

## Breathe

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# Breathe

by [artisticFlutter](#)

## Summary

While assisting the public during an akuma attack as Chat Noir, Adrien is unknowingly exposed to a deadly disease making one final stand in Paris. He struggles to stay above it, to keep fighting, but he finds it harder to breathe every day.

## Notes

There's no much to say right now as this is only the Prologue. It's a story I considered one evening out of the urge to write another crossover, and I still always hold a special place in my heart to the Trauma Center series, one surgeon in particular from Second Opinion. Anyway, depending on how this chapter is received, I may continue it. Of course, I might continue it out of personal interest, but I always like finding out people want to read more as well.

Enjoy~

Warning: This chapter was not subject to a beta read so apologies for any errors.

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## Prologue

Another explosion and another scream had the students at Collège Françoise Dupont scrambled to escape the terror of the akuma of the week. It never seemed too far which was fortunate this day. The mask over his face, Adrien didn't feel up to a lengthy confrontation. He could barely handle being in class as it went on, but he refused to stay home. It wasn't contagious, and as long as he took his medicine in the morning, each lecture passed without issue. There was a tightening in his chest again, and he wondered if he should have taken the two pills instead of the one while he hurried to hide and wait in the locker room in order to transform. Ladybug would be waiting for him. A cold wasn't going to stop him from helping her.

Unzipping his jacket, Plagg zoomed out and hovered before his face, but he made no sound. His large green eyes only gazed in concern at his kitten while gleaming with defiance, against the idea of even being coaxed into permitting Adrien to transform. That's right; not even Camembert would convince him at this point. Of course, it would only take the phrase, and he would be unable to resist the Miraculous' pull, but he would stand his ground until they were spoken... if they were spoken.

A minute passed in which groans and distant rumbles broke the silence, but Adrien didn't speak. Instead, his hand groped beside him, trying to grab anything to keep him upright only for him to slam backwards into the lockers. They rattled, but that was mute beneath his labored wheezing. Strings rolled along his temple and he realized his mask slipping from his mouth, but made no move to grab it. His hair was plastered against his forehead, sweat beading and rolling down his face, dripping from his chin while he rapidly tried to breathe. It would be easier to suck in air through a straw, he was sure. Fingers fumbled on his locker door again, his other hand clutching and twisting his shirt in hopes to relieve the constriction on his chest while desperately trying to get his medication. He heard blood pounding in his ears like a rapid drum and slowly realized he was sinking. A drum? No, that wasn't right...

“Adrien...!”

Plagg's yell was lost above the surface of the water rapidly pulling him down, his body sliding down against the lockers. Gunmetal gray and white were washed together in an indistinguishable blur broken by a single yellow beam – a plank of wood. If he could reach it, maybe he could stay afloat until someone found him. But he couldn't move forward. Cold needles had begun their incessant stinging lance up and down, pressing into his spine, and his body convulsed beneath the excruciating shocks. The numbness in his limbs would burned away momentarily to allow his nerve-endings to ignite before shooting back up to blind him, and everything tilted.

It managed to break the waves, and he managed to cough haggardly. Copper tickled his tongue between frantic gulps for air and began to pool beneath his cheek, its sharp stench nauseously keeping him awake for a little longer. When did he lie down? The world was shifting again, an icy tempest rising once more creeping over his legs as he struggled to hold onto his rapidly fading conscious. His shaking at least lessened, and he blinked to see large

green eyes gazing back at him, glowing through the darkness that crept into the corners of his vision.

Plagg...

The feline kwami was yelling, but the tide washed him out. It was weird. Adrien thought about dying sometimes – how it might happen while he protected Paris alongside Ladybug. He never would've thought about it being so anti-climactic. Another blink and he tried to speak when he realized space before him was now unoccupied. His kwami was no longer there, and he couldn't stave off the panic that these last few moments would end just as lonely as his life had been to this point. Lips trembled, and he imagined that he could form the words.

*Plagg...*

Sweat... or tears? Adrien tried to call out again, but he couldn't get beyond another hitched gasp. Don't leave him now; he didn't want to be alone. They were blurring his grayed vision despite suddenly being seized and his vision forced skyward. Blinking, his sight cleared enough for him to make out faces: a boy, and two girls one of whom was on a cell phone. There's a baseball cap, and headphones; dark hair tied up in pigtails; and distinct, wavy curls... He was rocking again though not shivering. Were they shaking him? Warmth pressed against his cheek, and his chin was tilted upward that he could inhale just enough...

There... was the sky again in her bluebell eyes.

“Marin... ette...”

He saw no more.

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Notes

It's Sunday and it's time for a new chapter! The story's going to be structured a little weird, but I have everything outlined for sixteen chapters in total. We'll have some fun as long as I maintain schedule and chapters. I really do hope you enjoy!

This chapter was beta read this time, and by my wonderful friend, cynicalSleeper.

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“It could’ve have been a pole vaulter or a long jumper, but no, of course it has to be shot putter.”

There was another clang as the flaming iron ball struck the other side of the car, engraving either the eleventh or twelfth dent into the door. Dark triangular ears pulled flat against blonde hair as the screech of metal on metal rung louder due to his enhanced hearing, causing him shake his head. Beside him, his red-and-black spotted partner chanced a look through the car’s window only to swiftly duck down, the next iron ball shattering the glass above her head. Her hand swept, and she flicked her hair to make sure all the glass was off, frowning under her breath.

“Ugh, we’re not going to get the akuma hiding like this... come on...”

Though her blue eyes darted around to try divulging *some* plan, they both blinked at the shadow suddenly growing overhead. He was the first to look up and gape at the meteor-sized burning ball plummeting toward them, and he tackled her behind the next car. Its frame groaned and splintered at the pressure, and more glass shattering onto the ground to mingle with the pavement now cracked beneath the wreckage. Sirens weakly droned and sparks danced from the ambulance’s broken console before spluttering silent. Both of them stared at the flattened vehicle, gawking at the massive shot now cooling upon the destruction.

“We’re lucky no one was in that,” Chat muttered, and Ladybug could only nod in agreement.

The Parisian heroes were not having a good time. Though the sun may be shining, and birds had been chirping, it was an absolutely terrible lunch hour. Tourist season had begun and Avenue des Champs-Élysées had been packed by buses, cars, vans, trucks, every vehicle that could almost be named, and Lanceur took full advantage of it. Though she didn’t voice it, Ladybug did have to agree: why did it have to be a shot putter akumatized? They now stood upon the Arc de Triomphe more hulking bull than man – or maybe he was supposed to be a

Minotaur? Either way, here they were pinned behind cars after evacuating the pedestrians and attempting to weave through dense traffic in an attempt to get closer while not being crushed by automobiles and regenerating shot balls, her a streak of red taking off left while Chat Noir was a black blur bounding to the right.

He managed to get closer this time due to his own distinct advantage to run comfortably on all fours, his body as lithe and fluid as the cat suit he wore. The further apart they moved, the more difficulty Lanceur seemed to be having since he could only hold one in his sight. It didn't stop him from drawing shots into both hands and throwing them wildly, striking not only abandoned vehicles this time, but buildings possibly occupied by citizens taking cover.

“QUIT HIDING! GIVE ME YOUR MIRACULOUS!”

Unlike their ambulance before, the average commercial car seemed more malleable to the iron balls, crumbling like foil under the weight and force which each was tossed. Chat Noir just avoided one in particular soaring through a sedan, metal flowering as the shot exited and showered glass on his back. He didn't turn his head to watch the ball carve a groove into the pavement, but he heard gravel clattering down again and smelled burning asphalt. Rolling, he stopped behind a truck tire, head now whipping back at a groan just in time to witness a double decker bus tilt heavily and fall, crushing the trunk of the sedan and the hood of a mini-van behind.

No time to rest; he still needed to run point.

Flexing his claws, he climbed the truck's cargo bin, pausing before he mounted it to remove his baton from his back. His ears flicked as he listened to shots continuing to smash both motor vehicles and pavement to his left – the akuma attempting to strike Ladybug. He could make out her grunts and faint footfalls, but fortunately never heard her scream; good, she hadn't been hurt... yet. It was always a matter of time.

With a final kick off the truck, he sprung onto the bin and dashed, extending his baton before Lanceur realized the cat hero was already pole vaulting high into the air. He flipped, baton shrinking down as he swung from overhead only for Lanceur to block with both swollen arms. Casting a cocky grin, Chat back flipped to land opposite of the akuma still high upon the Arc, and held his baton at the ready. Alright, he closed the distance, but he hadn't exactly figured out *how* to knock the bull off the tower. Green eyes darting, his pupils narrowed when he located what could possibly be the akumatized item on Lanceur's belt. That keychain was going to be tough to grab, but once they were on a level playing field, he was sure there'd be no trouble between himself and Ladybug.

“Toro! Toro!”

He had no red cape, but his tail waved behind him as he tapped his baton against the Arc, trying to bait the bull. The attempt was rewarded with a shot soaring past his ear, body arching as he dodged a second and spun on his paws before the third could be thrown. “Batter up!”

The baton caught Lanceur across the head and he stumbled aside, dropping the shot in his hand to the ground below, but not falling himself. His legs planted and he snorted, turning on

Chat with a roar before lashing out with his fists. The cat could feel the air pass him with each swing, unconsciously swallowing when one cracked the Arc between them. “We’re on a landmark, y’know!”

Striking again with his baton, Lanceur’s giant hand caught the end and pulled, yanking Chat clean off his feet and sending him soaring with a yelp, “It’s the keychain!” Lanceur looked triumphant despite his weakness being exposed, but the black cat’s distraction seemed to be enough. A red flicker one second later and Ladybug’s yoyo had tangled around Lanceur’s legs and yanked him down from the Arc. He crashed when Chat did, the superhero groaning at the sky while he took a moment to lay there and ponder how long this new bruise would last. One day, he would land on his feet, but for now, he sat up slowly to rise back to his feet, clawed hands dusting his suit off and flicking away bits of rubble. Turning on his heel, he was ready to return to the fray...

“C-Chat Noir...!”

“Hm?” One step, and he blinked, head turning back. A man adorned in a white lab coat and scrubs was waving his hand, mouth covered by a surgical mask, and expression imploring him to come back. Chat was hesitant though, knowing he had to get back to the fight, but there was blood on the doctor’s sleeves. Teeth gnawing the inside of his lip, he knew Ladybug would understand if he had to help a civilian. He would make sure it would only take a second, running over to meet the doctor before Lanceur somehow noticed. “What seems to be the problem?”

“It’s our patient. We were in the middle of moving him for surgery prep when Lanceur’s shot came through the window, and now we can’t move them to the OR.” There must have been some other complications that explained the blood, but the doctor didn’t go into details. Instead, he was frantic, “The ward is on the same floor, but we can’t get through the hallways. Please, this operation needs to begin now if we’re to save him.”

Chat’s eyes narrowed and he stepped back, looking up. He scanned the windows, noticing intact panes on the first and second floors, but shortly spotted the room in question on the third. It was just on the corner, running perpendicular to the street. It would provide its occupant with a wonderful view of the Arc de Triomphe while unfortunately leaving it open to random akuma attacks like this one. He gave the doctor a solemn nod, “Go call whatever doctors or nurses are on that floor. I’ll have your patient out ASAP.”

*‘Just hold on, M’Lady...’*

With a single leap, Chat Noir brought himself level to the window, claws seizing the ledge, and his feet springing him off the wall, allowing him to flip quietly inside. Now he could truly see what that single shot had done. After breaking through the window, it knocked aside an IV pole, bursting a blood transfusion and saline bag before apparently rocketing through the far wall. Though it crossed into another patient’s room, the hole left behind revealed it to be unoccupied; however, the path continued through the other room’s door, breaking it off its hinges before the shot must have ripped through the hallway’s floor, splitting tiles and weakening the structure.

Jumping at the sharp inhale from the bed, Chat hadn't realized the patient was awake – or, no, he wasn't. They appeared to be having a fit, eyes blown wide open but unfocused as their hands tore at their bloody hospital gown covering their chest. He sputtered and wheezed, literally suffocating before the hero's eyes, fighting against an invisible enemy. Whatever he had must be excruciating, and obviously needed attention now.

Prying away one arm, Chat wrapped it around his shoulders before hoisting the man into his arms, ignoring the flecks of blood coughed onto his cheek and mask. He hustled to the door, kicking it open with little regards to what other damage he might be doing, but aware that Ladybug's magic would probably not fix it since it wasn't the usual damage. In the hallway proper, he could better observe the damage. It may have only split the ground from where he had earlier seen, but a pillar obscuring a support beam had been broken. Should any of the doctors try coming across, they would've fallen through to the floor below resulting in a casualty. In his suit, Chat could move lightly and fast enough that the ground only shuddered, all while refraining from jostling the patient too much. Something about had every inch of his feline senses going haywire – maybe it was the environment, or maybe it was the patient himself – but besides that, he had to hurry up and get back to the battle with Lanceur.

Hearing the squeaking wheels of a stretcher accompanied by thundering footsteps, Chat was relieved of the patient once he rounded the nurse's station, a small team of doctors and nurses meeting him halfway. The doctor from before was there, but in a new set of scrubs. They seemed to be trying to do everything at once then and there to stabilize the dying man, but a cool voice had the frenzy stop.

"Finish the preparation in the OR. His condition's already critical."

Green eyes locked with blue not too unlike his Lady's, but they were colder and more critical like his father's. He didn't know when the woman had arrived, or how he didn't see her before given her pale hair, but he reasoned that from the blood still lingering beneath his nose and the ammonia more potent around the station. There was a chorus of 'Yes, Doctor' and 'Right away, Dr. Kimishima' before the staff took off leaving Chat and the female doctor lingering there. She was still watching him, and he wanted to shrink back naturally. In his suit, he managed to hold firm and look back at her.

"... Thank you, Chat Noir." He blinked; he didn't expect her to speak. Head up, she had turned away with a soft hum. "Any later, and I wouldn't be performing an operation due late stage complications and that akuma. Make sure to clean yourself up before finishing your fight; you don't need to go back outside with blood and worry your partner. The battle in here is mine now."

"... Alright. If the doctor orders, it shall be done."

At least he got his tongue back before she completely disappeared, the sounds of her heels fading soon from his hearing. Boots squeaking, he turned on his heels and jogged back, finding a bathroom to rinse the blood off. With that done, he hurried back to the already destroyed room, leaping out the window to land crouched on the neighboring roof. He noticed the akuma was still warring in the street, two shots clutched firmly in hand, and his stomach sank when he didn't see Ladybug anywhere. Had he been gone too long? Had the akuma taken her Miraculous? He shouldn't have—



“Wander off again, Chat?”

Both his body and heart leapt at those sweetly familiar yet disgruntled words of his Lady now standing beside him, his staff in one hand and her Lucky Charm – a boomerang – in the other. Though quizzical, he grinned as he accepted his staff back, “Sorry, bugaboo. There was a doctor in need of a new nurse.”

“Didn’t work out?”

“Not everyone can pull off scrubs.” He playfully sighed, “Oh well, what’s the plan, LB?”

She smirked, holding up the boomerang, “Follow my lead...”

---

The swarm of ladybugs mending the clinic went ignored as the surgeon stripped the gloves from her hands, and pulled her mask down, nodding to the assisting staff, “Alright. We’ll have to monitor his condition for the next few days since his heart is still weak. We’re lucky only a few of the diverticulum burst.”

“Yes. Again, thank you for coming, Dr. Kimishima.”

“Not at all. I doubt he would have survived transport to Caduceus.”

Excusing herself to the break room, the muted television was showing the news broadcast with the crew interviewing Ladybug and Chat Noir in hurried excitement. Sweeping several strands of pale hair behind her ear, Dr. Kimishima picked up her phone and dialed. The call connected after several rings.

“It’s Naomi. Yes... the operation went smoothly despite the attack...”

...

“It was Tetarti. We used the new masks to prevent toxin inhalation.”

...

“... He was our only case here. I’ll have the report ready for the meeting, but for now, I’ll make sure the staff wasn’t infected.”

Her blue eyes darted up to the television screen as the two Parisian superheroes took off.

“Yes, I’ll be back at Headquarters in three days. Goodbye.”

## Chapter End Notes

Before anything is said, yes, Lanceur isn't much of a name for an akuma. It's literally just "Thrower", but you know... shot putter akuma.

Please comment, leave feedback, or kudo!

# Chapter 3

## Chapter Notes

Another Sunday, another chapter! I mentioned to my first commenter on the story (oh gosh I got a comment!) that if I had all the chapters written up, I wouldn't hold off until Sunday to post, but between work and commissions, I kinda can't get them out faster. Good news though, I am two chapters ahead right now, and have a good idea about the next one. Also, outlined the entire story so we'll see. The thing is getting out all the details and making the story cohesive enough. Also, avoiding too much... exposition. I may not have done that in this chapter and I feel terrible.

Anyway, hope you enjoy this next chapter! I'll see about maybe getting the next chapters up later this week if I can get out another.

Thank you again, cynicalSleeper, for beta reading this chapter!

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*"Ladybug, why was Lanceur akumatized?"*

*The dotted heroine seemed somewhat hesitant about answering the question, but decided to go ahead. "From what I understand, he was trying out for a competition, but wasn't allowed a do over after an accident on the field made him throw his shot. I guess this individual was supposed to be at the clinic too due to an illness, and not attempting to do hurdles."*

*"You must be speaking of M. Mercier. We did receive word he was transported to a clinic located on Champs-Élysées before Lanceur's appearance."*

*"Oh, did he make it in time to be treated?"*

*"We've received word that he did even though the building was hit."*

*"Ah, so that was M. Mercier..." Chat Noir spoke up, looking astonished. The camera shifted slightly to him, waiting for him to continue which he did. "After my flight courtesy of Lanceur, a doctor asked for help transporting a patient into surgery. One of Lanceur's shots left his room inaccessible; they said they couldn't wait any longer so I got him to the doctors waiting for him."*

*"Saving Paris from akuma and diseases! What can't you two do?"*

The rest of the report was barely focused on as Adrien moved around his spacious room to prepare for the day. He showered, groomed, dressed, put on his shoes, and gathered his school bag, slinging it over his shoulder. On his desk, Plagg took this time to savor his breakfast of Camembert, already anticipating his five other similar meals with each bite. His green eyes flicked between Adrien and the television as it continued covering Mercier. Something, something, he closed his eyes and ate the remainder of his cheese, licking his fangs with a satisfying lip smack proceeding, “Delicious...”

“Time to go, Plagg.”

“Yeah, yeah, I’m coming...”

The kwami yawned and floated over, squeezing himself into Adrien’s book bag, ear flicking when his Miraculous holder turned off the television. What could he say? Adrien had a small pep in his step at the praise he received. He had still been apologetic to Ladybug, but she had whole-heartedly agreed with his decision to take care of the ailing sportsman even if she had been alone against Lanceur. After all, her cure repaired the damage done in their battles against akuma, but it couldn’t do anything against preexisting conditions. Now, if the disease had been caused by an akuma, Ladybug had explained, the cure could get rid of it. Though, thinking about it, he didn’t think he wanted to face an akuma that would be able to poison them or anything around the sort.

Closing his room door behind him, he heard Natalie call his name before he could reach the kitchens.

“You’re late.”

“Sorry! I was caught up watching the news report. It was replaying the akuma battle from yesterday.”

She was unimpressed at that, gazing down her nose at him, but eventually sighed. “Try not to make a habit of this. You know you shouldn’t skip breakfast...” Though reprimanding his behavior, at least she was still caring; even as she tapped at her tablet, and showed him his schedule for today. “You have fencing after school, followed by your piano lessons. Make sure to be on time.”

“Yes, Natalie. I will.” He didn’t say anymore, watching her nod and walk away before continuing his route to the kitchen. Just something light for the road; he didn’t feel hungry anyway with butterflies still filling his stomach. Even remembering his schedule couldn’t stop it – he didn’t even have too much crammed in as usual before his evening patrol. That meant he could bring Ladybug a gift to thank her for her compliment. Would flowers be enough? No, it had to have a more significant meaning. Breakfast clutched tight in his hand as he pondered, the Gorilla’s faint grunt jolted him to rushing to the car. He hadn’t even realized the man was there; he didn’t know how that was possible, but trying to get an answer would only result in him possibly missing class.

---

“Yo, Adrien!”

“Hey, Nino!”

Fists bumping together, Nino adjusted his headphones as he gave Adrien a bewildered look, “I thought you might not get here, dude. It’s not like you to be late.”

“They were rerunning the interview with Ladybug and Chat Noir this morning. I didn’t have a chance to watch it last night. Once we finished the shoot, I got back for dinner and had to finish my homework.” He shifted his bag, remembering how long the shoot for his father’s winter line had gone, and how he barely managed to get to patrol on time. It shouldn’t be so easy to tell this half-truth, but it at least satisfied Nino. With a snort, they both turned to walk up the short flight of stairs and through the entryway. Already, everyone was heading to class; he really did just arrive on time, but he ignored this fact in favor to listening to his friend talk about his latest remixes. He better understood various terminologies in regards to Nino’s work, but most of it still flew over his head. However, Nino’s enthusiasm was contagious, and Adrien gladly agreed to listen to Nino’s new beats once lunch started.

The classroom was still abuzz with chatter, students standing by other desks while they waited for Mme. Bustier to arrive which would undoubtedly be within the five minutes before the final bell rung. It was usually like this, but following an akuma attack? It would take longer to get the class to order. Fortunately for Adrien and Nino, the excitement even had Chloé distracted, allowing the two of them to take their seats and turn back to their friends already seated behind them.

“Mornin’, ladies!” Nino greeted and flashed them a broad smile.

Adrien did similar, but his smile more reserved, “Good morning, Alya, Marinette!”

“Hey, boys!” Alya returned both greeting and smile with ease, lowering her phone. Her brown and russet curled hair bounced as she turned to the flushed girl besides her, mouth open, but no sound escaping her. Rolling her eyes, Alya gave her frozen friend a quick jab with her elbow. Marinette immediately recoiled, raised hand lowering to rub her arm, her own dark hair whipping as she shot her best friend a look. Blue eyes back on the boys, she finally managed to squeak.

“G-Good or-ning! Morn-good! I mean! Good morning!”

While Alya rolled her eyes, Nino chuckled, and Adrien tried giving Marinette a reassuring grin even though she had already sunk in her chair, face taking the most interesting shade of scarlet. They should probably move onto a topic before the poor girl passed out. Fortunately, Alya was more than willing to provide that distraction, leaning forward to keep the conversation between just them.

“So, what brings you guys in after Marinette?”

“Adrien here was late. He said he was watching the rerun of Ladybug and Chat Noir’s interview from yesterday.” Nino’s hand dropped onto and patted Adrien’s shoulder a few times. The model rubbed the back of his neck, grin becoming sheepish. Alya’s eyes just gleamed, her internal blogger rising to the surface at the very mention of the Parisian superheroes.

“It was pretty cool, right?” Raising a hand, she gestured it to the class. “Everyone’s been talking about it, but mainly about how awesome it must’ve been for them to meet Geoffrey Colnard. Even if he was akumatized, everyone’s expecting him to go to Nationals, or was anyway.”

“Was?” Nino asked, wondering what else there was to it.

Given the chance to continue, Alya did. “Well, you know how Nicolas Mercier passed out while Geoffrey was in the circle?” Both Adrien and Nino nodded, waiting for her to elaborate. “Turns out both of them are old friends. Geoffrey was helping Nicolas until the paramedics arrived, and couldn’t concentrate after. He asked if he could retry after the surgery, but the judges said he had to throw then and there. I can’t even begin to imagine what kind of stress he was under.”

“I think I can...” Marinette spoke so low, but Adrien heard her. Alya and Nino seemed to miss it.

“That’s wild,” Nino sighed, “They should’ve let him reschedule.”

“It’s probably not that the judges didn’t want to,” Adrien interjected, “but for competitions, they have to finalize the roster that day. It could’ve thrown off the entire event otherwise.”

“Speaking from experience, bro?”

“You know it.” Adrien’s life was all about being punctual, “Even a minute overtime and someone’s going to be upset.”

Nino made a face, but didn’t comment anymore on his best friend’s work. Instead, he moved on much to Adrien’s relief. “How’s that Nicolas guy doing anyway? First, he passes out, then he gets taken away by the meds for an operation, and after that, Chat Noir has to save his life so he can even get his operation. Sounds like the guy wasn’t having much luck.”

“He really wasn’t,” Alya said, grimacing as she spoke now, “Apparently, he somehow got... that.”

Exchanging looks, the boys just looked confused at what *that* could be, but she didn’t say anything. At least, she didn’t until she chanced a look towards the other side of the classroom and leaned further over her and Marinette’s desk to whisper, “He had GUILT.”

That answer still left Adrien perplexed, but Nino paled beside him. He didn’t know if he should ask, but it came out of him before he could stop himself, “What is that?”

“It’s a disease.” His attention came to Marinette, but he could still see Alya and Nino’s disbelieving expressions. Had he really been that isolated from the going-on that he somehow missed this news? Or maybe it had been something else he had merely been sheltered away from. He tried not to focus too intensely on Marinette as she spoke on. “They mentioned it after Ladybug and Chat Noir’s interview. He was apparently one of the few cases in France, and a special surgeon from Caduceus came to operate, but she refused to be interviewed.”

A special surgeon? He remembered that stern doctor with pale hair, wondering if that could possibly be the individual Marinette spoke of. Somehow, she did seem out of place in the clinic.

That explanation raised more questions than answers, but satiating his curiosity about the subject would have to wait as Mme. Bustier walked in just seconds before the bell rung. Later; he would look it up before patrol.

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Adrien did not understand how he could’ve missed hearing about GUILT now. With evening having overtaken the day, and another hour before he was expected to meet-up with Ladybug, he sat down at his monitors and began to look into this disease. Though its origin was not one hundred percent certain, he understood why it hadn’t exactly reached many public news sources here unless filtered, and as he read, there was more to it. Delphi, kidnapped children, entire towns disappearing, famous people and public spaces targeted, Caduceus International in a war against medical terrorists that countries had determinedly kept mostly under wraps, and why not? Just reading what he found had his stomach curling thinking these were just humans intentionally infecting and killing other humans.

And he didn’t even finish reading the diseases. Seven of them; he had only skimmed the names and their symptoms, noting how they actively and viciously turned the body against itself. It made him recall Nicolas Mercier convulsing on his bed, realizing the disease had reacted defensively against the doctors the moment they began prepping him for surgery. Whichever one he had, it wanted him to die. Had Geoffrey known? After seeing his friend on the field choking for air and clawing at himself, had he imagined them dying there?

“... Nicolas Mercier, age 32. Recent reported case in Paris, France,” Adrien read aloud, but quietly clicking the link to the article, and reading it in silence. Admitted to local clinic before akuma attack, feared the worse, expected to fully recover with minor complications; the teen breathed a sigh of relief, rubbing his hair loose from its usually tame swept style. His eyes darted around each monitor as he closed tabs, sweeping over the time in the bottom corner as he leaned back, rubbing his face with both hands. He needed a moment to breathe, becoming aware shortly that his kwami hovered nearby.

“I think I like it better when you’re pining for Ladybug,” Plagg scoffed, but frowned at how pale Adrien looked. He’s too old to keep reminding his charges that curiosity could kill the cat – or in this case, make them lose their appetite. “This is just what happens when you use

that search engine for random stuff. Come on, didn't you want to get a gift or something before patrol started?"

"... Huh!?"

Emerald eyes wide, he recalled the thought from this morning. That's right; he wanted to bring Ladybug flowers as a thank you. It would keep him from thinking about everything he just read. Putting his computer in sleep mode, he cast a smile Plagg's way and nodded.

"Right, let's get that done! Claws out!"

## Chapter End Notes

I figured I'd give a little more on our athletes. For the person suspecting Mercier wasn't an accident, you're correct. Still, more on GUILT and all these fun, other canon terms will be addressed in the future so don't worry.

Please comment, leave feedback, or kudos!



# Chapter 4

## Chapter Notes

Why am I posting this chapter early? Mostly because I can't help myself, but also because after this coming Sunday, I have a convention the next weekend so I might not be able to post at all. So, consider this me spoiling you delightful readers this week. So, one update today, and the next chapter will be Sunday. I'm already working on the chapter after that, and will have the next in process the moment its finished too. We're one-fourth complete of this story! No time to stop!

Thank you again, cynicalSleeper, for beta reading!

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It had been a week since Lanceur's attack, but the heroes remained ever vigilant, bounding over the late night rooftops of Paris. Tonight, the air was crisp with a gentle breeze, and carried with it Fall's soft chill. Present as they had been in the day, clouds blocked out the few stars the bright Parisian lights could not hide, and hid the moon away for moments at a time only for it to gleam down again seconds or minutes later. Yoyo snapping back to her hand, Ladybug stood tall upon Notre Dame Cathedral and scanned over the city from upon this new perch, bright bluebell eyes combing what darkness they could. It seemed quiet, but only Chat Noir could verify for her... though...

Looking behind her, Chat was curled up below her within the shadows of the bell towers. Normally, he would have climbed up to the top with her, but he had been out of sorts all evening. She couldn't remember exactly at which stop, but remarks he had ceased, and he began to fall further and further behind. At one point, she had to stop and wait for him to catch up, his breathing coming out in laborious pants and his face pale in contrast to his mask. However, she was uncertain if those two things were related as the moonlight made his skin already far paler than it was in the daylight.

Casting one more look to the streets below, she repelled herself down between the towers, and allowed her yoyo to spring back all while focused on her partner sitting before her. His back was curled and his shoulders were hunched, his fake ears even folded onto his wild mane while his eyes stared at nothing. His attention slightly perked at her approach, and he pulled together a smile when she knelt almost in arm's length from him.

“What brings you down to the lowly shadows, My Lady?”

“Nothing really, but I thought I spied a stray cat curled up down here.”

“Purr-haps he intended to serenade mew.”

“More likely caterwaul into the night...”

He feigned a gasp and grinned, but his head whipped away one second later so he could cough behind his claw. One heavy sigh later – or was that an inhale? – Chat curled in a little more on himself, allowing his head to rest on his knees. Not saying another word, she shuffled forward and pressed her hand to his forehead, frowning when she realized both how warm and damp it was.

“You’re burning up, kitty.”

“Just caught the wrong bug, LB. I’ll get the right one next time.”

She rolled her eyes and he managed a hearty chuckle. He was warm, but he was still able to crack a joke, “Really, it’s nothing to worry about.” Though, worry about it she would. It was about that time for the flu season to start; and it was probably best Chat was sick and getting over it now than possibly catching it while there was an actual threat for them to deal with. Though, when the next attack happened might make it complicated. Hopefully, her kitten had an immune system that matched his comebacks otherwise it was going to be a matter of days before he got over his sickness. Clearly, even patrol right now was too much for him to handle, his fatigue probably catching him unaware at that earlier stop. What Chat needed right now was TLC; although, the little that she knew of him, he might not get that at home. That had to be the reason why he even bothered coming to patrol despite feeling under the weather, and that thought made Ladybug bite her lip.

“... Let’s call it early, Chat,” she sighed, standing up again, one hand coming to rest on her hip.

His head whipped towards her, eyes open, and claws curling tight on his legs, “But this is barely halfway on our route. We should--!”

“We should, but you shouldn’t. I know you want to stay out, but I don’t want you pushing yourself.” Her hand came to rest on his shoulder, making him jump. If he hadn’t already felt hot, he would be burning now. The soft smile she gave him somehow made his temperature rise several more degrees. Her fingers soon laced between his, and his heart beat faster. “C’mon. I’m going to get you some medicine, and I want you to take some when you go home, okay?”

For all the puns that could be said right now, he could only swallow thickly, trying to calm down lest he worsen his condition. Though really, he couldn’t even focus on how he was feeling. If she could stay—

“Swallow your tongue, kitty?” she teased, a finger tapping the bell around his neck.

Chat shuddered as it rang, a shy smile curling into a teasing one, “If My Lady orders me to rest, what sort of partner would I be if I didn’t obey?”

Blue eyes wide, she leaned back when his face came to invade her space. Coy grin, teasing glint in his eye, she noticed how he didn't really look at her. His eyes seemed slightly glazed, his cheeks retained a prominent flush beneath his mask, and sweat beaded his forehead beneath his golden locks. Her embarrassment gone, she frowned as she listened to his breathing: soft pants through his mouth as opposed to his nose. Ladybug tightened her grip on his hand, and watched his eyes widen and pupils thinned. Once more, she let herself smile, "Let's go then."

---

Adrien couldn't say how much the medicine helped. It managed to help him sleep through his fever, but the symptoms were still present. Fortunately, they weren't as bad as the previous night. He felt light-headed, but he wasn't dizzy or incapable of maintaining his balance; however, he couldn't move too fast otherwise he'd lose what little breath he managed. When he coughed, his voice didn't rasp after and he didn't feel like he might lose a lung, but he was going to be a contamination hazard at school. Though he should probably stay home, he just walked into the bathroom and took out a mask that would cover his mouth and nose, slipping it into his bag with Plagg.

He had his meager breakfast under Natalie's watchful eye, silent as she told him his schedule for the day. Lunch time, his father had scheduled a photo shoot – apparently, there had been an issue with the camera and the film had been damaged requiring a retake – then after school was fencing, and wrapping up for the evening would be Chinese. Adrien nodded along, his fork unmoving on the plate somewhere between her mentioning how there would be a substitute at fencing today due to the regular instructor coming down with the flu, and how his Chinese instructor wanted him ten minutes early. A gaze boring into his skull, he finally realized Natalie had stopped speaking, choosing instead to stare intensely at him. Opening his mouth, she cut him off before he could speak, "Adrien, you need to finish your breakfast."

"... Huh?" Raising his fork before it could tap again, he noticed how half the plate still remained. Normally he would almost be finished by the end of her report, of course that would alert her. "Oh... I'm not that hungry right now."

He still felt Natalie's eyes on him as he pushed his chair back, but she said nothing. He was sure she noticed he was sweating and might be slightly flushed, but there was no comment from her. If anything, she seemed to be waiting for him to say something, ask her for a thermometer perhaps, or if he could rearrange his schedule. However long the silence stretched between them, he soon managed to slip on that guise he needed when facing the world outside; he smiled in her direction, "It's a small cold. I already took some medicine for it; it's just makes me not want to eat as much as usual."

Whether she truly bought that couldn't be gleaned from her expression. She sighed – finally, her eyes were off him – and turned away. "Hurry to school then. You'll be late otherwise."

"... Thank you, Natalie."

While he doubted she would inform his father immediately, she would at least contact the photographer, the substitute, and his tutor about his cold, and prepare them to receive him. They, in turn, would not be surprised when he arrived in his cold mask and ready to handle him should his condition be worse. However, it wouldn't be Adrien tried to assure himself. Getting through the day would be a haze, but nothing out of the ordinary; mostly.

Showing up at school with his mask on did earn the usual questions he expected, though he handled them smoothly enough. Entering the classroom and setting his bag down, he knew it would be a different sort of interrogation when the others arrived.

“Adrien...!?”

Speaking of, Adrien opened his eyes and sat up a little straighter, aware that he had sat back in his chair and leaned his head against Marinette and Alya's desk. Perhaps he was more exhausted than he first thought; it felt like he decided to hike a mountain before coming to school. Still, watching Nino sit down next to him, and casting wary eyes to Alya and Marinette, he waited for the questions to begin. The cold hand on his forehead made him jump, and green eyes locked to blue, breath catching in his throat. Had this... happened before? Her hand felt familiar, comforting, and the chill against his burning skin made him press a little closer for relief.

“What's the diagnosis, Dr. Dupain-Cheng?” Alya asked, breaking the minute-long trance the two had. Adrien leaned back and Marinette snapped her hand to her chest, face burning but still shooting a look at her best friend.

“... I think it's a fever.”

“What're you doing at school? You should be kicking it at home and sleeping the day away,” Nino pointed out, shaking his head. That would be the normal teen response, Adrien supposed, but he shook his head.

“I had some medicine last night, and before coming to class. I'll be okay.” At least he could smile, and even with his currently paler complexion, that seemed to be reassuring enough. If only his lip didn't abruptly quirk or his brows press in on his forehead. Instinctively, his shoulders curled forward, his coughs fortunately coming out less harsh than it felt. Inside, there was something different; a new pain welling in his chest, and despite being Chat Noir for so long, he couldn't think of any wound comparable to this. Dislocœur's arrow would probably be the closest – an arrow piercing his chest, but the arrowhead then decided to expand, making the hole open wide. Too much air; he wheezed after the coughing fit subsided, eyes again rising to meet his friends' alarmed gazes. His hands were trembling beneath the long desk, but he raised a hand to wave them off.

“S-Swallowed... down the wrong tube...” he mumbled. The pain, whatever it had been, soon dulled to a phantom ache, and he managed to level his breathing. Unfortunately, it didn't seem like his lie fully convinced the group around him. Nino and Alya exchanged glances, and Marinette was closely watching him. He didn't know she had made out how his expression changed, or how his brows remained furrowed. She was keenly aware of how his forehead was dotted with more perspiration, how the flush in his face deepened, and overall,

how exhausted he appeared after that attack. Adrien caught her eye again, but dropped his head to the desk again, unable to see just how worried she was.

“Adrien...” she started, but the door opened. On the corner of his desk, he noticed her hand ball into a fist. Whatever she had wanted to say would have to wait until lunch time, but by then, the ailing boy would have his breathing under control, and his coughs managed.

Hopefully, they would just believe his medicine hadn’t been working that morning, and that it kicked in during the lecture. That’s all he could ask for right now, happiness gracing his features as they spoke on their way to lunch, the ache thumping in his chest alongside his heartbeat.

## Chapter End Notes

A chapter of little substance, buuut just wait for the next one.

Leave comments, kudos, and subscribe for updates!

# Chapter 5

## Chapter Notes

Gosh, you guys were waiting for this chapter for a while. We still have plenty of this story remaining for more ups and down along with a few other things that might be inevitable given the situation. Anyway, I'll avoid having your eyes fall out here from this nonsense note reading, and begin working on stuffing more detail into chapters.

Thank you again, cynicalSleeper, for beta reading!

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Days past, nights fell, and it persisted, but he couldn't stop.

*Inhale, exhale, he had to remind himself again... It's not enough; repeat.*

The looks continued from Alya, Marinette, and Nino, but the medicine concealed the worse symptoms. He was still moving, still focusing, and still able to keep up with his schedule. It would be fine; *he* would be fine. The flu could take days, even weeks to break, but it would soon. Adrien couldn't allow it to keep him down though.

*His sheets were clinging to him again, but his hand clutched his chest where it hurt the most. The breaths were getting shorter, and he rolled onto his back, trying to tip his head as he wheezed. Knees bending, he feebly tried to kick, to move; just do anything that wasn't choking. Could he get up to get more medicine? Should he try taking more? It would push him past the recommended dosage within the first twelve hours.*

Gathering up his school bag, he quickly made his way to the locker room, quipping out a brief goodbye to his friends. He knew they were only concerned, but they didn't need to fuss. A few more pills before his photo shoot, and he would be able to finish getting through the day. Inside his jacket, he could feel Plagg squirm, the kwami's piercing green eyes scrutinizing from his hiding place, but he remained silent.

*"Adrien... c'mon!"*

*Plagg didn't bother with the silly convention of instructions sometimes. Miraculous wielders tolerances changed, and his bearer needed more medicine. Knocking the bottle over, the cap popped off with a small snap of his black magic, and paws hurriedly grabbed two pills while the rest clattered on the ground. Ears high, eyes open, and pupils dilated, the kwami darted over as Adrien shook violently, breathlessly struggling against his fits. For a moment, Plagg's*

*mind blanked, pills dropping onto the pillow. As he was now, his human would be unable to take his medication. Hissing, he had to try something else, anything to get the kid through this.*

*Flitting down to Adrien's right hand, Plagg disappeared into his Miraculous. The transformation wasn't called, but he could still do this.*

Two more capsules down dry, Adrien pulled his mask up and closed his locker, readjusting his bag on his shoulder. The photo shoot would be taking place in Parc de Belleville and last for two hours as long as things proceeded on schedule. Once that was over, he would be permitted home early to study before dinner, but maybe he would use that time to take a nap instead.

Stepping into the car waiting for him, he instantly slumped against his headrest, letting his bag drop from his arm. The steady ride as Gorilla drove could have lulled him to sleep were it not for that pain deciding now was the time to flare up. It was becoming more frequent after he dosed himself, its pulse matching with his heartbeat as it sped up. His vision blurred and the world tilted before his sight, darkness creeping in. He didn't know if his tunnel vision was being caused by his illness, or the amount of pills he'd taken today. Either way, it felt like he kept tipping, or everything was threatening to fall. Were it not for the lurch as the car's brakes engaged, maybe it all would've.

Blinking, the world righted itself. With his legs shaking, he slowly stepped out of the car. He just had to get through this one more thing.

*It was the most unpleasant hacking sound, and his throat burned after. Whatever had been smothering him cleared and he ravenously consumed air, desperate to refill his lungs after being deprived. Emerald eyes barely opened beyond a squint, his sight distorted by tears that managed to escape before he could blink again. Adrien could make out the two pills resting besides him, but his attention was drawn to the dark stain splashed across his pillow and sheets, and undoubtedly staining the mattress. He still panted as his tongue twisted in his mouth, and brushed over chapped lips, the familiar sharp metallic taste making his stomach roll.*

"Adrien..."

"Adrien...?"

"What?"

His head rose, and he sat up straighter on the bench, realizing the photographer was speaking to him. Apparently, it was time to change his attire again; he must have spaced out. Without saying a word, he rose and walked away to change into the next ensemble. The designer fussed, and make-up artist touched up his face again, mumbling about his cold making everything run. A retouch on his forehead and cheeks, they seemed satisfied soon enough to return him to the photographer. Move under the arch, lean against the railing, turn your head to the right, all these instructions came and Adrien followed without question, exhaustion helping the forlorn look that the photographer wanted to capture. Waiting for someone, but they never arrived; the camera flashed quickly, making dots pop in his vision.

*Weakly, Adrien managed to turn his head on his pillow, eyes unfocused, and ignoring the fact he was now tangled in his sheets and sweat. Plagg hovered above him, staring, but not saying anything, eyes darting to the side. He managed to see it too; how could he not? Even if they didn't see it, it was hard to miss the stench of rusted pennies when it stained the bed next to him. He also saw the pills abandoned, miraculously untouched by the blood he just spat out, but now he was hesitant to take the pills at all. This happened; even though he took medicine before bed.*

*His fingers gripped his bedsheet tightly as he shook this time. Plagg tried to run a soothing paw over his chosen's head, but he wasn't like his counterpart kwami. He had to try though. He didn't like seeing his chosen rattled like this... and if he was asked, he unfortunately didn't have an answer as to what was wrong.*

“Yes, yes, perfect, Adrien! Everyone, let's take a break!”

The photographer's order was a blessing, the young blonde exhaling and walking away from the crew – far, but not too far should they try looking for him. While the staff sought out snacks and warm beverages, he walked himself back to the bench he had been at before, heavily sitting down once at his destination. Right now, this would generally be the moment where he could have a look around at their scenery, and enjoy it for what it was, and not worry about the advertisement it was about to be the backdrop in. Honestly, he would love to have a look around the Parc de Belleville the last time they were here, but they had been in a rush to finish the shoot. And right now, he could not bring himself to rise from the spot, his body sinking into the bench, and a short breath escaping him.

He was bundled in layers – so many layers – for this shoot, but he still felt cold. When anyone touched his forehead though, they said he was burning up. He didn't understand why his fever still left him freezing, and no one else was aware. Unconsciously, his arms crossed to clutch both elbows tightly, and his body curled forward, just like that day at school. The cough didn't come this time, but the pain was flaring up again. The arrow was long imbedded in his chest, but it felt like someone rotated the arrowhead occasionally, pressing it until it started again.

Eyes shooting wide, he became rigid as his breath cut short, unable to move from his huddled position. It wasn't that he didn't want to, it wasn't as though he didn't want to possibly call for help this time; no, it had him locked there. He couldn't feel his legs and his back – god, his back – it felt like hundreds of tiny needles suddenly decided to gouge their way into his spine, and not just below the skin. They nestled themselves beneath the skin and between the bone, leaving him in a blinding pain that he was seeing white mingling with the darkness trying to throttle him again. It didn't remain there either, deciding to lance throughout his body; to the tips of both fingers and toes, to the point where he found the world tilting again. Though, it didn't tilt this time because of his mind looping out.

Plagg wriggled beneath his sleeve as he lay on the ground, the sounds around him suddenly muffled by cotton in his ears. Adrien puffed, desperate for air like the night before, but all he could manage was a rasp. It seemed to hurt everywhere now, his chest burning, his spine tingling, and every nerve in his body snapping with such ferocity he was shaking again. His



blood was pounding in his ear, his pulse thrumming far beyond just maddening at this point. He wanted to cry out, but his mouth only quivered.

Natalie...

Plagg...

*S-Someone*... The words were dead in his throat.

His vision became white.

---

Unlike the other times where she might follow him to his photoshoots, Marinette had other intentions this time. Alya, despite her teasing, shared similar thought as did Nino. The three of them came to Parc de Belleville with the intention of watching and making sure that Adrien was really holding up. Over the days, they had been observing him, the only relief in his illness being that Chloé thought twice about coming around in case she caught his ‘cold’, or get it off of any of them (though, they weren’t sick. They were positive that was only another excuse to insult them).

“It... seems like it’s going well so far...” Marinette muttered, but she couldn’t shake the feeling as she watched Adrien pose again, the camera flashes making her blink, but not Adrien. No, he was raised in this lifestyle. The sight of a camera flash no longer made him reflexively blink unless it was directly in front of him at a range no one could stand. Beside her, Nino scowled, and Alya just crossed her arms, her phone nowhere to be seen despite the opportunity. Normally, they would try getting his attention and maybe help him smile, take pictures for themselves, but for the winter line, other poses were expected – no, demanded of him. Control his emotions; she bit the inside of her lip when she remembered Gabriel saying Adrien had been too emotional that day Jackady attacked. Was this what it was always like?

“I don’t know. That look is too good...” Alya sighed, shaking her head. “There’s being forlorn, and then there’s ‘I’m about to faint’. Nino?”

“They should be calling for a break soon,” the DJ soon replied, not really answering his girlfriend’s question about the current look Adrien was giving. Nino had been to a few of his best friend’s shoots by now, and they usually were on schedule unless there was a technical difficulty, or another model was here. Adrien never caused too much trouble while on his shoots, but there was always some bad luck around him. Today was too on point that Nino nervously fiddled with his headphones, anticipating something to happen. And if there wasn’t any other models around, and the equipment was working; he wished he still fiddled with his bubble wand, but he couldn’t - not since that day.

“Yes, yes, perfect, Adrien! Everyone, let’s take a break!”

Words didn't need to be exchanged as they all watched Adrien move away from the stairs, and move back to the bench he was previously occupying. They were already on the move to see him while they could, the staff preoccupied by snacks and warm drinks; the few that did spot them must have recognized them from previous sessions, and chose to ignore them. Whatever the details, they moved closer, eyes never leaving the teen model dropping onto the bench and holding himself by the elbows. Nino moved faster, passing Alya and Marinette by several paces, but his cap flew off as they all broke into a run when it happened.

Adrien had suddenly tensed, and spilled onto the ground less than a minute later, but it may as well been eternity. *That* drew attention finally, but Alya was the first one with her phone dialing 112 as Nino and Marinette knelt down besides the convulsing teenager.

"Adrien! Can you hear me? Hey!" Nino shouted, but those green eyes were wide and unfocused on their current surroundings. Pale fingers on his throat, Marinette at least found a pulse, but there was still something more alarming.

"Nino! He's not breathing!"

Alya was trying her best to calmly explain the situation to dispatchers, but it was difficult for her to keep her voice level, "Yes, we're at the Parc de Belleville. We don't know, but he's not breathing...! What do we do?"

"Move aside!"

Both Marinette and Nino pulled away when a young male in scrubs crouched down, setting a toolbox beside him and snapping gloves over his hands. Gently he grabbed Adrien's chin and opened his mouth, pressing inside with an index finger to see if the airway was clear. Withdrawing, everyone besides the medic froze upon seeing thin traces of red present on his glove, but he was opening his box, and pulling out a tube. "You two," his voice snapped Nino and Marinette out of their stupor, "I need you to roll him onto his back."

A crowd was forming, photos were being snapped, videos were being recorded, but the photography crew was trying to keep the public back with Alya assisting now that the ambulance was on the way. Nino and Marinette helped move Adrien onto his back, keeping a hold on him although his convulsions had long since died. They said nothing as the medic tilted the model's head and opened his mouth again, inserting the tube into his throat. There was trembling; Nino's hands tightened on Adrien's arm as did Marinette's, one of her hands moving down to grip Adrien's own. Sirens wailed in the distance and steadily grew louder, but the medic was busy attaching a pump to the tube. One pump, two, three...

Adrien's eyes fluttered and closed, and the medic exhaled, "He's breathing... Stay with us kid."

Nino sighed, relieved that they had acted fast enough. Alya mumbled something indiscernible under her breath, the hand holding her phone pressed against his chest. However, for Marinette, she continued holding Adrien's cold hand, watching the on-site medic managed each breath for the ailing boy who seemed to be halfway between conscious and unconscious. What was going on?

## Chapter End Notes

Again, sorry for probably not updating next Sunday! I'll be at convention for the weekend, but I'll see what I can do about getting two chapters up when I come back; one on Wednesday, and another the following Sunday. Oh, and the next update will be a moment step away from our little Miraculous children.

For now, leave comments, kudos, and subscribe for updates!

# Chapter 6

## Chapter Notes

You know waiting for Wednesday after con? Yeaah, not happening. Instead, posting this Wednesday and then the next update will be June 5th. I already have the next chapter done, but it gives me time to write up two more between now and then. I like being a little ahead of schedule.

Also again, this chapter steps away from our Miraculous children and goes about... one hour and fifteen minutes away to Great Britain. And to people who are familiar with Trauma Center, I know, it takes place in 2018 technically, but Miraculous is rather ambiguous about what year it's in.

Thank you, cynicalSleeper, for being my beta fish.

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Caduceus EUROPE had – what she personally considered – a terrible location. It had its pros and cons which crossed the line often, but she always thought anything waffling between a positive or negative fell more towards the negative. When deciding the location of the building, the surgeon wanted to ask who decided the Central Business District of London would be a good idea for a hospital. Or perhaps they had merely forgotten how quickly the city could become congested by both vehicles and foot traffic. It just wasn't conducive for any emergency scenarios. Gazing down at it now from her office window, the platinum haired woman could guess what time it was by the amount of people alone, and it was time to go.

Adjusting her white coat, her hands came to rest on her hips, and her silver heels clicked as she turned and exited her office, walking briskly down the corridor, the sound reverberating all the way. Busy outside, it wasn't so much in here, doctors, nurses, and patients busy in the multitude of rooms lining the hall, or making sure to stay out of the way. Her eyes were trained on a single destination after all, one separated by the heavy double doors at the end. They were getting new employees today, new... prospective doctors that were hopefully ready to fulfill the expectations ahead of them. Getting accepted into Caduceus took a certain level of skill and tenacity that would go unused in the usual hospital setting further helped by a director recommendation. They were now where the forefront of medical research and technologies were developed; now wasn't the time for getting cold feet, but allowing their curiosity and ideas to satisfy a greater need.

All eyes were on her as she entered the large room, oval table almost completely occupied by fresh faces save for three empty seats. Cold feet? Or perhaps they were thrown out before she could get them. No matter, it wouldn't change her plans. The Director hadn't arrived yet, but he would only be observing anyway. It was up to her as the head surgeon to give them a proper introduction. For now, she just observed them, angled eyes considering each new candidate as she crossed to the massive paneled window that showed downtown London proper. Tensions were already high in the room that a single pin dropping would set the candidates off, but she smiled mirthlessly. If anything, having this much nervous energy was only giving them a sample of what they could expect should there be an standard emergency situation. They were lucky to miss the most recent one.

"Ah, Dr. Kimishima. My apologies for being late..."

Turning on her heel, she caught sight of the Director Langston Miller letting the double doors close behind him. The aged man with blonde hair was in his usual dark blue suit decorated with various military medals, and the Caduceus emblem. He adjusted his matching tie, his own eyes looking at the new doctors seated at the long table, but he didn't move over to join them. Instead, he remained by the door, locking it and flicking several switches on the wall. The center of the table opened while there was a soft hiss near the windows, shades lowering to cover the numerous panels, and dim the room. A round projector sat center of the table now, humming to life with several blue lights blinking and soon displayed a holographic sphere above. The Caduceus emblem appeared – the red shield bearing the Rod of Asclepius and two white wings – and the surgeon took a seat at the head of the conference table.

"Welcome new recruits. I am Dr. Naomi Kimishima, and while typically this would be the part another doctor tells you more about their position, understand I'm only here for your orientation for now. What I do as a surgeon in this hospital, you will come to learn in time. However, that's only if you stay here."

Leaning back in her chair, her arms were crossed beneath her chest, the holographic Caduceus emblem spinning slowly before all of them where it floated. The image shifted on its own, instead becoming text which flickered from one language to the next while she spoke.

"Right now, I have to ask who any of you are. What have you accomplished? Why have you been selected? Why are you a doctor? It's believed you have something to contribute, but I don't see anything of value to us right now." Her head snapped the instant one mouth opened to object on her left, and her glare silenced the doctor before he could speak. At least someone attempted to bark. "... You are doctors who hopefully come to us with similar ideals: to cure the incurable, and to help humankind strive for a better tomorrow against the world and against themselves. Though, *are* you here for that? Or are you only here for the right to say I'm a doctor at Caduceus?"

"Now, before any of you get the wise idea of talking back, I have a few questions... you have two patients arrive, an actor that collapsed on set, and the second is a pedestrian found collapsed in the park. One is diagnosed with a pleural effusion and the other has pneumothorax. Who do you treat first, and why?"

Eyes widened around the table, and she scoffed. This was going to be her day.

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She supposed the recruits' test results would be better had they been warned prior to their orientation, but she walked away from the conference room with a better idea of what they would be in an emergency situation. Overall, her judgment of them was they were still too inexperienced save for two. Hearts, lungs, livers, even skin, she tried getting them to look at the whole picture expected of them here, but only two stood out. Naomi was not going to begin her rounds in a good mood, and the other doctors around realized that; Director Miller noticed that, and bothered to catch up to shortly after she returned to her office.

"Unsatisfied, Dr. Kimishima?," he said, sharp eyes watching her as she decided to occupy herself with patient files.

"They need to sort out their priorities, Director." Her reply was just as cool as her attitude had been all day, but she could be positively frigid. "If GUILT is the only reason they're here, they're no one we should keep. Honestly, if you wanted parrots, I'm sure you know where the best pet store is to get a few."

"True enough, but they will learn. Your 'orientation' seemed to challenge several to try reaching your expectations," he chuckled, "Besides, parrots are not known for their surgical prowess."

That earned that faintest quirk on her lips, but she sobered up, flipping through a file on her desk.

"... Another GUILT patient?" She raised the file to closer examine the report, eyes narrowed as she considered. "Hm, the pattern says it's Deftera, but the readings are peculiar. You know we have other doctors that could've been put on your orientation so I could handle it."

"Yes, but I wanted them to be prepared to observe your operation, and let them see what a true master surgeon can do."

Naomi gave a withered look at the aged Director, but sighed shortly. "Observing my operations will do nothing for them if they're not here for the right reasons. Still, I'll spare this discussion for later. Have Dr. Kelso and Dr. Nguyen take over for my other patients. I'll be down to begin in ten minutes."

"They'll be prepping in Operation Suite Seven..."

Without another word, Director Miller excused himself, leaving Naomi to ponder over her case again. The young woman's name was Silvia Platt, and there was nothing exactly distinguishable about her. A stay-at-home mother of two, and living with an Elena Ross, they weren't anyone Delphi would normally target. "But this couldn't have been exposure..." Considering how Delphi was now either in custody or hiding, but just considering that was

troubling. As the only recent case admitted, either there was someone else infected not showing symptoms yet, or someone had their hands on the virus and was randomly distributing it. Whether they followed Delphi's ideals, or were going to result to their own terrorist acts for personal gain, she would have to have the matter looked into; though, only once this woman's life was out of danger. Of the seven strains, these creeping tumors had to be dealt with before the condition worsened.

Dropping the file back onto the desk, she picked up her headset and put it on, setting it to the channel she needed. Her heels clicked, once again carrying her out of her office with the door sliding closed and locking behind her. "How's prep in Operation Suite Seven? Are we ready to get started?"

*"We're stable for now, Doctor, and ready to proceed."*

"Good. We're beginning in five... Inform me if her condition changes."

Calmly, she entered the locker room, slipping off her lab coat and placing it upon a hanger while approaching the scrubs. She combed her mid-back length hair and drew it high, twisting it into a bun in order to slip the hair cap over. Washing her hands once in the sink, she covered herself in her surgical scrubs, tying on her mask next, and then washing her hands again. Gloves snapped once pulled on tight, and she saw the star flicker in her eye. If this operation didn't throw any surprises at her, that skill would be wholly unneeded this time. Still, with an ever-evolving virus like GUILT, it would be wise to remain on guard.

With a soft hiss, the door opened to the surgical suite before her. Fluorescent lights bounced off the pale blue walls, and the two-way glass from which her operation table could be observed, illuminating the room in its entirety. Carts were at ready bearing tools and empty trays, machines beeping steadily as numbers rose and fell; saline dripped in its IV bag without a sound, and her heels clicked, announcing her own presence. The general anesthesiologist, the surgical nurse, the attending physician, they all moved back as she approached the operation table and met the still open eyes of her patient, Silvia Platt. They betrayed her fear and worries, the wonder if she would survive this procedure after being informed she practically had parasites swimming somewhere beneath tan skin, and generating tumors sporadically as they did so. Naomi came to stand at the woman's side, nodding to her once.

"We're going to administer the anesthesia shortly. Ms. Platt, you'll count backwards from one hundred... and I want you to dream of your family as you fall asleep." Gently as she spoke, Naomi's eyes also softened, and Silvia expression changed, surprised. "Because when you wake up, they'll have been waiting for you. Now isn't the time for you to give up... You're going to fight, and I'm going to see that you live. Do you trust me to take care of you? You only need to move your head..."

Beneath her mask, Naomi beamed seeing the relief in the poor woman's eyes, and watched as her mouth managed a faint smile. Silvia was crying, but she nodded, whispering weakly behind her oxygen mask.

"I trust you, Doctor..."

“Good...” Naomi nodded to the anesthesiologist, allowing them to begin administering the medicine. “We’ll speak again. Sleep well...”

It doesn’t take long for Silvia’s eyes to close, and Naomi raised her hands.

“Proceeding with Deftera excision. Everyone, stay on point...”

Silence filled the operating room, and the other lights dimmed save for the one overhead. Naomi – Dr. Kimishima – adjusted her magnifying lenses on her headset before accepting the antibiotic gel. She spread it smoothly over her patient’s skin, the length of which was about to be more exposed than most people would probably ever care for seeing. Quietly, she passed off the gel, and allowed the cold metal of the scalpel to replace it. However, new weight in hand, Dr. Kimishima wasted no more time, bringing the point against her patient’s skin and pulling down, making one single cut.

“Incision complete. Exposing the stomach. Chiral reaction is rising... Nurse, hand me the laser.”

*“It’s here doctor.”*

“Hemorrhaging is present on sight. Prepare the drain...” Dr. Kimishima traded the scalpel for the next tool, eyes tracking the red and blue fish-like parasites swimming its way up towards the now exposed surface, quickly changing their routes about the organ. They weaved around and then bound together, their bodies a mockingly twisted yin-yang while they fought each other. Around them, cells reacted violently, discolored tumorous growths rising in the organ as she continued draining the area – draining them of the cytoplasm they generated fused together. They fell apart, more blood leaking through damaged tissue walls, but the doctor kept a steady hand.

*“Doctor, there are abnormal tumor markers appearing...”*

“Ah... so you’re the one behind this...”

Her blue eyes glinted at the several tumors that were beginning to overtake the field. They were leeching onto several veins, oozing foreign plasmids, and drawing in sustenance while Deftera fought back, colored fins flared in their final stand against her.

“Bear your teeth if you want, but we already know how this will end...”

The fluctuating numbers on the monitors steadied themselves as Dr. Kimishima concentrated, eyes solely focused on ridding the stomach of each tumor that remained. They had to be drained, and the veins connecting them severed. All of them had to be removed at once otherwise the remaining tumors would promote their resurgence. Another operation might be more frantic, but the staff remained back as she worked her magic. The ancient gift flowed from her, but they couldn’t see the soothing energy wrapped around her fingers, or the way her eyes took on a violet hue. They could bear witness though from the stabilized numbers trying to waver yet being disallowed by both doctor and patient. After all, she didn’t want to waste this power as she had before.



“That’s it, Ms. Platt. We’re almost done...”

Tumors removed for a biopsy later, she hummed as her eyes scanned over tissue again. Its healthy pigment was returning, and the hemorrhaging had stopped. Another dab of antibiotic gel would provide the weakened organ some strength until it naturally returned. For now...

“Chiral reaction is negative. Tumor markers are gone... We’re closing up the area.”

“As you recruits can see...” Dir. Miller’s voice cut in, making the doctors jump behind the glass they observed the operation from. “We expect you to be ready to adapt to any situation. Diseases do not remain stagnant and anyone can be a patient. Dr. Kimishima is our head surgeon for a reason, and has high expectations when it comes to combating evolving diseases.”

“Operation complete. Director Miller, inform the other Caduceus branches that Deftera has decided to mutate again,” Dr. Kimishima chirped over the intercom. She was standing at the glass, angled eyes watching all of them while the staff behind her prepared to move Silvia to a room for further observation. The delicacy she had been showing her patient was gone, her cold blue eyes intense once again. “Also, send me any updates on GUILT cases. Infection rates are still low, but we never know given the recent mutations.”

Her mind was already elsewhere upon her quiet departure from the operating room, thinking back to the recent case in Paris. Nicolas Mercier for one was infected by Tetarti and in a stadium when he collapsed. Those nasty bugs loved pumping out toxins, and it had no trouble getting into the bloodstream. He was a highly contagious case, but she still hadn’t received the report she was expecting. Naomi still remembered seeing the blood flecked against the black mask, but that kid wasn’t even aware – or he didn’t care. GUILT numbers were low, and how many people bothered to panic over it anymore, she didn’t know. Or perhaps being a superhero granted immunity to diseases blessed by ‘God’.

Stripping off her gloves, she tossed them into the waste bin, drawing down her mask with a sigh. So much for not using her Healing Touch for that operation, but it was needed. She wouldn’t dare break a promise to a patient especially one like this. After all, for having a hand in creating them, it’s only natural it made her responsible for its destruction. Pausing at movement in the mirror, she realized someone must have left the television on mute. In the glass, she could see the news was playing; coverage from France about a young teen model collapsing unexpectedly on set. “Life of even young celebrities... they couldn’t even faint in public without someone reporting it,” she mumbled, taking off her surgical scrubs to put on her labcoat again. She would entertain the thought of watching more, but her headset was ringing. Raising a hand, she answered.

“Yes? Which room number? ... Alright, alright, I’ll be there momentarily.”

The television turned black just as the blonde hair and vibrant green eyes of the young male in question was displayed on screen.

## Chapter End Notes

See you guys June 5th where we'll return to Paris and check in with our young patient.

On a weird side note, this... became invisible under Miraculous? I don't know, AO3 is doing something weird again and I don't understand. Oh well...

Please comment, leave feedback, or kudos!

# Chapter 7

## Chapter Notes

Hi! Man, it's been a while hasn't it! Well, we're still on schedule, and so sorry for the wait! Sometimes, chapters where normal life is happening can take so long to write, but I'm slowly speeding up on that part. Anyway, we will resume schedule with Sunday releases now unless I can get these chapters out faster. Considering we should be reaching the continuation of the Prologue soon, we'll be getting along with the rest of the story, but that's still about three chapters to go.

Anyway, no more talk here, let's keep going! As always, thank you, cynicalSleeper, for being my beta fish.

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When was the last time he felt like this? Both his mind and body floating, senses dull to everything, and only focused in the moment now. Nothing bothered him, and he could continue floating on this cloud to who knows where. Though, he felt like he was forgetting something in this haze. Was it himself? No, he remembered who he was, and that was Adrien Agreste. Was it his friends? He remembered Chloe, his first friend, but there were his new ones; Nino, Marinette, and Alya. Ladybug too; as Chat Noir, he couldn't forget about his Lady. Where was he? That question had his mind halting. Where... where was he? The very fact was, he didn't know.

Where was he?

He tried to remember still floating in that comfortable haze, darkness around him cold and comforting. It felt like he was burning up, but why was he burning up? Where was he? What happened? His head throbbed sharply, but he made no sound; at least, he didn't hear himself. The throbbing moved from his right temple to his left then moved around to the back of his head as he tried harder. Something about remembering – he had to remember, but what was he trying to remember?

... Right, where was he. But why did he have to remember?

There was the faintest sound permeating the water around him; a high-pitched, ringing chirp. It sang steadily, but only until the pain lanced his skull again. He heard the tempo pick up, felt weight press down against his chest and back, but he was trying. It bubbled through to him, the images of muted blue skies and thin wisps of clouds. Fall, wasn't it? Rusty orange

and golden leaves were swaying in a silent breeze, a scarlet one unable to hold to its branch anymore dancing away from its odd colored companions, and drifted along the winds. Cold, the air was crisp, and its smell broken by the ground granite and earth. It had been pressed against his face, hadn't it? A bitter taste lingered on his tongue too; salty, but pungent like iron. Somewhere, he was lying down somewhere – had been lying down, but the weight was on his back and chest.

From one temple to the other, and around again...

The sky became so much clearer; it was all he could- no, wait. There were shadows swimming into his vision, someone in royal blue, and another person wearing white with a flower print with a gray blazer. One side, umber became sepia, and to the other side, peach brightened to a pale rosy hue. Dark brown, and a black so blue... honey and bluebell... Both of them are so worried. Adrien wanted to apologize, but he doesn't think he can. For some reason, he can't draw out the third silhouette even if their white gloves swim about his sight. It might be because everything was growing dim again. Wait, why *again* ? White and black spots were beginning to cloud his eyes, and he panicked.

That once faint, steady tempo was growing louder and faster again, pressure building in his chest. It hurts, and he doesn't understand why it was, but he felt like he was suffocating. Clawing, but not by his hands, raking at his skin, reaching inside to tear him apart. And then snapping; bubbles bursting in his lungs – he thought he managed to cry out, to scream. Anyone, he wanted it all to stop. Let him go back into that floating emptiness.

*"He's choking on blood again."*

*"Someone get the crash cart...! We're losing him!"*

Too many, and the darkness was growing heavier and colder unlike before. He didn't want to be there anymore...!

...

The pale pastels of the room glaring beneath the bright lights over Adrien's bed momentarily blinded him when his eyes snapped open, causing him to wince and shut them tight. When he dared to open them again, he squinted, trying to recognize where he was. Four, large panel windows were to his left, and to his right, there was a single white door in the far corner, and a partial wall with two windows stretched across, allowing him to see into the hallway where lab coats and colored scrubs primarily occupied with one or two odd machine he didn't recognize. Directly away from him, the wall itself was barren except to the left corner where another door sat closed; probably the bathroom. Finally, raising his eyes upwards, he saw a flat-screen television hanging there, the screen itself black, but the red light on, signaling it was plugged in. Not that it mattered presently.

Head down, the beeps of the heart monitor rung in his ear; he blinked, looking at his hands. He didn't recognize them as his own at first, his skin was never so alabaster before, and at the sight of the IV inserted into his wrist, allowing saline to run into his veins, he thought he might hyperventilate. Fortunately, he didn't, but he did notice something was wrapped around his face – just above his mouth, and right beneath his nose, curling around his ears. Adrien

didn't dare try moving the arm with the IV inserted, but raising his other proved to be difficult on its own. It was as though someone weighed it down, his elbow struggling to bend, and his shoulder resisting standard input to raise his arm. With effort though, he soon felt his cold fingertips against his cheek, clumsily feeling around until they traced opaque tubing running beneath his nose and around his face. Inhaling, he concluded what it must be: oxygen.

"Good afternoon, Adrien..."

Flinching, Adrien lowered his hand and turned his head against the pillows supporting him, noticing the doctor now standing in his doorway. It was an older male he did not know with flecks of gray mingling in his dark hair, and kind hazel eyes. His attire was simple, a set of green scrubs beneath a starch white lab coat, and a pair of glasses tucked away in his breast pocket. The name tag clipped to his chest read 'Dr. Isaac Reyes', but Adrien didn't focus on it too long, choosing instead to watch the doctor as he read what had to be his chart. He was trying to figure out what was happening without disturbing Dr. Reyes, attempting to read the doctor's face to glean any sort of news, but either the doctor had mastered his emotions like so many people Adrien knew, or simply he was too exhausted to notice any changes. Or perhaps it was just a mixture of both because he wasn't sure how long he would be able to stay awake despite how much he wanted to move.

"Adrien, do you think you could answer a few questions?"

Dr. Reyes was speaking lowly, not for the purpose of eavesdroppers, but for the fact everything already sounded too loud to the sun-haired youth still lying partially dazed in bed. Adrien appreciated it, finding it a challenge to even muster a response between the beeping beside him, and the face his throat felt like he swallowed sand, fine particles scratching while leaving his throat dry. Attempting to wet at least dry lips, he managed to croak, "Yes." Dr. Reyes didn't ask anything straight away. Instead, he turned to the rolling tray outside of Adrien's current peripheral, and faced him again with a small glass of water, tall straw bent to ease drinking. A few sips, and the dryness was alleviated, but not entirely gone. Just a start, but that was fine.

"There you go..." Dr. Reyes hummed, setting the cup aside once Adrien seemed to stop sipping, and leaned further back in his pillows. "It's only a few questions now. After that, I'll let you fall asleep, okay?"

Adrien didn't answer vocally this time, choosing to save that energy for the questions when they came. So, he nodded slowly; just enough to get his answer across. Dr. Reyes did seem satisfied with this method.

"Good. By now, I take it you know where you are?"

"... Hospital," he murmured, pleased to at least hear it sounding less like he was gargling gravel, but still noticing how tired it was. After some rest, he would sound more like himself hopefully. Right now, he wasn't feeling too much one way or the other.

"Yes. The Hôpital Saint Louis to be exact..." Dr. Reyes replied, writing something down in the meantime on Adrien's chart. "Do you remember what happened before you were brought

here?”

For a second, only ‘No’ settled on his tongue, but the teenager knew better. ‘No’ was not the right answer he could give because he could see it. Flashes and flickers, the waving leaves that looked like fire from a distance with their hues, and he recalled the cold air, the even colder earth...

“... Yes.”

“Can you tell me what you remember?”

Bemused eyes drifted over to the doctor there, but there was a reason for the question even if he couldn’t understand right now. He was tired and wanted to go back to sleep, but part of him knew that these questions had to be answered to the best extent he could manage. His head lulling against the pillows, he thought, and tried to recall everything with appropriate articulation.

“I was... photoshoot...” Okay, so he wasn’t going to get the articulation down right now probably, but he had already started with his story. “Parc... de Belleville? Yeah, it... Parc de Belleville.” He closed his mouth, inhaling and exhaling with the assistance of the oxygen tube resting in his nose. When the doctor said nothing, he thought he might as well keep talking, try to keep the blurriness out of his head for a few minutes longer. Whatever happened before, he was scared that it might happen again. He didn’t want to be in that darkness again. “... We were on break. I sat down... it was cold.”

But he had been wearing layers for the winter line. It was coming back in more detail beyond the surroundings. The hand which he had dropped from his face clutched the front of the hospital gown he wore – of course they dressed him down into a hospital gown, but what else had been going on? “I felt... I felt this pain in my chest. And then, I wanted to sit up because I couldn’t breathe, but...” His fingers trembled as he remembered what happened next, phantom pain blooming in his mid-back. “I couldn’t move. My back... I-It felt like I was being stabbed. And then, everywhere, and it turned white... and I was on the ground, but I couldn’t feel anything. I still couldn’t breathe.”

“Calm down, Adrien... lean back, breathe deeply...”

Adrien didn’t even notice he leaned forward and had begun to hyperventilate. Still, he bobbed his head hastily, falling back against his pillows, and closing his eyes as he tried to steady himself. Don’t go back to the darkness again, he had to remind himself. However, in that moment, he missed how Dr. Reyes brows furrowed and his pen stopped midway through his notes. Troubled eyes disappeared in time for him to meet Adrien’s tried expression, doing his best not to betray how bizarre the story was.

“Doctor?” Adrien started, but then paused. Looking towards the window, he judged that the sun was beginning to set. And the day he collapsed, it had been growing late. “... How long have I... been here?”

Silence engulfed the space between them, broken by the rhythmic beeping of the monitor running on, the numbers rising and fallen at the slightest changes in the young model’s

condition. Dr. Reyes's soon tapped the clipboard, drumming lightly before he deemed it alright to answer. "... It will be four days shortly. You were choking on blood on the scene so we had to hold you here until we could stop it."

Should he be surprised? Adrien didn't know. It explained why he tasted blood and couldn't breathe back then, but he didn't understand how it related to his back pain.

"You seem to have developed a bacterial pneumonia... We're not certain yet with some of the tests still being run, but it appears atypical in nature right now," Dr. Reyes explained, but realizing that wouldn't be understood, he elaborated. "It didn't respond to the usual antibiotics, and we found some abnormal bacterium present. We have to hold you here for a few more days to continue your treatment, and run several more tests. Visitors will be permitted, but only two people at a time."

He had to be frowning, but Adrien understood all the same. Whatever atypical pneumonia he had, it needed to be treated. Still, he had been out for four days? He missed school, practice, and patrols; his father wouldn't be pleased, and Ladybug must be disappointed, but he would try his best to make up for falling behind schedule. If he could get up, call home; or transform and call his Lady, apologize for letting his flu turn into this...

"We've already informed your father of your condition," the doctor said calmly. "We'll call him again to tell him you've woken up; he said he would send your things once you did. Speaking of waking... I should let you rest. I imagine you're still exhausted."

Letting out a slow breath through his mouth, he nodded once. Dr. Reyes hummed himself, stepping back from the bed, "Get some sleep then. A nurse will be in later to see if you're up for eating."

"... Thank you, doctor."

With Dr. Reyes closing the door behind him, Adrien contemplated risking sleep. It would be dark again; who knows what would happen the moment he allowed his eyelids to droop. What if he panicked? What if he started bleeding again? What if...?

"Adrien, you heard the doctor..."

"Ah...?"

His pillow shifted beneath his head, and a black spot wriggled from between the two supporting cushions. Bright, lime green eyes and thin pupils looked back at him, small paws touching his nose. He didn't even care that his eyes crossed for him to see his kwami. He could only smile, "Plagg. You're still here."

"Of course I'm here. Do you really think I'd leave you in this place alone?" Paws drawing back, his small arms crossed. While he pretended to look offended, there was relief visible on his small face. He moved around Adrien's face, hiding himself from the window to nuzzle against his chosen's cheek. "You should've told someone, you know? I think you gave your photographer a heart attack when you dropped like that."

“I tried to when it started...” With a breath, Adrien raised his hand to cup around his kwami, fingers curling to pet him. “It’s hard when there’s blood in your throat.”

“Yeah, yeah, whatever you say...” But Plagg was vibrating, purring. Whether out of happiness, or pain, Adrien didn’t know. It was comforting though and it lulled him, drawing him closer to sleep again. Beside them, the monitor spiked. Plagg pressed closing, rumbling louder. “I’m not going to let anything happen to you, okay? You really need to get some sleep.”

“B-But... what if it—“

“Hush, you’re not. And if you do, the doctors are right there.”

Half-lidded eyes drifted over to the open windows that allowed him to watch the doctors and nurses pass in the hallway, and wondered how quickly they really would respond. Not that he wanted to test it. Really, he wanted to be well again, and able to go back home to be in his own room for once. And if not there, running around on the rooftops, and scaling the tower besides Ladybug, maybe even watching the sunset with her. It was casting a beautiful mix of ochre fading into magenta and that deep star-filled blue into his room. His monitor resumed a gentle pulse as he stared out into the twilight horizon, tiny paws patting his cheek, “Watch it kid. You’ll crush me turning like that.”

“Hehe... sorry, Plagg.”

“If you’re really sorry, then try sleeping.”

Same old grumpy cheese fiend, but he was glad for that familiar stench of Camembert present. Plagg was right; he needed to rest, and believe that he was going to be okay. His eyelids dropped lower, fluttered in a last attempt to remain open, but closed, reassuring purrs guiding him back into a deep sleep.

## Chapter End Notes

If I can get this next chapter done, I'll see about a Wednesday update. But again, if not, see you next Sunday.

Please comment, leave feedback, or kudos!



# Chapter 8

## Chapter Notes

Sunday again! Not much to say this time so let's just get to the chapter yes? Though, I will say this... we're almost back at the start and at the climax. Hehe, I'll try to make it as entertaining as I can!

Thank you, cynicalSleeper, for being my beta fish.

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Staying at the hospital wasn't inherently terrible, but it wasn't entirely pleasant either. It wasn't the doctors or the nurses because honestly, they were very patient with him. Whether it was by his name, or not, he appreciated that they were lenient on the 'two visitor' policy by at least one after three more days he had to be held up in the hospital for. Nino, Alya, and Marinette had originally come by to deliver his homework at Natalie's behest, but they ended up staying with him until he became tired, or until visiting hours were over. Besides homework, they would sneak him other things too like baked goods beneath get well presents from his classmates. Really, they didn't need to, but he was grateful. He couldn't ask for company from the staff, and his father wasn't about to come see him.

No, what really complicated his stay in the hospital was just the treatment itself. It required almost constant prodding and poking for one sample or another, and then the antibiotics made him more nauseous than he thought possible. He had recovered enough that he could move, but a few steps either had him stumbling due to random bouts of dizziness, or his stomach would flip, making him need to sit down before he lost whatever food he could eat. Adrien was patient though as frustrating as it could be trapped within the pastel room and hallways, but by day seven, he was feeling better and beginning to appear healthier again.

"Discharge date! Excited man?" Nino was beaming, all four of them putting off their homework assignment. Not the first time, but they would have most of it completed by the time they had to leave. Adrien grinned back at his best friend, nodding enthusiastically. It had been a while since he could do that without a searing pain in his chest or back; it felt good. Nino patted his arm, "How about taking a deep, celebratory breath for us."

"Nino..." But Adrien did, expelling the air as he laughed. Nino, Alya, and Marinette joined in, all of them calming down only after he did, the large grin on his face giving way to a gentle smile. "Really, thank you guys for keeping me company. I can't believe I'm saying this, but I'm happy I can go home soon. Not that it's going to be a big change in

appearance...” And a bit less active outside of his room, but having to be here was concerning. He understood how – at home – that was some reassurance of his safety.

“You don’t have to thank us, Adrien... It wouldn’t be fun to sit in the hospital all day without anyone coming by.” Marinette spoke honestly, hands clenched tightly together in her lap. Adrien watched her, noting how there were dark circles just visible beneath her eyes. There seemed to be more on her mind, something she just wasn’t telling them about, but she put on a smile all the same despite whatever bothered her. “Besides, it’s not the same at school when you’re not in class.”

Even if it was tired, that tiny smile made his heart jump. There was just something always so incredibly sincere when it came to her smiles that made him want to see more of them, but gazing at her so long usually made her – and she turned her head away, pink dusting both of her cheeks. It darkened to a full red when Alya cleared her throat with a smirk.

“Oh yeah, it’s not. Chloe can’t stop moaning about how you’re still in the hospital and she can’t visit because she’ll be exposed to *all* those sick people besides ‘Adrikins’.” Her hands moved animatedly and her eyes rolled as she shook her head, laughing a second later. “It will definitely be quieter having you back around. I’d be careful though. I bet she’s been saving up *all* her misplaced affections for your return. We might need a crowbar to get her to let go.” And for some reason, Adrien almost suspected the Ladyblogger might already have one prepared for the harrowing event. He chuckled lightly this time, but sighed.

“If you guys could help... I’m going to be on new antibiotics once I leave, and Dr. Reyes said I might feel nauseous again.” Though they might dislike Chloe, she was still his friend for the most part. That, and he didn’t need to accidentally throw up on anyone should he be jarred too much.

“Dude, we saw you get sick once,” Nino started, shaking his head with a frown, “We’ll make sure you don’t blow chunks on anyone.”

“If it’s that much...” Alya quipped with a grimace, “He was spitting up blood, remember? Even if it’s hurling on Chloe, no one needs to be covered in blood.”

“T-That’s why we’re going to make sure he doesn’t get sick at any point...!” Marinette interjected, looking between Nino and Alya. Now she was being firm, and while he appreciated it, it was too late. Now the unpleasant thought of his nausea causing him to accidentally hurl in class was there, and it wasn’t about to leave. An attempt to change the subject was quickly made by Nino who brought up the mysterious lack of akuma during the duration of Adrien’s stay, and Alya was immediately there to bite, discussing too how she only saw Ladybug on night patrols lately also. When he was discharged two days from now, Adrien made a mental note to transform and contact His Lady with vague details about what happened.

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Two days never moved by so slowly, but it did bring Natalie and the Gorilla to collect him from the hospital around noon. Despite a lingering cough, Adrien wasn't feeling the encroaching heat anymore, or experiencing any chills, and hadn't felt any shooting pain in his back. Escorted by security, he at least insisted they stop when they passed Dr. Reyes so he could thank the doctor for taking care of him. Of course the old doctor stopped and smiled, bidding him farewell and to take care which Adrien promised he would try.

Still, outside of the hospital, he began to grow anxious. There were reporters being held back by security, and stepping into the limo, he began to wonder what his father would do. Having nearly spent two weeks at the hospital, he had a hefty pile of work to make up for. School work was done, but Chinese, fencing, and piano would require extra hours to make up for the sessions he missed. His father was most likely busy preparing for Paris Fashion Week, but that didn't mean Adrien was off the hook. No, that fiasco at the photo shoot meant it had to be rescheduled again and probably delayed the release of the Winter season ensembles. Pain flared in his chest, but less from the still-lingering illness, and more from onset panic. He remained rigid in his seat though so Natalie wouldn't notice, but she was preoccupied with her tablet; already considering how to ease him back into his previous routine and then some without causing too much physical exertion right now.

He jumped when the door opened to reveal the Agreste Manor, shocked that he hadn't realized they had already reached their destination. Already another attendant from the house was there when the Gorilla opened the door, and helping Adrien step out of the car. There were still flashes, but the paparazzi and reporters were kept on the other side of the gate, allowing them safe entry into the Manor's foyer. Just the same, modern appearance as always with blacks and whites, and the minimalist design leaving the mansion spacious, but cold. However, it was a familiar space, and detonated the sense he would get better instead of worse. Hospitals held people who could be in far worse conditions than himself now, but he had come close to being even beyond unwell.

"Thank you..."

Adrien spoke softly to the attendant, glad to be on his own bed after already becoming physically taxed following his brief walk from outside. They gave him a set of pajamas, and dismissed themselves so he could change and rest. It was still early, but it would take three more days recuperating at home before he could attend school again. So close now, he should be able to manage it, and do his best to get the sleep he required. A short nap, and then he would walk around the manor to stretch out his legs again.

Making sure the last button on his top was done, he double-checked his phone alarm. Two hours would do. Covers pulled up to his waist and Plagg circling on his pillow, he was about to lie down when there was a short series of taps at his door. Head up, Adrien saw the cat kwami dart beneath his pillow from the corner of his eye while he watched his bedroom door open. Unconsciously, he sat up straighter, hands resting neatly on his lap.

"I didn't know you would be home, Father." It was supposed to be fashion week in Milan now. Adrien caught his father's steely eyes, and managed to hold for a while. However, Gabriel was a hard man to read, even if they were related. He could only think of the man's

disappointment, and fear what he might say. After all, it wasn't uncommon for diseases to be passed around at school, and given that flu season was upon the country; what if his father took him out of school for getting sick? His immunization records might be up-to-date, but there was always a chance remaining. He'd gotten the flu, he passed out at a photo shoot, and he almost *died*! There was no way his father would merely let this go. Green eyes fell, and he waited for his father to say something, but all he heard was his dress shoes tapping, and felt his presence growing closer. Adrien's fingers trembled, but he stopped them from clutching the bed sheets.

The footsteps stopped. His father was there at his bedside, but he kept his head down, unsure of what he would see if he looked at his face again. Honestly, Adrien was trying not to hold his breath.

"You're looking better than the last I saw you..."

A blink, and Adrien looked up, one brow raised in confusion. The last time they saw each other had been over video chat when his symptoms originally began to develop. Gabriel wasn't looking at him.

"The doctor didn't expect you to awaken for another day when I came by."

"... You came by the hospital when I was admitted?"

If he were anyone else, that wouldn't be a surprise, but to hear his father actually set aside work to see him. His eyes were wide. In those early hours of his stay, that's when he had almost...!

"The doctor said you needed three more days to rest before you consider picking up your schedule..." Gabriel started, and Adrien almost threw his blanket aside.

"If you need me to do a shoot now, I can—"

"Don't act irrational, Adrien."

He flinched, but settled down, dropping his head away again. He heard his father sigh, and could imagine him pinching the bridge of his nose beneath his glasses.

"As I was going to say..." Gabriel continued, his hand lowering from his face – Adrien only caught a glimpse of the movement. "The doctor said you needed three more days to rest. With fashion week coming soon, your photo shoots resume the third week of October. I suggest you use this time off to make up for what you missed at school and with your instructors."

Adrien wasn't sure if he heard his father correctly, but looking up again, he only saw his father's retreating form, and the door soon closing behind it. It felt like his mouth was open – no, it had to be; he knew he was gawking because there was no way not to.

"... Did your father really just come in here to tell you that you have time off?" Plagg asked, eyes shifting to the side to catch Adrien's own. His whiskers flicked, and his paws crossed,

head tilting to the side. “I thought he was going to tell you no more public school, or whatever. Well, vacation time! That calls for some Camembert to celebrate!”

Emerald eyes rolled, and Adrien closed his mouth, shaking his head at Plagg’s casual response. “It’s not vacation time. I still have my other lessons to make up for.”

“Yeah, yeah, but without photoshoots, you have almost three hours open on the weekdays. And your weekends are completely open,” the cat pointed out with a fanged grin. While that was true, Adrien still shook his head.

“Natalie will find a way to fill that time up. Anyway, there’s Camembert in the usual spot.” He slowly eased himself to lie on his mattress and pillow, glad to have them back. “I’m going to nap before this dream becomes a nightmare.”

“Suit yourself! More cheese for me!”

Lying on his side, he watched Plagg dart over to the trash can and tip it. On the bottom hid a piece of cheese that had no doubt been festering inside its plastic bag for the past two weeks, but his kwami scarfed it down anyway with a small belch. Chuckling faintly, Adrien exhaled seconds later as his eyes closed, soft breaths taking over the room once he was asleep.

## Chapter End Notes

OH MY GOD YOU DID NOT SEE ME POST THE WRONG CHAPTER! A-Aha... I was trying to edit chapter nine last night and left it open. Whoops! Right chapter now!

Please comment, leave feedback, or kudos!

# Chapter 9

## Chapter Notes

OKAY, Sunday again and let me say, Happy Father's Day! Buuut we're not here to have a Father's Day chapter as the show must go on. The chapter after this one is ready to be loaded, and the chapter following is ready to be beta'd so I'm getting ahead. I'll be working on the next chapters like immediately since we're finally at the climax! How exciting!

Ah, that reminds me, thank you to everyone who has been reading thus far. I love writing Crossovers, but I know they don't get much traffic because - pretty often - if you don't know the material for half of the crossover, you're probably going to glaze over it. Still, so happy that some of you find this entertaining even with the week's delay between chapters. If I can get this next chapter done sooner, I'll post a bonus chapter on Wednesday so cheer me on please!

Well then, enough chatting in this note. As always, thank you, cynicalSleeper, for being my beta fish.

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If Paris's citizens were awake right now, they would be cheering right beside her. Well, no, they would be cheering louder than she could alone. Then again, Ladybug welcomed him back with a tired, but bright smile and a hug, and left the cheering to the Parisians that were out this evening. Running on all fours at her side, his skin still pale, but his emerald eyes gleaming, Chat Noir was again at her side and Ladybug couldn't be happier. Those weeks suddenly without him were awful. Though they were without akuma during his absence, it still wasn't the same. Patrols had been quiet, and she had quickly begun to worry the worst when she couldn't find any trace of him in Paris. Landing on the Arc de Triomphe, her yo-yo snapped back to her waiting palm, and she turned, hands behind her back, as Chat joined her.

She watched him closely as he stood, sweeping his wild blonde hair back from his forehead only to have the strands fall back a second later. There was barely any sweat on his brow this time, and his cheeks were flushed a healthy pale pink. Overexertion would still be an issue she supposed, but it was better – he was better twenty minutes into this patrol than the one where he only lasted ten. His green eyes flicked and caught her own, making her freeze. Her kitten grinned widely like always.

“See something you like, My Lady?”

Giving him a flat stare, it kept the flush from betraying her. When the light caught his suit like that, it *did* define the contours of his suit. Of course, the sight also made her frown. Whatever he had caught must have taken his toll. He was a lean feline with enough muscle tone on a good day; however, he was thinner now, atrophy possibly from lack of exercise, and an inability to eat his fill. It reminded her of a certain model friend of hers that only recently returned to class. Adrien... She wondered if he was sleeping comfortably tonight. He didn't seem to have any breathing difficulties after being discharged from the hospital.

Chat was giving her a curious eye, standing perfectly still when she decided to approach him. Both faux ears stood up, and he jumped at her hand pressing against his forehead just like before. Still, Ladybug held, noting how his temperature was slightly elevated. Nothing dangerously high like back then, but still warmer than what would be considered normal. Lowering her hand from his face, both pressed against his chest, seeing if he was as thin as the light made him appear.

"... Were you that sick, Chat?" she finally asked, head rising so she could look him in the eye. Her hands pulled away, fingers clenching to stop herself from tracing what had to be his ribs again. She saw his ears fall, and he faintly cringed, left eye squinting and the corner of his lip curling in an awkward grin. He didn't like worrying her – she knew that – but she was concerned. As much as he didn't want to answer, fighting against her intense stare and the way she held herself, he eventually caved.

"Sorry. Your cat had the small misfortune of getting a bit sicker than most." His words had her biting the inside of her lip, waiting patiently for him to say more. Without any intimate details that might give him away outside of his mask. Ears pressed low still, he scratched his cheek carefully with a claw. "I ended up in a hospital... but! I'm all better now! *Purr* - omise!"

"The hospital...!?" She gaped at him and he could only wring his gloved hands, wincing at her outburst.

"Y-Yeah... I just started having trouble breathing so I went to the hospital." Those were bare bone details, but right now, being unable to know more and who he was... She barely heard him add how the doctors diagnosed him with pneumonia. His tone was so casual about it, but it made her think of Adrien again. Both of them, she knew the flu could be terrible, but for both of them to end up in the hospital? Not only that, but Chat – her partner - had been in the hospital, and the little she concluded about his family from prior discussions, he probably had no one visiting him. Adrien had been held for almost two weeks on antibiotics; Chat had only called her up a few days ago saying he was recovering at home, but how long had he been in the hospital alone?

She placed a hand on her head, frowning, "I'm so sorry, Chat. If I'd known you were in the hospital, I would've visited..."

"... Thanks, LB, but it's okay," he murmured, a tiny grin forming on his face. "I was only there for a few days in my civilian form, and as much as I'd love to see you, they gave me some pretty strong antibiotics." He waved a claw before his face, grimacing cheekily. "You know, sometimes the medicine makes you feel worse than the sickness itself. Anyway, I was

really nauseous and my kwami didn't want me to transform because he knows I would rather tell you in person. That's why I couldn't call sooner."

The image of a nauseous Chat bounding around Paris wasn't a pleasant one that's for sure. Ladybug's brows knitted as the imagery continued; Chat slumped over at the Eiffel Tower, panting as he checked around the Louvre, being passed out at Notre Dame. And now that she was going down that line of thought, it branched into Chat stumbling off a roof, or getting sick near the Seine; all those thoughts, and he never finds her in any of them because she decided to turn in early, or diverge from their normal route since it was only her these past evenings. She really should stop, but she paled, considering how he could've fallen into the Seine instead, or stumbled out into the road with a car barreling towards him. Their suits were meant to protect them, but she doesn't think drowning, or being crushed by a car fell beneath the usual damage that posed less of a threat against them. Or what if--!

"Ah, Ladybug, what are you thinking about?"

She must have leapt at least a few inches off the ground when he spoke up again, her head snapping in his direction. He appeared befuddled, one brow up, and his ears marginally fallen in concern. Her face must have said it all, revealing all the horrible things she had been thinking. Ladybug flailed, shaking her head, "N-Nothing! It's nothing at all! Just thinking about the paper I've been putting off for class."

... And now that she mentioned it, she really should finish that assignment for Literature. It just needed a few more citations, and it would be ready for tomorrow. Though, she wouldn't be finishing it at all if they didn't complete their round for the evening. Clearing her throat, she stood up straight once more, placing her hands on her hips, "Ready to keep going? We should finish up so you can get more rest. You're still recovering after all."

"After you, Bugaboo~" Okay, when he bowed and gestured for the next roof, she had to chuckle at the familiarity. How Chat Noir, and how his eyes just widened, her red hand passing over his head to scratch him like old times. Her hand curling around his cheek and raising his chin, drawing his blown eyes to her and she smiled, leaning closer... only to bolt away a second later.

"Keep up with me, Chat! Come on!"

"R-Right behind you, Ladybug!"

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He all but face planted into his bed upon his return, transformation wearing away, and leaving him in his normal attire. Plagg didn't need to tell him he was grinning like a fool; he could tell. However, Adrien hadn't been this elated in a while, and Plagg could withstand him grinning like an idiot just for tonight. Shivering, he rolled onto his back and sighed, bringing an arm to drape across his eyes, and block out the moonlight pouring into his dark room. It all



melted away though, and soon, he just laid there, second hand blindly groping for his comforter while the other dropped away from his hand to clutch the front of his dark t-shirt.

“We should’ve come back sooner. You know you’ve already taken beyond the ordered dosage from the doctor, right?” Plagg looked troubled on his small face, watching Adrien just lay still – almost entirely prone. He didn’t like it; it was something he had seen way too often out of his ring bearers, but he could make out Adrien’s chest rising. Grabbing the Camembert sitting alone on Adrien’s desk, the black cat consumed it before darting over again. He landed besides his chosen’s head, ears turning this way and that, listening to the short inhales and exhales. Lime eyes narrowed, tail flicking, whiskers twitching, but he knew he was powerless to actually help against this. “... Adrien, we should go back to the hospital if the medicine isn’t working.”

“You know I can’t...” Adrien mumbled, wrapping himself up tightly in his comforter facing away from Plagg. It didn’t matter to him that he wasn’t in his pajamas; he was beginning to feel exhausted. The shivering that had wracked him ceased, but he was panting still, curling up into a tight ball. “I missed too much, and we’re lucky there weren’t any akuma while I was in the hospital.”

“What’s a few more days cutting class if you’re not getting better?” Plagg hissed, floating up to Adrien’s shoulder. The blonde boy was staring ahead, but he could see the kwami in his peripheral. His dark fur was standing, but small paws were quick to smooth it out. “Look, let’s just go back to the hospital tomorrow after school, and ask for a few more tests. We don’t have to stay, just get a blood drawing or whatever and leave it to the doctors. Whatever you have... it doesn’t smell right.”

“... Smell?” Adrien turned his head to give Plagg a rather quizzical look.

Paws crossed, the small being of destruction nodded. “I don’t know if you realized it Adrien, but I’m aware of things around my element. If it’s bleeding, decaying, fermenting, rotting, any of those things, I can smell it. Kinda like how they have dogs that can sniff out cancer.”

“So, you’re saying you can smell whatever I have... but it doesn’t smell like anything you’ve encountered before?” He raised his head from the pillow, eyes opening more when Plagg nodded, small brows furrowed together.

“It’s really bizarre whatever you have... I know what pneumonia smells like since the Dark Ages, but your sickness there? Some nights, I can almost hear it... *moving*. Whatever it is, it’s not pneumonia.”

And Adrien thought he was having trouble inhaling before, but the news had him frozen, face paling upon doing so. His eyes dropped to where his hand clutched his chest, and he thought about it, remembering that feeling when he almost... The flaring pain, the twisting like someone was turning a corkscrew, and all of it was accompanied by bubbles bursting, blood blooming into his lungs and clogging his throat. It was there – it was still there. And he realized the numbness in his spine was fleeting, the medicine he had taken earlier to suppress his symptoms fading away and permitting the fire to slowly spread again.

Paws pressed against his clutching fingers, and a large ear rested against his chest, but Adrien didn't move – or more, he was too scared to try moving. He swallowed a shuddering gasp, wondering if the doctors would be able to do anything. They might not know what it was, they would not be able to treat it; this was going to kill him.

“Plagg...”

“Go to the doctor's tomorrow, Adrien. After school...”

He didn't know how he was feeling. Cold, hot, numb, aching, could he be all of that at once? He trembled and tugged at his shirt, hiding away in his comforter with Plagg holding onto his hand. Blood pounded in his ears and he tried to fight, but the fear of that Darkness, the fear of dying and being gone knotted tightly around his heart.

## Chapter End Notes

A little shorter than usual, but at least I'm posting this chapter in the right place now. By the way, if any of you are familiar with Trauma Center, what GUILT do you think I've infected Adrien with? I think it's pretty obvious by now even though the symptoms in the game were fairly minimal.

Please comment, leave feedback, or kudos!

# Chapter 10

## Chapter Notes

Looks like I get to spoil you this week~ I have two chapters waiting after this one, and a third in progress. Once you hit the climax and aren't trying to bide your time for the main event, it becomes so much easier to roll sometimes. So, without further adieu, welcome back to the beginning.

Thank you, cynicalSleeper, for the beta reading~

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His hair was tousled in the back this morning Marinette noted.

Adrien's hair had not been properly groomed as it usually was, but considering the way he looked this morning walking into class, she couldn't blame him for one or two missed spots. He appeared exhausted, like he hadn't gotten any sleep the evening before. And he brought the cough mask with him; maybe a precaution since his coughs seemed worse today than the day before?

Her head propped on her hand, her elbow resting on her textbook, she just frowned, watching him curl over again for what had to be the fifth time within twenty minutes that he had a silent coughing fit. He was trying so hard not to disrupt the lecture even though he desperately needed to go to the nurse's office. She bit the inside of her lip, wondering if she should get their teacher's attention, and just take him there herself. Why was it taking so long for his medicine to fight off his illness? Maybe they should skip the nurse's office and take him back to the hospital. Something just didn't seem right about—

“Marinette?”

“... What?” She snapped to attention, face burning when she noticed the history teacher and almost every other student's eyes were on her. Frozen, she looked at the blackboard, down at her book, and then back up at the teacher again before nervously giggling, “I-I'm sorry... What was the... question?”

Immediately she was sinking beneath the desk at both the teacher's glare and her classmate's laughter around her. Alya's comforting hand patted her shoulder, but Marinette could only bring her eyes back to Adrien's head. He wasn't laughing either, but his head dipped forward, nodding several times. One particularly heavy dip forward would have had him face planting into his desk were it not for Nino catching his shoulders.

“Dude, just go to the nurse’s office. The teacher will understand if you have to catch some extra z’s,” he whispered, letting go of Adrien only once he was positive the blonde wasn’t going to slam into the polished wood surface. Unfortunately, he was proving stubborn, and Marinette could hear him muttering something about ‘can’t skip’ and needing to ‘get back into lectures’.

“Man, don’t even worry about it. If you need notes, we -“ he gestured to himself, and then back at Marinette and Alya’s single desk. “- can bring them along with anything else, but go on man.”

Marinette watched as Adrien sighed and bobbed his head. Well, that was one more thing on the list she didn’t have to worry about. Leaning back in her chair, she would have decided to move on were it not for the ground shaking, or the ear-splitting screams now coming from outside. A few more seconds, and the police sirens begin to close in near their location. Students proceeded to fuss, others trying to look out the window and get a better idea as to what was going on outside. Their history teacher’s response was instant, voice booming above the chatter, “Alright students. Exit in a calm and orderly manner and make sure not to leave anything behind. We will continue with chapter 9 tomorrow, read from the earlier paragraphs and take notes. Now everyone, please return home!”

That final command came out like a gasp, flaming coins and receipt stubs slamming into the window, but clinking off the glass uselessly. Marinette scowled slightly; she did not need this right now, and as the other students swarmed to leave, Adrien was again unmoving, like he hadn’t even realized the commotion occurring around him at all. She couldn’t wait any longer otherwise the akuma would cause some real damage with its burning currency. Still before she took off, she steeled herself, placing a hand on Adrien’s shoulder as she stepped down beside him.

“Adrien, let’s get you home, okay? Can you get up?” she asked just loud enough over the rumbling again rattling the classroom. Dazed green eyes remained looking forward, but then they rose to meet her own, making her stiffen. His skin had been pale before, but it was becoming chalk white now. She didn’t understand; he appeared so much healthier before, but in a single day, it was like he was fading away with each passing second – no, she practically sensed his energy fleeing from him. Even as he forced a smile, even as he pushed himself up to his feet, he was trembling.

“I’m okay... I need to get my stuff from my locker...” Her hand slipped from his shoulder as he walked by, nodding over to Nino, “I’ll meet you guys outside.”

“But--!”

He ignored Nino speaking up, and stepped around Alya before running out the door himself. Marinette’s heart thumped; something was wrong. A blink and she realized she was alone in the classroom, both Alya and Nino having gone out either to catch Adrien, or to witness the akuma.

“Marinette...?”

Tikki's soft, but high-pitched chirp cut through her thoughts, but weren't capable of moving the heroine to act. Hand still hovering in the air where it had fallen away from Adrien, she brought it to her chest, pressing it over her heart. "Tikki, why... does it feel like..." she started, unsure how to describe what she felt and her teeth caught the inside of her lip. "When I was looking at Adrien... that I'm empty? Something inside me just seems to be disappearing, and it hurts."

Her little red kwami gazed at her with her huge blue eyes, but no answer spilling forth from her mouth. Small paws rubbed together, and antennae twitched before she sighed. "It's part of being Ladybug. Whatever disease he has, it's killing him – that even when you're not transformed, his life is fading so fast that you can sense it."

Everything around Marinette stopped, explosions and tremors falling deaf upon her ears. She could only stare at her kwami, her blood pounding in her ears, the words repeating over and over.

"Marinette, you can still save Adrien, but I can't tell you now because we need to purify the akuma first!" Tikki exclaimed, trying to snap her chosen out of shock. If this had surprised her so badly, the little sprite could only imagine what would happen were she to tell the whole truth. When yelling and zooming around didn't work, she had to use her paws and pinch, making the girl yelp, and clap a hand to her cheek. "The akuma! If you don't stop it, help won't be able to come for Adrien!"

Though she trembled, Marinette shook her head, clearing her mind. Her eyes hardened, and she turned away from the door while sweeping one hand past her ear, fingers brushing the Miraculous earring resting there, "Tikki! Spots on!"

Power flooded her body as Tikki disappeared into the dark earrings which immediately flared red and donned five black dots. Drawing the mask over her face, it appeared and framed her eyes in a dazzling pink light, her clothes disappearing beneath the same only to be replaced by red spandex suit covering up to her fingers and enclosing her toes. Her yo-yo's weight against her waist was familiar, and welcomed in her palm when her hand seized it. New energy and determination coursing through her, Marinette – now Ladybug – dashed to the window and ripped it open, leaping outside.

The chaos was just the level she expected given the tremors and screams before. Sidewalks were split, the street gouged out and littered with debris, and fires magically burning and spreading down the street. Tailed by the fires burning down the road and consuming cars around them had to be the akuma. Their dark attire this time reminded Ladybug of a hostess, clean pressed skirt flecked with purple spots like ink and white blouse covered in the back by menus from Le Grand Paris. A brief glimmer of purple, and the woman turned, facing Ladybug, and giving the heroine full view of dark-lined and splotched front with black buttons gleaming down the top. On the chest as well, she could read the name 'Annette'.

"Well, well, about time you arrived for your reservation, Ladybug," the akuma said, lip curled in a snarl. "Though, look at you. I thought I would be receiving two, or did your cat stand you up? How embarrassing, but I'm ready to service a party of one."

Yo-yo already at speed, Ladybug did notice the lack of a certain feline partner. He should've been here by now, or at least, arriving here shortly. Still, the akuma seemed kind enough to allow her fires to spread as they waited another few minutes, a coin flipping into the air and landing in her hand. Finally, there was a laugh, "My, my, no more time to wait for that stray to arrive. I have other guests to take care of unless you hand over your Miraculous."

"No thanks. I'm going to have to cancel this date and reschedule." If Chat was here to hear that, he would have a field day. The akuma's frayed hair almost seemed to curl as their eyes darkened in a glower.

"There will be no future dates available! I have to take them now!"

Ladybug back flipped as the coin was thrown; it sparked into a fireball midway towards meeting her, and carved the asphalt wide open with intended target missed. More change was thrown only to repeat results, others pinging off Ladybug's shield while she charged in. This would be Chat's job getting up close and changing the akuma's fighting tactic to accommodate both. With all the enemy's abilities known, Ladybug would be able to formulate a plan, but she had to find out everything alone.

Her heart pulsed once, painful against her ribs, or maybe it wasn't her heart.

The hostess had pulled a menu from her back and opened it. There had been something about starting the young lady off with a drink before the explosion. Ladybug gasped, flying back several meters to bounce once against the ground before rolling onto her feet and sliding to a halt. Away from her, she could see the akuma still holding the menu open, but in her empty hand, another flaming cocktail appeared, "Consider this on the house. It's the Extermination Special made just for annoying insects like you."

"Chat Noir, where are you?" she murmured. The only answers she received were that of her heart palpating uncomfortably again and the akumatized victim's laughter.

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As the swarm of ladybugs cleansed the damaged arrondissement, she brought her yo-yo back to her waist with a frown. The woman she saved thanked her profusely, but Ladybug barely managing a smile before turning away to run back to school. The police would leave and the press would come, and she could already guess what their first question would be.

*Where was Chat Noir during the battle?*

She had no answer, and both her heart and mind ached. Chat Noir had patrolled with her last night, had been grinning and reassuring her, but now she wondered if he really had been there. He had been gone for so long; perhaps her loneliness had gotten to her. But glancing at her hands, she remembered touching him, feeling his chest and tracing his ribs pressing out

of his suit. She had scratched his head, caressed his cheek, and tipped his chin – all of that had been so solid and real. But then why? Why hadn't he come today? Sure, the battle didn't last *that* long, but they had an emergency on their hands – or, rather, she had someone she needed to find once she gathered her school bag.

Ducking into the bushes, she released her transformation and raced up the stairs of Dupont, her cellphone ringing. Just as she plucked it out to answer, she squeaked, stopping herself short of crashing into Nino and Alya.

"You two are still here?" she asked, disconcerted.

"Well, Nino insisted he was going to get Adrien home while I livestreamed the fight, but then he called and said he couldn't find him," Alya explained, her lip curled in discontent, "So I cut the feed and told the LadyBlog I had a medical emergency concerning a friend. They'll just have to understand."

"It's weird. We caught up to him in no time and I told him I'd get his stuff before dragging that guy along so we could leave. Second we stepped out of school, I noticed he was gone." Nino crossed his arms, soon raising a hand to scratch his head, "I thought maybe someone picked him up, but the streets were blocked off. I can't believe I lost hold of him like that."

"You were only holding onto his sleeve," Alya countered.

Nino scowled, "I didn't wanna grab his arm. I thought he might bruise easily because that's like a thing that happens to sick people."

"*Nino* ... all the more reason to drag him along. The sooner he gets to the hospital..."

Marinette unconsciously tuned the rest of the conversation out when her heart uncomfortably thrummed rapidly, momentarily making her lose her breath. When it subsided, she turned her head, looking around the empty courtyard, gaze moving over the stairs, only for it to happen again when her eyes fell on a door. The beat struck her again, making her almost cringe, and she had to cough before she could inhale. That pain from before was back; the emptiness that had been eating at her insides that she had set aside. She fought to defeat that akuma in order to help Adrien, but why? Why did it feel like Chat Noir was fading away too? Why was she thinking about that silly cat and imagining that last night would be the last time she would see him? Both of them were leaving her.

She took off before she realized it, sprinting towards the door leading to the locker room, heart pound faster. If Alya and Nino were following her, she didn't notice. Half of her was vanishing; it was growing colder and heavier, it hurt so much. Were she Ladybug at the moment, she would have ripped the door off its hinges, the beating in her chest almost too much.

... And then it constricted.

Collapsed on the ground, his mask askew and blood dribbling out of the corner of his mouth, Adrien's green eyes were hollow, and pupils dilated. He wasn't moving – hadn't been moving

for a while. Blood had pooled beneath his cheek and mixed in his hair, and was steadily growing larger still. Inside, Marinette could've sworn something was about to break.

“Adrien!”

It was the photoshoot all over again...

Alya was on the phone calling 112.

Nino and Marinette were rolling Adrien onto his back, hoping to elevate his head to get him to breathe. However, there was no crowd to hold back, and no medical attendant to clear his throat. His head was on her lap; her hands were on his face, tilting his head up by his chin as she caressed his cheek as well.

“Adrien! Breathe! Please, you need to breathe!”

Nothing, but then his lashes closed, opening again. His eyes quivered, shifting ever so slightly, and his mouth moved.

*“Marin... ette...”*

His voice was gone in a whisper, and the beating stopped. Tears trekked from the corner of his eyes, and Marinette screamed as part of her shattered.

## Chapter End Notes

So, something I like to think about is Miraculous wielders having an unconscious connection that only bubbles to the subconscious when the other's in danger, and then also having some senses linked to detecting 'Destruction' or 'Creation' - things related to either or. Trying to avoid an outright reveal and so far, I think I'm getting away with it.

And yes, the Akuma this time didn't get a flashy fight or name, but just know they were a Hostess and got in trouble when a reservation came in late.

Sooo, be back on Sunday with what happens next! Please comment, leave feedback, or kudos!



# Chapter 11

## Chapter Notes

Gooooo morning readers and happy Sunday! We're back with another chapter and continue forward now that we're at the start. So, so, that was a month development, but you know, maybe it's time to start saving the children for the most part... kinda. I still have five chapters left, and now that I've written up another one, I might end up dividing one in half since it's a lot of action coming up. Of course, I won't say anything more about it because surprise. I'll get started on the action parts though

Thank you, cynicalSleeper, for the beta reading~

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See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Silence... only complete and utter silence after the scream ripped from her lungs and the cold washed over her. Marinette couldn't even manage a sob, bluebell eyes wide and quivering as she just stared into the empty eyes of the boy in her lap.

Nothing, there was nothing...

Just a void consuming her the longer she remained there, cradling his face and begging him to come back, knowing that her plea would be unanswered. The beating that had guided her to him had already stopped, and the pieces that had come undone, she doubted they could be put back together. This poor boy suffering as long as he had, dying so quickly despite their desperate attempts to get him help, and keep him alive. Maybe this was just the cruel fate expected given the bizarre nature of his illness no matter how hard they tried. They were only teenagers, but why did it have to be him?

Her back curled as she bowed her head closer to him, stinging eyes squeezing shut to prevent her own tears from falling.

"I'm sorry... I-I'm so sorry, Adrien..." she whispered, biting her lower lip, "I tried..."

If Chat Noir had been there, she wanted to say, but no. Her partner had never arrived, but it wasn't his fault this happened. For all she knew, he could be somewhere like Adrien now, again alone and without his own partner to comfort him. No, it wasn't something that was

probably happening, but something that already had. Both of them suffered without any comfort, and now they were gone. Why couldn't she do anything for them?

*"Marinette..."*

She felt a tear escape her eye, and soon was incapable of holding back any longer as they began to fall. Upon her shoulders, there fell a hesitant pressure and she recognized them as hands trying to comfort her, patting and rubbing. While she could feel them, she couldn't see who was beside her and trying to save her from sinking. Remembering who it might be, but she could not see beyond the blackness closing around her and numbing her slowly to everything.

Fading away...

*"Marinette...!"*

"... Tikki?"

Her voice was so quiet; Marinette didn't realize she had even spoken. Still, at the murmur of her kwami's name, she felt the cold retreating around her ears. Warmth that reminded her of a calming spring day spilled onto her face and gently dried her eyes. It further brushed over her cheeks and cupped her chin to remove every trace of them having been there. It was so strange, but so familiar and she held her eyes closed as it wrapped around the rest of her body, rising to the top of her head, and making its way down to the very tips of her toes. It felt like she was transforming, but she hadn't said the usual phrase, and the way it settled over her like a tender embrace.

*"Place a hand over his heart and focus... Listen to your breathing, and listen to your heart as it beats."*

"Tikki, I don't understand..." she whispered, but with her left hand still cradling Adrien in her lap, she lowered her right hand to his chest. His own hand was still there, fisting the black material of his shirt but not with the same strength as he must have earlier, and Marinette flinched when her fingers skimmed against his skin. For a second, she couldn't breathe, her throat seeming to tighten while at the same time fill with bitter copper. The soothing warmth could not stop the explosion of heat in her chest that seared her very insides, and it didn't stop there. Everywhere at once, it felt like she had been thrown onto a bed of needles.

The feeling had her paralyzed; however, as mercilessly as it stung, she only gripped Adrien's hand tighter, cajoling it into loosening its hold from the dark fabric. Her fingers slipped into its place as she intertwined their fingers and allowing both of their hands to rest above his heart. She bared her teeth and held together, biting back the pain while the gentleness overtook her body again, but not completely ridding of the ache. Her mind swimming at the intermingling feelings, she tried to do as she was told: listen to her breathing, and listen to her heart. She coughed harshly to clear her throat and felt blood overtake her mouth, taking deep breathes.

In and out...

She felt something drip from her mouth, but ignored it.

Softly, in her ears, she could hear Tikki speak to her again.

*“Just as you can sense his life escaping earlier as the Bearer of Creation, you can take some of his pain and share your energy until help arrives. Your breathing and your heartbeats are his as well as long as you remain connected.”*

Tikki... she would've said her name again had her pulse not sharply dropped. Winded, Marinette wanted to sink to the ground, faint from the sudden change, but hands steadied her and kept her from keeling over when she had to do this. The hand cupped Adrien's face moved and began to comb through wild gold tresses, the beating in her chest gradually picking up once again, a long exhale escaping her lips.

Another...

That was hers.

Those pieces of her that seemed to break before came pressing back together, trying to stick, but it was still fragile. Opening her eyes, she thought she could see a calming pink light around her fingers and his.

A pulse... A shuddering torrent of agony trying to break her apart again, and she felt her toes curl tight as she braced herself against it.

That was his.

There was a whisper of her name, but she continued her steady breaths, letting her thumb brush over Adrien's knuckles, trying to will the cold to release him. It was slow work, its grasp firmer than she thought, but she could feel his fingertips and palm begin to warm, and she saw the pale skin begin to turn. Absentminded strokes over his head, his tone further became less gray, and instead became crème. It spread from his temple over his forehead and down, filling in his cheeks and beneath his eyes, rising over his nose next, and flowing over his lips, chin, and spilling to his throat. Eyes falling to his, she noticed how they seemed to glow.

Fingers quivered, and she gasped shortly after he did, vision blurring when Adrien closed his eyes.

*“Oh my--!”*

*“He's... but how?”*

Alya? Nino? That's right; it had to be them supporting her right now. Marinette almost wanted to laugh; this must be a sight for both of them.

“Marin... ette?”

She bit her lip again, feeling the tears pricking, but she couldn't be distracted now. She could, however, watch as various emotions flashed in his eyes, indiscernible as they collided

together and fought to make themselves known. His arms shook, and for a moment, she thought he might try to let go of her hand. Another beat – it had to be her this time – and his other arm left the ground. Trembling fingers moving closer, her heart must have started pounding madly for the two of them. She held perfectly still, doing her best not to shy away while his fingers traced over her mouth and drew away coated in red. She had almost forgotten that she was bleeding for some inexplicable reason. Probably because she was too focused on how much life was back in his eyes, and how much fear showed upon closer inspection of his hand.

“Welcome back...” she whispered, panting softly at the exertion. Maybe she was lucky to have lasted this long, but the panic, the akuma fight; it was all beginning to catch up to her. One person wasn’t meant to breathe for two people, or at least, not another person of a slightly larger physique. There was ringing in her head – outside, something was actually ringing and she felt her shoulder press against the cold steel of a nearby locker – but she didn’t remove her hands. Adrien had been suffering for almost a month that she had to try bearing the pain just a little longer.

Still...

Should a normal disease make it feel like your chest was being shredding by a whirring blade? Or that someone was popping bubble wrap filled with liquid and filling your lungs with the contents? Was there even a name for an illness that made people begin drowning on their own blood, and leave them incapable of moving because a knife was cutting into their spine?

“Marinette, let go...” Adrien had spoken again, his voice barely above a sigh, “You need to get away. The akuma...”

“It’s gone. Ladybug took care of it...”

She was beginning to slide down to the ground, body curled in the fetal position with his head still on her bent legs. Inhale and exhale... but her breathing was comparable to his. Light, almost sporadic movements when his chest rose and fell, quite incapable of inhaling any deeper and leaving no air to expel. It hurt, and she didn’t know whether to feel hot or cold, shivering despite him being so close.

Pulse – a cough without sound that rattled her ribcage and left a fresh wave of iron rusting on her tongue. Marinette felt his fingers try to release her hand over his heart, but she refused. There was something familiar about his wide-eyed expression that almost reminded her of her missing kitty. Oddly enough, that made her smile.

“I’m not letting you go through this alone again... So, you keep fighting, okay?” The ground suddenly didn’t feel so hard. Shapes around him were losing focus, becoming distant blurs, but he remained. She could see his eyelids fluttering, noticing his head tilt towards her hand still pressed against his cheek, and felt her palm dampening. It was becoming harder to breathe, harder to hear the pulse that had been throbbing in her ears. If she closed her eyes for a few minutes, he would still be there, right?

Hopefully?

... Maybe?

The last thing she saw was a sliver of green comparable to wild fields.

For him, he saw the sky before being eclipsed by darkness.

---

The paramedics didn't know what to expect as they were led to Collège Françoise Dupont's locker room. They had been called in shortly following a local akuma attack in the arrondissement and told a male student had been found collapsed there. The reasons were unrelated to the attack, and he apparently wasn't breathing. However, mounting the short flight of steps as they followed the young teenage girl with curled ombre hair that called them with a stretcher ready, they didn't think they would come across what they did.

There was one more collapsed teenager than reported; a young female that – despite her condition - was unable to be separated from the blonde boy. Both were curled into the other and had evidence of either bloody sputum, or hemorrhaging that could suggest internal injuries. From the little they could assess, the decision was to transport in the end with little else besides examining them physically being able to be performed on sight. The other teenagers present stood back, clutching each other's hands while the paramedics carefully moved their unconscious classmates onto the stretcher. It took four of them to lift and transport them safely across the courtyard and down the stairs.

Pedestrians had gathered, watching in silent curiosity, no one noticing a small woman peering from the window of the bakery across the street, or seeing how she frowned when her eyes fell upon the two young kids following behind the medics. She called for her husband, missing the stretcher as it was loaded into the back of the ambulance permitting the briefest view of the young model and their daughter holding on beside him above the crowd's heads. Together, husband and wife watched the doors to the ambulance close, and heard the sirens wail for traffic to permit them passage.

*“ETA ten minutes. We have two teenagers in critical condition, one male and one female. Names are Adrien Agreste and Marinette Dupain-Cheng. Current blood pressure reading is...”*

And while Hôpital Saint Louis' doctors prepared for the ambulance's arrival, Dr. Reyes couldn't believe what he had been told. Adrien Agreste was being brought in again, and in the same condition as before. The old doctor opened the file made from the boy's previous stay, brows knitted in concern. He was examining the physical charts again made from the previous visit, mentally noting the curious fluctuation in the boy's tests. While his body weight was low upon his admittance, it was still a worrisome drop at his departure. Not only that, but there had apparently been an oversight. Young Agreste had told him about back pain, and on the chart, clear as day, were numbers warning to significant attacks to his nervous system caused by an unknown factor.

... A thought occurred, but he also questioned if he was being overly disturbed. After all, he had diagnosed the pneumonia case, but this was proving to be something potentially worse. The rate in which it came on, the symptoms from before, and now this second attack regardless of the medication prescribed.

Shaking his head, he tapped the tablet screen and brought out the mailing clientele.

Caduceus EUROPE

FWD: Dir. Langston Miller, more

My name is Dr. Isaac Reyes. I have a patient here at Hôpital Saint Louis, a young male by the name of Adrien Agreste, being readmitted for an unusual case of pneumonia. I am sending a copy of his files, current symptoms, and the tests we've performed in order to diagnose him. There is also now a young female named Marinette Dupain-Cheng being admitted with similar symptoms, and I will email her file once drafted.

Please be advised that Agreste's condition has become critical. I have a suspicion as to what they may have; however, if it's what I fear, we require a Chiral Test at the earliest convenience. With his current readings, we may have less than twenty-four hours with Dupain-Cheng not far behind.

With regards,

Dr. Reyes

## Chapter End Notes

I really do hope we find out more about the Miraculous in the next Season, but making things up as we go is just the way of fanfiction writing, isn't it? As for the disease, ah, now it is probably known, but the name will be revealed next time. Now, if I can finish part one/the fighting chapter, then I should be back Wednesday. Otherwise, see you next Sunday!

Please comment, leave feedback, or kudos!

# Chapter 12

## Chapter Notes

Hello! Sorry for no update on Wednesday! Had some family matters to attend to last week and it got crazy. Basic summary of it? Airport, funeral, airport, birthday parties... so yup. I didn't really have time to concentrate on working on the next chapter either, and I definitely need to work on it now that it's going to be a two parter between Ladybug and Dr. Kimishima.

Speaking of, today's chapter is back with our surgeon. Our Miraculous children will be back again next chapter.

Also, lemme just take this time to say you commenters and people leaving kudos are super awesome! And some of your comments I just don't know how to answer because gosh, you're embarrassing me! (In a good way) Ah, let's stop with this rambling and get back into it for now!

Thank you, cynicalSleeper, for the beta reading!

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Beyond the window, the sky was painted by the shades of the fading sun. A deep burgundy orange blazed a trail over the horizon line which faded into scarlet and a deep, consuming violet that found itself swallowed by the endless expanse of night overtaking the sky. Ocean eyes blinked at the soft chime from her computer, and Naomi turned in her chair to face her desk, pale fingers brushing over the mouse just enough to wake the device from its sleep. She had six new messages, two being spam, three being related to a patient discharged earlier, and one from an email she didn't recognize. It had been sent to Caduceus EUROPE in general, but forwarded to Langston Miller who, in turn, sent it to her.

He marked it as URGENT.

Well, deleting two, checking the other three, she opened the final message and skimmed his additional message applied to the original.

Dr. Naomi Kimishima

Seems you may have been right to suspect another case appearing in Paris, but you may have two cases. The patients are from a local school, admitted at 1520 our time. I have



requested and attached the second patient, a young female, same age as the young male. As for his chart, I have had it updated since his placement in the ICU.

The male has been given twenty-four hours.

If you need anything, you know how to reach me.

Dir. Langston Miller

“Twenty-four hours, huh? And they suspect GUILT...” Eyes dropping, she looked at the attachments. “Well, let’s have a look.”

If only they had connected her directly to their charts in the hospital to keep her up-to-date, but this was fine. It took a minute to download both, and a few seconds to have them side-by-side to compare. Both were indeed similar in aspects, but as she had been informed, Adrien Agreste’s condition was more advanced than Marinette Dupain-Cheng. In fact, they just had Marinette on an oxygen mask with her vitals noted as ‘recovering’ when compared to Adrien who was intubated.

“... Hm, upon admittance, both patients’ hands had to be separated. Shortly after, Agreste’s condition declined... that’s interesting.” She wondered if it was a psychological response, but they had both been transported unconscious. Well, there were many strange things in the world; this might be another. However, what wasn’t strange were definitely the symptoms and the numbers standing out. Internal hemorrhaging, fluid accumulation in a lung, polyps present in the same lung, complaints of back pain, and those were in mixed in with the usual symptoms of your standard pneumonia case. “The diagnosis was an abnormal pneumonia... Of all the GUILT it has to be.”

Though, the question then was *how*. After the Mercier case, the city had been quietly swept. Leaning away from her computer, she picked up her headset and turned the channel.

“Director Miller, what were the results again from Interpol?”

*“Hm? The investigation conducted last month you mean... There were no Delphi cells present in France, but there were two independent agents. One was responsible for infecting Nicolas Mercier with Tetarti while the second was a supplier with a shipment bound for Germany.”*

“So, Adrien Agreste was never targeted?”

*“No. Records show the next target would have been Mayor Bourgeois. All targets were high profile adults, not their children.”*

“I see...” That was odd, but if resources were limited, why not? Sure, their children being infected would cause worry, but a Mayor or an International Designer would cause panic. Just using their bioweapons wisely which was a surprise considering how easily they were caught. Nonetheless, this was plenty of information for her to believe GUILT was highly

probable; and if not, it was imperative to document any new diseases and do their best to treat any ailing patient. Every disease had a cure as Dr. Stiles would say. She turned off her computer and rose, marching towards the door with her headset still on.

“Inform Saint Louis the Agreste and Dupain-Cheng cases are now under Caduceus EUROPE’s jurisdiction. After that, I’m going to need the earliest available flight to Paris, and remain there for three days to monitor their recovery.” The scalar laser would be necessary for the operation, but she wondered about bringing her own suturing needles, approaching the nurse’s station. Catching the first nurse she could, she almost had them ring her usual surgical assistants. Though, she paused, recalling that there had been a recent akuma attack reported. “... No, wait, call Nurse Tapia instead. Director, I’m also taking Dr. Kelso.”

*“Doctor, be reasonable...”* There was a chuckle on the other end, and she rolled her eyes.

“Also, tell Dr. Reyes I expect him to assist with the operation as well. How long is the flight?”

*“A little over an hour. The helicopter will be waiting for you on the roof; it’s being supplied right now for the operation, or operations ahead.”*

“Double check that it’s prepared for Pempti treatment. I take it cross-matching has already been handled?”

*“It’s been done. Dr. Kimishima, be warned that the media has already arrived and has begun covering the story.”*

Naomi’s brows pressed and she hummed in displeasure. Déjà vu honestly as she scoffed. “Celebrities just can’t fall ill without it reaching news sources anymore. I’ll cover up, but they need to be kept out of the hospital and away from the OR. I *will* have them arrested if they come so far without proper clearance and proceed to bothering any of my patients, or their family and friends.”

*“Security measures are already being taken. Seems Gabriel Agreste has hired security of his own for his son’s sake.”*

“And? Do they have people covering Dupain-Cheng? The moment the media hear about her being brought in with Agreste, they’re going to cause her family grief.”

*“I believe her parents are in the ICU. Both parties should be undisturbed until after they’re discharged.”*

“Hmph, we’ll see...” she grumbled, entering the locker room. Putting her headset aside for a moment, she tied her hair up, and grabbed the bag she usually tucked away if last minute traveling came up. She could hear Miller giving directions to the doctor and nurse who would be accompanying her, and could hear him contact Hôpital Saint Louis directly. Perhaps he wanted her to be in on the call as well. Hair in place, she put her headset back on.

*“—2200 hours should be a reasonable time. Dr. Kimishima, will you be prepared then?”*

“It doesn’t take too long to run a Chiral Test. If we do that immediately upon arrival, the operation can commence at 10:00 PM. However, it *has* to be immediately. We don’t want to waste any time.” She closed her locker with a bang, turning away with her bag in hand. Leaving now would take a little over an hour, but there was also the time change to consider. It was six-thirty here meaning it would almost be nine on their arrival.

Already plenty of her co-workers knew to stay out of her way when she was marching, heading towards the elevators to get to the roof. “I expect we’ll land at another hospital and be taken to Saint Louis? If I recall, it doesn’t have a helipad.”

*“Correct. You’ll be taken in through the Emergency Room entrance. Ah, and a final note Dr. Kimishima, be careful. You may encounter Gabriel Agreste and he is not an easy man to deal with.”*

“Even the negotiation with a reasonable man becomes a minefield in this situation. I’ll be fine.” Her heels clicked as she stepped onto the elevator and turned, pressing the button to the top floor. She didn’t know too much about Mr. Agreste or the Dupain-Chengs, but how she ultimately handled the parents would depend on how they were handling their kids being monitored. It had been a while since she dealt with anyone that may try her temper. Her tongue clicked as the door closed, and she smirked, “Besides, I’ve dealt with worse.”

---

Sure enough, the helicopter ride was uneventful itself with Naomi and her team listening to ground chatter over the radio as they crossed into French airspace. Nurse Tapia and Dr. Kelso didn’t understand the extent in which their head surgeon loathed media coverage even if she understood how important it may be. It could be utilized correctly, or it could cause citywide panic. Right now, they didn’t need citywide panic at the thought that young Agreste had been infected by GUILT without them knowing the how or why. However, the doctor examined his file again on her phone, hand resting on her chin as she examined the picture attached closely. Something about this boy looked familiar, but she couldn’t put her finger on it.

“Dr. Kimishima, we’ll be landing shortly,” the pilot informed, making her close the file and look up. A simple yes would have sufficed, but she checked the time to make sure they were adhering to the schedule.

“Alright. Dr. Kelso, Nurse Tapia, be ready to move the equipment with the hospital staff. All of it is to go in one van. I don’t want to take any chances losing a single thing in transport...” She knew her team would not be so neglectful, but she didn’t know the staff here. Of course all three of them kept spares in the event something were lost or – possibly - stolen, but that was only a precaution they didn’t want to find *was* necessary to take.

Naomi opened the helicopter’s cabin door before the skids touched down, and noted three doctors, four paramedics, and three nurses waiting to assist them once the vehicle had grounded. The rotor slowed down to save speeds, the platinum-haired doctor stepped out with her team and set to work, the ten hospital employees rushing to join them with the pilot

joining last once the helicopter was completely off. Dr. Kelso took the lead, and Nurse Tapia monitored transport from the middle. Naomi took the back with the pilot, her eyes narrowed as they made their way inside the building, and divided themselves in the elevator.

Regrouping on the ground floor, they retook their positions while making their way through the Emergency Ward. They made sure to stay clear of any patients coming in while they moved out, the paramedics guiding them to their ambulance to load.

Dr. Kelso silently took inventory, nodding his head to Dr. Kimishima only when the last case was securely loaded. She turned to the hospital staff, and thanked them quickly before boarding, two of the four paramedics getting into the driver and passenger seats. Naomi checked her phone as the sirens wailed and the van began to move. It was a quarter till 9 PM; just the time she expected it to be. And with the two tests taking about ten minutes to finish, she could spare twenty-five minutes between Mr. Agreste and the Dupain-Chengs before prepping herself for the operation at 9:45.

“Remember, once we get there, I’ll see to Dupain-Cheng. In the meantime, I want you two to oversee the preparations for Agreste’s surgery. GUILT or not, we’re beginning the operation at 10 PM.” At the chorus of ‘*Yes, Doctor*’ and ‘*Of course, Dr. Kimishima*’, she cast her eyes out to the dark streets of Paris, watching the residents and landmarks pass by the window, but her lip curled into a frown as they neared Hôpital Saint Louis. There was enough light to illuminate the news vans and their reporters huddling around the main entrance, camera’s flashing and voices loud but muffled by metal as they questioned, trying to get in past the security posted outside. It was... significantly more bodies barricading the hospital than she anticipated.

“Look at that. You would think the hospital was under a bomb threat...” she commented, eyes catching sight of a weary doctor doing his best to cut through the crowd. Just a man attempting to leave for the night; didn’t they mind giving him that courtesy? Something small and black caught her eye, but it was merely a fluttering glimpse before the ambulance rounded to the emergency entrance. Stepping out first, examining their location, she nodded her head to the doors.

“Let’s get to work.”

## Chapter End Notes

Oh right, if you guys wanna ever bother me, I'm artisticFlutter also on Tumblr. I don't put much in terms of fanfiction, but sometimes there's sporadic posts of fanart among other things.

Please comment, leave feedback, or kudos!

# Chapter 13

## Chapter Notes

Well, well, we're at Chapter 13! Four more chapters and the next one is ready, but I'm working on 15. Anyway, we're now in the final stages. Gosh, it's been forever since I've actually completed a fanfiction; this is going to be weird, but I'm excited. The focus this time is still mainly some discussion which might be a little heavy in some parts, but hospitals and health discussions and people probably dying in hospitals...

Well, let's get the show on the road!

Thank you, cynicalSleeper, for the beta reading!

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See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

These particular heels clicking against the linoleum tiles of the hospital drew everyone's attention, from the few reporters permitted inside to the parents who had taken post in their children's rooms. Yes, the doctor's presence was known without her saying a word, a briefcase in her hand, and two resident nurses flanking her, guiding her through the hallways and into the ICU.

The two patients she had taken responsibility of were in adjacent rooms – a convenience, but also, it made her wonder if it possibly had anything to do with how they were found. In one room, she made out the young girl in bed with dark hair that seemed to have an iridescent sheen to it making the light hitting it from overhead reflect midnight blue. Her tone was a pale peach, her mouth and nose covered by an oxygen mask, and cherry pink lips slightly parted as she breathed in her unconscious state. The heart monitor was steady, and the numbers were making a gradual rebound, quite notable when Naomi decided to glance at the file she had on this Marinette Dupain-Cheng.

Eyes sliding from the file, the doctor gazed into the other room, brows pressing inwards on her forehead. Unlike his companion, the young male was ghastly pale, and blonde hair once vibrant in the image that came with his file now appeared dim and listless. His mouth was covered by a white strip that wound around his head to hold the tube connecting him to the ventilator, allowing him to hold on in what could be his final hours if his own heart monitor were all one was to go by. He was a slow, declining thrum unlike the steady, accelerating beat the young female retained.

“... They shouldn't have to go through this,” she sighed, shaking her head. What a terrible horror they both had to endure, but it would be over soon. Checking the clock, Dr. Kelso

could come soon to oversee Adrien's transfer to the operating room. Until then, Naomi approached his door and Marinette's respectively, knocking to kindly summon the adults occupying each room.

From Adrien's room, a tall man stepped out, his pale blonde hair she was certain was usually slicked tightly back showing a few strands loose. His cold expression fit well for his icy blue eyes hidden behind thick, dark-rimmed glasses, but they could not disguise an appearance she was all too familiar with: stress. Even before her, he took a moment to adjust his striped tie which required no adjustment at all. It rested neatly upon white dress shirt, and was tucked cleanly into the silver vest, ensemble finished off with cream dress jacket and the oddly scarlet dress pants. Beside him stood an equally stern, dark-haired woman who made no touch-ups to her dark suit. Instead, she only adjusted her grip on the tablet tucked beneath her arm.

"Gabriel Agreste I presume?" Naomi asked, earning a single curt nod as her answer. If he expected her to say anymore, she didn't – at least, not yet, her eyes moving to the other woman, "And you are?"

"Natalie Sanceour. I'm M. Agreste's assistant."

"Hm, usually, it's only family allowed here, but fine..." Naomi replied, attention turning away when the two more stepped out of Marinette's room.

Now, this was a curious pair with a male tall and broad shouldered, and the woman much shorter in comparison and round. They were not immaculately groomed like Gabriel and Natalie, but they were clean and dressed more casually; blue shirt and brown pants for the large man, and a white Cheongsam and blue pants for the woman. One party held themselves together, but these two wore their anxiety openly, their hands clasped together to comfort each other as they waited for her to speak.

"Tom Dupain and Sabine Cheng, correct?" Naomi inquired. Neither hesitated to nod, confirming their identities, and wondering what more she had to say. Giving the four another look over, she spoke, "I am Dr. Naomi Kimishima, Head Surgeon of Caduceus EUROPE. I'll be overseeing your children's treatments in assistance with this hospital. I know you have questions, but we'll need to keep them brief. I have a Chirality Test to run on both of them before we move Adrien into surgery."

"Chirality Test?" Sabine gasped softly, covering her mouth while Tom paled beside her. Natalie shifted, but Gabriel did and said nothing about the new development.

Naomi refrained from sighing, but she did cross her arms. "Unfortunately, they are both suspected of being GUILT carriers at this point in time. We have no way of confirming which one it is until the test is complete due to their ever-changing nature; however, from the tests we've been provided, we do highly suspect Pempti."

"What symptoms may the infected patient experience?" It was Gabriel that spoke this time, his expression still firm, but she could see it in his eyes now: a simmering fear. Each guardian waited; it was already enough to be told it was GUILT, but now they had a possible strain and a name to put with it.

“When a patient has Pempti, it can be mistaken for pneumonia. In all the cases I’ve had of it, it has appeared in the lungs.” Gabriel’s eyes flicked back towards his son’s room at those words, but they returned shortly. Naomi didn’t stop for him though; they were on a schedule – she had a time limit before the GUILT might react again. “Starting there, it hinders respiratory functions before spreading. Everything you expect with pneumonia – fever, chills, coughing, chest pains – it will all be there. However, Pempti doesn’t stop at hindering respiratory functions. As it makes its way into the bloodstream, it produces polyps which proceed to hemorrhage and occasionally burst, resulting in internal bleeding and bloody coughs. It continues to spread, targeting the nervous system, and does whatever it wants from there. We’ve been fortunate... and I know how you would say otherwise...”

She had raised a hand to stop Gabriel, and Natalie.

“But you need to realize, at any point, you could have lost him. Pempti causes those it infects to suffer, but it only takes a signal into the brain – one decisive move instead of just giving a person these symptoms – in order for it to kill its host. That he survived till now is lucky for us.”

That seemed to silence the designer and his assistant for now, but they weren’t the only two before her. Sabine was looking up, gazing over to Adrien’s room, and then looking back into Marinette’s. “My daughter, she said he was on antibiotics. Ever since her and her friends helped him when he collapsed at a photoshoot, they were making sure he took his medication at school.”

“Antibiotics impede Pempti when they’re new, but it only takes a few days for it to adapt, and another week to fortify itself. Which is why, if both of your children test positive for it, I will be operating on them tonight.” The doctor watched, and waited again for any objection she may have to counter. This was an emergency, not an elective operation. And there, while their body language shifted, they said nothing, Tom only squeezing Sabine’s hand. Natalie turned her head away to adjust her glasses, but didn’t look back. She had no say in the matter; only Gabriel did. Though, he was silent, considering again everything they had been told. Given the doctor had spoken as though it were only GUILT, his question was only logical.

“... And if my son does not have GUILT?” His somber tone echoed as the words left him, “He has less than twenty-four hours according to his original doctor. What will you do then?”

“If it is not GUILT, we can still operate and try saving him... that is, unless you object for any reason, M. Agreste.” Both of his brows rose, and somehow, he seemed to tense more. It made her wonder when the last time this man was unperturbed. “Each family has their wishes. And if you just want him comfortable in his final moments, I will respect that. So, what do you want?”

Naomi wasn’t leaning him to either option; it really was his choice since the illness at this point could be labelled in a terminal stage. Gabriel eyed her, icy blue much more visible before he looked away, brows pressing tightly together. When he stood straight again after thirty seconds, it was hard to tell what sort of thoughts raced through his head. He was a difficult man to read, but anyone would find this to be a grim decision to make. The doctor decided to interject, “If you want a moment with him to decide, I need to test Marinette now.

My team will be on standby in five minutes waiting for your decision if I'm not here in ten minutes."

She shifted the briefcase in hand, bringing back feeling back into her arm long since numb from weight. Whatever stupor he had been in, he snapped out of it, and closed his eyes. Arms lowering at his side, he turned, addressing Natalie first and telling her to remain in the hallway. All of them watched Gabriel step into Adrien's room, and said nothing when he closed the door softly behind him, closing the blinds shortly after. Naomi stared at the now blocked window, but turned away and nodding to Tom and Sabine, "Your daughter then..."

Though both parents exchanged looks and hesitated to enter the room with the doctor, the three of them soon did, father and mother standing opposite of Naomi so they were out of the way and able to hold their unconscious child's hand. Rolling the bed table to her, the doctor placed the briefcase upon it and swiftly tapped in the code. With a click, it popped open, revealing what could've been mistaken as a laptop were it not for several ominous cords. She wrapped one around Marinette's wrist while two more were connected to small suction pads which Naomi placed: one to the temple, and another on the chest. Last, she raised Marinette's hand, taking a small, pen-sized tool and clicking it once against her thumb. Nothing seemed to happen, but a single bead of blood soon bloomed against delicate pale skin. Collecting her sample, Naomi didn't bother grabbing a bandage, instead using the antibiotic gel to have the wound heal at once so she could focus on the computer.

The Chirality Test took a patient's vitals among other things while it compared the database to find an asymmetrical match. Everything was checking out so far, and with the similar symptoms, she expected a positive. However, her eyebrow shot up towards her hairline, finding it now curious.

"Interesting..."

Her voice had all attention on her, but she was looking at Marinette. She thought she saw something red momentarily beneath her pillow – not a crimson red either, but more ruby or rose. However long she looked, it did not reappear, and soon, she was giving Tom and Sabine her attention. "The test results are negative. However, considering her condition when she was brought in, I want her to remain here for a few days. She's stable for now; I can examine her once I've finished with Agreste, you understand..."

"Yes... I mean, she still has something, and hid it from us until this point..." Tom's voice was low, and he sighed heavily while he stared at Marinette. The girl hadn't moved once since arrival, and continued to remain in stasis. His wife's small hand patted his shoulder, his own hand rising to rub his eyes. "We really are grateful for everything you and Dr. Reyes are doing for our children."

"Of course, M. Dupain. It's our responsibility to do everything we can within our power..." Though, now that Tom mentioned Dr. Reyes, Naomi realized she had yet to encounter the doctor. It was always possible Dr. Kelso or Nurse Tapia had swept him away to the OR already. She would just meet with him then. Removing the wires from the young girl, she disinfected each part in silence. While she did so, Naomi noticed that they no longer worried so much over their daughter. In fact, Tom and Sabine seemed to be listening, heads turned to the wall of the adjacent room – Adrien's.



“You will be able to help that poor boy, won’t you?” The small woman inquired, thin eyes coming back to meet Naomi’s own sharp blue. Beneath her fingers, the briefcase closed itself, but she didn’t lock it. No, there was no point when it would be opened again shortly, but the doctor took a moment. Her abilities weren’t being questioned; it was only a question born from concern. This sweet woman and her husband... “Adrien’s a kind young man. We’ve only met him a few times, but from what Marinette has told us, he was just beginning to experience being a teenager.”

Naomi raised an eyebrow. Often, she didn’t know too much about her patient’s personal lives; just enough if other services required contacting, or if it personal history might complicate their treatment. This information wouldn’t change anything however. His status, she already figured that might result in a complicated childhood.

“... Mme. Cheng, I will do everything I can. However, I’m still human, and some things are beyond our capabilities.” Not encouraging words, but the truth. Sabine bowed her head, perking up though because Naomi wasn’t done. “Adrien is still fighting. That fact he’s held this long says so much... I’ll help him fight back. During the operation, can I leave you two to look after M. Agreste with Mme. Sanceour?”

Tom and Sabine sat up straighter, both surprised at the request. Perhaps they had the same issues when it came to communicating with the stern man, or maybe they hadn’t spoken with him before. Apparently, he was rumored to be the rather reclusive type when he wasn’t working. Despite that, the couple nodded, and Naomi already knew they would try.

“Then, if you’ll excuse me...”

Picking up the case, Naomi stepped out of the room, and caught sight of Dr. Kelso and Nurse Tapia with Natalie. Adrien’s room was still closed, but with several raps against the door, it opened in another minute to reveal Gabriel. He didn’t step forward, or move aside for Naomi, and she stared at him when neither of them shifted. Again, he was keeping himself unreadable... until he beckoned her. She moved left while he stepped right, catching her shoulder and leaning closer. Naomi held still, eyes forward as he whispered.

“...”

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The two would probably benefit from seeing more of those emotions from his father, but one step at a time. There would be no conversations to be had, and no relationship to repair if she didn’t do this here and now. The words had been simple, but all that needed to reveal the truth:

*“Please, do everything you can to save my son.”*

Water rushing between her fingers, she reflected on such a simple statement, and every feeling that mingled with the words. He didn’t reveal that side too often, did he? Crystal blue

eyes opening, Dr. Kimishima turned off the sink and dried her hands.

“... Are we ready?”

She was speaking into her headset again while pulling her gloves on, and checking herself in the mirror.

*“Yes doctor. Also, we’ve just been informed Dr. Reyes is unavailable. Apparently, there was a minor altercation with M. Agreste shortly before we arrived and he left the premises.”*

“So that’s why I haven’t seen him...” Clicking her tongue, she turned on her heel and approached the door, stepping into the OR. Blonde hair appeared bleached platinum under the lights, a hospital nurse assisting turning the light to Adrien’s chest while Nurse Tapia checked both Chiral readings and vitals. The anesthesiologist checked the saline drip, and had a blood transfusion on standby. Nearby, the technician was busy with a ventilator, frowning beneath their mask, but they turned away shortly, moving to standby as Dr. Kimishima approached the operating table. She wanted to have the other doctor here, leave him in charge of post-op care, but they couldn’t wait any longer.

“Alright. We’re proceeding with the Pempti treatment by using the scalar laser to induce self-termination. Be prepared for its offensive and defensive cores, and keep an eye on his vitals; we’re already critical.” There were several nods and ‘yes’s, and she picked up the antibiotic gel. Spreading just enough on the incision site, she traded the vial for a scalpel. “Making the first incision. We’ll be splitting the sternum next...”

So focused on her operation and reaching the lung, it took her a moment to realize there was an alarm chirping in her headset... Actually, even from outside, she was hearing ringing.

“Nurse Tapia, what’s going on?”

They didn’t have the luxury of any distractions right now. Exposing the right lung, the accumulation of abnormal fluids was quite obvious. It made the organ appear putrefied along with the surrounding tissue darkened and taking on unhealthy hues of rancid browns and blacks. Adjusting her magnifying goggles, she switched to the nanomachines and syringe, getting the gelatinous fluids to reduce. "Come out, come out where ever you are..."

*“... Dr. Kimishima, there’s an akuma inside the hospital!”*

“An akuma? Right now?” She picked up the laser to treat the polyp formation, and gel next to heal the holes left behind. “Of all the timing... Well, I’ve already started the operation, and I’m not going to stop. Tell security to do their best to hold it off until Ladybug and Chat Noir arrive...-!”

Wait...

Blonde hair, green eyes... and that black mask flecked with blood. Laser aside, she had the syringe and nanomachines again.

“... I’ll have the core exposed shortly; halting this procedure now is out of the question otherwise Pempti will kill him. Put this OR in lockdown immediately!”

And while the dual set of double doors were sealed, the hallways were in a panic. Patients were hurriedly being escorted back to their rooms with visitors further crowding rooms to hide, but that still left an unfortunate few along with medical staff trying to protect the patrons. The hospital was rocked again, the doors to exam rooms being breached first by the cackling akuma.

*“M. Agreste! I’m ready to see your son now! This time, Mr. Diagnosis will be correct!”*

In the ICU, Gabriel snapped his head in the direction of the voice. Natalie, Tom, and Sabine were all on their feet, wide eyes focused on the man with a billowing purple lab coat hanging off his shoulders stalking towards them, the usually gentle grin replaced by a curling snarl. Beneath the commotion, no one paid any heed to the new alarms blaring in the now empty ICU room, or see the open window. All eyes were on the akuma as the cry rang out.

“Tikki, spots on...!”

## Chapter End Notes

My third akuma, and yes, Mr. Diagnosis is a play on Misdiagnosis. Of course, as I write this, M. Diagnosis, but Monsieur Diagnosis seems a little long for playing with one word, so I stuck to Mister (ah I need to be more consistent with languages in the future).

Also, for those unfamiliar with Trauma Center, Antibiotic Gel in the game is an in-universe instant heal for small cuts and lesions. It's the standard go-to disinfectant for surgery, and applied to patients before bandaging like any other standard IRL solutions. Last thing to note, I have to double check again for heart and/or lung surgery because one time I wrote an operation before, had the sternum removed as opposed to split. Either or I guess works, but splitting it is the general move in order to access the ribcage.

Please comment, leave feedback, or kudos!

# Chapter 14

## Chapter Notes

Welcome to another new Sunday and I have fallen behind. I'm only halfway done with the next part of this chapter and haven't even begun the recover chapter following or the Epilogue. That's right, there's only three chapters left now. Oh god, I'm not sure how to make this end either; endings are always the worst part to write up. Though, I guess I shouldn't worry about that right now - everyone reading this is just like 'chapter please'!

So, let's get on to Ladybug vs. Mr. Diagnosis.

Thank you, cynicalSleeper, for always being my beta fish.

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Outside, the reporters, their crews, the hired security, anyone that the akuma had encountered were on the ground, but not all for the same reasons. From debilitating fevers and colds to cases of paralysis and numbness that disallowed the victim to even move, Ladybug knew this was going to be a fight ahead of her. Still, why was the akuma going after Gabriel? No, it hadn't said Gabriel was its target, but Adrien was. She had heard that much clearly before slipping out of the window, and calling for Tikki to transform her again into her superheroine form. Her chest still ached and her head spun, but the suit gave her power and the strength to rise. And right now, and with wherever Chat Noir might be, she had to do this alone again.

Running into the hospital passed those who had already fallen victim to the akuma, she soon spotted him. With billowing lab coat and outstretched arms, Mr. Diagnosis sauntered along almost like he was going to start skipping with glee at any moment, but stopping himself short to instead prowl towards his prey. He was getting far too close to her parents, Gabriel, and Natalie, each of whom were prepared to keep him from entering the operating room down the hallway behind them.

“*Monsieur Agreste*, I'm prepared to finish your son's treatment, just as you wanted. But now look at you... deciding to impede a doctor from doing their work yet again.” The akuma chuckled darkly, raising a tablet in its hands up, “And I have his updated file here; I only need to see him.”

“He *is* receiving treatment right now. Your presence is unnecessary,” was Gabriel's cool reply, eyes focused on Mr. Diagnosis, but Ladybug knew he saw her. There was no way she had been missed in her outfit, but no eyes were towards her. Her mother and father, and Natalie were also keeping their eyes on the akuma, knowing they couldn't give away the

heroine as she crept towards them. She had already taken the yoyo from her waist, and silently brought it back, ready to sling it forward; however, she needed the right opening.

“Then I guess I’ll just have to see to each of you first, just like the other patients...” the akuma sighed, tapping through the tablet. “After all, numbness in your legs isn’t a good sign.”

Raising the stethoscope around his neck, the bell clutched between three fingers, he pointed it forward as though to listen. However, a purple beam fell upon them instead, and Ladybug watched with bulging eyes as all four dropped, unable to support themselves on their feet. With them collapsed, he began scrolling through his tablet again, tongue clicking as he tutted at their *misfortune*.

“Besides numbness in the lower extremities, it was reported you have a shortness of breath, Mme. Sancoeur.”

The bell of the stethoscope again pointed at Natalie, and immediately she was panting for air, but the akuma turned to face Tom and Sabine. Ladybug had seen enough to know she couldn’t permit Mr. Diagnosis to finish scrolling through his tablet. As he raised it again to read out a new symptom for her father, the yoyo flew and wrapped tight around his extended wrist. A brow raised, she managed to make him spin and stumble, dragging him back and away through the corridor. The tablet; the akuma had to be inside the tablet. The victim himself seemed fairly nonchalant, pulling back on her string before standing up. Her yoyo unwound to avoid giving him too much leverage, snapping back to her with a zing.

“Ah, Ladybug. I have you and Chat Noir scheduled for your appointment now. Though, it seems one of you is late,” the akuma shook his head. “I’ll have to reschedule him for a later time once I cure you of your Miraculous.”

“Sorry, doc, but the cat already has a vet. You’ll just have me as your final appointment.”

Yoyo swinging at her side, it hummed faintly when she spun it to speed, pink shield glowing and ready for whatever the doctor might throw at her. Around his eyes appeared the telltale purple butterfly mask, Hawkmoth mentally communicating with the corrupted man, causing the doctor to clench the stethoscope tightly in his fist. “I understand, but you haven’t even allowed me to successfully treat my main patient! Besides, Ladybug’s having some difficulty due to trembling hands right now...!”

Gasping, Ladybug almost didn’t deflect the purple beam heading her way, sending it ricocheting off into a wall. A second bounced into a nearby door, and the last just shattered upon contact with glass, the window itself intact. All of them hissed, but disappeared without any other damage and that clicked quickly: Mr. Diagnosis’s ability could only work on living objects and couldn’t pass through any inanimate and solid objects. That was good to know. He wouldn’t be able to interrupt the surgery unless he got into the room itself.

Ducking to block the next shot aimed at her feet, she noticed how the akuma was walking backwards down the hallway, tablet clutched tight in his fist and bell still raised. This was not good; the hallway and waiting room were too narrow to try dodging all his shots, and too much space between them would allow him to make a run for the operating room. Even if she

pushed towards him, that would only continue pushing him backwards. Knees bent, she was just going to have to rush him and force this battle into close quarters.

Before she could move, large arms encircled Mr. Diagnosis around the stomach and pinned his arms, catching both heroine and akuma by surprise. Though he couldn't use his legs, Tom was leering, using his upper body instead to move and keep the akuma in place. Ladybug could see Mr. Diagnosis flicking through symptoms again with his thumb, but she couldn't see it what he landed on. Running to close the distance, yoyo ready to fly, her own breath caught as the purple beam again wrapped around her father. Instantly, his arms were off and he collapsed to the ground on his side, his hands clutching at his chest.

"A male your size with heart arrhythmia... my, my, that will need to be treated right away."

"Tom!" Sabine cried, pulling herself to her husband's side. Mr. Diagnosis turned away to march on, but the yoyo around his middle had him flying backwards, Ladybug flipping overhead and landing besides the four fallen adults. Her weapon unwound and returned, but again she had to throw up her barrier to prevent all of them from being hit.

"Stop before you really hurt someone! You don't want to do this!" she exclaimed, another beam being deflected into a nearby door. If she could get her parents, Gabriel, and Natalie into one of those rooms, she wouldn't have to be worried about them being in the crossfire. Her father and Natalie looked like they could use an actual doctor's attention right now.

"But I must. Thirty years I've been in this occupation, and I always own up to my mistakes when I make them," Mr. Diagnosis growled, letting his tablet just roll through diseases and symptoms randomly. "This is my first time encountering GUILT. How am I supposed to diagnose his son with anything else considering the abnormal symptoms? In a standard hospital, none of the tests will turn up positive for it. Not with all the work Caduceus has been doing to keep it quiet so the public no longer has to worry about it." The bell was raised again, purple beam racing only for its course to be re-directed by Ladybug. She cast a look towards Gabriel, but the designer said nothing while the akuma resumed its tirade. "If I'm going to lose my license for trying to fix my mistakes, then he'll lose his son just as he wants...!"

Before she could act this time, the next purple beam soared, ricocheting off one of the paintings lining the hallway and striking her unguarded arm. Ladybug saw the ground coming up fast, she didn't feel herself hit it; nor did she feel her body as she tried to stand up. It was as though she wasn't even in her body at this time; instead, just acting as another entity observing with no input on her actions. All at once, her entire body had just become numb to every sensation around, pins and needles indicating her nerves were starting up, "W-What...!?" She shuddered, her skin crawling at her sluggish movements. The akuma was walking towards her now, thumb scrolling through the tablet once more.

"Having some nerve trouble, insect?" Mr. Diagnosis hissed, smiling widely, "Paresthesia is no good. Still, you should be able to feel it when I clip your wings so just hold still, and Hawkmoth will allow me to finish here..."

Teeth gnashed tight, the speckled and freckled heroine managed to sit up, but pulling herself any higher would not be possible. Her arms wanted to crumple and her legs threatened to

slide out when she bent them towards her body, trying to get them beneath her, but she fought. She was crouched, fingertips gripping her yoyo's string despite each one prickling.

"What determination... I can commend you on that, but since you want to protect him so fiercely..."

He was done scrolling, and his bell was aimed at her. She was trying to get her shield up, tried twirling her weapon, but her limbs had become despondent. The lavender butterfly mask around his eyes seemed bright at this distance, and the beam was brighter... especially when it hit Sabine.

"Ma—Madame!" Her stomach dropped, bluebell eyes watching the radiant flush cover her mother's face: a fever, and a high one at that. She shouldn't have thrown herself in the way like that.

Ladybug reached out to help Sabine aside, but Mr. Diagnosis got there first, scowling and nudging the older woman back towards Tom with his foot, lip upturned in annoyance. "I suppose my diagnoses have been rather lenient, but now you're all testing my patience. You're going to--!"

The akuma was taken down in a heap, both caught off-guard by Gabriel's rather bold actions. The designer's expression barely changed, but the fury in his eyes was evident enough, "You will *not* go near my son...!" Somehow, he had managed to stand disregarding his current condition, and tackled Mr. Diagnosis. The tablet clattered once against the ground before sliding beyond their reach beneath an abandoned laundry cart, but the two men wrestled over the stethoscope still in the doctor's corrupted hand. Maybe the akuma hadn't been in the tablet as she originally thought; Mr. Diagnosis wouldn't try keeping the stethoscope otherwise, but then why the tablet at all? For show?

Either way, she wound up her yoyo, and managed to fling it this time even though her body continued to burn. The wire tangled around both men's wrists just as the bell glowed purple again. The beam originally aimed at Gabriel misfired, Ladybug's eyes widening a fraction when she noticed it coming at herself again. Though most of her body might have been experiencing mixed sensations, it all seemed fairly external. The moment the next light touched her, she felt it again – the whirling blades twisting and igniting in her chest. It overflowed, iron liquid bubbling into her mouth causing her to choke and shortly cough, causing blood to land on her suit.

"That will hold the unlucky bug, but you, *Monsieur Agreste*, need your ailments looked at." Finally managing to overpower the fashion designer, and pressed the stethoscope to his chest. The purple light was muffled, but the effects were visible, Mr. Diagnosis pushing the limb-locked Gabriel off of him. He straightened his lab coat, humming, "And now, you two can suffer young Agreste's symptoms while I give him a final diagnosis. I'll be back for your Miraculous, Ladybug..."

Blue eyes watched in horror as the akumatized doctor went along his way down the locked corridor, proceeding to kick the first set of double doors in his attempt to get in. Her body shaking and more blood trickled from her mouth, Ladybug forced herself to *move* her disponent form, and fell over onto her side. More needles prickled her skin upon impact, and

the burning in her chest intensified after she rolled onto her stomach. Shoulders stinging, she willed her arms forward to drag her body, to do anything to stop him from bursting through that door. With a haggard cough and quivering fingers, she managed to throw her yoyo up.

“L-Lucky Charm...!”

The double doors crashed open just as a long red accordion tube with black spots landed before her. Picking it up, her heart was pounding as her eyes darted, but nothing was coming up in her vision. It couldn't be; the solution had to come to her! But Mr. Diagnosis was charging at the last set of doors and she still had no answer beyond a bloody scream, “No!”

What happened next had the hallway falling silent save for an alarmed, repetitive chirping. There had been a purple beam and next, the akuma was soaring backwards and crashing against the ground. Silver heel clicked against the ground, and Ladybug raised her head to see the female surgeon's hand flashing red and black as she marched out of the OR. She was leering down at the akuma, but her path was towards Ladybug instead. Bending down, she grabbed the red-and-black tube, “May I borrow this for a moment?”

“... Yes?” Ladybug didn't know what else could be done with it, but giving it to the doctor seemed correct.

Nodding once, the surgeon rose back to her feet and turned, strolling back into the OR with her eyes still glowering towards Mr. Diagnosis. Actually, she wasn't even heading back in, but tossing the accordion tube off to a nurse, “Fix the ventilator with this for now. Get an actual replacement the moment that's done.” There was a ‘*Yes, Doctor*’ from behind as the woman slipped her hands into her pockets, blue eyes darkening with a faint glimmer of a star there, “Now then... Dr. Reyes, or whatever your name is right now; I don't care. No one - not even when you're possessed like this – is allowed to barge into my operating room like that. Time to understand the consequences of your actions... don't worry, you'll be fixed soon enough.”

Ladybug never thought she would hear an akuma scream in such pain, but she just remained lying on the ground, and cringing while the woman sorted the matter out.

## Chapter End Notes

To be continued in part two if you're wondering what the surgeon is doing to the possessed doctor... and also for the purification and restoration. There will be an explanation too into Naomi and her odd abilities following the end of next chapter so look forward to that. Besides that stuff, anyone see this coming?? Adrien was thinking about a weird akuma like this back in an earlier chapter.

Please comment, leave feedback, or kudos!





# Chapter 15

## Chapter Notes

Oh man, chapter fifteen. We only have two more chapters if I can finish up the last two. This chapter is basically 'as Ladybug fought Mr. Diagnosis, here is what was going with Dr. Kimishima in the OR'. And also what happened when she got out of the OR. So nothing much to say here, more in the end notes so here's the chapter.

Thank you, cynicalSleeper, for always being my beta fish.

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See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*“The operating room is secure, Doctor!”*

“Good. Nurse Tapia, keep me up-to-date with the fight.”

Not the best situation she had been in, but not the worst. At least, she didn't immediately equate akuma with any terrorists, and there wasn't exactly any record of people dying during an attack. She would like to keep this operation quick, but Pempti required precision – not the best GUILT to be dealing with when there was an akuma in the hospital. And it sounded like it was coming for *her* OR. Depending on whether Ladybug had arrived or not, they didn't have long, and Pempti wasn't going to wait for a possessed human to be purified – perhaps a sick form of comradery between this Hawkmoth and Delphi was going on, the timing was too perfect.

“Chiral reaction?”

*“Rising, Doctor. Pempti should be appearing now...”*

Crystal eyes narrowed as the fluid in the lung condensed, the nanomachines doing their job successfully at irritating and cornering the ever-evolving parasite. Dr. Kimishima silently watched the tissue pucker in the lowest lobe of the lung, needlepoint teeth pressing a circle into the organ as it was forced up. In the center of that small circle, a round red center was forcibly exposed two, surrounded by one dark spinning claw and layered upon a second one, lighter and larger than the first but still contained within the ring of fangs. Both clawed wheels whirled, but it did nothing at its exposure, almost like it was stunned from being found.

“What a sight for sore eyes...” Dr. Kimishima scoffed, and accepted the scalar laser from Nurse Tapia. Turning it, she aimed and activated the blazing beam directly upon Pempti, and watched it burn with a faint feeling satisfaction, but she couldn't let it go to her head. It was

cut off only when Pempti managed to retreat down into its gelatinous bed, blades slowing down before resuming their prior speed. “None of you ever want to behave. Fine, I’ll give you a good fight then. You’ve burdened this boy and everyone around him enough.” And as she waited for its next move, she let her eyes dart over to her nurse who took this time to listen to the reports coming in. “Nurse Tapia, how’s the situation outside?”

*“Ladybug is holding off the akuma right now. It’s calling itself... Mr. Diagnosis.”*

“Mr... Diagnosis? Like Misdiagnosis? That’s a terrible play on words...” Though she had heard about some of the akuma before, she didn’t think the names would get so bad. Honestly, whoever was corrupting innocent people like this needed to stop fooling around if he genuinely wanted to impede her, but she digressed. Expression back to almost perpetual surgical scowl, she was back on Pempti as several small blue mini-cores seemed to burst from the main body and spread out. Fortunately, she was a quick and precise shot with the laser again, but she was not going to be happy when the pink ones started appearing. A few popping polyps would be fine, but lacerations may have her calling in the assistant to aid her. “Chiral reaction?”

*“Unchanged, Doctor.”*

“Strange... Even after the first use of the scalar laser, the number should be decreasing...”

Putting her confusion aside for the moment, she concentrated on dealing with the next wave, waiting for Pempti to make its resurgence from the nanomachines prompting. Though, while she worked, she noticed how the fluid seemed to take on a peculiar shape. Like it was bubbling beneath the surface, it began to become oblong, but that couldn’t be right. It wasn’t until the form expanded completely that she realized the fluid held a familiar hazy image within, much smaller and immature compared. Naomi hissed, “A mutation? Right now? Dr. Kelso, Pempti is attempting to replicate itself... Please make note of that so we don’t forget to inform the Director.”

It seemed to be a common theme with all of her GUILT patients recently having some present form of the disease mutating within their bodies. However, it wasn’t different enough to alter treatment; just perhaps complicate it by several steps. For her, the current new step was introducing the immature Pempti to the nanomachine and see how it reacted while she continued handling the fully mature core releasing gray miniature cores now. The scalar laser made quick work of them while Nurse Tapia stood on hand, preparing the syringe filled with nanomachines. Above them, the lights flickered and the OR door creaked.

*“Ladybug’s having some trouble holding off the akuma, Doctor, and it appears we have four adults in need of medical attention.”*

“Four...? Can anyone check their conditions right now?”

Laser down, the syringe was up. Injecting into the immature Pempti caused it to pulse, and the fluid attempting to separate from the main core reduced. Well, that’s good for them, but she switched back to the scalar laser, “Begin the blood transfusion. It’s ejecting pink cores, and missing a single one will cause hemorrhaging that we don’t need...”

The technician said nothing, making haste to fulfill the surgeon's order. In the meantime, Dr. Kelso listened into the fight for Nurse Tapia instead as Naomi had to rapidly switch through tools. The shrinking fluids had caused polyps to make an appearance while the mature Pempti was finally releasing its more offensive cores. Those were two things she didn't need interacting with each other. She concentrated on ridding of the pink miniature cores before dealing with the polyps, and moving onto the final steps.

*"Doctor, we have new information finally. Mr. Diagnosis has the ability to give people medical symptoms. Mme. Sancouer is having difficulty breathing, M. Dupain is suffering from heart arrhythmia, Mme. Cheng has a high fever, and... M. Agreste is wrestling with the akuma?"*

"What do you mean 'wrestling with the akuma'?"

Gabriel hadn't struck her as an irrational man; he shouldn't be wrestling anything, but this must be his attempt to protect his son, too.

Another injection, and the immature Pempti disappeared, the fluid that had accumulated around it returning to surround the single mature virus still trying its best to thwart the doctor. For all the trouble it caused, Naomi had to consider this was a rather anti-climactic ending. It could release more miniature cores, it could try doing so faster, but she was faster with the laser. The dual blades curled within on themselves, and the miniscule fangs released their hold. Pempti's blazing orange core dulled and all-together, the virus collapsed inwards on itself. The infected fluids expanded within the lung again; however, with the disease passed, it and the surrounding tissue returned to normal albeit still remaining a darker shade than the usual healthy red.

"Dr. Kelso, what's the chiral reaction?"

*"It's negative, Doctor. Looks like you've saved another one."*

"Looks like it, but he still has to go through recovery," Dr. Kimishima corrected, decreasing the magnification on her goggles. "Let's close him up so that can begin..."

And while she worked on patching the sternum up, everyone heard the hefty bang echo into the room. Nurse Tapia didn't look away, but Dr. Kelso and the resident staff did. The tension rose significantly when that first was shortly followed by a second and third; someone trying to break in.

*"... Doctor! The akuma is at the first doors and trying to break in!"*

"What happened to M. Agreste and Ladybug?"

*"They've been incapacitated. Mr. Diagnosis apparently gave them two of our current patient's symptoms. M. Agreste can't move, and Ladybug is coughing up blood."*

Everyone except the doctor jumped at the booming crash outside their door, but they held their ground. Though Dr. Kimishima's eyes narrowed, she still focused on her suturing,

trying to work quickly without ruining her quality. “If you want to leave, that’s fine. I’m almost done...”

She wasn’t like them; they weren’t experienced working in less-than-hospitable conditions like her. The assistance was always appreciated, but it wasn’t always needed; and if they wanted to protect themselves right now, her co-workers were free to do so. She didn’t notice the way they looked towards her, gazed upon her intensity, and then tried to will the same amount of determination she had. The suturing was done, and the thread tied off and cut. Picking up the antibiotic gel, she disinfected the incision side, and traded Nurse Tapia for the bandages.

“Alright, the operation is complete. Let’s--”

Another crash and even she turned this time, the alarm in the room blaring once the door was breached. Both doors were broken, and the akuma looked upon them with a strained grin, panting, “Finally. There’s my patient...”

Nurse Tapia’s eyes widened, “Dr. Reyes?”

“That’s Mr. Diagnosis now, Nurse...” the akuma hissed, raising his stethoscope. Dr. Kimishima didn’t know what he was going to do with that, but Dr. Kelso moved first, tackling the akuma. A bright purple beam burst from the stethoscope’s bell and struck the tray holding the surgical tools. Most of them fell to the ground, bottles smashing, forceps and scissors clattering, but the scalpel was flung in an arch. As it came back towards the ground, its blade managed to sever the main tube connecting the ventilator to Adrien. Warning lights flashed, and the machine’s alarm blared with the rest. The technician yelled, and the anesthesiologist shook their head quickly, saying something about a spare while Nurse Tapia picked up a manual pump, making the exchange fast.

Dr. Kelso slammed into the ground before Dr. Kimishima’s feet, but before Mr. Diagnosis could round on Adrien and raise his bell again, the surgeon had moved. Though she wore heels and a skirt, she kicked the akuma squarely in the chest, eyes glinting while she watched him fly back down the corridor. Everyone froze in the OR except for her Nurse’s hand, who was making sure Adrien could still breathe. Slowly, the doctor stripped her gloves off, and lowered her mask as she marched after the akuma, leering after him all the way into the waiting area. A light purple butterfly mask seemed to appear around his eyes, the bewildered man still trying to comprehend what happened. She would have continued towards him alone had red and black not caught her peripheral vision.

Ladybug...

Dr. Kimishima could see the traces of blood present around her mouth, and staining the front of her suit. However, any inspection of the heroine would have to happen later. Lying on the ground before her was just the piece they required for the ventilator; though, from what she had come to understand about the Parisian duo, this couldn’t be a permanent fix. Bending down, she picked it up, “May I borrow this for a moment?”

“... Yes?”

Well, considering she had been outside, Ladybug wouldn't know what had occurred inside the OR. Honestly, just recalling what happened a moment ago had Dr. Kimishima incensed again. Glancing back, she saw Nurse Tapia had come out – probably to get the tube as the surgeon ordered prior. Dr. Kimishima tossed the tube to her, eyes closing as she sighed, “Fix the ventilator with this for now. Get an actual replacement the moment that's done.”

*“Yes, Doctor.”*

Her hands slid into her pockets while her Nurse scampered away, and her blue eyes slowly turned back to meet Mr. Diagnosis. It looked like he was getting his wits about him again, but she wouldn't have any of that. She *did not* save a young boy's life only to lose it a few minutes later – that was unquestionably something she would not permit happening if she could do anything about it. Concentrating, she had only used her powers before in her operations, but what was dealing with a problem like this akumatized victim if not just a slightly different operation? “Now then... Dr. Reyes, or whatever your name is right now; I don't care. No one - not even when you're possessed like this – is allowed to barge into my operating room like that. Time to understand the consequences of your actions... don't worry, you'll be fixed soon enough.”

And before he could retort, before he could raise that stethoscope again, she brought her heel down on his hand and made sure to grind it. He yelled shrilly, raising his hand to swipe her away, but she caught his wrist and twisted his arm, eyes glowing bright. “Going to try infecting me, too? All so you can harm an innocent child? I don't know what made you this way, but you're going against your oath as a doctor, but if you want an eye for an eye, *Mr. Diagnosis*, that's why I'm here.” His shoulder was reaching its limit, and he could only try to kick and watch her, trembling once her hand drew a scalpel out of her coat.

*“Doctor, the repairs have been made.”*

Dr. Kimishima didn't even bother looking over at her Nurse, occupied once there was a faint pop. She dropped the akuma's arm, allowing it to drop against the ground, and raised her hand to deafen the screaming in her ear. “Good, now go find an actual replacement. Ladybug will require that one to fix all the damage the akuma's caused, correct?”

*“Ah, yes... but Dr. Reyes?”*

“I'll put his shoulder back once she's finished,” she replied, raising her foot from his hand so he could clutch his hanging arm. Hearing the footsteps retreating, it sounded like Nurse Tapia was rushing to get the accordion tubing. Maybe she felt sorry for Dr. Reyes; Naomi doesn't know, but the fact was his actions presently were unacceptable. The stethoscope abandoned, she picked it up and turned it over in her hand, considering using her scalpel on it now. Eyes flitting back to the whimpering man, she rolled her eyes and kicked him again, heel hitting his good shoulder to make him crumple. Forcing him onto his stomach, she placed her foot on his mid-back, making sure to dig her heel into the center of his spine. Mr. Diagnosis could only groan beneath her.

Figuring he wasn't about to try moving, Dr. Kimishima decided to examine the waiting room, eyes moving from Ladybug to Marinette's parents, and then darting over to Gabriel and Natalie. They were as reported, but they must have had moments where it broke. She had

expected them to be lying on the ground, but besides Gabriel and Ladybug somehow Tom, Sabine, and Natalie managed to lie against the nurse's station. Clicking her tongue, she pressed her heel in a little more, "You've caused a considerable amount of trouble, truly you have..."

*"Doctor, I--"*

"Take it to the technician, and bring that other tube back for Ladybug."

Her reply was just Nurse Tapia's soles clicking against the floor and fading while she headed into the OR again. Mr. Diagnosis shifted while they waited, and she swiftly made sure he knew she was paying attention, "I can do worse than dislocated your shoulder."

Sweeping her hair behind her ear, she heard Ladybug being addressed, and a second later, there was a cry: "Miraculous Ladybug...!"

The hospital was awash by pink light and ladybug swarms which healed those affected by the akuma and repaired the doors he broke down. Naomi finally turned her eyes away from Mr. Diagnosis to look down at the heroine brushing her now clean suit off, blinking once when their eyes met. Silence between them, the older woman shrugged and finally cut the stethoscope with her scalpel. Both pieces falling on the ground, the dark butterfly emerging had her brows pressing together. That bug had been outside of the hospital before they arrived. She watched it try to flutter away only for Ladybug's yoyo to snap forward and close around it. Removing her heel from the de-akumatized Dr. Reyes, she helped the older man up, and popped his shoulder back into place. He yelped, but managed a faint smile, "T-Thank you, Dr. Kimishima..."

"Don't thank me yet. You should have known better than to let one man get to you like that," she chided. However, she knew it wasn't entirely his fault, and turned on her heel to face Gabriel while he straightened his tie. "As for you, M. Agreste, training doctors to diagnose and handle GUILT treatments are still undergoing review. Dr. Reyes did misdiagnose your son, but he did his best given what this hospital could do. If it wasn't for him, Caduceus would have remained unaware, and I wouldn't have been here to save Adrien..." She stood straighter before him, arms crossed beneath her chest, "So, you're going to speak to Dr. Reyes again once he's finished overseeing your son's transfer back into the ICU... and you can apologize in private then."

The fashion mogul didn't appear pleased to be lectured, but he said nothing and Naomi stalked past him, approaching Ladybug. "As for you..." she started, making the girl jump. The earrings she wore beeped in the same instance, catching the surgeon's attention for a split second. Glancing to the side, Naomi lowered her voice, "... get back to your room before anyone realizes you're missing."

"W-What do you mean?"

"It takes a little more than magic to fool me." Another spot disappearing on the beeping earrings, she turned her head away, "I'll be going to the on-call room. Dr. Kelso will be by in ten minutes so be quick..."

She took one step, her heel tapping before she heard Ladybug speak up again, “Wait...!”

For the heroine, Naomi did stall, but she only turned her head enough to look over her shoulder.

“... Yes?”

“... How did you do that? Usually, only people like me and Chat Noir can hold down an akuma,” Ladybug noted. Watching the hero, Naomi didn’t really know how to answer. She knew she had her own ability, but the fact that it worked outside of surgery... What was the true nature of the Healing Touch?

“There are mysteries in the world, Ladybug. Perhaps one day, I’ll know the answer myself.”

It’s not the answer she wanted to give, but it was all she could for now. Nodding once to Ladybug, Naomi turned forward, and disappeared down the soon bustling hall to find a place to rest.

## Chapter End Notes

There will be more talk on Naomi and handling akuma in the sense of this crossover next chapter, but we want to see the children recovering, too. Sorry if there isn't much about her past, but yes, it was hinted she had some involvement with GUILT before. Cooperating with Caduceus is kind of her way of making up for it.

Also, guess I should note why the sternum repair was kinda glossed over. In Trauma Center, Antibiotic Gel was the general go-to for helping correct any fractured bones after being reconstructed in operations. Almost got confusing when Orthopedics was introduced in Trauma Team until you notice those operations were mostly spiral surgeries and fractured legs (and then bone tumors that required artificial bone to be affixed in place). The gel can be used on fractured ribs and arms which would be considerably more difficult to treat with so many rods and pins. In fact, the sternum after heart or lung surgery is traditionally held together by wire. However, in more high-risk patients, a plate will be used instead.

Bah, sorry for going on! Anyway, next chapter we'll see how the kids are doing! Yes!

Please comment, leave feedback, or kudos!



# Chapter 16

## Chapter Notes

Oh my gosh, second to last chapter and I should be finishing the last one soon. Lemme just say thank you to everyone who put up with this crossover. I definitely could've been more detailed one way or the other in regards to Miraculous for Trauma Center fans, or more detailed about Trauma Center to Miraculous fans, but if I managed to get you a little interested in either, that's awesome, too. Of course, if you check out either one, be prepared. Miraculous is targeted to a younger demographic with undertones to darker themes right now, and Trauma Center is a medical drama with fictional viruses with real world inspiration and medical terrorism.

Rambling again! I'll see you in the end notes!

Thank you, cynicalSleeper, for always being my beta fish.

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See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Golden wheat lashes fluttered against still pale skin, the color gradually coming back and further improving upon that which returned in the previous few hours. Wild, meadow green eyes opened for the first time in twenty-four hours, pupils contracting and slowly sliding around the room with intermittence of blinking. Gentle, rhythmic beeps chimed to his left, and he settled on staring at the machine there – an heart rate monitor - following the line and numbers measuring his vitals as they dipped and rose, hovering around the same without ever dropping to far, or picking up in pace. Blinking again, what next caught his eye was the steady drip of saline in the IV, and he followed the tube down. It crossed the mattress and bedsheets, bending smoothly and passing one hub before being covered in medical tape on his wrist.

Releasing a soft sigh, Adrien let his eyes drift shut and held them closed, inhaling deeply. Eyelids opening again, he blinked several times before trying to glance down at his face. He willed his elbow to bend, and felt his exhausted limb protest, but he had to check something. His fingers curled and brushed against his chin and cheek, brows furrowing together when he felt just skin. Strange, because the last time he ended up in a hospital they had placed him on oxygen.

Still confused, he allowed his hand to fall away and rest against his chest only to slightly grimace in discomfort. There was a dull ache there; actually, tracing down, he found that the pain radiated until just short of his abdomen. His hospital gown, he noted, was rubbing against something other than skin there, too. Vaguely, the thought about trying to pinch it

fluttered through his mind, but it was fleeting, gone as his hand dropped against his chest. That was enough moving around for him now, his body exhausted, but his mind awake.

Considering a nap over satisfying his mind's curiosity, a gentle series of knocks against his door had him attentive again, and tilting his head so he could better see the door. It opened a hair's breadth to a bustling hallway, a crystal blue eye peeking in once it opened wider.

"Ah..."

Fully opened now, he stared at the platinum haired doctor now standing in the doorway, a tablet in hand, but not immediately entering. Instead, she glanced to the side, "He's awake, but only two at a time, are we clear?"

"Crystal, doc!"

She must have taken just two steps inside before Alya and Nino entered, moving to stand on his right while the doctor walked around to his left. Both appeared somewhat disheveled like they'd recently run without stopping. Alya's hair, while always wavy curls, was more frazzled around the sides, russet tips standing out with the light catching them more easily. As for Nino, his trademark cap was askew on his head, his headphones tilted more to the right, and Adrien could make out where sweat had collected around the collar of his shirt.

"We dashed over here as soon as school was out," Nino explained, taking his cap off to fan his face. "Marinette gave us a ring at lunch and told us everything. Man, I can't believe it. You're gonna have a wicked chest scar."

"C-Chest scar?" Adrien gaped, but to his left, the doctor clicked her tongue.

"Now now, the scarring will be minimal," she quipped. "By the time summer comes next year, none of you will be able to see it."

"What?" Nino sounded like he might complain, but Adrien could only sigh, relieved. Not that he was opposed to the idea of having a chest scar – admittedly, it might be pretty cool – but while he modelled for his father, he couldn't have any scarring. Even turning into Chat Noir, he was always grateful the suit didn't rip, or that akuma attacks didn't leave behind any blemishes.

Alya swatted Nino's shoulder, causing him to yelp and rub his arm. Rolling her eyes, she beamed at Adrien, "I'm sure you want to put this behind you anyway. GUILT, two akuma attacks, being in and out of the hospital, this definitely calls for something fun later... if the doctor permits." The reporter's eyes drifted over to the stern woman still taking notes on the tablet.

"Hm?" Realizing she was actually being addressed this time, the doctor turned, "Nothing strenuous for two weeks once he gets home at least. Also, I don't want to receive a phone call from Dr. Reyes saying he's been hit in the chest without his fencing uniform padding there at least, got it?"

“Yes, Madame Doctor. Off limits to projectiles and flying hugs,” Alya chuckled. Adrien only winced at the thought, knowing very well whom she was talking about. A grin stretched across Nino’s face, all too aware of who was probably just waiting for Adrien to come back to school. Waving her hand, Alya placed it on her hip, “That aside, it’s good to see you finally looking better, Adrien. Even the color’s coming back to your face now.”

Nino nodded in concurrence, a hand rising to rub the back of his neck. When Adrien’s expression became quizzical, it was only then that Nino permitted a frown to cross his features, “You have no idea, do you? When we found you in the school locker room, we really thought you... died there. We tried to get your breathing again, but... nothing.”

Sitting there, the blonde tried to remember this, and recalled shadows. Running down the stairs and going into the locker room before everything became hazy and slanted, a cold chill seeping under his skin. There had been people there, and he could recall stand out features, but there was a little more blue. Actually, there was blue and red; blood and... someone welcoming him back, someone he tried to push away.

“I still don’t know what Marinette did, but... you came back to us,” Alya said, eyes closed. She didn’t see Adrien’s eyes widen, or note how he trembled at the sudden clarity. “That girl... She had been sobbing her eyes out, but then she took hold of your hand and just refused to let go even after you both passed out. I still can’t believe that all happened yesterday.”

“Yes... you could say it’s miraculous he’s awake now,” the doctor hummed, lips curled in a smirk and briefly caught his eye before looking down at her tablet, “Despite how soon you’ve awoken and regained general coherency, I’ll still want this hospital to keep you for several more days. Before I leave, I’ll see if you and Dupain-Cheng are ready to be transferred to a normal ward.”

Say he was coherent all they wanted, but Adrien was still only getting back up to speed. He grasped that he had surgery, and silently chided himself for being absent from two apparent akuma attacks – one which he vaguely remembered. What happened at school - how Marinette had somehow saved him - that momentarily caused a hold up in his memory. She had been lying beside him, blood running from her mouth while she smiled at him, told him she wouldn’t let him go through this alone. What *had* she done? And how did she do it? Whatever it was, she was in the hospital too?

“-ien... Adrien!”

“Huh?”

His head snapped slightly up, and he noticed Alya, Nino, and the doctor were watching him. He grinned sheepishly, realizing that his spacing out must have concerned them. Nino gave a reassuring smile back, “You know, if you wanna get some sleep, we can come back another time. There is one more visitor waiting if you think you can handle them before dozing though.”

Perplexed at the thought of another visitor, Adrien couldn’t outright deny them. They had bothered coming to see them so he may as well. “... Yeah, I’ll see them. Sorry you guys.”

“Hey, don’t worry about it. We’ll come visit you tomorrow,” Alya replied. “Besides, we have to see if my girl’s up for a short visit, too. We can bring you both notes from class and any assignments the teachers hand out.”

Smiling softly, Adrien sighed, “Thank you. And... sorry for-“

“Ah! Don’t want to hear it!” He knew that, if he were in a better condition, Alya probably would’ve slapped his shoulder too, “Don’t apologize for getting sick. Just look forward to getting better, got it?”

“But...”

“Nope!”

“Alya...”

“Stop!”

Adrien’s eyes twinkled, and he laughed shortly, resigning himself to the fact Alya was not going to take his apology. And with a glance towards Nino, the DJ just crossed his arms, signaling he wouldn’t take one either. The ombre girl winked, and grabbed Nino’s hand. “We’re off then. Sleep well, okay?”

“I will. See you guys tomorrow...”

With a final wave at the door, the two departed from the room leaving Adrien with the platinum-haired doctor. She made no comment, but she was smiling slightly, taking a few more notes, “Well, I’ll leave you two to speak alone for... ten minutes while I speak to Dr. Reyes.”

One eyebrow raising, Adrien didn’t understand, but watched the open door. Soles only made so much sound against the ground, and his eyes widened at the figure that entered.

“Father...”

---

“Tikki...”

“Yes, Marinette?”

Curled on her side in the hospital bed, the young teenager’s body hid the kwami curled up beside her head on the pillow, large doe eyes meeting with her own bluebell eyes. Raising her hand, she used her index finger to pet her small friend, pink lips curled upwards.

“Thank you for saving him.”

“Marinette, that wasn’t me saving him...” Tikki giggled, nuzzling against her chosen’s finger. “That was you. You wanted to save him.”

Raising her hand away somewhat, Marinette’s brows came together, mouth pursed slightly in wonder. Tikki rolled to sit up, blue eyes bright as she spoke, “I told you before, every Ladybug is different. Though every Ladybug could use Miraculous Ladybug, there other powers manifested in ways unique to them. I’ve had Ladybugs able to heal in the past, but nothing like yours. You brought Adrien back to life. That’s something that should only be possible through Miraculous Ladybug.”

“Really? Woah...” Eyes wide, Marinette looked at her hands, awed. She knew that she bore the power of Creation, but she was only human. “I... How is that possible?”

“Well... I think I know one way...” Antenna lowering, Tikki seemed to have considered something. “It happens pretty rarely, but one of your ancestors could have been a Miraculous holder themselves. Until they relinquished their Miraculous, any children a bearer had would still carry a portion of their abilities on, but they don’t always awaken. Usually, we’re returned to the Guardian before our Chosen settle down, but there were times when they wanted to have offspring, and were unsure if they would be able to after their battles.” Her tail fell flat against the mattress and she closed her eyes, “I can’t blame them. They just wanted to have the chance.”

“Tikki...”

Cupping her kwami, Marinette nuzzled Tikki, taking the information in slowly. A part of her had been curious about Miraculous and if any of them had children. Even just hiding her identity had proven challenging, but in the past, other bearers had their own families and continued fighting. And throughout the world, there were people carrying on those legacies without even knowing it. She wondered how they would be against...

“... Tikki,” she started, thinking back to the battle with Mr. Diagnosis, “Could that surgeon be one?”

“You mean Dr. Kimishima?”

“Yeah... Could she be a descendent?” Closing her eyes, she remembered seeing something clearly in the doctor’s eyes. “... There was a star in her eye.”

Tikki blinked, her antenna rising, “A star?” Raising her head slightly to the door, she gazed back at her Chosen, “I did feel something coming from her, but I can’t be sure. Maybe one day we can find out, but you should get some rest. You fought two akuma and revived Adrien just in two days. I’m amazed that you’re awake right now to be honest.”

Raising her other hand, Marinette did have to stifle a yawn. “I really wanted to talk to you... and maybe visit Adrien if he was awake. I heard Alya and Nino a few minutes ago so maybe we should try going by tomorrow.”

Pleased at the decision, Tikki gave her a kiss on the nose. “Both of you should have plenty of rest from your ordeals then.”

“Right...”

Soft eyes gazing upon her kwami, Marinette pulled the thin sheets up, covering herself and hiding her friend further from view. No doubt a doctor would come in to check on them, or maybe even her parents would come by to see how she was doing. Tikki made herself comfortable tucked close to her Chosen, the proud smile still adorned on her face.

“Good night, Tikki.”

“Sleep well, Marinette.”

## Chapter End Notes

Short, sweet, to the point explanation for this crossover. Of course, the Healing Touch - an ability in Trauma Center for those who don't know - is said to be an ability passed down from Asclepius, the Greek God of Medicine (technically Demi-God given his birth between mortal and God but details). However, as we know in the Miraculous universe, there were many figures who took on Miraculous throughout history. Just a what if sorta thing here on something that could happen, but we don't actually know yet.

Ahhh, next chapter's the last. I'll see you all again then and before anyone wonders, yes, I do have another story in mind which most likely will be a collaboration with my usual beta reader.

Please comment, leave feedback, or kudos!

# Chapter 17

## Chapter Notes

Oh my god... this is the last chapter. I've actually finished a fanfiction again. It's been forever! Thank you again to everyone that followed me through this. It was a fun second piece to work on! I'll be back with another story soon. In fact, once the first chapter is done, I'll post it and see how the reception is before posting any more. See you in the end notes!

Thank you, cynicalSleeper, for the beta reading!

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See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Three days into their recovery and Dr. Kimishima stopped coming by to check on them. Dr. Reyes informed both Adrien and Marinette that the surgeon had to return to her own hospital in England, but he would be providing her with a progress report. On their final day, he gave them both an address which they could send her anything if they so wanted. Adrien, of course – once settled back home – wrote the doctor a letter thanking her profusely for saving his life, unaware that Marinette would be doing similar back in the bakery.

For the two teenagers, and everyone around, life resumed without any more delays outside of the usual akuma. Both heroes returned in form, Chat Noir taking it on the easier side though, or doing his best to try. For the first two months, Ladybug would be seen occasionally scolding him on the Ladyblog when he pushed himself too hard, but those gradually stopped with the duo in full form by the time spring returned. When summer arrived, Adrien pulled off his pajama shirt and examined his chest in the mirror. As the doctor said, the scar was practically gone, having healed so faintly that only if he stood closer could he make it out. Fingers tracing where it had been, he inhaled and exhaled slowly, smiling when he felt nothing but his lungs expelling air through flared nostrils. Plagg appeared above his shoulders, paws crossed and head nodding.

“Not bad, but don’t admire yourself all day when you could pick up any magazine to do that. I thought you wanted to meet your friends on time,” the black kwami tutted. With a huff, Adrien grabbed a white shirt and pulled it over his head.

“I just wanted to see how the scar was fading. Father’s not going to be disappointed.”

Speaking of his father, things had gotten better between them. Sure, he was still busy, but he seemed to be trying to reconnect through the occasional dinner together and by taking a minor albeit active interest in his schooling. No birthday parties still, but like today, he was

actually allowed to go out with his friends just as long as the Gorilla remained nearby. Awkward, but the Gorilla at least gave them space.

“It takes a near-death experience for your dad to pay attention to you,” Plagg grumbled, bumping his head against Adrien’s cheek. “I guess it’s better late than not having the chance at all.” Adrien wasn’t surprised that his kwami was still huffing over that. Throughout, the little cat of destruction had been plenty panicked, the feeling growing exponentially when he had to slip away with the Miraculous ring shortly before they arrived at the hospital. He didn’t like having to be a passive observer while his Chosen suffered, but there wasn’t anything he could do. Scowling, he accepted a few scratches behind his ear before diving down.

Ducking into Adrien’s pocket, the young boy hurried out of his room, almost running down into the foyer, but slowed at the sight of his father standing at the stairs. The usual intimidating stare was there, icy blue staring firmly back into his son’s emerald green. Seconds of silence passed before his father spoke, “Where are you going?”

“We’re going to Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, so, not that far. If we don’t stay there, we’ll probably head to Marinette’s house,” Adrien replied, “And, if we head anywhere else, I’ll send you a text.”

“Good. What time will you be home?”

“Five o’clock, five-thirty at the latest.”

With a satisfied nod, his father said nothing more, turning away to ascend up the opposite staircase while Adrien walked down to the first floor landing where Gorilla stood silently, waiting for father and son to finish their conversation. Turning, he opened the door, saying nothing as Adrien passed, and closed the door behind him once both outside.

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Two years later...

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Their final year at Lycée would be upon them soon, but there they were, fooling around, ignoring the final question on their literature assignment at Parc de Belleville, and trying not to disturb too many other groups visiting. Fortunately, from his photoshoots over the years, Adrien knew the best places to go if you wanted to avoid people or just high foot-traffic in general. Marinette brought snacks from her parents’ bakery for them to enjoy, Nino delivered the tunes during their study session, and Alya had a handle on the entertainment with her phone and spare portable chargers on hand – or, she would be providing entertainment if they weren’t currently in a dog pile laughing.

“C’mon, you guys are heavy!” Nino whined, flailing beneath Adrien, but he couldn’t get up either considering Marinette and Alya were weighing him down. Still, he could push himself up, and turning his head to speak to the girls, his eyes snapped open upon discovering Marinette’s face was barely a few centimeters away. He felt his cheeks warm, and noticed the pink blooming beneath her freckles and he couldn’t look away. Beneath him, Nino grinned and behind Marinette, Alya was smirking. The reporter shifted her hand to between



Marinette's shoulder blades, ready to 'help' them close the gap. Unfortunately, both looked away at the same instance instead causing them both to crash together and for all three to spill off a groaning Nino.

"Augh, I think you dudes crushed something..."

Marinette was standing up first, one hand hurriedly dusting grass blades off her clothes, her head turning as she tried pinpointing something. "Did you guys hear that?"

"Hear what?" Alya asked, straightening her plaid button-up before cleaning off her pants, "I don't have your weird super hearing. Consequences of younger siblings, remember?"

"Same. I didn't hear anything..." Nino readjusted his headphones around his neck, hands swiping blindly at his back. He paused when he noticed Adrien was acting similar to Marinette. "Adrien?"

"... It's coming from this way." He had said nothing for a full minute, and set off at a jog before the others realized save for Marinette. "Stay there! We'll be right back!" He called to Nino and Alya before running faster, Marinette running in step next to him. "Crying, right?"

"Yeah," was all she had to say. They were up the slope in a moment, and slowing outside of the tree lines when they spotted a young girl. She was crying – no, calling a name as she clutched her orange sundress and rubbed at her face. Her shoulder length brown hair swayed, small form moving left and right before stopping again where she started. Besides a few scuffs to her single-strap shoes, the girl was fine despite being upset. Marinette frowned, noticing how people were just walking past, "She's lost."

"And I think she only speaks American English," Adrien noted, hearing how the young girl attempted to speak up. It was distinctive just from a few words that she wasn't French, and the accent accompanying wasn't British English.

A soft gasp at his side, he glanced at Marinette, but she was only staring at the girl still. "Is she supposed to be at a hospital?"

"What?"

His head whipping back, Adrien didn't know how he missed it. One of the girl's eyes was covered by a patch, and the side of her body away from them was swathed by bandages. Could people possibly be avoiding her because of those? Oddly enough, he could pick up on Marinette's anger slowly rising and he placed a hand on her shoulder, "Let's go help her out. She must have wandered away from someone here, right?"

"... Right."

Nodding once, he knew they had to be careful approaching. A lone child in need of help maybe, but they were still strangers, and they didn't know how she might react to them approaching. And as he assumed, one large green eye was on them once she noticed their presence. Between Marinette and himself, they should know enough English to help her...

hopefully. The designer appeared hesitant, her confidence in foreign language lacking considering her last few times.

“Hello. I’m Marinette.” The introduction was very by-the-book, but at least Marinette had the girl’s attention. “This is Adrien. You need help?”

The girl stared at them longer, and Adrien worried that she might start crying again. However, she merely sniffled and nodded. “I... followed a butterfly... a-and now I don’t know where Naomi is.”

Adrien hummed, relieved to know that this was just a lost child who wandered away from their guardian. Kneeling down to the girl’s eye level, he smiled, “We’ll help you find Naomi. What does she look like?”

His English was a little more articulated, but hopefully, the young girl did not go into a complex description. She was thinking about it, raising a hand to her mouth and biting a finger. “Naomi has... blue eyes, and she wears black... and her hair is white.”

“... White hair?” The two teenagers exchanged looks, wondering if they were looking for an older woman now. It wasn’t as though they hadn’t seen a white haired woman before, but what would be the chances that it that same woman?

*“Alyssa? Alyssa!”*

“Ah, Naomi!”

Standing, Adrien turned and Marinette stepped aside to allow the young girl to run passed. She might have injuries, but she was sprinting towards Alya, Nino, and a woman in their accompaniment. Though her outfit was now a black and orange pinstripe suit, both were surprised to see who it was. Her hair was shorter and tied in a ponytail, and her skin somehow paler, Dr. Kimishima was hugging the girl clinging onto her hip. She was speaking in English to the small girl, firm while she scolded her, but relieved all the same.

The girl, Alyssa, remained clinging to Dr. Kimishima with a bright smile while the doctor looked at all of them, one hand resting on Alyssa’s head. “I thought sticking with your friends would prove fortuitous when I encountered them.” Behind her, Alya and Nino stood straighter, eyes open a margin wider. Adrien guessed they were surprised that the doctor remembered them. Naomi bowed somewhat to them, “Agreste, Dupain-Cheng, thank you for looking after my daughter. I told her not to leave the Little Guy’s sight, but she has her moments. Now I need to call him before he tries rallying the police...”

“Rallying the police?” Nino murmured, voice wavering at the thought. Alya sighed and placed a hand on his shoulder, shaking her head.

“A normal overreaction from the Agent... you’ll have to excuse him,” the doctor replied, but she was quick to put the topic aside. Instead, she focused on Adrien and Marinette. “I’m glad to see you two are well. I came to personally see Dr. Reyes for your latest post-op records, but decided to take the opportunity to have a vacation. It’s been needed...”

“The life of a surgeon, right?” Adrien asked, but Naomi shook her head, smiling.

“Medical examiner now,” she answered, not commenting at their bewildered gazes. Instead, she pressed on, “Your operation was one of the last I performed. The rest is a long story, but... let’s just say the career change was a calling that I accepted.”

Naomi’s lip quirked. Staring at Adrien and Marinette, the knowing in her eyes, but she said nothing on that matter, nodding once to them instead. Her hand fell from Alyssa’s head, and she took one of the young girl’s hand into hers, holding tight. “Anyway, again, I’m glad to see you all in good health, but we must be going. Perhaps we’ll meet once more before we return to America, but that will be for fate to decide.”

Exchanging goodbyes (Naomi teaching Alyssa how to say goodbye in French too), the four watched mother and daughter walk away in better spirits, and soon talked about getting back to school work. Allowing Alya and Nino to go ahead, Adrien slipped his hand into Marinette’s, a familiar feline smile stretching on his face, “Shall we visit later, My Lady?”

Blue eyes flicking in his direction, she playfully shrugged. “It’s not like us to pop in and visit random citizens, but I think we can make an exception. Ladybug should thank the woman that saved her kitten after all.”

A faint chortle and soft purr, he leaned down to bump his forehead against her temple, knowing his tail would have curled in delight hearing her giggle. Her other hand pressing his chest and pushing, he pulled back, but they didn’t let go of each other’s hands once they finally started walking, going to catch up with their friends.

## Chapter End Notes

So, I have a proposition for people who have read all the way until now. First person to guess which Miraculous Asclepius was, I'll draw something for you. On Wednesday, I'll respond back to every comment. Now, it's probably not going to be colored since I have commissions to work on, but it's pretty much a free-for-all request.

Well, see you Wednesday! Thanks for reading again!

Please comment, leave feedback, or kudos!

## End Notes

I'll try to be back with another chapter Sunday depending again. Thank you for reading!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!