

Koi's Attempts at FFXIV Write 2023

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Koi's Attempts at FFXIV Write 2023

by [FeelingKoi](#)

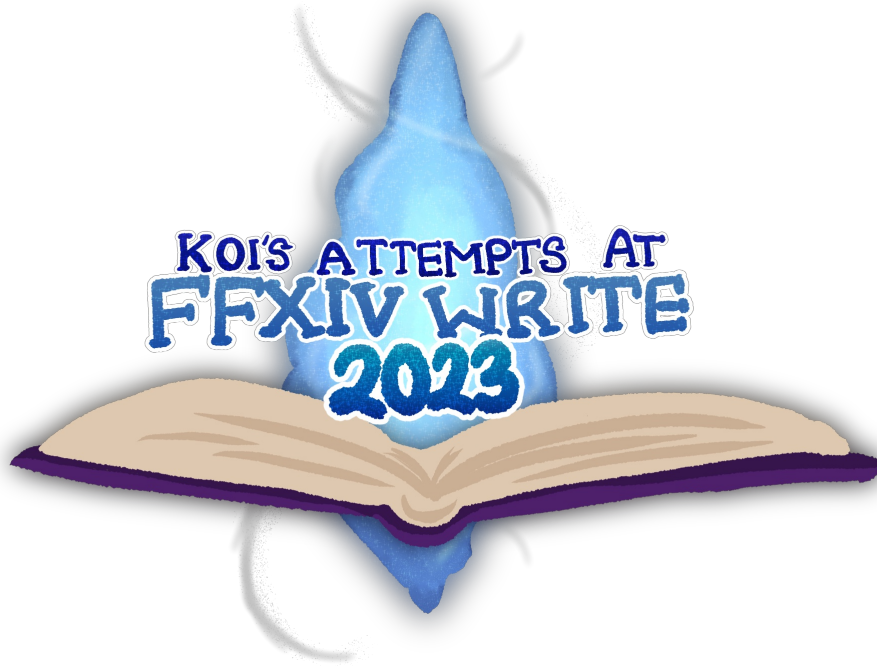
Summary

So, my friends have been talking about participating in a writing challenge called FFXIV Write 2023, and even though I haven't wrote anything here, nor have I wrote anything of great length since childhood. I decided to give it a go! I don't often do prompt challenges, even with my preferred medium of Art, but I've been looking for something to do and I suppose this is quite fun and exciting!

(Main challenge link here: <https://ffxiv-write.carrd.co/>)

Please don't expect anything stellar or world-class from me as I'm very rusty with all of this and I'm doing this just for fun with my friends. I don't know for certain because I've only just started, but I'm pretty sure I'm going to stick to mainly just my own OCs and following their story alongside the main MSQ. I'm very rusty with the MSQ and the lore in general though, so I'm very aware that I may be misunderstanding parts of the lore or there may be inaccuracies in my writing. However, with all that said and done, Final Fantasy XIV and my FFXIV OCs are a very big special interest for me, and I'm very excited to create content for them!

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Prompt #1: Envoy

Chapter Summary

Hanako is given a quest by Raubahn to deliver a message to the other city states, Gridania and Limsa Lominsa. Although still unsure of this land and its people, Hanako is honored to be delivered such a task to carry out. Hanako eagerly accepts and proudly begins her journey across Eorzea to become the Ul'dahn Envoy. This follows the story within in-game quest, "The Ul'dahn Envoy" but specifics in the text and happenings may be adjusted for creative interpretation's sake.

Chapter Notes

If you know Hanako through RP - please be aware this is non-canon to the Hanako that you see in RP. I imagine this is a spin-off version of her that starts her Eorzean journey roughly around the time that she escapes Kugane, although I still need to check and recheck the details on that. I'm going to overhaul her backstory soon anyway, so even what I've role-played in the past may change in the future going forward. If you don't know Hanako, then don't worry! I'll try my best to describe her where relevant, but basically she's a little gremlin Au Ra Raen who is one of my favorite OCs.



Prompt #1: Envoy

Hanako held the airship pass in her hands as she rode the Wellhead lift up to the Airship Landing. Her hands skirted the edge of the pressed card and she pondered the meaning of it, the words Raubahn himself had put emphasis on, and put into the thin slip. It was trust, acceptance, meaning. Not only the meaning of the message he wished to send to the other city states, but the meaning of belief. To feel someone believing in her, for once, and not limiting her.

It was a strange inverted circumstance to her normal. To the feeling of being left out and shunned

for her lack of money and status. Someone actually believed in her and her actions, trusted her even to call her similar to a Warrior of Light, and trusted her to travel to places unknown to her to deliver that message.

Hanako didn't fully understand the full extent of the calamity, or the Battle of Cartenau, she wasn't born in Eorzea nor did she really have any proper idea of it's history. She knew tragedy though, she knew loss, she knew pain and she *knew* terror. She could see that pain in him, it was set deep into his eyes and the scars that scissored his face. She knew what it meant to come out the other side a survivor of a pain like that. It wasn't even a question that she'd accept his request - that she'd embark on this quest, this envoy, to deliver his voice to the other nations. It was a missive of pride, words of recovery, and a message of healing. Of survival. That's all she needed to know at the base of it, the details did not fully matter to her, no matter what would befall her on this journey she **would** see this request to it's completion.

Hanako's determination burned inside her as she proudly strutted up to the clerk, placing down the documents with a swift '**twthomp**' onto the wooden desk between them. Hanako proudly announced to him,

"I've been sent to board the next flight to Limsa Lominsa!"

The clerk's eyes bounced along her appearance as she stood straight, grinning forward at him like a child awaiting praise. He seemed to be trying to verify her claim, it was an examining of her appearance. Hanako was very familiar with given her Raen race, and her small, unassuming stature, she paid it no mind and before a second had even passed the clerk nonchalantly replied,

"Next ship docks at 12:24, and leaves at half-past. Anything left on the airship will be sold. It says here your ticket for this flight and the flight to Gridania has been compensated for, but further tickets will have to be compensated for in gil. Please sign the departures here,"

Hanako took in his words as she looked down to where the clerk was pointing. Admittedly, she was caught a little off-guard by his flat tone of voice - she had expected more fan-fare in the reaction to her declaration - but her mind quickly forgot about it and moved onto the task at hand. She scribbled her name down onto the leather-bound book provided to her, her handwriting was barely legible as she had no formal training in writing, just scribbles into her adventuring diary and not good ones at that, but given the over entries she could see around where she was instructed to write she wasn't all too worried about hers being a stand-out case. Once done, the clerk stamped something with a rather official looking symbol of the Ul'dahn scales, then he swiftly pulled out a piece of parchment from a drawer underneath the desk that separated the two, he began to copy across writing from the book to the parchment. Hanako watched his head bob from side to side in small 5 second intervals, curiously Hanako tried to crane herself to view what he was writing, but alas, her Eorzean was still too terrible to read upside-down so she fidgeted with rubbing the scales on her arm.

A few minutes passed before the clerk spoke again, he spun around the form he had just completed, presenting it to her,

"And here,"

Hanako quickly looked up towards him before back down to the paper, her eyes guided back to the form. The clerk seemed to be resting the quill at the entry point, but also tilting it towards her as to indicate for her to take. Hanako obliged and repeated her chicken-scratch handwriting onto the piece of parchment. She looked back up to him expectantly once done, he moved swiftly like a machine as he stamped the bottom of it and signed it with a special golden ink. Hanako's eyes

wandered again, looking across the bronze-glad stone enclave they seemed to be situated in. Sunlight seemed to stream out from the opening where Hanako assumed Airships would dock at, from her angle she could only get a glimpse out but she recognized that this place seemed to be quite high up. She was knocked out of her thoughts by the clerk again,

"This one is for you,"

He explained, passing Hanako the loose parchment that he had just signed. She eagerly took it, slotting it into the middle of her journal along with the airship pass. She hoped that by placing it into a book it would keep it fresh and from crumbling, although this method seemed to have mixed results in the past. The clerk gave his parting remark, a warning as well as a standard courtesy,

*"Do not lose your ticket, or you **will** have to pay for your return fare."*

Hanako nodded stoutly, giving a small grunt of affirmation. The clerk pulled a small lever from the side of the desk, and the iron gate beside her creaked open. With nothing more to say, the clerk gestured towards the opening for her to go.

"Thank you!"

Hanako squeaked in parting and with excitement happily sprung through the gates before scanning the area to get a good grasp on where she was and possibly scout out a place for her to sit and wait for her flight. She noticed earlier the Airship Landing was perched in a small enclave rather high up in the domes of Ul'dah's main tower but now that she was the other side of the gates she could get a better view at the skyline outside. Walking closer to the opening cautiously, she found herself very scared at the somewhat unlikely possibility she may fall down and tumble into the endless abyss below. Reassuring herself that there *must* be things down there seemed to help but without a clear enough view of it, the fear lingered in the back of her mind. Not helping matters was the occasional whistle of the wind into the space, giving a wailing cry that echoed across the walls of the area before settling back down into white noise.

As she stepped back from the edge she checked the clock, 12:28. The airship should be here soon...

Prompt #2: Bark

Chapter Summary

Hanako walks home in a snowy Coerthas, and a love-able companion gets thrust into her hands.

Prompt #2: Bark

Nightfall was always a difficult time for Hanako. Cold snowflakes gently fluttered down from the heavens and stung into her skin like tiny glacial shuriken, burrowing into her skin and her soul. Hana had never liked Coerthas, it was always a place where misery laid across the land, resting on the hills like snowdrifts, no matter what happened within the lands of this retched region, any joy would always be swiftly reprimanded by pain. To be stuck within this twisted brutalist palace of penitence, even if supposedly for survival, was a sick twist of fate. Hanako's apprehensiveness was not eased by the apparent increase in political unrest that had befallen Ishgard, between the Dragonsong War reaching a fever pitch and speculation of cultist meddling it was getting too much to take. Granted, she had achieved some friendship within those who lived in Ishgard, mainly those of the Fortemps house, but she knew in her soul her lingering ties to the old, supposedly discarded House Noire placed her in an incredibly precarious situation, and if only to expedite the process of her eventual demise, her growing rumored status as one of the 'Warriors of Light' put even more of a spotlight on her.

Hanako stopped in the snow at a familiar sight, 'Saint Valeroyant Forum' was it's official title but to a younger Hanako it was the Inn Fountain, due to it's position relative to the local Inn the Forgotten Knight. Hanako paused to sit at the lip of the fountain, in her mind, coursed back memories shared with Rosemary, the noble girl from House Noire she had been ordered to protect. They had grown close in their years together, Hanako chuckled to herself, a couple near death experiences would do that to people she supposed. Back then, all she wanted was to fulfill her duty, to keep Rosemary safe, and although the temple knights seemed to often seek to jeopardize that mission and wipe not only Lady Rosemary but the entire House Noire off of the map, Hanako considered herself to be successful. Hanako kept Rosemary alive and safe for as long as she had the power to do so. Hanako was dismissed and that's when her duty ended. Hanako shook her head, it didn't matter anymore, now she had a bigger duty. Another duty, ironically, she did not ask for. Yet, such as it was, she couldn't help but feel that this duty left her even more lonely.

Hanako snapped out of her thoughts at the sound of a dog barking. It was not unusual for people in Ishgard to keep pets, Lady Rosemary had a ragged, wretched old cat named 'Empress' but for dogs and hounds, Ishgardians almost always decided to choose big, stocky dogs. This bark, this sound, was not of a big, stocky dog. It was a yapping. A light, high pitched 'arf' sound, that rung out amongst the courtyard, and it seemed to be getting louder. As if the dog were running, or someone was running with the dog. Hanako turned her head towards the sound curiously, she didn't seem to spot anyone about, nor did she spot the dog. Curiosity filled her, she stood up and looked about, before she felt someone tap on her shoulder. Hanako squeaked as she twisted to see who had approached her.

"Take it!"

A scruffy lady before her aggressively thrust the small, puffy cloud of a dog into Hanako's hands, she reflexively grabbed the ball of fluff, bewildered and swept up in the moment. She opened her mouth to ask a question but the words did not manage to exit her throat before the woman had disappeared. A second passed as Hanako was frozen in shock, stood in the middle of the courtyard with a pile of fur in her hands, trying to process what just happened, and that's when the fur began to wriggle. It was a lateral wriggle, where the top half would move laterally in one way, and the lower half would move opposite. Then, it barked, spooking Hanako from her stupor, she leapt back at the sudden sound as if she had held a cloud-based explosive. Hanako stared down at it, and now it was not inches from her face she could properly see and identify it. It appeared to be a lap-dog, but it had great bounds of energy, as was very evident by it's erratic dance at her feet. It's paws tapped excitedly into the stone pavement, and it's mouth beamed wide back towards Hanako, expectantly. Hanako, with no humans left to question, turned to the dog.

"What, are you?"

"ARF!"

Hanako thought, puzzled, perhaps that was a bad question.

"Where did you come from?"

"ARF!"

Hanako paused her interview, her situation dawned on her, and perhaps she shouldn't be trying to rile up the dog in the middle of night. It seemed a little counter-intuitive to the idea of laying low. With nobody to return the dog to, she turned her head to the Forgotten Knight where she was staying. She knew that the proprietor would not be very happy at her additional resident, but she also knew the power of a cute face, and besides, she couldn't just leave it out in the cold. Secretly though, although Hanako would never admit it, she was delighted by her new companion. She hoped she would be able to keep it with her, and take it on her journeys. Life would be better if she could just watch the little guy wiggle a couple times when things got tough. She went to pick the puppy back off the snow, and to her surprise, it leaped into her bag. It managed to perfectly aim itself into the gap between the flap of the bag and the actual contents. It settled on top of her things, and she thanked the heavens that she had chosen to place her journal at the top of her belongings. Her journal provided a much-needed barrier between the adorable yet muddy puppy and the many different things she carried about with her, and the puppy itself seemed to lie down contently on it.

"Okay," Hanako breathed, half to herself, and half to her new companion. "I guess we figure out where we go from here, huh?"

"ARF!" The puppy replied loudly, Hanako shook her head and reprimanded herself, whispering under her breath,

"No more questions. Not until morning."

Prompt #3: Extra Credit / Free Space - Parley of Peace

Chapter Summary

Hanako is an OC of mine that has been through the ringer of RP and backstory nonsense. I thought it'd be a nice change of pace to have her experience a gentle, calm morning with perhaps some notes of reflection and healing mixed in.

Prompt #3: Extra Credit / Free Space - Parley of Peace

Sunlight filtered through the curtains as they gently swept up on the tides of the wind. Outside, the day burned into life, flickering great spears of citrine and tangerine across the white fluffy clouds like pillars into the heavens. Hanako woke slowly, her eyes slowly blinking at the luminosity before the world around her fell into place. Beside her legs, Chewy slept, his great lumbering snore pushed his body up and down in a rhythmical motion. It was akin to a small, tiny, fluffy engine in both sound and sight. Her face softened into a smile. Things were good, peaceful even.

Hanako sat up, the covers slid down her body exposing her to the room's temperature. The difference wasn't much, but it was enough to provide an initial shock. She checked the table chronometer, the hour hand pecked slowly across the 7. Good, she thought, plenty of time to wake up slowly and prepare herself with grace before housekeeping would come by her inn-room with breakfast. Hanako slid carefully out of bed, guiding her legs from the covers that surrounded Chewy with a practiced precision as to not awake him just yet. It wouldn't be a problem if she did wake him up, Chewy seemed to be also very slow to wake, but his cuteness gave him immunity to Hanako's routine and thus he was always left to drift until the last possible minute. Hanako quietly moved over to the table by the window, opening her adventuring back and taking out her journal and an ink and quill. Her handwriting had gotten better over time, and with all the stories she had told. She had grown to feel rather proud of it.

Outside the window was the great skyline of Kugane, towering houses and establishments, broken only twice by the two long rivers that intersected the city and led to the docks. It was strange to be a tourist in what she considered her home town. It was a mixed feeling, with wistful longing and aching nostalgia, but also a feeling of growth and optimism. Together this emotional concoction felt, indescribably hopeful, like a change had begun in the world itself. Something to actually look forward to. Hana hoped that this feeling, whatever it truly was, would last forever. It was like a beautiful dream, now that she had the gil to not worry, and now she had the power to protect herself and others. For once, Hanako felt like she belonged. She belonged to herself, and the space between her, Chewy, and the fates of life, that would be her home.

And that was enough.

Prompt #4: Off the Hook

Chapter Summary

Hanako's childhood was not the easiest, and at times it felt like everything was against her.

However, one thing she always could depend on was her brothers.

Prompt #4: Off the Hook

Hanako held her breath as she shut the door quietly behind her. Her heart beat loudly in her ears, echoing throughout her chest. Hanako's hands lay behind her back, chaotically intertwined with each other. Her eyes lay firmly fixed upon the ground, tracing the endless patterns woven into the old rolanberry-coloured rug. Silence hang in the air for a beat too long. It only exacerbated the palpable anxiety that filled the room. Hanako had tried her best to stay out of trouble, she always did. She wasn't the easiest with rules though. Between forgetting and misunderstanding the complex webs of cultural rules that knit Kugane society to her mind wandering when being lectured to about important cultural history; Hanako was considered a failure from most of her tutors. She felt like the deck was stacked against her. As if cosmically she had been doomed to fail. Hanako knew what was coming, the yelling, the beating, the reprimands and the further restriction of her already dwindling freedom. She had already braced herself for it, already curled up into a ball inside her own head. That was until movement was heard behind the door and just when Hanako felt like her soul was ready to shatter into a million pieces, a voice sliced through her overthinking.

"Sorry I'm late! I was only just informed of what happened and I had to run from work."

Hanako's eyes widened, but she didn't dare lift her head. It didn't occur to her that she wasn't facing this alone. Usually the administrators would schedule these meetings within work hours, or would fail to tell guardians so that she would have to face it alone. Her brother's voice was the most comforting thing to happen at that moment. She knew that both her brothers were smart, and having either of them arrive was an ace up her sleeve. They understood her plight, and what it meant. They were always on her side. She knew things would be in her favor here. Perhaps this time, maybe she would be let off the hook.

Prompt #5: Barbarous

Chapter Summary

The nomadic people of Eschava are said to have skirted around Garlemald's iron fist by enlisting their strongest men.
But what if that was not entirely the truth?

Prompt #5: Barbarous

Whistling winds slid across the open the open plains. Huddled and braced against the wind the Eschava people clutched tightly to their coats. Their hoods pulled tightly over their faces as they trudged rhythmically through the snow. Usually, traveling would be a time for song. Singing the ancient tales of those who came before them as they carted the yak to their new location for the winter. They would opt to travel south, seeking the warmth. However, this time the south was not an option and this was not a happy affair. Today was a time for survival. To outlast an incomprehensibly stronger enemy.

Amongst the crowd, was Naja. Naja considered herself to be strong enough for most things. Strong enough in her body to assist her father in hunting. Strong enough in skill to assist her mother in the many tasks needed to raise her family. Strong enough in kindness to assist her fellow tribe members. Naja knew she was not the strongest, but it little mattered in the day to day life of things. Naja's strength protected her from fear. She maintained a good mentality, and kept the negativity at bay. This balance was what she prided herself in. Her soul balance was rarely shaken. There was almost never a chance for it to be challenged to such an unwitting extent except today. The leader of her tribe had suddenly called to pack up; throwing off the usual ceremony of clearing up and giving back to a place. This was only done in emergencies. Naja did not yet know of what the emergency was, but she feared it. Whatever sort of great fear that could strike into the heart of their leader. That was a fear that struck everyone else in turn.

As the sky was dark, they were ordered to silently prepare the most basic of a tent structure. Told to forgo any extra tents or fortifications for supplies, or constructing any means of cattle-keeping other than a simple stick to stop from the wilder ones running away. Nighttime was an eerily silent affair. No stories were told that night. Even the barest whispering was snuffed out like a candle born to a harsh climate. Fear overwhelmed Naja, preventing her from sleeping. She had not had these problems with controlling her mentality before. It was strange to her, foreign even, to be so anxious that she could not will herself to sleep. She took over the watch of the west side of the camp from her brother. Peering into the black, she willed it to the earth and sky herself that the night would pass without issue. Come morning, she was thankful that it did.

Birds gently sung in the trees, and people awoke from their slumber and started to prepare food. Naja elected to go on the first patrol across the woods. She stepped carefully through the snow as she surveyed the white wasteland before her. It was strange to be this far north so late in the year. It felt, wrong. Normally they'd be traveling south, to the beach-lands where they could fight the winter easier. North felt antithetical to that.

A crunch rang through the trees. Naja whipped around to see if she was being tracked, her anxiety spiking over her strength yet again. Nothing was about. Perhaps it was an animal, or some sort of

falling tree. Not every sound had to be danger, she told herself, there's lots of other reasons for sounds to be. She shook her head and continued walking.

Out of nowhere, she found herself seized by hands. She screamed but for reasons unknown her voice was silenced.

"What is a girl like you doing so far from camp?"

The voice asked, the leering question burned through her soul. It frightened her, how this voice was speaking in her mother-tongue but in such a foreign way. Not many knew her language. This had to be some sort of merchant, or traveler that had made deals with the Eschava in the past. However even that didn't fully make sense, as there would be no reason for such a person to act like this. Naja didn't reply to him, she struggled, grasping against his arms.

"Answer me, Barbarian!"

Her silence seemed to enrage him, she panicked and squeaked out,

"P-Patrol! I was Patrolling! I was looking out for..."

The voice chuckled in response, and even stranger turn of events, she was dropped to the snow. She didn't dare turn around, part of her didn't even want to see the face of such a man, it disgusted her, and it frightened her.

"Looking out for a man like me?"

He seemed cocky, so sure of himself it created a rage in her. What could he possibly mean by that? She turned around at that, almost ready to spit some sense into him before it dawned on her. Everything dawned on her. At once.

Prompt #6: Ring

Chapter Summary

Mielikki Metsalainen, local anxious lesbian attempts to propose to her partner, Izayoi.
Izayoi belongs to (<https://www.tumblr.com/observeroflaplace>)

Prompt #6: Ring

Mielikki spun the small loop of metal in her hand anxiously as she pondered. Her head was brimming thoughts, going through every iteration of the coming moments. It was four words, but it indicated a promise. A bond. A pact. She had spoken to Izayoi about such matters before. Made attempts to feel out Izayoi's feelings on the matter, and any cultural landmines that may arise from two, very different backgrounds coming together in such a way. Izayoi had been receptive, joyful almost. As two scientists would, they hypothesized everything together, even their future. Mielikki however wasn't a scholar of love and bonding, she was much closer to an inept student. She found herself constantly bumbling and stumbling through the criteria. Mielikki had done her homework though, and she hoped that would be the saving grace here.

She had spoken to her mother about it, and researched the Sharlayan traditions of marriage. They were not unlike the Eternal Bonding Ceremony that most of Eorzea holds dear. Mielikki couldn't quite find any research for the far eastern side of things, and she didn't want to give too much away to her partner. She had been told that alot of this was based on the element of surprise. That the intrepid partner would kneel before their beloved and announce their love boldly and with a symbolic gift of a ring. Mielikki looked down at said ring. It was small, at least in her hands, and made of silver. Silver was a little bit of an odd choice, given her partner's perchance for golden-clad attire but Mielikki had a plan for it. Silver would be a piece of her amongst Izayoi's gold, and Mielikki would choose Gold to symbolize the opposite.

As the time ticked closer, Mielikki watched Izayoi descend the steps of the airship. She smiled widely as she always did, striding confidently towards her partner to give her a comforting welcome-back hug.

"My dearest, I hope the travel was well."

Mielikki said with a gentle nod, picking up Izayoi's bags for her to carry to the inn-room. As they walked towards the Gridanian inn-rooms, Mielikki listened intently to Izayoi's chatter but mostly focused on getting the room sorted. Izayoi's journey seemed to have gone well, which was a relief, and things were in good spirits. Mielikki's anxieties eased with the time she spent with Izayoi. Signing in the two of them and grabbing the keys, she guided Izayoi towards the room. Once there, and opened, Mielikki set the bags down. The room was standard, dark-brown wood walls and floor. Basic amenities. Double-bed. Mielikki was happy with it, she inquired towards Izayoi who seemed to agree in kind.

As night fell Mielikki felt her chance approaching, she asked about a walk. A gentle stroll under the stars was not uncommon for the two, and it would not raise suspicion. She checked her pocket stealthily, feeling within it the small loop of metal. Thank the twelve, it was still there. They strolled out for a while. The streets of Gridania were quieter at night, the tender sound of the waterwheels, light flickering fireflies dotted about, and the occasional simmer of the trees. It was idyllic, a perfect atmosphere for the moment. They approached the amphitheater, and Mielikki felt a swell of nervousness overcome her again. She pushed it down, it was going well. It would go well. It had to.

Mielikki realized she had been silent for too long, perhaps Izayoi had asked a question and Mielikki had not replied. Mia may have been too far in her head to listen at the time. She waited for a second, seeing if Izayoi would repeat, but she didn't. Mielikki assumed that she hadn't said anything. She took a deep breath. Courage. Take courage, Mia. They sat in the empty stands, and Mielikki looked up towards the stars. Above her, faintly, seemed to be Menphina, the Lover, the coincidences were almost poetic at this point.

"Izayoi, I have a question to ask you,"

Izayoi turned towards Mielikki, and she felt her stomach twist again. Push forward, Mia. She told herself. It'll be fine! You'll be fine! Mielikki looked into Izayoi's eyes, they glimmered like rubies in the moonlight. Her breath caught in her chest, and she found herself flustered. She fought hard to keep her composure, to assume the cool exterior she was common to have. Everything in her life lead to this moment. This great question. This, binding choice that would intertwine their lives, their families, and their fates together. A milestone, a moment, a memory.

Mielikki moved off the seat onto one knee, producing the silver ring from her pocket and presenting it towards Izayoi with both her hands.

"Will you marry me?"

Prompt #7: Noisome

Chapter Summary

I'M RUSHING BECAUSE I FORGOT.
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA.

Prompt #7: Noisome

Stench was rugged and lucid. It filled the air and choked out everything in sight.

Life could not grow here, and though it's golden visage would allude to something of a greater nature, this was only a den of despair.

For within Aurum Vale, only death remains king.

Prompt #8: Shed

Chapter Summary

I wanted to make a children's book like rhyme, and I didn't realize how hard that'd be.

Prompt #8: Shed

The Chocobo Shed

Come with me to the Chocobo Shed,
where up ahead the red are bred,
but to not dread, as they are fed,
and do not bite, the farmer said.

Come with me to the Chocobo Farm,
have not alarm, they are disarmed,
they do not harm, they are calm,
and from their pelt, we make the yarn.

Come with me to the Chocobo Races,
there you'll find many places of chases,
which are penned in pages of paces,
and who give praises to faces of braces.

Come with me to the Chocobo Field,
where in the beauty, you will yield,
to the sight that lies unseen, concealed,
the younger flock have been revealed,
and rest with their mother, as their shield.

Come with me to the Chocobo Shed,
where led up ahead, the red have fled,
and in their stead rests in their bed,
a loaf of budding gingerbread!

Prompt #9: Fair

They say all is fair in love and war.

However what Hanako went through was not love, nor was it war, and it especially wasn't fair.

Hanako was only 15 years of age when she had naively signed up into the fighting ring. Her two brothers, Fel and Hylric worked the Kugane docks all day for a pittance of a wage. All Hanako wanted to do was change that and provide extra income to the struggling trio. Hanako had thought that with the included coaching and training; that the price offered for a night's worth of beatings was justified. And perhaps, after some time had passed that she'd learn the skills well enough to make even more money and supersede her family from poverty.

Hanako had no idea what she had gotten herself into.

Hanako trained endlessly, her mindset was that with enough time and effort she'd finally rank above the rest and turn the tables. She hadn't accounted for the fact that she'd be matched up with bigger and bigger targets. Unfair targets. Even when breaking her limits and rising above those in which were related to human, the pit fights turned into survival against beasts, warped enraged creatures of the damned, and even creatures beyond her understanding entirely.

Hanako should've read the fine print, she should've taken more time to understand the premise of the situation.

Yet now she found herself trapped in a cage and all she could bare to blame was herself, as the thought of being coerced broke her soul.

As the contracts grew tighter, she was offered more entrapment disguised as gifts.

Offers of her home and board to be covered, but on the condition that she move in to the estate grounds themselves.

Offers to become a part of the community, but on the condition that she must mainly socialize and sweet-talk the wealthy elite into betting more.

Hanako didn't realize the weight of these conditions, or what meaning they held just below the surface and yet, she now found herself trapped within the walls of the great organization she once used to look up to as her salvation. Through a complex web of half-truths and gracious offerings, Hanako had seemingly sold her soul.

Yet now she needed a way out. Someway, somehow, she had to plot her escape. Wriggle her way out of her legal mess. Break free from this corrupt system.

A solution presented itself in the form of another offer. An opportunity. Tied deeply with the fighting ring's organization was a mercenaries guild, and if she could find some rapport within them she could find a way out through their line of work. It did occur to her that perhaps she was moving laterally; forfeiting one cage for another, but that was a risk she was willing to take. If she could find some work outside the ceramic-clad walls, then she could talk to people and hopefully reach her family.

It would seem her captors had thought of that when she finally got her offer. She was told to accept it or risk being reported about to the fighting ring's management. Once she was allowed to know the details, and her destination was told to her, her heart dropped. She was being sent to the

complete other side of the world.

Ishgard. Frigid cold and unwelcoming.

A place she somehow had to make a home.

Prompt #10: Extra Credit / Free Space - Forest of Letters

Chapter Summary

Since it's mostly an off-day or a chill-day for this I decided to submit a piece I wrote for a lighthearted discord prompt about the Rising event.

Based upon the Forest of Letters from the 2023 Rising event, Mielikki writes a letter to a special someone to wander upon.

[The handwriting is gentle, but as if someone was actively fighting the urge to write in cursive. The start of the letter contains a few false beginnings, and an increasingly frustrated set of scribbled marks but flows as the letter progresses.]

My dearest, there is an old saying that goes like 'If I had more time I would've wrote a shorter letter' and although for the most of things that is a very true sentiment, I find myself ruing the limits of language and the concept of written word. For I do not have the artistic hands of Hanako, or the complex brain of Runa and I cannot express this deep bursting feeling of emotions that swells and overwhelms me when I think of you. Alas, for the sake of the prose, (and so that Vana does not keep nagging me), I shall attempt to describe it.

The small geography of your scales line my mind, the complex weave of bumps and dips that comprehend into a tiny mountain and valley path that makes of you. The brief oasis of smooth, gentle skin that lay between them. Your eyes glitter in my mind like the most precious of rubies but any appraiser worth their salt could never put a price on you. Your soft, flowing hair, disguised and framed in blonde coating but underneath hidden, a ruby sea in it's own right. You clad yourself in gold so commonly, but to me, you are worth more than any precious metal.

My dearest, I wish I could convey to you in a way in which your soul could comprehend, the sheer blaze that you ignite within my heart. You are the flint and steel to my passion, a key fuel source for my heart and mind. You drive me to better myself, and my work. Your interest, and the way the joy and excitement of discovery dances in your eyes and curls your cheeks into such a wonderful grin.

I wish for a thousand eternities by your side. I wish a thousand more in your memory. My life is putty in your hands. My soul is forfeit to you, all and entirety.

I adore you.

Prompt #11: Once Bitten, Twice Shy

There was a hesitance in the air, and the chocobo backed slightly away from the Gyshal Green.

"What?" Poki said, in a gentle but puzzled tone.

"K-Kweh." The sheepish chocobo answered.

Poki looked down towards his outstretched arm, on top of the Gyshal was a small wriggling worm.

"Are you kidding me?" He said as he picked it off but,

SNAP!

The worm chomped hard on his finger.

"GAH!" Poki exclaimed loudly, "That's it! I'm getting my gloves!"

-

Septonine wandered outside to check on Poki, peering around the taller miq'ote she watched as he was furiously washing Gysahls.

She couldn't help but laugh, which only infuriated the already rattled boy more.

"Why are you doing that?" She eventually asked, but could not keep herself from laughing at his intense expression.

"Once bitten, twice shy." He growled down at the loaf.

Prompt #12: Dowdy

Septonine paused her rampage to look back at the bed. Piled up high was a great fortress of discarded clothing, each one strenuously worn for a second before being deemed unfit for her uses.

She sighed, all the cloth-making skills in the world could not help her make a piece that actually looked good with other pieces. None of it had taste. She needed some inspiration and fast.

Septonine made her way downstairs into the library to look for a book; living on the premises of a free company was a boon in times like these. She scoured the shelves for the right book, picking up a few but deciding on an old Limsan cooking book.

She took a peek inside, the tablecloth lit a flame in her heart. If she could somehow source a tablecloth from somewhere she could probably make a nice draped skirt to help her.

She ran to Otto; who was in charge of the Free Company's stock and begged to use one of the tablecloths. He eventually relented, giving an older gingham fabric cloth to her.

After hours of cutting, sewing, and more cutting it was done, but it didn't *feeeel* done.

Septonine consulted her source again, opening the book to a random page she found, ah! Rolanberries! It could be cute to have rolanberry symbols on her pockets but... how?

She sat for a moment and thought before it came to her. There was some fabric paint in the workshop that she could use, and she could paint them on. (and probably embroider them nicely on later.)

Rushing off yet again, she did some test sketches, and a couple test paints on some fabric before deciding on her design. She pinned the pockets to the skirt and could barely contain her excitement!

It looked so cute, now to sew it, aaaand done!

Septonine was no longer a dowry girl, she considered herself to be stylish.

Prompt #13: Check

Chapter Summary

Septonine plays chess (or an Eorzean variant of Chess) with Runa and Izayoi.
Izayoi belongs to (<https://www.tumblr.com/observeroflaplace>)

Septonine focused on the small board with little wooden figures trying to focus her strategy. She had only just been told about this Sharlayan game and she was very aware of her ineptitude at it, but she was adamant to learn. She looked over her shoulder at the Lalafell who was standing on the chair beside her to get a better view and guide her.

Septonine hovered her finger above one of the figures asking "And this one the chocobo-"

"The Knight, yes," Runa interjected with a short correction, but listened intently to the rest of the question.

Septonine continued her question, "It goes in an an Eorzean L shape?"

"Yes, both backwards and forwards my dear." Runa clarified, nodding towards her.

"Backwards and forwards?" Septonine tilted her head, confused and looked for further input.

"Like this." Runa took the bird-shaped piece off of the board and hovered it just above the play area, tracing the shape with the piece as example of where it could move for the younger Xaela.

"That means you would land..." Runa attempted to try and confirm that Septonine had understood.

"Here..." Septonine tapped the spots on the board as she spoke. Her nail making a tiny 'tik' sound as it hit the painted wood. "or here."

"Correct." Runa said with a nod, pleased with her progression in learning.

"Okay..." Septonine paused to think of her strategy as Runa placed the piece back into it's original spot and let her think.

Septonine advanced the small rounded pawn shape forward a spot. Her opponent, one of the newer residents of the free-company and Runa's associates, Izayoi responded quickly in kind, and spun Septonine back into thought.

"How are you so fast?" She squeaked frustratedly, almost in awe.

"I had a good mentor." Izayoi looked up and smiled at Runa.

"And opponent." Runa added with a wink.

Their cryptic context-less conversation only confused Septonine further to what they could have meant. She shook her head and returned back to the board. She stared at the pieces in silence again, tracing their possible moves in her head and trying to think of the optimal strategy given the current rules. It was alot to process and she found herself baffled, eventually turning back to Runa for

guidance,

"Okay so what would you do?"

Prompt #14: Clear

Chapter Summary

Ugh I

From all who saw her, it was clear,
No longer in her face did she show fear,
Instead the strength, of a thousand men,
Let her go to eorzea and back again

Prompt #15: Portentous

Acrid tones scorched the air, smoke pillars billowed from the ground in random spurts.

The scenery scraped for miles, Koivana stood amongst it all like a pillar in an endless ocean of chaos.

Her heart felt still and frozen in her chest, she felt overwhelmed and alone, she couldn't clear her head to think.

Her boots clicked and clunked against the metal debris on the floor. She scoured the ground for a familiar face.

Any familiar face.

Something grabbed her boot, she stopped in her tracks and looked down.

She crouched next to the person, taking her conjurer's wand and some flowers out. She attempted to heal the poor lad's wounds. It took a lot of resolve, trickier than normal, but she managed to help him up to the point of standing. Looking for a next step, she spotted some chocobo wagons loading up people who needed medical assistance.

She whistled for her chocobo in hopes he would appear, and the battle-worn bird appeared. Helping the wounded soldier onto the chocobo's back, she led it to the wagons.

Prompt #16: Jerk

Mielikki held her breath as she stepped into the lounge. The chaos of voices quietened down, a couple shh's dispersed across the area. Mia cleared her throat, anxiously preparing herself for the next moments, "So, you must be wondering why I gathered all of you here," Her eyes flicker across her many siblings, their ages interspersed into little groups that seem anchored around her mother in the middle. All eyes burr into Mielikki, she looks to the floor to compose herself and her next words, the silence amongst her kin is deafening to her. The suspense rings in her ears, causing them to twitch.

"I asked Izayoi to marry me,"

Mielikki says, and everyone leans in. Eagerly awaiting the next words out of the Viera's mouth.

"She said yes."

Mielikki barely finishes her short sentence before the room erupts into cheering, many of her closer siblings leap at her, piling onto her and tumbling her to the ground. The first within her arms was her sibling Akka, who she shields from the brunt of her older siblings as they fall to the floor by pushing her out from the crush in a swift jerk.

"Please-" She squeaks in vain, "Let me up!"

Prompt #17: Extra Credit: Free

The sound of the bustling city felt good today. The wind whipped Hanako's air as the boat slipped away from the skyline. It was bittersweet but it was freedom. For all she'd tried and failed to do, she was finally escaping everything for real. It felt real this time, it felt, good. She knew how far she'd have to go. She couldn't get off at Dalmasca or even Raz-At-Han, she had to go all the way to Ul'dah. Once in Ul'dah she had people she could attempt to contact to seek asylum, people went missing in Ul'dah all the time, they wouldn't notice Hanako was gone either.

Hanako had co-opted a disguise to get herself there, a long dusty-pink scarf that she covered her blonde hair with, and pulled over to obscure the lower half of her face. She used pink to dull her eye color with the monotony of pink and purple of her outfit, if she looked all one color she wouldn't stand out. She also knew her self-centered assailant disliked pink with a passion, and she enjoyed having such a renewed claim over her own body.

Prompt #18: A Fish Out of Water

Chapter Summary

Hanako gets taken to Ishgard on a mercenary contract, she doesn't know Eorzean, she looks like a dragon, and she's got no way back home. She is a fish out of water in a very, very unforgiving pond.

Hanako had been given her brief on the boat towards Eorzea, so she zoned out to the second recital of it in Eorzean. She didn't know half of what he was saying and she didn't care for the other half. The gripping force of defeat overwhelmed her body, she hunched over the seat in the cart. Everyone in Ishgard stared at her, mothers careened their children away from her visage, and people gasped if she made eye contact with them. Hanako didn't understand their muttering or flowery outrage, but she knew disgust and rejection and she felt it. These next months we're going to be tough. Somehow she'd have to find a way to project this princess-like damsel whilst being socially labelled as an outcast. She didn't quite understand what in her visage was triggering them so, the pointy eared weirdos looked just as strange to her and she did to them, but it didn't matter. Her job was protection, not to gain social rapport. She could use her visage as a weapon to steer would-be assailants away and shock others into an advantageous approach.

Hanako glanced over to her new clients. One was a rather old and battle-worn man who was very well mannered and seemed sweet. He had attempted to offer Hanako some form of candy but her anxiety led her to decline. Her second client was a strange young girl. She sat stiffly, almost if she was being held up by razor-wire. Her hair was a dirty green-blond, and her face sat coldly. The girl appeared to be somewhat older than Hanako, but the way her eyes lingered on Hanako showed a case of somewhat guarded curiosity. Hanako had to keep an awareness of things, even now. She needed to get a good idea of both her clients and the landscape they were working within to properly protect and fulfill her work. She looked above the dismissive grounds to the landscape.

From the bumpiness of the cart she could discern that the streets were made of cobble, but it wasn't a far guess given that everything in this city was made of some sort of stone. The stone that surrounded her looked worn and crumbling, she had been told that this nation was at war, but even without that information she could see it. Homes were missing roofing in some part. The pavement would sometimes give way to a giant crater that seemed bigger than the cart itself. Her focus though, was on the buildings. Where the damage lay, there was an opportunity. She could see these structures were rife for climbing, although unlike where she grew up she knew she'd have to take more care due to their fragile nature, she still could use her climbing skills to gain the upper hand or outpace an assailant. The question was how she could do this whilst also ensuring the safety of her ward, who couldn't climb.

Prompt #19: Weal

Hanako pressed the small bag of ice to her wounds, hissing through the sting of the cold as she attempt to re-cooperate. It was going to be a long night, and it wasn't going to be a fun one. She had to find a way to get herself looking passable condition for fraternizing with the elites, but her body was broken and bruised and her eyes were baggy and sore. Makeup could theoretically fix all that, but it couldn't fix her soul. The distance away from her brothers, and the life outside the walls was starting to get to her. She had attempted to send letters to them, but they had no reply, she didn't know if they even left the estate. She'd been promised that they'd receive a cut of her profits, but she had no way to confirm it. She felt alone, and swindled, more than any weal or bruise could give her.

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