,” out the window where the lights of the site are shutting off one by one. He pulls his phone out of his pocket and tosses it onto a table. Enjolras turns to see there’s already quite a pile forming. Wallets, brand new iphones, jackets. “Tonight we’re wolves,” Henri steps past Enjolras, already unbuttoning his shirt.

Enjolras slides his phone out of his pocket. Nearly moonrise. Grantaire should be in by now, if not already out. This has to be enough. His stomach is churning around the drug, he shouldn’t have eaten so much for dinner but Grantaire made lasagne and he felt too guilty to not eat it. They hadn’t known what to say and then Feuilly had shown up early meaning the goodbye was all too public. Enjolras hasn’t kissed him since this morning, and if tonight goes wrong he wouldn’t blame Grantaire for never wanting to see him again.

Henri is giving some speech about unleashing the beast within and the true man is the paleolithic man like he’s nostalgic for the good old days of being eaten by cave lions and trampled by mammoths before you can turn thirty. Enjolras starts unbuttoning his shirt, watching his phone switch to countdown mode.

Henri is suddenly back alongside him bare chest against Enjolras’s arm and Enjolras’s nostrils burning from the chemical scent hovering around him. “Is this what it’s like in your pack?” he asks, a little too eager. “I heard you have the largest forest of any one family.”

If he’s at home for the full moon, they erect small tents for changing in with storage for everyone’s individual pile of clothes. Different wolves shift at slightly different points in time, but they all pad out onto the front lawn and play tag or lie down until everyone’s there. Mum co-ordinates the hunt, sending out scouts to find scents. The puppies are herded along with everyone else, because experience is important.

No one gets drugged. The change doesn’t hit early like it’s boiling up from his stomach, burning lines across his arms trying to force hair out where it shouldn’t be.

Henri claps him on the shoulder and he flinches, claws snapping out of his nail beds with a sharp pain like they’re tearing the skin. “You’ll see,” Henri says. “It’s the greatest thrill you’ll ever experience, better that whatever shit you’ve got going down in that forest. You’ll be fucking begging me to join up, you’ll see.” He pulls away - thank god - leaving Enjolras to fumble at his fly, kick off his shoes, try to get his breathing under control.

He glances back to see half the pack are already in wolf form, the rest a mess of too much hair, ears caught mid change, faces twisted up in pain and how are they all acting like this is normal? Enjolras fumbles his phone, checking the timer. Down to the seconds.
It buzzes, startling him so much he almost drops it as the text message appears on the screen. *Don’t mean to panic you,* Feuilly says, *but Grantaire hasn’t come out yet.*

*Shit,* is the last thought Enjolras has before he changes.
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

A wolf might hesitate to attack a human but a werewolf is bigger, is stronger. They have nothing to fear from a city at night, padding ten abreast down untrodden streets, skeletal frames of buildings rising up higher than a forest, thin beams reflecting the silver of the moon down across their fur.

Chapter Notes

Thanks so much to my beta McKenzi who is great and who finished going over this chapter like a week ago (sorry it took me so long!). Love you Katie for all your cheerleading and EMOTIONS.

Thanks to everyone who has commented or kudosed so far, you guys are the best! If anyone has any questions about the world or background stuff feel free to hit me up, i have a lot of notes from this fic ;)

Warnings: This chapter features a graphically described fight between wolves, and the wounds carry back into human form where they’re also pretty graphic.

It smells like people. Cities and smoke, there is no grass beneath his paws and no trees to shelter. The pack is not his, and they smell like the city too, raised on iron and concrete. They are not hunters, but their leader comes up to Enjolras, drops his muzzle, invites him to join the hunt.

There is prey here. A wolf might hesitate to attack a human but a werewolf is bigger, is stronger. They have nothing to fear from a city at night, padding ten abreast down untrodden streets, skeletal frames of buildings rising up higher than a forest, thin beams reflecting the silver of the moon down across their fur.

His fur is thrumming. The wind teases across his muzzle, bringing the faintest scents of fresh meat and he wants to surge into a run, chase them down. He wants to sink his teeth and claws into something solid. He wants to throw back his head and howl.

He is too far from home, his head is too empty, there are wolves padding on either side of him but they are not with him. They are cheap, hesitant wolves. He could take half of them down before they even bared their teeth to fight back. Prey.

But they outnumber him, and there is a sweeter prize hidden in these shadows. There are shapes moving in the distance and the pace picks up, he is running shoulder to shoulder with strangers, watching the prey, waiting for them to move.

The chase is where they are the most wolves. The wind runs through his hair and his paws hit the hard ground. Prey can try to escape from a pack but they will be run down, found in the smallest of hiding spots. His eyes can see in the shadows, his nose can smell in the darkness, his legs can run
the limits of this dark fenced city over and over without tiring.

They don’t run. A few on the edges flinch, tensed up and eyes flashing, like the initial alert running through a herd of deer, but something at the centre pulls them back, keeps them in one tight group. This is not going to be a hunt, it’s going to be a meal sitting out in the open for anyone to - mine.

The prey in the centre has stepped up, in the pack of wolves bearing down on him his eyes are fixed on Enjolras and Enjolras is sprinting, pushing his legs to the limit, breaking free of the pack, gaining one wolf length, two, three, and skidding to a halt, spinning on the spot with his body directly in front of them, between the predators and the prey.

No, he barks, as the pack stumble to a halt and for a moment there’s nothing but confusion as a few turn to go back, others seem frozen solid, it could be as easy as this.

Then the alpha steps up, an unspoken command and they form up, a semi-circle facing him with the single alpha wolf in the middle, stepping closer and closer to the herd, to the humans. Enjolras bares his teeth. ‘Stay back.’

Henri growls, snapping at the air and Enjolras can see the challenge in it. He is standing between an alpha and his prey.

But they are not his. This one is Enjolras’s, and this one protects the others. He is pack, so they are claimed. Enjolras plants both paws on the ground, raises his hackles and growls.

No.

Mine.

There is fear behind him, he could always smell that, but now there’s fear ahead as well. Several wolves in the circle are stumbling backwards, looking for a way out. Prey, Enjolras thinks, fixing his gaze on each one until their heads drop or they turn away.

Henri lets out a howl, high and chilling, and leaps, pushing off with all his strength to jump over Enjolras, claws outstretched towards Grantaire. Enjolras doesn’t hesitate, grabs his throat between his teeth and spins him back out into the circle, sending him scraping across the sand. Enjolras leaps after him and now he can get his teeth into something. Enjolras gets his teeth around Henri’s front leg, but then claws cut deep into his side and he rolls off on instinct to pull free, losing his grip.

Henri snarls something at the pack wolves. A couple step forward, but the majority are hanging back, waiting to see which way the fight goes. Enjolras uses the distraction to dig his foreclaws into Henri’s back, tugging him around and throwing him back to the ground. Teeth close sharp around his neck, and he lashes out, scratching at whatever fur he can reach. He cuts open Henri’s nose and the grip on his throat eases, but then another wall hits him from the side like a hoof to the stomach, knocking the wind out of his lungs.

He kicks out with his back legs, catches a glancing blow that opens a line of red across the new wolf’s neck, rolls onto his feet in time to catch Henri mid-leap, scoring open his stomach and throwing him back. A third wolf gets its teeth on Enjolras’s shoulder, but it’s too hesitant and one kick sends it skidding back to its packmates.

Enjolras almost falls putting weight on his leg, the bite went deeper than expected, and he has to limp back to Grantaire, planting himself firmly in the centre of the road. Henri is worse off, he can’t seem to put weight at all on his right side. His second in command is eying Enjolras as
though looking for an opening, but he can smell apprehension in the air now, he knows he is without back-up and he doesn’t look at all inclined to make a move.

A hand rests on the fur between Enjolras’s ears, the smell of lasagne and coffee and wine and pack all mixed up together into mine. Enjolras tilts back his head to howl, letting his mind follow the same path as the contact, feeling the solid weight of the human beside him, the awareness of the crowd of humans behind them. Not prey, not pack, but people all the same.

Enjolras sits back on his haunches beside his people, and stares down at the pack of wolves, daring any one of them to make a move.

*

Enjolras wakes up alone. He’s lying on his side on concrete marked with claw scratches and flecked red and he is alone. He remembers the smell of prey, the thrill of the hunt, Grantaire standing steady in the direct line of fire where he was not meant to be.

Enjolras tries to sit up, ears craning for any sign, and immediately falls back down again, his arm giving way beneath him. The familiar muscle soothing of the change is fading now, replaced by stabbing pain coming from every direction.

Grantaire. Some of the blood on the ground must be his, that much is clear. His whole body feels like it’s been put through the shredder, he can barely sit up, what was his wolf like? He can remember the night in flashes, in moments. A wolf slamming teeth into his neck, claws raking across his shoulder. He doesn’t know when he lost consciousness, he doesn’t know who won.

Grantaire. He steels himself, forcing his other arm to bear his weight enough for him to sit. An old wool coat falls down into his lap, as though it had been lying over him. He breathes deep through his nose, picking up blood and sweat and mine.

Running footsteps. His head jerks up to see Feuilly a moment before arms wrap tight around him and the familiar smells overpower, however momentarily, the rough iron of his own blood. “Enjolras,” Feuilly breathes, fierce. His grip is tight enough to hurt all of Enjolras’s aches but his heart is beating fast against Enjolras’s chest and Enjolras can’t think of his pulling away.

Grantaire.

He only realises he said it out loud when Feuilly answers. “He’s fine, he’s alive. He was in here - he said he heard you talking to Combeferre, you weren’t sure a secondhand scent would be enough.”

Enjolras remembers that conversation as though through a fog or from a dream. Grantaire had been on the sofa, breathing slow, six mimosas down. He wasn’t supposed to have heard.

‘He’s alive’ is a very open statement. So many possibilities.

Enjolras doesn’t ask for clarification. “He’s not here.”

Feuilly gets an arm around Enjolras’s chest sending stabbing pains shooting up from whole new places. “He went with Courfeyrac. He’s fine, Enjolras. He’s fine.” Feuilly lifts his head for a moment, scanning the empty site as Enjolras gets his feet flat on the ground. “We have to get out of here. Where are your clothes?”

Enjolras almost says they can leave it, he has to get home and what use are clothes anyway - but his phone is there, with all sorts of information he can’t risk to the hands of Henri Valance. Leaning
most of his weight on Feuilly, he starts limping as fast as he is able towards the door where they came in.

It is not very fast. By the time they reach it, he’s feeling lightheaded and there’s a trail of red leading halfway across the construction area. That’ll be a fun thing for the workers to figure out when they arrive. He stumbles his weight onto a table, letting Feuilly wince and stretch out his arms while he grabs at his jeans, checks for his phone and starts pulling them on.

There are open wounds across his legs and arms, bite and teeth marks some deeper than others. His whole left side - from his pelvis up his ribs and over his shoulder - is turning a particularly interesting shade of purple. He hasn’t got a mirror, but he can only half open one eye so he imagines his face is just as torn up as the rest of him.

He should be sleeping, should be shifting to close up the worst of the wounds. His head is a blur of distraction and ache. He can focus on one thing at a time and right now it’s just a solid wall of GrantaireGrantaireGrantaire.

“You.”

Feuilly’s head jerks up from his phone, Enjolras gives up on the buttons of his jeans to meet the gaze of Henri Valance standing in the doorway. His shoulders have four long score-lines each, dark red and still dripping. There’s a bite taken out of his cheek and he’s leaning in the doorway to steady himself but he’s glaring like he’d happily take a few more wounds if he could take Enjolras down with him. Enjolras takes a deep breath and tries to steal himself to fight, or at least stand up.

Feuilly steps forward, putting himself between them. Between two wolves, all muscle and blood, Feuilly looks very small. A skinny hipster in a waistcoat and glasses, holding out a hand that’s never thrown a punch. “Mr Valance, I assume?”

Henri bares bloody teeth. “And who the fuck are you?”

“No one important, by your standards.” Feuilly smiles. “I simply thought it would be courteous to inform you that Combeferre is currently speaking with the fourteen humans who you entered into a binding legal agreement with last night. We have a law firm willing to work pro-bono for any of them who would still like the bite after seeing what you did, in case you weren’t planning to honour your so carefully airtight contract.”

7am after a full moon is really not the time to use long words to a werewolf. Henri’s plan of attack seems to have been derailed by confusion, his gaze no longer fixed on Enjolras but finally distracted by Feuilly. He’s blinking numbly, glancing from one to the other but it seems to be sinking in. “They had help. Him. No deal.”

“They didn’t invite him in. You did.” Feuilly lets his hand drop. “Have a good day. Mr Valance.”

Enjolras just has time to snatch up Grantaire’s coat and his shirt before Feuilly has grabbed him by the arm and force-marched him out into the street. His hand is shaking, his heart racing but they’re both alive.

Fourteen humans are with Combeferre. Does that include Grantaire? Did one of them - it can’t have been Grantaire, Feuilly said he was alive. They said -

Enjolras’s phone buzzes the moment Feuilly has dropped him into the car and he pulls it out. He has hundreds of texts, missed calls, messages from everyone in his pack, in the ABC.

He has three that matter.
Doing something stupid, sorry.

I’m with C. Feuilly is coming to find you, don’t you dare die before he gets there.

I’m home x.

He stares at the last one, his thumb hovering over the call button but he knows he won’t be able to believe anything until he sees it and he can’t sit in the car as Feuilly speeds through the streets wondering if Grantaire is lying to him.

At a red light, Feuilly reaches over to take the phone from his shaking hands. “You need to shift.”

Enjolras grits his teeth reaching for the wolf. It’s not far to fall and he sinks into it like falling backwards into a swimming pool. Reforming, regrowing, Grantaire, replacing. He should keep shifting, back and forth until the wounds close up and start to heal but that’s the last thought his human mind provides before his wolf gives in to self pity, curling up on the seat with a whine.

An unfamiliar hand touches his forehead and he snaps at it, pressing his muzzle down on his paws. He can smell wine and homeapplesmintmine and packnotwolf but they’re old scents, clinging to the seats and the air. No indication whether they were before or after last night when he remembers wolves coming from all directions, a small cluster of prey and pack claws and teeth raking at him as he had to protect them.

The car stops. The human - Feuilly - opens a door to the air and everything narrows down to a single scent coming fresh and strong. Mineminemineminemine. For a moment it’s like he’s whole, back legs bunching up strong as new beneath him to power him out over Feuilly’s lap and onto the street. There are humans, scattering in chaos and heartbeats and screaming and there is a single point of stillness.

Grantaire. Enjolras darts through the chaotic crowd, up slippery smooth steps to press his muzzle into the hollow of a neck and breathe in. Minepreypackwinesweatbloodirondustmine. Hands come around to rest in the fur around his neck, scratching at those perfect spots where he can never quite reach himself. Enjolras follows the thick scents of Grantaire’s blood and finds scratches on his arms, across his chest. Nothing deep, nothing life threatening. He’s alive, he’s alive.

The soft murmur of a voice soothing, over and over in his ear and he forces himself to focus, pulling at his human side because he has to know -

“I’m okay,” Grantaire says, over and over into his fur. “I’m okay, I’m fine, I’ve got you, we’re gonna be okay.”

“Do you want me to stay?” asks Feuilly, somewhere behind.

He’s human enough to know they need to talk about this, he saved fourteen lives, there should be a debrief. Combeferre will want to yell at him until he starts healing, he has to call home and tell them why he wasn’t in the howl last night. He has to figure out how to leak this to the press and how they can ensure the coverage will be in favour -


And apparently it can be that simple. Feuilly retreats into the car, Grantaire rests a hand on the back of Enjolras’s neck and they walk inside together, Enjolras letting himself switch off the worrying and the planning in favour of falling back into the wolf as Grantaire shouts their way across the lobby and doesn’t stop touching him all the way into the apartment.
He’s still talking in a soft voice as he sits down on the sofa, Enjolras leaping up after him to rest his head on Grantaire’s crossed knees and let the nonsense words wash over him, Grantaire’s hands solid and steady in his fur.

He’s okay. They’re going to be okay.

* 

He’s on paws but he can only put weight on three of them. A slash, claws digging deep through thick fur sends his current opponent running and he turns his head to find Grantaire just in time to see a second wolf make a leap.

Just in time to see Grantaire’s eyes widen and Enjolras’s legs are already tensing to spring but it’s too late, too late, too -

Enjolras wakes up human, hand instinctively clenching on the solid weight beneath his head, breathing deep to find the scent of Grantaire close, solid, alive, alive, alive.

“It’s okay,” Grantaire says, voice monotonous as though he’s repeating a mantra he’s said a thousand times. “I’m okay.”

There's a soft pressure on his head, fingers card through his hair and as he forces himself to loosen the force a little on Grantaire’s leg, his voice softens too. “You can sleep now. We’re safe, we made it.” The hand stills for a moment in his hair. “I’ve got you.”

The soft statement stirs half memories of half opened eyes, waking up in instants to change shape and fall asleep again. Enjolras considers letting himself be lulled by it again, he’s lying down, he’s warm with Grantaire’s leg under his head and Grantaire’s hand gently stroking him back into sleep.

It’s standing under a blue moon with a whole pack around you, seeing the lights of the driveway after too many months away, the first familiar street sign at the end of a long journey.

Home.

But. He doesn’t know how many times this has happened before, doesn’t know what time it is and starting to worry about that is enough to jolt him out of peaceful incoherence and back into logic, reason and the realisation that his face is literally inches from Grantaire’s crotch.

And he could just -

Except they haven’t, they aren’t like that. They’re not serious. It’s all messing around, hands and thighs and Enjolras hasn’t said anything (‘You wouldn’t have to if you don’t want, but if you want me to, I could -’), doesn’t know how to say anything.

“No, I’m-” He sits up, a blanket falling off his shoulders to pool in his lap - probably necessary. “I’m awake.” It’s sore opening his left eye, but his vision is clear so at least some of those sleeping shifts did their job. They’re on the usual sofa, there’s some kind of explosion happening in slow motion on the television but the sound is muted. The curtains are still closed, the lights dimmed, the clock on the TV - Enjolras squints - says it’s already five in the afternoon.

He looks at Grantaire, who’s changed into a clean T-shirt and jeans but hasn’t showered, judging by the splashes of red caught up by his hairline and his neck, places he might not notice in a quick wipe. Contrary to all the flashes Enjolras remembers, he looks relatively whole and unscathed, quirking a smile and lifting the hand that was just in Enjolras’s hair in a half wave. “Hi.”

Enjolras once bit Courfeyrac. He’d been at Combeferre’s for the full moon, no one had really
thought about it beyond a vague assumption that since Courfeyrac was pack, it would be fine. Combeferre had fought him off long enough for Courfeyrac to get out of the house but for a month or so after, Courf wouldn’t meet his eyes. “I trust you, and I love you, man. But seeing you like that - it’s something I’ve got to work through, okay?”

“Hi.” Enjolras’s voice sounds hoarse, hesitant. He can’t quite make himself look at Grantaire fully, he doesn’t want to know.

Grantaire reaches out a hand, as though he’s planning to touch Enjolras’s knee - the closest bit of Enjolras to him, then seems to think better of it. “If you’re planning to yell at me, you should know that Feuilly, Combeferre and Courfeyrac already have.”

Grantaire wasn’t supposed to be anywhere close to Enjolras’s wolf. It was supposed to be a thirty second in and out operation that almost definitely wouldn’t have worked but wouldn’t have put him in any danger. If he hadn’t spent all night terrified that he’d hurt Grantaire, he would - “I kind of want to hit you and ask how you could be so stupid.”

The hand reaches his knee. Enjolras stares at it for a moment, watching Grantaire’s ink-stained thumb rub against the woollen blanket and follows Grantaire’s arm up to his face. Green eyes smile back at him. “Courfeyrac’s already done that too.”

His gaze is steady, his hand is solid on Enjolras’s leg and maybe it’s going to be okay, maybe they can fix this. Enjolras summons a shaky smile. “I miss all the good parts.” He reaches out to touch Grantaire’s cheek, to reassure himself that they’re fine, they can be normal.

Grantaire turns his face away a moment before, Enjolras’s fingertips passing through air. He swallows. “I’m sorry.”

“No,” Grantaire shakes his head, catching Enjolras’s hand before he can pull it back. “It’s not -” he looks at it, then lets it drop back into Enjolras’s lap. “I need a minute.”

_We’re safe, we made it, we’re okay_, Enjolras wants to echo back to him, but he doesn’t. He’s not going to ask, he’s not going to push, he’s going to be an adult who can take a ‘no’ at face value even when it makes his stomach ache around the bruising.

That doesn’t mean he has to stay on this sofa. He wraps the blanket more firmly around his waist with his left hand, using his stronger right arm to push himself to his feet.

Bad idea. His whine comes out through gritted teeth as his left leg buckles a little and Grantaire jumps up, catching him on his bruised ribs. “Ow, ow, fuck.”

“Why are you moving? Don’t move, you need to rest.”

One minute they can’t even touch, the next Enjolras’s bare chest has Grantaire’s arm wrapped warm around it. They can’t do this, he can’t do this. He grits his teeth and takes a step forward. His right leg holds, he’s fine. “I need clothes and a shower.”

“Shower, no.” Grantaire pushes him back onto the sofa easily, one hand flat on his chest. “I can get you something to wear but you have to promise to stay sitting there until I get back.”

Enjolras winces when his back hits the cushions. His left leg is sending stabbing pains up his bruises and he can’t bring himself to fight. “Where’s my phone? I need to call Combeferre, Feuilly, debrief. I don’t even remember what happened.” Not all of it, nothing but flashes of wolves in his peripheral and the taste of blood.
Grantaire’s hand touches his shoulder, hesitant. “We all got out,” he says, firm, and when Enjolras lifts his head he meets steady green eyes and - “We all got out.”

He is beautiful, light catching in his hair, his hand solid on Enjolras’s shoulder and there’s a burning somewhere inside him that says together they saved fourteen people. Together they can tear a pack apart, rebuild the world, stand hand in hand and scream revolution.

Then Grantaire’s hand is gone, and he’s laughing the moment off, running his fingers back through his hair. “I forgot to pick up my phone when I sat down and there’s been a werewolf in my lap for the last eight hours so I’m out of the loop.” He walks across to the other sofa where Enjolras’s old clothes have been unceremoniously tossed and pulls Enjolras’s phone out of his jeans pocket, tossing it over. “I’ll grab you some clothes.”

Enjolras glances up to say, “Thanks,” but the bedroom door is already swinging shut. He has essays in text form from half the ABC, six missed calls from his mum, another four from his father and a scattering from various aunts and uncles. He listens to the most recent from his mum, just in case, but it’s not total panic. “Hi Enjolras, Combeferre called us to say you’re back at home and you’re safe but you need to go to the hospital and get checked out, shifting advances the healing process but it’s no substitute for proper medical care. I can’t believe you did something - it was very brave but so - you should’ve called us.” She sounds choked up, which really makes the guilt churn in Enjolras’s stomach. “Anyway,” putting a brave face on it, politician smile in play. “Give us a ring when you wake up, okay? Grantaire too, we’re all a bit worried.”

Grantaire drops a pile of clothes next to him and Enjolras glances up, he’s standing behind the sofa, close enough to hear. “I had four voicemails from your mum,” he says. “Not sure I want to listen to them now.” He taps his fingers on the back of the couch, Enjolras tries not to read too much into the fact that he’s walked halfway around the room to put essentially a wall between them. “Do you want a drink or something?”

Enjolras is parched, but what he wants is for Grantaire to sit down and hold his hand while he calls her back. Moral support. “No, thanks.”

“Okay,” he draws back. “I’m going to take a shower, let her know I’m okay.”

Enjolras opens his mouth to say please and stay but the words catch on the lump in his throat and then Grantaire is gone. He unfolds the pile of clothes instead, moving stiffly. Grantaire has unearthed a soft T-shirt in red cotton, a pair of trackpants that Enjolras had forgotten he even owned. They’re soft on the inside, he pulls them on and draws his knee up to his chest, holding on with one arm as he dials home.

His throat is dry. It barely rings once before there’s the click of a connection and Mum says, “Enjolras? Enjolras, honey?”

His eyes sting, his hand shaking on the receiver and he find his voice in time to say, “Hi Mum.”

* * *

Grantaire doesn’t emerge for another twenty minutes. He comes out in clean jeans, wet hair dripping over a dark T-shirt that might be Enjolras’s, it’s stretched out at the shoulders and pulling a little low at the collarbone, revealing the top of a scratch just below his neck. “Hey,” he says, when Enjolras has been staring at least thirty seconds too long.

Enjolras shakes himself, pulling his eyes away, back down to his phone. “Can we go to the Musain?”
“Huh?”

“I know the last thing you want to do is go out again,” he glances back down at Combeferre’s most recent text. “But there’s a big crowd there and I think they would appreciate being able to verify that we’re both alive.”

Grantaire shrugs, glancing down at his phone as though checking the time. “If you’re sure you can make it there.”

Enjolras levers himself upright, using the back of the sofa. This time he knows better than to try and put weight on his left leg and he manages to remain - if not ‘steady,’ at least ‘vertical.’ He uses both sofas and a side table as crutches on his way to the closet, digging through winter coats and an assortment of protest signs before finding a golf umbrella right at the back. It’s from Pride, when Courfeyrac insisted on them all matching so it’s rainbow print but it’s about the right height to function as a walking stick in his left hand and he can limp back into the main room without a furniture accompaniment. “I’ll be fine.”

Grantaire keeps a respectful distance the whole way down, turning his phone over between his fingers. In the lobby, the doorman jumps up and runs to open the front door, holding it until they’re out on the street. “What did you do to him?” Enjolras asks, turning to start limping down the pavement.

Grantaire shrugs, moving a little closer now there are other people around, his hand hovering by Enjolras’s elbow as though waiting for him to slip. “He didn’t want to let a wolf in the lobby. I may have pulled the ‘do you know who his father is’ card.”

Enjolras winces, not entirely from the pain. “I’d never do that.”

“I know.” Grantaire stands on tiptoes to look over Enjolras’s shoulder at the road. “Where’s Combeferre?”

Enjolras grits his teeth and hobbles slightly quicker. “At the Musain.”

Grantaire stops walking. “You didn’t ask him to come pick us up?” He says, his tone adding a ‘you idiot’ to every word.

“It’s a ten minute walk.” He puts slightly too much pressure on his leg and his curse comes out as a tight hiss through his teeth.

“Jesus Christ,” Grantaire catches up in two quick steps, ducking down to slide his arm easily around under Enjolras’s shoulders, so Enjolras is being half carried, his weight negligible on his feet. “You’re not invincible. Stop pretending.”

He smells fresh, soap and water almost covering up the hints of dried blood, his shirt almost high enough to cover the mark on his chest. Enjolras focuses on that, because his head is starting to spin again and if he doesn’t concentrate his mouth will start spilling out all the words tripping over themselves in his head. I feel like with you I could be.

* 

There are more people in the Musain than there have possibly ever been before. They slip in a side door to avoid immediate attention while they find Enjolras a chair, but every table seems to be taken. Enjolras picks out a few members of the ABC, half of Jehan’s pack seems to be here and there’s a crowd of strangers who all smell very human. At the bar, Feuilly is pouring two bottles of wine into two glasses while behind him the owner whose name Enjolras always forgets stares at
the crowd with something like amazement.

“Shit.” There’s low conversation in the room, thirty separate groups talking over each other, but Combeferre’s voice cuts through it all like a knife. Enjolras follows the sound, catching him as he pushes between Éponine and a blonde woman he doesn’t recognise to steady Enjolras’s umbrella-arm. “You said you were better.”

Grantaire rolls his eyes, which isn’t fair since he’s the one who should be able to verify that Enjolras is definitely better than he was this morning. “You’ll drive him home?”

“Of course.” Combeferre’s swift movement has caught the attention of the close tables and it’s spreading, faces turning to see them. Musichetta quickly jumps up from the closest table, pulling her chair out so Combeferre and Grantaire can lower Enjolras into it. Grantaire glances down at him once, his hand lingering for a moment on Enjolras’s arm, and then he’s disappearing into the crowd, moving fast enough that people’s concern falls behind him and gets turned back on Enjolras.

Combeferre frowns. “He’s okay?”

Enjolras shifts on the chair, trying to find a position that doesn’t press the wooden back into any of his bruises. “Apparently.”

He looks up. He’s sharing a table with Joly and Bossuet, Musichetta hovering at his shoulder. The rest of the ABC have already managed to gather on the surrounding tables. Enjolras’s bruises must be pretty impressive because Bahorel is nodding approvingly and Marius looks as though he might be about to burst into tears. Behind them, Éponine is standing with Montparnasse, no Grantaire. Jehan’s family and the humans are further back, in groups, taking it in turns to look over at him. If Enjolras concentrates, he can hear one question echoing between both groups. “Is that him?”

He stops concentrating. Closer to home, Combeferre sits on the floor beside his chair, his back solid against Enjolras’s better leg, like a barrier between Enjolras and the world. He’d passed on most of the news by text, but he explains again to the gathered group which is a relief. It's easier to sit and listen than to try to think of something inspirational to say.

Feuilly had been in charge of dropping Grantaire off with the group. When Grantaire didn’t emerge, he texted Enjolras just before the full moon, in case there was anything Enjolras could do to delay the hunt. After the moon rose when he still didn’t come out, panicked calls went out to Courfeyrac, Bahorel and a couple of the human members of Jehan’s pack. No one had Éponine’s number, so Bahorel had driven out to Thenardier’s and Courfeyrac took Combeferre’s car to go and wait with Feuilly outside the gates.

Courfeyrac is sitting on a bench seat now, with Jehan’s hand clasped so tight in his that both their fingers are bright white. He’s shaking, Enjolras notes. They have that in common.

“It was a long night,” Combeferre says, eyes lingering on Courfeyrac, on Feuilly in the back, finding Grantaire who has reemerged beside Éponine with a bottle of wine that’s shaking in his fingers. Enjolras looks at him, trying to will him into coming closer to no avail. His hands feel empty, resting on his knees.

At dawn, Feuilly and Courfeyrac went into the waiver room. There were two humans in there, dozing on a bench. Feuilly woke them up and told them to get out before any of the victims came out.

“They laughed,” Feuilly says from the back, his voice somehow steady. “Said ‘no one ever comes
out.’” He glances sideways, finding Grantaire and offering a small smile. “So we decked them and went in after you.”

They were scared, Combeferre explains. They didn’t want to go with Courfeyrac, particularly not when they found out he was taking them to see a werewolf. Grantaire had offered to go with them, to introduce them and to prove that it was safe. Courfeyrac took the van from Feuilly and drove everyone home where Combeferre gave them a quick overview of what their next options were. Joly, Bossuet and Musichetta arrived to set up a medical station, dispensing painkillers, band-aids and a few stitches for the couple of people who didn’t want to leave the group long enough to go to hospital.

Courfeyrac drove Grantaire home, Feuilly met Enjolras and took him back. Everyone awkwardly returned to their own homes for about half an hour before Jehan sent out a message on the group chat that just said: ‘this is weird, why aren’t we together?’ and over the next couple of hours everyone descended one by one on the Musain.

Enjolras glances down at Combeferre. “Have you talked to Henri about getting the bite for the humans?”

“My lawyers are talking to his lawyers,” Combeferre’s hand rests loose on his ankle, which offers a little reassurance even though it feels like a sham when Grantaire is still too far away. “Not many of them want it, not after what they saw. It’s a shame, if all of them took it they’d have pack majority and they could really make a difference.” He shakes his head. “I don’t blame them for saying no though, I can’t imagine seeing whatever it is they saw and then deciding to join in.”

Everyone surreptitiously turns to look at Grantaire. It’s a lot less subtle when they all do it at once. What happened in the construction site is probably the one piece of the story everyone’s missing, Enjolras can’t imagine any of the other victims are particularly interested in reliving it just to satisfy everyone’s curiosity.

Under the pressure of everyone’s quizzical gaze, Grantaire shrugs.

“I thought the plan was for you to leave before the hunt,” Bahorel prompts. “Did they not let you out?”

“I could’ve.” Grantaire’s eyes find Enjolras’s and he can’t seem to pull them away again. Enjolras isn’t even trying, waiting for something about this to make sense. “I thought - this way my scent was stronger and -” with some effort he looks away, presumably finding Bahorel in the crowd and pulling out his usual grin. “Didn’t want Enjolras to get all the credit for being the hero.”

“So you claimed credit for being an idiot,” Éponine says. She’s shaking too, between the lot of them they could start a successful line of massage chairs. But her words have the right effect, people laughing hesitantly and letting the subject drop. Grantaire touches Montparnasse’s arm - gently - pulling him aside with a low murmur that Enjolras doesn’t try to hear.

He has enough trouble focusing on the people coming up to him. Combeferre fields as best as he can, but he was right about everyone wanting to personally verify that Enjolras is as alive and in one piece as could reasonably be hoped for. Within what feels like hours but has actually only been fifteen minutes, he gets to add a headache to the long list, bending down to whisper to Combeferre. “Can we leave?”

He nods at a tall black girl walking over to them, picking her way carefully between their friends. “One more,” he says. “I’ll bring the car around.”
And then he leaves, slipping out to the side door leaving Enjolras to the mercy of a stranger. He takes a quick scent in case there’s something familiar, but beyond the imprints of the Musain on a top level, there’s nothing. She’s human, she’s a stranger, she’s not smiling when she stops still a metre out and looks down at him. “LibertéEgalité? Or, Enjolras?” Her pronunciation is off, like most people who’ve only seen it written.

LouLou_15 was in Paris, trying to save her sister from the hunt. She was probably the only family the sister had locally, it would make sense for her to be called. “You never gave me your name.”

“Louison,” she says. “My sister is Cecile, she’s -” she points towards the bar where Grantaire is sitting with a hulking blonde boy and a slim black girl with silver ribbons threaded through her dreads. “You saved her life and I -” she’s shifting her weight, nervous or at least uncomfortable. Doing something she promised she’d never do, maybe. “I owe you an apology, I didn’t listen, I didn’t believe you -”

They had put her conversation on the board in the Musain to show how unreasonable she had been. What had Éponine said? You’re the bad guys. With wolves hunting humans for sport and tricking them into service and too many more ands to count. “You don’t owe me anything. I didn’t give you any reason to trust me.”

There’s a moment of stillness, then she crouches down so she’s at his eye level. “You have now.” She holds out a hand, he takes it. “Thank you.”

They shake, she stands up. “It’s quite something you’ve got going here. I was talking to Feuilly at the bar. You were at the Claw riots last year, you did the campaign on shifted street crime. Plus you knocked Tholomyes out, and I know just about everyone was celebrating that night.”

Enjolras finds himself cracking a smile. It hurts, which figures. “Welcome to the Amis d’ABC.”

She smiles back. “The ABC, does that stand for something?”

It does, but Enjolras made it up when he was sixteen and still thought acronyms were cool and now they’ve been using it for seven years it would feel too awkward to put his hand up in a meeting and be like ‘we all know the acronym is kind of stupid, right?’ He steals a move from Grantaire’s playbook, and shrugs. “It stands for beginnings. For the start of something bigger than itself, something important.”

She doesn’t look entirely convinced, but she nods anyway. “I’d drink to that. Maybe I’ll stop by sometime.”

“I’m glad we could help your sister.”

“Me too,” she looks over at the bar again. Courfeyrac has joined the group, Grantaire has his arms wrapped tight around Courf’s shoulders. “Hey, we’re having a protest on Saturday about the treatment of claimed human workers in werewolf households. It’s supposed to be humans only, but there’ll be wolves there. You could sneak in.”

If Enjolras focuses his hearing can reach the bar. It’s probably a breach of privacy but - “You were amazing,” Grantaire says into Courfeyrac’s ear, while Courf clings onto him like a life raft.

“I’m no Combeferre,” Courfeyrac replies. “But I’ve had plenty of chances to observe one in the wild so hopefully I managed a pretty good impression.”

Louison laughs softly, touching his shoulder. “You’ve got a good one there. You’d better keep doing whatever it takes to deserve him.”
“We’re not like that.” He tears his gaze away, focusing on her breathing to shut out the conversations he shouldn’t be listening into. “I don’t want to intrude where I’m not invited,” he thinks of Floreal on the streets outside Thenardier’s, the scars on her arms and the way she looked at him. “People need safe spaces. I can - my Mum has contacts in the justice system, I can try and get you a majority human police presence.”

She nods, glancing down at him. “Okay. Thank you.”

Enjolras wants to point out that it’s basic decency, that he’s literally doing what any person in his position would do. Except all of history would prove that wrong, so he just nods back. “Any time.”

* 

Grantaire gets home not quite thirty seconds after Enjolras has given up waiting for him. He jumps when the door opens, looks up from the baileys he’s liberally pouring into his hot chocolate because sometimes things are necessary.

Grantaire goes still in the doorway, halfway through kicking off his shoes. “It’s me,” he says, as though it could have been anyone else with a key coming in at midnight without calling first.

Enjolras stops pouring baileys just before his cup overflows. “I thought you’d go with Éponine and Montparnasse.” He keeps his voice even, doesn’t mention that Grantaire disappeared and didn’t come back all night, doesn’t say ‘why did I have to tell Musichetta to tell you I was leaving and why didn’t you find me and say goodbye.’

“‘Parnasse has a motorbike, not a car.” Grantaire kicks off his second shoe, stepping forward into the light. He’s swaying on his feet, Enjolras’s shirt stretched out at the neck so the top of two scratches are visible against his collarbone. “But I was thinking, in the morning - my trial’s over.” The statement hangs in the air. It’s not a question so it doesn’t need an answer, Enjolras’s opinion is neither needed nor sought. Grantaire sits down at the breakfast bar, tracing patterns on the surface with his fingertips. “I don’t need to be here anymore.”

“You never needed to be here,” Enjolras says. You never needed to stay, you never needed to sleep with me, you never needed to volunteer for last night, but here we are. He doesn’t look up. Never has a hot chocolate been more intently stirred.

Grantaire’s shoulders slump in the corner of his eye. “I know.”

There’s silence. Enjolras wants to sit down - most of his weight is pitched onto the counter but it’s making his shoulder hurt and his legs cramp up - but the other stool is right next to Grantaire and walking over to sit on the sofa now would feel passive aggressive in a whole new league. He taps his fingers on the mug. “If something happened last night -”

“It’s not about last night,” Grantaire says in a rush, like he was waiting for the silence to be broken. “It’s -” he drags a hand slowly through his hair. “It’s complicated.”

Everything always seems to be with them. “You can move back into the spare room, no one else ever uses it, it’s not a problem. If it’s me - we can stop -” less than twelve hours ago his head was in Grantaire’s lap and he was thinking about taking the next step, fast forward to here and Grantaire is disappearing back out of his life quickly as he arrived.

“It’s not -” Grantaire starts, then stops as though realising that it really, really is. “It’s not you, I shouldn’t be here.”

His hands are shaking. Maybe they never stopped, the whole group of them are going to be shaking
all the way through life. Seems fitting, that a night like that would leave a mark. “So it’s not me,” he says, slowly, so Grantaire can contradict him at any time. “but you need to not be near me anymore.”

“Enjolras-”

Enjolras shakes his head. “No. No, can we - I can’t do this now.” It’s midnight and they’re both alive and that was supposed to be enough, that was supposed to be the fucking dream. “Leave it, just -” He slides his cup across the counter, moves his grip so he doesn’t have to stop leaning and he limps around. He goes to pick it up from the far side, but it’s already gone and Grantaire is there, offering his arm like some Victorian gentleman so Enjolras can make it to the couch. The cushions are soft and welcoming and he can’t help the soft whimper as he sinks down into them and all the weight leaves his ankle. He’s not good with pain, never has been.

“Combeferre said shifting helps,” Grantaire says. Funny, Enjolras doesn’t remember seeing them talking. Basic werewolf health care: if it hurts, shift until it stops.

“There’s a limit.” Grantaire sits gingerly on the small table, pushing a pile of paperwork and maps out of the way. He’s too far away to curl up on, to press against until the shaking stops. Which, Enjolras supposes, is probably the point.

“They gave me a drug,” he says, to the sofa cushions, to the cup of baileys in his hand, anything except Grantaire’s face. “To make me less human, I didn’t know what it would do. I didn’t know if it would make your scent less effective but I thought -” his stomach churns at the thought, the sickly sweet smell of his drink not helping as he remembers his last thoughts before Feuilly’s text arrived. “I thought at least you wouldn’t be in there. It would be strangers.” The surface of the drink is vibrating, it could spill at any moment. “Then Feuilly said you hadn’t come out and it was too late, I was already gone. It hurt, it never hurts but it was like my body was fighting it and I don’t know if that was the drug or thinking about you out there and what I might do. I -” but even in this state, survival instincts kick in to head off that sentence before it forms into something he can’t take back.

“You wouldn’t have been able to live with yourself even if it was strangers.” He says it like he knows, there’s never any doubt that Enjolras cares about a handful of humans he’s never even met the same way he cares about his own mate. “Believe me,” Enjolras can hear him smile, rueful, false. “It’s not an experience I want to repeat.”

The drugs are good. Using drugs to agitate the wolf puts them in a much more legally grey area. There’s a solution here and they have at least four weeks now to find it. “We’ll stop them before next time.”

“Tomasz is going to challenge for leadership,” Grantaire says, as though toppling an alpha is something that could happen every day. “That was always his plan, if he survived.”

“To-mawsh?” Enjolras asks, looking up. It doesn’t matter. Grantaire’s looking at his own hands anyway.

Grantaire shrugs. “Big Polish guy, you might have seen him. Don’t ask me how he spells it, I have no idea. He was asking Montparnasse about how a challenge works.”

Enjolras nods, remembering Grantaire taking Montparnasse away into the shadows and how Grantaire wants to move out but Montparnasse only has a motorbike - “What were you asking Montparnasse about?”
Grantaire kicks a foot lightly against Enjolras’s least-injured calf. “Other things.”

It’s past midnight. Grantaire hasn’t spent all day sleeping, Enjolras still feels like he could sleep for another week and yet - if Grantaire leaves in the morning, he can’t stop himself wanting to draw tonight out. “You said he ran an organisation trying to convince humans to join werewolf bonds.” He lets the statement hang, hoping Grantaire picks up on the inherent question.

“Yeah, Ep and I joined it back when we were young and idealist.” His foot is still touching Enjolras’s leg. It’s not much, but it’s enough to hang onto. “He kind of fell in love with her. Like, death-defying, went behind his pack’s back to tell her what was going on and that she should get out kind of love.”

Enjolras’s eyes flick up to Grantaire’s face, looking for some trace of a lie or a disassembly, something to back up how Enjolras’s chest aches when he sees Montparnasse with Grantaire. No sign. “That’s a lot,” he says.

Grantaire smiles reminiscently. “Not enough for her. She called bullshit, said he couldn’t feel bad enough to get her out and leave everyone else to the wolves.” He shrugs. “So he did it. Left his pack, shattered the group. I think he whistleblowed loud enough that every farm in Paris had to close down for a while.”

“And now they’re together?”

Grantaire considers. “I don’t think so. She’s normally more possessive when she’s with someone. She doesn’t actively chase him out of the bar with a hot poker anymore though, so I think he’s making progress. He got out of the people business, went - I would say went straight, but I think he’s an art thief now which I suppose is technically more illegal.”

It takes Enjolras a moment to realise the possible implications. “Art thief? Has he ever made you -”

“I forged a Monet once,” Grantaire says. “But I don’t think anyone caught it. I mean, it’s still hanging in the Louvre.” Enjolras is a moment away from an appalled lecture when Grantaire looks up from his hands and laughs. “Your face. No, he keeps the bar out of it. She probably just called him tonight for transport.”

Enjolras is less certain of that. Not when they’d been standing close enough to touch, when Combeferre had sat at Enjolras’s feet almost all evening, when Grantaire still has his toes against Enjolras’s leg because even when you’re leaving, even if something’s over or never started or not even like that. Sometimes you just need a Someone. “How did you get back?”

Grantaire shrugs. “Walked. I was chatting with Louison, got carried away. She’s organising a protest on Saturday, I said I’d go.”

Enjolras’s throat catches, he finds himself pulling his foot back and his hands are shaking again. “Just like that,” he says, failing to keep his voice or his hands steady. It’s lucky his drink is already cold because it’s splashing out on his knees.

Grantaire’s forehead furrows. “She asked me.”

“I’ve asked you,” Enjolras says, before he can stop himself or cover up the hurt accusation in his voice. “I’ve asked you a thousand times.”

“I - yeah,” Grantaire reaches up to push his hair back. “But you’d ask, like, children. Inanimate objects. Interesting looking rocks.” He drops his hand to his own knee, fingers twitching a foot away from Enjolras’s. “I don’t know. She asked me.”
Like it’s simple.
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Considering the boy he loves thinks he’s fearless, Enjolras has wasted a lot of time being afraid.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the long wait! Yuletide and christmas conspired to drag me under. Thanks so much to McKenzi who beta’d this aaaages ago <3

And plenty of love for Katie who was stuck with this chapter’s cliffhanger for at least a month.

Warning for on-screen major injury to main character.

He is hurting, hurting like he hasn’t hurt before. Even the hand on his head elicits nothing more than a whimper. He’s licked his wounds but his legs are shaky and everything smells like blood, his own and others. Unfamiliar.

This wasn’t supposed to happen, he knows that through the blurring in his head and the aches. This isn’t normal.

There is a wind coming in from the left so he doesn’t catch the scent of fresh blood on the right until it’s too late. Forget the wounds, forget the pain and the hand in his fur; he’s on his feet turning just as six wolves come in full sprint from the side streets. A huge male human leaps in front of the smaller girl, swinging a length of pipe into the first one but by then the rest are already in the group. Enjolras leaps, claws flashing left and right, kicking a wolf backwards bodily -

There’s a cry and his whole body twists to see Grantaire flat on his back, a length of pipe skidding out of his hands and a wolf on top of him. He’s more than a full leap away, there is a wolf on Enjolras’s back, taking advantage of his distraction to get claws deep into his shoulder. There’s no time, he’s not going to make it, the wolf is shaking his shoulder and shouting… a voice is shouting.

“Enjolras!”

He’s awake. His pulse is rocketing a mile a minute, there’s something soft being crushed beneath his fingers. He opens human eyes - blackness - he opens wolf eyes, there’s a shape in the grey and the smell of blood is fading into memory replaced by wine and pack and his own sweat drying out on the bed clothes.

He’s not a wolf. He has fingers and toes. It’s not the full moon, it’s the night after and he didn’t shift because he was tired. Because everything hurt. He is in his own bed and he lay down alone but now Grantaire is leaning over him and his hand is slowly being crushed in Enjolras’s death grip.
The light goes on. Enjolras blinks his eyes back to human and Grantaire settles back into colour, dark skin and stubble. “You were howling,” he says.

First instinct of a wolf in panic: call the pack. Enjolras looks down at his hand, knuckles turning white over Grantaire’s fingers. He tries to tell his hand to stop, but he can’t seem to make himself ease the grip let alone release. “It was a nightmare, I’m fine.” Grantaire doesn’t want to be in here with him, Grantaire didn’t ask to be woken up in the middle of the night and then lose all use of his hand, Grantaire is leaving.

The urge to squeeze tighter is strong. He lets go.

Grantaire pulls his hand back, stretching out his fingers carefully. “Thank you.” He smiles, but he doesn’t mean it. His other hand is resting on the bed sheets where it fell off Enjolras’s shoulder.

Enjolras focuses on the proximity of that hand, the tiny amount of warmth he can feel across the distance between it and his arm. He focuses on all the smells coming off Grantaire’s skin, listens to the steady thump of Grantaire’s heartbeat until his own breathing slows to match.

He’s okay. Grantaire’s alive, Grantaire’s okay and all Enjolras needs is a bit more time to convince his wolf that Grantaire is still okay when he’s not immediately present. He goes to sit up, trying not to grimace too much as the wounds on his ankles rub against the mattress and he has to put all his weight on his cut-up right shoulder to avoid the bruises down his left side.

The sheet falls down to his waist, letting the bedside light spill right over those particular bruises. It’s an impressive mottle of black, purple and blue all mixed up and fading in and out of each other.

Grantaire’s breath catches, and he pulls his hand back as though he’s worried about touching it. Enjolras bites down on the urge to whine, to point out that he couldn’t hurt anything if he tried everything is better when he’s there. Grantaire is leaving.

It’s good. It’s healthy. Enjolras should never have brought him home.

Grantaire’s hand returns, dropping a sandwich bag containing a handful of small white pills in Enjolras’s lap. “Painkillers,” Grantaire says, before Enjolras’s mind can process beyond Grantaire having an unmarked bag of drugs. “From Musichetta.”

That makes a little more sense, although still doesn’t explain why Grantaire is carrying them in his hoodie. “Why do you have them?”

“For -” his hand moves momentarily towards his collar, then hesitates. “Doesn’t matter.”

He’s changed from the T-shirt he was wearing earlier, in this one the scratches are hardly visible - the very ends poking up only noticeable at all if you’re paying close attention. “Show me.”

Grantaire’s mouth twists, fingers still hovering. “You’re not allowed to freak out.”

That is not even close to reassuring. “I won’t,” Enjolras says. “I’ll be calm, promise.”

“No, yeah, that’s what I tell all my friends about you. Oh, that’s Enjolras, he’s like the king of calm.” He throws it like a challenge, but then reaches up to pull on his collar anyway, tugging the fabric down to reveal four red lines cutting from his collarbone down his chest and stopping right over his heart.

Enjolras can’t freak out. It’s not freaking out when you can’t even breathe and you can’t look away and your eyes catch on stitches at the bottom of three of them - Grantaire was cut deep enough for
stitches and Enjolras didn’t even know. Enjolras let himself be told he was fine. “When did you get them?”

Grantaire releases his T-shirt, which doesn’t help because the cuts are permanently imprinted on Enjolras’s brain. “Musichetta put them in. Feuilly said you kept saying my name so I figured I should get… home.”

Enjolras sits up further, reaching out to touch his hand to Grantaire’s chest. He can feel the marks, warm and rough, and below them Grantaire’s heartbeat. He let this happen, he should have been quicker, should have fought harder, shouldn’t have let Grantaire get anywhere near.

Grantaire moves back half an inch, and Enjolras obediently lets his hand fall. “How many have you taken?”

He shrugs. “I don’t have at least two broken ribs.” He reaches out a hand slowly to Enjolras’s bruise. His fingers barely touch, skimming the surface, gently. “You should go to hospital.”

“I’m not your responsibility.” The words remind him of something, but it takes a moment to place them. Grantaire had said that to him, way back when. He smiles weakly. “Or your problem.”

Grantaire isn’t smiling. He shakes his head at his own words echoed back to him. “I can stay for a few days. Until you’re better.”

Enjolras should object, should say he doesn’t need a carer and he can look after himself. Even in his own head, it rings false. He catches Grantaire’s hand instead, pulling it away from his side and lacing their fingers together, looking at the way they interlock, dark and white. “It was simple,” he finds himself saying, helplessly. “We could have kept that.”

Grantaire closes his eyes for a moment, then, faster than Enjolras can follow, he lifts their hands and his lips brush the back of Enjolras’s knuckles. “You don’t want simple.” He opens his fingers and Enjolras’s hand drops back into his lap, alone again. “I’ll be next door, if you need me.”

He’s up and moving, leaving Enjolras sitting with a bag of painkillers and an ache deep down where they’ll never reach. I need you.

*

All Enjolras can say is that it’s lucky the exam is easy. Outline the differences in contract law between solus humans who have been claimed by lycanthropic humans and solus humans who have not. Enjolras has written numerous articles which could have had that as a byline, although at least he’d gone for punchier titles, and he could write the essay in his sleep. Fortunate, since the majority of his focus is not in the lecture hall trying to save his one chance at graduating but a kilometer from the front door where Grantaire is waving a banner and chanting not three days after being the target of an attack by a whole pack of werewolves.

Professor Rosier had taken one look at Enjolras - most of the scabs are covered by a hoodie but his black eye has spread into an impressive phantom-of-the-opera-mask across half of his face - and offered to let him move his resit to a different date. He refused. If he’s honest, he could use the distraction. His e-tag is on a chain around his neck and every few seconds he considers just shifting forms and running down there. It’s practically next door, he could literally be there in seconds.

Differences in contract law. There’s a niche argument that should get him some points for pointing out that claimed humans are more likely to have access to pack legal services and the money for a lawyer to check documentation before it’s signed and in that way solus humans have the
advantage. Immediately countered, of course, by the presiding theme of the essay that the fact that the lycanthrope who performed the claim has right of veto over any contract the solus signs. It makes it harder for claimed humans to get work outside of their pack - no one’s going to trust an employment contract that a third party can cancel at any time.

Grantaire didn’t have to worry about signing the full moon waiver because he knew if Valance tried to turn it on him and insist on Grantaire joining the pack in spite of his immunity, Enjolras could step in and call it off. Assuming they both survived, which, check. Valance hasn’t been out chasing them down though, Combeferre’s giving him enough problems with Tomasz and Cecile.

Enjolras should be at the protest. Or, not part of it because safe spaces and humans only. Bahorel and Courfeyrac are both there to represent the ABC, but Enjolras could be with Combeferre who got authorised to be the lycanthrope representative on the human task force set up for the occasion.

“Enjolras,” Rosier says from the front of the room. “Focus, please.”

How long has he been staring out the window? He taps his pen on the page, reading over the last line. He’s already filled two pages but there’s a subtler point to be made about biases in the legal system towards those with pack ties and those without that he’s not sure is relevant enough to the question but is definitely an issue in society as a whole. This is a law exam, not a news article. He’s supposed to be reporting and analysing facts, not convincing Rosier about the injustices faced by a majority force in the population.

She’s human, she probably knows.

A bonded human could request that the bond be broken before entering into contract negotiations, putting them in a position of more control but the recovery time from breaking the bond would generally be several weeks, possibly resulting in the contract offer being rescinded. Grantaire couldn’t get a job with a pack because they regarded him as property even though only his mother had been claimed, that’s society rather than law though, so can he include it? Will he look for a job with a pack once he’s moved out? Enjolras said once that he’d break the bond if Grantaire wanted it, but he’s not sure how committed he’s capable of being to that promise.

The room is soundproof, however hard he focuses he can’t get any noise from the protest outside. He writes three paragraphs of drivel, cites a case from the 50s in which a contract was declared void because it was signed on the night of the full moon and there might have been some non-human influence. *It would be nice to think we’re more progressive now,* he writes, *but watching the news sometimes you think maybe not.*

*Bang.*

A sound like a car backfiring and he feels it like a punch to the gut, like a force slamming into the back of his head, pushing into the space and -

*Bang.*

A gunshot, loud enough to be deafening in a confined space and his ears are still ringing, his head filled to bursting, the floor tiles are solid beneath him and a woman is screaming his name at the same time as the pressure taking up so much more space than it should in the part of his head that used to hold Grantaire says, *Enjolras?*

He’s moving. He’s on paws almost before he’s upright, shaking off his clothes already halfway out the door. People scatter, people are screaming, Grantaire is too far away, Grantaire is here.
Another gunshot. Outside the test room, he hears it twice: the deafening bang from the back of his head followed by the quieter crack through wolf ears. The presence of Grantaire is like an anchor, keeping his mind human, radiating confusion as he pokes further towards Enjolras’s consciousness. Grantaire, Enjolras throws towards him.

The ball of confusion perks up. Are we a wolf?

A human trips in her haste to get out of their way, Enjolras leaps over her, paws skidding on cheap tiles and darts through the front doors before they can swing closed. His lungs are burning, there’s pain every time his back paws hit the ground and he doesn’t care. It hardly registers.

Curiosity is tendrilling out from Grantaire now, investigating the space in Enjolras’s mind where he’s found himself and Enjolras can feel him starting to put it together, starting to realise what he’s done. It’s a distraction, sending Enjolras’s paws skidding on the gravel and almost making him trip, but he can’t force Grantaire back. He won’t...

*I thought we couldn’t do this.* Grantaire still doesn’t sound worried, just curious. But he wouldn’t know, he’d have no reason to know.

There are two situations in which a bonded human can enter the shared consciousness of their wolf and by extension the pack. The first is when the wolf invites them in to break the bond, bring their entire mind into one place and then essentially slam dunk it right back in it’s entirety. Horrible pain, high chance of brain damage.

The second… Enjolras isn’t even considering, isn’t letting the thought enter his head, enter their head.

He’s reached the protest where people are already scattering, there are screams and shouts that only get louder when he leaps into their midst and runs through the crowd. One day he will feel bad about that, something about safe spaces and trauma buzzing at the back of his mind, but right now he follows the smell of pack, of Louison, of gunpowder and blood.

There is a second way a bonded human can force their way into their wolf’s head. And Enjolras couldn’t blame Grantaire for a moment because even with his side throbbing and his back foot threatening to give way there’s less pain in Enjolras’s head right now than in Grantaire’s because that second reason -

Grantaire is there, present, tracking Enjolras’s thoughts and any moment he’s going to see it, any moment he will know (there’s a second way, a significant way, a reason the worst wolves will go through the effort to break a bond rather than simply making a person disappear) and Grantaire is moments from it, Enjolras can’t keep his mind off it. Every determined promise to think of something else just pushes the revelation that much closer.

He needs something big, something distracting.

There is a feeling that started in his stomach and has spread out everywhere else, a feeling so big he’s not sure how he’s been containing it but Grantaire is present, he’s here, right now he’s still here and Enjolras pulls the feeling out from every nook and cranny, folds it up into a ball and throws it into the part of his mind where Grantaire is spreading, spreading.

The part of his consciousness that is Grantaire catches the explosion of emotions like a gift, peeling it apart like a flower. The flash of Grantaire’s eyes when he laughs, the way Enjolras’s most impassioned speeches catch in his throat when Grantaire winks, the thousand drawings saved from crumpled up balls of paper, tossed on the top of the trash, painstakingly unfolded and flattened and
piled up in Enjolras’s bedside drawer.

The way Enjolras’s whole body went warm when Grantaire kissed him.

Enjolras skids to a halt. Grantaire is lying on the ground, a sign beside his head, his fingers open beside it. Louison, Bahorel, Courfeyrac are there, shouting and screaming things that are all just background noise. Grantaire’s eyes are open, glazed green staring up at the sky and the smell of blood is strong enough to be overwhelming.

There is blood on his shoulder, his side, at the top of his chest opposite his heart, pools of blood still spreading out.

There are two ways a human can break into a wolf’s consciousness.

Enjolras tilts his head back and howls. Immediately he can feel pack dropping in beside him, his shift must have been enough to force half the family into the change, through their eyes he can see business meetings, afternoon tea, a tennis court, their howls settling in alongside his to create their call, their song.

There’s a beat, that’s new. Enjolras can feel it twisted up in his voice like a heartbeat, like a drum, a pulse giving a whole new twist to the familiarity and it takes him a moment to realise where he’s coming from.

*That’s it,* Grantaire says, it’s on the beat or maybe it’s that he is the beat. *That’s the song.* He’s still holding Enjolras’s feelings as though the moment he stops focusing on them, the delicate threads will shatter like a vase. The first time he walked into the Musain is there, the way the raindrops caught in his hair and his fingers were never still. The first night Enjolras saw him sleeping on the sofa, the surprise that his hair was soft as Enjolras brushed it off his face and pulled the blanket up to cover him.

It’s bigger than Enjolras ever imagined it would be, and Grantaire is twisted up in every strand. Night after night of watching Grantaire drop a last kiss on his shoulder then stand up, watching him walk away with no more thought than a wave. *You never told me,* Grantaire says, his whole presence lost in wonder.

Considering the boy he loves thinks he’s fearless, Enjolras has wasted a lot of time being afraid.

He pulls back into the howl, he doesn’t need to scream it anymore, his senses are heightened and his head is so *full* that his mother is already shutting down most of the pack channels. He can feel her, as though she’s right beside him; Combeferre, who is right beside him; and Grantaire who is somewhere closer, somewhere more, lost in three months of Enjolras being an idiot without realising that it’s too late.

*You need to tell me what to do,* Enjolras begs someone, anyone.

*There’s an ambulance coming,* Combeferre is in immediately. *Bahorel’s doing what he can but -*

Enjolras gets the message, he pushes for a moment and he’s human, kneeling at Grantaire’s side. In colour, everything is red. Someone drapes a coat over his shoulders, Bahorel shoves a cloth at him and he’s pressing it against Grantaire’s side trying to keep pressure while his hand is stained red.

There are two ways a human can break into a wolf’s consciousness: if the bond is being broken, or if -
He finds another well of memories somewhere, of Grantaire sleeping on the couch, the way his chest ached when he realised. The thought: ‘if I can’t save the whole world, I can make things better for this person, this one,’ and that hadn’t even worked. The breathless impossible disbelief of Grantaire kissing him, the number of times he told himself that it was worth the heartbreak of it not meaning anything just to have this.

Grantaire’s consciousness is slow and sleepy, following the threads of images and there’s a simple kind of joy radiating out that Enjolras clings on to, a single bright spark in a sea of everything he knows.

*Hey,* Grantaire says, deep in the middle of their combined minds where there are no more lies and no more secrets. *Love you too.*

*Enjolras,* his mother pulls him sharply back into pack headspace. Focus. There’s blood spilling up between his fingers. She’s using her deal-with-crisis voice, calmly authoritative, giving instructions that aren’t quite orders but aren’t open to be disobeyed. *The ambulance is two minutes out, Combeferre is clearing a path, keep pressure on the wounds.*

Enjolras pushes harder. Bahorel has one hand on Grantaire’s chest, one on his shoulder, his face strained. He’s speaking in a low voice, encouragement or reassurance, Enjolras doesn’t know, his voice feels too far away to even attempt and Grantaire is reaching the edges of all the distractions he can offer with his ears full of static and blood on his hands.

*Focus.* She has a way of cutting through things, letting him keep Grantaire at the back of his mind where he can’t think about it, can’t admit anything. *You have to break the bond.*

What.

His mind is hazy, he misheard, he’s in a state of shock, there is a hole under his fingers and just beside his hands is a white scar which was supposed to be a promise. *No, I can’t - *

‘I don’t want to hurt him,’ is his first, ridiculous thought because Grantaire has three fucking holes in his chest and he can’t make it worse but he doesn’t have any idea of the first steps to make it better. He has no more distractions, Grantaire is present in this moment, they are one, there are two ways a human can break into a wolf’s consciousness: if the bond is being broken, or if -

- or if the human is about to die.

*Listen to me.* He can picture her, hair pulled back hands steady on his shoulders looking directly into his eyes. Crisis management, don’t let anyone panic, explain, use small words. *The ambulance is coming, you have done everything you can do for him but you have to get out or he’ll drag you down with him. You’re not at full strength, if he dies while you’re this close you might not survive it.*

*Oh,* Grantaire is slow, detached. It sounds like the thousand times he’s walked up behind Enjolras, rested his head on Enjolras’s shoulder to read about atrocities a million miles away. His presence grows faint for a moment, as though he’s reaching out to see how his own body feels, and then it’s back almost immediately. *I’m going to die?*

And Enjolras - Enjolras threw himself bodily between Grantaire and a whole pack of drugged werewolves. Enjolras would have thrown himself between Grantaire and all three bullets if he’d been a little closer, if he’d suspected for a moment, because what’s the point in changing the world if you don’t love the people in it.
No, he thinks at Grantaire, at both of them. Not if I can help it.

Grantaire laughs and Enjolras can feel it running through his body like a thousand butterflies. 

*Enjolras vs. death, a battle for the ages.* It’s the same stupid shit he always says but he’s saying it with the same tone he used to say *love you too* and they’ve both been blind if they never saw it. This is the most tentative hope of Enjolras’s life and he’s not… he won’t give up on that.

He focuses on Mum, pinning her down. *There’s something else I can do, there has to be.*

In this strange world inside his head, everything is happening at the speed of thought. Grantaire is pressed up beside him, desperate and hurting and still occasionally turning to look at one of Enjolras’s memories of him like the whole world is turning upside down a little further with each. It feels like they can live years between one heartbeat and the next.

But they’re running out of heartbeats. *Maman!* he steals Grantaire’s strength to push harder, further into her mind than he should be but there’s an answer somewhere, there has to be an answer.

She’s desperate, he can feel her running even though she’s hundreds of kilometers away. He can feel her love, her frustration, the undercurrent of something hidden. *You need to break the bond.*

Enjolras’s eyes are stinging but he doesn’t know if they’re her tears or his. *There’s no point in the bond if I can’t save him!* Their whole society is predicated on the idea that wolves are quicker, stronger. How is any of that true if they can’t even save one human, just one. *Why would a wolf ever need to claim a human if not to protect them?*

*Enjolras,* she’s crying. He can feel it. Through her he’s seeing his whole life, stumbling on four uneven puppy legs, running home from school waving a sports day trophy up high, leading his first hunt through the forest. *You can’t. People die doing this, werewolves die. He’s not strong enough.*

And Enjolras sees it, through a gap in the tears. If Grantaire can heal up a little, like any werewolf could with a shift, he would make it to the hospital. But Grantaire’s immune, Grantaire can’t turn into a wolf, can’t turn into anything -

Enjolras can. Enjolras can, and if he can enter Grantaire’s mind and drag Grantaire along with him. They don’t have to go all the way, just enough that his body starts changing and then Grantaire can pull them back -

*Fuck,* Grantaire’s whole presence shrinks back, tugging both of them away from the answers. He almost retreats to his own body but there’s a red band of pain like a barrier.

*He would have to be so strong to fight it,* Mum says, apologetic but resolute. It’s impossible, there’s no way. *Even to start in the first place would take an understanding of wolves that hardly any humans possess and you’re both injured. You can’t -*

And he sees just behind that thought: if they start the shift and can’t pull it back Grantaire’s body will tear itself apart with both of them inside. Grantaire sees it every bit as clearly as Enjolras, Enjolras can feel the fear running through every thread of him where it’s tangled up into a them. *Don’t,* Grantaire starts.

But it’s a chance.

*No,* Grantaire says, realising what Enjolras is going to do at the exact moment he decides. *You’ll just be dying with me, she’s right I’m not strong enough.* A press of his mind closer, flashes of a life on the streets, pouring cheap wine into cracked glasses, face buried into sofa cushions as a blanket falls onto the floor. *It’s not worth it.*
Enjolras closes his eyes, blocking out Grantaire’s body, the blood flowing too fast over his hands. He focuses his mind, shutting out the echoes of the rest of the pack, the howls holding them together until there’s a single voice left in his head. *Please, please don’t do this.*

Then Mum fades too and it’s the two of them, close enough together to be one of them.

*Pack means no one has to die alone,* he says, reaching out with his mind, searching for a way to visualise their connection and pull Grantaire closer.

And in the end, it’s as simple as taking his hand.
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

"It’s okay,” he says to the weight of Grantaire around him. “It’s because I’m here, with you.”

Chapter Notes

I feel like I open all of these with sorry for the delay but, yeah. Sorry. For the delay. I definitely wasn’t planning on leaving you all with that ending for so long, but life as always conspired against me. Thanks to my beta McKenzi who is amazing. Thanks to Katie for keeping me at least vaguely on track in between feelings about aliens.

Thanks for all you comments & kudos, they really mean a lot to me <3

There’s pain. So strong that for a moment it blanks out everything else and Enjolras wants to scream but he has no mouth, he has no voice, he is an imprint twisted in and around Grantaire but Grantaire’s body is not his to control.

Above them, Enjolras’s body collapses and he feels Grantaire’s surge of panic. It’s that, more than anything else that calms him. On top of the wave of pain, everything is suddenly simple. He can’t scream, he can’t fight, all he can do is be here, now. Together. It’s okay, he says to the weight of Grantaire around him. It’s because I’m here, with you.

There’s a moment of stillness, then a familiar bitter laugh. Here with me, dying.

They are. It’s a lot clearer in Grantaire’s body where the bullet wounds don’t feel like punches anymore and there’s insides soaking across outsides where the pressure’s been released on their hip. We can fight this, Enjolras says, but it’s harder to believe from this angle. You have to shift.

Inside Grantaire, the laugh echoes off every regret and disappointment, the sound like the ringing of hollow bells. You don’t get it, do you? I have no idea what that means, no fucking clue.

It’s true. Grantaire is… solid, in a way Enjolras has never experienced, can’t even wrap his head around. He collects his thoughts to explain the process but it’s like trying to explain how to fall asleep, it’s not something he even thinks about. There’s a system, there must be, there’s always a system but where to start and Grantaire is laughing again but inside their head it’s more like a sob. I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry.

Enjolras bites back on his own growing despair, uses every mental block known to a teenage boy trying to hide all evidence of puberty from wolf parents, forces his upper level, easiest to read thoughts to stay calm. Grantaire doesn’t know how to change, Enjolras can’t explain it but in this position where they’re closer than touch, closer than thought he doesn’t need to rely on anything as inefficient as words.
Like this, he says, and lets a wave of memories flood through them. The first change he can remember specifically, three and a half years old at Aunty Flo’s when they were allowed to shift in clothes for the first time.

Six years old, going to a sleepover with unfamiliar scents and smells, the taste of another wolf’s blood when he bit their ankle and had to be separated. Fifteen, getting his first ident chip and following Dad into the city. Eighteen, driving home at fifty over the limit, feeling the change pull the voice from his throat, his hands shaking on the wheel, learning that he could hold it down an extra five minutes to get over the boundary line and home. The first time he shifted alone, in his apartment, the wolf scratching at the walls and howling all night long. The first time he shifted with Combeferre, everything falling into place and feeling at peace for the first time on four paws.

Grantaire’s body shakes. There’s an itching under his skin, strongest around the three wounds, so fierce he almost manages to move his arm to scratch it. Enjolras -

Enjolras holds him still best he can and keeps pushing. So many changes blur into each other. Shifting outside the mansion with his pack, shifting in the city with Combeferre, that time he went to Cosette’s for a mid-month hunt and whatever they ate for dinner made him so nauseous he only got halfway to wolf before having to run to the bathroom and throw up. Taking a little blue pill and shifting like his skin was tearing itself apart, the same feeling that’s running through Grantaire’s body now as every cell is vibrating, searching for a new shape.

A howl tears itself out of Grantaire’s human throat, hoarse and unwilling but it’s enough to throw them back into the packmind, bring other howls in alongside them and Mum is there, Dad is there, Combeferre, Florence, a puppy whose name Enjolras can never remember. There are shifts in locked rooms, shifts in forests, shifts in cradles and the blood flow stills.

There’s a moment of calm. Their body is itching, aching, screaming and healing but their mind is caught in a single eternal memory of that one second between two shapes when all you can say is you’re both. I always thought they would be… different, Grantaire says softly. The wolf, the human. But there’s just you.

Enjolras wants to kiss him. For being here, for saying it, for understanding that it’s the biggest thing in the world and at the same time, it’s nothing at all. I love you.

Somewhere in this place that isn’t a place, there’s a smile.

Then it all goes to hell.

It feels like a lance driving into them, sharper and deeper than anything that came before and Grantaire’s voice is torn away, back down into where his mind is tearing itself apart as his body gets halfway to changing and discovers there’s nothing to shift into. All conscious thought falls beyond Enjolras’s reach, even the howls of his own pack are distant, through a darkness thicker than night. Grantaire! he shouts, but his thoughts are swallowed up by the cloud before they can be heard. Grantaire, you have to stop!

When he was nineteen and late for an exam, shifting in the hallway and sprinting halfway across Paris in five -

No, Enjolras shouts at himself. It’s impossible, trying not to think about something but that very act holds it right in the front of his mind. Shifting in the forest to smell his way home, shifting on holiday to the unfamiliar salt smell of the sea. What do I do? Everywhere he turns he can feel pack members shifting, already in wolf form, howling.
You can guide him, Mum’s voice comes quick, sharp. The other voices are dropping out, or being cut off. He has to remember human, you can show him your memories like before but he has to take over. He has to finish on his own, if he can’t find his own way back - she doesn’t finish, but in the moment before her presence fades with the rest of the pack he can feel her sorrow.

He can’t close his eyes, can’t take a deep breath but he collects himself as best he can, centring himself in the cloud and pushing through back to his memories trying to focus on human. Human. He pulls his mind away from the mansion, away from all thoughts of the pack and into Paris. Paris with all it’s unfamiliar smells and places, and people.

When they first met, Feuilly was seventeen. He sat three rows away from Enjolras in Intro to Law and kept a tally Bullshit meter on the edge of his notes. His fingers smelt of charcoal and he stood Enjolras up three times in the same coffee shop before Combeferre got between them to explain that Enjolras wasn’t hitting on him and wasn’t trying to be insensitive.

Grantaire’s face burns, nostrils flaring for the scent of charcoal, eyes straining like they can pick up a tiny score of lines halfway across a room. No, Enjolras pushes it away, shuts off the thoughts. He tries to visualise the Musain, but sees Combeferre looking back at him, recognises hackles in the line of his shoulders and a tail swishing back and forth behind him in the glint in his eyes.

When is he at his most human? The ABC doesn’t have the best human presence, but it has some and that counts for something.

They met Courfeyrac in their third year of college. It was strange, seeing Combeferre with a stranger hanging off his back, stranger still the way their scents were already starting to mingle. He wasn’t pack yet, but he was something more. Courfeyrac isn’t immune, there’s a trace of the wolf he could be in the bright smile of a sunshine day, the way he leaps on someone’s back without looking for a welcome -

Human. Enjolras pushes through the blackness, hunting for some sign of Grantaire. He sends -fragments, shadows. The first day Grantaire came into the musain, the shadows under his eyes, the smell of wine and gutters. No. He tries to remember how it felt the first instant of entering Grantaire’s body, that feeling of solidity, a weight to him that Enjolras could never replicate, can’t even visualise. You have to help me, he throws out, but all that comes back are echoes. Help... help... he-he-help.

Days with no moon, days when his skin is still and the whole world seems to exist behind a cloud with no sensation. Breathing in through his nose and only getting flickers, the sensation for twelve hours that he’s missing a limb. Loss of something isn’t the same as absence, everything comes back to it. There’s not the wolf and the person, there’s just Enjolras in every memory, in every thought. This is who I am! Screaming at the inside of Grantaire’s head where no one can hear him anyway.

Am-am a-a-am.

The echoes bring a memory with them, standing in the mansion looking out over the forest. Behind him, dum-dum da-da-dum. Right in the middle of the pack, with wolves all around him, he pushes the thought away. Focuses on Grantaire, on the way his skin looks darker when it touches Enjolras’s. His hair constantly adding an extra two inches to his height so that when he comes out of the shower for a moment he seems unnaturally small like Enjolras could drag him back to the den and keep him there, keep him safe.

Because he’s so good at keeping Grantaire safe.
There’s still nothing coming from the vast silence of Grantaire around him. He can’t even feel the body anymore, he wonders if Grantaire can or if they’re both cut off, adrift, waiting for something that isn’t going to come. *You have to wake up, you have to remember, this isn’t done!*

*Done-dun da-da-dum.*

He’s standing in the music room in the west wing. Everything’s taller, or he’s shorter, it’s hard to say. The dust sheets aren’t up, the bookshelves and ornate lamps are standing out polished and shiny. Behind the grand piano, Grandmere is swaying in time to her own music, eyes closed and smiling at something only she can see. Out of the window, the woods spread out into the distance. Faintly, the wind carries the sound of howls and his chest burns with the desire to join them, to run out of the room and down the hallways onto all fours and *go.*

*No,* Enjolras thinks, but it’s like trying to catch water from a broken pipe, he can’t put it back, can’t stop it.

*Dum-dum da-da-dum,* he’s supposed to be talking. Everyone insisting that she’s lonely and of course it falls to Enjolras to entertain her - old enough to be polite but still young enough that he can be bossed around. She doesn’t need entertaining, she’s happy as anyone with her piano and her thoughts. Enjolras closes his eyes, pulling his senses away from the woods before the temptation becomes too strong, focuses on the music, tries to see whatever it is she’s seeing.

“You shouldn’t let them boss you around like this,” says a stranger.

Enjolras opens his eyes. He’s still in a room, still wood panelled, still looking out a window over a long forest. But the bookshelf has been replaced by a painting, something abstract that might be claws. The walls are darker and the carpet has changed from a rich red to a royal blue.

“I don’t mind.” Enjolras turns to the voice. Grantaire is sitting at a black upright piano, fingers moving easily across the keys *dum-dum da-da-dum.*

“Grantaire!” the cry comes out before Enjolras can stop himself and the scene breaks. For a moment he sees Grandmere again then it’s back to darkness and shadows and silence and echoing *aire, aire, aire.*

No. No. *NO.* Enjolras wants to scream, can’t. Wants to cry, can’t. There isn’t time but for a moment they were close, for a moment there was something. *R?* he calls back, mimicking his own echo.

*Aire, Aire, Aire.*

A single stylised letter at the bottom of a sketch framed in gold and up in the atrium of the mansion. Watching the scroll unrolled for the first time, Mum’s fingers hovering over Grantaire’s artwork. When she hugged him, and he felt like pack properly for the first time and Enjolras could stop worrying, could stop looking for the bond in every sniff, stop trying to reassure himself.

And just like before the scene changes, the atrium of the mansion melting into the upstairs of Thenardier’s, Éponine and Grantaire sitting side by side on one of the beds. Her head is resting on his shoulder, easy and familiar. “She seems happy,” Grantaire says. “I guess he was a good man.”

Éponine laughs, bitter as cigarette smoke. “What kind of good man shows up in a house like mine, sees what he saw and rescues one child? What kind of *good man* rescues a little girl but leaves her sister and the baby to rot there.” Her hands clasp in her lap, knuckles and fingers turning white. “Wolves look after wolves, R. That’s all any of them care about and we are *not* like them.”

*Grantaire?* Enjolras asks again, softer this time. The scene is fading, the darkness around him not
offering up any clues to replace it. And nothing makes any sense, Enjolras has tried focusing on every human he knows but the only response came when he was thinking of his pack, his house which has werewolves in every corner.

His home, which is the one place where he can stop searching every sniff for a hint of a threat. His home, surrounded by his pack, where he’s safe and he’s with family and even when he wants to run, he doesn’t need to.

He centres himself, lets the image fade around him and starts again. He remembers being curled up at the bottom of Combeferre’s bed, and it doesn’t matter what shape he was in, he was home. He could stop listening, stop sniffing, stop searching. It’s not about being human, it’s about being settled into one shape, forgetting for a moment that he’s anything more.

He feels something on the back of his neck, a laugh like Grantaire’s, the moon hovering before them. He spins to see, which breaks the image but there’s a pattern here, there’s a trick.

The first time he went home after three months in Paris, walking through the front door and wanting to collapse then and there and roll on the carpet everything was so familiar. Practically falling into Dad’s arms, never realising how much he missed them until moments like this.

“Grantaire?” Enjolras turns around and it’s the black woman from Grantaire’s memory of playing the piano. A middle aged woman, braids pulled up in a bright red scarf, a wide bright smile that dies on her face as she looks at something just over Enjolras’s shoulder. “What happened?”

Enjolras starts to spin, but Grantaire is already stumbling past - through - him. He can’t be more than eight years old, his head pressed into her stomach and Enjolras -

He turns away, closes his eyes, this is not his moment. And in that moment there’s something - something - a flicker in the darkness surrounding this one tiny memory. A flicker of something more than pain, more than absence. Grantaire?

...hurts...

His sixteenth birthday party, a cake in the shape of a pirate ship two days before a blue moon and everyone came home early for it, everyone.

A small table in a little room, a cupcake with red icing and a single candle, a blue scarf and a wide smile. “What did you wish for?”

Grantaire is twelve, perhaps. He’s still small, in a jumper that hangs past his fingertips and a hat falling over his eyes as he beams. “I’m going to be a wolf.”

And her sadness which doesn’t register to him then, but now is echoed by a deep pain from all around the memory. “You can’t, R.” Holding out a hand to pull him close. “I’m sorry but you can’t.”

A stab of pain runs through their mind and he can feel Grantaire shrinking away, pushing everything away. I can’t I can’t I can’t -

You have to, Enjolras says, to whatever’s left, to anything he can find. R, you can’t give up on us yet.

A laugh that’s half a sob (a sob that’s half a laugh) and his own feelings echoed back. He sees Grantaire through his eyes through Grantaire’s eyes, awe and disbelief and I was nothing to you then. Their first kiss through this distorted lense where Enjolras can’t believe it’s happening and
Grantaire can’t believe he went along with it.

*Not my thoughts*, Enjolras thinks desperately, because he’s already messed that up too many times. *You have to stay human.*

Grantaire’s laugh again, introspective, twisting through their thoughts. *I’m always human.*

And they’re back into memories, coming stronger and faster. Enjolras sees himself through Grantaire’s eyes, bare shoulders, Grantaire’s fingers in his hair and the final thought *fuck it* before he leans down -

Standing in the hallway of an unfamiliar mansion in a borrowed, oversized black suit. His eyes are stinging, red still hours after the ceremony. Mr and Mrs Dubois, the leaders of the pack he’s lived with his entire life, either haven’t noticed or are politely overlooking it. “Of course, you are welcome to take your mother’s position. I believe she trained you?”

There are so many things he could say, but the hole where his throat should be leaps somehow to the most incongruous. “I’ll have to drop out of school.” They frown, like they could not possibly have foreseen this. “It’s a full-time job for Mum with me helping, so - unless you’re hiring someone else too?”

He can see Mr Dubois wavering, but then his wife cuts in. “We only have the one room.” A warm, friendly smile. Politely distant. “Besides, it’s not like you’ll need the Baccalaureate to be a cleaner.”

*What. The. Fuck.* Enjolras is a blaze of rage and he can feel Grantaire, stronger than before, laughing in the back of their mind. *How old were you? When was this?*

In reply, Grantaire sends a conversation and it’s a surprise for Enjolras to hear his Mum’s voice filtered through Grantaire’s head. “Of course it’s just the one commission for the moment, but if you’d like me to put the word out this could be a growth business for you. I’ve had Katheryn looking into prices for this sort of art and you could support yourself.”

Grantaire sits on a bar stool, the walls of Thenardier’s filling themselves in in rough brushstrokes in the background. “Last time I had a pack they wanted to keep ‘the talent’ in house, that’s not an issue for you?”

Whatever she replied is lost in another memory, walking out a courtroom feeling nothing but a strange disconnect of disbelief, walking on air and *guess I should pack my things.* Enjolras’s mum is with him, speaking to Katie like Grantaire isn’t even there. “I’ll sort the payment this afternoon, but if you have nothing to do with Grantaire now I was wondering if I could borrow some of your time? I was going to sit in on a few more trials this afternoon and I could use someone to explain legal terms.”

Eponine again, lying on a table in Thenardier’s with a guitar on her stomach, largely ignored. “You’ve been sleeping with the wolf-husband for three weeks, yes? That’s, what, two weeks and six days longer than any of your previous relationships?”

He can feel it, can feel them pulling back. Grantaire’s mind is reforming around him, the pain is going from blinding to pins and needles, he can feel itching just beyond them. He stops pushing and can feel Grantaire’s consciousness respond with a curiosity, a *what now?*

Enjolras settles against him. *Show me something.*

There’s a moment of stillness, and then a familiar echo *dum-dum da-da-dum* and they fall back
into the room with blue carpets. Grantaire is sitting at the piano and now Enjolras recognises his mum in a white scarf against dark skin, dusting bookshelves behind him. “You shouldn’t let them boss you around like this,” she says.

“I don’t mind,” Grantaire says, without taking his fingers from the keys. “Ms Martin says she’d rather have me than some jumped up self-important wolf brat any day.” He looks so young, his hair neatly curling around his ears as though he’s brushing it every morning. There’s a scattering of acne across his cheeks, his nose oddly straight, unbroken.

“Ms Martin should be more careful what she says when anyone might be listening.” She leaves the dusting, pushes him up to fit them both on the stool pressed close. Enjolras can pick out similarities, they have the same nose, the same long fingers, the same smile. “They can’t tell you what to do, R.” Her hands rest on the keys, Enjolras can see the thick white scar on the back of the left one in the shape of teeth. “They don’t own you.”

“I know,” he keeps picking out the piece, slower now, note by note. She rests her head on his shoulder, eyes watching his fingers.

“Remember,” she says. “You can go to school with them, play with them, attend their piano lessons for them -” She places her scarred hand over his, for a moment throwing the room into silence. “But you’re not one of them, you’ll never be one of them.” She lifts her head and he turns so they’re facing each other, the piano stool making them close. “And that’s a good thing.”

He falls forward, head on her shoulder and her arms come up to wrap around him. For a moment he’s warm, he’s safe, he can press his face against her shoulder and breathe her in -

Something pulls Enjolras back, tearing the arms off his shoulders. He fights against it, pushing himself forwards but the force is too strong, like trying to fight gravity already halfway off a cliff. “No,” he shouts, pulling, pulling. “Maman, maman!”

* 

It’s dark, there is no room, no woman he doesn’t recognise - no woman that is his family, his pack his home all rolled into one - he’s thrashing but no longer falling, something holding on tight to his wrist. His throat feels raw like he’s been screaming.

“It’s Dad actually,” says a gentle, familiar voice beside him. “But I understand that it’s been a long day.”

Enjolras opens his eyes. For a moment all he can see is a white blur, then it settles into the regular square shapes of ceiling tiles. Noise filters in, soft regular bleeping, conversations murmured or at a distance. He turns his head to the side sending stabbing pains all the way down his ribs and flinches.

The grip on his wrist tightens. “Hey, hey, lie still.” Enjolras blinks again and his father comes into a fuzzy kind of focus, leaning over him. His face is full of worry lines, as much as his voice is steady and calming. “Your mother is here, but the doctors said you needed a calm environment so she went outside to shout at other people.” He gives a smile that only shows the strain a little at the corners of his eyes.

Enjolras tries to smile back, but doing so hurts. As the blur in his vision and body fades away more he’s starting to realise that everything hurts, the pain coming into focus as he regains a sense of each part of his body. His throat is dry, he can feel every breath he takes like swallowing pins but he forces himself to find words again. One word. One letter, even. He can manage that much. “R?”
The last thing he remembers, they were thinking human. They did everything they were supposed to but Grantaire isn’t here, Enjolras would be able to feel him and god - god - Enjolras can’t feel him. There’s a cold emptiness in the side of his mind and the second hand pain of the gunshot wounds at his hip and shoulder is gone. Enjolras tries to sit up, but the ache from his ribs grows into something blinding the moment he tries to put any weight on his arms and he finds himself collapsing back down.

“You have to lie still,” Dad presses a palm to his shoulder, that tiny amount of force enough to stop him moving again.

He’s in a hospital. There was an ambulance coming to Grantaire, he must be somewhere, if Enjolras can get past this ache in his ribs and remember how to breathe and find him. “R. I have to -” He lifts his hand to push his dad away and the pain is immediate, like knives driving into his shoulder and the statement ends on a whimper.

“Grantaire’s here, he’s here.”

Enjolras can recognise, absently, the calming tone of the voice, like dad’s trying to talk a feral wolf down from a hunt and it hits him even though the panic. It’s hard to take a deep breath, but if he keeps it shallow he can focus enough to listen. “R?”

“He’s in surgery,” dad turns his head to something out of Enjolras’s line of sight. “How does he work the drip?” There’s a low reply that Enjolras can’t quite pick enough individual sounds out of to make words, then dad turns back to him. “You have a button in your hand, can you feel it? You press it and the pain will go down.”

The pain is all-present and encompassing, but still second in priority right at this moment.

“Surgery? I thought -” He can’t think through the fog in his head but he remembers they were thinking human, remembers looking at Grantaire’s human mother, the shared feelings that went along with it. They had nothing left, it has to be enough. It has to be. “I did the thing, I tried -”

“I know you did, I know.” Dad’s hand rests on his forehead, pushing sweaty hair back. “You did all you could, but now the doctors have to do all they can -”

Enjolras struggles to lift his head. “I have to get to him, I have to -” he can’t quite feel his legs yet, but he could crawl. The surgery can’t be that far, not that far, and he has to find Grantaire. There’s an emptiness in his head and if he could just see him, if he can just smell him. He can do something more, they could try again nevermind that it feels like it nearly killed him last time, if they can hold it together for one more that might be enough.

“Look at me,” Dad leans in closer to make it easy. “You have to rest. Keep your strength up.” Enjolras pushes up again to no effect. “Enjolras.” Two eyes look right into his, familiar eyes. A firm steady tone, no room for disobedience. “The best thing you can do for Grantaire now is rest and focus on recovery. The connection between you is still very close right now, even if it doesn’t feel like it. The stronger you are, the better chance he has.”

They don’t feel connected, they don’t feel like anything but the logic makes sense, maybe. Enjolras’s vision is starting to go blurry and the pain from his ribs, his hip, something in his… shoulder? “I thought - you said he was here.” Dad guides his thumb to the button in his hand. Right - painkillers. If the pain faded a little he could think better, work through the problem. Grantaire is here, somewhere. “He’s okay, yeah? He’s okay?”

Dad waits for him to push the button before holding his hand gently. “They’re doing everything they can. You need to sleep and be strong for him. Give him some strength.”
Everything is going fuzzy at the edges again, and Enjolras is fighting a losing battle to keep his eyes open which doesn’t say much for his strength, but whatever he has Grantaire is welcome to it. R, he pushes at the empty part of his mind, pushing everything he has left in the direction of the silence and sending himself spiralling back into unconsciousness.

*

He’s dreaming. In the dream he’s running, he leaps out of Feuilly’s car towards Grantaire who is standing in a doorway, one hand on the handle. If he can get there, he can pull Grantaire can where it’s safe but the gap keeps extending and he keeps running and running until his paws are red and it hurts to breathe.

He keeps running. Watching Grantaire get further and further away but running anyway calling out with a howl that tears from his throat, that takes everything he’s got. R.

In the distance, almost out of sight, Grantaire turns to look at him. Enjolras?

*

Something is different. Not the pain, although it has faded to a dull ache across his whole body, oddly distant like it’s happening to someone else. He cracks an eyelid and sees both his parents are present now, dad resting his head on mum’s shoulder, familiar sounding snores breaking up the monotony of the beeping and the silence.

There are two sets of beeping, just out of sync with each other. Four sets of breathing. There’s a silence in his head, but it’s not an emptiness. It’s almost a hope, almost, but he has to make sure.

Enjolras pushes himself up on his elbows - winces - pushes himself up on just his right elbow, so he can make the seemingly monumental effort of turning his head through 180 degrees.

“Enjolras,” her voice is sleepy, but her hand is on his instantly, smooth skin brushing against his knuckles like she has to check he’s real. Enjolras will absolutely acknowledge that in a moment but first he has to take in the new addition to his room.

The second bed is set nearly a meter away, surrounded by at least twice as many machines and drips as Enjolras’s. Inside it all, Grantaire looks small. Almost covered by a white blanket, all Enjolras can make out is the profile of his face, a single hand falling to the side with a clip over his finger so the machines can beep out the steady pulse of a heartbeat.

There are bandages on his shoulder, his eyes are closed but his chest is moving. Enjolras can see that, his chest is moving and the machines are beeping and he smells like disinfectant, anaesthetic, swabs and surgery and home. “R,” he whispers.

Grantaire’s eyes don’t open. He doesn’t smile, doesn’t immediately wake up and laugh it off, ‘look at you Enjolras, were you worried about me?’

But the machine keeps beeping, his chest keeps moving.

Mum’s hand tightens on Enjolras’s. He can feel it, in the same distant way as the pain, the dread, everything that isn’t caught up in watching the slow steady rise and fall of Grantaire breathing. “He’s alive,” she says, her voice oddly gentle as though breaking bad news.

Enjolras’s elbow gives way and he collapses back onto the pillow, his vision blurring back into ceiling tiles and the edge of his mother’s face but he can breathe properly for the first time since waking up. He’s alive. “We did it?”
She shakes her head, her cheeks glinting wet. Whatever composure she can normally summon at will is gone, her voice shakes badly on every word. “I can’t believe you could be so… so…”

Keeping his eyes open now Grantaire is out of sight is taking too much energy. It doesn’t matter, he can imagine her lecture just as clearly as hearing it. “Stupid?”

“I was so scared.” She leans over the bed, he can feel her whole arm against his. “And you were… brave. You were brave.”

“We did it,” Enjolras says again, it’s the one hook his mind can hang on to as his thoughts start to drift back into sleep. “He’s alive.”

“For now,” she says softly. A touch of fingers against his jaw, then a brush of lips against his forehead as he falls back into sleep. “You both are.”
Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

There’s an odd slant to the light, like they could be in a dream or a memory.

Chapter Notes

Well that was a much longer break than planned! Thanks for sticking with me and with this fic. Only one more chapter after this one, and it’s almost ready to go so I promise no more long breaks! (I’m road tripping NZ at the moment so can’t give an exact date on the ending but definitely sooner not later!)

Thanks so much to McKenzi for the beta and convincing me that I can string words together in a coherent order <3, thanks to letosatie for the cookies, laughs and a place to crash while I wrote half of it :D
As always all the love for Katie who gets all of the side stories and false starts and for some reason likes me anyway.

Lots of hospital time in this chapter, some description of injuries etc.

They’re in the music room, Grantaire picking out a familiar tune on the old grand piano - dum-dum da-da-dum. Enjolras can’t help but smile at the sound of it. “My grandma used to play that song.”

Grantaire smiles back, “I remember.”

There’s an odd slant to the light, like they could be in a dream or a memory. For a moment Enjolras thinks they’re still spiralling in the change, but no - they passed that. He remembers the hospital, Grantaire on the bed, Grantaire’s silent presence back in his mind. He looks up at the wooden walls, the heavy curtains pulled back over a window that’s little more than a blur of grey. “Are you in my head?”

Grantaire’s mouth quirks to the side, amused, eyes flashing over Enjolras’s shoulder to the window and the sound of rain hammering against glass drowns out the piano. Then it’s gone, as if it never was. “Just for a moment,” Grantaire says.

The questions surge up. Are you okay? Will you wake up? How are you feeling? He doesn’t say anything out loud but this whole room exists in his head, so of course Grantaire hears them anyway. His shoulders curve in slightly, smile going rueful and Enjolras takes it all back. He doesn’t want to know.

“You’d be fine without me.”

Enjolras sits down on the piano stool beside him, close enough to touch. He wants to offer reassurance, but what can he say? He doesn’t have the answers either. “I think we all know I was a mess without you.” He picks out the familiar notes - dum-dum da-da-dum. “You’ve seen my
apartment."

Grantaire rests his head on Enjolras’s shoulder, the familiar tickle of his curls on Enjolras’s chin. “I like your apartment.”

“Well, don’t stop on my account,” Grantaire runs his fingers down the keys, the notes ringing out through the room. “It’s nicer here than at my place.”

Enjolras’s eyes are drawn unwillingly towards the window. It’s a door now, the pane of glass revealing storm clouds and rain pounding over and over, the sound increasing in volume the more Enjolras looks until it drowns out the piano. He still can’t tear his gaze away, and after a moment the piano stops entirely as Grantaire comes up to stand beside him. A bolt of lightning flashes past, lighting up the sky far into the distance. “Stay,” Enjolras says, too soft under the drumming of raindrops and rolling of thunder. “Until the storm passes.”

He laughs, his stubble tickling as he presses a kiss to Enjolras’s cheek. “The storm’s the best part,” he says, and there’s the smile: slightly cocky, mostly brave. “Don’t wait up.”

Enjolras catches his hand for a moment, but then their fingers are slipping apart and in a gust of wind and a flash of light he’s gone and the dream crumbles.

*

He feels rested. Not recovered, but he’s no longer thinking through a wall of cotton wool and smoke. The light stings when he opens his eyes and his body still aches around the bandages but the complete fog of pain and confusion that had blurred everything the last few times he woke up has faded almost to nothing. He turns his head sideways in case -

But Grantaire looks the same, eyes closed surrounded by machines, the only sign of life the slow rise and fall of his chest and the constant beeping. “R?” Enjolras says, softly so he doesn’t wake up if he’s not ready but perhaps - if he can hear, if he can know that Enjolras is there.

“He hasn’t woken up.”

Enjolras turns to his other side, where Dad is sitting, rubbing his eyes as though waking up. “But he’s okay?”

Dad stretches his arms out, looking over Enjolras’s bed to Grantaire. “No change, really. How are you feeling? The doctors took away the morphine drip, they seemed to think you’d get by without it?”

That probably explains the clarity of thought. Enjolras is still in pain, but it’s all physical injuries, whatever’s going on under the bandages. Nothing a few shifts won’t clear.

“You can’t change,” dad says, as though reading his thoughts. “Not until -” he nods at Grantaire. “If his mind is still in flux and the two of you are still connected, they’re not sure of the impact it will have.”

Enjolras finds the bed controls with his left hand and pokes them until he figures out how to tilt the bed so he’s sitting upright. His ribs are aching, there are bandages across his chest and both legs, although now he’s cataloging his left leg has the least pain, but mostly because he can’t feel much of it at all. “What happened to me?”
“Their best guess is that to share your shift healing abilities across the bond, your body had to take that energy from somewhere and in doing so reversed all the times you’d used them recently,” Mum says, entering the room flanked by three doctors. “Which is why I told you to go to the hospital after you were attacked the first time.”

Enjolras turns to look her right in the eye. “Well, you don’t always tell me to do the right thing.”

She looks away, stepping to the side to allow the team of doctors to come and start poking around Enjolras’s various monitoring equipment. The apparent leader - a tall Southeast asian lady with a clipboard - smiles encouragingly at him. “Good morning Enjolras, I’m Dr Cai. I’m sure you have a lot of questions for us, we have a lot for you so if you’re up for a chat, perhaps we can get all the basics covered now and then we can let some of your friends in. How does that sound?”

Enjolras glances over at Grantaire, still unmoved. “Okay.”

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Of one thing, and pretty much only one thing, everyone is clear: He's not allowed to shift. In fact, other than the puppies too young to control it, the whole pack is on lockdown. No one's sure what effect it'll have on Grantaire, so they're avoiding it. It's becoming a familiar story, until Grantaire wakes up they're not allowed to do anything because they don't know what effect it'll have. He seems entirely human, but the doctors keep saying there's no way to be sure, he could be caught mid-change and the slightest wolf-influence could tip the scales.

No one's told Enjolras to push the faint presence of Grantaire out of his head, but he's not allowed to pick at it and he's not allowed to shift, so he's left helpless in the hospital bed waiting for his injuries to heal the slow, human way.

It's frustrating. And painful. He's sure it didn't hurt this much when Henri attacked him in the first place, although dad keeps insisting that was because he was running on adrenalin at the time and did repeated shifts in the twelve hours after. Lying in bed with nothing to distract him except worrying about Grantaire in the bed next door is not ideal.

There's a lot to worry about. And maybe that's not helpful or 'conducive to a healing environment' but Enjolras can't not think about it when Grantaire hasn't stirred even a little in the three hours of questioning where Enjolras had to pry important information from the doctors while they went over the same tiny details about the shift process over and over again. Still, by the time they leave he’s figured out the basics.

Grantaire was shot three times, from an estimated distance of about ten meters. Once in the chest, once in the shoulder and once in the hip. Enjolras can point perfectly to the marks with his eyes closed because the pain is still echoed in his own body like three bruises no one else can see. The aborted shift that almost threw them both into some strange limbo between wolf and human, that Grantaire might still be caught up in, was enough to advance the healing process in all three areas. It slowed blood flow, rejoined torn veins and kept Grantaire's heart beating until the ambulance arrived. It also meant they'd had to cut in through recently healed muscle in his hip to extract the bullet that had lodged inside. It did very little for the collapsed lung. Grantaire is on a ventilator, he's had a blood transfusion, there's more bandage on his chest than skin and the doctors still can't say if his consciousness ever settled properly back into his own head.

Waking up is a probability, not a certainty. Dad has the numbers, Enjolras knows, but he doesn’t ask because anything less than 100% is too low a chance.

Dad always leant forward during these questions, prompting when Enjolras fell silent, asking more
questions to deepen understanding. "The more we know," he liked saying. "The more chance we have."

Enjolras explained some things. How Grantaire had felt solid to Enjolras's far more fluid mind, how Enjolras had tried to push him in the direction of human thoughts, but Grantaire's own mind had been the one prompting him. That was a good sign, he said, wasn't it?

They said in the early hours of the morning, their bond had surged and then died back. After that Enjolras had stopped responding to all of Grantaire’s injuries and they’d taken him off morphine. Enjolras confirmed that he’d had a dream of Grantaire returning to his own body, but didn’t give details. “It didn’t look... good,” he said. “But it was like, he could stay with me or he could go back and fix it. It wouldn’t fix on it’s own.”

The doctors nodded agreeably but it seemed a lot more like they were just humouring him, particularly when one of the younger doctors muttered that there was a big difference between science and dreams.

It didn't seem necessary to explain the flashes of memories they’d shared, too personal to bring up Grantaire's mother and Eponine's fierce comfort in a room full of strangers where Grantaire couldn't smile or laugh it off. When the last doctor left, Dad followed him to 'discuss this further in your office, maybe there's a specialist we could call in.' Easy as that. They could be halfway across the world but the Enjolras name would get them here.

Enjolras couldn't even be appalled. Not if it helped, not if there was any chance. The door swing shut behind them and it was him, mum and Grantaire for the first time. She hadn't said anything through the questioning. Every time dad mentioned that he could feel it a little but he'd kept his mind separate there had been a pause as though waiting for her to chime in. Enjolras looks over at her now, not looking back at him, spinning her wedding band over and over around her finger. "How much do you remember?"

Her fingers stop spinning, which draws attention to the way her hands are shaking. "It's not something I'd like to relive."

"You were there for most of it," Enjolras pushes. "If it could help him."

"Haven't we done enough to -" she bites her own words off, blinking too much. Her gaze isn't on him for more than an instant before she looks away, picking up her bag and rummaging through. "I had the both of you in your mind, I told you what to do and then you pressed into my head looking for answers." She pulls out a packet of tissues, sliding one out to hold against her nose. "I lost you both when you went into his head, caught you briefly when he was shifting, I assume because that's when his mind was most lycan. I told you how to pull him back and then I had to get the whole pack out of there before we could influence him further. I tried to pull you out too but it was too late, you were caught up and all I could do was keep running and pray to god I found you before -" she choked off on a sob, lifting the tissue up to her eyes, hiding her face.

He had felt it, at the time, that all consuming grief. The please don't. But it had been easier to shut it out and focus on what had to be done, at the time. Now with tears on her cheeks it was harder to ignore. "He was dying, I couldn't let him. Not when this was all my fault." He shakes his head, not looking at her. “They think the bond might have equalised. So I couldn’t abandon him now, not even if I wanted to.”

Her chair is carefully pulled back, an easy half a meter of space between her pencil skirt pulled tight over her knees and his hand resting on hospital sheets with a clip measuring out his pulse in regular mechanical beeps. “That’s not what I wanted,” she says.
Enjolras pushes himself up so he can look her in the eyes. “That’s what you wanted, that’s exactly what you wanted. Abandon him and save myself, but he’s my bond, my partner that makes him mine to protect otherwise what is this connection even for. We can’t call ourselves stronger, call ourselves more powerful if we can’t even help them.”

She blew her nose sharply, wiped her eyes and lowered the tissue to look at him. "You're my son," she says softly. "That makes you mine to protect. If you knew what we went through to have you. You are the greatest thing your father and I have done with our lives and I was scared. I needed you to be okay."

Enjolras turns his head away, fixes his eyes on the bed next door until he can pick up the slight movements of Grantaire’s breathing. “I wouldn’t have been okay.”

“You would have been alive.” Her hand touches against the bandages where they stick out of his T-shirt up his neck. “Everything else, we could have dealt with.” She lets her hand drop back to her lap. “You can’t tell me it wasn’t a close call, you can’t tell me you didn’t have a moment of doubt that you would pull it back, that he didn’t have a moment of doubt.”

Don’t, Grantaire had said. I’m not strong enough. Enjolras shakes his head. “That doesn’t matter. It shouldn’t matter, he’s pack. If I hadn’t -” he would have been left there, on that street. Bled out before the ambulance even arrived. “He wouldn’t have made it here.”

"You might not have made it here!" Her chair scrapes against the floor as she moves, resting her forehead in her hands. "Enjolras, I don't know this boy. I've met him twice, you barely speak about him. He said himself he didn't think he was strong enough and you risking yourself for this human who's been in your life a couple of months -"

“I love him.” It’s the first time he’s said it out loud, and Grantaire can’t even hear him.

There’s a silence. He looks away from Grantaire to meet her eyes and her face softens into the echo of a smile. “Well,” she says. “I know that now.”

But that’s not the point, is it. One of the many things they never seem to understand. “But it wouldn’t matter if I didn’t.” Enjolras continues, forcing himself to keep going, to find the words for this thing inside him. “It wouldn’t matter who he was. I didn’t love him when I claimed him to save him from prison, he didn’t love me when he stepped between my wolf and a group of humans neither of us even knew. There was something I could do and you should've known better than to suggest I shouldn't do it. I'm not going to be the one who takes the easy way out to save my own skin, I couldn't live with that. Not for him, not for anyone.”

Something tears in his shoulder and he realises, too late, that he’s sitting up and waving his arms like a madman without twenty stitches across five different gaping wounds. He falls back onto the pillows, tightening his hands on the sheets. He tries to bite down on the cry of pain, but it comes out anyway through gritted teeth.

“You should be resting.” Mum reaches out to touch his forehead, like he’s six years old with a stomach ache again. “I shouldn’t have brought this up, I’m sorry.”

Enjolras lifts his less painful hand to his shoulder, poking at the stitches in case they’re torn because he’s never been one to leave well enough alone. “I saw you,” he says, remembering all of a sudden. “In Grantaire’s - you went to his trial.”
“I-” She pulls her hand back into her lap, glances over her shoulder as though hoping the doctors might be coming in. “Someone from the pack had to attend. You sent me all those articles about the justice system and bias, I suppose I wanted to see for myself.”

“You stayed,” Enjolras says. “You and Katie, you went to another one.”

She folds her hands neatly in her lap. “I went to three, simply to observe. Not a representative sample, I’m sure but it certainly showed a pattern.”

“So you know I’m not wrong.”

“I never said you were wrong.” She shakes her head. “You need to focus on recovery. There’s a group of your friends outside, we can let some of the quieter ones in.”

Enjolras smiles faintly. “Courf is here?”

The sides of her lips curve a little, not quite a smile but getting there. “That boy. They’ve been taking turns, I could send in Combeferre.”

As much as seeing Courfeyrac always makes him feel better, Enjolras can accept that words coming a mile a minute and someone jumping on his stitches might not be the best plan. “Yeah, that’s great.” He hesitates. “Is Feuilly there? He’s human, brown hair.”

“I can ask.” She stands up, pausing to lean in and touch her hand to his shoulder. “I’m glad he’s okay. I’m proud of you. Don’t ever think - I’m proud of you.”

Enjolras closes his eyes when she kisses his forehead and watches her walk out. A moment later, the door inches open and Combeferre leans around it. “You’re awake? Can we come in?”

Enjolras nods, although he’s starting to think he can’t promise them he’ll be awake for long. All the energy he’d woken up with has drained over the last few hours, and the renewed ache in his shoulder isn’t helping matters. “Hi.”

Combeferre enters, followed a moment later by Feuilly shifting from foot to foot looking as though he’s not at all sure how he ended up there. It lasts a whole second until he looks past Enjolras to Grantaire and suddenly he’s all the way in the room, darting over.

Grantaire had said it himself, way back in that tiny interrogation room. Feuilly or Jehan, someone who actually likes me. Enjolras wasn’t going to steal Jehan away from Courfeyrac, but as Feuilly reaches out to touch the bandages at Grantaire’s shoulder, Enjolras is glad he remembered. “Is Eponine here?” he asks Combeferre as he sits down in the recently vacated chair.

Combeferre shakes his head. “Bahorel went down there. She said she sees enough of him snoring, give her a call if he ever stops being lazy and wakes up.” He tries a smile, but it doesn’t make it past the corners of his mouth. “He stayed with them, I think she was a bit… I mean, we all are.” He leans forward, resting a hand on top of Enjolras’s. “It’s good to see you.”

“We thought you’d make picking a fight with an entire wolf pack the most dangerous thing you did this week, at least,” Feuilly says, leaving Grantaire for only as long as it took to grab the other chair and drag it between the two beds. “Give the rest of us a few days to catch up, you know.” Sitting down, he can reach out to touch Grantaire’s still hand. Enjolras isn’t regretting inviting him in as such, but the envy burns a little at the ease of it.

Combeferre being Combeferre, of course he notices. “Hey,” he says, tugging at Enjolras's attention. “He’d understand that you can't get up. He knows you're here, he knows you cared about
him enough to share your mind with him, that's a big step.”

And Enjolras - Enjolras laughs. He can't help it, because Combeferre is the closest person he has and even he has no idea. His mum heard Enjolras tell Grantaire he loved him but she has no clue that Grantaire said it back. They haven't told a soul that they've been sleeping together for - God - over a month and they might have loved each other all that time but no one ever said anything, Enjolras doesn't even know if Grantaire - and he might not find out. And Combeferre thinks after all that, trying to die for him was a big step. That was the easy part, that was nothing at all.

“Is he okay?” Feuilly asks over his head. “Should we be doing something?”

Enjolras shakes his head, although he can't seem to stop the laughter and it is getting a little harder to snatch at breaths and every chest movement makes his claw wounds ache. He forces himself to slow down a bit, curling in a little and Combeferre passes him a plastic cup of water which is terrible for the environment, but he supposes no one's thought to go home and bring their mugs. “I love him,” he says, into the cup. “I just -” he looks up at Combeferre. What had he been thinking? It could have been months and neither of them knew. “And I love you. You're like, you're my brother. And I know sometimes I'm useless and you feel like you have to take care of me but you don't and if you didn't I'd still love you, you'd still be - you know.”

Combeferre makes a show of checking his forehead and asking what drugs he's on, but he's smiling. It's the small glow of a smile, like the feeling of Grantaire’s mind slowly realising Enjolras's feelings and all it takes is telling someone. “Feuilly-”

“It gets less special if you go through everybody one by one,” Feuilly says, but he's smiling too. “You're my friend, I love you too.”

Enjolras is trying to focus on him, but his eyes keep slipping down to Grantaire, to his hand hanging limp in Feuilly’s, his unresponsive face.

“Do you want me to pass on a message?” Feuilly asks gently. “Since you can't get up.”

Enjolras is amazing at words. He can give speeches to stir the masses, to sway the most stubborn man. In his high school debate team he once reduced an opponent to mutely acknowledging that he was right and could stop shouting now. This is his chosen area of expertise and he thrives on it.

Except right now, when no words come to mind. There's nothing that he hasn't said, nothing in his soul that Grantaire hasn't seen stripped bare and open. All he really wants is to be where Feuilly is, to hold his hand. “Tell him,” he starts hesitantly. “Tell him, I'm here. And I'll stay, as long as it takes. Until the storm passes. I'll be here.”

Feuilly glances at Combeferre, then bends down to pass Enjolras's message on softly into Grantaire's ear. It doesn't make any difference, he doesn't stir, and a moment later the door opens to admit the doctor again. “Enjolras needs to get some sleep now, I'm afraid. You'll be able to come back in the morning, and we're hopeful that we'll be able to release Enjolras tomorrow as well, so maybe he'll leave with you.”

Enjolras squeezes both their hands on the way out, and lets the doctor fuss over his various lines and pillows until he's settled back on the bed. “I'm not leaving without him,” he tells her, and she nods absently apparently not realising that when Enjolras makes a promise, he intends to keep it.

When the doctor leaves, Enjolras ruins the perfectly arranged sheets by rolling onto his side. It makes his stitches hurt and his arm sting where he's lying on it, but he has a solid view of Grantaire’s bed between the machines and to that view he falls asleep.
He's released by mid morning. They put him in a wheelchair and take him down to the reception where he signs the required release forms, takes the small pot of pills then climbs painfully out of the chair to lean on Combeferre all the way back up the lift and into the room just as his bed is being wheeled out.

The doctors are in and out for Grantaire, each individually tutting at Enjolras and explaining like he's a child that the idea of being released is that he goes home and gets some proper rest in a bed. Enjolras nods patiently along with each one and then says, "I'll go home when he goes home."

At some point, the combination of Enjolras's obstinance and, most likely, the application of large amounts of money somewhere behind the scenes results in a new bed being brought in with a backrest so he can sit up and a tray table. Enjolras tries to avoid it - in a plastic chair, he can get that much closer to Grantaire's bed - but when he meets his daily painkiller limit in two hours of sitting up with Jehan and Courfeyrac, Dad insists that he move.

It's... If he's honest, it's kind of boring. And he hates thinking that, because it makes it sound like he wants to be somewhere else and he doesn't, not ever. It's just - they're only allowed two people in at a time, and the conversation is always stilted because of Grantaire's silent presence constantly hanging over them. At least Jehan and Courfeyrac were easily distracted, spiralling into a long anecdote about this quest they went on to an abandoned warehouse for Jehan's photography degree and how the building literally almost fell on them and some other things that Enjolras is sure he was listening to at the time. But they can only stay for an hour and then they're replaced by one of Enjolras's aunts who lives in Paris and spends a good half hour complaining that she never sees him without the presence of mind to realise that maybe the complaining is the reason.

Enjolras begs off any more distant relations after that and his mum comes back in, but any attempts to start a conversation about criminal law or which of those articles she read is met by a stern look and her insistence that he rest and stop worrying about the problems of the world. She offers to read to him from her current noir detective novel but refuses to give any details on the actual real life shooting Enjolras is still living in the aftermath of.

In the afternoon when Combeferre comes back, this time accompanied by Bahorel, Enjolras is ready to demand some answers.

"Do they know who did it?"

Combeferre glances at the door where Enjolras's parents have just left with a doctor, leaving strict instructions not to say anything that might stress him out because he needs to rest.

Enjolras fixes Combeferre with his best look of persuasion. “I’m in bed, I am taking my pills, I am not shifting even though my stitches itch like hell. If you don’t tell me I swear to god I will walk out of this room and search every room in this hospital for an unlocked smartphone. I’m not asking you to help me rain justice down on their heads, I just want to know.” Carefully omitting the ‘yet’ from that statement, of course.

Combeferre sighs, glancing at the closed door, but Enjolras knows his debate loss face when he sees it. “They caught the shooter,” he says, glancing over at Bahorel like Bahorel might be helpful.

“She was pretty fine looking,” Bahorel says. “Not to be distasteful or anything, but you’know. If I had to pick someone to shoot me, could do worse.”

Combeferre looks mildly appalled, Enjolras finds himself smiling in spite of himself. “Well, yes. It
was close range, there were plenty of witnesses. Her name is Emile Florence, they have her in custody currently charged with grievous bodily harm, attempted murder, possession of a firearm, etc.”

The ‘so you can’t go charging off after her’ is heavily implied, but Enjolras’s mind catches on the name. It rings half a bell, as though he’s read it somewhere, but there’s no immediate thought that she’s someone out to commit murder. But the charges make it sound like she wasn’t just there to cause chaos, she was gunning for one man. “Grantaire has enemies?”

“You both do.” Combeferre says, pulling out his phone. The hospital had returned all of Enjolras’s belongings when he signed out, but his phone battery had been at one percent and had died the moment he tried to connect to the internet. “Emile Florence is a human, immune to lycanthropy and once survived a full moon pack hunt. She subsequently became the bonded partner of one Henri Valance.”

He passes the phone over, already open to an article.

_Terror Attack in Paris Centre_

_Shots were fired at a protest near the ENS Paris campus. The victim was an unidentified solus human, believed to be a member of an as yet unidentified wolf pack. He was attacked by a woman named Emile Florence, the bonded partner of pack alpha Henri Valance following an incident where his involvement disrupted a full moon event where a pack of werewolves were set loose on eight unarmed human victims. This has been permitted under law due to the use of waivers, although survival rates have historically been low._

_It is believed the shooting victim intervened with the assistance of a wolf pack to rescue all eight intended victims. Henri Valance, the former pack alpha who condoned the attacks and is bonded to the shooter, is wanted by police for questioning. The new pack alpha, a recently turned lycanthrope named Tomasz Wójcik made a statement to the press that he hopes his leadership will help the pack turn to a new, more productive path and vows that the practice of hunting humans will not be carried out as long as he is in charge._

_The names of the shooting victim and the lycanthrope who was also taken to hospital have not been released at this time. Reports indicate that they are both being cared for at The American Hospital Of Paris and it is not yet clear if they are in recovery._

"So the law allowing these hunts was largely snuck through parliament," Combeferre explains, using his psychic ability to know the moment Enjolras’s eyes reach the end of an article. "It came up here and there, but always small groups, always outside the city. I'm not saying what you did was in any way a good thing or should be repeated, but gunshots at a public protest followed by an unregistered werewolf sprinting across the city, all associated with Valance, the son of a very influential werewolf, it gets noticed. There are four protests to reclassify a wolf killing a human a murder, no matter what paperwork has been signed, and that's just today. It's gaining traction by the hour."

Enjolras sits up a little.

"No," Combeferre says, before he can even speak. "You're not going. We have Musichetta, Joly and Bossuet spreading the ABC name around. If you sit still and rest for the rest of the day, I might let you sign a petition."

Enjolras opens his mouth to argue to point - it will have more weight if he's there, he's practically namechecked in the article, all the wounds will only reinforce his point about full moon hunts being dangerous - then catches a glimpse of Grantaire out of the corner of his eye. "We have
people there?"

Combeferre rests a hand on his shoulder. "Plenty of people. The word is being spread, we had a
meeting last night after they kicked us all out of the waiting room."

He hasn't missed an ABC meeting since they started it, and now the whole world is finally paying
attention and he's stuck here a million miles away. "Can we get press in? I could make a
statement."

"We haven't even released any names, Katie's been working every second to keep the pack out of
the press." Combeferre bites his lip hesitantly. "You could if you wanted, but we thought - it might
be better to wait until we have more certain news." He pointedly gestures to Enjolras's wounds, like
Enjolras might have missed the way his eyes flicked over to Grantaire's bed.

More certain news. It's a probability, not a fact. Enjolras closes his eyes for a moment, looks for
Grantaire as far down as he can go but as always the lingering presence is an echo, nothing more.
What would Grantaire think of going public? He's never ever been to a protest before, has kept his
name out of virtually everything but it seems naive to think they could cover it up now. All it
would take is one of Valance's pack to talk to a reporter.

Something else Combeferre said suddenly registers properly in his brain. "Wait, you said an
unregistered werewolf sprinting across the city, I didn't -" he lifts a hand instinctively to his neck.

Combeferre reaches into his pocket and pulls out Enjolras's ident chip, hanging on it's chain from
his fingers. "Now, no one blames you for not stopping and putting it on, but that is extremely
illegal and the large number of police officers present at the scene did notice."

Shit. Enjolras reaches up to rub his forehead, trying to think. "Surely we can say it's extenuating
circumstances. He's my mate and he got shot, if I'd taken the time to clock on he might have bled
out before I even got there."

Combeferre nods. "That's what Katie said when she first arrived. I told her to drop it, plead guilty."

"What?"

Combeferre looks at him for a moment, takes his phone back and puts in his pocket like he's
stalling for time. "Do you remember back when we first started the ABC? The ident chip campaign
had just started, we wanted to take a part in it. We went to three protests, we stood on the street for
hours getting people to sign the petition. When it passed, we threw that party and you were the
drunkest I've ever seen you."

Enjolras definitely remembers the campaign, although the party itself is more of a blur beyond the
fact that it's where he met Sebastien. "I agree with the law, I'm just saying in this particular instance -"

"It doesn't matter," Combeferre interrupts. "If you can get off for 'circumstances' so can someone
else. I could come up with an excuse, Henri Valance could have leapt into that protest all fangs and
claws but with the right lawyer, a decent excuse and you setting a precedent -"

Once one wolf has done it, any wolf can do it. These are the people in society who make the laws
and have the money to make the laws work for them. "I get it."

Combeferre pats him on the shoulder. "Katie says it'll be community service, most likely. They'll
want to make an example and there's no point giving a fine to someone with your connections. You
can serve your time giving back to the people." He almost keeps a straight face, but ruins it by
laughing at the end.

"If I could move my arms," Enjolras says. "I would hit you."

"I have a petition here with over two hundred thousand signatures calling for a change in the law to make trapping humans with wolves on a full moon murder, so if you'd like to rephrase that -?"

Enjolras makes a grab for the phone and is foiled by not particularly impressive reflexes. "If I had arms I would kiss you, if it was a day when you were feeling that would be appropriate."

Combeferre smiles and passes him the phone. "Only because it's you."

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When evening starts to fall, a nurse comes around to tell them that visiting hours are over for the day and they need to leave the patient to get some sleep. Enjolras lifts his head briefly from resting his forehead against the edge of Grantaire's mattress to throw a pleading look at his Mum, who came in when Bossuet had to go home. They'd skyped the whole pack back home, and some of them had even remembered to ask after Grantaire which was a nice touch. After hanging up, Enjolras had pulled himself back out of bed to curl in a chair as close to Grantaire as he could manage.

Mum had followed briefly, resting a hand on his shoulder. The words 'they don't know' had choked him on the call and gone unsaid, but now they were rattling back and forth inside his head looking for another outlet and he couldn't face it head on.

The nurse calls in a second nurse, this one a werewolf and there's a muttered conversation that ends with an agreement that Enjolras can stay, but all their other visitors will have to come back in the morning. Mum wheels Enjolras's bed as close to the chair he's sitting in as it'll go, "Please try to get some proper sleep," she says, bending down to hug his shoulders from behind.

Enjolras nods absently and the room empties. After a few minutes Doctor Cai comes in, looks around the screens, makes a few notes on Grantaire's chart. "Anything?" Enjolras asks, although how many times he's asked now he's completely lost count.

She startles a little, as though in the dim light she hadn't realised he was still there. Perhaps thinking the hunched over shape was some other appendage of Grantaire, a permanent limpet following everywhere he went. Enjolras could live with that, he thinks, if Grantaire would wake up to laugh about it. "No change," she says gently. "But it's still early days. It's good that you're staying here with him, a lot of wolves wouldn't do that."

They assume he's a servant. A servant or a grounding partner, at the very most possibly a boyfriend, although he's overheard them in the corridor arguing that there's no way an Enjolras heir would be permitted to date a human with no family or connections to speak of.

Enjolras doesn't have the energy to argue with every single false assumption. "He's mine," he says instead, shifting his chair in closer as soon as she's out of the way.

She smiles indulgently and refills his water cup, reminding him to take his pills if the pain gets at all overwhelming and to ring the bell if he has any trouble getting out of the chair and into bed. When she leaves, she switches off the strong halogen bulbs, leaving the room lit by the dim glow of the monitors and the green emergency exit signs above all the doorways.

It feels like a charm, the darkness. Half the moments of their relationship seem to have happened by moonlight and reflected streetlamps and Enjolras isn't ready yet to sleep through this one. After
all the sounds from the hospital have died away, he finds himself climbing out of the chair and onto the very edge of Grantaire’s mattress, there’s a sliver of space from Grantaire being positioned slightly off centre. He can feel the warmth of Grantaire’s body from here, the slow regular movements as he breathes and he finds himself breathing in time with it, reaching out to curl his fingers around Grantaire’s still hand.

“Hi,” he says, his voice cracking only a little.

Enjolras brushes his thumb across Grantaire’s palm, just shy of the pulse on his wrist. He hasn’t dreamed once since Grantaire took the plunge back into his own head, and he can’t stop thinking that that could have been his last chance.

There was so much he didn’t say. “So you have to wake up,” he says. Grantaire always looked small on the bed, and if Enjolras keeps his limbs close and rests one arm a little against Grantaire’s chest - nothing they haven’t done before, nothing that doesn’t make his whole body finally relax - they can both fit. It’s cramped and cold with no blanket but he’s not going to stay for long, just a few minutes to properly breath him in -

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It’s light. There’s white sunlight burning at Enjolras’s retinas, his neck is stiff around the stitches and there’s something tickling at the back of his neck. He lifts a hand absently to knock it away, rolling slightly backwards and suddenly finding nothing underneath him but air. The jerk of almost falling to the floor pulls him wide awake, eyelids snapping open as he catches himself just in time and scrambles back onto the mattress -

He chest collides with something solid. He remembers, belatedly, crawling into Grantaire’s bed and he wasn’t going to stay but if he fell asleep and forgot to go back - except it’s not Grantaire’s shoulder he’s facing. Grantaire is on his side, so they’re face to face. Did the doctor’s move him somehow, without waking Enjolras up? Did he -

Grantaire’s eyelids flicker so slightly Enjolras would almost think he was imagining it, except that his mouth is definitely moving as well to curve into a smile. And then there’s a flash of green under his eyelids and a sleepy little blink that makes Enjolras’s heart pound loud enough to wake the pack.

“Hey,” Grantaire says. His voice comes out quiet, cracked and broken down the middle, but it’s there. “Look at you, sleeping the day away.”

God, he’s beautiful. That little teasing smile pulling at his lips, the slow blinking as he goes from vaguely dozing so as not to slip out the bed and wake Enjolras up to actually awake. Enjolras lifts the arm that had been flailing for balance, touches his fingertips lightly against Grantaire’s cheek, finding the crease lines of the smile, the tiny hint of a dimple. Fool his eyes, fool his ears, maybe, but he couldn’t imagine the feel of it so perfectly, the slight warmth of Grantaire’s cheek as it heats up a little, like he’s blushing.

There’s a million things to say, and Enjolras doesn’t say any of them. Not with three inches of space between them just begging to be crossed and then Grantaire’s lips are on his. Dry, chapped, laughing instead of kissing back but as soon as Enjolras pulls away to check in - is this okay? Do we do this now? - Grantaire shakes his head and whines, “Come back.”

It’s the wrong moment to cry. After everything, all they’ve been through and the long days of waiting it makes no sense to cry now with Grantaire’s eyes open and his lips moving to kiss back, small gentle kisses over and over, but after a moment Enjolras can feel his cheeks are wet and he’s
tasting salt and he has to pull back to take a shuddering breath.

He’s awake. He’s here and he’s awake, his eyes drifting closed again, lips slightly parted as though waiting for Enjolras to come back. “You’re crying,” Grantaire mumbles, the words starting to blur together as his eyes open less and less. “I know, disappointing, you have to - have to share your apartment.”

Enjolras presses another kiss to his lips before he can drift off again. “You’re here. You came back.”

“Yeah,” Grantaire agrees distantly, eyes fully closed now. “Yeah, thought I would - worth a shot.”

Enjolras leans closer, pressing their foreheads together so he can feel as Grantaire’s breathing evens out and he falls back into a natural sleep. When Enjolras sits back upright, Granatre lets out a tiny whimper and his fingers flex as though trying to reach after him. It’s so different from the perfectly still emotionless coma of the last days that Enjolras feels his throat closing up again, the urge for the tears to turn into full blown sobs rising.

He stumbles out of the bed before that happens, almost falls three times making it to the doorway and has to hang his full bodyweight off the handle to lean into the hallway. “I need a doctor. He’s waking up, I need -”

Nurse Helen is there almost instantly, taking his weight off the wood and leading him back to his own bed. She’s giving some lecture on attendant call buttons and not running around on a torn up leg but Enjolras is past the point of being able to listen. She leaves him perched on the edge of his mattress and crosses over to take Grantaire’s pulse, tut loudly and move him briskly off his side and onto his back. “I suppose he did that to look at you,” she says sternly, as though this is Enjolras’s fault in some way. “I swear, the two of you will be the death of me.”

Enjolras pulls his good leg up onto the bed after his body, wraps his arms around his knee and focuses over her shoulder on Grantaire’s face, his mouth still twitching but curled up incessantly into a smile.

“You can stop crying and all,” Helen throws out over her shoulder. “Honestly, the pair of you would seem to be disaster magnets, the least you could do is be stoic and macho about it.”

Enjolras can’t stop, but somehow the sobs are something like laughing and there’s a smile on his face. The tears are still spilling down his cheeks, but they taste of relief.
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

You can't chose the pack you're born into, but you can choose the one you run with.

Chapter Notes

And so it ends! This fic has been several years and five countries in the making. It
would not exist without the les mis obsessed part of my Twitter feed (so basically all
of you, <3), the wonderful World Ain't Ready that got me into this fandom and the
incomparable, extraordinary, wonderful, lovely, hench evil genius mastermind beauty
that is Katie.

This was (originally) going to be a 20k Big Bang fic for which my posting date was
over a year ago! Thanks to that challenge for getting me started, and to Eirene who did
the amazing art up in chapter one.

Shout out to McKenzi for coming on board to beta and to Keth who baked me cookies
and is famous.

To Australia and New Zealand for having me.

Continued warnings for hospitals, injuries, disappointing families,

The morning feels a long time coming. Grantaire's eyelids flicker two, three more times but he
never wakes up much further than seeing Enjolras back in the painful chair beside him and giving a
bleary smile before drifting off again. Nurse Helen stops by twice more on her rounds to tuck him
in and tut loudly at Enjolras for choosing to sit awake instead of focusing on his own recovery, but
says there's no emergency and the doctors will be by in the morning.

Enjolras keeps Grantaire's hand tight in his. He doesn't want to talk and wake him, but it's a long
time to sit in silence so he finds himself humming instead, soft snatches of melody. There's a dum
dum da-da-dum but also the song he heard Grantaire playing when he stopped by Thenardier's,
snatches of pop songs he's heard on the radio, a repetitive rhythm that he thinks he's heard in
Combeferre's car.

Possibly he also borrows Helen's phone charger and plays solitaire for a while. It's a long three
hours and he can only have a hysterical crying breakdown for so much of it. When the sun and
Doctor Cai arrive, he's having trouble keeping his eyes open and his head keeps drifting down to
his chest before jolting him awake with a start.

The doctor checks Grantaire's pulse, notes down numbers off all the machines Helen's been
checking all night, shoos Enjolras back onto his own bed and adjusts a few dials on the tubes and
wires snaking down into the shunt on Grantaire's arm. Enjolras sits up in the bed, wide awake,
peering over to watch Grantaire's forehead crinkle in confusion and his hand wave against the
sheets. Enjolras can just picture that hand coming up higher to push against his shoulder as Grantaire rolls over, "I'm not getting up now, no, I work nights you can't make me wake up."

Enjolras could say that if you kiss him and press in real close he goes from sleepy to wide awake and alert in less than a moment, but instead he smiles so that the first thing Grantaire sees when he wakes up is Enjolras in the distance watching him. "Why're you so far away?" Grantaire slurs, forehead still furrowed but now directed at Enjolras's perch.

Doctor Cai sighs and waves a hand to catch his attention. "Hello Grantaire, I'm your attendant doctor. I've lowered some of your medications to make it easier for you to stay awake. If the pain becomes too strong you tell me and I'll put you right back under, you understand?"

Grantaire hums in a vaguely agreeing way. "Sure, sure."

"Can you describe how you feel in your own words?"

Enjolras inches a little further forward, becoming at mild risk of falling on the floor. Grantaire gives the question deep thought for a long moment. "My chest feels heavy," he says eventually. "And my arms, they're glued to the floor by the rain? And my thoughts are fuzzy, like wolf ruff fuzzy not just stubble fuzz. Full grown, troll hair fuzz." His mouth gapes in a yawn. "Enjolras is laughing at me."

Enjolras is very stoically holding down the urge to laugh, thank you very much. "My wolf ruff or 'Ferre's wolf ruff?'"

"He's teasing," Grantaire tells Dr Cai very seriously. "Combeferre is our friend and he has short hair, nothing like troll hair."

She is also smiling, which seems unfair since she must deal with drugged up patients all the time. "Thank you for the clarification. You have been through a serious incident, can you tell me what you remember?"

Grantaire closes his eyes to think. "I didn't go out," he says. "I could have, but I had only touched a few people and I didn't know how strong my smell would be. They were scared, they were - I thought I have to. I thought he would, so I -" his eyes open to frown at Enjolras again. "You're here. You were there after, you were a wolf and we - I was at a protest?"

He looks so small and lost, Enjolras is halfway to his feet before the doctor can turn and glare him down. "You, stay over there. Grantaire, some confusion is perfectly normal. Can you tell me more about the protest?"

"It was for humans, I was with... Tall, not a were-bear."


"Bahorel," Grantaire echoes, drawing the name out slowly. "And there was a sound and then I was Enjolras, I think." He cranes his neck to see Enjolras behind the doctor. "You had all these feelings."

"Yeah," Enjolras says, trying to push yes, I did, I still do all into that one syllable.

"Then I died. Maybe? It felt like I died. Enjolras was saying goodbye and then I woke up and he was right in front of me like we both died. I'm sorry if we both died, he didn't deserve it, I told him -"
The doctor rests a hand on Grantaire's shoulder and holds her other arm out to stop Enjolras who is already on his feet and halfway to the bed to press himself against Grantaire and promise *we're fine, we're alive, we made it.* "Well for a start, you're not dead, so congratulations. You did come very close, it was only thanks to Enjolras here that you managed to make it into surgery, that and your own strength of will. We are very proud of you both."


She's already moving back to the machine, twisting the dials back. "Thank you for talking to me, how about you sleep a bit more now and later on we'll let you have some visitors."

Grantaire's head sinks back onto the pillows, but not without his eyes flicking pointedly in Enjolras's direction.

"Mr Enjolras doesn't count," she says, smoothing the blankets flat and placing his finger carefully over them. "Not when he was bullheaded enough to be admitted right along with you."

Grantaire's clearly almost asleep again already, but his mouth still curves into a smile. "That's my wolf."

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Enjolras was absolutely determined to stay awake until Grantaire woke up again, so naturally he falls asleep the moment he makes the mistake of lying back on his bed - just for a moment - and wakes up again to find Grantaire sitting up a little with Eponine and Bahorel.

"R?" Enjolras pushes himself up too fast, wincing as it pulls at his stitches.

Grantaire gives him a small smile, Eponine fixes him with a glare. Enjolras glances at Bahorel for completion but he's occupied eating Grantaire's jelly cup and only lifts one finger in a wave. Enjolras fights his way out of the blankets to fall out of bed, just about remembers not to rest his weight on Eponine and veers at the last minute to collapse against the back of Bahorel's chair. "Is he awake?"

Grantaire opens a single eye to look at him. "Are you going to sing again?"

Eponine barks a laugh. "Enjolras - no, I'm not even going to ask. I bet it was some suitably dramatic song calling everyone to arms." The words are exactly what he'd expect, so it takes Enjolras a moment to realise the reason it sounds weird coming out of her mouth is there's no malice in it. It's the same voice she'd use to mock Grantaire, at the back of the room where she thinks Enjolras can't hear them.

She's holding Grantaire's hand and her knees are bouncing nervously, even though by the amount of Grantaire's dinner that's empty beside Bahorel, the two of them have been sitting with him for a while.

"I thought you were asleep," Enjolras says.

"I was in and out," Grantaire says around a yawn. "Your howling is better than your singing, but your face is better when its human shaped."

Enjolras is looking that way to quickly check Grantaire's vitals on the computer behind her, so he sees the small indulgent smile that flickers across Eponine's lips however much she may try to deny it later. "He's on one or two drugs," she says, leaning back in her chair to look at Enjolras.
"The doctor said it'll be like he's very drunk for a few days, which is pretty much business as usual." She frowns. "God, you look terrible. Why the fuck are you standing up, you look like you're about to collapse."

Enjolras opens his mouth to explain that he's *fine* it's just a few sets of stitches and internal bleeding; but then Bahorel turns in his chair to look, shifting the weight and Enjolras collapses forward on top of him. "Ow."

"What happened?" Grantaire asks, trying to lift his head off the pillows. "You can't break him, I haven't blown him yet."

Enjolras doesn't even get a moment to wince before Bahorel lets out a sound previously unknown to man and pushes Enjolras further off balance so he can stare at him.

Eponine gives an extremely dramatic sigh and stands up. She's stronger than she looks, and with a withering glare at Bahorel she gets him to help push Enjolras upright and onto her shoulders and then down into her vacated chair. "You have painkillers?" she asks, leaning over his bed to explore the selection of pill pots on his bedside table.

"So you haven't blown him yet," Bahorel says, getting back to the point in the tones of a small child looking under the tree on Christmas morning. "Let's have some more details on this oddly specific denial. What has been going on in the Enjolras household as he insisted repeatedly to us all that it was simply a convenient arrang- ow!"

Eponine has Enjolras's pill pot in one hand and Grantaire's dinner tray in the other, proving that it's not the blunt instrument, it's how you use it. "Would you look at that, seems like our time's up here."

"The nurse said we had two hours."

Eponine raises the tray slightly higher. "I have work and you drove me here so get moving."

Bahorel lifts the remains of the jelly and tips it down his throat like a shot. Eponine leans down beside Grantaire's bed and whispers something that Enjolras tries not to overhear.

"Don't do that to me again, asshole," is pretty much what he gets. It's close range and restraint is not one of his skills. She punches him on the slightly less bandaged shoulder on the way out, accompanied with a nod like they're in agreement about something.

Enjolras watches them go then slides his chair right up to the edge of Grantaire's bed. "Eponine spent two minutes in my company and didn't call me a dog, a mongrel or 'your stalker' once, is she ill?"

Grantaire laughs, then winces, eyes closed for an extended moment as his body slowly relaxes back down. "I got told off," he says when he's breathing steadily again, eyelids opening just a little so he can peer at Enjolras's face. "'What did you go and make him save your life for, now I have to bloody like him.'"

His fingers twitch vaguely in Enjolras's direction and Enjolras takes the hint, reaching out to take his hand. Grantaire's grip is still virtually non-existent, but the slight twitch of his fingers is such a huge leap from the unresponsiveness of the last few days that Enjolras could dance anyway.

Metaphorically speaking. Judging by his failure at standing earlier, he's going to pass on dancing
for a while. "I did save you from prison that one time."

"That made her tolerate you," Grantaire explains in the slow well meaning tones of a kindergarten teacher. "This scheme with the gunman and the trying to die for me made her like you. It was a good plan on your part, normally she's much harder to win over."

Enjolras finds he's smiling in spite of himself. "Well, I thought if we're going to make this work I have to try to get on with your friends." He glances down at Grantaire's loose hand in his and forces himself to remember the feeling of the first time he woke up, the fear that Grantaire wouldn't be here, wouldn't wake up, that they'd never get to talk properly. He moves forward a little more, sitting up on the chair so he can look properly into Grantaire's face. "I love you."

His hair is a mess across the pillow, his lips are dry and cracked and that odd lump on his nose still has no clear cause and as a smile breaks across his face he is absolutely the most handsome, most perfect, most amazing awake face Enjolras could ever see. "Damn right you do." His words are still a little slurred, but his eyes open a bit further when he smiles and if Enjolras leans his elbows on the mattress and his bad leg against the nearest machine he has enough structural integrity to go for a kiss.

"I love you too," Grantaire says a few, maybe two, minutes later, pulling his head back into the pillows to find some space. "Couldn't remember if I said before."

Enjolras pulls back, going for his chair but Grantaire shakes his head and shifts his whole body with a strange uncomfortable looking wiggle to make space on the mattress beside his arm for Enjolras to perch. Enjolras doesn't have to be asked twice, not with the warmth of Grantaire's body pressing against his. "We should date," he says. "You and me - I could take you out somewhere."

He was trying to think of where they'd go if Grantaire woke up. There's a fancy place his parents always go, but Grantaire would have to buy a suit and Enjolras's face of scars might not go down too well.

Grantaire laughs, slightly hacking around the breathing tube. "Yeah," he says. "We could do that. I mean, it'll be difficult to arrange since we live so far apart and you should know I don't sleep with anyone until date number three."

Enjolras has a whole second of freaking out because they've already - and if Grantaire's starting to worry about it being unofficial then Enjolras is going to feel guilty for not putting any romance in the last month and definitely for not mentioning the whole feeling things beforehand -

Then he looks at Grantaire's face and realises he's being messed with. "This isn't fair," Enjolras says. "You're supposed to be all sleepy and slow on the uptake."

"You were actually worried for a second there," Grantaire flickers his fingers, which is maybe meant to be a reassuring squeeze of the hand. "I'd say you're doing okay for boyfriend points. The whole being in love with me but not saying anything knocked you down a bit, but you did save my life and all so I guess we can call it even."

Enjolras can't help pouting a little. "You were in love with me too," he says, because he's almost - almost - sure of that. The way Grantaire's mind was bending towards his in the same way, the way his reply to Enjolras's feelings was a simple 'love you too' without having to think or process. Which, of course, begs the question of how long were they both in love and not saying anything. Are they actually the most dense pair of people in human history? Enjolras glances down at Grantaire's knuckles. "How long did you -?"
"Oh." When he looks up again, Grantaire's cheeks are turning slightly pink, strangely visible since his face is otherwise quite pale. Grantaire's look is apologetic, which could go either way. "Four days," he admits awkwardly. "Well, four days before the protest so now it's been a whole week, although I guess I slept through most of it." His eyes dart up to meet Enjolras's for a moment, and fail to move away.

Enjolras isn't disappointed. He's not, he's happy enough that Grantaire did start feeling the same way back and if he's just realising now that four days would be after the full moon, right when Grantaire decided to leave. Because he couldn't have feelings for Enjolras and stay, wouldn't that be terrible, wouldn't that be exactly what Enjolras did to him. "So the whole time we were sleeping together, you didn't -"

"I -" Grantaire hesitates. "No. I mean, I think Eponine knew but I was clueless," he offers up a small smile like this is something they can laugh at.

The first time, in the pack house, Grantaire had laughed and Enjolras had found himself laughing too. Naked and kissing and laughing and Enjolras had been in love with him then, but it hadn't meant anything at all. "How did you realise?"

"Why do i have to start? that's not fair. You gave me a whole infodump of feelings starting from literally the first day you saw me, so how about you start and I'll come in later."

"I-," That should be a reason for Grantaire starting. Enjolras's story is too long and complicated, too twisted up in all of the feelings that Grantaire has already had to talk through. "You know my part."

Grantaire smiles faintly, eyes sliding shut reminiscently. "Yeah," he agrees slowly. "But I want to hear you tell it." His eyelids flutter a little but don't open again and it hits Enjolras, like a tonne of blatantly obvious bricks, that Grantaire is lying back and slurring his words because he's exhausted. How long has he been awake? Long enough to invite their friends in and chat to them.

"Okay," Enjolras moves his hand up a little further, the tips of his fingers stretched out to Grantaire's wrist where he can feel the steady pulse. "It was evening, I had spent a full day of classes preparing a presentation and had then spent the entire drive to the Musain listening to Combeferre tell me off for not paying attention in any of my classes." He looks up at Grantaire's face. "I started talking and you walked in. You looked confused, like you'd expected to come through the door into somewhere else entirely and your hair was sticking up all over in a way no one else could do if they tried." He finds himself smiling unexpectedly at the memory, how he can still picture Grantaire's face in that moment. "I know, it was a while ago. You barely even looked at me, and I was distracted from everything I'd been thinking about wondering who you were, why you'd come, how a human had heard about the ABC without being a friend of someone there. I didn't finish talking, Combeferre had to take over, you probably don't even remember me being at that meeting."

Grantaire laughs, soft, eyes still closed. "I remember. I was drunk, otherwise I wouldn't have have gone. Feuilly sold me some wine, I was trying to figure out if your group was secretly evil or deluded." He smiles vaguely at the ceiling. "I remember you. You were the brightest point in the room. I remember, I drew your picture."

Enjolras freezes, frowning at him. "You drew Feuilly. I have the picture." It's mostly the bar, really, but Feuilly is caught behind it. The whole background seems to spread out from him in some way, like the bar is truly a part of him. Enjolras took it that first night thinking he might ask permission to frame it for Feuilly's birthday, but he'd ended up keeping it.

"Not that picture," Grantaire yawns widely. "I kept it."
He never keeps them. Enjolras could have sworn, he's kept track of every time Grantaire didn't tear up or throw into the rubbish bin, Enjolras picked up as soon as he'd gone. Why would he keep that one? "I should let you sleep."

Grantaire's fingers twitch against his again. "Keep talking, I'll sleep. Stay."

Enjolras leans in to kiss Grantaire's fingers, trying to jostle his arm as little as possible. "I'm not going anywhere," he promises, and in a softer voice continues talking. How Grantaire was intriguing with his pen and his apparent indifference, sneaking up to the table to get a look at each drawing, when he started taking them away.

He talks softly until his throat is dry and Grantaire's pulse and breathing are the slow steady beat of deep sleep. "And that's when I knew I loved you."

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His parents come back to visit that afternoon, bringing with them his laptop – finally – and some marginally more palatable food, in the form of half a baguette and a wheel of cheese. They've moved into Enjolras’s spare room to the end of the week, they explain, but then Dad does have to go back to work, although Mum assures him that if he wants her to stay, she can, and if he needs both of them it’s only a couple of hours drive.

Grantaire doesn’t wake up the whole time they’re there. Dad tries to include him, which mostly involves standing beside his bed for five minutes then commenting that he looks much better, there’s plenty of colour coming back to his cheeks. Enjolras took two pills at their insistence when they arrived, and can now sit with his knees up without feeling like he’s being stabbed repeatedly between the ribs. It should be an improvement, but it makes it harder to think straight, he’s trying to listen to his dad going through all the ways Grantaire’s condition appears improved but he keeps getting distracted thinking that Grantaire’s breathing is less steady than it normally is when he’s sleeping.

“I could bring you some soup,” Mum says, when Enjolras turns down more bread because seriously he isn’t wasting away in here and he eats plenty normally. “You used to love my soup when you were sick, remember that day you kept shifting back and forth so that your fur would rub off on the sheets so you could claim that you were moulting and had to stay home from school?”

Grantaire’s breathing goes out of time again. Enjolras narrows his eyes looking over at him, is his mouth less slack than before? Is that a pointed curling up at the edges? His mum follows the look, and her own smile is not even a little subtle. “Well,” she says, reaching out to put a hand on Dad’s elbow. “It’s good you’re both doing well. We ought to get to the shops before they close, oughtn’t we dear.” She leans down to kiss Enjolras’s cheek, then pauses at Grantaire’s bed for a moment, before settling on squeezing his palm gently. His fingers curl very slightly into hers and her face breaks into a soft, off-guard smile.

It’s the second time Enjolras has seen that look on her face, and they’ve both been Grantaire. First the drawing, now something as simple as this.

Dad pulls Enjolras’s shoulders forward into a quick hug, beard scratching against his cheek. “I don’t blame you at all for wanting to stay of course, but have you considered maybe you’d both get more rest in your own rooms? Your apartment seems oddly empty without you, are you redecorating or something? Everything’s quite sparse, although I was telling your mother on the drive over that I bet you’d have nothing in the kitchen and clearly I underestimated you there.”

Grantaire snorts, then attempts to cover it up with a shift against the sheets like a room full of three
werewolves might have missed it. Dad’s eyebrows raise and he opens his mouth, clearly to make some pointed joke but he’s stopped by Mum placing a hand on his shoulder. “Could you go start the car,” she says, forestalling whatever he was going to embarrass the two of them with.

"I'll be down in a moment."

Dad looks from Enjolras to her with a grin and the urge to joke at Grantaire’s expense is diverted seamlessly into a, "Don't tell me, girl stuff?"

Enjolras shrugs, because he's not sure either. If she tries to start a conversation with Grantaire while he can't run away, well, Enjolras may want them to get on but he's going to at least give Grantaire the chance of an even footing when it happens. If she saw something in Grantaire's head - but her only connection to him was through Enjolras so she shouldn't have had anything that Enjolras didn't also see. Dad squeezes his shoulder one last time and heads out with a wave.

Enjolras picks crumbs out of the heart of the baguette left on his tray table, tapping his fingers on the plastic. It seems rude to throw her out so that he can talk to Grantaire instead, but she's his mum. She's loved him all his life, Grantaire has loved him for one week and Enjolras needs details. Plus, after all that 'I need to talk to him' she's sitting there not saying anything.

"is there-" Enjolras tries to focus on her face and not Grantaire right behind her cracking an eyelid open to give him a 'what's up with her' look. "Before he comes back looking for you?"

She reaches up to push her hair back behind her ear. "We're here until the end of the week."

He gives it a moment for the rest of the point to arrive. It doesn't. "You mentioned, earlier. You're staying in my apartment, if they release us before the week's out you'll get a hotel but the doctors say it's unlikely since they have to monitor Grantaire's condition for a few days before they can even think about removing the breathing tube." That part is imprinted on Enjolras's memory, but he realises a moment too late that maybe he shouldn't have said it aloud because behind mum Grantaire's face falls a little, dropping resignedly back into the pillow.

"Your father -" she hesitates. This isn't like her, she's normally a person who wants everyone to get straight to the point, none of this time wasting and hedging around the subject. "Your campaign with me was always about our criminal justice system and its bias against solus humans, I assume because of my background in the law and my contacts in the justice department. I know I have not been the best listener, and it was your - it was meeting Grantaire that opened my eyes a little. I'll admit I dismissed you a little before, and I am sorry about that, but you've always been so passionate about everything." She reaches out a hand to touch his wrist, pulling his focus back. "I don't mean that as a bad thing, but you'll find the rest of us are easily overwhelmed by everything, it's easier if we have one focus."

"There's not just one problem," Enjolras interrupts before she can follow down that road. "If we only focus on one pixel of the picture we have no idea how it affects the world as a whole. You can try to fix one tiny part, but for all you know you're destroying something else. We campaigned for registration of wolves shifting in public spaces and that passed so they could be held accountable, but now there are more wolves shifting on the street than there ever were before. I don't know if that's better, there are people who might be scared seeing a wolf running towards them and that instinct doesn't change because the wolf is wearing an ID tag."

The debate at the ABC when Cosette raised the issue as one that should be on their radar had been fierce. Ultimately they'd come out in favour, but Courfeyrac still refused to attend any meets in support of it and was campaigning for designated wolf free streets before the bill had even passed. Grantaire had sat in the back corner through the meeting and hadn't looked up once. Enjolras had
had to fish his drawing out of the rubbish bin after, and the picture of a young boy's face with scars running deep across it had haunted his sleep for weeks.

But you can't do nothing, either. Progress is slow, but at least it's moving forward.

"I know," she says. "And I'm sure you're right, I'm sure you know more about this cause of yours than me, but perhaps you can admit I know a little more about these people. The politicians, the man on the street," she pauses for a moment. "And your father."

This one’s easy. "He's tried," Enjolras says, mimicking Dad's 'I'm trying to compromise but you're being unreasonable' tone almost flawlessly, he thinks. He's heard it a lot. "He supported the bond rights bill that I was flagging at him, it didn't pass because there's not enough of the right attitudes around at the moment and it's a tragic shame but what else can he possibly be expected to do."

Somewhere in there it stopped being mocking and became bitter. The last sentence sounds downright cruel from his mouth but he can't help it because it's frustrating, okay, to hear the same thing over and over again and knowing if you start yelling you're going to become the one who's 'being unreasonable' even when all you want to do is shout: 'more. You could possibly do more than this.'

"I know it's frustrating," she says, sounding one hundred percent authentic and caring which is how he knows she is using one of her many leadership techniques. "But when I spoke to Grantaire, he's very authentic. He's likeable, and your father picked up on that. What's happened here, it's tragic, I don't want to suggest in any way that it was an advantage but -" something must be showing on his face because she slows down again, picking her words very carefully. "You have his attention. To the end of the week, the two of you have one hundred percent of his attention." She leans forward to kiss his forehead. "That's all I'm saying, it's up to you. We'll see you tomorrow," she turns around quickly, catching Grantaire a moment before he can close his eyes convincingly again. "Nice to see you Grantaire."

As soon as the door shuts, Grantaire opens his eyes properly and smiles drowsily at Enjolras. “I think I fooled them.”

Enjolras takes his laptop carefully off the table, placing it on the pillow and pushing the tray back to free his legs. His doctor had been in after Grantaire fell asleep to change the dressings and had pronounced Enjolras as healing well and given him official permission to walk to the bathroom without having to call a nurse. In the bathroom, he’d finally got a good look at his body. The first time he’d had these injuries, he’d been in wolf form and then immediately shifted back, so that first heal had been in place before he was even human enough to be aware he was injured. Without that, the claw wounds in his left thigh needed sixteen staples between them and the bruising on the left side of his body starts at his armpit and spreads all the way down to his hip. There are other areas of clawing, a few bites that he has to clean out daily but in comparison it’s all superficial.

His parents had arrived right as he was trying to hop from the handlebarred corridors across the room to his bed, his Mum had gone off to shout at someone or other and now he has a crutch, which he grabs at to lever himself back out of bed and into the chair up next to Grantaire’s bed. “Hey,” he says.

Grantaire’s fingers wave imperiously at him and Enjolras obediently reaches out to lace their hands together. “Hey,” Grantaire’s voice is still a little slurry, he’s definitely on better drugs than Enjolras. “I was thinking, it’s lucky I signed those forms for pack medical care. You don’t get anything like this when you go public.” He laughs softly to himself at something Enjolras isn’t following. “I can feel you in my head now, you’re somewhere -” his hand lifts a little, but doesn’t make it anywhere near his head. “There.” He flicks his head, like he can nod in the direction of his
own brain. “Somewhere there.”

Enjolras is definitely not laughing, he’s at least compressing it into a smile at Grantaire flailing his head against the pillows. “It’s because the bond is different,” he says, glad he spent an hour on his phone googling it. “They ran some tests and it seems like we equalised it, so there’s that.”

“Cool,” his head rolls back to stare at the ceiling, eyelids already drooping again. “Next time let's go with the knives and chanting. You know, for variety.”

Enjolras laughs helplessly, leaning down to kiss the back of Grantaire’s hand. “Sure,” he says. “Next time.”

Grantaire’s fingers curved gently against his chin, four points of contact that in that moment felt more momentous than the first time they had sex. “Hey,” he says. “So your mum didn’t seem to hate me?” Enjolras moves Grantaire’s hand a little so it can rest on his cheek without him having to hold it up so much, and so he can feel Enjolras shaking his head.

No, she doesn’t hate you. No, how could anyone ever hate you.

“I did almost kill her only son,” Grantaire explains gently, fingers moving incrementally back and forth on Enjolras’s skin. “I keep thinking she’s going to demand to know why I thought I had the right, why - I don’t know.”

“She was mad at me,” Enjolras tells him. “Not you, never you. And only at me because she was scared, not because she wanted anything to happen to you, I don’t think she even realised how bad it was.”

Grantaire smiles reassuringly at him. “I get it. Her point of view. I mean, you’re you and then there’s me, this washed up bartender who didn’t even finish high school.” A soft laugh that hurts Enjolras more than his leg and ribs combined. “Maybe consider that next time you’re deciding to put your life in someone’s hands.”

Enjolras shakes his head again, turns it further to press a kiss against Grantaire’s lightly trembling palm. “Ten out of ten,” he promises into the skin. “Would put life in again.”

Grantaire lets out a soft whine at that, the sort of sound that makes Enjolras's whole body tremble for the times when they both had functioning bodies and there was so much stuff they didn't do back when they could've. Enjolras presses kisses against Grantaire's fingertips, takes his hand to kiss his wrist.

"Is this one of those fancy moving beds?" Grantaire asks. "I want to sit up."

There are bandages all across his torso, the shunt on the back of his hand is stopping Enjolras from kissing there and there's still the ever present tube across his top lip. Enjolras runs his hand across Grantaire's forearm. "I don't think it's a good idea to move."

"I want to see you." Grantaire runs his fingertip across Enjolras's chin, his heads lifting a solid inch off the pillow, at what looks like a particularly uncomfortable angle.

It's like a logic puzzle. If Grantaire has stitches in his shoulder, chest and hip; Enjolras has gashes across his thigh and broken ribs on the left side how can they fit together to create one whole. After some awkward negotiating, an amount of wincing on both sides and Enjolras taking slightly more than the recommended dose of vicodin they end up both against the slightly inclined end of Grantaire's bed, Grantaire's head resting against Enjolras's right side and their hands laced in his lap, the clip on Grantaire's index finger digging into Enjolras's thumb.
"When she got me that first commission," Grantaire says. "It came with a whole pack of paperwork, about how she was acting as an agent but didn't expect any agent fees but with provisions for when I hired a proper agent, how the transfer would work and how much I should expect to pay. There was a detailed letter going through it and explaining that she'd hired a lawyer to draw it up so that I could use Katie to read over it as my representative."

They're talking about his mum, again, Enjolras realises. She'd asked him about the picture, he'd seen Grantaire drawing it, it made sense there would have been steps in the middle but it's strange to picture them communicating without him involved.

Grantaire taps their fingers against his lap. "I guess don't be so harsh on her. You sounded like - but it's not like she never thought anything of me, if she was thinking about agents." He's warm against Enjolras's side and Enjolras can get what he's saying and appreciate Mum looking into the justice system and love her because she's still his mum.

But for a while all that is going to weigh against the sound of her voice in his head saying 'you have to break the bond' and knowing that if he'd done so Grantaire wouldn't be here. They'd never have exchanged 'I love you's or come out to their friends or finally talked about all the places where nothing had quite added up to what should have been there all along.

Enjolras kisses his forehead, catching hair and skin. "She didn't know I loved you."

Grantaire laughs. "Sure, but that doesn't matter. You'd have done it for anyone if you could, I know you." He squeezes Enjolras's hand. "You didn't know I loved you. Maybe we all need to work on our communication."

Enjolras hesitates, but he can't not ask, not with such a blatant set up. "I think I did my part yesterday, which would make it your turn." He wants to ask, doesn't want to ask, is swallowing down the horrible feeling in his throat just to get the words out. "Since apparently the first time we slept together, you didn't have any feelings at all -"

"Hey, hey." Grantaire tilts his whole head up, turns his body a little even though he shouldn't to kiss Enjolras's chin and holds his lips there for a moment, warm and soft on Enjolras's skin. "It wasn't nothing," he says. "Love is a big thing, it's a lot to ask, but I liked you." Another quick kiss on his jaw. "I liked you."

Enjolras mirrors his twist so they can meet each other's eyes, Grantaire's nervous smile against all the uncertainty Enjolras has been battling with. "And when did you -?"

Grantaire kisses the side of his mouth. "It was the longest night of my life." He sits back a bit, so Enjolras can't bridge the distance without leaning over him. "None of us could think of anything, they came and came and my arms were so heavy on that iron bar it felt like I could hardly lift it but the wolves kept coming. Every time I missed a strike, if I saw one coming for me you were there, and I wasn't feeling anything but exhaustion, relief."

Enjolras holds his hand tighter, tight enough to hurt, leans in to press his face into Grantaire's neck, reassure him that they're not there anymore, they got through, they made it. "You don't have to tell me."

Grantaire shakes his head. "Then it was dawn," he says, his voice brushing Enjolras's hair. "You changed - there was blood, there was so much - and all I could do was collapse next to you. The others, everyone was so exhausted we knew the pack had to be around somewhere, it was only a matter of time before they woke up but we didn't know where to go, we were so tired." He swallows, Enjolras can feel it. "Combeferre came, with Courfeyrac. They had a van, they were
going to take them to a safe house but they wouldn't go. You can't blame them, after that night this wolf showing up and telling them to trust him -" his voice falters. "You couldn't blame them, but I wanted to. I hated them, a little bit, because they wanted me to go with them. They wanted someone they could trust with them and I had to go, I had to leave you." He tilts his head back and Enjolras takes the cue to lift his head and met Grantaire's eyes. "That's when I knew."

There is a look in his eye when he thinks about it, a shadow that maybe Enjolras will never be able to wipe away. He reaches up with his free hand, trails his fingers down Grantaire's cheek like maybe he could, if he could just find the start of it. "I thought you were scared of me."

A weak twitch of the lips, nothing like an actual smile. "No, pretty much not that. I thought you'd know, I figured you could smell it on me or something."

Enjolras - he's not proud of it or anything but the absurdity of the statement makes him laugh in spite of himself. "You thought I would smell it? Like, some 'I am in love with you' cologne?"

"That's how it works in the movies."

"Because they're fictional!" Enjolras kisses him because he can't not, when Grantaire is pouting at him and they are the worst communicators in the world ever. "I'm not some magical creature with superpowers."

Grantaire kisses him for that one, Enjolras moving his hand to twist through his hair, putting more effort into teasing the strands than he normally would since Grantaire can’t lift his own arms to return the favour. Grantaire’s mouth opens and Enjolras honestly feels like he could kiss him forever. That first time in the pack house, it was like something slotting into place. A realisation that this was the one, this was it, nothing would ever take this memory away and nothing could ever surpass it.

Kissing him now, knowing that Grantaire feels the same way surpasses it. Knowing that Grantaire wants him, that they’re both alive and they’re going to stay here together, go home together, get their shit together together.

They kiss until the pulse machine is beeping uncomfortably fast and Enjolras is starting to get hard with no idea how to deal with it in a hospital bed - the door is open, nurses could come in at any moment, and that’s nothing to the problems Grantaire’s going to have if they keep going with his catheter.

Enjolras pulls away reluctantly, preses his forehead to Grantaire’s instead - it’s totally different, definitely easier and he’s only being turned on a little bit more by Grantaire’s breathless laugh still so close against his face. “You kissed me first,” Enjolras says, reminded by the symmetry and just thinking back to it.

Grantaire’s brow furrows for a moment, then he laughs again. “Yeah. But to be fair you were naked in my bed? I figured either you’d kiss me back or get all scandalised and pull away, and either of those options seemed less awkward than trying to slowly detangle my fingers from your hair?”

Enjolras stares at him for a moment. “You thought I’d be scandalised,” he echoes, really rolling the word around to give it its full weight.

Grantaire knocks their foreheads together. “In my defence, I didn’t even know if you were sexual,
let alone into the dudes. You’ve never brought anyone to meetings.”

That is… probably true actually, looking back at the period of time Grantaire’s been coming. “My last boyfriend,” he says slowly. “Liked to paint pictures of his partners naked, which at the time I thought was amazing and artistic and he was so wonderful,” Enjolras can remember saying all of these things to Coufeyrac who, to his credit, smiled supportively instead of laughing like a hyena at Enjolras’s apparently painfully obvious type. “Turned out he was giving all the pictures to his ex, and also sleeping with him, but apparently it wasn’t cheating because it was all for his art.”

“Wow,” Grantaire laughs, moving his head back to their original position with him resting on Enjolras’s shoulder. “You should teach me how to act like a functional human, because I used to think you had everything together but clearly you are a sham, and you cannot deny it to me because I’ve seen your apartment.”

Enjolras thinks about denying it, but his apartment is infinitely better with Grantaire in it, which reminds him of another issue that needs to be covered. “So, you and me is pretty new as a relationship. Assuming - I mean, you called me your boyfriend so I’m assuming we’re both on the same page with that -” he takes a breath, actually thinks through his next sentence before starting. “I know living together at the start of a relationship isn’t always a good idea. People need space, they need to figure things out.”

Grantaire pulls his head back. “Are you kicking me out? Because I never thought I’d have to play this card but, Enjolras, I literally live in the spare room above a bar. Sometimes I sleep on the floor.”

Enjolras kisses him. “I’m just saying, if you ever need space. If I’m too much or you don’t want to deal with me, you don’t have to hold back on my account or try to come up with some explanation, you can just go. To Eponine’s to the pack house, wherever you need.”

Grantaire laughs, then kisses Enjolras’s slight frown before he can object. “I will bear that in mind. I feel very respected and equal in this partnership.” He kisses Enjolras again and this time Enjolras lets it go deeper, drops more across his cheeks, they’re getting back into dangerous territory when Grantaire interrupts.

“I was thinking, and please don’t dump me immediately, but when you’re in wolf form you aren’t really wearing clothes.” He’s failing to suppress a grin. “So technically I drew a picture of you naked and gave it to your mother.” He gives Enjolras a completely fake wide eyed shock face. “Gosh, it’s no wonder you’re trying to get rid of me.”

Enjolras tries not to laugh, he tries because apparently he’s stuck with this for the foreseeable future and there’s only so many terrible jokes he wants to encourage. “You’re a dork.”

Grantaire grins like he can see exactly how much of Enjolras is trying to laugh. “Yeah, but you love me.”

And Enjolras does. Completely.

* 

Combeferre arrives promptly at nine am the next morning. He hovers outside the doorway while the morning nurse checks Grantaire's bandages and Enjolras eats his bowl of allegedly porridge. “Is he awake?” he asks, when Enjolras gives up and pushes his tray table back so he can limp over to the doorway.
Enjolras glances over at Grantaire and away again quickly at the sight of blood. "R? Are you awake?" He can appreciate that Grantaire is still very injured without having to see it, he doesn't have to know in detail exactly how close Grantaire came to dying.

"For you babe, anytime."

Combeferre raises an eyebrow and Enjolras definitely is not blushing, it's just unusually warm in here and he has strange bloodflow because of all the fleshwounds. "So I heard an interesting rumour from Bahorel," Combeferre says. "And I told him that he must be exaggerating because you are incapable of keeping secrets, and definitely not from me. But, then I stopped off to pick this one up and now I'm going with 'what the hell?'"

"Hi," says Eponine from the doorway. "I can't believe you didn't tell anyone, Grantaire literally texted me the moment he got up to brush his teeth."

"Oh god."

"He said you were very enthusiastic and it was super endearing," she rolls her eyes. "I can't believe it took you guys this long to get your shit together." She pushes past him into the room. Today, her jeans are torn off at the bottom and belted tightly at the waist to be the right length and she's wearing a hoodie that is definitely too big to be hers and smell faintly of werewolf, under the alcohol and cigarette smoke. The nurse tying off Grantaire's bandage wrinkles her nose, but Grantaire beams as soon as he sees her.

"Eponine! They put me on the good drugs again! Enjolras tried to kick me out of his apartment, but we're all happy now."

Eponine's eyes turn daggers on Enjolras, who raises his hands quickly and shakes his head. She analyses him for a moment, then seems to decide he's more trustworthy than Grantaire's drug haze and turns away again, which would be great except that it leaves Enjolras with -

"In your apartment," Combeferre says. "He's staying in your apartment."

"So we're kind of dating? Now. We weren't before."

"When you were sleeping together." Combeferre shakes his head. "I've got to stop thinking I'm coming to you with big news, it's like you're making a habit of one-upping it."

Enjolras refuses the offer of a shoulder, since he's basically got the crutches figured out now. It's nice to be mobile, even if the furthest he's gone is a hundred metres down the hall to the bathroom. He still gets to gloat over Grantaire though, since Grantaire still isn't cleared to sit up let alone pee.

It's the small things. Grantaire smiles at the nurses so they bring him extra pudding which Enjolras thinks makes them even.

"So you haven't asked about my news," Combeferre says, when Enjolras is perched on the edge of his bed. There are two chairs in the room, but if Combeferre doesn't sit down Enjolras has no intention of staying on the mattress as soon as Grantaire's dressings are done.

Eponine is watching because she has no shame and occasionally chips in with, "That doesn't look so big, I don't know what you're lying here on your ass complaining about."

Combeferre pointedly clears his throat and Enjolras pulls his attention back to the conversation he's actually in. "Sorry, yes, news? Did they catch Valance? Did you find a job? Is anyone else in hospital because honestly maybe don't tell me that one, give me a few more days of being half the
invalid population of the ABC."

Combeferre smiles. "Do you want the good news or the bad news?"

If there is one thing Enjolras has learned in years of political activism, it's the answer to this question. "Give me the bad."

"You're going to have to start studying for final exams." Combeferre reaches into his bag and pulls out a sheet of paper. "The phrases 'wish he'd shown this kind of commitment at any point during the module' and 'would be great if not for all the heavy bias' were used when I spoke to her, but apparently you got enough facts down in amongst the propaganda to make the grade, plus a twenty percent mark-up for extenuating circumstances, if you go to student services as soon as you're mobile and fill in a few forms."

He drops the page on the bed and Enjolras picks it up. It's his essay, a solid page and a half effort for the amount of exam time he used and the fact that it stops in the middle of a sentence doesn't seem to have any effect on the 'B-' scrawled in the top corner. "I passed?"

"You passed," Combeferre confirms. "Now you only have four end of year exams to worry about, but fortunately it looks like you'll be having a lot of rest and recovery time in which to do all that studying you normally forget about." He grins, pushing Enjolras lightly on his more functional shoulder. "I'll forward on some job links. And you can have today to rest, but if you're still here tomorrow I'm bringing in the text books. Grantaire," he calls over one shoulder. "I'm enlisting your help, together we can finally get him to graduate."

They stick around until Enjolras's parents arrive, at which point the nurse knocks politely on the doorframe to let them know Grantaire is still limited to two additional visitors and would they like to do a swap over. Eponine glances at her phone and says something about being late for work, Combeferre standing up quickly to offer her a ride back to the bar.

Eponine rests a hand briefly on Grantaire's shoulder. "I'll catch you later, okay." Then bumps far less gently into Enjolras's arm. "Wolf."

Enjolras nods his response, because 'human' doesn't have the same ring. Combeferre is more gentle, pulling him into a very lopsided hug with a quick pat on the back. He glances between the two of them as Eponine walks away and shakes his head. "I can't believe this worked out," he tells Enjolras. "But since you managed to unfuck everything without me even knowing about it, I suppose I have to give you some credit. Although, I'm not sure waiting until one person gets shot is the best way to solve communication troubles in future."

Grantaire laughs, even though he's been in and out of sleep for the last half hour, mostly dozing pretending to listen to Combeferre and Enjolras discussing the particulars of the case against Valance, which they're not actually involved in but at this rate the lawyer who is is going to receive a long anonymous list of ideas in his email one day soon. "Next time I'll stub my toe or something," he suggests quietly. "Fall out of bed, break my arm in a freak bicycle accident."

"We'll use our words," Enjolras says, rolling his eyes. "Promise."

Combeferre squeezes his shoulder again then heads out after Eponine, Enjolras steals the chair to have a quick few minutes with Grantaire while the nurse leads them out. "You’re not allowed to stub your toe," Enjolras says, kicking his foot against the bottom of the bed because he can’t sit still when they’re not touching. “I’m not letting anything hurt you again.”

“Don’t think you can help that,” Grantaire tries to sit up and one of the pillows falls down,
knocking him forward and making him cry out as he bends double around his stomach injury. Enjolras jumps to his feet to catch him, puts all his weight on his left leg and ends up collapsing on top of him in a heap. For a moment he’s frustrated, with himself and his leg and this whole situation that’s still stopping them from being together.

Over his head, Grantaire starts laughing. Starting slightly choked, a cry of pain that somehow twisted, but then he’s falling back on his pillows and laughing, properly, all encompassing and Enjolras - Enjolras pushes himself up onto his right leg and looks into bright sparkling green eyes and they’re alive, they’re so alive. Torn up, stitched back together, a deeper connection that’s evolving day by day.

“God, we’re going to be so useless,” Grantaire says as Enjolras attempts to lift his chair back up without putting any weight on his leg. He’s left his crutch just slightly too far out of reach, of course. “Hobbling around your flat, bumping into things. After all this I was hoping we could at least have sex but I think the logistics may be beyond us.”

A week ago that might have made Enjolras blush, but now he just smiles helplessly and gives up on the chair, perching on the edge of the bed instead. “We’ll heal,” he promises.

“Will we though?” Grantaire pokes his leg lightly with a fingertip. “Or will someone come by the apartment a week later to find us collapsed in a pile on the floor rolling everywhere and eating pizza covered in mystery meat?”

He’s joking, but there’s a hint of something behind his eyes. Enjolras can’t blame him, they’re two wildly opposing forces, they’ve lived together thus far in a strange in between type world where everything was only ever supposed to be temporary. Now they’re talking about making permanent a relationship that’s only ever been based on the flimsiest premise and Enjolras’s whole heart is resting on the line. Enjolras takes his hand, squeezes it tight and looks directly into his eyes. “We’ll have to look after each other,” he says, making it a promise.

Grantaire’s whole face softens, caught momentarily off guard, lips slightly parted in surprise. When he smiles again, even that’s gentle. “I was going to say we’ll have to bring in Combeferre as our personal nursemaid,” he says. “But that works too.”

Enjolras desperately wants to kiss him for that, but at that moment the door opens and Mum and Dad come back in. “Enjolras,” Mum says, frowning at them. “That doesn’t look like a good position for healing, what if you hurt each other.” She’s across the room in a moment, pulling him into a hug that also incidentally turns into a support for him to hop back to his own bed. “Grantaire, good to see you awake.”

Grantaire’s smile fades to something more guarded. “Hi Mrs Enjolras. I don’t think I’ll be awake for long.”

“Sleep is the cure for all,” Dad agrees, pulling Enjolras into a tight hug and leaning over to shake Grantaire’s hand. “Who was that girl in the hallway?” he asks over his shoulder to Enjolras. “Is she one of your ABC lot? Looked like a strong breeze would blow her clean away.”

"She's -" Enjolras starts, and immediately fumbles on what word best describes the chaos that is Eponine.

"She's pack," Grantaire says, blinking up under heavy eyelids and a sleepy smile. "I mean, not like she's blood family but she's mine."

Dad's brow furrows and for a moment Enjolras isn't sure if he'll get it. For all that the Enjolras pack
is huge in land and bodies, it is surprisingly easy to map every member onto the same family tree. A few people married in here and there, but mostly it's aunts and uncles and cousins all the way down. Other than the few stragglers Enjolras has corralled and claimed into the mix, they're all one family.

But then he smiles warmly. "You can't choose the pack you're born into, but you can choose the one you run with."

It's the same thing he said to Combeferre, Enjolras remembers, before switching shape to press the bite into Combeferre's shoulder and claim him into the new pack. He rests his hand briefly on Grantaire’s shoulder, and Enjolras can only see his face from the side but he thinks it's the same look, the understanding that for better or worse Grantaire is chosen now too.

Enjolras’s heart could burst a little, and their connection might still be strong enough for Grantaire to feel that because his eyes flick over with a small smile just for them.

They help fix up Grantaire’s pillows again and lie the bed flat so Grantaire can drift back off. There is a curtain, but he waves them off closing it and sure enough by the time they're sitting down beside Enjolras’s bed, Grantaire is breathing steady and probably not faking it this time. Enjolras sits up in his own bed, takes the food they've brought and makes the mistake of saying that he passed his test retake, meaning anything they were going to say gets lost to a full rundown of the exams he has, how he’s planning to study.

"Now, I don't want you to worry too much about jobs and prioritise them over your exams, we all know how you are with a split focus," Dad says with a grin, after he’s literally pulled out a notebook to draw up a revision timetable covering all of Enjolras’s free time and made plans to bring textbooks in the next day before they drive back home. "But, I do have some contacts in the area. Now, I know we didn't met under the best circumstances but we had Senator Tholymes over for dinner to soothe over that... unfortunate misunderstanding, and he is a fairly decent fellow once you get him talking. I know you and he won't see eye to eye on a lot of issues, but he's starting a strong campaign for next season, his career is really only going up and he'll be looking to take one a lot of new staff. Entry level is a hard sell, but if you can pick up your grades this exam season and you have plenty of experience in campaigning and drumming up public support, as long as we emphasise your leadership of the ABC over its political platform -"

He's still talking, but that's about the moment Enjolras stops even trying to process the actual words since it's clearly as far from his plans as anything could possibly be. He looks over at Mum, she knows where he's coming from, she's spoken to Grantaire about Tholymes, surely she'll interrupt at any minute with all the words Enjolras is normally so good at.

She purses her lips, and he allows himself to breath a tiny sigh of relief that she's stepping up, but then she bends down to pick up her purse and stands up. "I don't think this is my area of expertise, I'm meeting Katia for lunch, I'll be back later."

"What?" Enjolras say, urgent, trying to telegraph no, don't leave me with his eyes. "I thought you could...stay."

"Well you're doing so much better, it'll be nice for the two of you to talk." She kisses Dad on the cheek then Enjolras and then she's gone, Grantaire is sleeping in the bed behind so here it is, just the two of them.

The two of them, and Dad's new best friend Senator Tholymes. Even before Grantaire, Tholymes was a man Enjolras wouldn't have wanted to touch with a barge pole. He's never stood on a stage and proclaimed werewolf superiority, but he's quietly amended countless bills to tip the bias further
into werewolf favour. He campaigned aggressively against the equal pay act, claiming that there was no way a werewolf and a human could be doing equal work in any industry because wolves were simply better. Worth more.

"I'm not going to work for Senator Tholymes," Enjolras says, before Dad can figure out where he left off. That's a good start, that's how he'd open a speech on the matter. Here is my position and I will fight to defend it.

Dad smiles, familiar and slightly condescending like Enjolras is still a puppy saying he isn't going to eat his broccoli and you can't make me. "I'm not offering you a job, I'm merely suggesting that you think about it. Tholymes is hiring, he's shown a real interest in you when we've been talking. I know he fought against our platform when you had me raise that bill a couple of years ago, but maybe that's better for you. Working against the system from the inside," he nudges Enjolras's arm with a grin. "It would be fantastic on your resume, really good experience for when you're a bit older and more in a position to choose."

There is, of course, benefit to working inside a system to change things. Enjolras fundamentally disagrees with the imbalance of power in the government as it stands, but he still took a politics degree, he still plans to work to change it. But Tholymes isn't going to be interested in that, he's benefiting from a system that he sees no reason to change.

And the reason Dad is raising it without seeming at all concerned by the ethical qualms is because he is too. "I'm not going to work for him." It would work better with eye contact, but Enjolras is very engrossed in his sheets right now, picking at the threads with his fingernails. "I don't know how you can -" He's raising his voice too much, with Grantaire sleeping next door and Dad's face closing over. This isn't a debate, not if he starts shouting, it's a kid having a tantrum.

Enjolras takes a deep breath. "He has actively campaigned against equal rights in multiple instances, in his personal life he has knowingly harmed human employees and favoured werewolves over humans at every turn."

Dad sighs. "I'm not saying that's a good thing," he forestalls quickly. "But it would be an advantage to you. I know you like seeing the big picture, but if we narrow it down to focus on your future. Tholomyes will respond to your pedigree, you'll have amazing opportunities for advancement -"

"If I sell out everything I believe in," Enjolras cuts across him. He still can't quite believe they're having this conversation, that Dad has apparently been taking fucking tea with Tholymes despite them being in opposing political parties and Grantaire being briefly imprisoned by Tholymes's accusations.

"You don't have to turn your back on everything. You can still have your little club, even, as long as you don't actively protest against anything Tholymes is supporting."

"The ABC," Enjolras grits out firmly. "Protests approximately one hundred percent of the things that Tholymes is supporting."

"So take a break. Pass your exams, get yourself a good job. Give in a year or two, just a little while and then you'll be free to do whatever you want."

"And how much legislation will I have helped him pass in that time? How do I sleep at night for two years knowing I'm assisting a man like that to hold power."

"You remind yourself of the amount you've achieved," dad insists. "You're still so young, and you've done so many huge things but it's like you can't even see them. You got Combeferre away
from that family that didn't understand him, you helped Courfeyrac. You saved Grantaire, your mother tells me he could have been in prison for life and you did that, Enjolras, you stopped that." He shakes his head. "The newspapers say you saved fourteen humans last full moon and while I may not agree with your methods," his eyes linger on the bandages across Enjolras's shoulder, the cut slicing across his cheek. "You have that result. Don't you think it's someone else's turn? Time to step back a little and focus on your own life?"

It's funny, because it's almost what Combeferre has been saying, what Rosier's been saying. You need to stop thinking about other people long enough to pass your exams, long enough to graduate university, and now long enough to get two years experience in a reputable senator's office.

And in some ways, sure, he's right. Enjolras has been a student for too long, Enjolras has no idea how the world works in reality because he still believes that things can be better tomorrow than they are today. But he's not willing to give up on that, not for a degree or a job or anything. He can't, and that's what no one seems to understand.

"I am going to get my degree," Enjolras says slowly. "I'll put my ABC work on hold for a couple of months. I need to heal. Grantaire needs to rest. We'll take a break, I'll ace my exams, but not because you think I should, not because I'm holding out for a cushy office job where my name will get me a promotion no matter what the quality of my work. I am getting this degree not in spite of the ABC, but because of it. Because I want to make a difference, because you can rattle of names to me of individual people and I am tired of knowing their names, I am tired of all my efforts going into saving people one person at a time. This country doesn't need me to save eight humans in a building site, it needs sweeping industrial changes to the fundamental values, laws and systems that govern it. And I can't do that as a student revolutionary with a justice club, I definitely can't do it as assistant to the man causing the inequality in the first place. You could do it, you could fight for any of these causes and actually make a difference but you won't. God only knows why not, because you don't read what I send you, you don't look at the facts, or you do and you don't care, happy to keep your head in the sand as long as you get to live in your nice house and feel good about yourself because your servants aren't claimed and they're paid a decent enough wage."

"You're being unreasonable, Enjolras. I have helped you with your causes before. I claimed Combeferre when you asked me, I have given my full support to Courfeyrac, to Grantaire despite not even knowing them."

"Combeferre," Enjolras parrots back. "Courfeyrac. Grantaire. Is that all it is? You'll give all the support in the world if I drag them in front of your face. What, do I have to claim every single human in Paris to get you to give a damn?" He's shouting and he can't bring himself to care that much. "I will. I would, if I thought it would change anything. If I could give every single person the benefits of my name, my status."

Dad shakes his head, rising to his feet. "You're being unreasonable."

"No," Enjolras cuts right across him, stands up even though he has to lean on the bedside table to do it. Dad has always been such a force of presence in his mind, a minister of parliament, leader of the pack. It's such an ingrained thing mentally that it's a surprise to find standing face to face, he's not this tall looming figure to respect and revere. He's Enjolras's height, maybe a bit shorter. There are lines at the corners of his eyes and grey hairs spreading across his head.

No," Enjolras repeats. "I have spent ten years being calm and being reasonable, coming to you with data and letting you send me off with platitudes and counsels of patience."

"But claiming the whole of Paris, I know you like your causes but you can't stand up for everyone." He sounds so reasonable, this would be the moment normally when he would promise
to give Enjolras's proposal some thought and they'd all go downstairs for some tea and it would all 
be shifted to some part of Dad's mind marked 'solved' without anything ever being done. “You 
stood up for Grantaire and look what happened to you.” He shakes his head. “It was foolish and 
even now you’re not taking full advantage. It would help your cause more if our pack was attached 
to the story,” he says slowly. "But Katie tells me you've had her keep your name out of it. That's 
not a great start, if you're trying to sell me on this idea of fighting with everything."

This is the thing, it's always a fight. Always, even when it's just Dad sitting there acting like he's 
trying to do the right thing. "I haven't put our names out there because Grantaire almost died. He 
shot because he was trying to support something that I believe in, something that I've 
constantly been trying to get him to fight for even when he didn't think it would work or he didn't 
believe in it. He is the man that I love and I almost got him killed twice in a week so I thought it 
would be prudent to give him a couple of days to recover before asking him if I could splash his 
face all over the news!" Enjolras shakes his head bitterly. "When I fought Valance's pack, 
Grantaire wasn't even supposed to be there. I was going to throw myself bodily between a pack of 
drugged wolves and fourteen humans I didn't even know. Fourteen total strangers because 
otherwise there was no one else to protect them, because knowing that they were going to be there I 
couldn't stand back, I couldn't stay away and tell myself it's not my problem and I've done enough 
to help.

"So don't tell me what I can't do. I would do that again in a heartbeat. For fifty strangers, for one 
human child who hasn't done anything or achieved greatness, who isn't someone's father or sister 
or partner but who is a person because that's enough, because they matter. I would go through all 
of this," he waves vaguely at the limp, the bruises, the hospital. It doesn't matter what specifically, 
doesn't matter that it's that and more cumulatively. "Because that is who I am. That is what I 
believe." He takes a step forward, he has to remove his hand off the support and lean all his weight 
on his right leg but it's worth it to look directly into Dad's eyes. "So who are you?"

And Dad - Dad takes a step back, the wolf that's never too far from the surface of Enjolras's mind 
giving an approving growl at the fact that he's giving ground. "I don't -" for the first time, the 
politician stumbles over his words, starts again. "You have always had my support on these equal 
rights issues, I cast my vote in your favour the last few times such a bill was raised in parliament. I 
don't see -".

Enjolras sits back heavily on the bed before his legs give way. It feels like he's explained this a 
thousand times, but as always it comes back to him. No one can figure this out on their own, not 
when he's there to explain it over and over. "That's the bare minimum, that's literally scraping the 
line. I can write petitions and start a protest but I can't raise a bill, I can't talk to other politicians 
and have equal rights be the first thing on the table, not a vague agreement somewhere down the 
line."

Dad shakes his head. "My seat is comfortable, there's no real competition but if I start shaking 
things up - I haven't even got the team in place for campaigning, I'd have to spend more time in 
Paris. I'm not as young as I once was."

It's true, it's hitting home a lot more now his shoulders are slightly cowed in and he looks tired, 
exhausted, like he hasn't slept since Enjolras came in. Maybe he hasn't, he's certainly seemed more 
tired every day. Enjolras nudges his leg against Dad's knee and smiles. "I know some up and 
coming politics graduates who are looking for work. They don't have much experience in the 
office, but you'd be impressed by the reaction to some of their grassroots campaigning."

He laughs softly down at his hands, a little bit tired, a little resigned. "Doesn't look great, me hiring 
family."
"As long as we do the work."

Dad hesitates for a moment longer, then shakes his head although it looks more like disbelief than outright rejection. "I - I can't make any promises. And you'll need to ace those grades, something truly astounding to justify being hired over someone more experienced." He reaches up to rub the back of his neck, and when his hand comes down it pauses at the bandages around Enjolras's thigh. "You've done some amazing things, I am proud of that, I'm proud of you."

"You should be," Grantaire says, making them both jump. Even Enjolras hadn’t realised he was awake, but there he is sitting up in bed and watching them through open eyes. "He’s pretty impressive. And you can tell Katie to run that story, with my name and his name on the front page."

Enjolras opens his mouth to object, then realise how hypocritical that would sound. "Are you sure?"

Grantaire shrugs, even though it makes him wince a little. "What are they going to do? Shoot me?" he shakes his head. "I’m sure."

Dad looks slowly from Grantaire to Enjolras and back, then sighs. "I would rather protect you."

Grantaire holds out a hand, Enjolras uses Dad’s shoulder as leverage to stand up and limp over to take it, fingers gripped tight together. "We have each other," Grantaire says. "You can protect everybody else."

Dad watches them for a moment, then nods. "I need to make some calls, I’ll give you some time to -" he tries for a smile, it comes out fatigued but it comes. "We’ll see you again before we leave."

Enjolras returns his hug one-armed, so he doesn’t have to let go of Grantaire's hand. As soon as the door closes behind him, Enjolras sits down on Grantaire’s hand. "Sorry if I woke you up.

"Shouting about the glorious revolution? I would have slept through it, but you look all sexy when you're angry." He smiles up through hooded eyelids, lifts his arm to clumsily brush fingers against Enjolras's cheek, the clip on his finger catching awkwardly against Enjolras's lips. "What was it you told me? If you can't convince the people who love you, what's the point?"

Enjolras sits on the edge of the bed, reaching up to hold Grantaire's hand in place before he loses the strength to keep it raised. "So now all I have to do is convince you?" he says.

Grantaire laughs softly, his fingers moving very slightly against Enjolras's skin. "Oceans have been parted," he murmurs. "Mountains have been moved." He yawns and Enjolras lets their hands drops down onto the blankets so he doesn’t have to strain. He doesn’t release Grantaire’s fingers, and pauses on the way down to brush a kiss against his knuckles. "I meant it. You can use my name, tell the media or Courfeyrac, whoever will spread it faster. If you think it’ll help."

"You don’t have to decide now," Enjolras says. "You definitely don’t have to decide because of him, because of what he said. He can’t sit in his gilded throne doing nothing and start casting shade while you’re literally in a hospital bed because -"

Grantaire pulls an exaggerated frowny face and Enjolras stops. "Don’t shout at me, I’m an invalid," he says, but around the grimace he sounds like he’s amused. "I thought about it. My name isn’t going for anything else, if everyone else’s are already out there you might as well throw mine on top, for all the good it’ll do."
Enjolras doesn’t say anything, but he’s picturing the crowd of people cheering along at Thenardier’s while Grantaire strummed slowly on a borrowed guitar, humans and werewolves alike united, the notes in Grantaire’s tip box adding up to a lot more than a repository for spare change and a bit of pity. There are people who know Grantaire’s name, probably more than he gives himself any credit for.

Enjolras leans forward to kiss his cheek. “You keep doing things like this, you’re going to start having trouble convincing people that your whole ‘I don’t believe in anything’ schtick is anything more than an act you put on so people stop bothering you.”

Grantaire turns his head so Enjolras’s lips are brushing the edge of his smile. “I believe in you.”

“You told me that once before,” Enjolras says, unable to stop himself smiling back.

Grantaire tilts his head away to fix Enjolras with a frown of deep concentration. For a moment he looks genuinely confused, like he’s actually forgotten, then it dawns on him in a slow change of expression spreading from his smile up into his eyes. “Was I drunk?” he asks carefully. “I was - in bed?” Something hits him and he suddenly looks appalled. “Wait, did I kiss you?”

Enjolras sits back up because of all things for Grantaire to forget, their first kiss is absolutely up there. Enjolras spent weeks deliberating on the meaning of that kiss and if Grantaire just forgot it, straight out. “You did.”

“Oh god.” Grantaire’s cheeks are turning red, and Enjolras wonders if he should point out that they have actually kissed quite a few times since then and if he’s going to start getting embarrassed about it now this is going to get awkward. Then Grantaire shakes his head weakly and looks over at him. “Man, you have no one but yourself to blame for how long it took us to get our shit together. You could have pointed out that I was clearly totally into you.”

Enjolras blinks. “You were drunk, how was I supposed to guess?”

“Oh, sure, you’ll be jealous of Montparnasse because I kissed his cheek once in public in return for a favour, but kissing you in the dead of night with no one around while saying I believe in you is so totally platonic.” He says it mockingly, but his thumb is rubbing back and forth against Enjolras’s wrist with every word and he’s smiling like it’s a joke they’re both in on, like it can be something they look back on and laugh.

Enjolras leans down to kiss him again, and for a long minute he doesn’t have to think about anything except carefully getting two different sets of horrible injuries to settle in places where they aren’t going to touch or rub or hurt any more than their current painkiller levels are able to deal with, anything except Grantaire’s lips giving easily under his until he squeezes Enjolras’s hand tight and tilts his head away.

Enjolras sits up a little to give him some air.

“I never said I don’t believe in anything,” Grantaire says, because he’s apparently been using the time to do far too much thinking. “I don’t - “ his mouth twists, apparently not having taken the time to choose his words. “It’s not that you’re wrong. I mean, maybe about humans being - I know I’m - but even overlooking that, you’re so naive. This is the world, this has been the world for so fucking long and you think you can change that.”

“Not tomorrow,” Enjolras says. “Not right now, not everything. But we can start, we can lay foundations and every single thing we do adds to that until we look back and things have changed.” He smiles faintly down at their hands. “You say you don’t think it’ll help, but look at those people
you saved. You did that. You did it enough that someone wanted to kill you for it, and you still say you don’t believe in anything.”

Grantaire shrugs weakly, winces. “I don’t believe in, like, Justice. Liberty. Revolution.” He shifts over properly so Enjolras has space to sit on the mattress pressed up against him before he allows, “I suppose sometimes I believe in people.”

Enjolras lies down in the space, resting his head on Grantaire’s gunshot-free shoulder, lying their entwined fingers against the space where his chest meets Grantaire’s ribs. He gets it, he does. It’s hard to believe the system can change, but easier to see that one person can be convinced. One father, one mother, one man sitting in a jail cell thinking the whole world has forgotten him. “People,” he says quietly into Grantaire’s hair. “Are what revolutions are for.”

End Notes

Comments and kudos are all appreciated, plus you can come chat me on tumblr if you like werewolves, robots or you're in NZ and want to be my friend :)

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