

## Make a Deal to Fix your Mistakes

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# **Make a Deal to Fix your Mistakes**

by [Lunatic\\_Shipper](#)

## Summary

Ed gets caught in the rebound of a Human Transmutation and nearly dies as a result.

Truth offers to save him, but will only do so by sending him back in time to his childhood.

Because Truth wants back the Souls that disappeared with the Homunculi. And Ed is going to be the one to get them back, allowing him to fix the mistakes he made the first time around in the process.

## Notes

So I have plot points for this but no way to get from point A to point B. So.... This is going to be a fun journey

# Chapter 1

10 years after the Promised Day, and Edward Elric has what many people would call the perfect life.

He brought back his brothers body, without losing any more body parts. His job lets him travel all over the country. He has a wife and 2 kids that love him.

But the Gate he lost took a part of his Soul with him when it disappeared. The job that lets him travel all over the country keeps him away from his family. The family that love him no matter what. The family he can't bring himself to love the same way. It's true that he loves and adores his kids, but they weren't his choice, they were Winry's.

Winry that has loved him since their late teens. Winry that he grew out of love with as he figured himself out. Winry who he married in order to not break her heart. Winry that he cheated on with the one who truly has his heart no matter how much he wishes they don't. Wishes that he hadn't gotten drunk that night because he had been doing *so well*, keeping away from that man.

He pulls himself out of his quickly spiralling thoughts as he looks at the house he's been sent to. The neighbours have been hearing increasingly loud rants at all hours of the day and night, accompanied by loud bangs. This isn't something Ed would typically be asked to check out, but one of the neighbours (a low level Alchemist) recognised some concerning things the man is saying in his rants. Concerned that something dangerous is happening, Ed got sent out to investigate. Because he may have lost his Alchemy, but he's still the resident expert on human transmutation, which is what the neighbour fears the man is researching.

Stepping up to the door, he knocks twice before stepping back to wait for an answer. The muffled banging and curses don't fill Ed with comfort as the man makes his way towards the front door.

The door opens to a man wearing a button down shirt with half of the buttons in the wrong hole, and some brown slacks. His eyes widen just a fraction when he looks at Ed. "Edward Elric, to what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?"

Ed just raises an eyebrow at the man. "We've heard rumours that you're practicing or researching human transmutation. I'm here to make sure that they're just rumours." The man stares at Ed for a few seconds, seemingly nervous before nodding and stepping aside to let him enter the house. "What's your name by the way? I didn't get told before I was sent out here."

The man leads him through the house towards the basement, the standard place for most Alchemy rooms. "My name is Lucas Silvera." He opens the door to the basement and leads Ed down the stairs. As soon as Ed follows him down he immediately recognises the array drawn out on the floor. Sitting right in front of him, seemingly innocent is a human transmutation array. Lucas turns around to face Ed. "I don't know why they sent you here. It's not like you can stop me."

Ed takes a small step forwards, being very careful not to touch a single chalk mark on the floor. "I may not have my Alchemy, but I know more about human transmutation than any Human should have the right to."

Lucas steps further back from Ed to stand on the edge of the circle, far out of Ed's reach. "So what is your plan now? You break my circle? I could activate it long before you managed that."

Taking another small step forwards, Ed glowers at the man. "If you try to do this you could die. Not only is the transmutation dangerous in and of itself but the rebound could kill you before the array even finishes activating." He takes a quick look around the basement they're in. "It's not like you made this basement incredibly sturdy."

Glowing back at him, Lucas pricks his finger and lets his blood fall in to the tub containing the necessary ingredients to form a human shell. "You don't understand, Fullmetal Alchemist. I'm not trying to bring someone back to life."

It takes a few seconds for Ed's brain to catch up with what the man is saying. "If you don't want to bring anyone back to life then why the *fuck* do you have that!?" He points down to the tub, where the few drops of Lucas's blood have caused small sections to stick together. Lucas looks confused which only angers Ed further. "You only need those things if you're trying to create a body. Are you telling me that you were trying to do human transmutation for whatever stupid fucking reason, and you did so little fucking research that you were about to drag someone's soul into the destructive carcass that this would create only for them to die all but immediately!?"

Lucas scoffs at him. "It's not human transmutation if there isn't a human to transmute." With that, he claps his hands and presses them to the edge of the circle.

Enraged, Ed yells at him as the Eye appears underneath Lucas. "You fucking idiot. *You* are the human. You transmute *yourself*. What you've done now, is fucking kill the both of us." The basement begins to shake thanks to its terrible structure, which sends tremors up through the rest of the house. It doesn't take long for the first piece of ceiling to fall and smash on to the floor. When Ed looks back over to Lucas, he sees that the man has already fallen prey to the rebound. "Fuck. Seriously?" He sends a second looking down at the dead body, before turning around, to try and get out of the basement door. Before cursing again when he can't see the doorway, only the pieces of stone and lumbar and whatever other bullshit Lucas used to build this shit excuse for a basement. "Fuck! No, no this cannot be fucking happening." He takes a step back before his automail leg catches on a piece of broken ceiling and he falls backwards, hitting his head on a jagged piece of metal.

Ed lies there for a second, before drawing his gaze over to the human transmutation array. The eye is still there, the creepy fucking baby hands that haunt his nightmares still stretching out of the ground, searching for someone to grab on to and pull in to Truth's domain. But he drags his head away, going in to Truth's domain wouldn't be much help to him. He lays there for a few more seconds, trying to think of a way to get out of the basement without dying. As he lays on the floor he sees another piece of ceiling come loose right above where he's laying. Rolling out of the way as quick as he can manage still doesn't manage to avoid him getting hit. The debris catches him in the side as he moves, slicing his side open rather violently. "For

fucks sake!" He eyes the circle again. The eye is closing and the hands receding back in to the floor. He glares at it before heaving out a sigh. "You better have something good for me Truth."

He places a hand on to his bleeding side as he crawls towards the circle. When he's in reach, he slams a hand on to the circle. Thankful for once when he feels the familiar but still uncomfortable, borderline painful feeling of being taken apart atom by atom. When he opens his eyes he's stood in front of Truth again for the first time in years, but the first thing he does is breath a sigh of relief that he can't feel himself bleeding out any more.

As Ed takes check of himself, Truth watches on with their usual knowing smile. After a few seconds, Ed looks up at Truth. "Why did you leave the gate here open for so long?"

Truth gives him a slightly different smile, one that if Ed didn't know better he would say looks sad. "I knew you were going to need my help. And seen as you almost got yourself killed stupidly, you have little room to say no to what I'm about to ask you." Ed raises a weary eyebrow at them. "I want those Souls back. The ones that made up the Philosophers stone. You had no way to get here before now, and you would've said no if you could. But now you don't really have much of a choice. Because if you were to go back now, you would die a slow and painful death."

Ed stares at them, unable to figure out what Truth is trying to say. "Well what else am I going to do? You're not going to ask me to stay here are you?"

Truth chuckles at the question a few times, their creepy glowing smile growing with the laughs. "No, Alchemist. I'm not going to ask you to stay here. I'm going to send you back to your childhood so you can bring me back those Souls. It will even let you fix the mistakes you made, so really we're both getting something out of this."

Faltering for a few seconds, Ed opens his mouth without saying anything for a good few seconds. "Are you asking me to live out my entire life again? What about this life? Or this timeline I suppose. What happens to the people here?"

No answer comes for a short while, leaving Ed to stare at Truth like a lost child again. "They will move on. You will die in this timeline, and they will mourn but they will continue on. If you accept my deal, you will never be able to return to this timeline, but even if you go back now, you will die. No one will get there in time, because you didn't take anyone with you."

Silence reigns for a few seconds, before Ed lets out a heaving sigh. "Okay. If you promise me that no one here will try anything stupid to bring me back, I'll accept your deal and bring you back your Souls." Truth's smile widens as he stands up, pushing his weight on to Ed's borrowed leg. The movement draws his gaze to the flesh and draws a groan of complaint from his throat. "I'm gonna have to have automail surgery again aren't I?"

Truth grins even wider, before nodding. "That you will, Alchemist. But I can lessen that pain for you a little. You will be taking your younger self's place. The younger you that hasn't sacrificed their Gate." Ed's old Gate builds itself back up behind him and Ed can't help but turn his head to look back at it. Feeling part of his Soul returning at the sight of it alone.

"Welcome back to the missing part of your Soul, Edward Elric. I know how dearly you've missed it." Truth holds out their hand towards Ed. "You accept my deal yes?"

Staring down at the hand for a few seconds, Ed nods his head. If he was going to die in his original timeline anyway, he may as well be able to fix the mistakes he made in it. "I accept your deal, Truth." With that he meets Truth's outstretched hand with his own. Only a second passes before a jolt of pain runs through him, to concentrate itself in his shoulder. Looking down at his right shoulder, hidden among the soon to be gone automail parts left as shrapnel in his shoulder, is the Alchemic symbol for the sun. Ed stares at it for a few seconds before looking back up at Truth, who is just stood there with an obnoxiously ominous smile on their face. "What is this?"

Truth continues smiling at him, as Ed's newly reformed Gate opens behind him. "It's the proof that you've accepted my deal." As Ed starts getting pulled through the Gate, Truth takes a second to give him some more information. "As long as you get me my Souls back, I don't care what you do. Tell whoever you want about this, don't tell anyone. Everything is your choice as long as you uphold your end of the deal." Ed nods his head as the Gate pulls him through it. Spitting him out on the floor of his childhood house, bleeding out from his leg.

# Chapter 2

## Chapter Summary

Ed and Al knock on the Rockbell's door in the middle of the night and Ed digs himself in to a hole a lot faster than he would've liked

## Chapter Notes

Okay so 2 quick notes, firstly I head canon super hard that Ed is Truth's favourite human. So they're gonna have a more friendly relationship in this than most other FMA fics (but they're still gonna be super unhelpful a lot of the time)

Second note, I tried to throw in a few worldbuilding notes here both for Ed's character and skillset in this as well as some foreshadowing but I'm not too sure how well I fit it in so hopefully they don't ruin the flow of the chapter

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

Despite the fact that Edward was bleeding out less than an hour ago, he had forgotten how *painful* losing his leg was. When Edwards brain starts functioning again, he takes a few deep breaths as he tries to remember one of the healing arrays Al had studied after his return.

He doesn't bother looking around for Al right now. Because if his leg is gone then Al is already gone too. So he spends all his energy on focusing on the array he's about to use. It's going to take some serious concentration because Ed did end up visiting Xing a few times. With the first being to celebrate Ling's succession to Emperor. He learnt a fair bit of Xingese while he was there. He was never fluent, but he was more than conversational. But he never used his visits to look in to Alkahestry, because he couldn't use it.

Only after once the bleeding has stopped and there's a thin layer of scabbing already stretching over his stump, does Ed allow himself a second to look over to the transmutation circle in the middle of the basement, sending a silent apology to Al as the body collapses in on itself.

With his leg no longer bleeding, Ed tries to think of a way to get Al back from beyond the Gate without trapping him in the armour again. Before he remembers about the Philosophers stone trapped under the ground in Amestris. If Truth wants their Souls back, surely they'll want those ones back as well.

The only problem with this plan, is that Ed doesn't truly know how to draw the stone out of the ground. So he does the only thing he can think of and claps his hands before pressing them against the stone floor of the basement. "Please." He whispers to the Souls he hopes can hear him. "Help me get my brother back. Don't make me put him back in that armour. I will put you all to rest eventually, but I can't help all of you right now. I can't alert Father to me. I'll help all of you eventually whether you help me or not. But please *please* don't make me trap my brother again." He waits for a few seconds for something to happen. To get some type of response, but before he can get dejected when he gets no response, he feels something moving underneath his hands. When he pulls his hands back a small stone rests in his hands. He closes his hand around it gently. "Thank you."

With his bargaining chip in hand, he crawls his way over to the circle he and Al drew. The activation has already stopped by now as it had the last time he brought his brother back from the Gate. But this time, he won't be going in a suit of armour. He rests his stone on his outstretched leg as he claps his hands to reactivate the array.

Truth laughs as Edward reappears in their domain. "You can't resist this place can you Alchemist?"

Edward rolls his eyes and holds out the stone in his hand. "I'll get you back the rest of the stones under Amestris once Father has been dealt with. But for now, take this in return for my brothers body and Soul."

Truth stares at him for a second before holding out his hand for the stone. Ed hands it over to him without hesitation. "Very well Alchemist, I will give you back your brother in return for these Souls."

Ed sighs in relief. "Thank you." Before Truth can open Ed's Gate to take him back to that basement, he starts talking again. "By the way. Do all of the Homunculus have forms for them to return to like Selim did? Because Father can disappear for all I care, but I want the other Homunculus to at least have a *chance* at being Human. Because I know for a fact that Envy wanted to be Human so I want a way to give them that."

A few seconds pass as Truth stares at him. "Your empathy will be the end of you Alchemist. But very well. I will not give you the answer straight out however. But I will give you the chance to create an array to send their Souls to me. If you can figure it out, you will be able to bring them here and create them a Gate. Make them truly Human." Truth watches as the Gate opens behind their favourite Human. Edward always manages to entertain them, with his actions and decisions. As long as Edward can remain entertaining, Truth will continue helping him.

When Edward gets sent through the Gate, he sees bits and pieces of an array that he figures will allow him to build the Homunculi a Gate. Except Bradley. Bradley wasn't interested in becoming Human again so he can die as the Homunculus he loves being so much. Lust may be another one that'll be difficult to persuade. But if she cares about Gluttony as much as he cares about her then he should be able to persuade her.

When he's spat back out in to his childhood basement, he ignores his missing leg and immediately looks around for Al. He finds him passed out beside him, like he was when they



activated the array. "Al." He shocks himself with how young his voice sounds. Sure he'd just been speaking to Truth but he was focused on getting Truth to agree to his deal. And sure, he knew that he'd become a child again, so logically he knew his voice would be young and pitchy again, but as soon as he called out to his brother, he truly realised what he just got himself in to. But the need to check on his brother overpowers his shock. "Al. Alphonse!"

Al shoots up in to a sitting position when Ed yells his full name. "Brother?" He looks over at Ed after a second and his eyes widen in horror. "Brother!" He stands up on shaky legs and moves over to kneel by his brother as quickly as he can. "What happened? Brother are you okay?"

Ed just nods his head in response and it isn't exactly a lie, because he can't *feel* the pain anymore, so he technically *is* fine. "Al. I need Granny." Even as an adult the 3 of them had never stopped referring to Pinako as Granny. That carried on until the day she died. So it doesn't feel strange for him to refer to her as such, Winry though.... Yeah he's not looking forward to seeing her again even if she won't remember how bad of a husband he was.

Despite being unharmed, Al can hardly carry Ed's weight along with his own right now. So he easily slips out of Al's hold and crawls over to the suit of armour he hates so much. It doesn't take much of a hit to knock it over and soon enough he's turning part of it in to a crutch so that he can walk on his own, or mostly on his own at least. He slowly makes his way back over to Al and leads them up the stairs.

He doesn't look at anything as they make their way to the front door. He can't afford to get overwhelmed right now, he needs to get looked over by Granny before he can afford to let that happen. So after leaving the not burnt Elric house, the 2 of them slowly make their way down the dirt path towards the Rockbell house. It starts raining almost as soon as they start walking and as a result they have to stop multiple times along the way so that Ed doesn't slip on the ground and tear his scabbing. The last thing he wants to do right now is start bleeding out *again*.

When they finally get to the Rockbell house, both Eric's are breathing heavily on the first step. After taking a few seconds to catch his breath, Ed climbs the last 2 steps and bangs loudly on the door. When no answer comes from the first few bangs, he raises his fist and tries again. By this point, Al has stopped next to him and decides to call out to the houses residents. "Granny! Winry!"

Still nothing.

Ed growls and goes to raise his hand again but it swings inward as soon as his hand makes contact and he stumbles through the now open door. The only reason he doesn't completely face plant is because he plants his makeshift crutch firmly in to the floor and uses it as a balancing point to lower himself a little slower than he was falling.

Pinako follows his fall with her eyes before her gaze rests on his leg. "Ed!" She rushes over to his side, eyes immediately scanning the damage. "This is already scabbing, how?"

She looks up at him accusingly which Ed was already expecting. "I sealed the wound with Alkahestry but it may have torn slightly on our walk over here."

Both Al and Pinako raise their eyebrows at him but both for different reasons. Pinako stares at him because he actually told her what happened without a fight for once, while Al stared at him because of the mention of Alkahestry. "Alkahestry? Brother what's that?"

Ed sighs, this was coming a lot sooner than he would have liked, but luckily he's still at risk of starting to bleed out again so he can put it off for just a little while longer. "I'll explain it to all three of you later okay?" He shifts his gaze from Al to Pinako. "But for now can we please *please* sort my leg out?" Pinako nods her head immediately, shoving her many questions aside for now so that she can focus on her patient.

She helps Ed stand up and hands him his crutch. "I'll wake Winry so she can help me out." She turns to Al. "Make sure your brother gets to the patient room without tearing his scab." Al nods his head and, now on steadier legs, comes to stand by Ed's side and take some of his weight like the good brother that he is. Satisfied that nothing drastic will happen the second she leaves them alone, she turns towards the stairs to go wake Winry up.

Just as she gets to Winry's door she hears Ed shout from downstairs. "I want automail by the way!"

Pinako pauses at the door before shaking her head. She doesn't want to know right now how Ed came to a decision on that so quickly. The possible answers will only distract her. So instead of shouting anything back, she pushes her new question in to the corner of her mind where the others are, and knocks on Winry's door. "Winry. I know it's late but I need you to help me downstairs."

Winry opens the door half asleep but alarmed. "What is it? What's happened?"

Pinako sighs slightly before leading the way downstairs. "Ed needs surgery." Winry follows her silently after that, wanting to see what Pinako was talking about for herself before she says anything. Besides, she knows better to ask questions when Pinako has a patient. Questions are distracting and distractions could lead to mistakes.

## Chapter End Notes

Ed won't be receiving his moniker of Fullmetal in this fic so I have to create a new one.

I'm playing with a couple right now but the most prominent one is the Golden Alchemist for a few reasons

But if you have any ideas for what his moniker could be please do tell me cause I'd love to have a few more ideas to bounce off of

# Chapter 3

## Chapter Summary

Ed explains his circumstance to Al, Pinako and Winry

Pinako alone gets the whole truth

## Chapter Notes

So I'm just going to apologise in advance because this chapter is a lot of talking. Hopefully it won't be too boring to read, but I really wanted to write Ed explaining his circumstance and also give you guys more information on the whole Ed/Winry situation

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

The surgery only lasts for a little over an hour and a half at most. After all she doesn't have to actually remove the leg this time as it was severed perfectly with Alchemy. But she needs to remove the scab Ed formed for himself, and she needs to do it carefully.

She'd love to not touch the scab at all. But Ed wants automail and for that to happen she has to make sure that all the nerves are attached and still working.

But despite the fact that the surgery isn't that long, the night seems to stretch on forever. She put Ed to sleep at the start of the surgery and he has yet to wake up. Pinako, Al and Winry all sit around his bedside waiting for him to wake up. Pinako and Al desperately want the answers he promised, but Winry just wants to know what the hell is going on because neither of them are talking.

When Pinako notices that it's starting to get light outside, she sends the 2 of them to get some sleep. Promising that she'll come get them as soon as Ed wakes up.

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Unsurprisingly, she doesn't end up waking the 2 immediately. Because when Ed wakes up and she begins her check up of his leg, she can't help herself from asking a few questions already. "What did you really do Pipsqueak?" Ed doesn't react to the name calling. He got very good at ignoring hits at his height after the Promised Day. His non existent reaction draws her attention immediately. "Edward. What happened to you?"

Ed lets out a heavy sigh, before nodding his head slightly. "I'll tell you the whole truth Granny. All of it, every last bit. But there are things I want to leave out for those two. They're

too young right now to know how fucked up I am."

Pinako narrows her eyes at him for a few seconds before she agrees. "Okay. I'll go get those two. You can tell me the full story once they've gone to bed tonight." Ed nods his head in an agreement of his own before watching as Pinako leaves the patient room.

The house is only silent for another minute, because soon enough Ed can hear footsteps pounding down the hall in the direction of the patient room. Footsteps that he knows belong to Al. And surely enough it's his brother that bursts through the door before continuing his dash towards where Ed is resting. "Brother!" Ed doesn't say anything to Al, waiting for the other 2 pairs of footsteps to finally reach the doorway.

Once all 4 of them are in the room, he starts talking. "Okay. I should probably start by telling you all that I'm not 11. I'm 26, nearly 27." He isn't at all surprised by the gasps and incredulous looks he gains from that statement. "I said I'll explain and I will but firstly." He turns his attention to Al. "Human Transmutation is impossible. Humans can't be brought back from the dead. What we transmuted wasn't mum. Before you say anything, I know because I checked in my last time line after the bastard hinted that it wasn't mum. Me and Granny dug it up and checked. It wasn't her. We didn't kill her again."

As soon as he's done speaking Al collapses in a heap on top of Ed. Crying his eyes out as he had when Izumi comforted them all those years ago. Speaking of, he should probably get in contact with Izumi to reassure her as well. But Ed puts the thought aside for now and comforts his brother. Runs his fingers through the golden hair and shushes him in an attempt to calm him down.

Once Al stops crying and returns to his seat, Ed continues. "Fuck okay where do I even start? Okay, I'll run through all the details in a minute, but the short version is this. In my original timeline I was 26 and was hunting rogue Alchemists looking in to Human transmutation. The last one I found, well. I don't even know what that guy was trying to achieve but he hadn't done *any* research in to the concept. He had created a basement out of earth with terribly weak foundations. That's where we were when he activated the array. He died almost immediately from the rebound and the basement started to collapse leaving me trapped there. Truth left the way to their domain open for much longer than they normally would and since I was going to slowly bleed to death otherwise, I accepted the invitation."

He takes a deep breath and rubs his side where he was impaled. "Truth offered me a deal. In return for sending me back to my childhood, which would save my life, they wanted the Souls used to make the Homunculi and Philosopher's Stones. I'll explain in a minute." I accepted and he sent me back to the time of our own attempt at Human transmutation. Okay I think that's the gist of it. Ask away."

Silence reigns for all of 3 seconds before Al jumps at his brother again. "How did you get trapped in that basement in the first place? Your Alchemy is already amazing now you must have been even better 16 years in the future!"

Ed winces slightly and takes a deep breath. "Right okay so. I actually traded away my ability to do Alchemy. It was.... not something I want to repeat if there's another option. I'll do it if I believe I have to, and I never regretted my decision. But when I lost my Alchemy I lost part

of my Soul. I'm not being dramatic when I say that, even Truth welcomed back the missing part of my Soul when he gave me back my Alchemy."

Al stares at his brother for a few seconds in horror. "What could you possibly have needed so much you'd trade your Alchemy for it?"

Taking a deep breath, Ed forces himself to keep eye contact with his brother. "You." Al sucks in a breath of surprise, but before he can ask Ed what he means, Ed is already talking. "In my original timeline, I pulled your Soul through the Gate in exchange for my left arm. I bound you to that suit of armour with a blood seal. You were trapped in that armour for 4 years. You spent the rest of your childhood in that armour and at one point your Soul started to reject the armour. So on the Promised Day, once everything else had been handled, I traded my Alchemy for your Soul to be returned to your body and for both to return from the Gate."

Pinako asks the next question. "Promised Day?"

Ed shakes his head slightly. "That and the Homunculi I mentioned are a whole different can of worms. I'll explain those once your other questions are answered. But honestly I'm surprised you're all taking this so well and that you actually believe me."

Pinako shrugs her shoulders slightly. "I've known your father for a long time Ed. This isn't too surprising next to that."

A laugh escapes Ed out of nowhere. "Oh yeah. I forgot you kinda knew about that." He turns to Al and Winry, who are sat on the other side of him. "Why are you two taking this so well though?"

Al and Winry share a look before shrugging. Al answers first. "Because I can tell that you really are my brother. After all, you knew about Teacher today, knew that what we tried to transmute was our mum, plus despite being the injured one last night, you still tried to carry all your own weight as we walked over here. You always do that when you're hurt. Even if it's just a paper cut you never let people fret over you."

Winry looks from Al to Ed. "I believe you because these two do. Besides, nothing you two could tell me would surprise me too much cause I don't really understand Alchemy in the first place." She looks down at Ed's leg for a second before asking another question. "Is the fact that you lost your arm last time why you immediately knew you wanted automail?"

Ed nods his head in agreement, glad to find that being around Winry wasn't as awkward as he thought it would be, even if it does still make him feel guilty. "Yeah. I had it last time as well. I needed it then and I'm going to need it in the coming future."

Pinako decides to ask the last question so that Ed will still be cooperative when the 2 of them talk later. "So what's the Promised Day?"

A huff of air escapes Ed. "Okay, basically, there's a Homunculus, the first actually, underneath Central. he wants to become a God, that's always been his goal it's why Xerxes was destroyed and he's the reason for Hohenheim's situation." Noticing the sour look on Pinako's face, he quickly continues. "Not by choice. From what I gather he lost everyone he

cared about and had no idea what had happened until Father, the name of the first Homunculus, explained to him that he had hundreds if not a thousand Souls inside of him. The Promised Day is in the summer of 1915 and it's when Father's plan truly comes in to action. If I don't stop him again, all of Amestris dies." Ignoring the scared looks on all 3 faces, he continues. "On to the other Homunculus. They're basically Father's children. They're a pretend family in a few different ways. There are seven other Homunculus. All of them are parts of himself that Father didn't want. They're named after the parts of him he exiled. They're each named after one of the seven deadly sins and each of them has something that makes them deadly. The only one we don't have to be worried about is Greed. He lives in Dublith right now with a bunch of Human Chimeras. As long as you don't bother or intrigue him, he won't be a problem. But none of you need to worry about them. At least not yet."

Al turns to his brother with a sly smile on his face. "Brother, can I ask one more question?"

Ed laughs slightly. "Of course you can Al."

Al smiles at Ed before his expression mellows out. "Did I ever get married in your last life?"

Ed nods his head in answer. "You did." He looks down at his hand where his own wedding ring used to sit. "But no. I won't tell you who you got married to. If you fall in love again this time then that's great for you but I won't tell you and make you think you *have* to love them." When Al opens his mouth to defend himself, Ed clamps a hand over it. "I know you, Al. Don't try and tell me you wouldn't force yourself to love them if you knew because I *know* that you would."

Al lowers his head slightly, knowing his brother is probably right but not wanting to admit it. "Did you ever get married, Ed?"

Trying his best to repress the flinch that passed through him at Winry's question, he turns back over to look at her. Both of the pre-teens missed the flinch but Pinako caught it and what it tells her isn't too comforting. "I did. And no, I won't tell you who *I* was married to either." Both kids slump down in their seats in disappointment, but Ed can't help but let out a sigh of relief when the topic is dropped. For now at least, because he knows Pinako is going to ask about it when they talk later.

Pinako draws the conversation away from Ed's past towards his request for automail. "I know what you're like Ed, so how soon do you want automail?"

Ed shakes his head slightly. "I've had automail for most of my life, Granny. I have a bit of time before I *need* the automail. So you can fit me with the port whenever you think my stump is healed enough for it. The leg should be able to come pretty quick after that because it's weirder for me right now to not have a port than to not have a leg at all."

That comment seems to upset the 2 children sat beside him, but Pinako is talking again before he can try and comfort them. "We'll see how well your leg is healed by the end of the week okay?" She looks down at Ed's leg again at the almost pristine bandages. "Normally I'd demand you wait at *least* two weeks before I even *think* about attaching a port. But the leg was severed so cleanly before you even got here. Scabbing it and making a crutch for your

walk over here kept it relatively clean. So at the end of the week, we will *talk* about you getting a port. But you won't be *getting* one until two weeks have passed okay? Just so I know your leg is healed enough to support it."

Ed nods his head quickly. "Okay. That's fine. Like I said I have time before I *need* it." The tone in his voice promises Pinako that that will also be explained later.

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The rest of the day passes at a snails pace. Al is incredibly reluctant to leave Ed's side, and Winry spends the day trying to convince Pinako to let her help make Ed's automail.

That hour long conversation did make him laugh a few times, because in a few years Winry will be the best automail mechanic in Amestris. When he tells Al as such, his brother tries to claim that he's exaggerating because they're friends. So Ed tells him about Rush Valley and the shop Winry used to work out of that was filled with customers even when she wasn't there, all eagerly awaiting her return so she could look at their automail.

Al stares at Winry in awe the next time she walks in the room, which causes Ed to chuckle and Winry to accuse them that they're up to something. Ed just continues laughing at her accusation, so eventually Winry stops trying to understand *what* he's laughing at.

But eventually, it gets late enough for Pinako to send Winry to bed, and for Ed to talk Al in to getting some sleep. With Al still in the patient room, Pinako and Ed leave it for the dining room. So that if Al wakes up he won't overhear anything Ed doesn't want him to.

Ed rests his makeshift crutch against the table as Pinako moves to sit in front of him. "So. Where do you want to start or do you just want me to start asking questions?" Ed nods his head at the second option, so she hums and leans back in to her seat. "Well right of the bat. Explain how long you have until you need your automail and why you have a time frame at all."

Ed sucks in a breath and holds it for a second, before letting it out. "Roy Mustang, the Flame Alchemist currently stationed in East Command. He's been tasked currently to find candidates for the State Alchemist program. Within the next two weeks he will receive a lead on a talented Alchemist in Resembool and will come out to find them. Even now I'm not sure if the tip was about me or Hohenheim. Because it only mentions one person but Hohenheim hasn't lived in Resembool for years at this point so the timing is a bit off." He shakes his head slightly in order to keep himself on track. "Anyway, in my original timeline, he went to my and Al's house and found what we did in the basement. He offered me the chance to join the military under his command so that I could look for a way to fix Al's body. Promising that he would keep our committing the taboo under wraps, which he did."

Pinako can hear the start of a spiral in Ed's tone, so clears her throat to draw his attention. "So what does this soldier have to do with your automail." Ed just stares at her blankly, which causes her to heave out a sigh. "Of course you're going back to the military." She shakes her head a few times before looking backup at Ed. "I only have a few more questions right now." Ed nods his head in acceptance, otherwise waiting stoically for Pinako to ask. "Was it Winry you married in your original timeline?"

An involuntary flinch passes through Ed. "It was. When it first started I genuinely thought I loved her. But a couple years passed and I had time to figure myself out and I realised that I didn't. Not in the way she wanted me to. But I still cared for her and she was still my best friend, I would have done anything to make her happy. I didn't want to hurt her. When she asked me to marry her I tried to think of a reason to say no that wouldn't break her heart. But then I saw how happy she was talking about it with her friends and customers and I couldn't do it. I thought that as long as I tried to love her how she wanted me to that we would be okay. And it worked, for a few years. We had two kids and I loved them with both my heart. But they weren't planned, so when I had finally grown enough of a back bone to admit the truth to Winry, we found out she was pregnant. With twins no less and I just couldn't do it." He feels a few tears start to burn behind his eyes and he wipes them away immediately, he wouldn't cry over this. He doesn't deserve to when he brought the whole thing on himself. "I tried so hard to love her how I was meant to. But I had already fallen in love with someone else. And...." He takes a shuddering breath and risks a look up at Pinako. He knows that she can tell where this story is going. But he needs to say it out loud. "And I tried so hard to stay away from him. But one night we went out to celebrate a promotion, we weren't alone for most of the night because I always tried so hard to make it so we never were. But.... we all got drunk. And I was the one to take him home. To be completely honest, most of it is still blurry. But I know it happened."

Pinako lets out another sigh. "I can't forgive you for that Ed. Not only because it wouldn't be for me to forgive, but because it hasn't happened."

Ed snaps his head up to meet her gaze. "What are you talking about Granny. It did happen. I *remember* it happening."

Standing up from her chair with a shake of her head, Pinako walks around the table to stand in front of Ed. "Edward. You might remember it happening, but it hasn't happened yet. Are you married to the little girl sleeping upstairs?" Ed blanches and starts looking like he's ready to throw up. Pinako nods her head once upon seeing the appropriate reaction to her question. "Exactly. You aren't married to Winry, so you haven't cheated on her. This one at least. And I love Winry with all my heart, she's all I've got left of my son, but I only care about *this* Winry. Not the one from your last life because she isn't here. And as far as I'm concerned you haven't done anything wrong." Ed opens his mouth to talk but Pinako just holds up a hand to silence him. "I won't tell you that it didn't happen to *you* but to me nothing has happened. You can continue to feel guilty for your mistake, but you haven't made it yet. And you can make it so that you *never* make that mistake." A slow nod from Ed gets Pinako to back down slightly. "Who was it you fell in love with anyway? Someone I get to meet or someone you met after you fix the countries fuck ups?"

Ed scratches his cheek slightly. "Well.... You're going to meet them pretty soon honestly." He forces himself to make eye contact with her. "In a few weeks in fact." Her eyes widen and her face blanches slightly. His own eyes widen when he realises how that sounds. "He didn't do anything to me! He knew me when I was a kid sure, but he never did anything unethical. The most unethical thing he did was get me to enlist in the fucking military. I promise, I wasn't groomed and he isn't a predator."



Pinako analyses him for a few seconds before nodding her head in acceptance of what he's saying. "Okay. Well I think any other information can wait for now. Because you need rest, Ed."

He nods his head and picks his crutch up before they start slowly making their way back to the patient room. Thankfully Al is still asleep when he gets over to his bed. Barely even stirs when Ed lays back down next to him.

## Chapter End Notes

So I got bored the other day and made a playlist for Ed based on this fic. It's based around both canon Ed and time travel Ed so it's an odd mix of themes but it's pretty cool

Anyway Roy and Riza will be making their first appearance next chapter which will be an.... interesting interaction

# Chapter 4

## Chapter Summary

Ed explains nothing to Mustang just to fuck with him.

While also giving him life saving advice....

Mustang is \*very\* confused about who this kid is as a result.

## Chapter Notes

Real quick I just want to apologise for any email notifs about a new chapter yesterday

I accidentally posted the chapter for my other fic here, sorry about that

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

It takes a little under 3 weeks for Mustang to turn up in Resembool.

In those 3 weeks, Pinako cleans up the mess made in the Elric's basement while Ed apologises for not being able to help. Every time he tries to apologise for that she just waves him off, so when Pinako asks him during the first week whether or not there was anything the boys wanted from their house, Ed asks her to bring back some of Hohenheim's books. Preferably the ones in other languages because he never got the chance to read them in his past life as a result of burning his house down. Another thing he won't be doing again in this timeline.

When she comes back with an armful of books that night he almost leaves his wheelchair to go snatch them from her. But he knows that would only end in her lecturing him, so he waits for her to place them on the table. Where he immediately scoops up the closest one and opens it to the first page. Al comes over in a change of clothes a few minutes later to read over his shoulder. Al may have been the only one to ask for clean clothes, but Ed wants the knowledge locked away in these books. He has his priorities in order alright? They just might not be in the the right order for anyone else.

Al spends all of 5 minutes trying to make any sense of the symbols on the page before giving up with a groan of confusion. "How are you reading that? There's no way any of that makes sense to you." Ed doesn't respond for a few seconds, too busy devouring the words on the page. When Al realises his brother isn't listening, he slaps him on the arm. Ed shoots his head up to look up at his brother. "Teach me to read that stuff."

Ed looks down at the book in his hands for a few seconds. Ed had an easier time learning languages than Al (he assumes it was because of all his trips through the Gate leaving lasting knowledge in his head) but Ed has never been all that great at explaining things he knows. Often times he just *knows* them, even before the Gate there were basic things he understood about Alchemy that he couldn't explain but he *knew* he knew them. Instead of giving that long winded explanation, he just looks up at his brother with a deadpan expression. "Al, you know I'm a terrible teacher."

Al opens and closes his mouth a couple times to try and rebut that or find a way to get Ed to agree. After a few seconds of mimicking a fish, he gives up and picks up one of the *Amestrian* Alchemy books he asked Pinako to bring him.

The 3 weeks continue on in this fashion, with Pinako doing a quick check up on Ed's leg every couple of days just to be sure that it is healing properly.

It's mid afternoon when Mustang shows up to the Rockbell house. Just as angry as he was the last time. He doesn't get the chance to lift Ed up from his wheelchair this time though, because Ed starts speaking as soon as he pushes past Pinako to get further in to the house. "Good to see you Colonel Bastard."

That stops Roy from grabbing Ed by the collar. "I'm not a Colonel yet. How do you even know who I am?"

Ed smirks smugly. "Trade secret. Doesn't matter anyway cause you're here looking for the person that drew the Human transmutation circle on the basement of the Elric house. Well congratulations. You found him."

Roy stares down at him for a few seconds. "What did you do?"

Giving a slight shrug of his shoulders, Ed answers nonchalantly. "Tried to bring our mum back. Mine and my brothers that is is. I know you came here looking for a State Alchemist candidate, preferably one you could add to your team."

Roy blinks his eyes a few times, trying to process everything that's just been dumped on him. Ed is very glad to see that the carefully crafted expression that Mustang usually wears is slipping faster and faster. "Are you saying you want to join the Military as a State Alchemist? How old even are you?"

Ed smirks again. "Well you see that depends on who you ask. But if you were to ask most of the people in Resembool, they'd say I was twelve. And yes, once Granny deems my leg good enough to be fit with automail I'll be good to go. So I'll meet you in Central in about a year. I would say I'd be there sooner but automail recovery is a bitch."

Roy takes in a breath and lets it out slowly. "So in a years time you'll be arriving in Central to become a Dog of the Military?" Ed hums in agreement. "Very well."

As Mustang turns around to leave the house, Ed whistles to grab his attention one last time. "There are eyes all around you Mustang and not many of them are friendly. Be careful who you trust, but don't make it obvious."

Mustang turns around to face him. "Who can I trust then?"

Ed catches the second when his eyes flick to the door, worrying about whether or not he means Riza. "Hawkeye is fine. The entirety of your team are fine, they would all commit treason with you if you asked. Major Armstrong is okay, and unsurprisingly his sister and all of Briggs are good. I know you and the Snow Queen don't see eye to eye, but she's trustworthy when push comes to shove. When he notices that the concerned look in his eye hasn't dropped he realises he hasn't mentioned Hughes. "Maes is good as well of course. I don't know about the rest of his team barring Maria and Denny. There may be a few more that I don't know but those are the ones I'm absolutely certain you can trust."

Roy narrows his eyes at the child in front of him. "How do you even know all this?"

Ed shakes his head. "Not important right now. I'll explain everything to you and your team properly next year. Nothing important happens soon. Oh and Grumman! He's alright. Anyway, when you inevitably tell your team about this, make sure you sweep for bugs or wires. I'm being serious, this is a matter of life and death for you your team and anyone you care about. One last thing by the way, there's a man called Shou Tucker in Central that's dying to become a State Alchemist. I know it's kind of out of your area but he is willing to do anything to become one. Including turning his wife in to a Chimera. You can ignore this right now if you want, but if he presents a talking Chimera that only says 'I want to die' and then refuses to eat, look in to it. Because the next person he uses will be his daughter Nina." He looks up at Roy, staring at him. "I know I haven't explained how I know any of this, but you can trust me."

Staring at him for a few more seconds, Roy breaks eye contact with a short sharp nod, before turning back around. "I'll look in to it."

With that said, he leaves the room and leads Hawkeye out of the house. "How did it go Sir?"

Roy casts a quick glance back at the house over his shoulder. "We just met the new youngest State Alchemist."

Riza stares at him silently for a few seconds. "Are you sure? He looked tired, Sir. I don't know what that boy has seen, but his eyes looked tired."

Meeting Riza's gaze for the first time, Roy shakes his head. "I don't know about that. Those were the eyes of someone who escaped Hell and is willing to walk through the flames again."

Riza just stares at him as he looks away from her and continues walking forward.

## Chapter End Notes

Mustang: Who the hell is this child?

Ed: Your worst nightmare Bastard.

Al: \*long suffering sigh\* He is

# Chapter 5

## Chapter Summary

Ed starts a secret new research project and plans a trip to Dublith

## Chapter Notes

I keep forgetting when I'm writing these chapters that Al isn't the same age as Ed in this and it always throws me off for a quick second

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

Time passes quickly after Mustang's visit.

Well, it passes quickly for Ed at least.

Because a week after the visit, Pinako agrees to fit Ed with automail. So Ed is pretty much confined to the patient bed and can do nothing but sleep and read.

So for the 3 months that Pinako forces him to remain in either the bed or his wheelchair, he starts piecing together the parts of the array that Truth showed him. Because once he has all of those pieces in order, he can start figuring out the pieces he wasn't given.

Halfway through the year time frame he gave Mustang, he figures out the missing pieces for the array he needs. So he decides to find a new project to research.

Partly because he needs something to do for the next 6 months, but also because even at the end of his last go around, he needed a project. Whether that was fixing the roof of the Rockbell house, learning Xingese or whatever else. Losing his Alchemy didn't get rid of his need for knowledge, or fix the fact that his brain runs at 100 miles an hour. In fact if anything, losing Alchemy made it worse.

So he spends a week thinking of what project he could start. It doesn't take him very long to land on creating a form of water Alchemy similar to Mustang's fire Alchemy. He knows it's partly a pointless decision, after all Mustang's master spent his entire *life* creating and perfecting Flame Alchemy.

But he didn't have an extra life of knowledge and experience up his sleeve. Nor did he have a single trip through the Gate, Ed has *multiple* of those to help him, which is miles better than just the one. Because sure the Gate shows you the same thing every time you pass through it. But you lose more than most of the information. You keep bits and pieces that your brain, or

soul deem important enough to keep. But the more times you pass through the Gate, the more information you keep. Ed and Al in his last timeline hypothesised that the amount of time spent in Truth's domain didn't equvalate to passing through the Gate. Which was why, despite having spent almost 4 years on the other side, he hadn't retained as much information from the Gate as Ed had.

He spends another week not doing any research, just working out what he wants to be able to *do* with the Alchemy once it's completed.

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2 months before he leaves for Central, a week after Pinako stops glaring at him when he walks around, he asks about making a trip. "Granny. I want to take a quick trip to Dublith to visit our teacher."

Pinako was in the middle of making lunch when he asks her. She places the knife in her hand on to the counter before turning around to face him. "Edward, you're technically a grown man. If you want to go to Dublith I can't exactly stop you."

Ed rolls his eyes a little bit. "Okay yeah, but that's not why I'm asking you. Sure I'm 26 and I can make my own decisions but I'm still your patient right now. I fucked my automail around a lot last time. I went up north without northern automail, I pushed two automail recoveries in a year instead of just the one and I never rested it after I had it fixed or refitted. It fucked with my nerves a lot and made fitting automail more painful each time I mistreated it." He runs a finger along the edge where his port meets skin, satisfied when he feels no pain. "I'm not looking to fuck my leg up even more. So I'm asking for your opinion not your permission. I'm going to Central in two months no matter what. But if you say my leg isn't healed enough for the trip to Dublith right now, then I'll wait."

A few seconds pass in silence as Pinako stares at Ed. "Alright. I'll check your leg over in an hour or so, and if the swelling has gone down enough, I'll say you're good to go. So go sit down and stop aggravating the port for a bit alright? Cause the automail is still new so the rest of your leg needs to adjust to the wait."

With a few quick nods, Ed leaves the kitchen and heads back for the patient room. Silently thankful once he's sat back on the bed and his new leg isn't holding any of his weight any more.

As promised, Pinako performs a quick check-up of Ed's leg. Checking around the area of Ed's port for any tearing, swelling anything that would hint that the port or leg are too heavy for him.

She spends a good 20 minutes poking and prodding at his leg and the surrounding areas. When she's satisfied that there isn't any tearing, swelling or anything else, she steps back with a small nod. "Okay. I still want you to stay off of it as much as you can, don't think I haven't noticed how the connection is still a bit raw. But other than that, you should be alright to go to Dublith." She packs away the few things she was using to poke at the automail, before turning back to him. "Are you taking Al with you?"

Ed shrugs his shoulders. "I'll ask if he wants to come. But I'm going to tell her a run down version of what's going on and to tell her what I told Al that first morning." When Pinako raises her eyebrows at him, he nods his head solemnly. "She tried it as well. She wanted to bring back her and her husbands stillborn baby. She didn't know what we were planning to do when she taught us though if that's what you're worried about." Her eyebrows lower at that piece of information, so Ed assumes that *was* what she was worrying about. "I'll ask Al whether or not he wants to come with tonight. I'm only planning on going for a day or two, so it won't be a long trip."

Pinako stares at him for a second with a raised eyebrow. "What about those monsters you told us about? You said one of them lived in Dublith didn't you?"

In all honesty, Ed had forgotten about Greed. But maybe his impromptu trip to Dublith can help him out in the long run. It would give him a chance to test out his array on a *mostly* non-hostile Homunculus. "I did say that. But I also said that he isn't interested in Father's plan. If anything, it'll be a good way of testing out the array Truth showed me. For me to start making good on my end of our deal." Pinako just continues to stare at him, before letting out a sigh.

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As Ed said he would, he brings up his plan to Al that night. Al thinks about it for a couple of minutes before saying he'll come along. But Ed thinks Al already knew the answer anyway, he was just pretending to think about it to keep his title as the sensible Elric. Which Ed thinks is ridiculous, cause that title can't go to their mum and it isn't going to Hohenheim. It sure as *fuck* isn't going to him with all the stupid shit he does on an almost daily basis. So in reality Al doesn't need to do actual sensible shit to be the sensible Elric. He just needs to not act like his brother.

So with Pinako's clearance, he packs a small bag for him and Al on a Monday morning, a few hours before they head for the train station. The ticket officer at Resembool gives him both of the tickets to Dublith on a discount. It isn't an unusual occurrence, after all most of the trains running through Resembool are full of livestock, with only one carriage which doesn't make it the most comfortable journey. As a result, the locals get discounts on their tickets more often than not.

With tickets in hand, Ed and Al take 2 of the few available seats on the train. They sit in silence as they wait for the train to start. And as soon as it starts moving, when the train starts rumbling, he's reminded how painful it is to sit on a train with fresh automail. Because his leg *hurts*. He'd completely forgotten how much the rumbling of the train jostles the leg, pushing and pulling the port away from the leg and the metal leg away from the port.

He fights back his winces as much as he can. But every time the train stops or starts too quickly, it pulls even harder on his leg, a whine of pain rips itself from his throat. Despite his best efforts to bite them back.

Al looks over after the third noise of pain. Concern written on every line on his face. "Brother? Are you okay?" His voice is hesitant, like he knows it's a slightly stupid question, but he wants to ask it anyway.



Not wanting to concern his brother further, Ed nods his head. "I'm fine Al. The movement of the train is just making my leg a little sore. It is still basically new automail after all. I haven't been walking on it for long so it hurts a bit to have the port being moved like this."

Al stares at him with wide eyes. "If your leg is still sore than why are we going to see Teacher right now? Surely resting your leg is more important!?"

Ed shakes his head slightly. "It's fine Al. I was much harder on my leg last go around so I'll be fine. And we're going to see Teacher because she deserves to know the truth about her baby. And Greed lives close enough to Teachers shop for me to make a quick visit." Al frowns at him slightly so Ed starts talking again. "I told you that night okay? He's mostly harmless if I don't anger or intrigue him. As long as I don't draw the attention of his Chimera friends I'll be fine. And I should be able to get close enough to him to test out the array that Truth gave me."

Al stares at him for a few more seconds, before shaking his head. Ed bites back a laugh at the sight. Even as kids the first time, Al was always too responsible for his age. "I can't exactly tell you what to do Brother. And you probably wouldn't listen to me anyway."

A laugh tears itself from Ed's throat this time instead a noise of pain.

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They get to Dublith in the late afternoon. Ed is more than glad to get off the train and give his leg a few minutes of rest before they start walking to Izumi and Sig's butchers. But soon enough they start getting some odd looks from people getting off other trains. So he reckons it's time they head off.

As soon as he puts his weight back on to his metal leg, Al looks over at him in concern. "I'll be fine Al. We need to head out before people start asking where our parents are. If we can avoid Teacher throwing us on our asses when we get to her then I'll be fine. So let's go."

Al stares at him for a few seconds and his expression looks so much like their mothers that it freezes him for a second, luckily Al doesn't seem to have noticed. "Fine. But I'm carrying the suitcase." Ed opens his mouth to protest but Al promptly shuts him up by taking the suitcase and walking off. "Come on Brother. You said we needed to get going."

An innocent smile rests on the youngers face as if he *isn't* purposefully taunting his brother. "You're such a little shit Al. You know that right?" Al nods his head in agreement as Ed walks over to him. "And people call you the nice one." He shakes his head slowly, letting out a joking sigh. "You're a little devil and no one but me seems to realise it." Al looks over at his brother with a smile still on his face, happy to see that Ed seems to be distracted from the pain in his leg now.

Should only be 2 more chapters before Ed's journey to Central but it might stretch to 3

Either way it should be here soon

# Chapter 6

## Chapter Summary

Ed and Al arrive at the Curtis's house

## Chapter Notes

Izumi may be slightly OOC because I've never written her before but I tried to keep her in character

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

Despite Al's best efforts, his brother doesn't stay distracted for long, eventually the strain on his leg becomes too great to ignore and Ed is wincing after every step again.

Al continues trying to distract his brother as they walk, but it isn't enough now that Ed is back to walking on the leg. Both brothers let out a sigh of relief when the Curtis residence finally comes in to view. Ed is the one to knock on the door, and he lets out another breath of relief when Sig opens the door, not Izumi. Sig turns back in to the house after giving the 2 boys a smile each in greeting. "Izumi. The Elric boys are here."

It doesn't take long for Izumi to appear in the door. "What are you two doing here?"

Ed takes a small step towards her. "Teacher we have things to tell you. But they shouldn't be said out loud." He claps his hands together pointedly to help him get his point across.

Izumi stares at him incredulously for a few seconds before her eyes narrow and she turns in to the house. Ed takes it as the invitation it is and gestures for Al to follow him inside. Izumi is wiping blood from her lips when they get inside and so he starts the conversation without any warnings. "You didn't kill your baby." Izumi's hand pauses in its movements and he hears Sig's heavy footsteps behind him.

Al elbows him in the side almost immediately. "Tact. Brother. You can't just *say* things like that."

Ed looks over to his brother for a second before nodding. "You're right." He returns his gaze to their Teacher. "I know what you tried to do. Me and Al tried to bring our mum back. But it's impossible, our Alchemy and methods weren't wrong, Human Transmutation is just impossible."

Silent tears start dripping down her cheeks and Sig steps closer to comfort her. "How do you know what I did?"

A soft sigh leaves Ed before he answers. "Because I'm 27 years old and I dug up the body of what we thought was our mum in my last timeline."

With a heavy sigh and eye roll directed at his brother, Al speaks up. "He's telling the truth. But before you ask, no I'm not also a time traveller. I am *actually* 11 years old.

Another minute passes in silence before Izumi demands that Ed tell her everything. Considering she's a Human Sacrifice, he figures she deserves to know. So he, Al and their Teacher sit down at the table to talk while Sig returns back to the shop. Ed sticks with the same story he told Al and Winry, i.e. the truth without all the parts with him and Winry.

It takes a little under 2 hours for Ed to explain everything to her, but once his explanation is over, Izumi leans back in her chair to think. Ed is willing to give her as much time as she needs. It only takes a minute for her to start talking, but she vomits up another waterfall of blood as she opens her mouth to say anything. Ed waits patiently for her to wipe the blood away, knowing she'll be okay in a minute. Once the blood stops and has been wiped away, she tries talking again. "You want to go find one of those monsters here, with your automail freshly fitted in a twelve year old body?"

Ed falters for a second. "Well it sounds stupid when you put it like that! But yes. I know how to overpower his ability so if I can get in close enough, I'll be able to test the array Truth showed me."

Izumi stares at him for a few more seconds before giving in with a sigh. "Fine. But not today. You are going to rest that damn leg before you go *anywhere*, understand?" Ed nods his head silently so Izumi repeats herself. "*Understand?*"

Even as a 27 year old Izumi Curtis was a terrifying woman. He doesn't want to anger her in his 12 year old body. So there's only one correct response to her question. "Yes Teacher."

Sig returns to the house a few hours later, and stands by Izumi as she looks. Wiping away the blood on her mouth when she starts throwing it up again. She refuses to let Ed help with anything, forcing him to sit at the table until dinner is ready. Claiming, when he asks to help, that until he stops making stupid decisions, he is to sit at the table not allowed to help. Because she knows he doesn't like doing nothing when other people are working. But she's doing it with his best interests at heart really and he knows that. Sure, Izumi doesn't know much about automail, if anything really, but she has enough common sense to know that Ed is being harsh on his automail.

The four of them eat dinner before they send Al off to bed. Ed stays down a little longer. "Teacher, I'm going to their hideout tomorrow. But I don't want Al to come with me. So can you keep him busy until I get back?"

Izumi stares at him for a few seconds, but Sig is the one to speak up. "We can keep him occupied, but why don't you want him to go with you?"

Ed lets out a little sigh. "A few reasons. One is something I'm trying very hard to *not* label as trauma. Because the last time, I didn't find Greed. He found us when he kidnapped my brother to find out the secret of his armour body. I plan on enticing Greed in a similar way. Because Greed from my memory didn't want to attack women or children he *did* fight in the end. Both me and you. But I'm planning on using the fact that he doesn't want to attack children to give me more time to talk. I'll have to get through his henchmen first though."

A few seconds of silence pass before Izumi nods her head. "Fine. We'll keep Al busy while you go deal with this Greed. But if you get in to a fight when you're there, I will send you straight back on the train to Resembool. With a hand written note to your doctor that you're a fucking idiot. And *no*, I don't care that you're an adult. I can and will force you on to the next train out. Do you understand me?"

Not even a second passes before Ed nods his head in agreement. "Yes teacher." With that, he stands up, tucks in his chair, and starts heading for the room Al is in. He wants to get a couple hours of sleep before he heads out for the Devil's Nest. Because he's planning to get there early in the morning, hopefully way before Al wakes up. So he drops next to his brother on the bed and closes his eyes, trying to force his brain to go to sleep.

## Chapter End Notes

Sorry it took me a while to update but I've been hyper fixated on Resident Evil for a little over 2 weeks now

Like even as I'm posting this I have Resi 7 paused on my TV in front of me.

I've also been getting back in to Black Butler and Detective Conan, so y'know. My brain is full of fic ideas and it makes clinging on to any a bit more difficult.

I'll try to keep my update schedule for this as frequent as it was before cause I do adore this fic but please be patient if the updates are a lil slow sometimes

# Chapter 7

## Chapter Summary

Ed and Greed have a chat

## Chapter Notes

I tried to write the end of this chapter like 3 times but the words weren't flowing right until about an hour ago and I'm so fucking glad I finally got it finished because I'm hyped to write the next chapter

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

Ed wakes up only a few hours later, and immediately starts getting up. He moves through the spare room as quietly as possible, so as not to wake Al. When he has his boots back on, he pulls on his coat and heads out the door, making sure to lock it with the key Izumi left for him, before slipping it back through the letterbox. Dublith is a nice place, and the Curtis's live in an even nicer area, not to mention everyone is rightfully terrified by either Sig or Izumi, or both in a few cases. So *yes*, it's a slightly unnecessary precaution, but paranoia is a bitch and it gives him a small level of comfort to know that if something goes wrong he won't have the key to his teachers home on him.

Half to his surprise, the lizard Chimera who followed Greed around like a lost puppy last time, is already waiting for him in the alley outside the bar. He stares at the Chimera for a few seconds before shrugging and telling him to lead the way.

It only takes a few minutes for them to reach Greed. And Bido runs immediately over to his side. "So.... This is him? He's a pipsqueak."

Bido nods his head slowly a few times. "It-It's him." Ed interrupts their conversation with a raised eyebrow. "How exactly have I peaked your attention this time around? As far as I was aware I haven't done anything yet."

Bido claps his hands a couple times in excitement, like he wants Greed to praise him. But Greed is the one who answers his questions. "Well to be honest, you haven't exactly *done* anything. But most children don't go around having serious conversations with their teachers now do they?" Ed curses under his breath but Greed continues before he can say anything. "So when two small children slink through the streets of Dublin, well, of course I want to know what's going on. So I sent Bido here to spy on you."

A few seconds of silence pass before Ed crosses his arms defensively. "So, let me guess. You overheard my plan for you and now despite your creed against attacking children, you're going to have me killed."

A small chuckle escapes out of Greed. "Not exactly. See, my spy didn't manage to remember all of your conversation, so I need a few bits and pieces filling in."

Ed raises an eyebrow at him again. "And what's in it for me? You want all this information from me but you're not getting it for free."

Another laugh escapes Greed. "I like you boy. So I'll tell you what. You fill in the gaps for me, and I'll let you near enough to try out that scary Alchemy of yours on me."

"Boss! You can't!" Martel shouts out in protest as soon as the words are said, as if she's hoping her shouting will prevent Ed from hearing Greed's offer.

She jumps in between the 2 of them, so Ed holds his hands up in order to keep her calm. "Why the fuck would you *willingly* let me do that? Or do you not know what the array is for?"

Greed shakes his head, not even bothering to ask Martel to move out of the way. "I have an idea of what it's meant to do." Ed doesn't stop his staring so Greed lets out a groan of annoyance and continues explaining. "Really ruining my fun here. But *fine* I know that the array is supposed to turn me Human. I don't particularly want to become Human despite not hating them, but being Human means having a *Soul*. Everything in this world belongs to me, but that's the one thing I can't get my hands on."

He doesn't say anything more than that, but even that is a lot of information for Ed. After all, he spent at most an hour with the original Greed. Almost all of which was spent in a fight. But the second Greed, the one that shared Ling's body was different. He was like Envy in a few noticeable ways. Firstly neither of them hate Human's despite their status as Homunculus. Second, in the end both of them only wanted one thing, a friend. Envy was jealous of Human friendships and wanted one for themselves, while Greed desired a friend to call his own which Ed always hoped he figured out by the end. Because both Ling and himself viewed Greed as a friend.

But maybe this Greed is the same. Maybe, each time a Homunculus is reborn, it gets the same set of core beliefs, wants and desires in order to keep them out of Father. So maybe Greed really does just want a soul of his own.

Ed stands there in silence for what must be a good 5 minutes as he thinks. But eventually he does look back up at Greed. "Okay. In return for your missing information I get the chance to test my Alchemy on you."

Greed laughs, loud and violent for a couple seconds before looking back at Ed. "I like you. So ready to give me the information I want from you despite the fact that you know what I am." Greed perches on one of the crates scattered around the room and gestures for him to sit on one of the ones next to it.

Doing as Greed wants, Ed takes a seat on the nearest crate. "You're the one allowing me to use an untested Alchemy on you. If I didn't know any better I'd say you *wanted* me to use it on you."

A harsh scoff escapes Greed before his face straightens. "Enough joking. Tell me what I want to know. Firstly, how old are you exactly? Sure you look like a twelve year old but that can't be right."

Ed shakes his head a couple times. "It's not. Well I mean *technically* it is seen as my body is twelve years old. *I* however, am 28." When Greed opens his mouth to ask how that was possible, Ed just waves his hand slightly. "Time travel. Dimension travel. Timeline travel. Take your pick. Truth didn't exactly *explain* how they were sending me back to my childhood when they did it."

Greed's eyes widen infinitely. "Truth? You've spoken with Truth? The thing daddy dearest wants so desperately to obtain?" Ed nods his head. "Why did they send you back here?"

No answer comes for a couple seconds, while Ed tries to figure out what exactly he can tell Greed without making the Homunculus break their deal. After a few more seconds he ends up deciding to trust that Greed will follow his own creed and keep up his end of the deal. "They want back the Souls that make up Father and your siblings. Not to mention the thousands of Souls underneath Amestris. Before you ask, yes that's what my array is designed to do. It will remove the stolen Souls inside of you leaving you with one of your own. It will *hopefully* leave you a Human."

Greed stares at him for a few seconds. "You can't be serious? Homunculus don't have Souls. We were created from other peoples Souls. It's why no Homunculus can preform Alchemy."

Ed raises an eyebrow at Greed. "If Homunculus don't have Souls then how do you have a creed? Why will you never tell a lie? And why are we surrounded by your friends? Don't give me none of that henchmen crap either. In my last life Father killed you and eventually you came to reside in my friends body. You supposedly had your memories wiped yet Ling told me you were remembering these guys, and it was causing you so much confusion that you attacked Bradley, your newest sibling. And on account of the Alchemy front, I have a hypothesis that the reason Homunculi can't perform it isn't because they supposedly don't have a Soul. It's because they don't have a Gate. A persons Gate links them to Truth's domain and allows them to perform Alchemy, if it disappears so does that ability. That bit I actually have proof of. I sacrificed my Gate to save my little brother last time. And permanently lost my Alchemy, until I came back here and Truth gave me the Gate from my younger self."

All of the room's occupants are staring at him blankly, having gotten lost at different parts of his explanation. Heaving a sigh, he tries again in simpler terms. "You have a Soul because you have morals. You can't perform Alchemy because you were created not born. You don't have that to link with Truth."

That explanation removes the confused looks on everyone's faces. Greed is staring at Ed with an expression that he can't decipher. While Greed's friends are looking around the room from Greed to Ed to each other with an expression bordering on hope. It takes a few minutes of



silence but Greed does eventually speak. "So your Alchemy really will make me a Human? Will it stop this insatiable Greed I feel all the time?"

Ed nods his head in agreement. "Hopefully. It will remove the Souls that you were created with and leave you with the Soul you've created for yourself. By turning you Human you'll have a Gate and will most likely be able to perform Alchemy. And if I can swing it with Truth, you'll keep your shield or some semblance of it at least." A few more seconds of silence pass but Ed is finally able to decipher one of the expressions on Greed's face, fear. "Greed. It won't change who you are. It will remove the all encompassing Greed you feel all the time, but you'll still feel it. You'll be able to feel everything a human can."

Greed looks around the room at his henchmen, before making eye contact with Ed again. "Well. I can't break our deal off now can I? Come on, do whatever it is you need to do."

## Chapter End Notes

So, that lil monologue Ed has at the end abt the Homunculi is basically my own headcanon about the Homunculi and Alchemy as well as what the Gate is actually for

# Chapter 8

## Chapter Summary

Greed becomes Human

## Chapter Notes

This chapter doesn't focus much on Greed's reaction to becoming Human but he'll be coming back in the future so don't worry you'll get to see Human Greed in his glory at some point

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

Ed stares at the Homunculus for a few seconds before nodding. "Okay. Well there's a few ways I might have to do this, but we'll start with the most obvious."

Greed nods his head in approval, so Ed walks closer to him. As he stops in front of him, Ed visualises the array he needs. He's honestly not sure how well this will work, because you can't reach Truth's domain without a physical transmutation circle. But he wants to try it this way anyway, because he knows the other Homunculi won't be as calm about him possibly turning them human. With the array visualised, he claps his hands to activate it before reaching out to place his hands on Greed's shoulders.

Nothing happens for a second or two besides the ring of Alchemy and a few red sparks, so Ed assumes it hasn't worked. But as he goes to pull his hands away, he finds he can't move. Before he can start panicking about how bad this would've been if he'd tried it on a hostile Homunculus first, the floor starts sparking around him and Greed. The tell tale red and black sparks that always signify Human transmutation.

Ed lets out a silent cheer as he opens his eyes to the white void. He starts looking around for Greed, but Truth's voice reaches him before he spots the Homunculus. "Congratulations Alchemist. I gave you a broken array and yet in just a few months you have pieced it together and gotten it to work." Ed turns around to see Truth stood behind him.

Turning his head left and right, Ed still can't see Greed. "Where's Greed? The array is kind of useless if it doesn't do what I wanted it to do."

Truth grins their usual manic grin before stepping out of Ed's line of sight. Behind them, hidden somehow by Truth's body, is Greed. "What the fuck is this place?"

Ed lets out a small laugh but turns back to Truth. "So it worked, you'll take back the Souls and leave him Human?"

Truth stares at him for a few seconds before nodding their head. "That I will, Alchemist." As they speak, a brand new Gate forms from the ground up right behind Greed, and Ed lets out a silent cheer of satisfaction.

Sensing that Truth is getting ready to open their Gates and send them back, Ed starts talking again. "Truth. Is there any way that you can let the Homunculi keep their abilities. They came in handy for Father last time, and stripping them of them feels cruel. Too much like when I stripped myself of my Alchemy."

Truth stares at him for a few seconds. The man in a child's body that has always known more than he should. Has always wanted more. Always reached for what he can't touch. Looking at him now though, Truth can see the way he's mellowed out ever so slightly around the edges. He still wishes for the impossible, but he will no longer try to achieve it. He still reaches for things he believes to be far away, but he's willing to accept that he may not be able to reach them.

The contradictions between who Edward Elric was when they first met, and who he has become are vastly amusing to Truth. So much so that their smile stretches across their entire face, and laughs start escaping from their throat. They throw their arms out to the side, reminiscent of their interaction from when Edward came to give up his Alchemy in his original life. "You are an enigma Alchemist. You have changed yet you remain exactly the same." They tilt their head, which turns the wide smile just on the side of dangerous and feral. "But very well. I will leave them with their abilities in place. Make use of them as you will Alchemist."

With that, Ed's Gate opens behind him, Greed's doing the same from where he's still stood behind Truth. "Stay entertaining, Golden Sun."

Ed's eyes narrow slightly in confusion at Truth's new name for him. It's not like it's come out of nowhere, after all the mark of their deal that sits on Ed's shoulder is the Alchemical symbol for the sun, which represents gold in arrays. But it came out of nowhere, right as Ed was leaving their domain as well. So he won't have the chance to ask them about it for a while now, if he even remembers to ask about it by the time he goes back there.

He snaps back to himself in a flash still stood in The Devil's Nest, still in front of Greed. Who, upon a quick glance doesn't have his Uroboros tattoo anymore. He takes a few steps backwards in the hopes that it will make Martel look less like she's seconds away from striking out at him.

Greed takes longer to come to his senses and he takes a few glances around the room at his friends before staring down at Ed in shock. "You actually managed it? I'm a Human now?"

Ed nods his head immediately. "You are. Here." He holds his hand out, silently asking for Greed to place his own on it. "Dolcetto, could you poke one of his fingers with your sword." He looks up at the Chimera. "And I do mean poke. He's Human now so lost limbs won't regrow." The man nods and unsheathes his sword. Ed turns Greed's hand over and stretches

out one of Greed's fingers, before tapping the top of it twice. "It'll probably sting a bit, I don't know what your pain tolerance is." Greed nods his head silently, Ed understands the need for proof so he won't push for him to talk until he has it.

After a few seconds of hesitation, Dolcetto presses the blade of his sword ever so lightly in to Greed's fingertip. A small, shallow cut forms quickly and blood starts welling up to the surface. Ed wipes the first few drops away to show Greed how more bubble up to the surface almost immediately. Greed strands there in shock as he tries to heal the tiny cut. "I did get Truth to leave you with your shield. It felt too cruel to take that away from you as well." Greed looks back to him from where he was staring down at his own finger. "Try activating it. I want to know if they altered it at all or if it's exactly the same."

Greed nods his head dumbly before looking down to his forearm, staring down at it as he tries to call his shield. Ed sees the first few seconds of the transformation before it flickers out and disappears. "I can't activate it! I thought you said I still had it."

Ed holds his hands up quickly. "I did, and you do or else you wouldn't have been able to activate it at all. But it was most likely powered by the Souls swimming around inside of you. Which means you'll have to learn how to power it through your own will. It's like your own personal form of Alchemy."

Greed narrows his eyes at the supposed child in front of him. "From my understanding of it everyone has access to the same Alchemy."

Fighting an eyeroll, Ed starts explaining. "We do. We all get the same building blocks, but some people are able to use their knowledge of Alchemy to create types specific to them that they don't share with others. You've heard of the Flame Alchemist right?" Greed nods his head once. "Well his Alchemy was created by his master and there's only two people alive who know the secrets of it and only Roy can use it. That's what you have in a way now. But rather than being unique to your set of knowledge, it's unique to your body and Soul."

A few seconds of awed silence pass before Greed raises an eyebrow at Ed. "Do you have a unique Alchemy? After all kid you're a genius."

Ed laughs once before shaking his head. "That would be telling, which means it's no longer a secret." He turns around to start walking towards the door. "Keep working on that shield and I'm sure you'll get it. I need to get back to my brother." He waves a hand over his shoulder as he steps out of the door. It's silent for a few seconds before he pops his head back around. "By the way, you might want to come up with a name for yourself. Can't go around getting people to call you Greed." He starts back down the hallway and walks up towards the exit. Only stopping for a second to shout back down to the basement. "I'll keep in touch, see how you're adapting to humanity." With that he leaves the backstreets and walks towards his teachers house.

Don't mind Truth's nickname for Ed

I have a slight headcanon that Truth has a bunch of names for Ed (half of them are rude or something about how often he winds up on the other side of the Gate) this just happens to be one of my favourites

# Chapter 9

## Chapter Summary

Ed reveals some of his unlabelled trauma to Izumi

## Chapter Notes

Again I've never written Izumi before but I'm trying really hard to keep her in character

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

Since he pushed the key back through their letterbox on his way out, Ed has to knock on the door and hope that one of them is up yet. He didn't quite realise how early he'd left until he got back to the Curtis's house and realised that none of the lights are on.

Considering that there isn't any lights on in the house and the shop isn't open either, it isn't even 6 in the morning yet. Which, yeah okay, that probably helped tip Greed off to the fact that Ed isn't actually a child. Because what fucking child is awake at this time, never mind functional enough to be making deals and explaining scientific concepts. He knocks on the front door in the hopes that either Sig or Izumi is awake yet. Luckily, he can hear footsteps from inside the house walking towards the door. Unluckily, the steps are too light to be Sig, and too fast to be Izumi. Which means that the person behind the door right now is Al. Which means an argument is almost certainly on the horizon. Which sucks because Ed is *far* too tired right now to be arguing with his little brother.

So what happens next is a surprise. Al being the one at the door isn't, as Ed already knew who'd be opening the door. No, the surprise is the fact that Al doesn't immediately start yelling at Ed. Instead of doing that, he launches himself at his brother, knocking them both to the floor. "Brother! Do you have any idea how worried I was when I woke up and you were nowhere to be found?!"

Ed looks at his brother sheepishly. "I'm sorry Al. I didn't think my not being there would scare you. But I'm okay. I went to speak to Greed and try out that array. But could you get up? That fall jostled my automail real bad."

That forces Al into motion and he scrambles off of his brother. "You tested the array? Did it work? Is Greed Human now?"

A chuckle bubbles up from Ed's throat at Al's enthusiasm, but he nods none the less. "Yes, yes and yes. I tested it, it worked and Greed is Human now. I've started to uphold my end of

the deal now. Which is great. I know how the array works and I should be okay to use it in combat with a single Homunculus."

Al raises an eyebrow at the wording. "A *single* Homunculus? What do you mean by that?"

Ed rubs the part of his leg where flesh meets metal in hopes of easing some of the pain flaring up in it. "Well, activating the array seems to freeze me in place along with who I'm targeting with it. So if I was in a fight with *just* a Homunculus, with no other enemies, I would be an easy kill. Unless I was surrounded by allies who can protect me. I don't think we stay in this world the whole time the Gate is being built though. Because as just as I was about to call it a lost cause, the red and black sparks of Human Transmutation started appearing around my and Greed's feet as if we were actually stood inside an array."

Al nods his head in understanding, before standing up, offering an arm down to his brother. "Well then all I need to do is make sure you don't have to face them alone." Ed smiles at his brothers offer for help but part of him winces and cries in anguish at the comment. Both lifetimes now, he's forced his brother to grow up too fast. The first time by trapping in a suit of armour that couldn't feel affection and dragging him around Amestris in order to fix him. The second by unloading too much information on him. He tries to hold back the physical wince, but Al sees it anyway. Luckily for Ed, he just assumes it's from the pain of putting weight on his automail.

Izumi forces them to wait until the next day to get on the train, so that Ed will have time for his leg to stop hurting. So he takes advantage of the situation and goes to their teacher that night, again without Al. The 2 sit at the dining table after the moon rises once Al has gone to bed.

His teacher stares at him in silence, knowing that he'll break his self imposed silence at some point, she's content to wait it out. After 2 whole minutes of silence and a couple deep breaths, Ed looks up at her with a question she both would and wouldn't expect to come from her eldest student. "Teacher, do you think I'm a bad brother?"

A few more beats of silence pass as Izumi works through her initial questions, such as 'what the hell brought this on?' Instead, she talks calmly, something she doesn't do often around the Elrics as they're both too hard headed for their own good. "Edward, I don't think you're a bad brother at all. I'm sure Alphonse doesn't either. But what brought this thought on? More of that trauma that you're trying not to label?"

That forces a small laugh out of Ed, because she's kind of right. He remembers vividly how hard he tried to keep Al happy once he finally got his body back. If Al wanted to do something, Ed did it. While Al was recovering, if he wanted to eat something, Ed would find it for him and sneak it in to the hospital. He was always terrified of being the reason that Al's life was ruined again, so he tried so hard to give Al everything he wanted and deserved. "I suppose that's true. I just, I've ruined my brothers childhood *twice* and both times it was entirely my fault. I ruined it last time by coercing him in to trying Human Transmutation and then trapping his Soul in that cursed suit of armour. I ruined it this time by telling Al the truth about me, why I'm here and what will happen if we fail." He takes a deep breath and stares down at the table for a few solid seconds. "He's barely eleven. He's not even a teenager and yet already he knows more about the truth of this country than the adults that will help me

save it. Al deserves so much more. He deserves a brother that doesn't ruin his childhood. Deserves to get to *be* a child. Yet I've stolen it from him again. That isn't something a good brother would do."

Izumi stares at her student as he sits before her. The exhaustion she's feeling from him should look out of place or strange on a child, but on Ed it just feels natural. Like it's always been there. The sight forces Izumi to wonder when the last time was that Ed was taken care of outside of his automail check-ups. When the last time was that someone saw the exhaustion written in every line of his body and decided to give him a rest. Or at least tried to. A distant part of Izumi recognises that that probably hasn't happened in a long time, or ever. Because most likely, no one has ever seen the exhaustion for long enough to get him to rest. Because Edward is stubborn, he hates people taking care of him and because of this he's learnt how to mask his pain. Granted he's being vocal with the pain his automail is giving him, but he isn't saying anything about himself. How *tired* he must be already of knowing that if he slips up a single time, lets his hand show just an inch too much then everything is over. The enemy will know everything and Ed's plan is torn to pieces.

"Edward. Alphonse loves you. Even if you think that you're a bad brother everything you've done, you've done with his best interests at heart. I think that you're an amazing brother, Al thinks so as well. Everyone who knows you knows how much you care about your brother." Ed just stares at her for a few seconds. Which she understands, she isn't usually this sweet on the boys. Telling them exactly what she thinks and whatever she thinks they need to hear. But she doesn't think that would help right now, in fact such a heavy handed technique might have an adverse affect. "You should get some sleep Ed. You look tired." She knows that Ed will understand what she means. Will know that she's seen the exhaustion.

But unlike what she expects him to do, he just nods his head. "I think I will. Night Teacher." Izumi bids him goodnight as he walks off to the spare room where Al is currently sleeping.

When the next morning comes, Ed and Al are getting ready to head back to Resembool. Izumi is a little hesitant to let them go so soon, after all she knows that Ed's leg is still hurting from the journey here and Al jumping on him yesterday made the pain flare up again. But there isn't anything she can do to keep them here, so instead she and Sig send them off in the afternoon, after making sure that both of the brothers have eaten something.

Ed tries his best to ignore the pain radiating from his leg. Because as it did on the train to Dublith, the movement pulls the port and leg away from his flesh. They won't reach Resembool until the early evening, so Ed settles himself in to an uncomfortable, slightly painful few hours.

Because it's not like it's the worst pain he's ever felt, not even close considering he's lost 3 limbs and been impaled through multiple organs. So it's not unbearable and probably doesn't even reach the middle of the chart of painful things Ed has experienced. But it's *constant*. For as long as they're on the train his leg will be jostled and jolted without much pause. Which is more than he can say for his usual, quicker more intense feelings of pain.

It's not a stretch to say that Ed is relieved when their stop finally arrives and he can leave the train. Al can't help a small laugh at his brothers eagerness to get off the train.



Pinako is still awake when the 2 of them arrive at the Rockbell house. With warm food waiting for them and a promise to check on Ed's automail once they've eaten. "Thanks Granny."

Al looks over to her as well, with a small smile of thanks. "You should check brother's port. He said it was getting pulled away from his leg while we were on the train."

Ed turns to look at his brother with a look of betrayal on his face. "Al! How could you betray me like this!"

Al just sticks his tongue out as Pinako shakes her head at the both of them. "Thank you for telling me Al. I'll be sure to have a look at it once you've both eaten." Al smiles brightly at her before tucking in to his food. Ed rolls his eyes jokingly at his brother before doing the same.

## Chapter End Notes

Roy makes his reappearance next chapter!

I'd also just like to say thank you for all the kudos and comments. It really does make my day to know that people are enjoying this story with me

# Chapter 10

## Chapter Summary

Ed arrives in Central

## Chapter Notes

This chapter was going to come out like a week ago but despite the fact that I really *\*wanted\** to write this I just couldn't get any words down for it

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

A week before Ed's departure date to Central, he sends a letter out to let Mustang know that he's coming. Al wants to go to Central with him, doesn't want to have to wait behind in Resembool. But Ed doesn't want him to go. Al didn't go with him last time and he doesn't want him coming this time either. Because he doesn't want Bradley, Father and the rest of the military to know about his little brother just yet.

The only reason Al agreed to stay behind was because Ed promised that he isn't expecting Al to live in Resembool for the next few years. He isn't going to abandon him, he just doesn't want to bring Al in to the whole military mess again. Because while Ed was the only State Alchemist last time, Al was far too close to the military last time for Ed's liking. Things are likely to be much more risky this time around because Ed is going to turn the Homunculi in to Humans. He knows what has to happen, he knows the plans, but he's purposefully going against it. So barring team Mustang (and the Hughes family) Ed doesn't want Al near any military members. If they don't know he exists, they can't leverage him as a bargaining chip like they did last time with Winry.

More of that trauma coming back to bite him, but if it keeps Al safe then Ed doesn't care. Speaking of that trauma, Al seems to have caught on to the fact that Ed has trauma. But thankfully, he doesn't quite seem to realise *what* it is. Which is a small blessing but a blessing none the less.

So when it came time for Ed to head out for Central, Al only waved his brother off with a smile. No complaints or augments. Just a hug and a reminder for him to stay safe. As well as to not piss off the Fuhrer and other Homunculi already.

His brother knows him so well. It's heart warming. And slightly worrying.

The train doesn't hurt his leg nearly as much this time. It's still a little uncomfortable but it doesn't cause him any pain. So he's able to ignore it long enough to fall asleep.

As he makes himself as comfortable as possible on the uncomfortable train seats, he spots a familiar face on a seat a few rows down from him. He should have expected Mustang to send one of his team on to this train. Whether to watch over him or to keep an eye on him he isn't too sure right now. But Breda doesn't seem to look too unnerved or anything of the sort whenever he looks over at him, so Ed assumes it's the former.

When he gets off the train at Central, he sees Hawkeye stood beside one of the benches just within view of the platform. Breda stands up a few seconds after Ed does and it makes him chuckle to himself. He doesn't say anything to Breda though, just walks over to Hawkeye. "Hello Lieutenant. Good to see you again." Hawkeye just raises an eyebrow at him before looking over his shoulder, to where he assumes Breda is. Following her gaze he turns around to wave at the man. "Hey Breda. Good to see you again too."

Breda just stares at him incredulously for a few seconds. "So you noticed I was following you?"

Ed just nods his head. "Yeah. I can sense people to a degree. But I have a knack for it when they're staring, following me or have intent to hurt me." He pauses for a few seconds, remembering Kimblee's dirty trick in the mines. "Most of the time, sometimes things slip past me." He tacks on at the end. "Plus, I recognised you on the train, which definitely helped. There was no way you just *happened* to be there because no one but locals get on the train out of Resembool, cause no one has any need to go there. So it wasn't a stretch to figure out Colonel Bastard sent you to keep an eye on me."

The man just stares at him for a few seconds before letting out a breath. "You sure you wanna sign up kid? You seem intelligent, I doubt you need to join for any reason."

Hawkeye nods her head slightly. "I agree. I understand that Colonel Mustang sees something in you, but surely you don't need to join the military, at least not so young." Ed feels a few seconds of satisfaction at the title she used for Mustang. Colonel was his nickname for Mustang for so long that it ended up sticking, getting swapped out for Fuhrer Bastard every now and then in the few weeks of his promotion before the time travel. But then the rest of her sentence registers in his head and he suddenly feels a bit bad. Because sure, it wasn't obvious and he only figured it out with the knowledge of hindsight many years after he lost his Alchemy. But Riza had always had a soft spot for Ed and Al. Maybe it was because she felt bad for them (even though she never let that show, none of them did really which he was always incredibly grateful for). He never thanked the other Riza for that, even after he had figured it out. He could just never figure out how to bring the topic up. "Look, this isn't the place to talk about this, but trust me. I do need to join the military, I know what I'm getting myself into."

Getting the feeling that Ed won't be explaining more anytime soon, Hawkeye leads the 2 out the train station towards where she parked her car. Ed throws his suitcase in to the trunk when she opens it for him before jumping in to the back of the car, leaving space for Breda in case he doesn't sit in the front beside Hawkeye.

The car ride from the train station to central command, only takes 20 minutes. But the ride is silent and borderline uncomfortable. Because Breda clearly wants to ask Ed more questions but knows that he won't get any answers yet. But his want to ask more questions is making the atmosphere tenser by the second. In an effort to bring the tension down a bit, Ed speaks up for the first time since getting in the car. "I owe Colonel Bastard an explanation first before I answer any big questions, but I'll answer some smaller questions."

Breda looks at him through the rear-view mirror. "Can you tell us how old you are?"

Ed shakes his head. "I could but I wouldn't be telling the truth. When Mustang gets his owed explanation I'll tell you the truth."

Before Breda can ask another question, Hawkeye speaks up from the drivers seat. "You told the Colonel about Shou Tucker correct?"

His head snaps over to look at Hawkeye, while Breda just watches the 2 curiously. "I did why? Is Nina okay?"

Hawkeye nods her head, not taking her eyes off of the road. "She's okay, the Colonel wanted me to tell you that she's okay. But it was too late to save her mother. By the time we got permission to investigate his home, he had already started his experiment."

Ed nods his head slowly, he obviously never met Nina's mother, so he's upset he didn't manage to save her this time, but he's more upset about the fact that Nina lost her mother again. "Wait, if her mum is gone then where is Nina living?"

Hawkeye takes her eyes off of the road for a few seconds to look over at Ed through the mirror. "She's been living with the Hughes's family for a couple of months now." Ed feels himself relax with that knowledge.

He knows Maes and Gracia would give her a good home. "Don't they have a baby on the way? Or has she already been born?"

Breda speaks up this time, unable to stay quiet for much longer. "Gracia gave birth a few weeks ago. She was nearing the end of her pregnancy when they agreed to adopt Nina."

The car falls in to silence again, but it isn't tense like last time. Even if it is, Ed can't tell because he's too busy feeling relieved that he managed to save Nina this time. He had never forgiven himself for that last time.

When they finally arrive in central command, Mustang is in the outer office for a change. "Lieutenants, thank you for collecting him from the train station." Breda gives a salute before going to sit at his desk, while Hawkeye remains at attention beside Ed.

Ed speaks up before Mustang can say anything else. "Thank you. For saving Nina. I know I didn't exactly give you much cause to believe me, but thank you." He bows his head ever so slightly in thanks. It isn't an Amestrian gesture but it's used in Xing often to convey gratitude, Amestris doesn't have such gestures but he wanted to make Mustang understand how much his help means.

Mustang stares at Edward for a few seconds before nodding his head. "You're welcome. I'm glad you told me about it. I do believe I was promised an explanation though. Your exam isn't until tomorrow so we have time." Ed taps his ear twice, silently asking Mustang if they've checked the office for bugs. Mustang turns to Fuery and taps the side of his wrist. No one in the room breathes as Fuery runs a sweep of the room.

When he turns back to Mustang a minute or so later with a smile, Ed lets out a sigh of relief. "We're all clear, Colonel."

Ed turns from Fuery to Mustang. "Then yes, I owe you an explanation." He turns to face Breda, who's still sat at his desk. "In order to answer your question from the car, I'm 28." The room falls silent which causes Ed to chuckle slightly. "Alright, fine. My *body* is that of a 12 year olds. But my actual age is 28." He takes a deep breath and turns back to Mustang. "What you're about to hear will make me sound like I'm insane. But everything I'm about to tell you is the truth."

It takes a little over an hour for Ed to have the basic information out in the open. The basic information being, the time travel, the Homunculi and the Promised day. He also briefly touches on his deal with Truth while he explains the Homunculi. Once everything major has been explained, he stops and allows them to ask questions on anything they want clarified or more information about.

Most of the questions are basic and easy to answer. If they're about him, he'll steer the topic away ever so slightly, if it's about his brother he'll answer but with a warning that he doesn't want the military to know about him. The questions about Ed's or anyone else's future he just straight up tells them he won't answer it. So for a few minutes or so, Breda, Fuery and Havoc ask basic, mostly easy to answer questions. But leave it to Mustang to ask a question that, while it does need answering, Ed can't do so alone. "What would you have me tell Maes?" Ed turns to look at him, a sombre expression falling on his face. "At some point he will ask me why I thought it a good idea to bring a child in to the military. And as you are well aware, if he isn't happy with my answer, he will go digging."

Ed stares at Mustang for a few seconds, after all it isn't exactly his place to decide what Mustang tells his best friend. Except that it is, because his knowledge is the only thing that will keep this all from going sideways. And part of the reason Ed came back was so he could save the people he failed last time, so although Maes doesn't know Ed yet, this is his responsibility. "I want to tell him the truth. Maes is intelligent and will most likely know if something is up. He got caught last time for investigating Amestris's conflicts and finding out about the massive transmutation circle. As far as I'm aware, he hadn't tied it back to the brass yet when Lust went after him." He keeps his eye contact with Mustang as he talks despite how much he wants to look away because this is *important* and he *needs* Mustang to be listening to him. "If we tell him anything but the truth, he'll figure out that something is off and will start sniffing around. If we tell him now, straight out the gate, he'll know not to look too closely in to what Bradley and the brass are doing."

Mustang stares at Ed for a few seconds before nodding and turning to look at Hawkeye. Ed breathes an internal sigh of relief at the broken eye contact. "Maes doesn't have enough room to house one more person, so you'll be put up in a hotel tonight, but I'm sure I can find a way

to let slip that there's a child trying out to become a State Alchemist." Mustang turns back to look at Ed again. "Speaking of, what are you planning on doing tomorrow during your practical?"

Ed opens his mouth to speak before faltering, he can't exactly go about this like he did last time when he was a naïve brat. "I don't know. I can't do what I did last time, because last time I transmuted a spear and attacked Bradley with it. I'm not sure how much of my hand I want to show them. I'm thinking, at the moment that it might be enough to hint at my relationship to Hohenheim. Who before you ask is my and my brothers bastard of a dad and the only survivor of Xerxes. But like I said I don't know yet. I'll probably just wing it once I get in there and deal with the consequences when they appear."

Mustang stares at Ed in disbelief before shaking his head and leading him to the door. "I'll take you to the closest hotel, follow me." Ed nods his head and follows after him as he leaves the office.

## Chapter End Notes

The exam is up next and Ed will finally receive his new moniker (that I've totally decided on.... whoops)

# Chapter 11

## Chapter Summary

Ed gets his new moniker

## Chapter Notes

It's been so \*humid\* the last few days and the heat has fried my brain

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

One of Mustang's team must have gone to tell him the news, because by the time Roy and Ed make it to the closest hotel, Maes is walking through the lobby behind them. "Roy, were you not going to tell me you got a child to try out for the military?"

Roy looks down at Ed, about to ask him what he wants to do, but he finds that Ed is already opening his mouth. "Do you have any pictures of Nina?" Usually Roy would warn people against *asking* to see Maes's pictures, but he assumes Ed knows what he's getting himself in to and is okay with the ensuing rant.

Maes stares down at Ed in shock before lifting his head slightly to look at Roy, who just minutely shakes his head. Silently telling him not to ask about it right now. Understanding what Roy is telling him, he looks back down at Ed. He makes a show of checking his coat pockets before answering, before shaking his head. "Sorry. I don't have them on me right now." Lie. He always has pictures of his girls on him, the child seems to know this, based on the subtle eyebrow raise, but he doesn't call him out on it. "Tell you what. You get checked in and put your stuff in your room and we can go over to my house to meet her okay?"

Ed nods his head before looking down at the number on his room key. Without a second of hesitation he walks up towards the stairs after throwing a signal over his hand towards Mustang. A military signal. Maes sneaks a look over at Roy to see if he's ready to talk yet. But he sees that, no, he won't be getting any answers yet. So the 2 wait by the check in desk for Ed to walk back down the stairs.

A 5 minute wait later, and Ed reappears back in the lobby. "I don't know if whichever of his team told you this, but my name is Edward Elric."

Maes turns from Roy to look over at Ed. "They didn't. I was told your name was Ed and that was about it. It's nice to meet you Ed, my name's Maes Hughes."

Ed nods his head and starts walking towards the main doors. "I know." Roy snorts slightly before following the golden figure out in to the streets of Central.

The walk to Maes's home is quiet as Maes tries to figure out who this boy is. He has a few ideas by the time they make it to his house, but he'll keep them to himself for now, because he did promise that Ed could see Nina. So instead of finally asking Mustang who the hell this child is, he walks further in to the house and announces to Gracia that they have visitors. "Gracia! Roy's here!"

Gracia walks out of the kitchen with Elicia balanced on her hip and Nina walking behind her, holding a small stuffed animal. "Welcome home, dear." She turns to face Roy, not having spotted Ed yet. "It's nice to see you Roy." Roy returns the greeting before turning down to look at Ed.

The movement draws Gracia's attention to Ed. "Maes, Roy. Who is this child?"

Ed speaks up to prevent either Roy or Maes getting chewed out by Gracia. She seems like a woman who can really put someone in their place. "I'm Edward Elric. I'm trying out to become a State Alchemist tomorrow." Gracia turns her head from Edward to Roy with a glare as Nina leaves the safety of Gracia's shadow to walk over to Ed.

"Ed....ward? Are you a friend of Mr Mustang?" Ed flinches slightly as she calls out to him.

He hides it spectacularly in his opinion. "In a way yeah." He kneels down in front of her. "You can call me Ed okay? Because you're special." He gestures down at her toy. "What's this guy called?"

Nina looks down at the toy in her arms. "I don't know. I haven't thought of a good name yet."

Ed hesitates for a second before speaking again. "What about Alexander? A good name for such a precious toy."

Nina looks down at her toy with a curious look. She stares at it for a few seconds before looking up at Ed with a smile and a few quick nods. "Alexander." She turns the toy around so it's face to face with her. "I like it."

A few more minutes pass before Ed decides Maes is overdue for an explanation so he, says a quick goodbye to Elicia before standing up and looking over at Maes. "I assume you want an explanation right?" Maes just nods his head and leads Ed and Roy to his study at the back of the house.

The next hour or so is spent explaining everything to Hughes, while Ed drives home how important it is that Maes doesn't start poking around in places he shouldn't be. Maes refuses to accept that at the start because it's part of his *job* to stick his nose in to other people's business. And that was how he saved Nina from her father.

Ed snaps at the mention of Nina. "No it isn't!" Maes's eyes widen as Ed starts shouting. "You only knew to look for Nina because of me! Because *I* knew what that bastard would end up doing to her if she stayed with him. You know how I know that? Because she *died*. The last



time I saw Nina she was a Chimera, she had been fused with the dog Tucker bought her to keep her out of sight. I was too late to save her last time. I wasn't quick enough to put the pieces together in time, I only figured it out *after* she had been turned when she couldn't be turned back. I was 13 when that happened. That shit stuck with me for the rest of my life, I named my daughter after her!" Maes opens his mouth to apologise, because he knows Ed is right. He *is* the reason they were able to save Nina, because he had the foresight to tell Roy about her. But Ed isn't done yelling at him yet. "And before you admit that I'm right about that, because I *know* that I am. I want you to know that *you* died in my last life too. Which was *also* my fault because *I* was the one to tell you about the Homunculus. You went snooping and you got killed. I wasn't even *told* that you were killed because *this one* seemed it fit to lie to me about it." He points a finger at Mustang. "Not just that! Your death nearly drove him over the edge. He burnt out one of the Homunculi's stone because he *thought* she was the one that killed you. When he found out which one *did* kill you, he burnt out their tongue *multiple times* because he got lost in his fury. Hawkeye couldn't or wouldn't pull him out of his rage so *I* had to be the one to do it. If you die on me again because you wouldn't *listen* to me. I will pull *your* Soul back through the Gate this time and *keep you here* until you apologise to me, Gracia and your two daughters."

A few harsh breaths escape Ed after his rant. But before either Roy or Maes can do anything to placate him, he opens his mouth to speak again. "Sorry. I haven't had an outburst like that in years I just.... I don't want to fail you again. If I let a single one of the people who died last time die this time, then I'll never forgive myself. What's the point of doing this all again if I'm just going to let you die. I might as well just complete my deal with Truth and then live out the rest of my life like Hohenheim did. Like a fucking ghost that never interacts with anyone more than is strictly necessary."

Maes places a hand on Ed's shoulder. "You don't need to apologise, you're right. I don't understand what these monsters are or how dangerous. You do. You've already survived them. I won't look in to anything okay? I just ask that you keep me updated so I don't feel the *need* to."

Ed nods his head slowly. "Okay. Okay I can do that. I'm going to head back to the hotel. I still need to figure out what to show Bradley tomorrow."

Maes accepts and leads Ed to the front door. "Edward." He turns his head slightly to look at Roy. "What was your moniker last time?"

Ed casts a glance down at his arm before looking back up at Roy. "If I survive this whole ordeal, maybe I'll tell you." With that he opens the door and walks out in to the early evening streets of Central.

Once Ed makes it back to his hotel room, Ed spends the rest of the night thinking out a plan for tomorrow. He could *technically* attack Bradley again. But he doesn't think his body would be any match for him right now. Which gets him to make a note to talk to Teacher about some sparring training. Or Riza, or Scar if he can get him on side quick enough. Maybe even Greed, he was a hell of a fighter last time. But he scratches that idea out quickly, from his last contact with the former Homunculus, he's only just starting to get a hold back on his powers, he doesn't want to distract him from that.

When morning arrives, Ed still only has a vague plan of action for his practical test in front of Bradley. When he meets up with Mustang the man asks him if he has an idea of what he's going to do yet. So of course Ed lies and says he does.

The test they had him sit was even easier than it was last time and he's done in an hour and a half, cutting his original time in to pieces. The last time he sat that exam it took him almost 3 hours. Which if he remembers correctly was still *far* too fast for a child to complete it, if they were even meant to be able to at all. Roy is still waiting for him outside the exam hall and is staring at him with a small amount of fear. Ed just grins at him, so Roy clears his throat and starts talking. "What are you going to do about the physical exam? Won't they ask about your tattoo? The sign you got from 'Truth'?"

Ed snorts at the finger quotes and tone Roy uses whenever he mentions Truth. He's never called Ed out on their existence, because well, *something* clearly allowed Ed to travel back in time but apparently Roy still has trouble believing that it was a God. Or as close to one as one can be without *being* a God. "So you *did* have a brain by this point." Roy just stares at him in annoyance which causes Ed to snicker. "Okay fine. I'm just gonna lie. I mean the mark is the symbol for the sun, and have you taken a *single* look at me? I'm literally a child of Xerxes. I'll just say it was an ancient Xerexian tradition that my parents wanted to uphold since the colouring came through so strong through 'all the generations'. There's only two people alive that could prove me wrong, one was in a flask and wouldn't know and the other was a slave and probably wouldn't know. So you know, it's pretty safe."

Roy just shakes his head in dismay as they walk towards the room for the physical examination. "Well, have fun. Shouldn't take long but we're going straight to the examination hall after this." Ed nods his head in understanding before opening the door.

The physical really doesn't take long. He takes his shirt off as he did last time, before pulling up the leg of his pants to show them his automail. They ask him about his tattoo and he immediately feeds them the lie he formed out in the corridor. They accept it quickly and wave him out after checking that he doesn't have any other tattoos or injuries

He shrugs his jacket back on as he opens the door out in to the hall. Roy nods his head in acknowledgment before starting down the hallway towards the practical room. He points his finger at the double doors before walking up the stairs so he can watch from the balcony. Ed lets watches him leave for a second before opening the doors.

As Ed walks over to the spot in between the 2 guards, he forces himself to decide on a plan. He has a couple pieces of chalk wrapped in his pocket for the possibility that he didn't want to show of his no array Alchemy.

He makes his decision in the split second it takes for the guard to ask him if he had anything to draw arrays with. He just nods his head and pulls out the pieces of chalk. He draws a circle on to the ground and crouches down in front of it. He claps his hands and touches them to the circle before standing up to guide the creation of the spear properly. Partly for show, but also partly because what he wants to create will need some concentration so he doesn't get distracted and create the original symbol.

What he draws from the ground of the examination room is an ornamental spear or more accurately a staff. The base of the staff is solid, which splits out in to a Flamel. Instead of the detached crown and wings that usually finish it off, he's created the ouroboros at the top of spear, but instead of the star in the middle he instead formed the Alchemical symbol for the sun. Bradley stares at Ed for a second, assessing him. Ed holds the staff out in front of him, spins it 3 times and bangs it on the middle of his array. The motion activates the array again and the staff melts away in to the floor. The array glows as it melts in to the floor as Ed keeps it active the whole time, focusing to make sure he doesn't leave any transmutation marks on the floor.

Bradley stares at Ed in concentration, and Ed makes sure to match his stare. "You're talented for such a young child."

Ed nods his head, still refusing to break eye contact with him. "Thank you." He thinks for a second whether being snarky is worth it, before checking himself and remembering it's basically *always* worth it. So he adds on at the end. "I've been surrounded by Alchemy since I was barely five. It's in my blood."

The Fuhrer raises an eyebrow before stepping down off of his pedestal and walks towards the small hallway followed by his 2 guards. "I'm expecting big things from you, Elric."

After waiting for Bradley to leave the hall, Ed turns around and heads for the double doors behind him. Roy is already there waiting for him, and turns to lead them towards his office.

They wait there for a few hours for Ed's pocket watch to be delivered there. It's not a shock to Ed when Bradley himself comes to deliver it. "I thought I could make the trip myself, in order to congratulate the youngest ever state Alchemist." Bradley holds out the box containing his watch (read; leash) and a rolled up piece of paper. Once they've been handed over, Bradley bids Mustang farewell. He stops at the door for a second to look back over at them. "I heard you have a tattoo in celebration of your Xerexian colouring but I must admit, I am surprised to see the colour come out so strongly after so many generations."

Ed raises an eyebrow at him, against what would be most people's better judgement. "Yeah, well my parents were certainly pleased to see it before they died. But I'm sure you know how genetics work, Fuhrer Bradley, certain genes can go unseen in family trees for decades before popping up in one child." Bradley stares at him again before turning away and finally leaving the room.

Ed wastes no time in throwing his watch to the other side of the couch he's sat on before unrolling the parchment. He skips the entire thing, already knowing what it says, to look down at his new moniker. He lets out a sharp laugh once he's seen it. "What is it?"

Roy looks over at him from where he's resting against his desk. Ed lets out a few more laughs before answering. "Bradley still has a sick sense of humour."

When Roy just raises an eyebrow at him in question, Ed throws the paper over to him.

"Shining blood."

## Chapter End Notes

Quick warning that I'm not currently 100% sold on his title (I may no longer feel like this in like a day) so it may change.

It probably won't because even as I'm posting this I'm growing fonder of the name but I thought I should give you a heads up just in case

# Chapter 12

## Chapter Summary

Ed goes back to Resembool to get his brother

## Chapter Notes

Shining has grown on me a lot so it's no longer in danger of being changed

Also I know not a lot really \*happens\* in this chapter but it's all stuff that I needed to happen before the story continues so this is basically a chapter just for world building (or house keeping whatever you wanna call it really)

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

Mustang stares down at the paper for a few seconds before letting out a disbelieving laugh. "It could certainly be worse."

Ed thinks about all the other State Alchemists titles, including his old one, before nodding his head with a small laugh. "Yeah, it could be worse." He opens his mouth to say more before realising they haven't swept this room yet and Bradley could *absolutely* still be waiting outside the door. Or Envy in disguise. So he changes what he was about to ask. "So what do we do now?" He nods his head towards the door, silently telling Mustang to be careful in case Bradley is still out there.

Mustang catches on almost instantly. "Well. I suppose we could go back to Maes's house. You don't start active duty for a few days."

Ed nods his head and stands up, not before shoving his watch in to his pocket. He needs to go back to Resembool to figure out what to do with Al but before he can do that, they need to be away from any possible listening devices or eavesdroppers. So to Maes's house it is. The car ride back to the Hughes household is quiet but not uncomfortably so. When they get in to Maes's house he greets Gracia, Nina and Elicia, before turning to face Roy and Maes. "I need to bring my brother here. The only way I got him to let me come without trying to sign up himself was to promise him that I wouldn't keep him in Resembool for the next three years." He looks over at Roy individually. "But I can't put him in any of the places pretty much dedicated for State Alchemists because I don't want him any where near the military. The closest I'm okay with him getting is your team and Maes. I need somewhere safe for him."

Maes speaks up before Roy can come up with an answer. "He can stay with us." Ed's head snaps over to him and he opens his mouth to protest. "I'd have to talk it over with Gracia first, and make sure Nina is okay with it, but she and Elicia can share and that frees up our last room."

Almost immediately Ed starts shaking his head. "I can't ask you to do that. You don't even know my brother and we haven't told Gracia much about any of this."

Maes nods his head solemnly. "You're right. But where else would be safe for him? Like you've said any military ran housing is out of the question, so unless you want him to live on the streets for three years, this is the best option. As for Gracia not knowing anything, that has a simple fix of telling her."

A second a silence passes before Ed's mouth drops open. "Do you know how dangerous that is? If you tell her she'll be looking over her shoulder for three years, she'll live in fear for her children's lives and she'll be scared of her own shadow. If you tell her she can never slip up. One slip up in the wrong place, just one, would doom her."

Roy, who has kept silent this whole time, just moving his head to and fro as he listens to both of their arguments, finally speaks up. "You told her though didn't you? You went to her and told her the truth after Envy kills him."

Ed just stares up at him. "I did, but in case you missed that part of your own sentence I did that *after* he had *died* because she deserved to know the truth about her husbands death."

Someone clears their throat behind them and all three of them spin around to face a very stern looking Gracia, no Elicia or Nina with her. Ed takes one look at her face and pales. He's intimately familiar with that look, it's the look Teacher, Pinako and Winry always wear before he's about to get chewed out. "Oh shit." He takes a few steps back as Roy looks between Ed and Gracia

Gracia tilts her head up slightly, so she can stare down at Ed even better. "I don't appreciate secrets being kept from me in my own home, Edward. If something is going on that involves my husband I would very much like to know what's going on."

A few seconds pass before Ed motions at the door behind her. She gets the message and steps in to the now cramped study, closing the door as she does so. "Gracia, if I tell you what's going on you'll basically be living a lie for the next three years. You can never let any of this slip or it will doom all four of you. Are you *sure* you want to live like that?" Gracia just nods her head, barely a hint of hesitation. Ed sighs at her determination before nodding his head. "Okay. You're right, you deserved to know I just didn't want to burden yet another person with this." With that, Ed starts explaining everything from the top.

About his time travel, Nina's death, Maes's death, the Fuhrer being a Homunculus (obviously explaining about the others as well) and the nationwide array.

When he's done explaining, which doesn't take nearly as much time now because he's gotten good at cutting out the rambling to bring it down to the important parts, Gracia just stares at him for a few seconds. Maes takes that silence to bring up the topic of their spare room. "Ed

has a brother in Resembool that he wants to keep out of the Military's eyes, if we moved Elicia in to Nina's room, would you be okay with him staying here?"

Gracia turns to look at her husband with an almost exasperated smile, used to him bringing in strays. "Of course he can." She turns her attention back to Ed. "How old is your brother?"

Ed looks up at her. "He's twelve. Actually twelve, he's not from my last go around. Shit...." The 3 look down at him in confusion. Ed ignores their confusion and looks straight up at Mustang. "Al can't come to Central how he is now. You've seen him, our colouring is almost exactly the same. So even *if* I bring him up here he'd still be stuck somewhere because if he's seen it would immediately be clear that he's related to me despite the fact that I've stated on my records I have no living family."

Roy's eyes widen in realisation, because Ed is right. He only saw the younger brother for a few seconds during his visit to Resembool, but their unique colouring is difficult to miss. They stand in silence for a few seconds trying to think of a solution before Ed lets out a quiet shout of exclamation. "I've got it!" He looks back up at Roy. "How many days do I have until I need to start reporting to you."

A second passes as Roy thinks of the exact number. "Most people get seven days. With you looking like a child they'll likely allow a day or two more."

Ed nods his head in acknowledgement as he thinks. "That should be enough time but I'd need to create a functioning array if one doesn't already exist. Not to mention I'd likely need to explain it to Al so he can undo and redo it himself." He looks up at Gracia and Maes. "Are you sure you're okay with Al staying here?" They both nod their heads immediately. "Is a week enough time for you to move Elicia's things around?" When they nod again he smiles up at them. "Thank you." With that he turns around and heads to the door of the Hughes's house.

"Edward!" Mustang calls from the office door. "How exactly are you going to handle this?"

A grin breaks out across Ed's face. "Isn't it obvious?" When Mustang just stares at him silently, Ed grins wider. "I'm going to use Alchemy of course!" With that, he picks his coat up off of the coat stand and heads out. The 3 physical adults are left staring after him in confusion and slight worry.

After having left the Hughes home, Ed makes a beeline for the hotel he stayed in last night to pick up his bag and check out. Trains run to Resembool only a few times a day because so few people get them that they're almost a waste of money. The last train should be leaving in an hour, so unless he hurries, he's going to miss it.

Knowing he'll be busy as soon as he gets to Resembool, he gets as much sleep as possible on the train. So when he gets off at Resembool he has enough energy to run straight in to the Rockbell house and drag Al out up to their home. "Brother? What's going on? Is everything okay?"

Ed finally realises how this must look to Al, so he slows down as he leads his brother up the hill. "Sorry, Al. Everything's fine, but in order for you to be able to stay in Central safely I

need to do something to hide your hair and eye colour. They're almost exactly the same as mine, and that will immediately get us found out. So I need you help to look through Hohenheim's Amestrian Alchemy books for anything on arrays that can alter appearances, while I look through the ones not written in Amestrian." Al nods his head slightly as they enter the basement, a slight falter to his steps. "I know you probably don't want to be down here, but the books are too heavy for us right now to carry upstairs. If we had longer we could do it in increments, but I have a week at most until I need to head back to Central. If we don't have a solution by then, then you have to stay here for longer, because I'm not risking putting you in danger."

Al stares at his brother for a few seconds before nodding his head. "Okay. Where do you want me to start?"

A quick smile is shared between the 2 before Ed is focusing again. "Start with looking for any books you can find on the topic of Alchemy and genetics. Anything along that line." Al nods his head and starts looking through the nearest bookcase. Ed turns around to look at the non Amestrian books which.... there's a lot of. Even a few of Hohenheim's notebooks written in Xerxean. Notebooks that Edward is *dying* to read, because who knows what's written in those books. But rather than allowing himself to get fixated on words he can't read, he turns to the ones that he *can* read. He pulls out a few Xingan books that seem promising and immediately drops to the floor with them. A quick look up at Al tells him that his brother will be fine for a little while if he goes in to a trance like he pretty much always does when he does research or any type of reading. Besides, Al knows how to pull him out of it if he needs anything.

When the first 4 books he pulls off of the shelves prove to be useless, he pushes them, in to a corner of the basement before taking another look at the shelves. None of the authors stick out to him nor do any of the titles. Cretan Alchemy is mostly based on healing, so he pretty much writes those books off. Not entirely, just in case one of them catches his eye, but he focuses mainly on the texts from Xing and Aerugo. Xing has a wide array of uses for it's Alkahestry (even if most of it is healing based) and Aerugo while having a much smaller population of Alchemists than Amestris doesn't have any specialties like Amestris, Xing or Creta do. Their Alchemy does seem to be focused on helping people live their day to day lives, so it isn't out of the question that someone will have done some research in to something similar to what Ed wants. So he's not surprised when 7 books later, he stumbles across something useful in one of Aerugo's texts.

He runs over to Hohenheim's desk and scrambles for some paper and a pen. With pen and paper in hand, he drops back on the floor with the book spread out in front of him. Al walks over to him before he can drop back in to his trance like state. "Brother? What did you find?"

Ed looks up at him with his signature grin. "I found exactly what I was looking for." He closes the book with his sketched array acting as a bookmark. "Let's head back to Granny's. I don't want to keep you down here in this basement while I work on this."

Al nods his head before leading the way out of their house. Ed stretches his automail leg for a few seconds, before following him outside. "Granny! We're back!" He hears Den running



down the hall to greet them and reaches a hand out to stroke him when he stops running at them. "Hey Den."

Pinako follows him out a few seconds later. "Feel like explaining why you decided to kidnap your brother for a few hours?"

A sheepish look passes across Ed's face, remembering that despite having told Al what was going on, he still hadn't told Pinako. "Sorry, Granny. But I remembered earlier that because Al doesn't want to stay in Resembool for the next three years, he'll need some form of a disguise. So I wanted to look for a solution with Alchemy as it would be much easier in the long run. Easier to maintain, easier to redo and not to mention harder to realise that it's a disguise."

Pinako watches Ed for a few seconds with a raised eyebrow before she shakes her head with a sigh. "Come on, you can do your Alchemy nonsense later, you both need to eat something first." With that, Pinako turns away and starts walking further in to the house. Den follows after her with a soft bark which gets the 2 Elric's to start following her as well.

## Chapter End Notes

A mini theory I came up with while writing this chapter (it came from literally nowhere):

The reason it hurts so much for a Human to be made in to a Homunculi is because the Stone is forcibly destroying their Gate. It's also why so many people don't survive the transition, because their bodies and/or Soul's can't handle the connection to Truth being so forcibly removed. Ed was fine when he traded his Gate for Al because Truth did it himself. So despite being originally Human, Bradley can't perform Alchemy just like his siblings because his Gate was destroyed during his transformation

There's probably a lot of holes in there but oh well

# Chapter 13

## Chapter Summary

Ed figures out how to hide Al's Xerexian colouring

## Chapter Notes

I hope the Alchemy makes sense. I always try to come up with an explanation for new types of Alchemy because it's a science not magic so while I *\*could\**, I don't want to just fix everything with Alchemy. I will fix everything with it don't get me wrong but not without explaining something on how that type of Alchemy works.

Also I just think it's interesting

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

When Al goes to bed later on that night, Ed gets to work. He sets himself at the dining room table and despite Granny's half hearted complaint about the clutter on her table, she recognises that what he's doing is important, she leaves him to it. She leaves the dining room to go do the washing up.

15 minutes later, she walks through the dining room to see Ed scribbling on a piece of paper. "Make sure you get *some* sleep. Alright Ed?" He doesn't respond to her at all, which she had half expected, just from looking at him she can tell he's completely absorbed in whatever it is he's reading. With a slight sigh she turns away from him and walks towards her room.

Ed doesn't move at all for the rest of the night, he has only 3 chapters worth of research in to the subject so he's going to glean as much information from said chapters as possible. So he has a pile of paper on either side of him. One is a rapidly declining stack of plain paper, while the other is a rapidly increasing stack of scribbles. Transmutation arrays sketched out with crosses over the ones he messed up sketching in his haste.

Pinako isn't exactly surprised to see him in almost exactly the same position when she goes to check on him, but she isn't pleased about it either. Because Ed doesn't seem to be showing any signs of tiredness, which is when she notices the smell of strong coffee lingering near the boy. She walks in to the kitchen to find her rarely touched coffee jar has a considerable amount less. Walking back she sees a half full coffee mug full of almost black coffee that has certainly gone cold, but Ed is still drinking from it anyway. "Ed." He doesn't even twitch at the use of his name. "Edward." Still nothing." She sighs at him, she understands that Ed is doing this to help Al, but said boy will almost certainly be upset to see that his brother hasn't

slept at all, so she tries again. "Edward!" She pulls slightly at the book as she calls his name and he finally looks up at her.

A few seconds of silence pass as Ed blinks at her in surprise, before he looks out of the window behind him. "Shit." She turns back to look at her. "Don't tell Al?" She raises an eyebrow at him before nodding. "Thanks Granny."

When Ed starts tidying his work up, she's surprised. "You're not going to go back to researching?"

Ed lifts his head to look at her as he downs the rest of his (very cold) coffee. "I am. But you've never liked work being done at the table, so I was gonna move somewhere else. Probably the floor of the guest room."

Pinako was half expecting that to be his answer, so she starts walking towards the kitchen as Ed finishes picking up his work. "Will you be joining us for breakfast or not?"

While tapping his handful of papers on the table to straighten it, Ed thinks. "Sure. I could eat, besides Al would just drag me out here if I said no anyway."

Ed hears the laugh Pinako lets out as he walks towards the guest room. Once in there, he sees Al is half awake already so he sets his stuff down on the floor and walks over to him. "Hey Al."

Al looks up at his brother with a smile. "Brother! You weren't researching all night were you?"

With an exasperated gasp, Ed grins at his brother. "Al how could you? Of course I didn't." Al just levels him with a look that Ed knows from experience will become his regular face for calling Ed out on his obvious bullshit.

Accepting that his brother is a stubborn idiot, Al sighs at him. "How long until you have to go back to Central?"

Ed blinks at him in confusion for a few seconds. "Oh right I didn't actually tell you anything yesterday did I?" Al shakes his head with a slightly annoyed look on his face that causes Ed to grin slightly. "Don't worry about it, I'll just fill you in now." He takes a seat next to his brother on the bed. "Bradley was there for my exam like he was last time. I explained the whole ordeal to Mustang's team and the Hughes's. The adults at least. Other than that nothing happened except me getting my Alchemist title and making up an excuse for the mark Truth gave me." He can see his brother's eyes widen and he leans forwards, clearly wanting him to explain both parts of that sentence further. "I told the people who did my check up, as well as Bradley, that because my Xerexian colouring came through so strongly after so many generations, that they gave me a tattoo in celebration like the people of Xerxes used to do. They seemed to buy it and there's no one alive other than Hohenheim who could possibly prove me wrong. Because Father only ever knew the flask and the castle and dad was a slave so he wouldn't have known anything about things like that." Al nods his head in understanding, the lie does make sense, some people do like to honour their heritage after all. "Anyway, as a result of that, my new moniker, is the Shining Alchemist."

Al's eyes widen slightly at that. "Brother! That sounds so cool! What was your last title though?"

Ed falters at that slightly, he didn't have any plans to tell people his old title, but he's always found it hard to say no to his brother. So he gives in with a sigh. "Bradley has a sick sense of humour you know. This time wasn't so bad, but a child tries out to be a State Alchemist with two automail limbs and he decides to give him the title of Fullmetal Alchemist. That name stuck with me for 16 years. People still referred to me as Fullmetal for years even after I had regained my arm and lost the ability to do Alchemy." A memory of Mustang calling him Fullmetal pops in to his head and he has to physically shake his head to get it to go away.

Shaking his head immediately made Al curious though, little devil that he is. A small smirk forms on his face as he leans in to his brother. "Did your partner call you Fullmetal as well?"

The image of Mustang pops back up and he scowls it away, before turning his head to actually look at his brother, hoping he's hiding his guilt well enough. "Not exactly no." A second passes as he feels a wave of guilt wash over him. "Anyway Al. That name doesn't matter anymore. If you ever need to refer to me to one of the people I've told you are good to trust, call me Shining okay? Not only will doing otherwise raise so many questions, Mustang asked me what my title was last time and I said I'd only tell him if I live through this, so make sure not to let it slip okay?"

Being the genius that he is, Ed had fixed up a working array 2 days after his arrival. But they aren't heading straight out to central because they need to test it properly first. Make sure it will hold out against a lot of things. Like Al's hair growing, or if it deactivates when he goes to sleep or if there's any time limit on it. There shouldn't be, after all he's changing how much Melanin his hair has. He isn't hiding anything, he's messing with the chemicals in Al's hair and eyes to change how much melanin is being *produced*. With a functional array in his head, he goes to find his brother.

Al is sat on the steps outside of the Rockbell house enjoying the last few moments of sunshine when he finally finds him. "Al!" His brother turns around to him with a questioning look before recognising the special kind of pride his brother only ever has in his eyes when he's done something clever (or when they got praised by mum before she fell ill). "I did it!" He casts a quick look over the empty as ever path. "I've figured out how to disguise you. Come in so we can test it, I need to know it's limits before I say it's finished." Al nods his head and stands up before dutifully following his brother back inside. They don't go far, Ed turns back to him once the door is closed and they're out of view of the windows. Al supposes he can't exactly blame him for being paranoid with everything that's on the line. "Ready?" Al nods his head once so Ed smiles and claps his hands to activate the array in his head. As gently as possible (more gently than he ever used to touch the arrays he had to use before their failed transmutation) Ed places his hands on Al's head, just on top of the roots. He holds them there for a few seconds before pulling away when he feels the energy start to fizzle away. As he pulls his hands away he sees his brother's hair *has* changed colour. But he stops his brother from moving immediately to go see. "I need to try your eyes as well, the colour is still too obvious." Al nods his head again before returning to his previous position. Ed pictures the array in his head again but hesitates before clapping, he doesn't exactly *want* to put his hands on his brother's eyes, closed or not, but he doesn't exactly have much of

a choice. So he claps his hands and places his hands on either side of his brothers head, resting just his thumbs on his brothers now closed eyes. Thankful not for the first time to have both his arms this time, as it makes it easier to not accidentally hurt his brothers eye. Like he did for Al's hair, he pulls his hands away when the energy starts to fizzle out.

Al opens his eyes and looks to his brother. "Did it work?" Ed takes a breath when he realises what he's done. Al now has brown hair and green eyes and with his softer features looks the spit of their mum. "Brother?"

Ed lets out a small breath before nodding his head. "Yeah, yeah it worked." He sends a small smile towards Al. "I always said you took after mum." Al tilts his head in confusion before he catches on to what Ed said, his eyes widening with the realisation. He opens his mouth to confirm it but Ed nods his head before he can get a word out. "Yeah, you look like mum. Go have a look." Without another word, Al runs towards the bathroom where one of the 2 mirrors in the house resides.

Ed follows him at a much slower pace, to find a shocked Pinako and Winry stood in the hallway. "That was Al right?"

Ed nods his head at Winry's question. "Yeah that was Al. I changed the chemical arrangement of his hair and eyes with Alchemy. Hence why he now looks like our mum."

Winry and Pinako stare at him in shock, but Al retreats from the bathroom before either of them can say anything. "This means I can come with you to Central right?"

A quick laugh escaped Ed before he answers Al's question. "It does. But I need to run a few tests first. Like making sure it stays activated throughout the night after I fall asleep because if not it means you'll have to redo it every morning before you can do anything, I also need to make sure it stands up to heat and water and make sure I can reverse it. But yeah, it means you can come with me." With that done, Ed walks turns away from them. "I'm gonna go get started on that last one while there's still some daylight left." With that he starts walking back towards the guest room where all his research is strewn about in a corner of the room's floor.

Al finds him asleep there a few hours later when he goes to fetch him for dinner, so he uses the opportunity to pull a strand of hair in front of his face to check it's colour, satisfied when he sees that it's still brown. With that confirmed, he takes the pencil out of Ed's loosening hold and places the half drawn array on top of the book, before laying Ed out on the floor (he knows he wouldn't be able to carry him to a bed, especially not with the extra automail weight). With Ed in a slightly more comfortable position, he puts a pillow under his head and covers him in a blanket before leaving the room to go eat his own dinner.

The rest of the week is spent with Ed running various tests in between him making an array for Al to use who (like last time) hasn't awakened the ability to do Alchemy without arrays yet. Part of Ed hopes he never will because it will mean he never goes back through the Gate, never has to give up another part of himself.

When Ed's time limit is up, both he and Al find themselves on a train to Central (sat in the same booth for now but Ed knows one of them will have to move when they start getting closer to Central).

When they arrive at the station, Ed gets up from his seat first, and Al follows him a few seconds later. Ed leads the 2 of them through the streets, with Al following a few steps behind him. Just close enough for Ed to be able to hear Al walking and for Al to feel safe, but far enough apart that they don't look like they know each other. When they get closer to Maes's house, Ed leads his brother down one of the side streets. "Al. I don't want to risk going up with you okay? Not right now at least. I'll stay close but I won't be leading you. Knock on that house over there." He points to the Hughes's home. "You know how to activate that array right?" Al nods his head quickly. "Okay, I'll undo your eyes just for you to walk up to the door but I want you to immediately turn them back okay? And don't let anyone else but the Hughes's see them."

Al rolls his eyes fondly. "I know brother. You've drilled it in to my head that I need to be careful." When Ed drops his hands Al continues quickly. "It's fine, I know you just want me to be safe. But what do I do if they ask who I am?"

Ed thinks for a second before responding. "They can be trusted, so just tell them your name. I'm almost certain I actually used your name and didn't just refer to you as my brother." He laughs sheepishly when Al glares at him. "Look if I didn't and they don't know who you are, which with your eyes their normal colour would be unusual, just say you're hiding from Father." Al nods his head and leaves the alley and walks across the road to the Hughes's house. Ed watches as Al walks up to the front door and lets out a sigh of relief when he enters with no fuss at all. With Al safe, he turns around and starts heading for Central command.

## Chapter End Notes

There's gonna be a time skip between this chapter and the next. It's gonna jump to just before the start of the canon timeline (i.e. Liore)

# Chapter 14

## Chapter Summary

Ed heads out for Liore

## Chapter Notes

Announcement we've hit the canon timeline! I repeat we've hit the canon timeline!

I'm very excited and scared to see how fast I can make everything go off the rails of canon and how difficult that makes it for me to get this story from one chapter to another

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

The next 2 years pass extremely slowly for Ed. But everyone else seems to be going on with their lives, business as usual. He had known obviously, but he hadn't exactly realised how quickly everything had kicked off last time around. Sure there was a year gap towards the end as they waited for the Promised Day to arrive, but after his trip to Liore, things started to go off the rails, and they went off the rails pretty quick.

So Ed spends the next 2 years working on creating Water Alchemy in between the missions that Mustang is sending him on. Well he says missions, Roy is somewhat reluctant to have him leave Central this time around. Which, Ed can understand to some degree because if something happens before it's meant to, or someone slips up, only Ed would be able to tell. But when he starts hearing whispers about a priest that can perform 'miracles' he heads out to Liore without telling Roy. Which to be fair, isn't too far off from what happened the last time. He did manage to slip Maes a note for his brother before he went though. Because despite the fact that he refuses to take Al anywhere near Liore (on account of there being not 1 but 2 Homunculi there) he knows that just disappearing for at *least* a couple of days is a very stupid idea. Stupid and likely to worry his brother (as well as Maes and Team Mustang) enough to risk going after him.

So after making sure that Maes knows about the note for Al, he heads over to the block of military apartments he's been staying in. Which just so happen to be the closest ones to the Hughes's house. He doesn't bother with *packing* a suitcase so to speak. He just throws in some spare clothes (because he knows he'll have at least one upcoming fight) before pulling his research out of it's hiding place and packing that as well.

He's only a *little* annoyed to see that Breda is waiting for him outside. "You're off to Liore right?"

Ed sighs slightly before nodding. "You obviously already know the answer or you wouldn't be asking." He starts walking in the direction of the train station, Breda falling in step easily. Ed turns to the side to look at him. "Did the Bastard tell you to come with me?"

Breda nods his head. "Maes got told about your little trip and told Mustang about it. So he assigned me to come with you."

Cursing Al out in his head, Ed stares at Breda. Having someone with him wouldn't exactly be a handicap, in fact it will probably be very helpful. "Do you trust me at all? You can say no, I wouldn't really blame you."

A few seconds pass before Breda starts nodding his head. "I do. I don't know how far that trust goes just yet, but Mustang trusts you and I trust him. So I trust you at least enough to listen to you and do what you tell me to. I trust you enough to respect your intelligence and experience."

Ed smiles at him gratefully. "Thank you. Even if you only trust me because Mustang does, I really appreciate it. I'm glad you said you'll do what I tell you though." He looks up at Breda. "Because there's at *least* two Vices there." Vices is the word they've designated to talk about the Homunculi in public. So it immediately gets Breda to stand straighter, at attention but not enough to draw attention to them. "All of the Vices are deadly, but these two are especially annoying to deal with. I'm not looking to get eaten again. So I'm hopefully *not* going to draw their attention just yet. In reality I need to handle all of them separately, but these two in particular need to be tackled separately. Because one of them is a pain, and the second will fly into an uncontrollable rage if he thinks I've hurt her."

They stand on the platform now, waiting for their train to arrive. "I understand. Once we arrive in Liore, I'll do only what you tell me to."

As the train pulls up to the platform, Ed nods his head and turns away from him. "Thank you. So." He takes the first seat available and Breda sits opposite him. "Did the Bastard give you any orders before sending you to me?"

Breda shakes his head slightly. "No. He told me to make sure we both come back alive, but I wasn't planning on dying out there and I can only assume you aren't either." Ed shakes his head in response. "Then no, I didn't get any orders. I am curious though." Breda takes a quick glance around at the other booths around them, making sure they're empty before continuing. "How did you deal with this last time?"

Ed takes a glance around himself, he trusts Breda but a bit of extra caution never hurt anybody. "Well last time, I drew Cornello's attention and he got a Chimera to attack me, before trying to shoot me when that proved useless. In the end, I got Al to make an amplifier with Alchemy out of the church bell, and had him hook it up to the radio Cornello uses to speak to his followers from. I started broadcasting and taunted him in to spilling his entire plan to me."

With that explained, he pulls out his notebook from his pocket and starts writing. Breda watches him for a few minutes, before asking what he's doing. "Well I want to keep my no array Alchemy hidden for as long as possible, which means I need arrays. I'm quick at it, but



drawing them out still takes time, so I'm going to draw them out now, and activate them when I need them."

Breda, who like the rest of Mustang's team barring the man himself, knows very little of how Alchemy works. "You can do that? Just keep an array for whenever you need it?"

Ed nods his head slowly, slightly confused. After all Mustang's team don't know much about Alchemy sure, but they're surrounded by State Alchemists. *Mustang himself* is a State Alchemist. "Of course I can. In fact most State Alchemists do this. It's how Mustang's gloves work, Armstrong's gauntlets, Kimblee has his array tattooed on to his hands and so does Iron Blood if I'm remembering it right. In my original timeline, I was doing something similar. Because for clapping Alchemy, you still have to know the array you want to use. Your knowledge of Alchemy is the pre-drawn array pretty much. Normal Alchemists don't tend to do this though, because they have no need for instant activation. People who use it in their day to day lives, can spend a minute or two drawing out an array."

The rest of the train ride is sent in a comfortable silence. With Breda asking a question or 2 every now and then. The train ride is almost 6 hours long, so Ed decides to snatch a few hours of sleep before their arrival. "I'm gonna get a bit of sleep. You should probably think of getting some as well." Breda nods his head in agreement even though they both know he won't go to sleep. But is in no place to say anything about being stubborn or poor sleeping patterns. (Sure he slept all the time as a teenager, but as soon as he brought Al's body back he stopped sleeping as much. He was battling with insomnia for the first few months after Al's return.) So instead of saying anything else, he makes himself comfortable (or as comfortable as possible on the uncomfortable train seats) and closes his eyes, waiting for his brain to turn off for a little while.

He wakes up a little over 2 hours later, to see that they're almost in Liore. About an hour out by this point. So he turns over to Breda to see the man watching him. "Cornello has a Philosopher's Stone right?"

Ed nods his head slightly. "He does. It isn't a 'real' one though. He believes it is but it broke last time. Which just in case it isn't obvious, a Philosopher's Stone doesn't break. It can get used up but it can't shatter and then fizzle out."

Breda nods his head in understanding before raising an eyebrow at him. "Why the quotation marks around real?"

Ed taps his shoulder where Truth's mark lays. It's late at night ow so the few passengers left in this carriage are fast asleep (and at the other end of the car). Which means that as long as they keep their voices down, they can talk with less caution than before. "Because I'm not sure if Truth wants them. Pure or not, to make any version of a Philosopher's Stone a collection of Souls have to be given up. When we made the deal, I assumed Truth meant the Vices and hidden Souls. But I don't know if they want the Stones scattered around. I'm pretty sure Kimblee already has one, despite his imprisonment, Marcoh has one that he's using to heal people, and obviously, Cornello is using one to power his false miracles. So I'll probably try to steal it from him, but if it gets used up before I can it *shouldn't* mean I'm breaking my deal with Truth." The rest of the journey passes quickly and when they pull in to the station closest to Liore, it's almost daybreak.

## Chapter End Notes

Am I think of having a member of Team Mustang accompany Ed to some more of his missions? Maybe. Is it purely for self satisfaction so I can see more interaction between Ed and the team? Definitely

# Chapter 15

## Chapter Summary

Ed comes up with the plan to take down Cornello

## Chapter Notes

I'm sorry! I really really tried to update sooner but I couldn't figure out which parts of canon for the Liore event I wanted to keep and which I wanted to get rid of and I've had some mild writers block for 2 weeks now so that didn't help

I have Liore mostly all planned out now though so next chapter should (hopefully) be up in a week)

When Ed and Breda get off of the train in Liore, Ed makes their first stop to find Rose or the chef of the small stand that Ed never caught the name of in his first go around. He knows both of them would be more than happy to tell him about Letoism and where to find Father Cornello.

When they finally get to the man's stand, Ed leans on the counter and points up at the radio. "Who's talking?"

The man looks at him in shock, and beside him Ed can see a similar look on Breda's face (although his is much better hidden). "You don't know who Father Cornello is?"

Ed shakes his head. "Nope. Who is he?"

A few seconds pass as the man continues to stare at Ed before he does actually answer the question. "Father Cornello is the Sun God Leto's apostle. His words are the words of God."

Ed lets out a low whistle. "Any chance I could meet this supposed apostle of God? Maybe he'll be able to make me believe in God."

The man nods his head slowly, Ed notes to himself that he isn't as eager to take him to Leto as Rose was. "I suppose I can ask Rose to take you to the Church. She should be arriving here to help me soon anyway."

Ed grins at him, still leaning against the counter. "I'm Edward Elric. This is Second Lieutenant Breda. What's your name?"

Slowly, the man holds his hand out for Ed to shake. "Isaac. Are you Edward Elric as in, the Shining Blood Alchemist?"

A grin forms on Ed's face as he reaches forwards to shake Isaac's hand. "The one and only." Before he can say anything else, he spots Rose walking up to the stand from the corner of his eye, so he drops Isaac's hand to turn and face her. "That must be Rose right?"

Isaac follows his gaze before nodding his head. "Yep that's her." He waits a few seconds before addressing Rose as she gets within talking distance. "Rose. This is the Shining Blood Alchemist. He says he's interested in Letoism. Can you take 'em up to the church for me?"

Rose turns towards Ed before a big smile splits across her face. "You're interested in converting to Letoism? That's amazing!"

She turns on her heel quickly starts walking towards the church. "Come on! I'll introduce you to Father Cornello myself. It's almost time for my daily prayers anyway."

Ed almost doesn't want to ask her, doesn't want to bring the topic up. But he knows he has to. Because letting her believe her boyfriend can be brought back from the dead is just cruel. So is telling her, but at least this way she'll be able to start grieving him, something Ed knows she had refused to do at this point, because she truly believed he would be coming back to her. He taps Breda's shoulder to draw his attention, before holding a finger up to his lips. Breda gets the hint and silently lets Ed speed up to walk side by side with Rose. "What are you praying for if you're doing it daily? That's some devotion."

Rose turns her head slightly to look at him. "I'm praying for Leto to give my boyfriend back to me. Father Cornello says that if I pray hard enough, that Leto will allow him to grant me my wish."

Taking a deep breath to prepare himself for the pain he's about to see on Rose's face, Ed asks his next question. "Rose, did your boyfriend die?" She nods her head slowly. "Then he can't come back to you. You know that right? No matter how hard you pray, there's nothing that can bring the dead back to life."

Faltering in her steps, Rose spins around to face him. "You're wrong! Father Cornello can bring him back to me!"

Ed sighs and lifts his left leg up so he can reveal part of his automail. "This is what happens to those who step too close to God's domain. They get shot down and when they land something is missing. If you tried to bring him back, what you would likely be missing is your heart, or part of it at least. Because that's what God does. He takes away the part of you that makes you, you. I tried to bring my mother back from the dead when I was 11. I lost my leg in return, my way to stand by myself."

Rose brightens slightly. "But you got your mother back right!?"

A few seconds pass in silence, which is enough for Rose to get the picture and she takes a step back in horror. "No, Rose. I didn't get my mum back. Human Transmutation cannot be done, nor can people be bought back with miracles. Once they're gone, they're gone for good."

"I'm sorry." Rose collapses to her knees at the steps of the church. "I'm sorry." He kneels down in front of her. "But I couldn't let you continue thinking he would return. Father Cornello is a fraud, he's been lying to you this whole time, and we're going to let the whole of Liore in on this fact okay?" He stands back up and turns towards Breda before gesturing at the church.

Ed spares a glance back at Rose as they finish walking up the steps. She hasn't moved an inch and tears are streaming down her face. He flinches slightly before turning around again and following after Breda. "What's the plan, Chief?"

A small chuckle escapes Ed despite himself. He always had liked Havoc's nickname for him. "First, we need to get to Cornello's office. That's where the broadcasting system is." Breda nods his head once and waits for Ed to start leading the way.

When they arrive at Cornello's office, Ed is thankful for the show Cornello puts on for his believers. But he doesn't know how early they got here, so he doesn't have time to be thankful for that fact. "Surely you're not just going to wait for him in here?"

Ed shakes his head slightly. "No. I did that last time and broadcasted him to the entire town but that was after I had spent about half an hour goading him. No, we're going to take the mic to him this time."

Breda walks over to the desk where the microphone is. "I'm not sure how you're going to manage that. This wire is long sure but I don't think it's long enough to span the whole church."

A second later Ed drops a handful of disconnected wires on to the desk. "Not yet there's not. There should be enough in here for me to extend the wire as far as we'll need." He looks up at Breda. "It might take a few minutes though so I need you to watch the door and tell me if you hear someone coming."

Nodding once, Breda positions himself in front of the doorway. With Breda acting as lookout, Ed can focus all of his attention on to the wires in front of him. He can also use his clapping Alchemy without risk of being caught. So he focuses on the makeup of the wires and how he needs them to function once they're added to the microphone wire.

It takes him a few minutes to get it done, but he does manage to extend the microphone's cable by a large amount. Maybe not enough to span the whole church. But if he lays the broadcasting switch by the door, that will also add a good 2 metres of length to the wire. If he had to guess, the amount of wire he made will get them to the basement where Cornello is keeping that Chimera. But most likely it would only get them through the door. So hopefully that's good enough.

Picking up both the broadcasting switch and the microphone, he walks away from the desk towards the door. Walking with the switch until the wire is in danger of being pulled out, before he places that on the floor. "Pretty sure I've got enough wire here to get me down to the basement where that Chimera is."

Breda blinks a few times, before speaking. "You want to willingly walk in to a Chimera's den. Please at least tell me it isn't an insanely vicious animal." When Ed doesn't speak up, Breda

sighs. "Major Elric, please tell me it's not a vicious animal."

Ed scratches the back of his neck. "I can't. The base animal is a Lion." Breda stares at him in silence with an intensity that Riza would be proud of. "I'm not asking you to come with me, Breda. I'm not at all expecting you to put yourself at risk. I'm not exactly *planning* on fighting that Chimera. But that's where he was last time so I'm assuming that's where he'll be this time."

Breda snatches the microphone out of Ed's hand. "Boss ordered me to make sure we both came back alive. If you're going to go potentially fight a Chimera, I'm coming with you."

Unable to find a way of getting Breda to change his mind, he takes 2 steps back to be stood next to the switch again. "Okay. But you are *not* to fight the Chimera with me. You stand by the door and I will handle it. I never liked doing this, but that is an order. Do not try and fight the Chimera with me. While it's claws and teeth couldn't cut through my automail, they're sharp enough to go through human flesh easily." Breda nods his head in acceptance. "Okay. Right, when I flip this switch, we'll be broadcasting to every radio in Liore. So no talking until we find Cornello." Breda nods in agreement again, so Ed flips the switch and starts leading their way through the church.

# Chapter 16

## Chapter Summary

Cornello gets exposed

## Chapter Notes

I almost called Ed Fullmetal multiple times in this chapter before realising as I was typing it that it isn't right

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

Ed and Breda make it to the lower levels of the church without any problems or wrong turns despite the fact that they're walking completely silently.

There's no one in the Chimera room when they arrive there, but Rose must have found Father Cornello and told him he had visitors still, because after a few minutes of silently waiting, Father Cornello appears on the balcony above the room like he did last time. "To what do I owe the pleasure of a visit from the Shining Blood Alchemist?"

Ed sends an imperceptible look at Breda and he nods in response, the mic is still on. "It's nothing really. But it seems to me that you're using Alchemy instead of Miracles as you claim to be doing."

Cornello looks down at Ed in annoyance. "I'm afraid you've wasted your time then. My Miracles are just that, they're a gift from Leto himself.

The priest behind Cornello steps forwards to talk. "Father Cornello is the voice of Leto. So of course he would be gifted some power in return."

A second passes as Ed stares at the man in disappointment. "You can't be serious. You don't actually believe this man do you? He's a fake."

Cornello turns to the Priest. "If you've come here just to insult me, Alchemist, I will have to ask you to leave."

Ed scoffs slightly. "I came to insult you but not because of your beliefs. No I came to insult you because you've been tricking this whole town. You made Rose believe that her boyfriend can come back to her. If you were actually in possession of some God like powers, then I'd ignore it. But you're using Alchemy, which means you can't bring him back. You've been lying to her and this entire town."

A greedy smile stretches across Cornello's face. "It's not my fault that she's so gullible. It's not my fault that as soon as I presented them with a God to believe in they all started worshipping me."

The Priest stares at Cornello in shock. "Father? You're not being serious right? You haven't been lying to us, right?"

Cornello turns to the Priest, the same greedy grin still stretched across his face. "I saw an opportunity and I took it. Soon I'll have the whole of Liore under my command and I'll have my own personal army that doesn't fear death."

A fake cough draws Cornello's attention back to Ed. "I don't even want to know why you want your own personal army. But I'm glad to inform you that that isn't going to happen. Because, I used *my* Alchemy to stretch out the wire of your broadcast mic. It can't go any further but this should be just far enough to have been picking up your voice for the last couple of minutes. Which means the whole of Liore has been told of your little scheme."

It takes a few seconds for Ed's words to have any effect, but soon enough Cornello's face turns red in anger. "How dare you!? Do you know how *hard* I've worked to accomplish what I have? Just for you to come along and ruin it out of nowhere?"

Ed shrugs his shoulders slightly. "I'm very sorry you've just wasted however long of your life, but I'm actually not sorry at all. This way, the people of Liore know the truth and they get their autonomy back." Knowing what Cornello is likely to do next, behind his back Ed signals for Breda to disconnect the mic.

Cornello, still red faced in anger, turns to the Priest beside him. "Release the Chimeras." When the Priest doesn't make a move, Cornello goes to do it himself. "Could Alchemy make these beauties, Alchemist?"

As the Gate opens Breda immediately steps closer to the door behind him, while Ed pulls out one of his pre-drawn arrays and drops it on to the floor. It takes him only a few seconds to form a spear out of the floor. He knows it won't stand up to the Chimera's claws for long but something is better than nothing and he reinforced it anyway. Which, does have the downside of making it heavier than Ed is used to handling. So as the Chimera makes its way out of its cage, Ed spins his spear to get used to the weight and looks up at Cornello. "Love to break it to you, but *yes*. Alchemy can make these. Alchemy is how Chimeras are made."

Before Ed can make another snarky comment, the Chimera swipes its claws at Ed's leg. He looks down at it as he feels the claws slide off of his leg without doing any damage. Recognising its initial target as a waste of time, the Chimera moves onto to try and attack his arm like last time and Ed just manages to swing his spear up in time to block it. He pushes the handle off the spear in to the back of the Chimera's jaw and uses that to push the Chimera down to the floor. As the Chimera shakes off the disorientation, Ed jumps up off of it. Unfortunately it doesn't take nearly as long as he'd hoped for the Chimera to regain its senses and he gets his arm swiped by one of the claws as a result.

Breda lets out a shout of concern at the same time that Cornello lets out one of victory. "Those claws are sharper than steel, Shining. How do they feel?"



Ed ignores Cornello's taunting for now to focus on taking out the Chimera. When the spear hits its mark and the Chimera falls to the floor, he spares a second to comfort it. He didn't want to kill it but the way it was mashed together would've meant it was probably in a lot of pain. When Ed turns to look up at Cornello again, he relishes in the look of slight fear on his face. "Get down here you fake. Maybe I'll go easy on you."

When Cornello starts reaching for his ring, Ed slips one of his pre-drawn arrays out of his sleeve and drops it on to the floor at his feet. As the fake priest points his newly made gun at him, Ed activates the array and creates a wall to shield him (making sure it's big enough to cover Breda as well). "Tempting offer but how about I send you to God myself?"

The bullets get stuck in the wall without a chance of passing through and Ed laughs at him in response. "Sorry to burst your bubble, but God doesn't seem keen on having me stick around. I'd just get sent back. Now stop using that stone or it's going to rebound." Cornello just laughs at him so Ed decides to try and get through to the Priest instead. "You were tricked by him right? You're an actual holy man?" The Priest nods his head, still shell shocked from the revelation. "Then get that ring off of him or he'll be hurt and possibly killed."

Cornello looks between the two, mocking laughter spilling from him. "I have a gun and a Philosopher's stone. How do you expect him to get it from me?"

Ed steps out from behind his wall. "Because I'm offering myself up as a target for shooting practice. Surely you don't want to pass that offer up?"

The Priest takes a small step forwards as Cornello switches his aim from him to Ed. "You're right, how could I pass that up. With you gone, I'll be free to get rid of Rose and then I can start getting Liore back under my control."

As Cornello talks, the Priest grabs his hand and pulls the ring off his finger and throws it down to Ed. "Here!" Ed manages to catch it before it hits the floor, so that's one objective down. Now he just needs to make sure that Cornello doesn't shoot the Priest now. But he has a Philosopher's stone in his hands, which enables all Alchemists to do no array Alchemy, even those who haven't seen the Gate, so his secret will still be safe. Drawing as little power from the stone as possible (just enough to skip the clapping motion) he creates a wall in between Cornello and the Priest. When Cornello looks down at Ed in irritation, Ed uses the Stone again (still just the bare minimum) to form a fist out of the wall and knock him out.

When Cornello slumps against the wall and slides down to the floor, Ed looks up at the Priest again. "He's yours to do as you wish with. All I ask is that you explain to people that this *is* the real Cornello. After all I doubt our broadcast persuaded everyone of his disturbed ways." The priest nods his head and so Ed turns back around to Breda.

Breda's eyes immediately drop down to Ed's arm. "Boss, we need to get you to a hospital."

Ed follows Breda's gaze in confusion. When he sees the state his arm is in, lets out a low hum. "Well fuck." He looks up at Breda. "Tristan isn't going to be happy with me."

With a roll of his eyes, Breda gestures towards the door. "We should go, the sooner we get you to a hospital the sooner Tristan and everyone else will stop fretting about you."

The thought of his brother being worried about him snaps Ed in to action. Al will be worried about him no matter what, but he'll be slightly *less* worried if Ed is already being treated in a hospital when he hears the news.

So Ed pulls off his coat, and uses his discarded spear to cut part of it so he can use it as a makeshift bandage. "Let's go. I'm pretty sure I've lost more blood than could be considered healthy." Breda nods once and leads the way out of the church. At the ready to take Ed's weight if the blood loss starts to make him light headed.

## Chapter End Notes

Did I create an alias for Al and then forget to explain it anywhere in the last 2 chapters? Yes, yes evidently I did. Do I still really like the idea of calling him Tristan because of how much like Trisha he looks at the minute and it's a very similar name? Yes, yes I do

# Chapter 17

## Chapter Summary

Ed makes it to the hospital

## Chapter Notes

I looked at the word blood so many times while writing and researching this episode that it no longer looks like a word to me

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

There's no hospital in Liore, so Ed told Breda that they'd head back to Central and he'd check in to a hospital as soon as they get there. Breda isn't exactly happy with that decision, because Liore may not have a hospital but one of the places on their way back to Central will. But Breda isn't going to argue with him on that, because he's just happy he agreed to go at all.

As Breda leads them back out through the church, without any other incidents thankfully, Ed checks out the Stone Cornello was using. It looks just like a normal Philosophers Stone, except for the fact that it's solid. It's more like the Stones that Kimblee. Whereas the one Marco had was a liquid. He had never thought about it last time about why there was such a difference between the Stones forms. He guesses that's a question for Truth when he offers up this Stone, or Marco maybe if Truth somehow doesn't have the answer.

When they finally make it out of the church, Rose is waiting for them outside. She takes a step towards them, her eyes lingering on Ed's makeshift bandage. "What happened to you?"

Ed shrugs his shoulders a little. "Cornello attacked me after the broadcast ended. How did everyone take it?"

Rose glances behind her in to Liore before answering. "Everyone is upset. Most of us believe that what we heard is the truth, but there's a few people who don't want to believe it, believe that that was a fake Cornello. It wasn't, was it?" A sad shake of his head answers her question. "What are we meant to do now? What am I meant to do now? I've spent so long doing nothing."

A few seconds of silence pass as Ed starts walking past her down the stairs, which prompts Breda to start following him. "You figure it out." He turns his head slightly to look back at her. "Stop relying on everyone else to tell you what to do. You've got a working pair of legs,

so stand up on your own two feet for once." Rose stares after him in silence as he and Breda continue walking down the steps.

Ed and Breda walk along in silence for a few minutes before Breda can no longer keep quiet. "Was it wise to be so cold with her?"

Ed turns to look at him with a raised eyebrow. "You think that was cold? Besides she didn't need coddling. She didn't need someone else telling her what to do with her life. It's not what she needed last time or this time."

Breda stares at him for a few seconds before nodding his head and changing the subject. "Have you got something to do on the train? Because I don't want you to go to sleep, you've lost a lot of blood."

Turning his head back around to look at where he's going, Ed nods. "I do. Well I kind of do. I have a few questions about the Stones that I want to write down so I don't forget them. Other than that I have one last piece of research to do before I call it finished so I'll be fine." Breda nods his head in understanding as they get to the train station.

Like the way to Liore, the way back took 6 hours which is unfortunately *far* too long for a train journey to take if you're losing blood at a slower but still pretty stable rate. Which resulted in Ed finally passing out a few stops before Central. Breda scoops up Ed and his trunk (when Ed started feeling woozy he told Breda his research was in there so it didn't get left behind) before rushing through the station so he can get Ed in a car and get him to a hospital.

Bursting through the hospital doors, he runs up to the reception desk to the startled nurse working behind it. "I need a doctor. He's been bleeding out for about six and a half hours and he finally passed out."

The nurse starts in to action at that, rushing around the desk to pull Breda down the hall. "Lay him on the bed, I'll get the first available doctor and some blood for a transfusion. There's a phone down the hall if there's any one you need to call." Once Breda lays Ed onto the bed, the nurse turns back to him, do you know his blood type?" Breda starts for a second before shaking his head. "Okay well. I'd like to avoid taking *more* blood from him at this point but we need to know." She turns to the door and rushes out of the room. Breda looks down at Ed before turning to the door himself, planning to call Mustang to let him know what happened, before calling Maes. Maybe Al will know what blood type Ed has.

Once Breda fills both of them in on what happened (both saying they were immediately heading over) he returns to the room the put Ed in where he finds a Doctor taking a sample of Ed's blood. "What happened to him? He looks like he got attacked by a wild animal."

Breda shakes his head slightly, trying to think of a cover story close enough to the truth to not screw them over later. "We were on a mission and he got attacked. He was slashed with a knife multiple times in that one place before he managed to get away from the guy."

The doctor accepts it with a nod of his head before pulling the syringe out of Ed's arm. "I'll run the tests as quickly as I can." Breda nods his head and goes to sit by Ed's bedside. "Is

there anyone you can phone for him?"

Breda can only shake his head. "Got no family left. I've called our CO and a friend who's taken a shine to him, but other than that no." With another nod of his head, the doctor leaves to go run his tests. With nothing to do, Breda sits anxiously as he waits for Mustang and Maes to get here.

It's not a surprise when they both arrive at the same time. Nor is it a surprise to see Al trailing after Maes. Al takes one look at his brother laying on the bed before running over to him. "What happened to him?!"

Breda leans away from the boy as he starts answering. "Cornello had a Chimera. He killed it but it got a lucky hit in first. Swiped his arm with it's claws. I didn't see it for long, Ed wrapped it up immediately with his coat but it's been bleeding for near seven hours now. It's slowed indefinitely after about ten minutes, but it didn't completely stop and he finally succumbed to blood loss just before we got to Central. I didn't know his blood type so they're running a test now."

Almost immediately after he finishes speaking, the doctor and nurse re-enter the room and both startle slightly at the sight of new people. "His blood type is unfortunately rare. He's got 0 negative blood and we used all of our supply a few days ago in a major surgery. We've not had any more donations yet." He looks around the room in hope. "Do you any of you know your blood type and if you do does it match?"

## Chapter End Notes

Cliff hanger! What's gonna happen??

Let's be real only one of 2 things is going to happen but I might come up with something else when I go to write the next chapter

# Chapter 18

## Chapter Summary

Ed gets his blood

## Chapter Notes

Y'know what's annoying? I started this chapter like 4 days ago then got distracted by rereading the Haikyuu!! manga then Atsuhina fics and \*then\* I got whacked over the head with an idea for a BNHA fic that ran away with my creativity. So I might try juggling two fics in the near future

Probably not though

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

Mustang immediately turns to the doctor. "I have the same blood type. Take as much as you need I don't care, just don't let him die."

The doctor turns to Mustang with a slight nod. "We're only allowed to take 2 pints from you even given his concerning blood loss. But even that amount will be extremely helpful to him healing." He looks away from him to address the nurse. "Take Colonel Mustang's blood, while I stitch up the patients arm."

Nodding immediately, the nurse leads Roy to sit down in one of the rooms chairs. "Sit here please, Colonel." Mustang does as she says and starts taking his jacket off so she can get to his arm. "The military does constant health checks correct? So you already know that you're free of any diseases that could be passed over." Mustang nods his head again. "Glad to hear it. But you heard the doctor, we're only allowed to take 2 pints of blood from you, so no arguing and if you start feeling sick or woozy before we reach that, you *will* tell me."

Everyone in the room knows that he *won't* tell her if he starts feeling sick if it means helping a member of his team. But by telling him to do so, she's done her job and any side effects he feels afterwards aren't her fault.

Al watches nervously from behind Maes as the doctor unwraps the makeshift bandage Ed made for himself and starts wiping away the momentous amount of dried blood. The only silver lining in this situation is that the bleeding has finally stopped, so Ed is no longer losing blood.

Despite how deep the wound looks, it doesn't take long for it to be completely stitched up. As the doctor is tying off the last stitch, the nurse is removing the needle from Roy's arm. "He'll obviously need to stay here for at least a day or so but other than that, he should heal up in no time, especially once we complete the transfusion."

The nurse attaches one of the 2 blood bags on to the IV drip she put beside the bed. After struggling for a minute to find a vein, she hooks him up before returning to Roy to clean off his arm. "I'd like to keep you here for an hour or so while your body replenishes itself. Eat something and it will go quicker, but we don't often take two pints of blood at once because it makes the donator woozy and sick."

To Maes and Breda's surprise, Mustang easily agrees to staying for a few hours so they can keep an eye on him. But they suppose it makes sense that he wouldn't put up a fight. After all, if he's told to stay in the hospital, he can stay here with Ed and wait for him to wake up. The nurse hangs the second bag of blood on to the IV, ready to be connected. "I'll be back in a few hours to change the bag and make sure he's doing okay." With that, she turns around and follows the doctor out of the room. Al waits for barely a second once the door is closed before running back over to Ed's bed. He perches on the bed beside his brother's prone form and gazes down at his injured arm. The stitches looked clean when the doctor was doing them, and the fresh clean bandages make it look not nearly as bad as it did when he arrived.

Maes places a hand on his shoulder. "Al, we should go. I'm sorry. I know you want to be here, but it would just make Ed paranoid when he wakes up." Al nods his head solemnly. "I'll make a very obvious point of asking Ed to babysit Elicia and Nina soon after he wakes up okay?"

Al nods his head slowly before getting up from the bed. "Okay. Let's go." Maes starts leading him towards the door, but before he can open it, Al turns to face Mustang. "Thank you, for giving up so much blood for my brother. He probably won't thank you for it so I'll do it for him. Please keep an eye on him when he wakes up. I don't want him to push himself so soon after losing so much blood."

Mustang nods his head in agreement. "You don't need to thank me for that, Al. But you're welcome. I don't want to see him hurt himself again either, so I'll do my best to keep him in one place even though I feel like he probably won't listen to me."

That forces a laugh out of Al, which the three conscious adults are very happy to hear. He's looked very serious and scared since entering the room, which while understandable, they all know Ed would hate to see his brother like that when he wakes up. So having him leave the room is for the best. It'll give him some time to come to terms with his brother's injury too. After all, for how responsible Al acts, has to act with all the knowledge he has. He's still just a 12 year old boy.

When Maes and Al finally leave the room, Mustang turns to look at Breda. "You don't have to stay, he'll be fine."

Breda nods his head slightly. "I know. But if it's alright with you Boss, I'd like to stay here until he wakes up."

A small smile graces Mustangs lips at that, he knows that Breda and Hawkeye have still been wary of Ed. He has little doubt that Ed doesn't know that himself. It's not even that they don't *want* to trust him, but he is trying to make them believe an extraordinarily tall tale. Mustang himself isn't sure why he immediately believed what he was saying, but he's thankful that some of his team remained sceptical, even as they started actually trusting him. He assumes Ed told Breda exactly what was going to happen while they were in Liore and seeing it all happen has given Breda undeniable proof that he's telling the truth.

They're silent for a few minutes before Breda speaks up and confirms his thoughts. "He knew." Mustang, slightly light headed, sits silently as Breda speaks. Letting him get his thoughts out. "He knew that Cornello had a Chimera down there. He knew what it looked like, how strong it was and that he'd been lying to a girl there about being able to bring her dead boyfriend back. He told me he knew the Chimera was there and he was fully willing to go confront him anyway, while knowing how deadly it's teeth and claws were. He told me not to come with him but I said I wasn't going to let him go alone, so he ordered me to stay out of the way. To let him handle it himself. And that girl, Rose, she had completely bought in to his lies. She fully believed he could bring him back to her. But the way he confronted her, took that apart in seconds." He looks back up at Mustang for a second. "You probably would've been proud of how efficiently he took her apart. I mean, I know he already knew everything happening there, but in just a few sentences he got her to understand. And when we were leaving, she asked him what they were meant to do now that Cornello's gone. What *she* was meant to do. I thought he was being cruel when he told her to figure it out herself. But I took a glance back at her as we walked away."

Mustang looks back over to him when the silence stretches for a minute or so. "How did she look?"

Breda shakes his head slightly again and continues. "I thought she looked devastated at the time. After all in her eyes he had just blown in to town and turned her life on it's head. But now that I'm thinking about it a bit more, I think she looked relieved. I think she was *thankful* to him. For not giving her another set of demands to follow. Or another life to live. I think he gave her the chance to finally start walking her own path."

With that the two lapse back in to silence both content to sit and watch as Ed recovers.

## Chapter End Notes

Ed will be a character again next chapter but he *\*did\** lose an awful lot of blood so he can have a chapter to rest

I also explained Breda's apparent reluctant trust towards him at the start of Liore and how that's now completely changed cause I forgot to do that in the chapter I mentioned it in but it made more sense to me to bring it up again here



# Chapter

## Chapter Summary

Ed gets out of the hospital

## Chapter Notes

I'M BAAAAAACK!

I'll leave an explanation for the break in the end notes and just start the chapter but I wanted to apologise up front for the abrupt stop in uploads, which yeah I am really sorry about

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

"How long was I out for?"

Breda and Mustang jump from their seats and move to stand beside Ed's bed as he pulls himself in to a sitting position. "You've been out for six hours now. But the blood loss has stopped and Chief gave you some blood to help even out your levels.

Ed turns his head to look at Mustang. "Where's Al?"

Mustang smiles at softly at him. "He's with Maes. He wanted to stay here and be here when you woke up, but he understood that it wouldn't be a good idea for him to stay here for that long. It would look strange for him to wait here for a stranger."

Ed nods in agreement. "Thank you. I'm sure it was Maes who made him leave, but you two being here would have made him more willing to." A smile forms on Ed's face before he jumps up in the bed. "You need to get me out of here." Roy and Breda sit up in their chairs, immediately on alert.

Leaning closer to Ed, Mustang asks for him to explain. "You need to rest, what could be so important that you need to leave right now?"

Ed watches him in dismay. "Scar. He's going to attack Iron Blood tonight. If I don't go and confront him I don't know when he'll appear next." Breda and Mustang both stare at him in silence so he continues. "Last time, after he attacked Iron Blood, he went after Shou Tucker and ended up killing Nina the Chimera as she couldn't be reverted. Me and Al were still in East City at the time so he came after me next. If you don't get me out of here so that Scar can attack me we risk losing an incredibly valuable and powerful ally."

None of them speak for a minute, but eventually it's Breda who breaks the silence. "What happened between you and Scar last time? I get he tried to kill you but you had your brother with you."

Silence falls again as Ed thinks back on his first encounter with Scar. "I was grieving Nina when he found me and Al pulled me out the way of his first attack. We tried to run away but he caught up to us and then blocked off the alleyway we were in. Al tried to help me and so Scar attacked him. Destroyed his armour, a massive chunk was missing from it. I had an automail arm that time and he destroyed it. He left me practically defenceless. I asked him if he was going to kill my brother as well or if he was only after me. He told me that as long as Al didn't interfere he wouldn't kill him, he promised me he wouldn't kill my brother so I stopped fighting and just lay still on the floor as I waited for him to kill me."

Mustang gestures at Ed. "But clearly you didn't die then so what happened?"

Ed laughs slightly and looks over at him. "You showed up. Well, you Hawkeye, Havoc and a few military police. Armstrong and Maes showed up afterwards. Right as he was about to deconstruct my head you shot a pistol in the air to gain his attention. After that you didn't do much though because it was raining so you know, your Alchemy was useless."

Breda laughs a bit at the jab at Mustang's one weakness. But Mustang can tell what Ed is trying to do, and isn't going to let him get away with it. "So you nearly let him *kill you* during your first meeting, yet you want me to sign you out of the hospital early so that you can go fight him when he's never met you before? And you'll want to go alone too won't you?"

A sheepish smile spreads across his face, there's no point denying it. Because he's been caught red handed but it's not like it doesn't make sense. Scar is trying to kill State Alchemists, every one he can get his hands on. But he wants to kill the ones who fought in Ishval even more. "Look, he hates all State Alchemists by association, he hates the ones who fought in Ishval even more. It's *safer* if I go by myself. I already know how his Alchemy works, I can cancel it out. Before you say anything I don't know it in theory I know in practice because I did it last time and it works." He purposefully doesn't mention that what he was cancelling out was going to destroy his automail arm, not his flesh arm. He doesn't actually know if he could cancel *that* out.

Leaning forward in his seat, Mustang stares at him for a solid minute before sighing. "Fine. But if you get hurt during this, I'll make you stay at Maes's house for at least a week while you heal. You can deal with him mother-henning you."

Ed nods his head in understanding. "I can live with that. So will you sign me out?" Mustang sighs again but does nod his head as he stands up from his chair.

Breda watches Ed carefully as Mustang leaves the room. "Don't end up back in the hospital okay, Boss?" Ed turns his head to look at him, before nodding his head in agreement. A small smile forms on Breda's face at the acceptance as Roy returns to the room.

He picks up a pile from one of the visitors chairs and holds it out to Ed. "You'll have to deal with the damaged clothing. But I don't really think that's going to stop you." Ed takes the pile

from him with a shake of his head. It takes him a few seconds to be able to put enough weight on both legs to actually stand up and get changed, but he manages it easily enough.

Both Mustang and Breda watch as he forces himself to stand up, completely ignoring the way his flesh leg gives out the first time he puts weight on it. "This is ridiculous." Ed just glares at Breda for his outburst and Breda rolls his eyes. "It is! You shouldn't be about to go run after a serial killer when you can barely stand up!" Right at that moment, Ed manages to hold his full weight properly and all he does for a second is hold a raised eyebrow in Breda's direction. "Unbelievable." Rolling his eyes at him, Ed turns around to his pile of clothes.

Once Ed is out of the hospital gown, he stretches his limbs out before leaving his room and heading for the exit. "Where are you going to find him?"

Ed turns to look at Mustang as they exit the hospital. "Alright to be honest, I don't entirely know. I know he was in Central, in the biggest residential quarter. Other than that, I'll just have to run around until I spot him. I know vaguely where they found his body last time, but not *exactly* where it was." When Mustang just stares down at him in annoyance, Ed flips him off. "Excuse me for not thinking I'd need to know that trivial detail in fifteen years time." He looks down the street, taking stock of where he is before turning back to the two. "Unless you wanna drive me around, I'm heading up." He walks a few buildings down and Roy and Breda stare in shock as he climbs up the side of the building, using window ledges and gutters as footholds. He leans over the edge of the building and mockingly salutes the two before running off.

They both just stare up at the roof for a few minutes before Breda lowers his head to look at his commander. "He's already forgotten he's injured, hasn't he?"

Roy sighs, lowering his head as well even as his hand raises to pinch the bridge of his nose. "It looks like it, yes." He holds his position for a few more seconds before lowering his hand and looking over at Breda. "Let's go call Maes." Breda snorts in amusement at Mustang's dismay even as he follows after him.

## Chapter End Notes

The reason I stopped uploading this wasn't because I stopped wanting to, far from it. Couldn't be further from the truth, but even at the point I stopped at my ideas had already deviated from canon so much that it was incredibly daunting for me to write anything for this.

So I stopped uploading and writing these chapters so I could take my time planning everything out and I can finally say (apart from maybe one or two things here and there at the end) that I have officially finished planning!

Apart from this upload I probably won't update again for at *\*least\** a week or two while I pre-write the chapters. But once everything is written up and ready to go, I'll be posting

them once a week (so I have time to edit them just in case)

I apologised for the sudden drop off in the start note, and while I \*am\* sorry about that, I also want to thank all of you who have stuck with me through the zero explanation stop, and the people who picked this up and left comments on it. Before anyone says it, I know some people leave fics on here for like 5 years without warning, and mine was 'only' 6 months. But seeing people still enjoying what I had posted genuinely gave me so much inspiration to continue planning

Anyway that's basically all I wanted to say, thank you for sticking around and sorry for the wait. I hope you enjoy the story I have planned from here on out, cause I'm actually really proud of a lot of it. But I'll stop my word vomit now, see you all soon!

-Luna ^^

# Chapter 20

## Chapter Summary

Scar is recruited

## Chapter Notes

Sorry for the later upload, I didn't realise what day it was until I needed to leave for work

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

It takes Ed a good half hour of running across rooftops before he starts hearing the tell tale ringing of Alchemy. He can just about make out two voice as well. He can't hear either enough to name either as Scar's and he never met Basque Grand in person. But it's the best chance he's got so he immediately jumps to the roof closet to where he can now hear canon fire coming from.

When he reaches the street the two are on, he sees a State Alchemist standing in front of a large metal container clearly made with Alchemy. The man seems to be confident that Scar has been contained, but Ed knows that this isn't the end of the fight. He knows Scar kills him tonight. Which is why he isn't surprised when he hears the cage break and sees a hand shoot out reaching for the soldier. He immediately starts descending the building, hoping he can get to the two before Scar can kill him.

Unfortunately the building he's on is too high to risk jumping from the roof. So he climbs down on to one of the lower balconies and jumps on to the top of the cage Basque had made. He's suddenly thankful that Scar always gives his victims a moment to pray to God, because it gives him the precious few seconds he needs to jump off the top of the cage, yanking Scar's arm down on his decent, away from Basque's face. Unfortunately, Ed had gotten there just a second too late and Scar had already activated his Alchemy, destroying Basque's face similar to what he did to Marcoh.

As soon as Ed touches down on the floor, Basque forces one of his eyes open to look at his saviour. "Shining Blood, get out of here. You are far too young to be facing a killer."

Ed completely ignores him, instead keeping his attention on Scar, who seems to have switched targets. "You are the Shining Blood Alchemist?" Ed nods his head. "I will kill you for your sins against Ishvala."

A harsh laugh escapes him at Scar's words. "You say that as if you haven't just used Alchemy to try and kill someone." Scar lunges for him and Ed only just manages to get out of the way in time. Curse his younger body, it's reflexes just aren't up to scratch yet. It'll have to do though, because he needs to draw Scar away from here. He can't confront Scar in front of him. He jumps past Scar towards an alleyway at the end of the street. "Surely I'm a better target than him right now, so why don't you come get me?"

Scar seems to hesitate at that, thinking through who he wants to go after. Iron Blood isn't dead yet, but if he doesn't go after Shining Blood right now, he'll get away and either way they'll likely be put under heavy protection.

Which means Shining Blood is the right choice, because at least Iron Blood has been injured. So when the child recognises his shift in stance and takes off down the alleyway, he follows after him immediately. Both of them ignoring the yells of the downed Alchemist.

Ed leads him down a few alleyways before stopping in the middle of one a good few streets away. Once Scar runs down it after him, he blocks off both the entrance and exit of the alleyway. A pretty risky move but he can always pretend that he was trying to keep Scar trapped until the Military Police arrived. Scar stops at what used to be the entrance to the alleyway, but before he can attack again, Ed starts talking. "I'm sorry about what happened in Ishval, but it wasn't their fault, a monster wearing a soldier's face shot that child. And I mean that literally, they can change their shape in to whatever, a Human or an animal. Most of the State Alchemists who fought in that war are deeply haunted by their actions."

Scar flexes his fingers in anger, what does this child know of the murder of his people. "Being guilty does not relieve them of their sins. The war being started by a monster does not make their actions any better."

Hearing the understandable anger in his voice, Ed continues. "No, no it doesn't. But I'm not trying to say that it does. Being guilty does not wash away their sins, nor does it make them innocent. But it does mean that they know what they did was wrong, so incredibly wrong. I know for a fact that Mustang wants to help repair Ishval, he wants to repair the country he had such a massive hand in destroying. Does that make his actions in Ishval okay?

Absolutely not." Scar stares down at the child, surprised at how serious he sounds and how much conviction he speaks with. "I'm not saying you, or any other Ishvalan, need to forgive him or anyone else who took part in that war. What I *am* saying, is that I can give you the chance to take your revenge on the mastermind behind the scenes, the one who has had all of this planned out since the creation of Amestris. The one who treats so many people as nothing but sacrifices for his plan, who treats Humans as mere chess pieces in a game he's playing against himself."

Nothing happens for a few seconds, Scar is too stunned by Ed's words to say much. But eventually, he does break the silence. "Very well. I will stop attacking Alchemists. I know there is more you are not telling me, but I will help you take down this mastermind." Ed lets out a sigh of relief at having gotten Scar onside.

Clapping his hands once, Ed removes the stone walls blocking both exits. "I think we have a few more minutes before they start nearing us, so I'll give you a quick rundown of all the important facts." Scar nods his head in acceptance so Ed starts explaining. "Well first of all,

I'm actually 28 and I've lived through this mess before. Explaining would take too long, but that's how I know the truth about what happened in Ishval. It's also how I know about that monster, and the other six that are running this country from the shadows." Before Ed can say anything else, he hears cars off in the distance and a few faint dog barks. "We're out of time. Before you go can you break my leg?" He lifts his pant leg up a few inches so Scar understands what he means.

After Scar nods his head, Ed sits himself on the floor, leaning against one of the alley walls. Scar crouches down in front of him and uses his Alchemy to tear Ed's automail apart. After a second of thought, he reaches his hand out again to a part of the wall near Ed's head. Pieces of stone fall to the floor and Ed throws a couple down the alleyway. He looks up at Scar once he deems the scene believable, even as he empties one of his pockets of his pre-drawn arrays. "Lay low for a while okay? I'll be in contact as soon as I can, but don't get caught." Scar nods his head in agreement before running from the alley. Ed would love to make it look like he put up a better fight, but he knows he lost the first fight against him as a teen, so this is far more believable. And the lost leg is a pretty reasonable explanation as to why he let Scar get away.

As he hears the car engines turn off and the barking gets louder he makes himself as comfortable on the cold stone floor as possible. Winry is going to murder him for him *willingly* letting his leg get broken. He had forgotten that Winry was *always* protective of her work, no matter how old she was. With this being the first piece she's made with minimal (basically no) input from Pinako, she's going to be even more pissed off.

## Chapter End Notes

I have the next few chapters written out and ready to post so hopefully I can keep ahead and not run out of chapters

# Chapter 21

## Chapter Summary

Maes finds Ed after the Scar fight

## Chapter Notes

Sorry again for the late update I finally got covid and it fucked with my perception of time a lil bit but I'm only a little late!

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

Maes rounds the corner at the mouth of the alleyway with a sniffer dog at his side. When he sees all the parts of Ed's automail strewn out around him, he runs forwards in worry. He kneels down next to him, eyes focused on where his leg should be. Ed makes sure to keep his voice low as he explains. "It's alright. I told him to do it so it didn't look like I *let* him get away."

A sigh of relief escapes the other man as he draws his eyes away from the destroyed leg. "Well, as long as you're alright." Ed nods his head in agreement. "I can get you out of here quickly, but you'll still have to answer a couple questions." Ed nods his head in understanding and let's Maes pull him to his feet.

A group of soldiers are stood milling around the mouth of the alleyway and Ed can't help but notice Basque's absence. "Where's Iron Blood? He's okay right?"

The man who comes up to take the dog from Maes nods his head. "Brigadier General Grand will be fine. His face will heal soon enough but it will scar permanently." Ed lets out a breath of relief despite himself. He doesn't know if Basque is in Bradley's pocket, but he still didn't feel right letting him die right in front of him. "I'm sorry to do this to you in your state, but we do need to ask you a few questions before you can go." Ed nods his head in understanding. "We've already heard from Colonel Mustang and Second Lieutenant Breda how you ran off at the sound of Alchemy, leaving them to call Lieutenant Colonel Hughes. We just need you to explain what happened after you got to the scene."

Ed nods his head in response before he starts talking. "When I got there I saw Scar with his hand around Basque's face. I didn't know what he was trying to do, but it obviously wasn't anything good so I ran over to them and dragged his hand away. Unfortunately I was a bit too slow and couldn't get there before he activated his Alchemy. At that point he recognised me as the Shining Blood Alchemist and wanted to kill me as well. I wanted to prevent him taking



another shot at Iron Blood so I taunted him, telling him that it was better for him to attack me at that point. He must have agreed because he switched targets to me. So I ran off so that he couldn't change his mind. He followed me down to that alleyway." He jerks his head in the direction he and Maes have just come from. "I got a couple of hits in but after he broke my leg I couldn't do much else. He probably would've killed me if we couldn't hear the car engines and these dogs barking in the distance. He ran off almost as soon as he heard them."

The soldier nods his head along with all the information Ed is giving him. "Thank you. We'll let you go now so you can get your leg fixed."

Maes nods his head as he shoulders most of Ed's weight again. "Thank you. If you need a report written get in contact with either me or Colonel Mustang and we'll have him write one while he's with his mechanic." The soldier nods again before letting the two pass.

Once they're out of earshot of everyone, Maes starts talking. "That was a very risky plan you had."

Ed shrugs his shoulders slightly. "It worked. Scar agreed to stop going after State Alchemists and said he'd help us out. Well he said he'd help *me* out but same difference." Maes lets out a short laugh at that. "The real risky plan was asking him to destroy my automail. My mechanic is *not* going to be happy that her hard work got destroyed. Never mind the fact that I literally *asked* someone to destroy it. Maes lets out another laugh before steering them in the direction of his house. Ed assumes he's going to let Al come with him so he can both make a trip home and spend some time with his brother.

His assumptions are confirmed when he opens the door to his house and calls out for his brother. "Al!" Said teen rounds the corner before immediately running to his brother in a panic. Maes just places his free hand on Al's shoulder to calm him. "He's alright. It was on purpose but he *does* need a new leg. So you two can jump on the first train to Resembool and I'll call Roy to let him know what you told me.

As Maes and Al switch positions, Ed shakes his head. "It's too late for us to catch the night train out to Resembool, we'll have to wake up early and get the morning train."

Maes nods his head in understanding. "In that case, I'll get Roy over here and you can explain everything in person." Ed just nods his head before asking if he could at least sit down, standing with one leg is *such* a weird experience. Al breaths out a laugh of disbelief but leads his brother in to the living room.

An hour later, Roy walks in to the Hughes house with Ed's suitcase in hand. He drops it on to the couch next to Ed and only raises an eyebrow when Ed immediately scoops it up and starts digging through it. The Alchemist lets out a small breath of relief at the fact that his notes are all still safe *and* the Philosophers Stone that Cornello had is still hidden at the bottom of the case. He closes the case and puts it on the floor before looking up at Mustang. "I guess I should start out by letting you know that Scar has both agreed to stop killing State Alchemists *and* help with our plan. I didn't have time to explain everything but I told him about the time travel and the fact that there's monsters controlling everything in the shadows. He seemed to take it surprisingly well honestly. But we got cut short by the arrival of the Military Police so

I asked him to break my automail leg, he did and also broke a part of the wall to make it look like some sort of fight had happened. I told him to lay low, I'll contact him when I can."

Mustang just stares at him for a few seconds. "Are you sure it was a wise decision to tell him all that?"

Ed nods his head. "He's strong. I know you don't trust him and I won't lie to you I despised him for most of the first go around, he killed Nina and then to find out he's the reason Winry's parents never came home after *they* were the ones to save his life." He cuts himself off and takes a couple deep breaths. "I interacted with him a little more after the events of the promised day and while he's still not my favourite person in the world, I understand that he didn't know he was looking at doctors when he killed them. He saw the blonde hair and blue eyes and in his hurt, panicked state he saw them as soldiers." He has to shake his head again to stop him from a second spiral. "What I'm saying is that yes, it was wise to trust him with that information. Even though I hated it and it took some time to start working together he was an invaluable ally. In fact *most* of our allies were invaluable regardless of personal connections."

Roy nods his head in understanding, but Al walks in to the living room before he can say anything else. "Brother. You should get some sleep, unless you want to get on the train tomorrow with no sleep."

Shaking his head in response, he holds out his hand for Al, who quickly makes his way to his brothers side. "Thanks for bringing me my stuff Mustang. I should only be gone a week but I'll let you know if anything happens." Roy just nods his head as Al helps his brother limp out of the room.

## Chapter End Notes

I'm writing out the chapters that come after this one so we can get back to plot but it's really hard to write them cause I keep thinking about some specific scenes I get to write later on

# Chapter 22

## Chapter Summary

Ed and Al go back to Resembool

## Chapter Notes

Woohoo this is being posted at a reasonable time for once!

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

Ed wakes up at 5 O'clock the next morning. The train isn't until seven though, so he decides to let Al sleep for another half hour or so as he limps to the kitchen to take some coffee from Maes's stock. (Mustang had left a crutch for him at the front door so he doesn't have to rely on Al carrying him around until his leg gets fixed).

Maes is stood in the kitchen making a coffee of his own when he gets in there. "Help yourself to coffee." He gestures to the coffee pot on the counter. "I'm leaving for the office in a couple minutes, so I'll see both of you when you get back."

Reaching for one of the mugs resting on the counter, Ed makes his way over to the coffee pot. "The first train out to Resembool is in two hours so yeah me and Al will be gone by the time you get back." Maes nods his head and downs the rest of his coffee.

Turning on the tap, Maes washes out his mug before placing it on the draining board. He heads for the front door, reaching down for his boots. "Hopefully your mechanic isn't too mad at you." Ed just lets out a snort at that which causes Maes to shake his head in amusement. "Well, I'll see you when you get back Ed."

After waving Maes out the door, Ed returns to the kitchen and his coffee. Once he's finished his mug, he washes it up and places it next to Maes's on the draining board. Al is already starting to wake up when he goes to wake him. "Hey Al, time to get up." Golden eyes flick open slowly and he sits up to look over at his brother. "I know it's early, but if you don't get up now we'll miss the train and we'll have to get the one tonight."

Al groans in disappointment before slinging his legs over the side of the bed. A hearty laugh escapes Ed at that, but he's mindful that the rest of the house is still sleeping so he makes sure to keep his volume down. "I'm up. How long do we have until the train?"

Ed moves to perch on the edge of the bed as Al stands up to get dressed. "About an hour and a half. But we have to walk to the train station which is why I woke you up now." Al nods in understanding and finishes getting dressed. As Al pulls on his socks, Ed stands back up from the bed. "You ready to go?" A small noise escapes Al that Ed recognises as agreement. Accepting that the noise of agreement is the only answer he's going to get, Ed starts making his way towards the door.

Gracia is stood in the kitchen waiting for them, bouncing Elicia on her hip, trying to get her to go back to sleep. "I made some sandwiches for you two to take with you."

Elicia grabs on to her mothers hair, eyes starting to blink open sleepily. "Sorry, did we wake her up?"

A small smile forms as she shakes her head. "No don't worry. She's just a little under the weather and was having trouble staying asleep." Ed nods his head, thankful he hadn't woken her up but also hoping Elicia isn't going to get ill. "Before you ask if she's okay, she's absolutely fine. It's most likely because she's been trying to stay awake later now that Nina's bed time is an hour later than hers."

That gets Ed to let out a small laugh. "I'm glad we didn't wake her up and that she isn't seriously ill. But we should get going, or we're going to miss the train." Gracia nods her head in understanding. "It shouldn't take more than a week for me to get a new leg. So Al should be back by Monday."

Gracia smiles at him softly. "The girls will be excited to have him back." Al retrieves the sandwiches from the fridge before heading in to the living room to pick up Ed's suitcase. "You don't need to be in a rush to come back. We won't change our minds about housing your brother just because you were visiting home for too long."

A few nervous chuckles escape Ed and he scratches the back of his neck, knowing he's been caught. "Thank you. I just didn't want it to seem like I was taking advantage of your kindness."

Swapping Elicia over to her rest on her left hip, Gracia rests her right hand on Ed's cheek. "Edward, he's your *brother*. Alchemically made age difference or not he's your brother and you love each other. Maes and I are *happy* to take care of Al. He's such a sweet boy, but we know why he's in our care. He's in our care because his amazing big brother doesn't want to risk putting him in danger." She bounces Elicia a few times when she starts kicking up a fuss. "We aren't needed to be his parents, unlike with Nina. Al doesn't need parents. He needs people to care for him while his big brother is busy saving the world." She retracts her hand from Ed's cheek. "Our home will always be open to the both of you. The four of us will always be happy to see you two. If you ever have to go out to Resemblood or Dublith, or anywhere else you have allies that isn't Central. You are more than welcome to take Al with you and spend some time with your brother. And *we* will be more than happy to welcome him in to our home again when you come back."

Ed nods his head as he looks up at her. "Thank you, Gracia."

Before he can say anything else to her, Al walks back in to the kitchen. "Brother? Ready to go?"

Unable to help himself despite his trust in Al and his Alchemical abilities he checks over his brothers disguise. His golden colouring has been hidden perfectly with Alchemy and so Ed nods his head. "Yeah, I'm ready to go."

It isn't Ed and Al who step out on to the streets of Central. It's Edward and Tristan. The Hughes's newest ward who is accompanying the Alchemist to his mechanic because Maes doesn't have the time to be making the trip out to Resembool so suddenly. Despite knowing it's his brother walking beside him, it still feels weird to look over and not see golden hair just a few shades lighter than his own. It's similar to having Al be in that suit of armour again. Not the same, because Al was *trapped* in that suit of armour. He couldn't leave it and he couldn't eat or sleep while he was inside. But it's still not what his brother is *meant* to look like.

Al is meant to look like their mum with Hohenheim's colouring. Their mum's softer features with the Xerexian colouring that only three other people have. But instead he looks almost *exactly* like their mum. With her soft features, dark brown hair and green eyes. Ed is snapped out of his thoughts as he's pulled towards the platform at the back of the station. There's a couple other people around but Ed knows they'll be getting off way before they reach Resembool.

The two Alchemists take a seat in the last train cart, after seeing all the other passengers getting on to the front carriage. They sit opposite each other and Al almost immediately rests his head on the window to go back to sleep which gets a chuckle out of Ed.

As they leave Central station, he realises he could go see Marcoh early. They'd just have to get off at the small town Marcoh is living in, but he knows he was being tailed last time which is why the library got burnt down. He doesn't know if he's being tailed this time, after all he hasn't shown off his ability to do Alchemy without arrays yet, but he doesn't want to risk it. Not to mention his meeting with Scar is a few months earlier than his last go around. So it's best to play it safe and just sit on the train until they pull up in Resembool.

## Chapter End Notes

Can you tell I'm having a lot of fun with the current dynamic between Ed and Al? It's all cleared up in chapter 25 but it was a lot of fun to explore how Ed feels about everything

# Chapter 23

## Chapter Summary

Ed gets a new leg and returns Cornello's stone

## Chapter Notes

I had been awake for 27 hours at one point today so I have just woken up from a 7 hour hour nap but I woke up in time to post so enjoy the chapter

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

It's late afternoon when they finally get off the train in Resembool. There's no one else on the train at this point which doesn't surprise either of them.

Al walks a few steps ahead of Ed as they make their way up to the Rockbell house, Ed's suitcase swinging in his grip. He had refused to let Ed carry his suitcase despite the fact that it basically just has paper in it.

Pinako takes one look at Ed when they finally get to the house, before sighing and turning in to the house to call for Winry. "Winry! You're patients back!"

Footsteps come stomping from upstairs as Winry runs to the front door, wrench in hand. She comes to a stop at the front door and takes in the state of Ed's leg. Or lack thereof.

As expected, a wrench comes flying at Ed's head that he can't be bothered to dodge. He lets it hit him right in the forehead. Winry stares at him as the wrench falls to the floor. "Are you calmer now?"

Al picks the wrench up for her as she nods her head a few times. "I suppose. What happened to it?"

Ed takes the wrench from Al's hand so he knows Winry can't get to it again. "I asked Scar to destroy it."

Instantly, Winry is enraged which Ed was expecting and understands. It's a completely fair reaction to that sentence, after all the leg was a masterpiece and yet he *willingly* got it destroyed. She closes her eyes and takes a few deep breaths to calm down. Opening her eyes, she turns to look at Ed. "Okay. Come on inside and I'll get started on a replacement. Please don't *willingly* get this one destroyed though okay."

Chancing that she won't try and snatch the wrench out of his hand, he steps in to the house after her. "I can't think of any other situation that I'd *need* my automail to be destroyed in. So if it does get destroyed again it won't be on purpose."

Winry turns around to assess him for a second, trying to see if he's lying. After a second of watching him, she makes a noise of understanding before turning back around. "Well come on then." Ed follows her and sits down on the couch so that she can remove the part of his leg that's still attached. She glares at him again as it comes off but doesn't actually say anything, just grabs him the spare leg. "If I pull a couple all nighters, I should be able to have it done for you in just under a week."

Nodding his head in understanding, Ed stands up, testing his weight on the spare leg. "I'll leave you to it then. Thanks Win." She just waves him off as she heads upstairs in to her room to get to work.

Pinako walks out of the kitchen once Winry starts up the stairs. "You two are eating here for the week right?"

Ed nods in agreement. "Yeah if you've got enough to feed us as well. I'm gonna be heading up the hill to our house though. I want to have a proper look through all of Hohenheim's books." Pinako nods in acceptance as Ed turns to his brother. "Al, do you wanna come up to the house with me? Or stay here with Granny and Winry?"

Al barely needs to think before he has an answer. "I want to come up with you."

After giving a quick smile to his brother in response, Ed turns back to Pinako. "We'll come back tonight." She nods her head before shooing them out the door.

When they get to their house, Ed stops himself from looking around the house, just heading straight down to the basement. He hasn't seen his childhood home in a hell of a long time, but he doesn't exactly want to go poking around right now. Al follows him through the house, seemingly a little worried that Ed is practically refusing to look at anything on their way down to the basement.

The puddle of Ed's blood on the floor has all been cleaned up, as well as the array. But both of them can see the faint chalk marks left in the middle of the room as well as the dark stain that was clearly left by Ed's blood. Not wanting Al to be unnerved by looking at it, Ed claps his hands and draws a thin layer of the basement floor up to cover up all the marks. Al smiles at his brother in thanks before heading over to the Amestrian Alchemy books. Before Ed picks up any of the non Amestrian books, he spares a glance over at the suit of armour still laying on the floor. He does want a new weapon to replace his Automail and he knows that the metal is good quality. It would also be a way of keeping his brother with him, both the one he left behind and the one he can't take with him. But he'll think more about that another time, for now he turns his attention to the bookshelves.

They spend the next few days going to and from their house and the Rockbell house like they did as kids. Only seeing Winry during mealtimes and Ed feels as guilty as he always did making Winry work so hard to fix or remake his leg. But as she said she would, she has the

leg completed in four days. It gets fit in a matter of minutes and Winry joins them at the table before returning to her room to pass out.

Ed stretches his leg out a few times, making sure everything is in place. He doesn't know much about automail sure, but he's worn it long enough to know when something is off. When he's satisfied that everything is in place and working as it should (not that he really doubted Winry's work but it's better to make sure) he heads back in to the Rockbell house to dig Cornello's Philosopher's Stone out of his suitcase. It's been a week since he took it from the man, it's about time he returned it. Moving further in to the house away from any windows, he sits on the floor before clapping and touching his hands to the stone.

Familiar white light surrounds him when he opens his eyes. Truth is smiling at him when he looks over, amusement obvious in their usually blank expression. "You made a trip here just to return a Stone made of so few souls." Their grin widens a little even as it softens. "Wanted to return here so badly that you didn't even wait until you had a Homunculi to bring me. Or another of the Stones."

Ed rolls his eyes at them. "I already waited a week didn't I? Not that I know what the passage of time feels like for you, if you even feel it at all. But they're still Souls I promised to return to you, no matter how many are in the Stone." He watches as Truth's smile softens even further. "Speaking of which, I'm sorry I had to use any energy from the stone."

Truth shakes their head, but doesn't actually respond to that. "Thank you for bringing me back the Stone. Even if it is an impure one."

As the Gate behind Ed creaks open, he starts talking again. "I'll bring you Kimblee's Stone as well. But I can't snatch them from him, or do anything that will tip me off to the brass. I have to wait for them to fall in to my hands."

The black hands stretch from inside the Gate and start pulling him back towards it. "I leave it in your capable hands, Golden Sun." As Ed is yanked in to the Gate, he remembers he completely forgot to ask about that nickname.

## Chapter End Notes

Anyone else watching Moon Knight?? We only have two episodes atm but I'm in love



# Chapter 24

## Chapter Summary

Ed and Al get ready to leave Resembool

## Chapter Notes

I explain why Al doesn't have no array Alchemy in this fic and I think it works. He \*might\* end up acquiring it at some point but I'm not planning on it

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

Al is seemingly waiting for him when he reappears at the Rockbell house. Ed stretches his legs out before standing back up. "Al? You okay?"

His brother nods his head before making a show of clapping his hands. "You can enter the Gate without an array. No one should be able to do that without an array even if they've *been* on the other side of the Gate. Isn't that what you told me?"

Ed nods his head at his brother. He's right, you can't enter Truth's domain without a physical array. "Truth granted me an array that will allow me to open the Gate at any time without drawing out an array. But it only works when making contact with a Philosopher's Stone."

A small hum leaves Al's throat as he listens to his brother. "Why can't I do it? You, me and Teacher have all been through the Gate, but I can't use Alchemy without arrays."

Looking over at his brother, who is staring down at his hands, Ed sighs softly. He knows Al, once he finds out he *can* use no array Alchemy he'll do anything to get those memories back. "Al, you didn't just *visit* the Gate. You didn't lose a part of yourself there, your whole body was taken. The only way I got around that this time was by asking for help from the Souls under Amestris. Otherwise you'd either be in the Gate still, or you'd be in that armour." Al frowns at him, knowing that there's something Ed isn't mentioning. Noticing the look on his brother's face, Ed continues. "Remember the body we made for mum that I asked Granny to bury?" Al nods once. "Your Soul got shoved inside it. It's why you couldn't do no array Alchemy last time. Only when you remembered meeting Truth were you able to do no array Alchemy. But you only remembered last time because you were trying to hide someone inside your armour to keep them safe. Bradley killed her while she was still in your armour and her blood splattered on to the seal. I'd rather you didn't get yourself traumatised again."

With that bit of information, Al's enthusiasm dies down considerably. "I'm sorry."

Ed shakes his head. "You don't need to be sorry, Al. I'd love for you to be able to do no array Alchemy. But I don't know how to get you that ability except for going back through the Gate. And losing part of yourself just to gain that ability isn't worth it. Especially not when you're still an amazing Alchemist without it."

Al nods his head in agreement, giving up something for that ability isn't worth it. "You're right brother. I just thought I might be able to help you more if I could do Alchemy like you and teacher."

Unsure how to respond to that, Ed just stares at his brother for a few seconds. "Al." He calls his name, hoping his brother will look back up at him. "You *are* helping me. By staying safe and using Alchemy to alter your appearance. Knowing that you're safe *is* helping me. Al I'm glad you want to help, but you couldn't use the no clap array Alchemy without putting a target on your back that we're actively trying to avoid, which is why *I* don't use my no array Alchemy. I'm sorry that I dumped all this on you and won't let you help, but I know telling you was the only way you would have agreed to all the precautions. Like the appearance altering Alchemy and living with the Hughes's and the fake name."

Head dropping down slightly, Al nods. He knows Ed is right, if he hadn't been told the truth he would've wanted to know why Ed was joining the military. Why he wanted to hide his name and appearance. "I understand. But if something happens to you and it's something I can fix by going through the Gate, I *will* do it without hesitation."

A small laugh escapes him. Al's tone is leaving no room for debate and Ed knows better than to try and get him to promise not to. "I understand. I can't tell you not to do that without being a hypocrite. But please at least *consider* what you'll be giving up. You have a whole life ahead of you, I cheated my way in to a second one. I've had my fair share of time on this side of the Gate." Al nods his head in what Ed *hopes* is agreement. "We have a couple days before Colonel Bastard will expect me back. Are you coming straight back with me?" Al nods his head immediately and it makes Ed smile despite their previous conversation. "I know the Hughes's don't have any Alchemy books for you to read. So as long as you keep any more advanced ones in their house, you could probably bring some of Hohenheim's books with you."

Suddenly a smile spreads across Al's face, which Ed hoped would be his reaction. After all, both he and his brother use Alchemy as a distraction. So letting him bring some of Hohenheim's Alchemy books back with him means he should be too busy thinking of which books and topics he wants to have access to will keep him from thinking about his disappointment of not being able to do no array Alchemy.

As Ed leads them up the hill to their house, Al walks ahead of him, with an excited skip in his step. "You're not spending all night looking through the books. You can start looking when you wake up tomorrow." Al turns around to send his brother a small frown, but he doesn't actually try to argue with Ed. Because despite his excitement to *properly* look through their dad's books, he knows it's late and he's already getting a bit tired. If he goes to sleep now, he can spend even longer looking through the shelves tomorrow. So instead of actually responding, he just nods his head before turning back around to continue up the path.

Settling in to their beds, Ed waits for Al to fall asleep before getting back up. He makes his way through the house, heading for the basement. The armour is still laying there on the floor with a hole in the chest from when he made his crutch the day he got sent back here. he walks over to the upturned suit of armour. Parts of it missing from when he used it to make a temporary crutch. Kneeling down besides it, he scans the armour to see where would be best to take from. He knows that the metal on the chest and back is the thickest, he rolls the suit around so that he has a full area to take from. He uses Alchemy to draw to good size strips out of the back of the suit. He lays both the strips on the floor before clapping his hands and transmuting the pieces in to blades. More like knives as he needs a handle for them as well since they won't be attached to him unlike his automail arm.

Satisfied that they make sharp, sturdy enough knives, he claps his hands again to transmute them in to bands. If his plan for them doesn't work, he might as well just use the money he gets as a State Alchemist to invest in a pair of decent knives. But he wants these as a replacement for his automail arm, so that he's never unarmed in case he gets caught out by one of the Homunculi. With the transmutation complete, he slips them on to his wrists and after clapping his hands, he lifts his left hand to grab the band around his right wrist. It takes a bit more concentration than he thought it would to transmute it in to a knife from this position. But he hopes that once he gets used to doing it, it will get easier. Wrapping some leather or bandage around the parts he wants to turn in to a handle might make it easier as well. It'll definitely make it easier to hold at least. Transmuting the metal again, he returns it in to a band, and slips it back around his wrist.

Weapons made, he leaves the basement to head back to bed. But he can't help himself from taking a peak in to their mum's bedroom. It's probably the only room in the house he has no memories of, or at least very few. Because he never really went in their when he was a kid, once she had died they moved out to Dublith to live with Teacher while she taught them Alchemy and once they got back they lived a cycle of going to school and then the Rockbell house before returning to the basement to continue their research. Once Ed got his State Certification they burnt their house down.

Stepping in to the room feels wrong, it's been undisturbed since her death, every step he takes causes dust to jump up in to the air. Trisha had tried so hard to hide her illness from them. Neither of them had any inkling she was sick until she dropped dead in front of them, which Ed is extremely thankful only he seems to remember happening. Seeing the note from her doctor laying on top of the bedside table feels wrong, seeing the bottles of pills holding it down feels even more so. He goes to take another step forwards before stopping, he shouldn't go through her things without Al. That wouldn't be fair. But with Ed being needed to go back to Central the day after tomorrow and Al returning with him they won't have time to go through it all tomorrow, but they'll be back in Resembool in roughly a month for Hohenheim's appearance. So the two of them can go through her things then. With the decision made, he turns around to leave and *actually* go to bed.

I love the weapon I've given Ed. I think Ed would feel strange without a weapon in hand (or at least the means to make one with) because of his fighting style, he uses weapons in fights much more than he uses hand to hand

# Chapter 25

## Chapter Summary

Ed and Al talk about their feelings

## Chapter Notes

I finally have the boys talk about their feelings about the time travel nonsense

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

Al wakes up at the crack of dawn the next day, eager to look through the library properly. They never actually took in the books down there once Ed found that book on Human transmutation, so only in this past week has he actually read any of the many books down in the basement. Knowing that his brother hasn't looked through them either is exciting. It's something that neither of them have done before, even with Ed's prior experience of near everything. And it's something they get to do together.

Which is why Al starts shaking Ed to wake him up immediately upon waking up himself. He doesn't even notice the new metal bands hanging loosely around his wrists, too excited to start narrowing down what books he wants to take with him back to Central. He doesn't exactly have a specific type of Alchemy he wants to look into, unlike Ed who Al *knows* is researching a new type of Alchemy and is somewhat close to having it done. So he'll probably just decide on books with topics that he thinks are interesting. He doesn't know *what* books Ed wants to take though, probably some of the Xingese books that Al, annoyingly, can't read.

Ed follows him dutifully down to the basement as he wakes up properly. He already knows what books he wants to bring with him. He wants any of the Xingese books that pertain to long distance Alchemy. Because despite his Alchemical genius he knows that learning how to use arrays that he isn't touching will be difficult to get used to. But he he doesn't really have the time to get Mei to teach him. So he'll have to be self taught.

(His no array Alchemy doesn't count in that regard of not touching the array. Because in that instance he himself is acting as the array so there's no distance to cover.)

So as Al starts looking at the Amestrian books for names he recognises, Ed starts pulling off Xingese books off the shelf almost at random. He needs to find at least a single book he can scour that goes over the basics of Alkahestry. Because he knows in advance that Father can just shut off Amestris's access to Alchemy at any time, and he wants to be able to prevent

being caught in that group. Only Scar and Mei were able to use Alchemy (more accurately Alkahestry) last time around. But he won't be able to use his array if Father decides to do that.

They spend the better part of the day in the basement, pulling different books off of the shelves and checking the contents of them. Al decided on three of the older books in Hohenheim's collection, while Ed went with a bit of a variety. He's taking the book with the most in depth explanation of Alkahestry and what the Dragon's Pulse actually *is* as well as a book on healing Alkahestry. They head up to the Rockbell house for tea as they have done all week, then head back home for the night to sleep before they have to catch the early train out of Resembool early tomorrow morning.

Ed is the first one to wake up the next day and he lets Al lay in for a few more minutes as he gets changed and shoves his books in to his suitcase. Al has to blink his eyes multiple times once Ed shakes him awake. Sitting up in his bed, Al rubs the sleep out of his eyes before getting out of bed to get dressed. Ed picks up Al's books from where he had left them the night before. "Al. Do you want me to put these in my suitcase until we get back to the Hughes's?"

Al looks over from where he was pulling his socks on and nods his head, so Ed turns around and opens his suitcase back up. "Brother." Ed looks back up at him. "What are those things around your wrists? Where did they come from?"

After closing his suitcase again, Ed stands up to look at him properly. "I made them from the suit of armour down in the basement as replacements for my automail arm. I'll need to draw out a few arrays to keep on me so I don't tip my hand though." He claps his hands before grabbing the band around his right wrist. Once the transmutation is completed, he holds the knife out in front of him for Al to see.

Jumping up from his bed, Al runs over to him, hands held out in front of him as he stops himself from grabbing the knife. Chuckling slightly, Ed holds the knife out to his brother. "It's alright Al." With that confirmation, Al all but snatches the blade out of Ed's hand. "Careful! It's sharp."

After turning it around in his hands a few times, Al looks up at him. "What did you make it from?"

Reaching out slowly, he pulls the blade back from his brother. "I used the armour downstairs." He claps and returns it in to a band before slipping it back on to his wrist. "I know that it's made of a pretty decent quality metal and...." He drops his wrist back to his side. "It's my way of keeping you close to me. I know you're not in that armour, but I'll always associate that armour with you now. Since I don't want you involved in all this, I figured this would be the best way to keep you with me while you stay safe on the sidelines."

Without warning, Al jumps on to Ed, hugging him tightly. "I thought you wanted me to stay away because you didn't think of me as your brother!" He wraps his arms around Ed, keeping him in place.

After hesitating for a second, Ed hugs his brother back just as tightly. "Don't you ever think that. I have never for a second thought of you as anything but my brother. I admit a *small* part of why I was so adamant of you staying with the Hughes's is because I thought you might resent me for taking your *actual* brother away from you. But you're my brother no matter what Al. No matter how old I am, or if I'm keeping you away so you'll be safe." Pulling back slightly out of the hug he looks back down at his brother.

Neither of them were ever very good at talking about their emotions. Al was miles better in comparison to him and even grew up to get *used* to talking about what he was thinking and feeling. But Ed never quite got used to it. He tried to let his actions speak for him, knowing that he wasn't very good with words. But he needs Al to understand just how much he loves him even if he isn't *really* his brother. Because that's a load of bullshit. As long as his name is Alphonse Elric, and he's the second son of Trisha Elric and Van Hohenheim he will *always* be his brother.

Al pulls away to look at his brother properly. "You're my brother no matter what as well."

Ed smiles down at him before reaching down for his suitcase. "Go get your shoes on. You need to disguise yourself before we get to the train station."

Nodding his head in agreement, Al heads for the front door where their shoes are. He knows better than to think anything of his brother sudden change in topic. Ed has never been good at talking about emotions, even as a kid, choosing to keep everything bottled up until he explodes when he can't keep it all in any longer. It doesn't seem like he ever grew out of that habit sadly, despite how clearly unhealthy it must be.

As he starts pulling his shoes on, Ed comes to meet him in front of the door. Suitcase and house keys in hand. He places them on to the floor before pulling on his boots, and picking them back up. "You ready to get going? The train will be leaving in a little under an hour." Al nods his head before reaching into his pocket for his paper and pencil. "You want me to just do the disguise for you?" Al nods his head as he pulls his hands out of his pockets. With a nod of his head, Ed pockets the keys and drops the suitcase again before he claps his hands. "Close your eyes." Al does so immediately so Ed gently holds his thumbs over his brothers eyelids for a second, before pulling his hands back and clapping again to repeat the process on his hair. Satisfied that his brothers colouring is hidden properly, he pulls his hands back. "There you go. Let's head off." Al nods his head before taking the key from Ed to unlock the front door.

After Ed steps out the door, Al turns around to lock it before turning around to hand the key back to him. Pocketing the key Ed falls into step beside Al as they start down the path to the train station. The two of them take two seats on the last passenger carriage and get comfortable. It's a long train ride back out to Central, the sun will probably have set when they finally get off the train.

I played Genshin for four hours yesterday and I'm obsessed



# Chapter 26

## Chapter Summary

Ed and Al relax at the Hughes's

## Chapter Notes

This chapter is a bit of a filler but I needed it to close out the brothers worries abt the time travel nonsense

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

As Ed had expected, the sun is setting when they get off the train in Central. "Ed. Are you going to stay at the Hughes's tonight?"

Ed turns his head to look over at his disguised brother. "If they're okay with it." Picking up his suitcase, Ed leads them both off the train. "Come on."

Gracia opens the door for them when they arrive. "Boys. It's good to see you back in one piece." She sends a smile over to Ed and he lets out a small laugh at her joke. "Come in. It's good to have you back Tristan, and you Ed are staying for at least a night with us." Ed nods his head in acceptance "Good to see you know better than to argue with me."

A small laugh escapes him as the two follow her inside. "I know better than to argue with women like you, believe me."

An echoing laugh comes from Gracia as she leads them towards the kitchen. "I'm afraid we've already eaten but I'm sure I'll be able to find something for you two." She ushers the two brothers out of the kitchen towards the hall. "Al you go get settled back in and get your eyes and hair back to normal. When your settled back in, I'll have some food ready for you both."

Al walks out of the kitchen after giving her a smile to walk towards his room. "Thank you. Do you want me to help you with anything?"

She shakes her head and makes another shooing motion with her hand. "You go help Al get settled back in. If he settles in before I'm done *then* you can help me." Ed nods his head before turning to leave the kitchen. "Try not to wake the girls though okay? Elicia should be fast asleep but Nina is a bit of a light sleeper." He makes an acknowledging gesture over his shoulder as he walks out in to the hall.

When Ed enters Al's room he's sketching out the array to change his appearance back. "You don't keep those pre sketched?"

Looking up from the paper, Al shakes his head. "I figured it would be safer to only draw them out when I need to use the array."

Placing the suitcase on Al's bed, Ed opens it up with a shake of his head. "As long as you leave it here, and hide it if anyone other than me or Mustang's team visit it's safe enough to keep one around." Ed looks up at his brother. "You will have to destroy it if the plan goes to shit though. I don't want anything hanging around anywhere but *especially* not in Central that could tip anyone off to you not usually looking like this."

Al puts his pencil down for a second. "Are you sure? I don't mind sketching out the array individually each time I need it."

Ed nods his head while fishing out Al's chosen Alchemy books from his suitcase. "I'm sure. You don't have to if you don't want to, but they already know *about* the array so there isn't much difference between you having it pre drawn and drawing it out every time." He turns to Al who has started sketching the array again. "But thank you for being careful with it without me telling you." Al smiles at his brother as Ed drops the books beside him. "Where do you want me to put these?"

Clapping his hands and pressing them to the paper, then to his head, Al's hair returns to normal. "Leave one of them there and put the other two under the bed. I'll find a better hiding place for them tomorrow. I'll probably use Alchemy to make a hiding place under the bed for them." Ed nods in understanding as Al claps his hands again. Leaving the shortest book on the bed and pushing the longer two underneath.

When he gets back up Al's appearance has completely returned to normal. "You all done?" Al nods his head so Ed moves over to the room's door. "Let's go get you some food then."

Al follows after him, narrowing his eyes at his brother. "You mean let's go get *both of us* some food."

Ed looks over his shoulder at him with a fond eye roll. "Yeah sure. Let's go get *both of us* some food." Al nods his head in approval as they walk past Elicia and Nina's room. Gracia is still moving around the kitchen when they walk in, so Ed walks over to her. "Do you need any help?"

Gracia turns to him with a raised eyebrow, but she lowers it when she sees that Al's appearance has returned to normal. "I'm almost done, but you can get the plates down for me if you really want to help." Nodding his head in understanding, Ed walks over to the cupboard he knows the Hughes's keep their plates. As Ed collects two plates from the cupboard, Gracia turns to Al. "Why don't you go wait at the table? We'll be out in a minute." Al casts a confused glance between her and his brother before nodding his head and leaving the kitchen. "You two seem more comfortable than when you left."

A small laugh escapes Ed. "Of course you picked up on that." He shakes his head slightly while handing her the plates. "It wasn't anything big, we both thought the other was missing

their 'real' brother. By which I mean the Ed whose place I took and the Al I left behind."

A small smile forms on Gracia's face as she starts plating up their food. "I'm glad you understood what I meant last time you were here, at least subconsciously. I could tell you were both slightly unsure with each other despite the obvious love between you." She picks up one of the plates, leaving Ed to pick up the second.

Once she's placed Al's plate in front of him, Gracia starts moving towards the hall. "Both of you get some rest once you've eaten." She turns to Ed briefly. "I assume you'll be leaving with Maes in the morning, so I won't see you again for a while now. But know you're always welcome here."

Nodding his head at her once, Ed places his own plate on the table in front of Al's place. "Thank you. Good night, Gracia." Smiling at the two brothers as Ed takes a seat, Gracia turns down the hall to head to her room.

The Elric's eat in silence once Gracia is gone. Al is tired after the long train ride and Ed is comfortable in the silence. After finishing his food, Al starts nodding off in his seat which causes Ed to chuckle a bit. "You go get ready for bed, Al. I'll wash up." Al goes to argue but Ed just picks both their plates up before heading for the kitchen. He can hear Al sigh dramatically behind him, but he does actually do as he's told and head down the hall towards his room.

Ed wakes up early the next morning and borrows Al's hairbrush to remove all of the knots in his hair before putting it back in his usual braid. After doing an unnecessary check of his suitcase for his Alchemy research and the books from Hohenheim's study, he heads out in to the kitchen.

Maes is up, dressed and eating breakfast in the kitchen when Ed walks in. There's also a half empty cup of coffee behind him. Ed nods his head towards the cup. "You have any more?"

A chuckle escapes the man before he nods his head. "Yeah. I didn't make too much today but I made sure to make enough so you could have one as well."

Reaching for one of the mugs on the mug tree on his way past, Ed heads towards the coffee machine. "Thanks." He doesn't say anything else before taking a sip of coffee. He knows most of it's effects are placebo, but fuck it Ed *likes* coffee. Maes offers him the last of his breakfast but Ed shakes his head in denial of the offer. "Thanks but I don't usually eat breakfast." Maes narrows his eyes at him for a second before reminding himself that Ed is actually a grown man like himself and has likely been living like that for many years by this point. So if Ed doesn't want to eat breakfast, who is Maes to make him. Oh yeah, the current guardian of his brother.

Knowing that his eldest charge would be glad to tell his brother off for not eating properly, he smirks at Ed. To his credit, Ed seems to understand immediately what that smirk means for him because he takes something off of Maes's plate with an annoyed grumble. "Thank you. Finish your coffee while I wash this and I'll give you a ride in." Ed nods his head and starts working on the rest of his coffee.

Maes is at the front door putting on his boots as Ed moves in to the kitchen to wash out his mug. After grabbing his suitcase from the kitchen's entrance, he heads to meet him at the front door. Maes starts unlocking the door as Ed pulls on his boots and coat, making sure to flip his braid out of the collar as always. "Ready to go?" Ed nods his head so Maes opens the door for them before locking it behind them.

## Chapter End Notes

Posted this in a bit of a rush before leaving for work so please ignore any mistakes I missed in my very brief check over it or point them out to me and I'll fix them when my shift is over, otherwise enjoy!

# Chapter 27

## Chapter Summary

Rose appears in Central

## Chapter Notes

I know it probably feels like Rose has only just left the story, and it's a quick escalation of the Liore situation but it's been three weeks in world

After his return from Resembool the next week passes by rather quickly. He spends a day searching for a good material to wrap around his bands to make proper handles for himself when they're transmuted. As he walks past Central library, he remembers Sheska and how she'll likely get fired again now that the library won't burn down and makes a note to talk to her soon.

At the end of his week after his trip to Resembool, he finds Rose waiting at the entrance to Central Command. Her worried face lights up in relief when he walks over to her. "Edward!"

He leads the woman away from the building. He has a feeling what she's going to tell him and it won't do anyone any good to have this conversation in a military building. Instead, he leads her in to the busy streets of Central City as he checks her for any obvious injuries. "Are you okay Rose?"

He finally stops leading her around as they come to a stop at a fountain near one of the bigger parks in the city. "I'm fine. But there's an uprising going on in Liore, riots starting all over the place. Half of the priests have apologised and are trying to calm the mob but half of them are seemingly agitating them on purpose. You exposed Father Cornello surely there's something you can do to help."

As he shakes his head she takes a seat on the edge of the fountain to look up at him. "I'm sorry, but if it's already gotten to this point then anything I said would be twisted by both sides to fit their agenda. It could make everything so much worse, the best thing to do is just wait it out." She nods her head almost numbly as he sits down next to her, like she knew what his answer would be before she asked but was hoping otherwise. "You were smart to leave when you did, Liore can be repaired when all of this is over, but your life can't."

A small smile forms at that. "I wasn't the only one. Me and Isaac have been trying to talk sense in to the people. Not everyone was willing to believe us, and even fewer were willing

to leave when the riots started breaking out. I started advising people to leave for while when tensions started getting high. A few listened to me and have gone to live with family for a couple weeks. Some only listened to me when fights started to break out. Most refused to listen at all and have stayed in Liore." She smiles sadly up at him. "Anyone who had family or friends elsewhere left to go stay with them. Anyone who was leaving that didn't have anywhere else to go came with me and Isaac who were coming to find you."

Ed stands up and offers his hand to help her up as well. "I assume you're staying in one of the hotels around here?" She nods her head as she stands up. "I'll walk you back. If you need help paying for your rooms just let me know." He thinks back on how long the riots lasted last time to tell her how long she should stay. He can't remember exactly but he thinks they only lasted about two weeks. "The riots should die down soon enough. But I'd say stay in Central for two weeks to be safe. A week and a half at least if you're eager to get back to your homes."

Rose takes the lead as they walk towards the hotel she and the other Liore escapees are staying in. "Thank you, Edward."

They spend the rest of the walk in silence, walking away from the expensive hotels near the busier streets in Central to the cheaper ones. The roads get quieter as they go and Ed wonders how far away from Central Command he'll end up. But right as he thinks that, Rose stops walking and enters one of the buildings. He follows her inside without a second thought. The room Rose enters is full of people, thirteen in total not counting him and Rose. "You found him then?" He recognises Isaac the second he speaks, but that can be attributed to him being the only person in the room Ed knows barring Rose. When she nods her head in agreement, Isaac turns his attention on him. "Sorry for bothering you. I told her you wouldn't be able to do anything to help us."

He winces slightly but nods his head, Isaac is right after all. "Sorry. If my help would do any good I would. But anything I tried to do now could just make everything worse." Isaac nods in agreement while Rose puffs her cheeks in annoyance in a way that reminds him of Winry. She does that when she gets embarrassed as well. "I told Rose this before, but I'm here so I might as well tell you myself. The riots should die down soon, but you should stay here for at least two weeks to be safe. A week and a half at the *very* least if you really need to return. But if your need for returning is money, just ask. I'd rather give you money and you be safe then you go off and die because you didn't ask. On top of that, let me know when you do decide to go back, because I assume you'll all be going back at once." Everyone in the room nods their head in agreement so Ed continues. "I need to get back before people start wondering what trouble I got myself in to this time. But if you need to contact me, phone Central Command and ask if I'm available. If I'm not, don't leave a message just tell the operator that Rose or Isaac tried to get in contact and I'll head over as soon as I can okay?" After everyone makes a show of understanding, he turns to the rooms door. "Stay safe." With that he heads out of the hotel and starts backtracking towards Central Command.

It takes nearly an hour and a half for him to get back, he hadn't realised just how far away from the middle of Central Rose had led him. The team let out slight breaths of relief when he finally walks in the door but Havoc is the only one to actually address it. "Glad you could

make it in today. We were starting to worry you had gotten your leg destroyed in another alley." Ed snorts a little at his joke even as he taps his ear in Fuery's direction.

Without wasting another second, Fuery starts scanning the room for bugs even as Ed responds to Havoc. "How rude. I don't make a habit of destroying my leg you know. Mechanics don't take kindly to their work being destroyed so it's something I generally try to avoid." Havoc laughs at him as Fuery's device beeps the all clear. "Anyway, the reason I'm late is because I ran into Rose. She was waiting for me outside when I arrived. Her appearance could only mean one thing so I walked her back to the hotel she was staying in which was a bit of a walk away."

Mustang walks out in to the main office as he explains where he was. "Good of you to finally join us Shining."

Ed rolls his eyes at him. "Well I *was* just explaining where I was but I suppose I could stop if you'd rather be sarcastic." Hawkeye just shakes her head at the two of them while Havoc and Breda fight back laughs. Falman and Fuery just watch the interaction silently, waiting for Ed to continue. Ending their little staring match, Ed turns back around to the rest of the room. "Anyway, the riots in Liore have finally started so Rose, Isaac and a small group of other Liore residents got out before it reached it's current state. Which means that Envy will be on the board in about two weeks. Because they'll have been stuck in Liore playing the part of the fraud. Once the riots are over Father will be fine to move them around at will."

Walking further in to the office to stop in front of him, Mustang looks down at Ed. "You didn't say anything about them leaving Liore last time, this won't mess with anything will it?"

Nobody speaks as Ed thinks on the question. Because, annoyingly, the bastard raises a good point. Rose and Isaac *didn't* leave Liore last time. In fact he didn't hear of anyone leaving Liore before the riots started. But once the riots are over nothing else of importance happens in Liore. The fight with Pride and Gluttony took place there, but that was because Pride had managed to take control of Al. With no suit of armour to manipulate, that fight doesn't have to take place, or at least not in Liore. So it changes things slightly, but not in too major of a way. "Not really. It changes the timeline for one of the fights but me turning Gluttony would've done that anyway. So no, nothing should be affected by this. Especially because they all plan on going back to Liore in two weeks when the riots die down."

Content with the answer, Mustang nods his head before turning back to his office. "Good. If you realise anything has changed let us know immediately and we can start planning around it."

Ed rolls his eyes in fake annoyance. "Of course, Lord Fuhrer." Havoc chokes on a laugh at Ed's tone causing Breda to elbow him in the side. Mustang just shakes his head in poorly hidden amusement before heading for the ever growing stack of paper work on his desk. Deciding it better to just leave his team to it and let Riza sort them out and get them back to work.

# Chapter 28

## Chapter Summary

Sheska gets a new job

## Chapter Notes

An early upload today because I won't be able to update until late otherwise so I might forget

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

Ed decides to lay low for the time being until Rose's group returns to Liore. So he spends two weeks just going to and from Central Command and the military room he's currently occupying. He also makes a few trips to Central's library in those two weeks to talk to Sheska. Because with the library not currently at risk of burning down, he knows that she's likely to lose her job again.

So he makes a few trips to the library and wakes Sheska up when she falls asleep or gets her to stop reading the books she's supposed to be sorting or putting back out.

On his third trip to the library, after he's pulled a book out of Sheska's hands and put it on the shelf, he turns to her and asks her how she hasn't been fired yet. Making sure to keep his tone light so that she can tell it's a joke or at least sarcastic. She laughs sheepishly and rubs the back of her neck. "Funny you should say that. My manager threatened to fire me the other day if I didn't stop reading all the books."

Ed picks up another of the books from the trolley and places it on the shelf. "Have you read everything in here?" She nods her head again so he raises an eyebrow at her. "Even the military documents kept here?" She nods again, but slower this time. "Could you tell me if there's anything in here pertaining to the Scar case?" He doesn't really need anything from the library, especially not on Scar's case, but he needs to get her talking about her photographic memory so he can offer her a job on Maes's team. (Not out of the blue, he had talked to Maes about her and he agreed that she would be a great help on his team.)

Sheska finally starts shelving the books as well as she nods her head. "There's a few old files, but no one is allowed to check them out. They don't really like people looking in the military section either."



Faking a sigh, Ed moves the trolley to the next shelf. "I don't suppose you've read it and could summarise for me?"

She hesitates for a second before nodding her head. "I can copy it down for you if you really need it." He tilts his head at her in a silent question which causes her eyes to widen in realisation. "Oh, right. I have a photographic memory. I only need to read something once to memorise it and I *have* read those files against the managers wishes."

Reaching for the last book, Ed looks over at her. "You have a photographic memory?" Sheska nods her head in answer. "Why haven't you looked for a job that suits your skills? If you want I can put in a word for you with Lieutenant Colonel Hughes if you want? I know he'd find someone with a photographic memory a great addition to his team."

Her head snaps up to look at him. "You'd really do that for me?"

Ed nods his head in agreement. "His team fall behind on their paperwork and lose files with how much information they have to deal with. You'd be a great help to them I'm sure." Sheska gives him a shy smile so he nods his head. "I'll go talk to him now, though fair warning he may just show up and drag you away from here in his excitement but I promise you he's harmless." She pales slightly when he mentions how Hughes might just show up and pull her away, but it's better for her to know it'll happen rather than him just appearing and kidnapping her. Ed leaves the library to head over to Mustang's office in Central Command.

Throwing the door open to his office, Ed looks around for Maes. The man in question looks up from his paperwork at the bang of the door hitting the wall to stare at Ed in fond exasperation. "Yo, Maes!" He walks over to his desk. "I found someone I think would make a great addition to your team and she's soon to be in need of a job." Maes's eyebrow rises at that. Ed had of course told him about Sheska, and Maes had agreed to hire her as a part of his team if the woman loses hers at the library. "Her name is Sheska, she currently works at Central Library and she has a photographic memory." He sees a couple members of the investigation team perk up at the idea of that. He learnt enough in his last life time that having to consistently find old documents takes up a *lot* of their time. Having someone who can just *remember* all of that information would greatly cut down how much time they waste.

Maes has to play along as if he doesn't already know all this though, so he stands up from his desk with an eager grin. "She's hired!" Ed rolls his eyes at him in amusement, sure Maes had already agreed to hire her, but he hired her last time with no hesitation as well. "You said she works at Central Library?" When Ed nods his head in agreement, Maes moves out from behind his desk. "I'm heading out for lunch. We'll have a new team member when I get back!" Everyone in the office is more than used to Maes's behaviour so they all go back to their work without delay once he's left. Ed gives a two fingered salute before turning and leaving as well. Like they have with Maes, they've gotten used to Ed's attitude over the year and know he doesn't mean any offence with his half hearted salutes or abrupt attitude so they just wave him out the room.

Ed walks through the halls of Central Command again towards Mustang's office this time. He hasn't checked in for a day he should probably make sure that the bastard doesn't need him to do anything. He gives the door to Mustang's office the same treatment that Maes's got. Which

means it gets slammed open as a greeting to the people inside. Havoc looks up from his desk, before looking back down before he can say anything when Hawkeye lifts her gun in warning. "Sorry to disturb you, just remembered I didn't check in yesterday, just wanted to make sure I didn't miss anything."

Hawkeye places her gun back in her holster as she regards Ed. "No, you didn't miss anything. I believe the Colonel wished to speak with you however."

Nodding his head in agreement, Ed moves over to Mustang's office. Mustang looks up from his paperwork once the door closes behind Ed and taps his ear three times, telling him that the room has already been checked for bugs and they're able to talk freely. "I heard that the riots in Liore have escalated. Casualties are rising but Bradley has 'assured us' that it won't escalate further. Basically telling us that it won't be another Ishval situation."

A small sigh escapes Ed as he collapses on to the couch. "Which just means they don't *need* it to escalate. The crest of blood is already carved out or near enough that they don't need to escalate it. And since this wasn't an attack from the military they have no need to continue it for appearances. Once the crest is completed they have no need for these uprisings." He taps his foot on the floor a few times before turning his head to look over at Mustang. "Thanks for letting me know, I'll go see Rose tomorrow and let her know." He throws his head over the back of the couch. "I'm using your couch to take a nap. Done way to much socialising trying to get Sheska to open up naturally." Mustang just rolls his eyes at him but gestures to the couch anyway, silently telling him he can do what he wants. Because he knows he will anyway.

## Chapter End Notes

We're getting ever so slowly closer to the next appearance of the Homunculi

# Chapter 29

## Chapter Summary

Ed makes a plan to get lab 5 blown up again

## Chapter Notes

We're nearly at 30 chapters already and I have no idea what the final count is going to be

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

As he said he would, the next morning Ed heads down to the hotel where Rose is saying to give her the news about the state of Liore.

Isaac is the one to open the door for him and he seems surprised by his arrival so early in the morning. "Hey Isaac, sorry about the early morning call." Isaac just shakes his head in dismissal before letting him in to the room. "I've just been given confirmation that the military isn't going to be getting involved in Liore. They believe it's going to die down on it's own in a few days. So I came by to let you know that you can all head home soon."

A few people in the room look up at him at that, probably excited to be able to go home. "Thank you for letting us know. We were reaching the limit of our budget so this is good news." When Ed frowns at him he shakes his head. "We would have asked you for help if we needed to, but none of us wanted to. So to know that we can return home soon is good news."

Looking around the room, Ed notices that Rose isn't in. "Where's Rose gone this early?"

Noticing the slight note of panic in his voice, Isaac is quick to calm him down. "She went out to go get some food, don't worry."

Unable to help himself, Ed lets out a sigh of relief. "I assume you'll all be heading back at the end of the week, so I'll leave you to start packing up and planning." He heads for the door before turning back around to Isaac and pointing an accusatory finger at Isaac. "If you need anything before then, *please* ask me." After a few seconds Isaac nods his head in agreement so Ed finally leaves the room to head to head to the office.

Given that's it's only just turned seven in the morning, Ed isn't too surprised that there isn't many people out and about yet. As he walks back towards the office he thinks of what his next move needs to be. He already has Scar on side so he doesn't need to try and lure him out

to talk to him, but he *will* need to meet him at some point to fully explain everything to him. But the first thing he needs to do is shut down their production of Philosopher's Stones. If he's going to be going around sending the existing ones beyond the Gate, they're bound to start creating more of them when they realise their existing stock is diminishing.

Only Mustang and Hawkeye are in the office when he arrives. He nods in greeting to Hawkeye before walking in to Mustang's office. "You're here early Ed." Not needing to be told, Mustang is already scanning his office for bugs.

Playing along for now, Ed nods his head. "Yeah, well. I woke up and couldn't go back to sleep so I decided to come in early."

Once they hear the beep that tells them they're all clear of bugs, Mustang gives him his full attention. "What did you really come here so early for?"

Ed laughs at how easily Mustang has understood him. "Rose's group will be heading back to Liore at the end of the week. Once they've left I need to make a trip to the Fifth Laboratory."

Mustang's head tilts in slight confusion. "That laboratory isn't in use. Why would you need to go there?"

After a second Ed understands Mustang's confusion. "Right I never explained that they were still using the lab did I?" Mustang raises an eyebrow at him in disbelief before shaking his head. "Sorry. In my defence there's an awful lot of shit going on right now. Anyway, the Fifth Laboratory is being used in secret to create more Philosopher's Stones. It's right next to the prison and they're using death row inmates to create the Stones. Kimblee is being kept in that prison as well but they won't use him for a Stone. He's a valuable piece for them, can be utilised when they need him put on the board. They blew it up last time once I started poking around and I'm *hoping* that if I go poking around they'll blow it up again."

A few seconds pass as Mustang watches Ed, gauging how serious he is. "You want to go poke around a laboratory that only the Homunculi are using."

Turning his head away from Mustang, Ed nods. "It's also guarded by three serial killers. All Soul bound to suits of armour, one outside and the other two inside in the same suit."

At this extra information, Mustang lets out a heavy sigh and pinches the bridge of his nose in exasperation. "So you want to go poking around a laboratory used only by the Homunculi *and* guarded by literal serial killers that can kill you but can't be killed themselves."

Ed nods his head before he can't help himself from correcting Roy's assumption. "They can be killed. I'd like not to kill them but they can be. If you take the armour apart and separate the part with the blood seal from the rest of the body it can't move. At that point all you'd have to do is destroy or the blood seal. By scratching or washing the blood off, or as Lust did stabbing straight through the seal."

Mustang watches him for a few seconds. "Nothing you're telling me is filling me with confidence." Ed opens his mouth to protest so Mustang holds up a hand to silence him. "Yes I know you've done all this before and you were fine, but that doesn't mean nothing will go

wrong this time. Especially since you don't have your no array alchemy this time around." Ed can't really say anything to dispute that, but he's going anyway so Mustang's worries won't stop him from going. "Take Hawkeye with you."

Before Ed can say anything, Mustang is up from his desk and walks towards the door to the outer office. Opening the door Mustang beckons Hawkeye in to the office. Once the door is closed behind Hawkeye, Mustang returns to his desk. "Sir? What did you need?"

From behind his desk, Mustang gestures at Ed, who knows that it means Mustang wants *him* to explain. With a sigh, he turns to face Hawkeye. "The short version is I need to go poke around Laboratory 5 which is still in use by only the Homunculi in the hopes that they'll blow it up again. There's a killer bound to a suit of armour guarding the outside and two in the same suit guarding the inside. Colonel Bastard wants you to go with me."

Hawkeye studies him for a few seconds before nodding her head. "Very well."

Ed can't help the noise of annoyance that builds in the back of his throat. "Fine. But you're not coming inside the building, you likely wouldn't fit in the vent I'm going to use anyway, it's very small. You stay outside and guard the first guy, I'll handle the second."

Clearly not happy with someone else giving her orders Hawkeye raises an eyebrow at him, but Mustang talks before she can say anything. "Lieutenant, do as he says. Whenever he goes, you are under his command. I believe he just doesn't want you near the Homunculi nor to be inside the building when it collapses." Ed nods his head in agreement. After all, it's a gamble on whether or not *he'll* be saved. He isn't a known sacrifice this time, so he has to hope that becoming a State Alchemist so young has put him in their line of sight and they won't let him die so easily. That they'll at least *attempt* to keep him alive.

## Chapter End Notes

I finally bough myself a new laptop! Which means no more ghost input q key spams 3-8 times a day, all of the keys actually work now and so does the mousepad!

# Chapter 30

## Chapter Summary

The Liore group go back home

## Chapter Notes

Lab starts next chapter, they needed to make a plan before they could go

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

Set on waiting for the Liore group to leave, another week passes before Ed plans to go to Laboratory 5. The day they leave, Ed sees them to the train station, wanting to make sure they get there without any hassle.

As they're waiting for the train to arrive, Ed turns to Rose. "I'm sorry I couldn't be of much help for you but thank you for coming to me. If anything like this happens again, you can come ask for help again and I'll help if I can."

Rose watches him for a second before nodding her head. "Thank you, Ed. For some reason knowing you were looking out for us was reassuring, despite your age." Ed has to bite back a laugh at that as she continues speaking. "I know you probably would have found out about the riots anyway, with you being in the military, but I'm sorry to have brought this to you even though Isaac had already told me you wouldn't be able to stop it."

Ed shakes his head at her. "Rose, I meant it, I'm glad you brought this to me, even though I couldn't really do anything to help you."

The train pulls up to the station as he finishes speaking. As the group start getting on to the train, Isaac gently pushes Rose on to the train. But before he gets on himself, he turns around to face Ed. "Thank you for your generosity, Edward." Ed nods in acknowledgement as Isaac turns around to get on the train.

After watching the train leave the platform, Ed leaves the station to head towards Central Command. Both Mustang and Hawkeye should be there by now despite the relatively early hour, so they can start planning for the trip to Laboratory 5.

Barging in to the main office, Ed is glad to see that his assumption is right and Hawkeye is sat at her desk so he can assume Mustang is in his office. "Good Morning, Edward. You're here early."

Making a noise of agreement, Ed taps his ear with one hand as he gestures to Mustang's office with the other. "Is Mustang in yet?"

As she starts scanning the office for bugs, Hawkeye nods her head in answer. "Yes, Colonel Mustang is in." When the all clear beep sounds out in the office, Ed drops the pretence and walks over to Mustang's office.

Opening the door he looks at Mustang and jerks his head back, silently telling Roy to come in to the main office. Putting his pen down, Roy stands up from behind his desk and walks in to the main office. Once the door to his personal office is closed, he turns to look at Ed. "I assume the Liore group have left now?"

Ed nods in agreement. "Yep, just saw them on to the train. So I wanted to start making a plan for when I go poking around the laboratory." Roy nods his head in understanding before gesturing for Ed to keep talking. "Obviously you have to pretend as if you didn't know I went there, and Hawkeye you'll have to pretend I didn't *plan* to go poking around. I'll be going at night so there's less risk of any witnesses, so if anyone asks why you went with me, you tell them that you saw me walking around late at night and were worried or curious as to what I was doing out so late."

Standing up from her desk to meet them in the middle of the room, Hawkeye nods her head in understanding. "You're still ordering me to stay outside of the building?"

Without hesitation, Ed nods his head. "Yes." Seeing that Hawkeye still isn't happy with this order, Ed explains why. "Firstly, I don't want to kill the first guard so I'll need someone to keep an eye on him. The second gave up once I beat them and were about to tell me everything before Lust and Envy killed them so they aren't much of a problem. But if I *can* get the Homunculi to blow up the lab again I'm not even sure they'll rescue *me* this time. I might have to find my own way out of the building. The reason they were so adamant about keeping me alive last time was because I was a precious Human sacrifice. They don't know I've committed the taboo this time, so I'm banking on my Alchemical skill to have peaked their interest enough to at least *try* and keep me alive. Even if they don't go to the same extent as last time to keep me safe. You can't use Alchemy so they would have no reason to keep you alive. They would likely either kill you outright or knock you out and leave you there to die once they blow up the building. I'm not about to unnecessarily put you in that much danger."

Mustang nods his head, seemingly unsure to let him go now that he knows his survival isn't guaranteed. But he continues anyway. "When are you going to go?"

Ed looks up at him. "Tomorrow night."

Neither of them say anything for a few seconds, both just staring down at him. Eventually, Mustang breaks the silence. "You want to go poking around in an 'unused' laboratory that you're hoping to get blown up *while you're still inside* and just *hope* that the inhuman monsters decide you're important enough to save? And you want to give us a day to plan this?"

Well when he puts it like that it sounds insane. "To be fair, I didn't even *plan* to do it last time. But after we found out about Marco's research we figured out that they were using the death row prisoners to make the Philosopher's Stones and snuck out of our hotel room to go investigate."

As Mustang tries to move past the stupidity behind the idea of going to a laboratory you believe to be being used to sacrifice Human's without *telling someone you were going*, Hawkeye turns her attention to Ed. "Do you really need to go so soon? Can it not wait?"

After thinking through it for a second, Ed shakes his head. "I could *technically* leave it for a little longer. But the sooner we take out their easiest and biggest way of creating Philosopher's Stone's the better. I'd rather cut off their production before anything else happens. Because while they can just gather innocent people to make the Stones. They would need to spend time finding people who no one would notice are missing or they run the risk of making the rest of Amestris aware of themselves before they're ready to activate the nationwide array. Which would likely just result in a mass massacre."

With a solemn look on her face, Hawkeye nods in understanding. "You're right. It is better to slow their operations now rather than let them continue without issues." Letting out a small sigh of relief at her understanding, Ed nods his head. "I'll stay in the office until half nine tomorrow night, you head to the laboratory and I'll meet you there at ten."

Running through everything that needs to happen tomorrow in his head, Ed nods in agreement. "Don't head for the front gate, it's guarded. Meet me around the side of the building instead. I'll use Alchemy to make us a way in." Hawkeye nods in acceptance before returning to her desk to continue her paperwork.

## Chapter End Notes

I was talking to a friend the other day and said how no one I know knows this account and he took it as a challenge and is now trying to find it. Despite knowing that he doesn't use ao3 so would find it hard to navigate and knowing that he doesn't remember what this fic is about (cause I've talked to him about it) part of me is kinda nervous that he'll manage it even though I really don't think he will. Not without a hint or two at least



# Chapter 31

## Chapter Summary

They arrive at the lab and deal with Barry

## Chapter Notes

It's been getting steadily warmer recently and I don't like it. The only blessing is that it's \*also\* been windy as fuck

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

The following night, Ed heads for the laboratory hoping to get there just before ten so that he's already there by the time Hawkeye arrives.

It's just gone ten when Hawkeye stops in front of him. "How long have you been here?"

Ed stands up straight so he's no longer leaning against the wall, to face her properly. "Not long don't worry. You ready?" She nods her head in agreement so he turns around to face the wall. He holds his hands up, ready to clap before pulling his coat off and holding it out to Hawkeye. "Cover my hands for me while I do this? I don't want the light of the transmutation giving us away." Nodding her head, she takes the coat from him and holds it over his wrists and hands as he raises them again to clap.

The wall in front of them gives way to make them an entrance and they step through before Ed turns back around to replace the wall. Once it's back in one piece, Hawkeye steps back and hands Ed's coat back to him. As Ed pulls his coat back on, Hawkeye starts pulling her gun from her holster. "Please don't use your gun." She looks up from where she was unlatching the safety. "If you're in danger of course you can use it. But *please* just let me handle the fighting."

Normally, Hawkeye wouldn't take kindly to anyone, not even Mustang some times, telling her not to use her gun. Especially in a dangerous situation, but something in his tone is telling her there's a reason for his request, so she flicks the safety back on her gun. She won't put it away, but she *will* respect his request. "Is this something to do with the last time you came to this lab?"

He nods his head in agreement, still flooded with relief after seeing and hearing her flick the safety back on her gun. "Maria Ross fired a single bullet at Barry last time while she was here, that one bullet was then used to frame her for Maes's murder."

Hawkeye nods her head at him softly. "Okay then, I won't fire it unless either of us are in real danger of dying."

Ed smiles at her, he had never expected her to holster her gun, but he's glad she's agreed not to fire it. "Let's go find Barry. I want you guarding him before I enter the building." They start walking the outside of the building, waiting for a suit of armour to jump on them. If it wasn't completely stupid and unnecessarily dangerous, he'd use Hawkeye as bait to draw Barry out, knowing how obsessed he is with women.

Luckily for Ed's waning patience they run in to Barry as soon as they reach the back side of the building. Or more accurately, Barry jumps from the roof on top of them. Ed only barely dodges his cleaver as he jumps out of the way, the clanking of the armour having given the killer away. Barry stands up from his crouch, pointing his cleaver at him. "Hand over the woman!"

Looking from Barry to Hawkeye, he turns to the armour bound Soul with a raised eyebrow. "I don't think you know what you're getting in to here. But the answer's no anyway." Barry doesn't take kindly to him refusing to give him Hawkeye and he jumps forwards again with his cleaver. He jumps backwards again, no longer willing to take his eyes off of the cleaver. When he's just out of arm's reach, he spares a second to clap and transform one of his bands. Holding the knife in front of him, he suddenly feels a *little* better knowing that he has *something* to try blocking that cleaver with other than his skin.

Trying to avoid the cleaver is difficult to no one's surprise. But after a few minutes of close calls, Ed finally manages to knock Barry's helmet off, revealing the blood seal inside. Barry's laughs like a maniac once his secret is revealed. But when no reaction comes from either of them, the laughter stops. "Seriously? Neither of you want to react at all? An exclamation of shock? A scream? Not even an intake of breath?!"

Taking advantage of Barry's confusion, Ed lunges forwards knocking Barry off of his feet on to his back. He taps the tip of his knife right below his blood seal. "I bound a Soul to a suit of armour when I was twelve and missing an arm. This isn't new territory for me." He lifts the point of his knife off of the metal and hovers it over the seal. "You will stay here while I go inside the lab under Hawkeye's watch, but if you touch a single hair on her head while I'm gone I will poke your blood seal with sewing needles until it all flakes away." With his threat made he gets up and stands in front of Hawkeye. "I'm going to head inside, he probably won't try anything with you, but just in case all you need to do is damage his blood seal."

Hawkeye looks over his shoulder at where Barry is standing up. "Edward, are you okay? You struck me as the type of person that would try to avoid killing people. Yet you just very violently threatened him."

Ed shrugs his shoulders slightly as he moves to stand underneath his entrance point. "I used to be like that. I couldn't stomach the thought of taking a life. But well, my hands aren't as spotless as they used to be. There isn't many skeletons in my closet but there's a couple. Now I'm a person who'll kill if he has to, but I'd still prefer to save a life." He turns slightly to look over at Barry. "He made Al believe he wasn't real for a bit last time. Made him think I made him up and got everyone in on the joke. Never got the anger out." He turns back to the building. "Can I get a boost?"

Silently, Hawkeye holsters her gun before walking over towards Ed. As Ed is pulling himself in to the small space, she picks her gun back up. "Be careful if they do show up." He nods his head in agreement before manoeuvring himself around so he can crawl through the small space. Once Ed starts moving, Hawkeye turns around to face Barry, pointing her gun at him, pointedly taking the safety off.

## Chapter End Notes

I thought for so long for a decent threat against someone who can't feel physical pain, but I feel like chipping away at their blood seal would bring a level of discomfort if not pain which is the best Ed can do

# Chapter 32

## Chapter Summary

Ed takes care of the Slicer Brothers

## Chapter Notes

Can you tell that I struggled writing this fight for some reason?

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

Only halfway through the vent system of the building and Ed's hair is already full of cobwebs. Brushing them all out later is going to be a bitch. He knows that he should have bigger issues right now, mainly the serial killer he's about to fight, but he already knows the danger he's walking in to so he doesn't need to waste his energy worrying about that.

Immediately after dropping out of the vent at his destination he can hear the clinking of a suit of armour moving in the shadows. He drops in to a fighting stance, making sure to use the drawn out arrays stored in his pockets to form his knives just in case Lust and Envy are already around and watching.

As soon as Ed steps in to the room properly to look at the blood stained transmutation circle, the brothers lunge at him. "Let's see what you've got." Ed manages to jump out of the way of the initial strike, using his knives to redirect the next few attacks. "You've got some skill I see. No matter, you're still no match for me."

Jumping backwards to put some space between them, Ed narrows his eyes at them, holding both of his knives out in front of him, one crossed over the other. Ready to defend himself or deflect their sword at a moments notice. He hasn't forgotten how fast the younger brother can move the body. "Who are you?"

The older brother laughs. "I am Slicer." He lifts the cloth over where his mouth would be. "If you want to win this fight, you need to destroy this seal."

Ed laughs at him. "Giving up your weakness to your opponent is dangerous you know."

Slicer laughs back. "It is of no consequence to me. You will not be able to reach it."

Knowing he at least needs to knock the helmet off so he can fight the younger brother properly, Ed starts thinking of a plan. After a few quick seconds of thinking, he settles on using the same tactic as last time to knock the helmet off.

Keeping his face as stoic as possible, Ed glances over their shoulder. Looking in to the corner of the room that the brother's have their back to. "Hawkeye, now!" As the brothers turn to look behind them in alarm, Ed leaps forwards to knock the helmet off. He gets one of his knives inside the helmet and pulls it away as he jumps past them. It clatters to the floor as he lands.

That's one brother taken care of.

The older brother laughs darkly. "That was a dirty trick."

Ed looks down at him. "There's no such thing as dirty in a fight. Now that I've beaten you, tell me what this room is."

Footsteps ring out behind him and Ed knows the younger brother is about to attack him. "Ah but that's where you're wrong. You haven't won yet. Slicer was actually two brothers."

With that, Ed hears the sound of the clothes on the armour ruffling as the younger brother raises his sword. He doesn't quite manage to dodge the blade, it catches him slightly on his hip, but it doesn't feel like a dangerous cut. Nowhere near as deep as the last one was. He might not even need to be hospitalised after this.

Swearing, Ed readjusts the grip on his knives. "As my older brother had done, I will show you this courtesy as well." He bows slightly so that Ed can see his blood seal. "This is what you have to aim for."

Not wasting another second, the younger brother straightens up and charges at Ed again and again. The pain from the new wound on his hip flares up every time he dodges an attack. He's unable to get a proper stance to attack from, the younger brother is relentless, refusing to give him even a second to balance himself so he can attack. Which is annoying because Ed didn't exactly make a plan to get himself out of this without giving away his no array Alchemy. Not that his attacker is going to give him time to pull out an array.

Which means that he's likely going to have to brute force his way out of this. Either by knocking the body down before threatening to damage the blood seal, or dig around in his pockets for a destruction array while dodging before knocking him down so he has one ready to use.

After deciding on the latter, Ed starts trying to put some more space between him and his attacker so that he can rifle through his pockets. But every time he pulls out an array not only is it not the one he's looking for, but the younger brother gets close enough to attack him again.

By the time Ed plucks the destruction array from his pockets, he has a small collection of cuts to match the wound on his hip. Luckily they're all surface wounds. They'll barely need a bandage as the only blood is a few drops that have bubbled up to the surface. But all the cuts are too shallow for any blood to escape. Well except for the one on his forehead. But the hair that's stuck to the wound is keeping the blood out of his eyes, therefore it doesn't fall very high on Ed's list of priorities.

What does rank high on the list is the fact that he won't have enough force in his normal leg to knock the armour over. Holding himself up on his flesh leg Ed throws the metal one out as hard as he can. The sword strikes his leg as he makes contact with the armour's chest but Ed pays no attention to it because his plan worked.

Wasting no time, Ed claps his hands and presses them on to the array. Detaching the legs from the chest. Picking one of his knives back up, Ed leans down to the armour. "Don't move, stay quiet." He whispers. Before stabbing the armour right next to the seal. Standing up he walks over to the helmet and picks it up. "Don't tell me." He whispers, making sure the helmet covers his mouth from where the Homunculi appeared last time. "What is this place. What happened here?" Understanding what Ed is doing the elder brother holds his tongue. Narrowing his eyes in fake annoyance, Ed raises the knife to the inside of the helmet. "Stay quiet." He whispers before slashing the helmet below the blood seal and dropping the helmet to the floor. It clatters on the stone floor and Ed hopes that they'll be able to make it out of here once it gets destroyed. Ed makes a show of looking at the pieces of the body with a guilty look before putting them together again. Using the pencil he carries with him to reverse the destruction array so that he can repair their armour. "That's as close to a burial as I can give you. But you're back together at least." He doubts the brothers will leave this building once it comes down. They'll probably stay here. Might even remove their blood seals themselves. But at least Ed gave them the *choice*.

After the brothers body has been put back together, Ed walks over to a pillar and collapses. The wound on his side is throbbing now so he forces himself to take a few deep breaths. He's sat there for barely a minute when he hears it.

The tell-tale click of high heels coming towards him.

## Chapter End Notes

So close to the next Homunculus becoming Human

# Chapter 33

## Chapter Summary

Ed turns Envy

## Chapter Notes

I cannot believe I copied the wrong chapter and didn't even realise but here we are. Here's what was meant to be this weeks upload

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

Picking his knives up from the floor beside him, Ed jumps up in to a fighting stance. Staring at Lust and Envy as they enter the room a few seconds later. "Damn. I didn't expect the pipsqueak to put up that much of a fight, never mind kill them." Envy gives Ed a once over as they enter. Either they're shocked at his supposed 'murder' or they're checking him for injuries. It could be either but he isn't sure that they aren't about to kill him right now.

Lust comes to a stop at the first pillar from the entrance but Envy takes a few more steps towards the brothers and Ed hopes he doesn't check the seal. "I didn't either. But he saved us a job. After all, they could have killed a precious sacrifice."

Huh, well that's a good piece of information to have. Firstly, knowing that they don't plan on killing him immediately for poking around in here and secondly, knowing that he's peaked their interest enough to be counted as a sacrifice. Which was probably the work of the ornamental staff he made during his practical exam. After all it *was* pretty on the nose. He basically called Bradley out even if the Fuhrer doesn't know that. But knowing that he *is* a potential sacrifice is helpful, because it means they'll try to keep him alive even if they don't go out of their way to keep him alive like last time.

When Envy takes a step closer to the brothers, Ed charges at them. "Leave them alone." Envy dodges the hit easily. "Let them rest in peace at least."

Laughing at him, Envy kicks the suit of armour in the chest. "Why? They weren't Human anymore." Filled with annoyance, Ed lunges for them again. "Aww, does that anger you, pipsqueak?" Still holding one hand over his side in an effort to help minimize the bleeding, Ed swings his knife out again. It catches Envy slightly as he pulls it back, causing a small scratch on his chin that stops bleeding in a second. "It does doesn't it."

A sigh rings from the side of the room where Lust is stood. "Envy stop playing with him. We need to abandon this place soon."

Throwing their head over their shoulder, Envy looks over at her. "Fine, fine." They turn back to look at Ed and throw a punch out, in to Ed's stomach that Ed doesn't bother to try blocking. The punch lands right above the wound on his hip, causing pain to spike right through him before he passes out. He sees Lust turn around and walk away from them as he falls. Her heels echoing on the floor again.

Ed wakes up as Envy carries him out of the building and drops him on to the floor at Hawkeye's feet. "What did you do to him?" Hearing his two knives drop next to him, Ed feels a bit of tension leave his body. He doesn't know why Envy bothered to pick them up. Maybe because they seem to be specialty weapons and they don't want to make Ed defenceless as that puts him in more danger of dying. Or maybe Ed's grip on them had tightened as he passed out and he clung on to them as Envy carried him out. Only letting go of them as he was dropped to the floor. That could be possible. After all he *really* didn't want to lose these knives. Whatever the case is, Ed is just glad to still have them.

Envy looks from Hawkeye to Barry before shrugging, it's of no importance to him what they do with the guard. After all he won't have anything to guard now that the lab has been blown up. "You should keep a better eye on him. He could wind up in something dangerous if he isn't careful." The caring tone they're using is massively undermined by the building blowing up behind them.

As they turn around to start walking away, Ed starts pushing himself up so he can make a grab for them. His hip hurts too much now to try and stand up that quickly, so instead he hooks his arm around Envy's ankle and *pulls*, causing them to come crashing down to the floor. Ed barely rolls out of the way to avoid the Homunculi falling directly on top of him.

Unfortunately, Homunculi can't get winded. Their bodies just aren't hardwired like that because they don't even *really* need to breathe. So Ed only has a split second to act while Envy is confused as to what just happened. He pulls himself up enough to move over to Envy's legs and sit on top of them. Hooking his heavier metal leg in between them so that they can't wriggle away as easily. That split second really *is* all the time that Ed gets to anchor himself on top of Envy. Because as soon as they realise what happened, they're trying to untangle their legs from Ed's. Wriggling and writhing underneath him in an attempt to free their leg.

Before Envy can think to raise their arms and start pushing at Ed to knock him away, he claps once and pushes his hands on to Envy's stomach to activate the array immediately stilling their movements as a result.

Hawkeye takes a step closer to them cautiously after they've both stopped moving, concerned for Ed's safety. "Edward?" Upon hearing the hesitancy in her voice, he realises he never actually explained how his array worked. Only that he *had* an array to turn them Human. With that fact brought to his attention, he feels guilty that he didn't think to take the time to explain it to her. After all, he *knew* the chances of this happening were high. But he still didn't think to explain it to her. That she doesn't need to worry when he goes completely still after using it.



'I'll apologise when I get back from the Gate.' Ed thinks to himself as the Eye of Truth opens below them and starts pulling apart him and Envy.

## Chapter End Notes

At least you get two updates this week cause of my fuck up lol

# Chapter 34

## Chapter Summary

Ed confronts Truth about the nickname they gave him

## Chapter Notes

Gotta love Tik Tok, I've not watched a single episode of Stranger Things S4 yet I fell in love with Eddie, back in love with Steve and am now 24 pages deep in the Steddie tag purely because of tt videos

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

When Ed comes to, he spares a second to take a deep breath that won't result in a searing pain from his hip. Ed's pain tolerance is good, but the Slicer brothers katana was *sharp*.

His peace is interrupted by Truth almost immediately which isn't surprising. They're watching him with a wide smile on their face as they applaud him slowly. "Congratulations, Alchemist. Apart from their creator this one held the most of my Souls."

Ed nods his head in understanding as Truth stops clapping. "I thought that might be the case. After all, their other form is *massive* and it's just all the Souls they're made of."

Truth makes a noise that Ed thinks is supposed to be a laugh, it's always a little difficult to tell with Truth. "As per our deal I will leave them with their abilities in tact. You have returned two lots of Souls to me already, Golden Sun. I knew you would be able to do as I have asked."

Upon hearing Truth's nickname for him again, Ed realises he never asked what it was about last time. "What is with that nickname? I understand Alchemist. That one's pretty cut and dry. Even Golden Alchemist. But I don't understand why you call me Golden Sun."

No answer comes for a few seconds before Truth's smile stretches the whole way across their face. Making Ed feel like Truth really *does* find him amusing. "Have you ever heard the tale of Icarus, Alchemist?" Ed stares at him in silence. "It is a tale you Humans created a long time ago. And the shortened version of it, is that a young boy called Icarus tries to reach the sun flying on wings made of wax. They melt, of course, before he can make it. But despite him being warned against it, he tries anyway." Seeing that Ed still doesn't quite understand, Truth continues. "You are not Icarus anymore. You are the sun so many aspire to reach."

Hearing Truth say it like that, Ed suddenly understands what they mean. He's sure many people would kill for the opportunities to talk to Truth that he has. Father alone is trying to kill a whole continent to get that wish. Yet it is Edward that has been granted the privilege. "I was Icarus though last time wasn't I? Making all those deals with you believing that I understood the cost when I didn't."

Truth's smile becomes more sincere. "Icarus you once were yes. But in our last meeting when you bargained your wings to get back your brother, you became the sun."

The Gate starts opening behind Ed as Truth finishes their sentence. "Why me? Why grant me this privilege others would kill for?"

Once again, Truth's smile stretches wide across their face, twitching up in one corner making them look dangerous. "Because, Golden Sun. You are far more interesting than any of them." As the hands start using more force to pull Ed through the Gate, Truth sits down cross legged in their spot. "Maybe I will tell you more on your next trip through the Gate. Or maybe you will already understand by then."

Ed is slightly lightheaded when he comes back from Truth's Domain. A combination of blood loss and Truth's confusing, yet straight forwards words causing him to close his eyes and take a deep breath.

Once again, he is interrupted, this time by Envy. They're still on the floor, pulling themselves in to a sitting position to glare at him. "What the fuck did you do to me?"

Pushing himself to his feet, swaying only a little bit, Ed looks down at them. "I turned you Human. But if you work on them, you'll still have access to your abilities."

Envy is quick to push themselves up so they can lunge forwards to attack Ed, but Hawkeye is quicker. Aiming her gun at them and unlatching the safety in one swift movement. She doesn't want to waste Ed's hard work in turning them Human, but she also isn't willing to let Ed get killed. If she has to shoot Envy to save Ed then so be it, that's a small price to pay.

Understanding seems to hit Envy as they stare at the gun.

Understanding that they won't be able to shake off a bullet wound anymore. The bullet Hawkeye would put in their skull would kill them instantly and they wouldn't be coming back from it. They stare at the gun for a few more seconds before turning their gaze to Ed and then running off.

Hawkeye waits until Envy's footsteps are gone to click the safety back in to place. "Was that a wise decision? Letting them run off like that?"

Ed looks up at her before shrugging his shoulders. "Honestly I don't know yet. I hope it will be fine. But even if they don't go rouge and do run back to Father the biggest Homunculus is off the table." When Hawkeye raises her eyebrow at that description, Ed laughs before explaining. "They're a shapeshifter. That isn't their usual form. Their usual form is a giant green monster filled with all of the Souls that make up their stone. Which is a lot."

As Ed starts to sway again, Hawkeye looks down at the wound on his side. "You need to go to a hospital."

Looking down at the wound as well, Ed lets out a huff of annoyance. "Really? Fuck, I thought I'd be able to escape it."

Shaking her head in fond annoyance, Hawkeye holsters her gun before helping Ed towards the wall so he can make them an exit.

Exit made, Hawkeye puts one of Ed's arms around her shoulders as his free hand presses against the cut. Barry starts to follow after them, so Ed looks over his shoulder to address him. "You shouldn't be seen wandering around the city. Go find somewhere to hide, or find the brothers underneath the rubble. But do not go on a killing spree or my needle threat will be less of a threat and more of a reality."

Laughing at the authority in Ed's tone, Barry salutes him mockingly. "I'll go find the brothers. They're good sparring partners even if the old one is a bit of a stick in the mud."

Ed rolls his eyes at Barry as he climbs over the chain link fence, before sagging against Hawkeye. "Sorry. Getting a bit tired."

Hawkeye nods her head in understanding. "Just hold out until we get to a hospital. Then you can get some sleep."

Knowing that she's right, he *shouldn't* fall asleep now, he picks himself up a little before focusing on matching Hawkeye's pace so that his brain is occupied. "Thanks Hawkeye." She doesn't respond, just keeps leading him through the dark streets towards Central Hospital. Ed is just glad nothing happened to his automail this time.

## Chapter End Notes

Okay so I may have gone on a bit of a tangent about the nickname but I'm not gonna apologise for it because I fell in love with the reasoning and as I've already said I love the relationship between Truth and Ed so I will take any opportunity to gush about it

# Chapter 35

## Chapter Summary

Ed gets the date for his annual assessment and makes a quick visit to Al

## Chapter Notes

Posting in a bit of a rush again so hopefully it's the right chapter this time

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

After spending a week healing from the stab wound on his hip, Ed is cleared for active duty. He's heading for Mustang's office to let the team know that he's fully healed, but is caught on the way in. "Major Elric?" Ed turns to the officer who called his name. "This is for you. It's the date for your annual assessment." Nodding in thanks to the man, Ed takes the letter from him before continuing on his way to Mustang's office.

It seems that Envy went rogue like Greed did. Because if they *had* gone back to Father and told him what happened to them, Ed would likely have been attacked by now. Especially as he was stuck in a hospital bed the night he turned Envy. He hopes Envy will be alright in their newly Human body, or will go find their brother Greed so that they have some help adjusting to being Human and gaining back the use of their power.

Barging in to the office, Ed looks over to Hawkeye's desk. "All healed up and ready for duty, Lieutenant." She gives him a small smile, glad to see him healed so quickly. When she spots the envelope in Ed's hand, she raises an eyebrow at him. "Oh, an officer gave it me on my way in. It's the date for my annual assessment."

Before Ed can open the envelope to look at the date, Havoc pipes up from his desk. "What do you need to do for it? Mustang doesn't have to do them." Ed nods his head in agreement.

He hadn't had to do them either last time. They already knew he was a Human Sacrifice, didn't need to keep an eye on his Alchemical skill. It's why Roy doesn't have to do them in either timeline. They're already well aware of his Alchemical skill thanks to Ishval. "It's basically a way to show them how your research is progressing. I don't exactly *have* any research at the moment though." He can't help but check his pocket for his notebook at that, knowing that he does indeed have something he's researching. But it's his ace in the hole so he can't show that off. "I don't know exactly what I'll do yet. But I'll probably show off these bands I made."

Fuery looks up from his own work, to tilt his head in question. "What's so special about the bands?"

Grinning madly, Ed holds his wrists out to show them the metal bands. "With the right array, I can turn them in to knives while still wearing them." He claps his hands, not needing to pretend to use an array as there is no one else in the room and any bugs only pick up audio.

As the bands turn in to knives he pulls them away from his wrists and holds them out to the room's occupants. "They're made of a pretty sturdy metal so they make good weapons." Havoc and Fuery applaud at the show of skill. They see Mustang use Alchemy all the time, but he only really uses his Fire Alchemy. With no other Alchemists on the team, they probably don't see Alchemy used all that much, or at least not this close up. After bowing sarcastically in response to their clapping, he opens the letter and checks the date for his assessment.

Seeing that he has a week to prepare, Ed turns to Hawkeye. "Is he in?"

She shakes her head in response. "I'm afraid not, Edward. The Colonel is currently out for lunch with Lieutenant Colonel Hughes."

Clicking his teeth in annoyance, Ed turns to head for the door. "Well I have a week before my assessment so I'm going to go see my Teacher for the week. When he gets back let him know that I'm fully healed and I'll be back in Central next week." Nodding her head as he opens the door, Hawkeye bids him a safe trip.

Before he heads to the room he's currently staying in to grab his things, Ed should go see Al and ask if he wants to come down to Dublith with him. So rather than turning left to go to the military quarters he's staying in, he turns right to head to the Hughes's home.

Knocking on the door, he's glad to find that someone is in when Gracia opens the door for him. "Edward, what can I do for you?"

Ed waits until the door is closed properly behind them before answering her question. "I'm heading out of Central for a week, so I came to ask Al if he wants to come with me." Smiling down at him, she holds her hand out, gesturing down the hall to the room Al is staying in.

Not wanting to just barge in to his little brother's room, he knocks twice on the door and waits for an answer. Once Al says he can come in, he opens the door to smile at his little brother. "Hey Al."

Al looks up from the book he was reading to smile brightly at Ed. "Brother! What are you doing here?"

Taking a seat on the edge of the bed, Ed explains. "I'm heading to teachers for a week to get some training in and to see how Greed is doing. Came to ask if you wanted to come with me."

Frowning slightly, Al shakes his head. "Sorry, I made promises with Nina and Elicia...."

Before Al can continue or start to spiral, Ed interrupts his brother. "Al, hey. It's alright. I'm glad that you get to have fun like a normal kid that isn't aware his home is ran by corrupt monsters." Al does laugh a little at that. "Besides, the girls clearly adore you, wouldn't want to upset them by breaking a promise would you?"

As Ed stands up from the bed, Al reaches out to him. "How's your side?"

Lifting the corner of his shirt up so Al can see the scar, Ed gives him a reassuring smile. "All good. Got cleared for active duty this morning so you don't need to worry about me."

Al rolls his eyes at him. "I'll *always* worry about you brother. You're 27 years old and still just as reckless as you were when we were both kids."

Ed grins at him a little as he goes to open the door. "That might be true, but I promise you I'm fine." Narrowing his eyes at Ed for a few seconds, Al finally relents before getting up to walk Ed out. Making sure not to stand in the doorway as Ed leaves just to be sure that no one sees him as he hasn't hidden his natural hair and eye colour.

## Chapter End Notes

Someone else found my account before the last person because I completely forgot you could search by hits and then he found it in about a minute and a half after I mentioned a number which was annoying

# Chapter 36

## Chapter Summary

Ed arrives in Dublith

## Chapter Notes

Very tired as I'm posting this so please forgive any spelling mistakes or any of these (\*) that I've forgotten to delete I'll probably run over it quickly on my break or when I get home

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

It's midday when Ed finally gets on a train and he hopes it won't take too long for him to get to Teacher's house because he doesn't want to turn up on her doorstep in the middle of the night.

Luckily, the sun is only just starting to dip below the horizon when he gets off the train, so if he walks quickly he should be able to get before it starts getting dark. After all, the butcher shop isn't *that* far from the train station.

Unsurprisingly, Sig is the one to open the door for him upon his arrival. "Hey, Sig. How's Teacher?"

Sig steps aside to let Ed enter the shop. "I'm fine, thank you very much."

Ed turns his head to look over at Izumi. "Hey, Teach. I came down to check on Greed and for some training as well. If you're up to it of course."

Izumi scoffs at him. "Of course I'm up to it." As soon as she's said that she coughs up a puddle of blood. After Sig wipes the blood off of her mouth, she looks back up at him. "Ignore that, I'm fine."

Dropping his suitcase on the floor, Ed moves over to his teacher. "I'll get Hohenheim to pay you a visit as soon as he shows his damn face. He can't fix you completely, but he can stop you throwing up blood multiple times a day."

She stands up straighter to look at him properly. "Come on. We'll get started on dinner while Sig closes up shop."



Picking his suitcase back up, Ed follows her through to the kitchen. "I want to check up on how Greed is doing as well while I'm down here." He wants to see how he is progressing with his shield.

After placing down all of the ingredients on the counter, Izumi turns to him. "Then we'll spar tomorrow morning, to see where your level is in this body."

Nodding in agreement, Ed places his suitcase by the door and rests his coat on top of it. Walking back over to the counter, he takes the knife she's holding out to him and starts chopping ingredients as neatly as possible.

An hour and a half later, and the three of them are sat at the table eating. "How come Al didn't come with you?"

Looking up at Sig, Ed shrugs his shoulders slightly. "I did ask. But he made promises with the two daughters of the couple looking after him. They both absolutely adore him, as they should, and he didn't want to upset them by breaking his promise."

Once everyone has finished eating, Izumi gets up to collect the plates. "Go get some sleep Ed. I want you up and outside early tomorrow."

Getting up as well, Ed nods in understanding. "Do you want me to help clean up first?"

Izumi pokes her head out of the kitchen. "Go get some sleep. If I wanted your help I'd have told you."

Ed laughs a little at that, before picking his suitcase and coat back up and heading to the room he and Al stay in when they're here.

While taking his hair out of its braid, Ed pulls out about five knots. So as he lays down he makes a reminder to actually brush his hair tomorrow morning, rather than immediately putting it back in a braid. Once his boots are off he all but collapses on to the bed. He got cleared for duty but they *did* recommend him to take it easy for another few days. Which he isn't going to do, so instead he's going to make sure he sleeps properly instead of actually resting.

The sun has just started to rise when he wakes up, which means that Sig will be preparing to open the shop at the minute. Izumi should be getting up soon as well seen as she usually helps with setting up shop.

After pulling his boots back on and brushing his hair, he heads out to go meet Izumi. She's sat at the table with a cup of tea, seemingly waiting for him. "I forgot you wake up early now."

Pulling out the chair opposite her, Ed sits down at the table as well. "It was weird for me too at first don't worry. Are you still feeling up to a spar, Teach?"

Izumi nods her head before finishing the last of her tea. "Of course I am." Getting up from the table she walks in to the kitchen. "Start warming up while I wash this out."

As she turns the tap on, Ed starts making his way out in to the garden. He's run through a few basic stretches as Izumi steps out of the house. Ed stands up from where he was stretching his automail leg (the port more so than the actual leg). "Weapons or no weapons?"

She assess him for a minute, before making her decision. "No weapons for now, if you can land a hit on me you can use a weapon."

After stretching his arms out in front of him, he holds them up in a guard position. As soon as he's in position, Izumi lashes out with a kick.

They trade blows for a good ten minutes before Ed manages to land a hit on her. A kick to the back of her leg which unbalances her slightly. Not that Ed would let her hit the floor. As soon as he lands the hit, he straightens, ready to help steady her if she does stumble. "Good, much better than usual. I assume that's thanks to your extra years of experience?"

Ed chuckles slightly at that. "You get better at fighting when people keep trying to kill you."

She turns around to face him properly, rather than looking at him over her shoulder. "Go again, with a weapon this time." Clapping his hands once, Ed transmutes his knives and holds them out. Half in a defensive position, half allowing Izumi to examine his work. After all he might be a genius, but he went a long time without using Alchemy for something with this much precision, so having her look over them isn't a bad idea. "Interesting. What did you make these from?"

Even as she asks her questions she sweeps her leg out to try and knock him down. Luckily, Ed was expecting it so he dodges away as he answers her question. "The suit of armour in my basement. I know for a fact that it's a good quality metal."

Being more in his element with a weapon in hand, Ed manages to land a hit on Izumi in seven minutes. Not an actual hit of course because he knows how sharp his knives are, but he manages to hold the tip of his left knife at her throat for a couple seconds so they count it as a hit.

Once he's turned his knives back in to bands, Izumi nods her head. "Very good. Now go see how your friend is doing."

Ed nods his head before going to leave the garden. "I'll be gone at least a couple hours, so I'll see you later Teach." Without responding, Izumi turns to re-enter her house.

## Chapter End Notes

The first friend finally found my account, wouldn't tell me the name of it though, instead he found last weeks end note and quoted it back to me as proof XD

# Chapter 37

## Chapter Summary

The new Ultimate Shield has a problem

## Chapter Notes

Today is my last shift before two weeks of holiday and I am so excited. I'm \*planning\* on spending them writing so that by the end of the two weeks I'll have the rest of this fic written out and ready to post. But well....we'll see how that goes

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

Walking through the backstreets to reach the Devil's Nest, Ed reaches the bar at just gone seven in the morning.

Starting his descent down the stairs, he isn't surprised when one of Greed's guards comes to meet him. "Hey Dolcetto how have you been?"

Dolcetto doesn't say anything in response. Just sheaths his sword and turns around to walk back down the stairs. Ed follows him all the way down the stairs in to the heart of the pub. To be met with Greed sat on one of the crates facing the door. Dolcetto must have told him he was on his way. "To what do I owe the pleasure of this visit, pipsqueak?"

Ed walks over to stand in front of the crate. "I came to check up on you. See how you're getting on with your shield." He stops for a second and looks up at Greed. "Have you got a name for yourself yet by the way?"

The former Homunculus nods his head. "Avarice."

After a small laugh, Ed nods his head in understanding. "Well then, Avarice how are you getting on with your shield?"

Avarice smiles down at him sharply before jumping down off of the crate. Without any warning Avarice starts summoning his shield. Ed watches in fascination as he summons the shield and it answers the call with blue sparks instead of red. Final proof that Greed's shield must have been powered by the Souls previously inside of him.

A minute later, Avarice is stood in front of him fully covered by the shield. "I'm impressed. You've gotten far in just a year."

Grinning down at Ed, Avarice holds up his hands. "Want a spar?"

Ed grins up at him in response and pulls his own arms up in to a guard position. "You're on."

The rest of Avarice's followers join Dolcetto at the side of the room to watch as they start fighting.

Multiple times as the fight goes on, Avarice's shield fails slightly. In a different place each time. Ed stops paying attention to his attacks when he starts noticing the shield failing repeatedly. He aims a strike at Greed's wrist and isn't surprised when the layer of armour around his wrist gets thicker. Looking up from the wrist he scans Avarice's body to see where the break in the shield is.

As he scans for the break, Avarice steps back with a growl of annoyance. "Why does that keep happening?"

Ed spots the break on his left shoulder as the rest of the shield starts receding. Leaving his chest, neck and wrists still covered until the rest of the shield is gone. "This has happened before?"

Avarice nods his head. "Yeah. When sparring with Dolcetto and Roa."

Humming a little, Ed scans Avarice for any bruises or cuts. "Did it happen when they were about to attack you in a vital spot?" When Avarice doesn't seem to understand what Ed means by that, he carries on. "A vital spot would be your neck, wrists or chest, specifically where your heart is."

Avarice frowns at him. "How do I make it *stop* doing that? What is the point in a shield that decides to stop protecting me at random."

Ed shakes his head at him. "It's not random though. Don't you see? It's a defence mechanism. You no longer have nearly unlimited Souls to power the shield, nor can you recover from any manner of injury or come back from death. You're subconsciously trying to protect your most vulnerable areas." He pokes at Avarice's chest before continuing. "Surely you've noticed how it doesn't appear or recede how it used to. It left your neck, wrists and chest protected until the rest of the shield was down.

A few seconds pass as he stares up at him while Avarice takes in the information. "How do I stop it from happening though?" He frowns up at him. "Look I get that you find it impressive or whatever that I'm doing this subconsciously, and I get it's good that I'm protecting my vital spots but I'm still leaving other parts of myself vulnerable when it happens. If that happens in a fight it's something for my enemy to take advantage of. Not to mention that my shield is slightly slower than it was before."

Understanding dawns on Ed then. Avarice's shield breaking is a weakness, and it removes the point of the shield in the first place. The shield was meant to protect him from any manner of attack, but right now it isn't working like it should, it leaves part of his body vulnerable and Avarice doesn't know how to stop it. Of course it would put him on edge. "I don't know how to fix your shield yet Avarice. The only thing I can suggest right now is that we test the limits

of it. By which I mean gently seeing what will break through the shield on non vital spots, not just getting Roa to try bashing your head off, okay?" When Avarice doesn't respond, Ed narrows his eyes at him. "Avarice I need you to tell me that you won't get impatient and ask Roa to smash your head off."

Finally, Avarice nods his head in agreement. "Alright fine. I won't get impatient and ask Roa to attack me."

After letting out a sigh of relief, Ed turns to Avarice's friends. "I need all of you to make me the same promise. That no matter how many times he asks, you won't attack him seriously. Don't attack him somewhere that could kill him easily." Thankfully they agree much quicker than Avarice did. "Thank you." He turns back to Avarice. "One more spar? I want to try and calculate how quickly your shield breaks, and if you always break the shield in the same spot or if it depends on your proximity to your opponent." Avarice nods his head quickly and puts his hands up in to a guard position, as Ed transmutes his knives. "I'll be careful with them, but I think the results will be more consistent if I actually use a weapon." Avarice nods in approval before activating his shield and launching an attack at Ed.

## Chapter End Notes

I have new names for all of the Homunculi except for Lust and Sloth which I'm still not set on. I have two options for both that I'm currently deciding between but I'm indecisive as fuck so it's not fun

# Chapter 38

## Chapter Summary

Ed comes to some conclusions about Avarice's new shield

## Chapter Notes

Remember how last week I said I wanted to have the rest of this fic written before I go back to work? Yeah I'm not too sure that that's gonna happen cause I've only written ten chapters this week. So unless I start writing at super sonic speed for the next week and do absolutely nothing else it isn't gonna happen

I *\*should\** have roughly twenty chapters written up though so I mean that's something

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

The two of them spend three hours sparring with each other. Trying to work out the specifics of Avarice's shield. Ed wanted to come to at least one solid conclusion about how Avarice's shield works now. Because if the former Homunculus doesn't, or can't, learn how to use his new shield to the best of his abilities it could get him killed. The shield could fail him at the worst possible moment and he would die. It's Ed's fault that Avarice is so fragile now, so easy to kill.

By the end of their fourth spar, Ed feels like he's made a few solid conclusions on how the shield works now. The first conclusion is that Greed's shield breaks depending on where Ed attacks him. If he makes a move for Avarice's wrist it will break away on the opposite shoulder. Which means it *does* actively break responding to proximity with his attacker, and it leaves him open in the spot furthest away from where he's being attacked. It breaks to keep Avarice safe, so it needs to break far away from where he's being attacked in the first place, or else his attacker could quickly switch targets. The fact that Avarice's shield breaks at all though is telling. Because it means that the shield is no longer invincible. When Avarice was still a Homunculus, nothing could break through his shield. Ed only managed it by changing the chemical makeup of the shield, which he doesn't think is an easy feat, especially in the middle of a fight to the death.

Interestingly, the shield seems more stable on his legs. Because no matter where Ed attacks him, the shield always pulls away from somewhere on his torso. Which Ed believes is because it's nearer to his heart. If Avarice was attacked near his neck and had to get there from his leg, it has a lot further to travel than from somewhere on his chest. Ed wonders if there was ever a situation that Avarice's shield would pull away from his legs or from

everywhere at once to protect one or a few spots. Not that he wants to test that idea, but it does make him think. What would the shield prioritise in that situation. But again, Ed doesn't want Avarice to get in to a situation where he finds out the answer to that *completely* hypothetical question.

Eventually, Ed decides to call it a day. "I think I have enough data to figure out how your shield is working." Avarice looks at him expectantly as he calls back his shield. Like it has every time since he became Human, the shield leaves his neck heart and wrists protected until the rest of the shield has receded. "It breaks relative to your opponent and only breaks on your arms and torso. Which I believe is likely because it's closer to your heart."

Avarice holds an arm out in front of him, summoning his shield to cover half of it. After a second of staring at his arm, he looks up at Ed. "So it isn't broken? There's nothing wrong with my shield, this is just how it works now?"

Nodding his head in agreement, Ed looks down at Avarice's shielded arm. "As far as I can tell yeah. It doesn't look like it will improve any more. You might be able to get quicker at summoning it. Or it will start to reform the breaks quicker. But other than that this seems to be your shield now."

Calling his shield back, Avarice lowers his arm. "Thanks for the help pipsqueak." Ed rolls his eyes a little as Avarice continues. "You've done me a favour, so if you ever need any help, you call me."

Ed smiles up at him. "Thanks Avarice." The fact that Avarice seems to be friendly with him makes Ed feel glad. Because he only met Greed once last time before he merged with Ling. But he and Ling befriended Greed in the end. It took a long time, but he knows both of them would've called him a friend. Ed is glad he still has a friend in the former Homunculi, even if it's a different Greed than the one he knew last time. Even if he doesn't even go by Greed anymore. He still feels so similar to Greed from his last go around. "I'm sticking around for the rest of the week before heading back out to Central. Mind if I come round for a few more sparring sessions?"

A laugh escapes Avarice and he forms a claw with his hands, like he usually does when he's about to go on the attack. "I'd expect you too. After all, someone has to help me get used to the limits of my new shield. Why shouldn't it be the one who changed my shield in the first place?" Ed gives him a small smile before starting for the steps out of the pubs basement.

When he gets to the top step, he remembers about the events in the fifth laboratory. "I should probably warn you that I turned Envy earlier this week. They're now a fully fledged Human just like you. They seem to have gone off grid for the minute, but just in case they come here looking for you, I figured you should know."

Avarice nods his head in understanding. "Well if they turn up here and don't try to kill me, I'll let them stay here, give them some safety. Help them relearn their powers if they haven't already figured it out."

Ed smiles at Avarice in gratitude. "You might want to help them pick a name for themselves as well." With that last piece of advice and a small chuckle, Ed takes the last step out of the pubs

basement.

## Chapter End Notes

Even though I haven't done as much writing as I wanted, this week off has been so nice. Just not having to go in to work for two full weeks and actually having \*time\* to write or play video games



# Chapter 39

## Chapter Summary

Ed's last day in Resembool

There is a quick trigger warning in the first chapter notes, I wasn't sure if it was needed but just to be safe give it a quick read for me

## Chapter Notes

TW- There is a slight mention of Avarice skipping meals or trying to do something that could end up with him dying but it's not in a self harm way it's just him forgetting he's Human now but I wanted to put in a warning just in case, please take care of yourselves

If you do feel like you need to skip that section, don't read from the third chapter starting at 'He'll watch Avarice test his shield' and the mention is over by 'with the promise made'

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

The rest of the week goes by in a similar fashion.

Ed wakes up at the Curtis house and has breakfast as Sig starts setting up shop. Before following Izumi out in to the garden for a few spars. Each of which usually ended with a win for Izumi, which wasn't exactly surprising to Ed. But he managed to sneak in a few wins here and there, so he isn't too upset about it. After his fights with Izumi, when the shop has been open for a few hours, Ed will start heading over to the Devil's Nest.

He'll watch Avarice test out his shield for a few minutes, checking how his progress is coming along. After Avarice has summoned the shield completely, they get in to position for a spar. They spend the rest of the day sparring, with a few breaks for water and food. Avarice tried to get away without drinking anything on the first full day they spent sparring. But Ed shut that down quickly. Because Avarice still sometimes thinks that his body is still immortal. He asks his friends and Ed to test his shield in a way that would kill him if the shield failed. Dolcetto tells him as he leaves one day that Avarice keeps skipping meals because he forgets that he needs to eat now.

Before he leaves the pub for the last time that week, he stands in front of Avarice. "Promise me you'll start eating meals when you need to okay?" Avarice raises an eyebrow at him. "I've spent every day with you for a week now and you've tried to skip eating every day. I

understand that you aren't used to it. You probably don't like it either. But you aren't immortal anymore, if you don't eat and drink then you will die."

Avarice heaves out a sigh. "Alright fine pipsqueak. I promise I'll start treating my body like the fragile Human thing that it is."

Ed rolls his eyes at the comment, but he'll take it for what it is. It's Avarice agreeing to the promise, agreeing to take care of himself at least a little better.

With the promise made, Ed exits the pub and makes his way back to the Curtis house. Upon entrance, he sees Izumi sat at the table with a cup of tea and a bloodied tissue in front of her. He makes his way quickly over to her side. "Are you okay? I haven't pushed you too hard this week have I?"

Izumi shakes her head with a roll of her eyes. "I admit you're a better fighter than a few years ago, but you're still the size of a runt." She picks up her cup to take a sip of tea. "You don't need to start panicking, Ed. I'm fine. I just need a bit of rest."

After staring at her for a few seconds, eyes narrowed in suspicion, he finally lets it go. "It's a good thing I'm leaving tomorrow morning then. Means you'll actually get some rest." Izumi rolls her eyes at him, even as she takes another sip of tea. "Let me help out around the shop and with tea tonight."

Placing the now empty cup back down on the table, Izumi shakes her head slightly in exasperation. "Sig and Mason have the shop handled. You *know* that they're able to handle the shop on their own most days once we're open. But okay, you can help me make dinner in an hour." Ed nods his head in acceptance. "Go wash up first though. I won't let you help in the kitchen if you're still covered in dust and sweat."

Nodding in understanding, Ed moves from the dining room to the guest bedroom. Opening his suitcase he picks up some cleaner clothes before leaving the bedroom and walking down the hall to the bathroom. While waiting for the water to warm up, he leaves his clean clothes on the side of the sink.

After washing away all the dirt and dust from his body he starts trying to wash it out from his hair. Dirt has a wonderful way of hiding in his braid and getting stuck there.

Once his hair is completely free of dirt he steps out of the shower and starts drying himself off, taking extra care to dry his leg off, making sure there's no water left on the plates or few exposed wires before getting dressed.

Knowing his hair will take a couple hours to fully dry, he simply leaves it be once it stops dripping on to the floor. After dropping the towel in to the laundry basket, he throws on the clean clothes and heads back in to the guest bedroom to drop the dusty clothes at the bottom of the suitcase. He's only here for one more night, he can deal with them when he gets back to Central.

Finally washed up and changed, Ed walks back to the dining room to find Izumi nursing a second cup of tea. She looks up at him as he enters the room, making sure he did actually

have a shower and not just change in to clean clothes. When she decides he's clean enough to be allowed in to the kitchen, she stands up from the table. Ed follows her quickly when she steps in to the kitchen.

As she pulls out a piece of meat to start preparing, Izumi lists the tasks that Ed will be in charge of for dinner. Which is practically anything that doesn't involve preparing, or cooking the meat. Which Ed figures is fair, he's a decent cook but the Curtis's are butchers who take pride in their work. They wouldn't want anyone else to cook it unless they knew it would be better than what they could prepare themselves. The kitchen is silent as the two work, apart from the sound of chopping or the bubbling of a pot of boiling water.

Once Sig has closed up shop, he enters the house to see Ed setting the table while Izumi starts plating up in the kitchen. "How was the shop today Sig?"

The big man shrugs his shoulders a little. "Busy." Ed knows Sig is a man of few words to anyone who isn't Izumi. He talks to Ed and his brother more than most people, but he's a very quiet man by nature. Ed doesn't mind it though, he knows Sig doesn't mean anything by his short to the point answers. In fact he *likes* that Sig only usually speaks in quick sentences. Because it means that what he *does* say is usually straight forwards and easy to understand.

After the three have eaten and the table has been cleared, Ed bids the two Curtis's goodnight and heads to bed. He needs to be up pretty early in the morning if he wants to be in Central by afternoon in time for his examination. At least with the trains running three times an hour from Dublith (unlike twice or sometimes even once a day from Resembool) it's much less stressful getting back to Central on time.

## Chapter End Notes

I go back to work tomorrow and I *\*really\** do not want to but oh well, I don't have as many chapters written as I wanted either but I did manage to get to a point where most of the plot points from here are basically a complete chapter anyway

On a cooler note I brought two books yesterday, one was the collectors edition of the first Cardcaptor Sakura book (which is very pretty) and the other was a book of all the official artwork for Fullmetal Alchemist. I've owned them for less than 24 hours and have already looked through the artbook cover to cover three times

# Chapter 40

## Chapter Summary

Ed's annual assessment

## Chapter Notes

I contemplated for ages about whether or not to actually have this as a written chapter or just have it mentioned but I think what I came up with is pretty cool so you get it as a chapter

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

Getting off the train at Central train station, Ed checks the time on the nearest clock.

1 O'clock. He has a couple hours until his examination. Throwing his suitcase over his shoulder he starts making his way out of the train station. The letter said his exam doesn't start until 3 O'clock, which means he has more than enough time to go see Mustang and tell him he'll be out of Central again by the end of the day.

After all, the Xingans are due to arrive soon and he needs to be up in Rush Valley by the time they arrive. He also needs to get his automail switched out for Northern type automail so he's ready to head up north whenever he deems necessary. Which he feels will be soon. After all the dominoes are all lined up to start falling soon, because shit started going south almost as soon as Ling and Mei showed up.

Arriving in the office, Hawkeye is the only one there, he supposes everyone else is out on a break. "Edward, what are you doing here?"

As usual, Hawkeye is already running the scan for bugs without needing to be told so Ed can give a half truth while they wait for the all clear. Only they don't receive the all clear. The usual three beeps accompanying a bug free room only sound out twice.

Ed and Hawkeye share a nervous glance but Ed continues talking, not responding to her question would be suspicious. "I'm waiting for my assessment to begin. It doesn't start until three so I was going to hang around here. I also needed to tell Mustang that I'm going for an automail check-up once it's over. I should be back in Central in a day or so. I think it only needs a quick bit of maintenance."

Hawkeye nods her head in answer, eyes sweeping the room for where any microphones could be hidden. "I will let the Colonel know when he comes back from lunch. In the meantime why don't you prepare for your assessment." Ed nods his head before taking a seat at the empty desk he usually takes over when he works in the office. He pulls out a couple pieces of blank paper and starts sketching out the arrays he plans on using for the assessment.

Once all the arrays are drawn up, he folds them up and places them in his pockets. Picking up one more blank piece of paper, he writes a message to Hawkeye, explaining his half truths earlier, even though he's sure she understood clear communication never hurt anyone.

Once it's written out, it's time for him to start heading down the where his assessment will be held so he stands up and places the paper on her desk. She spares a glance at the paper before looking up at him. "I'll be heading out once my assessments done so tell the others I say hi." He taps the paper twice so she knows to tell them about that as well.

Only after Ed has left the office does Hawkeye start reading.

'Leave the bug in place for now. I think I know who placed it there. I think Lust might be suspicious of me after Envy's disappearance. Leave it be for now at least but be careful with what you say in the office obviously.

I'm going up to Rush Valley to have Winry to switch my automail out so that I can head up north whenever the time is right without delay. I'll also be collecting the first group of Xingans from there and hopefully bringing them back with me to Central. I should be back by late afternoon tomorrow or early morning the day after.

There probably won't be a bug in Mustang's office if you need somewhere safe to talk in Central, but scan it just in case. She probably only put one in the main office because it's where she'd assume I'd be. See you in a couple days.'

Standing up from her desk, Hawkeye moves in to Mustang's personal office, not entirely surprised when the three beeps ring out as they should. With that she places the letter Ed wrote on Mustang's desk before heading back to her desk to write a shorter point about the bug for the rest of the team.

Making his way down to the hall he did his first assessment in is weird. Unlike most other Alchemists who come by once a year for their annual assessment (unless they have another test location specified or their research is in a set location) Ed has only been in the room twice. It looks just like it always does, the balcony where people watch hopeful State Alchemists prove themselves to the stand at the front of the room where the Fuhrer watched his exam.

In the room are two small logs he had asked to be provided. Roughly the size people cut for kindling. He waits for his name to be called before saying anything. "Edward Elric?" The invigilator looks and sounds incredibly bored.

Stepping in to the middle of the two logs, Ed looks up at them. "Present."

Nodding his head tiredly, the invigilator just waves his hand, telling him he can begin. Holding back an eyeroll is tough but Ed manages to keep it in. "Since once of my specialties is metal, I've been looking in to it's properties, ways of making it stronger without tempering." He holds his hands up so that the bands are visible. (He made spares for today, his real ones are hiding in his coat.) "These bands are made of cheap standard metal." Pulling out the first piece of paper from his pocket he drops it to the floor before slipping off the band and placing it on top.

Clapping his hands once he turns the band in to a blade. "Without any tampering this is as much as it can do." He picks the blade up and slashes through the first piece of wood, letting go when it gets stuck a few inches in.

Slipping of the second band he pulls some pencil lead out of his pocket. Placing the next array on the floor he drops the two on top of it. "However, with a simple change." He activates the array, melding the two together after changing the chemical makeup of the lead to make it harder. "It becomes much stronger." He swaps the array out to form a second blade. Standing up from the array he walks over to the second log and swings the blade at it. It cuts all the way through, a clean line moving from the top left to bottom right. After a second the cut part of the log falls off of the stand.

Ed can see the invigilator perk up more as the wood falls to the floor. "This is most interesting. Where did you get the idea?" For a split second Ed wants to tell them about Greed and the Ultimate Shield, but he shuts the idea down quickly. The reaction would be funny, but ultimately very not worth it. "I know that steel is made by adding carbon to iron, however in most cases it is only small amounts of strong carbon. An Alchemist with the correct knowledge could cut out the middle man by changing the chemical makeup of the carbon in a pencil and adding it to their weapon."

A smile spreads on the invigilators face. "Very interesting. It's most astounding what you can do with a piece of metal and a pencil, especially given your age."

Even though Ed knows he's not actually a teenager he can't help getting annoyed. He *is* still technically the youngest State Alchemist after all. "I did earn the title of State Alchemist. It would be shameful if I didn't have the skill to back it up. My age has nothing to do with it."

That causes the invigilator to roll his eyes but Ed can see the twitching of his cheek telling Ed that the man finds him funny. "Quite right. Anyway, your results will be sent out before the end of the week. You put on quite a show Shining Blood." Ed collects the two knives and his used arrays off of the floor before exiting the room with a salute.

## Chapter End Notes

I'm going to my first con in 3 years today and I'm so excited. Going in a group with a friend and we're all doing Resident Evil cosplays (I'm going as Ethan) I'm going to

spend/waste so much money today but it's absolutely worth it because I've really missed  
cons

# Chapter 41

## Chapter Summary

Ed makes a trip up to Rush Valley

## Chapter Notes

I have officially reached the point in my notepad of plot points where most things are already fully written chapters and just need some editing or to be stretched out in places (at least where I am in my writing not this chapter)

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

As soon as his assessment is over, Ed leaves Central command and heads back over to the train station. Jumping on the first train out to Rush Valley.

It's getting late when the train pulls in to Rush Valley. Thinking about it now, he could have left Dublith a day earlier to get his automail changed, after all the train from Dublith runs through Rush Valley. He would've had to come back anyway though, he still needs to meet Ling and his bodyguards.

Making his way through the streets, he's thankful that he only has one piece of automail this time around. Because it means he doesn't have to keep his coat on in the heat to hide an automail arm that everyone wants to take off of him.

Arriving at Atelier Garfiel, Ed is glad to find the shop relatively empty other than Garfiel himself. "Hey, is Winry in?"

Garfiel shakes his head. "I'm afraid Miss Winry is currently visiting Dominic up in the mountains. She's not due back for another hour or so yet. I can take a look at your automail for you if you'd like?" As he says that Garfiel looks him over, likely trying to see his automail."

Ed taps his knee, telling the man where his automail is even as he shakes his head. "Thank you for the offer, but I'm not sure Winry would like that. She uses my automail to test out a lot of her new ideas and she's a bit territorial about it, even to me."

A short laugh escapes the engineer. "Of course, you must be Edward then, correct?" Ed nods his head in agreement. "She talks about you often, it's nice to put a face to the name finally. If you'd like to look around for a while before her return, you can leave your suitcase in here."



Tapping the workbench once Garfiel goes to stand back behind it. "I'll take you up on that, thank you. You said she's due back in an hour right?" Garfiel nods his head. "I'll be back in an hour then." After giving a polite wave in Garfiel's direction, Ed heads out in to the street.

Hopefully he can find Ling quickly, so he can tell him to come back to Central with him. If everything goes smoothly, he'll be on the last train out of Rush Valley back to Central tonight, with Ling and his bodyguards having agreed to help him.

It takes nearly an hour of wandering for him to find Ling, standing around at the other end of the valley. Which means he'll have to hurry back to Garfiel's to get there for Winry's return. "Are you okay there?"

Ling turns back to look at him. "I'm just fine! Looking for a place to stay is all." Ling takes a step closer, making a vague motion behind his back that is either telling his guards to back off slightly, or get closer to Ed. He isn't sure. "Who are you?"

Ed holds out his hand for Ling to shake. "I'm Ed, a State Alchemist."

Accepting the handshake, Ling's eyes start shining when Ed introduces himself as an Alchemist. "An Alchemist huh? You must know about the Philosopher's Stone then, correct?"

Pulling his hand back, Ed nods his head in answer. "I do yes. Why?"

With a flourish Ling bows to Ed dramatically. "My name is Ling Yao, Prince of Xing and a Philosopher's Stone is my ticket on to the throne."

Nodding his head in understanding, Ed waits for him to stand back up. "Maybe we can help each other out. You can feel that mess beneath us, right?" Ling raises an eyebrow in intrigue but doesn't actually interrupt him, just nods his head in agreement. "What you're feeling is thousands of Human Souls squirming around in agony. You help me defeat the monster that put them there and is trying to destroy this country, and I'll help put you on the throne."

Ling watches him for a few seconds, clearly intrigued by Ed's offer at least. Before he can come to a decision though, Winry appears at the other side of them. "Ed! There you are! Garfiel told me you came for a check up but you weren't at the shop when I got there."

Ed looks over his shoulder at her. "Hey Win. Sorry, didn't realise how long I was walking for. I came to ask if you can swap my leg out for the northern edition one I asked you for?"

Winry rolls her eyes at him. "Of course I can. Come with me to the shop and you can jump on the last train back out to Central." She looks over his shoulder at Ling. "Is your new friend coming as well?"

Looking back over at the Prince, Ed raises an eyebrow in question. Ling looks between the two for a few seconds. "I'll come with you. You sounded like you had more to tell me." Ed can't help but laugh at that and Winry rolls her eyes at him, having caught on to what amused him so much.

Garfiel has closed shop for the day when they get there, he's waiting inside for Winry to be done with Ed's leg. Trusting her enough to lock the shop again behind him. Winry taps the examination table with her knuckles as she moves over to her work bench. "Get up. It'll take me about a half hour to detach and reattach the leg, so you can explain everything to him as I work."

Nodding his head in understanding, Ed turns back over to Ling. "Are Lan Fan and Fu happy outside or do they want to come in?" Ling's eyes widen as he stares at him but doesn't answer. "Alright then, if they change their mind they're welcome to join us. The long and short of what I'm about to tell you, the things I know *you* need to know at least is that I'm actually 27, I lived through all of this before and you don't need a Philosopher's Stone to become Emperor. I don't know exactly how you did it last time, but if you help me I'll help you."

Ling just stares at him in shock for a few seconds before he manages to get out any words. "So you're a time traveller?" Ed nods. "That's how you know about the monster you talked about?" Ed nods again. "And we were apparently friends in your last life because you know I became Emperor and you seem familiar with my antics in a way most people aren't and you knew the names of my bodyguards." Another nod. A few more seconds pass as Ling narrows his eyes at him in scrutiny. Eventually, once Winry has unattached Ed's original leg, he talks again. "Tell me the whole story."

So Ed does. As Winry attaches the northern automail model, Ed explains the rest of the story.

## Chapter End Notes

I spent *\*so\** much money at con last week. I'm refusing to add it up completely because I don't want to face the truth of it but I think I spent about 300 quid??? Like I had fun and I truly love everything I bought at the con (including mini Ed and Roy plushies which are so damn cute) but fuck that's a lot of money

# Chapter 42

## Chapter Summary

Ed gets Ling and his bodyguards settled in Central

## Chapter Notes

The last three days I've walked in to my work with a pounding head thinking I was going to pass out. Gotta love heatwaves in a country \*absolutely\* not built for heat

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

By the time Winry is done refitting his leg, Ed has finished explaining the basics to Ling.

While Winry starts packing up her tools, Ling comes to a decision. "I'll help you. I don't like that you're getting rid of the Homunculi which are living Philosophers Stones. Because if I went back to Xing with one I'd get the throne with no effort. *But* if you stick to your word and help put me on the throne, I'll let it go."

Ed nods his head in agreement easily. After all he wants to see his friend put back on the throne. Ling, to the extent of Ed's knowledge was doing a great job of fixing and ruling his country the last time he spoke to him. In hindsight he wishes he'd asked his friend *how* he managed to become emperor without bringing a Philosopher's Stone back to Xing. But he did it once which means it's possible to do it again. "I promise you I'll help put you on the throne. I need to head back to Central now though. You coming with me? I can set the three of you up in a hotel."

Ling nods his head as he stands up. "I'll come with you."

Getting up himself, Ed taps his foot twice on the floor, testing that it's connected properly before he leaves. Turning over to Winry who has finished putting her tools away he gives her a thumbs up. "All good, Win. Thanks." She returns the gesture as Ed turns back to Ling. "I'll set you up in a hotel near where I'll be staying cause I'm staying in the military accommodations." Ling hums in understanding. "Other than that, you're free to do mostly whatever you want as long as I know where you are. Because I'm trying not to tip my hand here too much but I can't sense people's Chi so I can't come looking for you if I need your help."

A second of silence passes before Ling nods his head towards the shops locked door, where Ed knows the Prince's bodyguards are waiting. "Fu has one of the best Chi senses in Xing. He

can teach you, that way you'll be able to find me whenever you need my help with your plan."

Understanding the offer for what it is, a show of trust (or at least an effort to start building trust) Ed is extremely grateful. "Thank you." He knows when Ling nods his head, that the Prince knows Ed is aware of what the gesture is. Knows it's an attempt to show back some of the trust Ed has placed in a version of him that Ling hasn't become yet. Because Ed may know Ling, but Ling hasn't become his friend yet. From Ed's story they only truly become friends briefly before Ling gains a Homunculus. Which is never going to happen. Which means Ed has no way of truly knowing that Ling is still capable of *becoming* that person. He's putting his faith in Ling because of a currently non-existent friendship and the knowledge of the man Ling *could* become.

Sensing the serious talk has come to an end, Winry rounds on Ed. "I know you already know this, but be *careful* with that leg. It isn't as strong or as sturdy as your regular automail."

Ed salutes her half mockingly. "I know Win don't worry. Besides." He claps his hands and presses them in to his leg. "Now it's stronger."

Winry brandishes a wrench at him annoyance. "Don't Alchemise my automail!" Ed laughs at her a little before reversing the transmutation.

Ling watches the interaction quietly, waiting to be told they're ready to leave. As if sensing Ling's restlessness, Ed cuts his conversation with the mechanic short. "Sorry Winry, we need to head out or we'll miss the last train." Nodding her head in understanding, Winry unlocks the door for them to let them out.

When they get on the train, Ed and Ling claim two seats on the nearly empty train, the bodyguards taking another empty bench a few rows down instead of riding on *top* of the train. "I should warn you now by the way. The feeling of what's under the ground will get worse as we get closer to Central because that's where he is." Ling casts a glance down to the train floor before nodding his head in understanding.

The accommodation that Ed usually stays in only really has one hotel nearby. There *are* a few hotels in the area, but apart from this one, they're all just a bit too far away for Ed's liking. So when they get off the train Ed leads the three Xingans through the streets of Central towards the hotel. It doesn't take long for Ed to get Ling checked in to a room. Especially when Ed pulls out his silver pocket watch, not that it was needed, most people in Central know who he is from his appearance. The receptionist doesn't even bat an eye when Ed tells her Ling will be staying for an undetermined length of time. Enough people in Central (mostly State Alchemists who think themselves too good for the free accommodation) often book rooms for months at a time, even when they aren't *in* Central. Just so they know they have a comfortable bed to crash in.

After Ling is checked in and they make their way to the room, Ed spends a little over two hours with them. Partly to make sure they're settled in and to drill it in to Ling's head to *not* eat him in to bankruptcy. Other than that, the time is spent with a few quick lessons on Chi sensing. At first, Fu wasn't thrilled with the idea of teaching Ed, but after seeing how willing he was to learn, he warmed up to the idea ever so slightly.

Once Ed could sense where they were in the room with his eyes closed, they decided to call it a night. They could pick it up another day. Bidding the Xingans goodnight, Ed leaves the hotel and walks down the street to *his* bed for the night.

## Chapter End Notes

The next soon to be-Human Homunculi appears again next chapter

# Chapter 43

## Chapter Summary

Lust begins her attack

## Chapter Notes

I came so close to passing out as I got in to work on Monday, and again on the shop floor an hour later that I had to get sent home and I have no idea what caused it. I think it might have been heat exhaustion but I'm not sure

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

When Ed arrives in his own room for the night, he drops the suitcase on top of his bed before pulling off his coat and dropping on to the bed himself. Despite knowing he should take his boots off and actually go to sleep, he is intent to just lay on the bed for a few minutes before that.

Barely five minutes passes before he hears someone opening the rooms door. He's pretty sure he locked the door as well, or at least he remembers locking it. Which means either someone has picked the lock, or they took the spare key from the front desk.

Getting up from the bed he takes a few steps away from the door to be out of the reach of any immediate attacks. He isn't entirely surprised to see that it's Lust stood in the doorway when it finally opens. He's known since the Fifth lab that it was only a matter of time before she decided to go after him because of Envy's disappearance. Finding the bugs in Mustang's office only told him that his time was running out and she'd be coming for him sooner rather than later. Lust takes a half step in to the room, so that she's closer to him but is still blocking the rooms entrance. She holds her hand out and stretches her nails out, Ed knows the Ultimate Spear would hurt like a bitch "What did you do with Envy?" She barely gives him time to answer before she's attacking him.

In such a closed environment Ed has no chance of taking her down. She's backed him in to a corner at this point and he could only hold out for so long before he either succeeds or he dies. Which means that he has little choice at this point but to run from the room. But Lust is blocking the doorway, meaning that the only exit point in the room is the window behind him. Luckily, the room he's staying in this time is only on the second floor. So, while it is a *bit* of a jump, he can exit the room somewhat safely from the window to get away.

Keeping his eyes on her for her next attack he backs up to the window behind him. Once he's managed to slide it open, he risks turning his back to her so he can jump out with a better chance of sticking the landing. As soon as he's started the jump he feels her claws slice through the air right behind his back.

A sharp jolt of pain runs up his flesh leg as he lands which tells him in his haste to get out of that room he messed up the landing. Thankfully after giving his leg a quick shake the feeling disperses. A warning then, he likely landed on his ankle wrong but there's no actual injury so he'll be able to run on it. Sparing another second he can't afford he glances up at the window he just jumped from to see Lust leaning out of it. He knows immediately from the look on her face that she's going to follow him and hunt him down, his status as a Human Sacrifice no longer important to her. She knows he's done something to Envy and she wants to know *what*.

Wasting no more time he turns and runs away from the building. Lust is likely to jump out of the window herself, after all if she screws up the landing like he almost did the injury will be healed in seconds.

As Ed starts running away from the building, he hears Lust's high heels hit the floor behind him. She doesn't immediately start moving after him, so Ed assumes she did mess up the landing. He takes the minute she needs to heal to take the first turn and get himself out of the view of the building.

Barely a few seconds later he hears Lust's shoes clicking down the empty streets behind him. She likely isn't going to start running after him, she never does run after her prey. She prefers to hunt them down at her own leisure.

Running down the dark streets, Ed is both thankful and annoyed by the late hour. Because it means that there isn't likely to be any civilians caught in the crossfire, but it also means that Lust can attack him without worrying about giving away their whole plot.

While running past one of Central's biggest parks, cleverly named Central Park, he catches glimpse of a phone booth which gives him an idea. If he can reach it before Lust catches up with him then he can phone Mustang and ask for backup. But the chance of Mustang being in the office this late is fifty fifty at best. He's either been forced to stay late by Hawkeye to catch up on all the work he's skipped out on recently, or he escaped work hours ago and is at home.

Not bothering to turn around to enter the park through that gate, Ed keeps running to the next park entrance. Hoping he can trick Lust in to thinking he ran past the park for just a few precious seconds.

When Ed finally enters the park he spares a few seconds to spot the phone booth before making a bee line for it. He takes a second to catch his breath as he dials the number for Central Command. When the call is answered, he wastes no time on pleasantries. "Patch me through to Mustang's office please." Ed holds back the curses he wants to spit when the woman asks for his identification code before she can patch him through. He knows she's only doing her job and doesn't deserve to be shouted at, so instead of making a rude comment

he rattles out the code for her. Thankful that he took the time to memorise it because the book it's written in is still in his coat in the room.

Ed breathes out a sigh of relief when he gets patched through to Mustang's office and the man actually picks up. Not that he can spend long being relieved, because he knows every second he wastes is a second she's getting closer. "Edward? Why are you calling so late? Is everything okay?"

Peeking out from the phone booth Ed can see Lust starting to make her way to the gate. He has maybe two minutes before she reaches him. "Your favourite vice is coming after me. Get to Central Park as fast as you can. Don't bring the rest of the team, it will just draw more attention. If you bring anyone, bring Hawkeye." He peeks out of the phone booth again as Mustang makes a noise of understanding. "Gotta go." Slamming the phone back down on to the receiver he checks Lust's proximity to him to check whether or not he can risk using his no array Alchemy as he doesn't have any pre drawn ones on him. He reasons that she's far enough away at the minute to risk it and so he claps his hands and presses them to the side of the phone booth, forming a spear out of it. He knows it won't hold up against Lust's Ultimate Spear for more than a few hits, but it's better than nothing.

As he steps out of the phone booth spear held out in front of him, he watches Lust walk towards him. Arms swaying with each step, nails stretched out ready to attack. While watching her walk closer he decides to play dumb, pretend that he doesn't know anything about what happened to Envy or even what they are in the case that something goes wrong and Mustang doesn't show up in time. Or Truth forbid, another Homunculus shows up.

## Chapter End Notes

I finally started reading Spy x Family and it's great



# Chapter 44

## Chapter Summary

The fight with Lust commences

## Chapter Notes

Sorry the chapters up a little late I was off today and so completely forgot it was a sunday until I was waiting for an uber

On that note please ignore any spelling mistakes I'll fix them tonight when I get back to my laptop

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

As Lust continues to move closer, Ed takes a few steps away from the phone booth so that she can't corner him in to it. Because then he really has no chance of winning this.

Once she's in attacking distance, she immediately lashes out at him. Ed brings the spear up to block the hit, but her nails nearly cut the spear in half. One more direct hit will snap the spear in half. Which means he needs to dodge her hits instead of blocking them.

Dodging her hits turns out to be easier said than done. Because despite how little the Homunculi seem to care for each other (ignoring how much Gluttony cares for Lust) she is seemingly angry about what he's done to Envy. She wants to see him dead for what he did to her sibling, and it doesn't look like anything is going to stop her from killing him. His spear gets completely cut in half when he has no choice but to use it to block another attack. It breaks apart with a clink and Ed's arms start falling as the weight of the spear shifts from in front of him to his hands.

With his spear broken, he has a much harder time avoiding her attacks. He has nothing to chance blocking them with now other than himself. Meaning he needs to avoid every attack she throws his way. But that's not going to be very likely given the speed and sense of her nails. She catches his shoulder lightly as he jumps away from one of her attacks and catches his back with her nails as he dives under another. He doesn't have the time to worry about his injuries though because Lust doesn't waste anytime attacking him again. Uncaring about the fact that his blood is covering the tips of her nails.

After fifteen minutes, Mustang's arrival is announced by a ring of fire surrounding Lust, allowing Ed a second to back off and drop his guard slightly. He looks over to the park's

entrance to see Mustang entering the park. As Mustang makes his way over to him, Ed takes a second to check himself over. Lust *had* gotten a couple hits in after all. The cut on his shoulder is luckily pretty shallow as he had managed to mostly avoid her attack. The only reason he got hit by it at all is because he was still too close to her to completely avoid it. Then there's the definitely less shallow injury on his back where he's certain it will look like he's been attacked by a wild animal as three of her nails had caught him there. It doesn't feel too life threatening right now, but then again he *is* pumped full of adrenaline right now so he probably wouldn't feel it if it was. Mustang finally stops beside him once Ed is done taking note of his injuries.

Despite his spear having been snapped in half ten minutes ago he's been keeping hold of the two halves still to help block her attacks. Because while they can't stand up to her Ultimate Spear, if he can block her from the side of her hand or arm, then he can halt her attack and force her to move her arm back. "I need her alive so you can't burn her. Also if she asks about what happened to Envy play dumb. I don't want to risk another showing up before I've managed to turn her." Mustang nods in understanding before looking down at him, making note of the blood seeping through the back of his shirt. Ignoring the look of worry Mustang is giving him, Ed drops the two halves of the spear. With Mustang here to play defensive he can finally risk getting rid of them to focus on getting in touching distance of Lust. "I'm going to go in to try and activate the array. You stop her from killing me basically."

Mustang nods his head in understanding. "Alright." Before he can say anything else, Lust's nails slice through the fire towards them forcing them to jump backwards. A second later the fire dies down and Lust starts stepping towards them again.

Ed rushes towards the Homunculi, and knows he won't be able to get close to her on first try. He immediately has to dive to the side of her nails to avoid them taking out his throat. Mustang takes a few steps backwards to make sure he's out of Ed's way and doesn't interfere with his dodges.

Having Mustang helping him out isn't exactly making his attack on Lust any easier. Because he has to make sure not to get in to Mustang's way. After all, Mustang may have impeccable aim but he isn't used to using his fire defensively so Ed isn't going to make it harder for him unnecessarily. However having him there to protect him from her attacks, *is* making his attempts much safer. Because he's creating walls of fire to block her from reaching him after another failed attempt. Which means he can try again and again with less worry about her hitting him again.

In between her attacks, Lust repeats the same question. Usually in a slightly different way, always followed by a swipe of her nails. Always asking after Envy, demanding to know what Ed did to them. "Where is Envy, what did you do with them?"

Ed jumps away from her, knowing a swipe of her nails will follow her question. "I didn't do anything to them because I don't know what you're on about!"

As expected, her arm swings towards him aiming to slice him open. "You're lying to me and I *will* find out what you know!"

After checking the direction of where her attack would come from, he claps his hands and waits for her to swing her arm before latching on to her arm. In the few seconds of stillness he has before the Gate opens, he lets out a sigh of relief. Glad that he has finally managed to activate the array on her. Having seen both of them immediately freeze in place seems to have worried Mustang, but there's nothing Ed can do to reassure him that everything's okay now. So he'll have to wait until they return from the Gate. Apparently he forgot to tell Mustang about what happens after he used the array, just like he did with Hawkeye. Which caused both of them to worry about him, probably thinking something had gone wrong to cause him to freeze like that.

When the few seconds of paralysis pass, the Eye of Truth opens beneath them and Ed can see Lust's eyes widen in what he thinks is surprise but could also be horror. Which makes sense Ed thinks, even as the hands start pulling him apart. She probably knew what Gluttony was an attempt to make.

## Chapter End Notes

Can you tell I really enjoyed writing Lust in this chapter? Cause I found it a lot of fun

# Chapter 45

## Chapter Notes

I'm so close to having this fic completed and all written up I'm on like the last three chapters

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

Opening his eyes to the bright white space of the Gate, Ed sees Truth stood in front of him. Their head tilted to the side, almost like they're trying to analyse Ed. Not that they'd need to as they seemingly know everything about him anyway. "You are making your way through the ranks of the Homunculi with surprising speed. I wasn't expecting you to be coming here so frequently with my Souls."

Ed raises an eyebrow at him. "I've surprised you? I thought you knew everything."

Truth laughs at him. "I know many things, Golden Sun. But not everything. Humans have a miraculous ability to change what I have seen is going to happen."

After a few seconds of staring at them, Ed decides it isn't worth asking for a clarification. Because surely whatever clarification they give won't be any help to Ed and it would likely just lead to more questions that Truth won't answer properly. "It's late and I'm pretty sure I need a hospital so can you just take your Souls back and kick me out of here."

There's a second of silence before Truth starts laughing at him. "Very well, Alchemist. I will cut our interaction short today." Waiting for the Gate behind him to open, Ed prepares himself to return to the feeling of bloodless. "I'm sure we'll see each other again soon, Golden Sun." With that, the Gate behind Ed opens and starts dragging him inside.

He doesn't bother fighting it this time, he just really wants to go to sleep at this point. Having his automail changed out, then explaining *everything* to Ling, learning how to Chi sense at least in a basic sense, and then Lust's attack. Not to mention the injuries waiting for him when he returns from the Gate. In short, everything has taken too much time and energy today. Not that it's the same day anymore. It's now closer to 2am of the next.

Immediately after returning to his body, Ed lets go of Lust and takes a step backwards. She doesn't attack him immediately like Envy did though, because she's too busy staring down at her still outstretched hand. Because after having her Soul's taken from her, her Spear is gone but she didn't recall it. After a few seconds of looking at her hand, she snaps her head up to look at Ed, silently demanding an explanation. "Okay I know you want an explanation as to why your spear is gone, but I'm going to tell you first that it's not gone. If you work on it, you'll be able to use the Ultimate Spear again, but there will be slight differences." She's still glaring at him, because he hasn't actually answered her silent question yet. "As for why it's

gone in the first place right now, it's because I've turned you Human. I returned your Souls to Truth leaving you with your own." After he finishes explaining, he takes a chance to ask something of her. "Don't rat me out to Father?"

Nobody moves for a few seconds. But eventually, she takes a few steps towards Ed and he immediately knows she means to attack him again. But rather than defend himself from Lust's impending attack, he instead latches himself on to Mustang's arm. He was getting ready to click his fingers to attack Lust. But Ed knows Mustang, knows he would've actually aimed at Lust instead of near her like Hawkeye did for Envy. So he latches on to the mans arm and yanks it down, messing up his aim. "I did not get Truth to agree to turn them Human just for them to be killed immediately." He continues to glare at Mustang until he feels his arm go slack in his grip so he finally lets go.

Watching Ed protect her life even as she was about to attack him again and after she had just tried to kill him intrigues Lust. "You're protecting me. Why, I just tried to kill you." Mustang makes a noise that tells her he agrees with her statement. "Because it took effort to turn you Human. If I wanted you dead I would've let Mustang burn out your stone. Instead I let myself get injured in effort to send you through the Gate."

Lust raises an eyebrow at him. "Is that what you did to Envy? You turned them in to a Human as well? You know where they are?"

Ed shakes his head at her. "That is what I did to Envy. But I'm afraid I wasn't lying, I really don't know where Envy is. I hope they found their way to Avarice's bar, but if not they should otherwise be safe. Speaking of, you don't have to go back to Father. Avarice, formerly your brother Greed, has a bar in Dublith called the Devil's Nest. You'll be safe there."

She narrows her eyes at him in consideration before shaking her head. "I'll return to Father, surely it would be helpful to have someone capable of feeding you information. But I'll only help you if you turn Gluttony as well."

Immediately, Ed nods his head in agreement. "I was planning on doing that anyway. Do you want a different name now that you're Human?"

The question seems to throw Lust for a loop. But she doesn't need long to think about it before she comes to a decision. "Solaris. Call me Solaris." Ed nods his head in acceptance. It's a good name, pretty and she's probably used it before for a Human cover so she'll already be used to answering to it.

Mustang casts a glance over at Ed in alarm though. Likely remembering the warning Ed gave to Havoc, to stay away from any beautiful woman going by the name Solaris. Ed ignores the look for now though. "Solaris it is."

Solaris nods her head in approval. "I should return. Any longer and Father will question where I've been." With that she turns around and leaves the park.

As soon as she's gone, Mustang turns to look at Ed. "You need a hospital."

Ed looks up at him, even as he tries moving his shoulder to test the injuries. When he only feels a slight sting in his shoulder and a bit of pain in his back it tells him that the injuries are mostly not in need of actual care. "My shoulder is shallow enough to have been a bad cat scratch and my back has stopped bleeding so that will just need cleaning up."

A look of disbelief crosses Mustang's face. "You've been attacked by something called the 'Ultimate Spear' and you're trying to tell me you *don't* need to go to the hospital?"

After a second of consideration, Ed nods his head in agreement. "Pretty much yeah. They need cleaning sure, but other than that they'll be fine."

Sighing heavily, Mustang starts leading Ed out of the park. "Alright then. But we're stopping by the Hughes house to clean you up. I want to make sure they've been taken care of properly."

Ed rolls his eyes but follows after him anyway. "Alright fine. I need to go to the Hughes house anyway. Our bastard father is set to show up in Resembool in the next few days, so me and Tristan should head up there so we can explain everything to him.

## Chapter End Notes

I was listening to Horrible Histories songs while I was editing and drafting this and I forgot how much I love some of those songs (seriously the opening and ending of the show used to play in my head for *\*weeks\** on end as a kid)

# Chapter 46

## Chapter Notes

Still stuck on the final fight I don't know why but I've sat down three times to start this fight and nothing feels right but don't worry I'll get it eventually

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

Once they leave the park, Ed can see Mustang's car parked a little up the street and that that's where he's being lead. "You don't care that I'm likely going to get blood all over your seats?"

Mustang looks over his shoulder and raises an eyebrow at him. "I thought you said the bleeding had stopped. Or were you lying and you *do* need to go to a hospital."

Ed frowns at him. "If I needed to go to the hospital, I'd have told you. But I was talking about how my back is still covered in blood even though the bleeding has stopped."

The bastard doesn't say anything in response. Just raises his eyebrow at him again, almost expecting him to start backtracking and saying he *does* actually need to go to a hospital. "It's fine Shining, just get in the car." With that he unlocks the door and climbs in to the drivers seat. Ed rolls his eyes at him before climbing in to the passenger side seat.

As soon as Mustang starts the car, Ed looks over at Mustang. "I need to pick up my suitcase from the room I was in before she attacked me." Mustang looks down at him in disbelief before heading for the military accommodation.

When they finally get to the Hughes house, a very tired Maes answers the door for them. He stares at them for a few seconds before stepping aside to let them in. "Roy, Ed. What are you doing here at this time in the morning?"

Mustang gently shoves Ed inside. "Ed has some injuries that need cleaning up." He steps inside and closes the door. "Lust went after him."

Ed interrupts him even as Maes starts moving through the house to where they keep the first aid kit. "More importantly, I need to speak to Al. Hohenheim is set to appear in Resembool in the next few days so we should head down so we can be there and explain everything to him."

Maes looks up at Ed as he pulls out the first aid kit, gesturing for Ed to take his blood soaked shirt off. It sticks to his back slightly as he pulls it off and Ed realises that that's probably why the bleeding stopped so quickly. "Sit on the counter so I can reach your back." Ed stares at him for a second before shrugging and pulling himself on to the counter. "So, what's the story with your dad. The few times you've brought him up you've sounded like you wished you

were talking about anything else." He picks up a wipe from the first aid kit. "Also, some parts of these cuts have opened again, so this might sting."

A laugh escapes Ed and he shakes his head in amusement. "I'll be fine, Maes. My pain tolerance is pretty high. As to answer your question it's because he's a bastard. He abandoned the three of us when me and Al were barely old enough to remember him. He may have left to put the motions in place to stop Father from killing everyone, but I don't care. He didn't have to abandon our mum or us." A short harsh laugh is drawn from him. "I didn't exactly stay in one place when I had my own kids, but I was there for their birthdays and every other important day. If I was away for more than two weeks I wrote them both a letter. It's not difficult to not stay at home and also not abandon your kids." He shakes his head slightly. "In summary, he's a bastard and despite not being a kid anymore, I'll never forgive him for what he did because it wasn't necessary." Before Maes can voice his concern, Ed is speaking again. "I won't stop Al from getting to know him though, don't worry. I didn't last time and I won't this time."

Immediately after that admission Maes seems to let out a breath of relief and while a small part of Ed is upset they thought he would control Al like that, most of him is glad. Glad that Maes has become so fond of his brother that if Ed *was* going to stop Al from getting to know their dad, that Maes would at least *try* to talk some sense in to him.

Once Ed's wounds have been cleaned up, he jumps down off the counter. "Can I crash on your couch for the night? I don't want to wake Al up at this time."

Maes just shakes his head at Ed in amusement. "Course you can. Even though we both know Al wouldn't mind being woken up and we both know that. But I know what you're like by now so of course you can sleep on the couch."

As soon as the words are out of Maes's mouth, Ed is on his way out of the kitchen towards the living room. But he stops in the doorway to turn and look at Mustang. "Thanks for the help." Mustang just nods his head at Ed and so the other Alchemist continues his path for the nearest couch.

Once Ed is out of the room, Maes turns back to Mustang. "I'll check on his injuries again before they leave in the morning, or I'll get Al to do it so he can't get out of it."

Mustang gives him a smile. "Thanks Maes." As Maes starts packing up the first aid kit and binning the used wipes, Mustang heads out of the kitchen for the front door. "Sorry for barging in here so late, goodnight Maes."

Maes rolls his eyes as he follows him to the door. "You know I don't care about that Roy. I'd rather you come here than bleed out in a back alley."

A laugh escapes Mustang that he's quick to quiet down before he wakes up any other member of the house. "I'll head out in a minute, Ed left his stuff in my car." Maes nods his head as Mustang leaves the house to walk back to his car. A minute later, he returns with Ed's suitcase in hand. "Never goes anywhere without that thing, he'd kill me for leaving it in my car."



Taking the suitcase from Mustang, Maes turns to place it by the shoe rack. "Why does he lug this thing around everywhere anyway?"

Mustang shrugs his shoulders as he opens the front door again. "Probably contains Alchemy research that he doesn't want to leave hanging around." He steps back out of the house. "Night Maes."

With that he turns around and heads for his car. Maes waits in the doorway for him to drive off before heading back inside and locking the door. He pokes his head in to the living room quickly to check on Ed before heading back to his own bed. Al will wake up to a nice surprise at least.

## Chapter End Notes

Anyone playing Splatoon 3??? I am in love with it already and it's been out for two days as I'm drafting this

Also rest in peace Queen Liz I guess (the jokes about her and Diana meeting again are terrible and I've laughed at too many of them....)

# Chapter 47

## Chapter Summary

Ed and Al go back to Resembool

## Chapter Notes

I did a twelve hour shift yesterday on 20 minutes of sleep. My shift was only meant to be 8 hours I was so tired when I got home and it's meant I've woken up at 2 in the afternoon today

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

The next morning, Ed is woken up by his brother jumping on top of him. Normally, this wouldn't bother him, but this time it aggravates the wounds on his back. "Al."

As if sensing the discomfort he's causing, Al jumps off of his brother to stand beside the couch instead. "Brother? Are you okay?"

Ed nods his head at him in reassurance. "I'm fine Al. Lust attacked me last night, I'm fine but you jumping on me aggravated the injury she gave me."

Maes pokes his head in from the doorway. "Ed, let me check your back before I head out for work."

Groaning in annoyance Ed gets up from the couch. "I'm *fine* but alright." Ed pulls his shirt off as Maes goes to grab the first aid kit.

Al stares at him for a few seconds. "Brother you just said you were fine, *that* doesn't look fine." He points to the marks on Ed's back.

Before Ed can respond, Maes walks back in with the first aid kit and does it for him. "Ed will be fine, Al." He turns to look at Ed. "The one on your shoulder has scabbed over already so I'll leave that one be. I just want to see how the ones on your back are doing. If they opened up at all while you slept."

Nodding in understanding, Ed turns to the side so that Maes can reach his back. "I'm telling you, they'll be fine."

Maes sits behind him, placing the kit on the floor. "I'd still rather check them before you leave." Maes presses on the cuts a few times to check for blood in the places where the scabs

aren't as obvious. "You were right. They haven't opened and they've started to scab over already." He gets up from the couch so Ed starts pulling his shirt back on. "They've scabbed over but to differing degrees. Some parts have scabbed over properly while others are barely scabbing at all."

Ed hums in understanding. "I'll be careful don't worry."

After a few seconds of narrowing his eyes at Ed, Maes nods his head. "Good. I need to get to the office so let Gracia know if Al goes with you okay?"

Al pipes up from his spot beside the couch. "Where are you going?"

As Maes heads for the front door to go to work. Ed looks up at his brother. "Hohenheim is due back in Resembool in the next few days so I'm heading down. You coming with me?" Al nods his head immediately so Ed stands up from the couch again. "Alright. Is Gracia awake or just you and Maes?"

Shrugging slightly, Al moves over to the doorway. "Not sure, but I can knock on her door and if she doesn't respond we can just leave her a note."

Getting back up from the couch, Ed walks over to his brother. "Sure. You want to knock? The train will be leaving pretty soon so I need to put my boots and coat back on."

Without another word, Al nods and heads down the hall to go knock on Gracia's door and probably get his own coat and quickly pack some clothes. A couple minutes later, Al comes back shaking his head. "Gracia is still asleep so we'll have to leave a note for her. I packed up a couple changes of clothes as well since you didn't say how long we'll be home for."

Ed gives him a smile, before placing his suitcase down and turning to the kitchen counter behind him. "Go get your shoes on, I'll go write the note. Do you have a key for the door by the way? Or do you know where one is and we can push it through the letter box once the door is locked again."

Al nods his head as he opens his brothers suitcase. "Maes and Gracia spoke about getting me a key but they haven't gotten around to it yet, but Gracia's key should be by the front door right now."

With that problem solved, Ed plucks his book out of his pocket and tears out a page from the back. Al goes to grab the key from the door. When he gets back in to the kitchen, Ed is finishing the note for Gracia. "I mentioned about us using her key to lock and unlock the door so she'll know why it's on the floor." He looks up from the paper and his eyes catch on Al's hair. "Oh, right. Come over here." He claps his hands as Al moves towards him before pressing them on to his head and repeating the process on his eyes. "There we go. Sorry again about this Al."

His brother just shakes his head. "It's okay brother. You don't need to apologise every time, I understand." Al smiles sweetly at his brother and Ed is once again reminded that Al has always been a better brother than he deserves. "Let's go brother." Ed smiles at his brother before picking his suitcase up off of the counter and following Al to the front door.

As usual the train to Resembool is almost completely empty, which means that they can sit together on the train. Or at least on the benches opposite each other.

When they get off the train in Resembool, they both decide to stop by Pinako's shop before heading up the hill to their own house. "Granny! You in?" knowing their luck they've picked the one day she goes shopping to make their visit.

Pinako makes her way to the main room, Den following at her heels. "What brings you two back here?"

Ed pats Den on the head as he moves to circle around Ed and Al. "Hohenheim is set to return over the next few days. I'm going to explain everything to him and get him to head up to Dublith so he can heal Izumi if he hasn't already."

The mechanic just shakes her head at the two boys. "I take it you'll need feeding then. I assume you'll both be heading up the hill, so come back tonight for dinner okay?"

Al pipes up quietly from beside Ed. "Can dad join us for dinner when he gets here?"

A glance is sent Ed's way from Pinako before she nods her head at Al. "If he decides to hang around long enough sure, Al."

Rolling his eyes slightly, Ed keeps it to himself that he'll likely be skipping out on that meal.

## Chapter End Notes

Had a dream the other day that I'd finally completed the Father fight and it was one of those weirdly real dreams that never feel like dreams so I woke up super excited that the fight was done only to realise that it wasn't

# Chapter 48

## Chapter Summary

Hohenheim arrives

## Chapter Notes

I HAVE FINALLY STARTED THE FATHER FIGHT!!

Admittedly I haven't got much down rn but something is better than the nothing I had before

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

Over the next two days, the Elric's spend their days going back and forth between the Elric house and the Rockbell house. They spend their days picking through Trisha's things. Something they never got to do in Ed's last go around. As a result he has no clue what's hidden in the room. He goes in first to hide the pills and doctors notes he found the last time he walked in to the room, so that Al doesn't have to face them. As the sun starts to set they make their way down the hill to eat with Pinako before returning to their own home for the night.

On their third day in Resembool, Ed hears someone trying to open their locked door before knocking on it. He doesn't know who's at the door but he knows it's not Pinako because she has a key. She wouldn't need to knock on the door, and if for some reason she had forgotten her key, she'd just yell at him to come open the door for her.

Just in case, Ed changes Al's colouring in case it's one of the remaining Homunculi outside having followed them from Central. "Stay here." Al nods his head at him slowly as Ed leaves the dining room to go open the door.

When he finds Hohenheim stood outside, Ed just stares at him for a few seconds. Holding back the urge to slam the door in his face. After he gets the urge under control, he lets go of the door handle and turns around to move back to Al. "Close the door on your way in."

Al leaves the dining room, where Ed had left him, to see who Ed let in to the house. "Ed? Who is it?" When Hohenheim sees him walk around the corner, he freezes in place and starts tearing up. It takes Al a few seconds to understand Hohenheim's reaction, but he soon realises that Ed had changed his hair and eyes as a precaution. "Brother." Al crosses his arms at Ed in disappointment, which unsurprisingly doesn't sway him at all.

Eventually, Ed turns to look at the man himself and can't help rolling his eyes. Without another word, Ed claps his hands and presses them on to Al's head, repeating the gesture for his eyes. "It's Al you bastard. Mum's dead, she didn't have another child with someone else." That doesn't help to stop Hohenheim's tears and Al just stares his brother down. "What?!" Al just keeps staring at him, crossing his arms over his chest for effect. "Fine." Ed turns to look at the man. "Stop fucking crying before I hit you and sit down. Don't bother explaining where you've been I already know and I've explained it to Al. Instead you need to sit there and listen to me."

Seemingly in shock, Hohenheim stumbles through the house to a chair at the dining table. Al takes the chair next to him while Ed takes the seat across from Al, only slightly tilting it so he's actually talking *to* Hohenheim.

The three sit around that table for about an hour or so as Ed recounts his story. It then takes roughly another hour for him to finish explaining their current plan. "Oh and I'm going to ask you take a trip up to Dublith to help our Teacher again so that she can stop vomiting blood multiple times a day."

Hohenheim stares at Ed for a few seconds before turning his head to look at Al who just nods his head in approval. "He's telling the truth." Looking over the man's shoulder, Al notices the sun starting to set. "Dad, we're going to the Rockbell house for dinner, come with us."

Ed gets up from his chair with a roll of his eyes. "Al, don't forget to change your appearance before you go alright?" His brother looks up at him sadly. "I won't stop you from getting to know him. I didn't last time either. You can spend as much time with him as you want, but I have no desire to spend more time with him than necessary." He places a hand on his brother's head when his frown doesn't leave. "It's fine Al. You can't fix this, okay? Nor do you need to. I don't blame you for wanting to get to know your dad. But I didn't want to last time and I definitely don't need or want to this time."

Al nods his head slightly in understanding before getting up from his chair. "Come on dad. I'm sure Granny will be happy to see you." Hohenheim stares across at Ed for a few seconds, who meets his stare with a blank face except for a raised eyebrow, before he finally gets up from the table and follows Al. Who takes a second to pull a pre drawn array from his pocket to change his appearance. Ed can hear Hohenheim ask about the array and the pride in Al's voice when he tells the man that Ed created it.

Once the door has opened and closed, signalling their departure, Ed gets up from the table himself. He probably has a couple hours until they get back. He should really work on his Water Alchemy, because it's been a while since he did any work on it so he should really take this opportunity. The only work he's really done in it so far since deciding to create a new type of Alchemy is finalise what he wants it to do. He hasn't truly put any effort in to his work.

Moving over to his and Al's room, he picks up his suitcase from beside his bed. After picking his research papers out the bottom of the case he returns to the table. Once all the sheets are spread around in front of him he sits back down in his seat. Only one of the sheets has any attempt at forming arrays on. He picks that one out of the pile and pieces apart the array and how he was building it before he decides to start working on it again.

A little over two hours later Al and Hohenheim walk back in to the house and Ed immediately starts piling his papers together to put them back away. "What were you working on brother?"

Ed turns the pile of papers over so his research isn't visible. "Nothing. It's not complete yet, Al." The younger pouts slightly, wanting to know what his brother was up to. "You'll find out at some point, Al. I promise. It's just not ready yet." The promise that he *will* see what his brother was working on puts an end to Al's pouting.

Putting aside his interest for now, Al places a covered plate in front of Ed. "Granny said to bring you some food." Ed smiles up at his brother. "Thanks Al." His brother just smiles at him as Ed gets up to go get a fork. Knowing his brother is curious about the papers, he takes them with him to put back in to his suitcase.

Once his research was back in the suitcase, he heads to the kitchen to get a fork. He ignores Hohenheim who's stood by the sink in the kitchen and walks past him back to the dining room where Al is sat at the table. "Did you have to take the papers with you?" Ed just laughs at his brother, he knows he never would've have looked at the papers but that he would've been tempted. Al laughs with him for a few seconds. "Come on, brother. Eat something." Ed just nods his head and joins Al at the table again.

## Chapter End Notes

I did a twelve hour shift last week on twenty minutes sleep and I thought I was going to die the shift was only meant to be 8 hours so twenty minutes sleep was doable but those extra four hours nearly fucking killed me istg

# Chapter 49

## Chapter Notes

Finally bought Hades and I love it, so good

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

The next day, having explained everything to Hohenheim and gotten him to agree to help Izumi Curtis, Ed leaves Resembool. Al doesn't leave with him this time, wanting to spend another day with his dad. "I'll tell the Hughes you're still out here, just make sure to walk to the station from Granny's house and not here. And change your appearance before walking from Granny's house."

Al doesn't bother telling Ed that he already knows to do that, because he knows that Ed knows that. He knows his brother only repeats the warning every time for his own piece of mind and that he *does* actually trust Al to make sure to change his colouring or else he wouldn't be leaving earlier than him. He'd make himself hang around Hohenheim for an extra day to be *sure* that Al changes his appearance. So he nods along with the warning as always before hugging his brother goodbye.

When Ed gets off the train in Central, he makes sure to make his first stop the Hughes house. It's pretty early, but Gracia will likely be awake by this point.

Gracia is indeed awake and she opens the door to him with a confused look. "Edward? Is everything okay?"

Ed quickly nods his head to calm her down. "Everything's fine, Gracia. Tristan just wanted to spend a couple more days in Resembool for whatever reason. Wanted me to let you know he'll be back in a few days."

The look of concern on her face, which Ed now realises is because he knocked on her door without Al beside him, fades after he's explained that. "Thank you for letting me know, Edward."

Nodding in acknowledgment, Ed turns around to head in to the streets of Central, to head to Mustang's office. After all he should probably let Mustang know that Hohenheim is on the board. It shouldn't effect anything immediately, but better safe than sorry.

As soon as he steps in to Mustang's office, he comes face to face with Solaris. "What are you doing here?"

She turns to look at him, her hair pulled up in to a high ponytail instead of falling down her shoulders like usual. Even if it's just a quick disguise along with the outfit she's wearing, the idea that she's changed her hairstyle gives him a bit more confidence in his choice to turn



them Human. Tells him that they do have actual personalities. "You promised you would turn Gluttony and yet you ran off to Resembool for almost a week."

Ed stares at her before casting a quick glance at Hawkeye who nods at him silently, telling him that they already checked for bugs. Knowing that the room is safe, he turns back to Solaris. "I did promise to turn Gluttony and I *will* but I don't know where he is and I needed to go back to Resembool. As much as I don't like him, Hohenheim is a valuable piece in this game. To both sides, so he needed to know the full story." He stares at her for a few seconds, her tone had been rushed. Ed would almost say she was worried about something if he didn't know better. "Why is it so important to you that I change him sooner rather than later when it's going to happen either way."

Knowing that she's been figured out, Solaris sighs, pinching the bridge of her nose before opening her eyes again to look at him. "Gluttony is getting suspicious of me. He has a strong sense of smell as I'm sure you're aware. Me being Human must be slowly changing my scent. It took a few days for him to notice, but today he stared at me for a few seconds and told me I smelt different."

The rest of the room seem to need a second to understand why that that's such a bad thing. But Ed understands. "If he figures it out, he could give you away to Father. I doubt he would do it on purpose, but Gluttony isn't...."

Solaris rolls her eyes at him and ends the sentence for him. "He's not the smartest Homunculus no. But yes, if he says the wrong thing in front of any of the remaining Homunculi, well.... It wouldn't end well for me, let's leave it at that."

Ed taps his foot on the floor a few times before talking again. "The offer for safety at Greed's bar in Dublith is still open, Solaris. I don't want you dying."

She glares at him for a second before huffing. "I don't need safety. If you'd turn Gluttony then I wouldn't be in danger!"

A second of silence passes as Lust reigns in her anger. "I would turn Gluttony today if I knew where to find him. So if you bring him somewhere I can safely turn him, I'll do it right now."

As Solaris stares Ed down, Havoc pipes up and breaks the silence. "Uh, Chief? I don't know where you think would be safe enough to do that at this time of the day."

Looking back at Havoc, Ed nods in understanding. "I know, Havoc." Ed thinks for a second about anywhere that will be deserted enough to turn Gluttony there. After a minute of thinking, Ed speaks up again. "Bring him to the old train tracks. The whole area should be quiet enough that no one will go poking around at the sound of Alchemy."

Solaris watches him for a second before nodding her head and turning to leave the office. "You have an hour." Ed nods his head in understanding as she leaves the office.

Turning around to look at the rest of the room he shrugs his shoulders a little. "Well, guess I better go. Don't fancy making her even more annoyed."

## Chapter End Notes

I have a question for all of you.

As this chapter is being posted I am currently working on the last chapter of this fic, so what I want to know is do you want me to change the upload schedule for this fic?

I can keep posting one chapter a week, move it up to two or three uploads a week or just upload the rest of the fic once the final chapter is complete.

# Chapter 50

## Chapter Notes

In case anyone didn't notice, I updated this fics chapter count. The last chapter will be chapter 77

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

After leaving the office, Ed starts making his way to the old train tracks. He doesn't know how long Solaris will take to get Gluttony there, but it's better to get there much earlier than to make her wait for him.

Luckily, as Ed had hoped, the area around the tracks is indeed empty. Which means it will be safe enough for Ed to use his Alchemy. Speaking of safe, hopefully Solaris will be able to tell Gluttony not to attack him, which means that he can just activate the array without needing to fight him. After all, he doesn't want to risk losing an arm to the Homunculus. Or risk him getting angry about Ed having turned Solaris Human, and then trying to suck him in to the failed Gate of Truth in his stomach. Giving how much Gluttony cares about her, Ed wouldn't put it past him.

Figuring he has a while until Solaris arrives, Ed climbs up on to one of the train carriages to wait for her. It only took him twenty minutes to get to the train tracks from Mustang's office so he'll likely have a forty minute wait. So he throws his legs over the side of the carriage and lays down. Taking the time he has to soak up some sunlight. Resting his hands on his stomach he starts tapping out a pattern as he closes his eyes to enjoy the warmth of the afternoon sun.

Eventually, Ed's peace is interrupted by Solaris's heels clicking against the tracks. Ed doesn't even want to know how she's managing to walk on the tracks with heels as thin as hers. Sitting up, he looks down at her from his position on top of the carriage. Gluttony is following behind her, looking at the carriages full of coal and licking his lips like he wants to eat it.

When the two get closer, Ed jumps off the top of the train to stand in front of Solaris. Gluttony comes to a stop behind her, tilting his head as he watches Ed. "Good. You're here."

Ed casts a glance over at Gluttony, still stood behind Solaris. "How do you want to do this?"

Gluttony looks from Ed up to Solaris. "Lust?" Solaris looks down at him. "Can I eat him?"

Solaris places a hand on his head. "No you can't. You know he's to be used as part of Father's plan. Now I need you to stand still for me, okay Gluttony?"

The Homunculus stares up at her before returning his gaze to Ed. "Okay, Lust."

The former Homunculus gestures for Ed to move closer. Ed claps his hands once as he moves Gluttony. But as soon as he gets within touching distance, Gluttony starts to back off, casting nervous glances up at Solaris. "I won't hurt you please just stay still."

Another glance up at Solaris who just nods in approval. "Do what he says Gluttony." Gluttony looks up at her again before nodding and taking a step in Ed's direction.

Clapping his hands again to reactivate the array, Ed slowly takes a step closer towards Gluttony. Who looks about two seconds away from either stepping back again or swallowing him whole if not for Solaris stood right behind him. As soon as he makes contact with Gluttony, he freezes in place. As does the Homunculus which means that he can't keep swivelling his head back to look at Solaris anymore.

When the Eye of Truth opens up below them, Gluttony's eyes widen in surprise. Much like Solaris's did the week before when Ed pulled her through the Gate. Which *is* slightly surprising to Ed because he hadn't been expecting Gluttony to know what he is. Or at least what he was an *attempt* at being. But the way his eyes are glued to the Eye of Truth below them, proves that he did actually know what Father tried to make him. Ed doesn't get too much longer to be shocked about that however as within seconds, the hands are pulling the both of them apart, delivering them to Truth piece by piece.

Opening his eyes to the bright white light of the Gate, Ed is stood face to face with Truth again. Though they seem to be contemplating something. Tilting their head from side to side almost as if they were analysing Ed or sizing him up. But after a few awkward seconds of staring at him, Truth finally shakes his head, seemingly dismissing the thoughts he was having. Which, Ed has to be honest doesn't make him feel that great about what the thoughts where. "Well met, Alchemist. Getting the Stones to me without fighting means that there is less strain on the Souls. It is easier to settle them on the side of the Gate where they belong."

Ed rolls his eyes slightly. "Yeah well. Solaris was there to make sure he did what I needed him to do. Which was not eat me and not run away." Truth just smiles at him silently. "No snarky remarks this time?"

Truth shakes their head at him. "I'm afraid you've arrived at a bad time, Alchemist. I will have to send you back quickly, Golden Sun, so that I may continue my work."

That doesn't sound all that good to Ed, but if Truth isn't being forthcoming about it then there's no point in Ed asking for more information. Because first, he's not going to get anything out of Truth unless they're *willing* to talk. And second, the fact that Truth isn't telling him about it implies that he hasn't somehow broken their deal, nor is it a pressing matter. Which means Ed is more than content to ignore it. If it becomes important, he knows Truth will tell him. Instead he just silently waits for the hands to pull him back through the Gate.

From today I'll be posting two chapters a week, one on Wednesday and then the usual one on Sunday

# Chapter 51

## Chapter Summary

Gluttony chooses his new name

## Chapter Notes

I was watching Unus Annus clips yesterday and it made me sad over the channel again

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

After being dragged back through the Gate, Ed opens his eyes on the other side to see Solaris staring at the two of them in mild surprise. She must have assumed it would take longer for Ed to return. Sparing a quick look in Gluttony's direction, he sees the newly Human Gluttony poking at his stomach. After a few more seconds he looks up at Solaris. "I'm not hungry?" Ed feels slightly guilty that he didn't get a chance to explain anything to Gluttony, but he pushes it down and steps over to Gluttony.

Gluttony lifts his head too look at him as Ed walks over. "That feeling won't last forever, pretty soon you will have to eat something to *maintain* that feeling. But what you're feeling now is content, perhaps even fullness." Ed has had a theory for a while now that Gluttony always wants to eat everything not just because he's Gluttony but because he's physically *incapable* of being full. After all, Ed walked around in his stomach for what felt like weeks and never even came close to finding an edge. Having a seemingly endless void for a stomach would make it difficult to ever feel full.

Looking away from the new Human, he turns to looks at Solaris. "Like I told you to do, he'll need to pick a name for himself as well. The rest of his new emotions should start trickling in and in about a week he should have them all." She nods her head at him in understanding before turning to look at Gluttony. "Will it still be safe for you two to go back to Father now?"

Solaris looks back over at him and stares for a second. "It would put us in more danger to not return now. Envy disappearing is one thing, they were always a little flighty. Father must have known they would take off one day like Avarice did. But if we were to disappear he would get suspicious and would look in to our disappearance." When Ed doesn't seem to click it immediately, she sighs slightly. "Pride? Our eldest sibling? Father would set him after us and we'd likely be found in no time. No, I at least cannot leave Father's side just yet and I do not wish to send Gluttony away on his own."

A small smile forms on Ed's face. Most of the Homunculi care about each other to some degree or another. Father, Pride and Wrath only care about what the other Homunculi can do *for* them and how well they're doing their jobs. But the other four show some amount of consideration towards each other. Like Avarice agreeing to house Envy if they show up in Dublith, Solaris coming to attack him after Envy's disappearance and then her hunting him down again to turn Gluttony Human as well. But these two have always been closer to real siblings. Or at least Gluttony saw Lust as family. After all the reason he got swallowed by him last time is because he became so enraged about Lust's death. That memory of his last go around is what solidified his theory that they already had personalities and emotions as Homunculi.

As Gluttony continues to poke and prod at his stomach, Ed nods his head at Solaris. "Let me know the second you think it *will* be safe for you to leave. I want you each to be able to actually live a life worth living. I will *not* let any of you die before then."

For the shortest second a small smile forms on Solaris's face. It was more of a twitch of her lips then anything and if Ed wasn't so sure he saw it he would've thought he'd imagined it. But almost immediately after, she frowns again. "You aren't saving Pride or Wrath are you?"

Ed is slightly taken aback by the question. He was under the impression that none of the Homunculi cared about Bradley, that they didn't understand the point of a Homunculus that would grow old and die, when the whole point of *being* a Homunculus is that they were practically immortal.

Only a few seconds later, Ed brings himself under control to answer her question. "No. Or at least not how I did for the rest of you and will do for Sloth as well. I'm still not entirely sure how to deal with Pride yet, because Mrs's Bradley loves him as her own son. But I'll come up with something at a later date for him. As for Wrath.... I don't believe he'd want to be Human again. I remember something Mustang told me on my last go around. Mustang had asked if he would ever return to being Human if given the chance and Bradley said no. Had laughed and compared Human beings to ants and asked him if he would stop being Human to become an ant. Whenever I have to deal with Bradley I'll give him the offer. But I already know he'll turn it down without a second thought."

Solaris seems to be surprised with his answer. Either at the answer itself or the amount of thought he'd put in to it. She stares at him for a few seconds before shaking her head and turning to look at Gluttony who is stood behind them. No longer poking at his stomach and instead watching the two of them talk. "Lust?"

Sighing slightly she pats Gluttony on the head. "It's Solaris, Gluttony. Only call me Lust around Father, Wrath and Pride. Okay?"

Gluttony stares up at her for a minute before nodding his head firmly. "Okay Solaris." Not for the first time, Ed wonders about Gluttony's intelligence. He's clearly not the smartest, after all it's very easy to trick or talk him in to things. But he's not completely stupid either. He genuinely seems to have grasped what Solaris just told him. Deciding it isn't worth thinking about too much, Ed decides to ignore the thought.

Accepting that Gluttony understands what he's been told, Solaris pats him on the head again. "You'll need to think of a new name for yourself as well when away from those three." Gluttony nods his head three times before falling silent and tilting his head to one side.

Ed is about to pipe up and tell him he doesn't need to pick it right now, when Gluttony's eyes suddenly open. "Gulliver."

Not knowing why he picked that name and not wanting to think too hard about it either, Ed just nods his head in acceptance seeing Solaris do it as well out the corner of his eye. "Solaris and Gulliver. I like them." Gluttony stares at him for a few seconds before smiling. Ed is shocked for a second at the sight. He had seen all the Homunculi smile at one point barring Sloth.

Bradley had smirked at him when he thought Ed was being particularly reckless or stupid. Pride had grinned during their fight when he thought he had the upper hand, a cocky little grin. Lust had smiled rarely unless she needed to get close to a man while in disguise. But she smiled at Gluttony a few times. Envy grins at people all the time because he finds stupidity amusing. And Greed was constantly smiling, showing off his sharp teeth. But Gluttony. Ed doesn't think he ever saw Gluttony smile. The fact that it's the first thing Ed sees after he claims the name Gluttony is surreal. But he buries the feeling and bids goodbye to the two before heading away from the tracks.

## Chapter End Notes

Have I ever said how much I hate ending fics? Like even when I know a fic is on it's last chapter I never know how to write the ending.



# Chapter 52

## Chapter Notes

My best friend finally started playing Persona 5 after like 3 years of me trying to get her in to it

The validation is real

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

Almost a week after Ed turned Gulliver, he makes contact with Ling again. By which he means he jumped from roof to roof of the cheapest restaurants in the area until he found the Prince. Both of his bodyguards sat on the roof waiting for him to leave. In no time at all, Fu turns his head to look at Ed, silently watching as he lands on the same roof as them. "You are getting better at that." Fu says in way of greeting.

Ed tilts his head at him. "The Chi sensing?" Fu and Lan Fan both nod their heads. "I can only really sense you three, my brother, and Mustang." He resolutely ignores the last point. "I need to ask Ling a favour, so don't kill me for going to sit at his table."

Fu nods his head once, while Lan Fan lets out a huff of air that Ed knows from experience that it's a mix between a laugh and a sigh. (He knows from experience because last time it was usually he or Ling getting her to make that noise.) With the knowledge that he won't immediately die for sitting near the foreign Prince, Ed climbs down from the roof to walk in to the building.

Ling is sat near the back of the building, but right next to a giant window. Likely so that if he is ambushed he has an easy escape. Nodding his head in greeting to the teen, Ed sits down across from him. "To what do I owe the pleasure, Ed?"

Huffing in amusement, Ed rolls his eyes before responding. "I have a favour I need to ask you."

The Prince raises an eyebrow in response. "A favour? What is it you need me to do?"

Ed checks the tables around him to make sure no one is listening in before continuing. "I need you to track down Scar for me." Ed had told the Prince to keep an eye out for a small Xingese girl with a black and white cat who can perform Alkahestry. "He should have Mei with him by now and I need her on my side for my plan."

After staring at him for a few seconds, Ling nods his head in agreement. "Very well. We will track them down for you. Do you know the area he's hiding?"

Annoyed, Ed can only shake his head. "Sorry, no. Scar doesn't stay in one place for long so he never told me where he was staying. I can tell you he won't be staying in any well populated areas, pass through them maybe but he wouldn't risk sleeping out in the open."

Humming in understanding, Ling nods his head. "Very well. We'll find him and get in touch when he's found."

Bowing his head slightly in thanks, Ed makes a move to stand up. "I'll leave you to it then. I won't be leaving Central any time soon so I'll either be in Mustang's office or in the military accommodation I'm staying in currently."

Ling nods his head and stands up as well. "I'll get Lan Fan and Fu to look as well so we should find him soon." With that the two of them leave the café. Ling's bodyguards immediately jump from the roof to land in front of their Prince. They both listen silently as Ling explains what Ed is asking them to do. Once the Prince has finished, explaining both bodyguards make a noise of approval.

Having accepted to help look for Scar and Mei, all three Xingans make their way to the alleyway beside them so they can get back up on to the rooftops.

It takes a few days after the talk for Ling to get back in contact with Ed. The Prince arrives in Ed's window in the early hours of the morning, way before Ed needs to be in the office. "You found him?"

After opening the window to allow the Prince in, Ed gets out of bed to get dressed. "Yeah he's hiding out in an abandoned house on the edge of Central." Ed throws on his boot and picks up his coat after looking outside the window and seeing the slight rain outside. "Lan Fan and Fu are staying with him for now so that if they move I'll still be able to bring you to him by tracking them."

Ed nods his head before following Ling back out the window. "Let's go then." Ling takes a leap from the window ledge to the balcony on the neighbouring building. Ed hesitates for a half second before following after him. When he lands on the balcony he takes a second to be thankful that he swapped out his usual automail for the lighter northern version. There was no way he could make such a long jump otherwise. Typical automail just weighs too much.

Seeing Ling already clambering up the fire escape to reach the roof, Ed shakes himself out of his thoughts before following after him again.

It takes an hour of travelling across Central in the most unconventional way possible for them to reach Scar's hiding spot. When they start nearing the area, Ling turns to face Ed and tells him that Scar has moved slightly since they found him. Ed just nods his head in understanding before following Ling down the side of the building, using window ledges balconies and anything else they can safely use to reach ground level again.

Scar turns to face them when they hit the floor, hearing them land behind him. His eyes land on Ling first and his stance tenses, before noticing Ed behind him and relaxing again. "Hey Scar. You found the girl right?"

The man just nods his head and gestures to the run down building he was guarding. "I assume you're the reason for those shadows up there?" Ed nods his head slightly, unsurprised that Scar knows about them. After all, if Mei really is with him then she probably sensed them and told Scar to be careful. "I suppose you should all come in then. You won't have gone through all this effort for no reason right?" Ed nods his head in agreement so Scar just lets out a hum and turns to enter the new shelter.

Ed walks in after him, followed by Ling and his bodyguards. Mei's eyes latch on to the three of them immediately and she starts drawing one of her knives out of her sleeves. Before Ed can try to peacefully put a stop to her action, the knife has already been thrown in Ling's direction. Without thinking much about it, he holds his arm out in front of the Prince's throat to block the attack. Instead of Ling's throat, the knife buries itself in Ed's arm.

## Chapter End Notes

I don't feel like death anymore! I was so sick the past week but I got some antibiotics and feel so much better. Just the barest hint of a cough now

# Chapter 53

## Chapter Summary

Ed sends Scar up to Briggs to gather his brothers research

## Chapter Notes

Any writing in bold is Xingan

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

Mei stares up at him as he pulls her knife out of his arm. Once the knife is out, he claps his hands together before placing one of them on his arm. Once the bleeding has stopped he looks down at Mei who is still staring at him in shock and confusion. Kneeling down in front of her he holds her knife back out to her. Stopping Lan Fan and Fu from attacking her directly as well, as any attack they tried would hit Ed instead with how his whole body is shielding the small Princess. **"No attacking any members of the Yao Clan, Mei Chang."** Her eyes widen slightly when she realises he's speaking Xingese. **"I'm sorry to tell you this but I've already promised to help put Ling on the throne. However, he will make sure you and your family are more than looked after if you agree to help me."**

When he hears the three behind him yell out in defiance he turns around to glare at them. "I promised to put you on the throne, Ling but I have *far* too much on my plate to be dealing with your infighting all the time. I will break my promise if you want to go around picking fights with Mei." Part of his reasoning behind that is because he knows that if Al and Mei get introduced in this timeline they're likely to fall in love again. The more important reason, is because she's the only person in Amestris right now other than him that can use Alkahestry, and she's much better than he is. Which means he needs her safe and willing to help.

Ling stares at Ed for a few seconds after his statement. Likely trying to get a sense for how serious Ed is being. But eventually, Ling nods his head in understanding and backs down, turning his head to look at the Chang Princess. "I promise you that if you help Ed I will keep the whole Chang clan safe and looked after when I am Emperor. They will want for nothing." Ling's bodyguards quickly back down from their defensive stances after hearing their Master's surrender.

Ed thanks him before turning back to Mei and beginning to explain everything she needs to know. Which is basically everything that's going on. Confirming to her that *yes* that's the weird feeling she's been feeling under the ground. Telling her that he wants to fix it but needs

the help of an Alkahestrist to do so and unfortunately he has too much on his plate to be able to do it himself.

Once Ed has finished explaining everything, Mei sits there in silence so Ed leaves her to think everything through. After all, Mei is the youngest member of his plan and that's a lot of bombshells to drop on a child. Instead of pestering Mei, he stands up to give her some space, moving over to Scar, who has been silently watching this whole time to ask the man how he's been since they last spoke.

After a few minutes of making small talk with Scar, Mei stands up from her spot on the floor to look at Ed. He recognises the fire in her eyes and knows she's come to a decision. "I'll help you. Tell me what you need me to do." Ed smiles down at the girl, unsure what made her decide to help. Whether it was because she's just that kind or because she wants her family to be safe and looked after. Knowing Mei, it could honestly be both. After all, the girl ran back in to the fight last time around despite having a Homunculus in her hands, the way to help her family. Funny how both Heirs got their hands on Homunculus one way or another yet both lost them. This time neither of them will get their hands on one and yet they're both still promising to help him. Ling so he can get his hands on the throne, and Mei so her family can be safe. Part of Ed finds it funny that even with how much is going on around him, how much he has to handle, he's still making promises to people. Still promising his help if they help him first.

Shaking his head to draw himself out of his thoughts he nods his head in acceptance. "Thank you, Mei." With Mei having agreed to help, Ed turns to Scar to explain what he needs the man to do. "I need you to go free Tim Marcoh from where Solaris has been keeping him hidden." He didn't get kidnapped this time, but when Ed told Solaris that he needed Marcoh for his plan she took him so she can keep up her guise in front of Father.

Immediately after Ed brings up the man, Scar's face falls from its usual blankness to a fierce scowl. "You want me to team up with the man who turned my people in to Philosopher's Stones?"

Ed stares at Scar in silence for a few seconds, hoping he'll calm down enough to not punch him. "I'm sorry, but I wasn't there when you figured everything out. I just know it was you three and my brother Al. Also, I know this doesn't make his actions any better, but I know Marcoh *truly* regrets what he did to your people. I've seen his reaction when I asked him about how to get my hands on one last time before I knew anything else about them. To *anyone* wanting to get their hands on one."

Ignoring his apology (accepting it but not acknowledging it which Ed gathers is fair) Scar raises an eyebrow at Ed. "Why can't you go get Marcoh yourself? After all you already know where he's being held."

Scar makes a fair point, Ed *does* already know where Marcoh is being held, so he explains it to the man. "Because quite frankly, like I just told that lot, I have too much shit to do right now. I need to start heading up to Brigg's soon. Sloth is due to finish digging the circle soon, which means he'll be bursting through the floor in the fortress. I need to be there to turn him Human and also explain to Olivier what the brass is planning to do on her turf. Plus, Bradley

is probably going to release Kimblee soon. They need someone to carve the crest of blood up in Briggs. They'll likely use him again."

The Ishvalan watches him for a few seconds before nodding his head in understanding. "Very well. Explain to us what it is we need to do then." Without needing to be told again, Ed starts explaining.

Roughly an hour is spent explaining everything to Scar and Mei. Explaining that they need to find Scar's brothers research so Mei and Marcoh can piece it together and they can put the counter circle in place as soon as possible.

Once they both understand the plan, know where they're collecting Marcoh from and where Scar's brothers notes are hidden, Ed gets up from where he sat down on the floor. "I need to go back to command so I can tell the Bastard that I'm heading out again." He turns to look at Scar as he reaches the door. "Get spotted on your way up to Brigg's. They'll send Kimblee after you if you are. If slash when he does go after you, don't seriously injure Kimblee or they'll send some fucker up to heal him that I cannot be bothered to deal with. The Brigg's situation is precarious enough as it is." Scar nods his head in understanding. "Once you get your brothers notes head to the abandoned mining area. I'll tell Miles to keep out an eye for you or at least some sort of signal. Hopefully, I'll be able to lure Kimblee out there and take him out. Not to mention take his Philosopher's Stone from him at the same time."

Mei nods up at him from her spot on the floor. "I can use my Alkahestry to cause a slight explosion. Would that work as a signal?"

Ed smiles down at the little Princess. "That'd work perfectly." He opens the door to head out on to the streets of Central. Before he leaves he looks back at Ling's group. "No infighting you four. As for you three, thank you for finding Scar for me. I don't have anything I need to ask you to do immediately. So just don't draw any attention to yourselves okay?" After Ling nods at him in agreement and understanding, Ed finally leaves the rundown house.

## Chapter End Notes

My Halloween costume arrived yesterday! I'm going to be S3 Steve Harrington at my friends Halloween party

# Chapter 54

## Chapter Notes

Went shopping for clothes yesterday (cause I'm living on like the same 3 outfits) and instead came back with 3 new manga books, a set of DnD dice, a lil black cat statue and two sailor moon figures

Do I regret this choice? Only slightly

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

Walking from Scar's current hideout to Central Command takes almost an hour and a half. Which means if he wants to get the afternoon train up North then he'll have to make his trip to the office quick.

Stepping in to the office, he's met with a surprisingly full room. Every member of Mustang's team, including the man himself are stood in the outer office. As soon as the door opens and Ed steps in to the office, they all look up to see who entered. Havoc lets out a sigh of relief from his desk. "You scared us for a second there Boss."

Ed raises an eyebrow at him. "What where you talking about in the main office that's so important for you to *all* get spooked by the door opening?"

Hawkeye looks over at him from beside Mustang. "Nothing important, don't worry Edward. Fuery brought up the fact that you've been in Central for a while now. He was slightly worried if something was off with the plan."

Fuery starts waving his hands frantically in front of his face. "I wasn't doubting you or anything, and of course I trust that you'd tell us if something *had* gone wrong with the plan. I'm just a natural worrier."

Wanting to calm Fuery down, after all he knows he trusts him, he grabs Fuery's hands and places them back on the desk in front of him. "Fuery, it's alright. Nothing has gone wrong but with Ling and his guards around I needed to get him to trust me. Then I asked him to find me Scar and Mei which took them a few days." He looks at Mustang at that point. "Speaking of, Mei agreed to help me with the plan. Got slightly stabbed before she agreed but it was technically my fault, she tried to attack Ling which I expected but all I could do to block it was put my arm in the knife's path." Sensing everyone's gaze drop to his arm he rolls his eyes and pulls his sleeve up. Only a tiny scar remains and a bit of dried blood he hasn't washed off yet. "I'm fine. I healed it with Alkahestry right away." He turns his attention back to Fuery. "You can stop worrying now though Fuery. The plan is back in motion. I'll be getting on the train up to Brigg's soon because Sloth is set to finish the circle within the next day or so."

Mustang nods his head in understanding. "You want to get the Ice Queen on board as well don't you." Ed rolls his eyes at the nickname before nodding his head. "How long are you going to be up there for?"

Ed shrugs slightly. "Not sure. Scar is headed up to Brigg's as well to collect his brother's research and we have a plan to try and take Kimblee off the board immediately. So hoping that nothing goes wrong.... Maybe a week?" Mustang nods his head in understanding as Ed turns back to the door. "Need to go get my shit from my room. I should be back hopefully in a week." Ed ignores the thought that maybe this time he won't be lucky enough to survive his encounter with Kimblee. After all the man is fucking insane. They seem to pick up on the tone of his thoughts but let him go without calling him out on it.

After getting back to his accommodation, he picks up the rooms phone to call Maes, knowing that the man was off today and will hopefully be at home. The phone rings for about a minute before Maes picks up. "Hi Maes." The man gives him a quick greeting back before asking why he's phoning. "I'm heading up to Brigg's today for about a week. I just wanted to ask you to let Tristan know that I won't be able to help him babysit for a little while."

Maes must lean away from the phone because Ed can't fully make out what he shouts on the other end of the call. He finds out soon enough though when the phone is handed over from Maes to Al. "Hey Ed. Maes just told me you were going up to Briggs. Be careful up there okay?"

Ed lets out a small laugh before agreeing. "Alright. I'll be careful, promise. I need to head to the train station but can you put Maes on again for a second please." After a slight ruffle of fabric coming from the phone, Maes is on the phone again. "I just wanted to let you know that we're coming up to hostage time. They might not do anything, but please make sure he's safe." The Alchemist lets out a sigh of relief when Maes promises to keep his brother safe before bidding Maes goodbye and ending the call.

Winry may have been the main hostage last time, but they used Al as leverage last time as well. Winry is mostly safe up in Rush Valley because Pinako is his mechanic on file (as demanded by the woman herself). Al may be hidden, Ed may not have any living family according to the files the military has on him, but his brother is still in Central. Which is always going to set him on edge. Heaving out a sigh to relax he picks up his suitcase to make his way to the train station.

The train is already somewhat busy when it pulls in to the station. But Ed knows that the train will likely be completely empty by the time it pulls in to North City. After all, North City is the closest to the border with Drachma which means it's almost constantly snowing down there.

Knowing he's in for a long trip, Ed settles down in his seat, planning to sleep for most of the journey. Hopefully, Scar will be meeting Marcoh at this point and then the three of them can head up North as well to start piecing together his brothers research. Kimblee is also probably being released from hospital at the minute. Hopefully he'll only have the one Philosopher's Stone this time, but Ed knows that's not likely.



The only reason they'll have to release him this time is to carve out the crest of blood at Briggs. It *is* the last spot on the circle. However they expect him to do that this time they'll need him to be able to bypass the ten years in prison with no exercise. Even though he'll likely trick Drachma in to attacking the wall again. After all if Ed succeeds in his plan to get the man arrested again so he's forced off the board, it'll be the only way he can carve out the crest without causing anger with Amestrian citizens by him not being in jail after being arrested.

## Chapter End Notes

Still struggling with the last chapter of this

# Chapter 55

## Chapter Summary

Ed arrives at Fort Briggs

## Chapter Notes

Getting closer to having the last chapter completed

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

As Ed expected, the train empties out almost completely by the time they reach North City. The few other people left on the train are dressed for the weather in North City which leads Ed to believe they live up here and are returning home. They're certainly better dressed for the weather than Ed is. He's wearing his usual clothes except for his coat which he made better for the cold like last time. By buying some extra red cloth in advance to thicken the coat and some fur to line the hood, sleeves and end of the coat.

He walks out of the station in to the snow covered streets. After allowing himself a minute to enjoy the snow, something they don't often get in Amestris other than here in the North, he starts walking down the streets trying to hitch a ride with someone heading up near Briggs.

After a few minutes of walking, he finds the guy who gave him and his brother a lift up their last time. "Any chance you're going up near Briggs?"

The man turns in his seat to look at head. "Not exactly near but I'm going up in that direction, yes. Why you heading up to Brigg's boy?"

Ed holds back an eye roll. "I'm a State Alchemist. I'm heading up to Brigg's to talk to Major Armstrong." The man looks Ed up and down in suspicion, so Ed pulls his silver pocket watch out. "Shining Blood Alchemist at your service."

While Ed pockets his watch again, the driver looks him up and down again before gesturing to the back of his cart. "Hop on in. I'll take you as far as I can."

Not wanting to risk the man changing his mind, Ed immediately hops in to the back of the cart. "Thanks I appreciate it. Just let me know when I should hop off."

Roughly an hour after they leave the carefully shovelled streets of North City, the driver turns around to look at Ed. "This the closest you're gonna get to Briggs."

Nodding in understanding, Ed hops out of the cart. "Thanks for the ride." The man nods his head in acknowledgement before turning back around and continuing on his way.

Ed takes a few seconds to look through the snow covered field, hopefully Buccaneer won't get the drop on him this time. Because he doesn't have a metal arm he can give up this time. Eventually Ed starts taking steps through the snowy field, immediately feeling his feet start sinking through the deeper snow covering the field.

Before Ed knows it, he's being jumped by Buccaneer, only just managing to avoid his attempt to grab at him with his automail arm. "I need to talk to General Olivier Armstrong." He continues moving, now backwards so he can keep his eyes on Buccaneer, knowing he's close to the wall. "I have information for her. You can throw me in a cell if you want, but I think she'll want to know what's about to happen in her castle." Buccaneer pauses for a split second as the storm finally clears enough for him to see the wall of Briggs behind him. As well as a ring of guards pointing rifles at him.

Olivier Armstrong stands at the top of the wall with Miles stood behind her. "Who are you?"

Turning to look at the wall properly, Ed holds his hands up, hoping Buccaneer won't attack him again once his back is turned. "My name is Edward Elric, Shining Blood Alchemist." He lowers one hand to fish out and hold up his silver pocket watch. "I have some information that I believe you'll want to know."

After staring him down for a minute, she allows him entry. "I will put you in a cell the second I deem it necessary." Ed just nods his head in understanding as Buccaneer leads him in to Briggs.

Knowing that everyone at Fort Brigg's is extremely loyal to Olivier and therefore trustworthy, he dives straight in to his explanation as soon as he stops in front of her.

She stares at him judgmentally for a few seconds, which Ed understands. "I won't blame you for not believing me, not sure I'd believe me either. But you'll have proof of everything I'm saying soon. I only ask that you don't lock me in a cell for long. I need to be here when the Homunculus breaks through the floor so I can make good on my promise to Truth."

A few more seconds pass before she nods her head. "Very well." She immediately turns her attention to Miles. "Set him to work." Miles nods his head in understanding before gesturing at Ed for him to follow.

Barely two hours after Ed had explained everything to Olivier, does Kimblee show up in Briggs. Ed runs in to him and Kimblee raises an eyebrow at him. "You must be the Shining Blood Alchemist?" Ed nods his head. "It's nice to meet you, I'm the Crimson Alchemist."

Ed rolls his eyes a little at the introduction. *'Yes I know exactly who you are thank you, bastard.'*

But before Ed can actually say anything to the man, a commotion is heard further inside. Knowing what's happening he immediately starts off at a run to where he knows the noises are coming from.

Olivier is stood staring at the Homunculus before turning away to make eye contact with Ed. She gives him a single nod, telling him she believes him now.

In Ed's opinion everyone acts their parts out perfectly. Everyone pretending that they didn't understand what was going on, shooting Sloth a few times with regular guns and acting shocked and surprised when nothing happens. They run through a few more different types of ammo, before Olivier brings up the plan she came up with last time.

Kimblee, recognising that he should probably put a stop to this, tries to speak up with a plan to seal it back in to the hole it came from. But as he quickly learns, *nobody* tells Olivier what to do, especially not when they're on *her* turf. So Olivier immediately shoots him down. "If you don't like the way I'm dealing with this then leave. I will not have a war criminal telling me what to do."

Ed isn't too worried about Sloth getting hurt too badly, after all Olivier had promised to have Sloth brought inside and defrosted as soon possible and she isn't one to break promises.

But Ed is more than aware that the crest of blood still needs to be carved at Briggs.

Which is why when Miles reports an explosion at the old mining town and a possible sighting of Scar, Ed immediately follows Kimblee and his men out of the fort.

## Chapter End Notes

Anyone else super excited for the new PJO books coming out?? I am so excited for them and I've only been in the fandom for like maybe 6 months

# Chapter 56

## Chapter Notes

I'm posting this super early today because I don't know what time I'll wake up seen as I went to bed at 5 am yesterday and only woke up properly because my mum woke me when she left for work herself

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

After ten minutes of walking around the abandoned town, Ed shrugs his shoulders. "I guess it was a false alarm, we should head back to the fort."

Kimblee lets out a harsh laugh before turning to face the other Alchemist. "We've barely looked anywhere for him. You wouldn't be trying to protect him, would you?"

Ed panics for a split second, he had forgotten that Kimblee for all his insanity, was intelligent. He was a State Alchemist after all. "Of course I'm not."

A short hum makes it's way out of Kimblee's throat. "What's the harm in searching for a little longer then?" Even as he says that, he starts leading Ed towards the mine. The one he blew up last time. He must have seen Ed reach for the arrays in his pocket, because suddenly he's turning to fully face Ed, with his hands inches away from touching. "I wonder what you could possibly be helping that man with."

When Ed continues to reach for his arrays, Kimblee tuts at him. "Behave or I'll kill those two in front of you before I take you out." Ed doesn't even fully understand why Kimblee is trying to kill him this time, but he didn't fully understand last time either because he had been trying to *stop* them from killing him. Ed guesses the man is just so bloodthirsty that he'll kill whenever he thinks he can manage it, whether he'd get away with it or not.

Though, Ed *had* been beginning to wonder how the remaining Homunculi were going to get him to comply when they have no hostages to hold over his head. But they seem to have figured him out, or Kimblee does at least. Because Ed immediately stops reaching for his arrays, much to Kimblee's amusement.

The whole situation is infuriating Ed to no end because it's forced him to come face to face with a truth about himself. The people close to him make the most effective hostages, but with Ed's want to save people *anyone* could be a potential hostage for him. All they have to do is put a stranger in danger and they've got him. The reason it's so infuriating to him is because this wouldn't work on any other member of Mustang's team. Fuery would likely have a breakdown over it later but it wouldn't work. It shouldn't work on him either, Ed can't afford to let it work on him. He *can't* be the weak point on Mustang's team.

But evidently, he is.

But he can worry about that later, he has a more pressing issue right now than this. Ed still doesn't want to reveal his no array Alchemy. Because if Kimblee does what Ed expects he's going to, he'll survive. He did last time and he will again. He cannot afford to die this time. So he acts the bleeding heart teenager he's supposed to be (and evidently still is) and backs away from Kimblee.

With a vicious smile, Kimblee raises both his hands again, opening his mouth to reveal the two Philosopher's Stones in his possession. Ed has to physically hold himself back from lunging from them. It would show way too much of his hand and he can't afford that. Not when he has no way of informing anyone about it. It would cause too much trouble.

So he doesn't do anything to Kimblee. Instead he stares at him like a stupid teenager in over his head, despite the fact that he could take Kimblee out in a second. Something in his stance or his face must intrigue the Chimera's as they subtly step in to what Ed knows is going to be the blast zone. He doesn't look at them, doesn't draw attention to them. Because if he gets impaled again, their help will be invaluable. "I was told not to kill you. It was one of the conditions of my release. But it's been such a long time since I've had blood on my hands and your name is so pretty. Farewell, Shining Blood Alchemist." With that, Kimblee sets off an explosion, sending the three of them careening to the bottom of the mine.

Ed curses himself heavily as the floor explodes beneath him. He needs to get back to Briggs to turn Sloth. If he gets there in time, he may be able to get Kimblee arrested again like he was planning. Getting blown to the bottom of the mine again was *not* part of his plan for today but he can't say he's surprised. At least it shouldn't be hard to get Kimblee arrested. After all, he *did* just try to kill him. Hopefully he can get the Chimera's on side again so they can act as witnesses.

At the end of his fall, Ed lands on a massive pile of rubble, cut up and heavily bruised but at least he hasn't been impaled this time. Not wanting to risk his luck, he looks above him for anything that *could* potentially impale him and sees that cursed green beam hanging precariously above him. Not wasting another second, Ed immediately rolls out of the way. Once he's safely out of the way of being impaled in the near future, Ed does a quick check for any bigger injuries. Finding nothing bigger than a cut on his forehead, he pushes himself up in to a sitting position to look for Darius and Heinkel.

After a minute of looking, he finds them both trapped under a pile of rubble not too far away from him. Crawling a little closer, he pretends to draw a circle in the dust before using his Alchemy to lift the rubble off of them. Both Chimeras crawl out from beneath the rubble before looking over at him.

They all stare at each other for a second before Ed breaks the silence. "Why did you step in to the blast zone? You were both safe where you were stood."

Darius is the one to answer his question. "Because something was up with your posture. You weren't stood like a scared or stubborn teenager, you were stood like a soldier. One prepared to do something that they know is going to hurt but is going to do it anyway. You stared down a war criminal, a man with the blood of thousands on his hands and didn't flinch at all. Besides, you stopped your attack on Kimblee once he held our lives hostage. We wanted to make sure you came out of this okay."

Ed stares at them for a few seconds, looking between Darius and Heinkel, before humming slightly. "Thank you. Could you help me get back to Fort Briggs so I can get Kimblee arrested for attempted murder?" Ed suspects he won't be in for long if he even gets arrested at all. But they can't keep him on the board in Central or there'll be riots. So that's one piece somewhat out of the way at least. Kimblee is too unpredictable to be kept on the board for long. After all, he just tried to kill one of their precious Human Sacrifices. Unaware of the train of thought going on in the Alchemist's head, the two Chimera's just laugh before nodding in agreement.

## Chapter End Notes

This fic is now finished! I'm still updating twice a week but I wanted you all to know it now has an ending, one I'm actually quite proud of

# Chapter 57

## Chapter Summary

Ed returns from the mine to turn Sloth Human

## Chapter Notes

Sorry if you get two notifications for this chapter but for some reason the chapter summary and notes didn't post with the chapter

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

Before Ed can even *try* to stand up properly on his own, Heinkel sweeps him up. "Hey, I can walk on my own you know!" In response, both Chimera's just look down at his leg. Thankfully, it's not his flesh leg, but you can see all the missing or damaged parts of his automail leg from the holes in his pant leg from the shrapnel. He's also pretty sure some of the wires have been torn as well because it isn't responding properly when he tries to move it. So unfortunately, Ed has to admit that yeah, it looks pretty bad and resigns himself to being carried.

By the time the three of them get back to Fort Briggs, Kimblee is finishing his report of their trip to the old mining town, which ended in Ed's untimely death. Unable to help himself, Ed yells out from his place in Heinkel's hold. "Who are you calling dead you fucking liar?!" Olivier looks almost relieved for a second and he can only assume it's because she didn't want to have to be the one to tell Mustang and his team about his death.

Kimblee turns pale at the sight of all three of them bruised and beaten up but very much alive. Completely ignoring Kimblee after his outburst, Ed turns his attention to Olivier. "General, the Crimson Alchemist blew up the mine we were standing in in an attempt to kill me. Even going so far as to take his own men hostage to stop me from fighting him. Told me if I didn't behave, meaning not attacking him, he would kill them in front of me before he killed me.

As Ed finishes telling the story, Olivier turns to face Kimblee, her glare as cold as ice. After regarding him and his paling face, she turns to Buccaneer. "Place Major Kimblee under arrest. I will bring him to Central myself tomorrow morning. For now, we repair the hole in the floor that that monster made." The fact that she's bringing up Sloth, tells Ed that she's already had him brought inside the fort.



He nods his head ever so slightly from his spot in Heinkel's arms before the doctor runs forwards to stare at his automail. "You need a new leg young man. The wiring is ruined, I'm surprised it's even holding at all." As always when he gets reminded of how good quality his automail is, he allows himself a few seconds to be happy that Winry's work is getting recognised.

Olivier gets Miles to help Ed walk to the cell the put Sloth in to. Once the cell door is open, he turns to her. "I'm going to need a few blankets for when he's Human. After being out there frozen he'll need something to keep his body temperature regulated. Also, he doesn't know anything about Father's plan that I've not already told you. So interrogating him would have no point." Armstrong analyses him for a second, gauging whether or not he's telling the truth.

Soon enough, she nods her head in acceptance. "Very well. I will have someone come down with emergency blankets soon." Ed nods in thanks as she leaves the cell.

Once she's gone, Ed turns to look at Sloth. The snow, ice and frost have all been cleaned off of him, but his skin is still ice cold to the touch. Part of Ed wants to wait for him to have warmed up, but he knows he doesn't truly have time to wait that long. So instead, he claps his hands and presses them on to one of Sloth's frozen arms and hopes they'll be in the Gate long enough for the blankets to arrive.

As always, it takes a few seconds for the red lights of a Human transmutation to appear, and another few for the eye to appear beneath them. As Ed is being taken apart he tries to remember how painful it was the first two times. But Ed has been through the Gate so many times now that he can barely remember it. The pain of being pulled apart long having dulled in to a numbness.

Truth stands before him again when he wakes up. Their creepy white smile stretched wide across their face. "No injuries this time, Alchemist?"

Ed can't help the small laugh that escapes him at the question. "My automail leg is completely trashed, but sure, no injuries. Tell me, do you spend so much time watching over *every* Human, or am I just special?"

The smile on Truth's face turns feral. "Oh I assure you, Golden Sun. You are most *certainly* special." Unsure how to take that, Ed decides to ignore it. For now at least. No doubt it will be keeping him up all night a few days from now when he's back in Central. Understanding that Ed wants to return from the Gate quickly today, they open they Gate again to send him back.

Only as Ed is being pulled through does he address the fact that Kimblee still has his stones. "I'll get his Philosopher's Stones for you. But I couldn't risk doing it then. But I will get them back for you."

They don't say anything in response as they baby hands start pulling him further backwards. Silently sitting down crossed legged on the floor. It's only when Ed is being pulled through the Gate, does Truth respond. "I know, Alchemist. I know."

When Ed opens his eyes after returning from the Gate, he's met with the sight of a group of Briggs soldiers surrounding Sloth. Wrapping the new Human in emergency blankets to bring his temperature up under the watchful eye of Olivier. When she catches his eye, he gives her a thankful nod before turning his attention to Sloth. The new Human is just about conscious and is staring at Ed with wide eyes. "I freed you from Fathers control." That was an easier start than the Homunculi to Human thing that Sloth likely won't understand yet. "You don't have to follow his orders anymore. Nor will you feel so apathetic about everything. Most things will stop being a 'bother' soon." When Sloth just stares at him blankly, Ed sighs a little before looking back up at Olivier. "Can I make another phone call other than one to my mechanic?"

She agrees as long as she can listen in on the phone call. He'd like to be annoyed or offended by her scepticism but he understands that it's that attitude that keeps their borders safe and he respects that, so he agrees quickly. With his agreement, she leads him to her office, not mentioning how his broken leg is slowing him down even with the borrowed crutch from the med bay.

## Chapter End Notes

I cut my hair super short on Wednesday and now every time I catch myself in a mirror or something else that's reflective I just get like a load of gender euphoria because it's been like two or three years since I've had it this short and I forgot how much I love it

# Chapter 58

## Chapter Summary

Ed makes a few calls

## Chapter Notes

I have so many WIPs I want to work on and little to no inspiration for any of them

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

The first phone call Ed makes is to Winry. He taps his fingers against the borrowed crutch as the phone rings. "Hello, Atelier Garfiel. This is Winry speaking."

Ed stops tapping his fingers as he spare a look at his ruined look. "Hey Winry. I'm gonna need you to make a trip up North for me. My leg is.... a bit ruined."

Silence meets him on the other side of the phone. "How ruined is it?"

Ed winces slightly at the tone of her voice. He knows she already knows that she isn't going to like the answer. "Some of the plating is ruined, pretty sure there's some shrapnel stuck in between the wires and speaking of the wires, most of them have been cut or torn, maybe even ripped out of the leg all together. I'm surprised I can even stand on the leg right now, let alone walk."

The sigh that comes from Winry is surprising, because he was expecting her to immediately flip out at him for breaking her precious automail. "You're up at Briggs now right?" Ed makes a noise of agreement. "I'll get my stuff and get on the first train up. Should get there in the morning, just be more careful next time alright."

Before Ed can say anything in response, Winry hangs up the phone. Holding back a small sigh Ed just starts dialling in the next number. There wasn't a phone at the Devil's Nest originally, But Ed had convinced Avarice to get one, partly for circumstances like this. It rings for almost twenty seconds before someone picks it up, thankfully, Avarice is the one to pick up the phone which cuts out any potential need for a messenger. "Hey Avarice. Any chance you could come pick up your brother from Fort Briggs? I just turned Sloth Human but I don't think he'll be any good at keeping himself alive for quite a while."

After a few seconds of whispering on the other end that Ed can't quite make out, Avarice turns his attention back to him. "Sure thing kid. I'll leave now so I'll be there first thing

tomorrow." Ed thanks him quickly before hanging up the phone.

Once his two calls have been made, Olivier demands to know who was on the end of the second, So Ed tells her. "That was Avarice. The first Homunculus that I turned Human over a year ago now. He's coming in the morning to collect Sloth."

Olivier stares at him for a few seconds, assessing him, but when he meets her eyes without flinching, she nods her head in approval. "Does the playboy know where you are?" Ed nods his head. "Call him and tell him what happened to your leg. I do not wish to have his band of idiots marching in to my fort to 'rescue' you."

With a hum of understanding, Ed turns back around to pick up the phone and dials the number for Mustang's office. Hawkeye is the one who answers the phone, so Ed assumes Mustang is either busy or off ignoring his paperwork as usual. "Hawkeye, nothing's wrong *everything's* fine. But a few complications with my automail leg mean I might have to stay up here a little longer." He stresses the word everything so she knows that what damaged his leg hasn't damaged their plans.

Instantly, she catches on to what he means and lets out what could be described as a sigh of relief. "I'll let the Colonel know." A second later the call is ended.

Ed goes back to Sloth's cell to keep the new Human company, as well as rest his leg. There's three guards outside, and one inside the cell when he gets there. He understands it, really he does. After all Envy went after him right after being turned Human. But even though Sloth's sloth is gone, he's likely still going to find that most things are still too much of an effort. At least for the immediate future. Sloth is still half asleep when he steps in to the cell, so he takes the chance to press the back of his hand against one of his arms, thankful to feel that it's up to a normal temperature.

Sitting on the other side of the bed, Ed leans against the wall and gets comfortable. The guard inside the cell takes this as his cue to move to stand guard with the other three outside it and Ed listens to their quiet conversation as he falls asleep. When he wakes up about three hours later, he sees Sloth watching him, head tilted in curiosity. He lets the newly turned Human stare at him without prompting him to talk. He's sure Sloth will eventually say whatever it is he's thinking. The silence seems to make the guards antsy however, as they start whispering and throwing nervous glances at each other.

To stop them from doing anything stupid, Ed breaks the silence in the cell. "Are you hurt? What are you staring at me for?" Ed keeps his voice as steady and soft as he can so that the question doesn't have the same tone or attitude it normally would. He doesn't want to sound rude just this once lest he give the guards the wrong idea.

Sloth continues to stare at him for a second, before he finally responds. "I'm not tired. Why am I not tired?"

With a small sad smile, Ed explains what he did to him. "I turned you Human, Sloth. The tiredness and the apathy have mellowed out in to something resembling normal Human levels of those things. Everything else should follow shortly."

In response, Sloth just stares at him again for a few seconds. Brow pinched in confusion, clearly thinking about something. "Why did you bother? Why didn't you just kill me?"

Ed shakes his head at him. "It didn't sit right with me to let you all die again. You were all assets off Father that he didn't want, but you were brought in to the world without your say like everyone else. You deserve the chance to live for yourselves rather than live and die a slave to their Father.

For a few seconds, Sloth just stares at him in silence before leaning his back against the wall. "I'm tired again, I'm going back to sleep." Ed laughs slightly at the statement, but lets him sleep none the less.

## Chapter End Notes

I'm sure anyone reading this work doesn't need to be told this, but in the wake of 18 year old Kit Connor being harassed in to coming out and being accused of queerbaiting I need to get this off my chest.

Real people not wanting to confirm their sexuality isn't queerbaiting. A real person cannot queerbait you nor is any one entitled to their identity just because of their fame. Queerbaiting is a marketing technique for fiction and entertainment in which creators hint at, but then do not depict, same-sex romance or other LGBTQ+ representation. Think shows like Voltron which baited us with Klance or the og queerbaiting show Supernatural with Destiel. It cannot be applied to real people. My heart breaks for him and honestly the rest of the Heartstopper cast. The way they've been treated by the fandom is disgusting. They gave us such brilliant representation and have been harassed for it and that is not okay. Kit isn't even the only member of the cast to be treated this way and I truly don't understand how these people are claiming to be Heartstopper fans and yet so completely miss the point of the comics and the show.

Anyway, sorry for the sour slightly depressing end note but this has been on my mind since I saw his tweet. If anyone has read this whole thing, thank you and I hope you have a great day/night

# Chapter 59

## Chapter Summary

Ed returns to Central, with Olivier dragging the newly arrested Kimblee with her

## Chapter Notes

This fic is running around in my head non stop so every time I go to upload I get so confused on what has already happened and what hasn't

I was right about something though one of my favourite bits of this fic is going to happen soon (favourite to write at least). It should start in 2 chapters time unless I'm counting wrong then 3 but still

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

As he had told Ed over the phone, Avarice arrives at Fort Briggs early the next morning and is escorted to the cell Sloth and Ed are in. Along with Avarice is Martel (which doesn't surprise Ed at all) and Envy (which does surprise him).

Ed stares at Envy for a few seconds before finally opening his mouth. "How did you find Avarice?"

Envy laughs before lengthening their hair until it's the same length and style of Solaris's. Ed assumes that their hair is the only thing they can currently change at will. "I met with Solaris a week or so ago and she told me about his hideout up in Dublith in case I needed somewhere to stay. He's been teaching me how to use the powers you reset." Ed grimaces a little bit at that. He knows what that feels like, but at least they still *have* their abilities. Ed went ten full years, and would have gone the rest of his life, without the ability to preform Alchemy before all this time travel nonsense. "I go by Eris now by the way, instead of Envy."

Ignoring the part of what Eris said about their powers, he nods in acknowledgement of the name. After a second he nods his head in Sloth's direction, who is still half asleep. "Thanks for taking him. I turned him and everything worked as it should have, but he still seems rather apathetic. I'm hoping the rest of his emotions will kick in soon but I can't look out for him myself and can't send him back to Father like Solaris and Gulliver did." Ed casts a glance back over at Sloth. "He's already shown some improvement though, he's slept, eaten the rations he's been given and hasn't said either was too much of a bother."

Avarice nods his head in understanding before stepping in to the cell properly to look down at his brother. "Come on you big hunk of meat. We're leaving."

Sloth actually stands up at Avarice's prompting, so Ed counts it as a win. As Avarice and Eris start trying to lead Sloth to the cell door, Sloth turns to look at Ed. Knowing that the new Human is a slow talker still, he sits patiently waiting for Sloth to start speaking. "Should I.... Thank you...?"

Taken aback by the question, it takes Ed a second to respond, but eventually he starts shaking his head. "No, Sloth. You don't need to thank me because you didn't ask to be turned in to a Human."

Ed was being completely sincere when he said that, but Sloth doesn't seem convinced. He stares at Ed with a furrowed brow. "No. Nothing is too much of a bother now. You should be thanked." Ed stares at him in silence as Avarice and Eris think about their own experiences as Humans.

Sure, Avarice is greedier than the average Human, and a lot more possessive. Eris is still envious of people who have something they want. But they're no longer such extreme feelings that they make up their entire being. They both turn to look at Ed before thanking him as well which causes Ed to blink a few times in shock.

Avarice is friendly and polite enough to him, but even Eris is thanking him. Ed stares at them all before shaking himself out of his shock. "I mean it, really. None of you need to thank me. But you should get out of here. The Major will be taking Kimblee down to Central soon. I don't want any of you to be seen or caught. You'll surely be killed on sight by Bradley or Pride." Eris nods their head in understanding before ushering Avarice and Sloth out of the cell.

An hour after Avarice, Eris and Sloth leave, Winry arrives with her tool box ready. She brought his old leg up with her for a quick replacement so within the hour he's good to go. Ed does ask her if she can repair the northern leg for him though to which she agrees with a roll of her eyes. "I'll get Granny to give you a call when it's ready for you."

"Thanks Win." With that, Ed leaves the cell, suitcase in hand. He had asked Miles to bring it up for him since he couldn't really go get it himself without the risk of ruining his leg even more.

The Major is only just leaving with Kimblee when Ed gets to the fortress's entrance. Kimblee is tied up, both hands trapped firmly at his sides so he can't activate his Alchemy. Darius and Heinkel are stood behind him, seemingly warning him not to try running away. "Are you going back to Central now?" Ed nods his head in agreement, glad that he had asked if Winry could stay at Briggs until Kimblee was gone so that she didn't get involved. Miles had agreed and promised to see her back to Rush Valley himself, which Ed greatly appreciated. "You can come with us. That way I know you got back to Mustang and his ragtag group so they don't come up here after you." Throwing his suitcase over his shoulder, Ed follows her out in to the cold, thankful again for the fur lined coat. He makes sure to throw a small limp in his step to make it look as if his leg hasn't been fixed properly (i.e. not by his normal mechanic). That

way if Kimblee brings up the broken leg, he can tell him the Briggs mechanic fixed him up enough to get him back to his real engineer.

As they walk through the snow covered field, Ed throws glares at Kimblee, what he wouldn't give to punch the bastard right now and rip his stones from wherever he's keeping them. Ed can only hope that the Major took care of that for him. He had told her about the Stones in his possession after all.

When they get off the train in Central, Ed makes a show of thanking Armstrong for her hospitality before heading off first in the direction of Central Command. Again, being careful to keep a slight limp in his step. Armstrong must notice it if the small laugh is anything to go by. (It was more of an exhale of air really. But Ed knows her type well enough to know a laugh when he hears one).

Upon his arrival in the office, Mustang and Hawkeye are both in the center office along with everyone else. Before he can make any gesture, Fuery is already running a sweep of the room. They must really be curious to know what happened to his leg. As Fuery runs the sweep, Ed gives out the basic information, the stuff non trustworthy military members have. Which is that Kimblee tried to kill him and held his men hostage to do it and that Ed's leg got broken in the attack. The Briggs mechanic fixed it up but he'll need to make a trip out to his actual engineer to fix it properly. As always, the other members of the team play along expertly, before Fuery speaks up announcing the all clear.

At which point Mustang immediately asks for the truth. "What actually happened?"

## Chapter End Notes

I worked for two extra hours yesterday literally because the manager running that shift forgot I was still there. Don't get me wrong I know two hours isn't \*that\* long but when my shift was supposed to finish at 10 and I had been awake for around twenty hours yeah I wasn't too happy. Especially when she told me outright she 'forgot I was still here.' That is literally a direct quote. I was unhappy to say the least



# Chapter 60

## Chapter Summary

Ed explains what really happened up at Briggs and gives the team some details about the attack from his last time

## Chapter Notes

I'm going to a con for one day on Friday and I'm likely going to spend so much money

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

Rather than immediately answer Mustang's question, Ed places his suitcase down first and then perches on top of one of the desks. "Honestly the truth isn't that different. Kimblee held two of his men hostage to stop me from attacking him and then blew up the mine we were in with the help of two Philosopher's Stones like last time. I got back to Briggs just in time to hear him telling Armstrong about my death and called him a liar. She arrested him right then and there." Ed nods his head towards the door. "She's in Central with him right now actually. We're hoping we can get him arrested again so that he can't help out with the plan anymore. It might just work after all because he *did* try to kill one of Father's precious Human Sacrifices. One of only two that he knows for sure he can use so I can't imagine he'll be too happy when he finds out."

Mustang stops him after that. "I thought your brother was one along with you, as well as your teacher and me?"

Ed nods his head a little bit. "Al was a known Human Sacrifice last time yes, but Father doesn't know he exists this time. Teacher was a lucky find for them I think. I led them to Greed's hideout which led them to her. You were used as a last minute sacrifice. You were forced to open the Gate on the Promised Day. So this time around he only has two of our pieces available to him. Those being me, and my bastard dad. That does remind me, actually, be careful. If he gets desperate again like he did last time he'll use you again. After all, the whole State Alchemist thing is a sham used to find candidates for Human Sacrifices. Me and my brother were the best thing they could've asked for having actually opened the Gate. But you were, and likely still are, the most promising candidate."

With that warning given, Ed explains what happened with Sloth up North and how when he got Avarice to come pick him up, Eris showed up with him. "Two birds with one stone." Ed nods in agreement. "Now we only have two Homunculi left to deal with."

A noise of uncertainty escapes Ed which causes Havoc to groan. "Why do I feel like that noise means more work for us?" Breda elbows him to shut him up but it's a bit late by that point.

Turning to look at Havoc, Ed points an accusing finger at him. "Excuse you, who is it that's been dealing with all the Homunculus? I've managed to keep all of you safe and away from them thank you very much. The only one I asked help from was Mustang because I knew Solaris would give me trouble on my own." He casts a quick look over at Hawkeye. "No offence. Thank you for pointing a gun at Eris to get them to back off but I *did* try and get you not to come at first." Hawkeye just gives him a small, almost unnoticeable smile so Ed continues. "Anyway as I was *going* to say." He glares jokingly at Havoc. "It's technically four Homunculi left."

Mustang raises an eyebrow at him. "How? It's just Wrath and Pride left now right?"

Ed shakes his head slightly. "Technically yes. Of the sins, those are all that's left. But I also need to get the bastards souls and Fathers as well. Out of Fathers creations though, yeah it's just two. And they're the most difficult ones to deal with I'll be honest. It took three people to take Wrath down last time and two of them died in the process. I honestly don't know what it will take for me to get close enough to touch him. Especially like this." He holds his hands out to the side to emphasize his point before continuing. "Pride at least, should be relatively simple. But in one form or another I want to give Selim back to his mother. It's the least she deserves considering I'm going to be destroying her family." With his report given, Ed jumps off of the desk and heads for the door. "If that's all, I'm going to go sleep off the attempt on my life."

The team watch him as he goes to leave, but Mustang shouts out to him before he can open the door. "You didn't get hurt the last time this happened did you?"

An involuntary laugh escapes Ed at the question. "I got impaled by a steel beam last time around." The teams expressions all go from curiosity to horror in a split second. "I was forced to use my own life force as a Philosopher's Stone. If Kimblee didn't care so little about his men I would've died in that mine. I was back to punching through walls with my automail arm in no time though. Left a hell of a scar though, matching on the front and back of my stomach."

Havoc lets out a shout of disbelief from his seat. "How the hell did you survive that!?"

Ed rolls his eyes fondly. "Like I said, without his men down there, I wouldn't have. But to *actually* answer your question. I got them to pull the steel bar out of my stomach and the second it was out I used Alchemy to seal the wound shut and splice together a working system until I could get to a doctor. Not that I *tried* to go to a doctor. I tried to get to Al but passed out after three steps. It was those two that took me to a doctor."

Mustang chokes on air. "You repaired multiple layers of skin, tissue and muscle as well as organs immediately after a having a steel bar pulled out of you?! You would have been in excruciating pain, not to mention the understanding of the Human body you would've needed...."

He trails off slightly, still in shock, before Ed snorts at his expression. "Mustang. I successfully performed Human Transmutation at the age of 12. Well, as successfully as is possible considering it isn't at all possible. *Then* after having lost my own leg, I successfully drew a blood seal with my own blood to bound my brother to a suit of armour. I carried around a list of the ingredients and amounts needed to make a Human with until I was 18, despite having it memorised since I was 11. By the time that had happened I had been on the other side of the Gate three times." He starts putting his hands in his pockets and his hand hits one of Kimblee's Philosopher's Stones.

Ed had forgotten that it had fallen to the bottom of the mine with him. Completely accidentally and he absolutely did not throw something at Kimblee right as he blew up the mine to make him drop at least one of the Stones. Hopefully Armstrong will be able to get the other one from him.

Pulling it out of his pocket, and ignoring the curious looks half the room are giving him, he looks up at Mustang. "On second thought, I'm borrowing the couch in your office. I want to get this to Truth as soon as possible so I'm not carrying it around."

Mustang stares at the stone for a few seconds before nodding. "Of course." With that, he and Ed walk in to his private office. Mustang closes the door as always, though part of the reasoning this time is so that if someone barges in to the outer office they won't see what Ed is doing.

## Chapter End Notes

I'm getting ill again! Despite literally getting antibiotics for it about a month ago and it going away it's coming back so if it gets to the same point again I'm just going to go A&E and ask them to make sure there's nothing wrong with my lungs or chest because I don't get sick easily so twice in a couple months is a little concerning to me.

But yeah that con I'm going to on Friday? I'm wearing a Hinata cosplay (from Haikyuu) which isn't exactly the warmest outfit in the world so I'm going to have to come home and put like six layers on afterwards

# Chapter 61

## Chapter Summary

Ed returns the first of Kimblee's Stone's to Truth

## Chapter Notes

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

Mustang sits down at his desk as Ed drops on to the couch. Curling his flesh leg underneath him, he places the stone on his automail leg, which is braced against the floor. With a quick grin up at Mustang, he claps his hands once and places one hand on the stone. Roy watches in amusement as nothing happens for a few seconds as nothing happens, before the floor of his office starts to brighten with the tell tale sparks of Alchemy. Except that they're crimson red and black instead of white and light blue.

Roy watches in fascination as Ed gets taken apart, pieces of him slowly disintegrating away in to nothingness. Ed doesn't look fazed at all, but Roy can only imagine how it feels to have his body pulled apart. Yet Ed isn't showing even the slightest hint of discomfort, never mind pain. Once Ed's body finally disappears completely, he turns to his work. Ready to distract himself until the not-child is back in his office in one piece.

Ed hands out the Philosopher's Stone to Truth as soon he's conscious, in an effort to ignore the way Truth is staring at him. Eventually, they reach out to take the stone from him with a smile beginning to stretch across their face. "You're going above and beyond what I asked you for, Alchemist. I only asked for the Homunculi."

A huff of annoyance escapes Ed. "Yeah, which are made of the people of Xerxes so it includes my bastard dad and Father. Besides, you may not have asked for the stones back, but you want the Souls under Amestris as well right? Might as well get all the other Souls while I'm at it."

Truth grins at him, which almost unnerves Ed because it's softer than their usual grin. Almost fond. Truth is amused by Ed, he knows that much but he never thought Truth would be *fond* of him. After all, not many people are, let alone an all knowing being that sent him back in time. "You deserve a reward, Golden Sun. After all, our deal is no longer equivalent."

Letting out a short harsh laugh, Ed shakes his head. "You saved my life, sent me back in time and are letting me fix my fuck ups. That sounds even to me."

Immediately, Truth begins to shake their head. "But that is not what I sent you back *for*. I sent you back to retrieve the Souls of the people of Xerxes. While I appreciate and do want back the Souls underneath Amestris, you got your brother and the Chang girl to do it last time. As

such I have no doubt you will do it again. Therefore, our deal is no longer even. You are doing more than I asked for, I must give you something to even our deal back out."

Shocked in to silence, Ed stares at Truth. Because he'd forgotten about that. He *had* gotten them to do that. Once Al was better, he explained it all to him and he agreed, with Mei's help, to put all their souls to rest. So when she came back from Xing, they sent the Souls back to Truth. The Souls had acted as Philosopher's Stones to remove any chance of a toll being needed, and Truth didn't even open the Gate for them. The Gate was opened for the Stone but neither of them were dragged through. "Maybe so, but I'm happy to be able to do it myself this time. Besides, I can't think of anything I would ask of you."

The smile on Truth's face grows. "This is why you are my favourite, Alchemist. You understand the laws of Alchemy so well and yet you so often throw them away, ignore them, bend them a little. You have changed so much, Golden Sun, to no longer demand things from me at the drop of a hat." Their smile changes in to a smirk and Ed finds himself comfortable again. Because the way Truth is talking now, as if they have all the answers to questions Ed hasn't even thought of yet (which fair, it's true) is familiar to him. "What if I were to give you back your old body? You would keep your Alchemy this time, and gain back your old scars and nerve damage, but you would be housing your Soul in it's true home."

Ed narrows his eyes at them. "I'm not going to start getting rejected from this body am I?" When Truth just laughs as an answer, he continues. "I'd love to take you up on that. But I can't. Not right now, it would be too suspicious and my plans are only halfway through."

Truth nods their head in understanding. "I do not offer this *completely* to even our deal. With your current body it will be too difficult to reach Wrath. It is too small, doesn't have the correct reflexes. Your old body would need retraining, but it is a soldiers body, a warriors body." Ed nods his head in agreement, because it *was*. His adult body had been through so much that it was hard to call him anything *other* than a soldier. Even after he quit the military. Sensing Ed's hesitation, Truth nods their head a few times. "I understand Alchemist. You cannot risk such a thing yet despite knowing I speak the truth. So I will give you another option. I will keep this offer open. When you are ready to take on Wrath, return to me for your body. But you must give it time to readjust. So do not make the decision the day before."

After a second of nodding his head in understanding, Ed hesitates before shaking it in confusion. "But how will I get here? I don't think it's wise to sacrifice a body part to get back my old body."

A laugh escapes Truth and he holds out a glowing white hand in Ed's direction. "Give me your hand, Alchemist." Warily, Ed places his hand on top of Truth's. "I will do this once and only once. And only because I am making an offer you cannot currently accept." Out of nowhere, an array forms on the back of Ed's hand. It's a deep red, as if it's been etched in blood. "The array can only be activated by you, and only when you want it to. No other Alchemy will set it off. You have to decide and plan on using it before it will activate. It will disappear immediately upon use. But when you activate it, it will tell me you have made your decision and I will open the Gate *for* you. No sacrifice necessary."

Looking down at his hand, Ed tilts his head slightly as he studies the new array, which Truth finds incredibly amusing. "So it's like the array you gave me to bring the Homunculi here, but it doesn't actually open the Gate. Just tells you that it needs opening."

Truth nods, their grin widening as they drop Ed's hand. "Exactly Alchemist! Now, it's time for you to return." The Gate behind him opens and Ed allows himself to be pulled backwards by the tiny shadow baby hands. "Decide quickly, Golden Sun." Nodding in understanding at Truth, Ed resolves to talk to Team Mustang and Al when he returns from the Gate. Better to make the choice soon so he has longer to retrain his body.

## Chapter End Notes

I think I slept wrong because every time I turn my head to the right my neck massively protests the movement

# Chapter 62

## Chapter Summary

Ed makes his decision

## Chapter Notes

I am a little tipsy as I draft this (which is partly why it's being uploaded super early today) so while I've read over it three times and I'm fairly sure everything's fine please ignore any spelling mistakes or any \* marks I haven't deleted for now because I'll read over it later today after sleeping when I'm no longer tipsy

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

It takes an hour for Ed to return from the Gate. Mustang didn't even completely see it happen, having been looking down at a piece of paperwork. He had only looked upon seeing the flash of gold that signified Ed's return. He looks up at Ed after placing the half finished sheet back on top of the pile. "So, anything new?"

Ed turns to face him, debating on asking for his opinion on what he should do. He knows he should, after all Mustang will be the one redoing his paperwork after all. Eventually, logic wins out and he starts explaining. "Truth told me our deal was no longer equivalent with all I was doing for them outside of what they asked. In return, they offered to give me back my body. Partly to even out our deal, but also because it will be easier for me to attack Bradley if I have all of the reflexes, height and stamina of my old body. I told them that despite how much I wanted to, I couldn't accept the offer." He holds his hand up to Mustang, showing off the new blood red array. "It's a one time thing, but activating this array would tell Truth I want to accept their offer and they'll open the Gate for me. No sacrifice needed." He lowers his hand. "I wanted to talk to everyone about it first though, to see what you all think. I also don't want to make Al uncomfortable, he already *knows* that I'm older than I'm meant to be. But regaining my body might make him uncomfortable and that's the last thing I want to do."

Mustang smiles at Ed and the fact that he loves his brother so much he's willing to live in a body ten years too young just to not make him uncomfortable. "Firstly, please let me know if you accept the offer so that I can start on destroying and redoing your paperwork." Ed laughs a little at the way Roy is rubbing at his forehead, something he knows the other does when he's trying to stave off an incoming headache. "Secondly, talk to Al about it. He won't want you to be uncomfortable for his sake, and you know that."

With a sigh, Ed nods his head once in agreement. "Yeah I know. I'll head to the Hughes's now. I'll need to decide soon anyway. Because my original body was well trained with good instincts, but I hadn't been in too many fights by the time I got sent back here. So I'll need to talk to Teacher about getting me back up to scratch." He stands from the couch and heads towards the door. "I'll see you later, Bastard." Giving a quick wave over his shoulder, he opens the door and walks out in to the outer office.

Upon arriving at the Hughes's house, Ed is pleased to find both Al *and* Maes home. As soon as Ed closes the door behind him, he turns to Maes to ask him for his opinion about Truth's offer. "I won't explaining the whole thing, but I have a chance to return to my real body."

Maes just smiles at Ed, before telling him exactly what Ed knew he would. "You should take it then. It'll be a headache to cover up completely and remove any trace of your physical age when you accept it, but it's better than you forever being stuck in a body years younger than it should be. But I'm sure there's a person you want to talk to more, he should be in his room."

Ed throws him a smile before walking down the hall towards Al's room. After knocking on the door and receiving an invitation to open the door, Ed steps in to his brothers room. "Brother! What are you here for?" Taking note of the look on Ed's face, he shoots up from the bed. "Is everything okay?"

Schooling his face back in to a neutral expression, Ed nods his head. "Everything's fine, Al." As Al moves to sit back down on his bed, Ed joins him. "Truth offered to give me back my original body, at it's correct age. I just need to activate this array they put on my hand and they'll open the Gate for me."

Al immediately lunges for Ed's hand, latching on to it and pulling it towards him. "Accept it! Activate this array right now!"

Laughing at his brother's enthusiasm, Ed pulls his hand back to stop Al from trying to activate the array himself. "I can't yet. I promised Mustang I'd let him know before I accepted the offer. I'll do it tomorrow, alright Al?" His brother stares at him for a second before nodding his head in acceptance.

Ed spends the rest of the day with Al and the younger Hughes's. When Maes and Gracia get back early in the evening from their impromptu date, Ed announces his nearing departure. "I should head out soon. Can I use your phone first to call Mustang though?"

Maes nods immediately. "Of course you can. Mustang might be at home by this point, but his house phone's number should be written down beside my phone."

Nodding in understanding, Ed heads for Maes's home office. After making note of the time, Ed doesn't phone the office, instead dialling the number Maes has written down. He'll phone the office afterwards if no one picks up, but he's hoping to not have to have this conversation in code. Ed is relieved when Mustang picks up the phone. "Mustang, I'm going to accept Truth's offer."

A small amused sigh comes from the other side of the call. "Hello to you too, Shining."



After taking a second to sigh back in response, Ed continues. "Yeah yeah, hello to you too Bastard. Now, how are we going to get around the fact that I'm going to age ten years in an instant? Not unnoticeably either, I got a lot taller after the Promised Day. Not to mention that my old body had pieces of metal left in my arm."

Mustang is silent for a few minutes as he thinks. Because Ed is bringing up good points. If the change was just hair or eye colour it would be easy to explain away with Alchemy. Even the metal in his arm will be relatively easy to hide. But the change in height and stature cannot be explained away as easily. Unless.... "I hate to bring up bad memories, but your mother passed away from an illness right? One that made her physically weaker." Ed can see where he's going with this and he isn't too sure how he feels about it, so he just hums in agreement. "We could claim you had the same illness. I assume your body as a 26 year old will be larger than your 15 year old body. We could claim that the illness was making you frail. The height well, we can pin some of it on your stance and not being able to hold much of your weight. The rest we'll just have to hope no one notices or points it out."

It makes sense, Ed knows it makes sense. Everything that Mustang just said is a completely plausible way to hide the sudden changes from returning to his original body. But he can't say he likes the idea of pretending to have his mothers illness. Not only that, but pretending to have it and have *lived*. Mustang seems to understand his reluctance as he stays silent on the other end of the call. After a few minutes, Ed comes around to the idea. It's not like he has a better way of explaining everything. "Yeah alright. We'll go with that. I'll wait until getting in to the office to accept the offer."

Ed makes two more calls before he heads out. One to Izumi, to explain that he'll be getting his original body back soon and will need training to get it back up to scratch. Once Izumi agrees to train him, he hangs up and starts dialling Pinako's number. When she picks up, he tells her he'll be returning to his original body tomorrow, before asking to let Winry know as well. After she's agreed, he hangs up the phone and leaves Maes's office.

Al and the girls have already gone to bed when Ed leaves the office, leading him to realise he was on the phone for longer than he thought was. Seeing that Maes and Gracia are still awake, he bids them goodnight before heading out in to the night.

## Chapter End Notes

I would like to apologise for how much of a slow burn this turned out to be, I wasn't planning on it being a slow burn but we're on chapter 62 now and we're *\*barely\** reaching that point so yeah sorry

# Chapter 63

## Chapter Summary

Ed shows the team his finally finished Alchemy

## Chapter Notes

For clarification this *\*was\** going to be Ed getting his body back when I was writing the fic but then I realised that I hadn't actually had Ed finish his Water Alchemy (Which I needed him to have done) and wrote this chapter to go just before it

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

The sun has barely started rising when Ed leaves for the office the next morning. It's not a long walk to Central Command from his current accommodation, meaning that it's barely risen any higher when he enters the office. Unfortunately for Ed, that means he has at least a three hour wait before anyone else arrives at the office. But considering that being seen immediately before returning to his real body would be incredibly unhelpful, arriving at Central while it's practically completely empty and waiting for a few hours, is better than arriving at the usual time and risk being seen. Of course, as he had expected, he's the first of the team to arrive at the office.

With nothing else to do for the next three hours as he waits for them to arrive, he works on finalising his Water Alchemy. He's had all of the specific's worked out for a little while now, but the array is still ever so slightly unbalanced. He hasn't had the time to work on fixing it given how busy he's been so he might as well make use of the few hours he has spare now.

Sitting down at the desk he usually uses for desk work, the one opposite Fuery's, he pulls out his notebook and pulls the pile of blank paper closer to him. After getting settled at the desk, Ed starts sketching out the array with the symbols in different positions, making sure to scratch out any fully drawn ones so they can't be accidentally activated.

After working on it for roughly an hour and a half, Ed finally balances the circle perfectly. He transmutes one of his knives before testing out the new array. Watching the summoned water wrap around his weapon he lets out a triumphant laugh. Standing up from his chair, he makes the water longer and more fluid, like a whip, before shortening it and making it more like a sword. He swings both forms a few times, happy when no water is flung off of the weapon. Satisfied that he won't accidentally soak anything in the room, he swings the weapon around, both in it's longer whip form and the shorter sword like form. Surprisingly, the whip feels more comfortable to use rather than when it's completely covering his knife, but he assumes

that's because water is fluid and the whip allows for more fluid movement. Maybe if he worked on freezing the water as it formed, the sword would become more efficient.

Eventually, Ed evaporates the water before reforming his weapon in to a straight piece of metal. It's good to know that he can use the water as a one handed weapon as that's his go to fighting style, but he'll probably need two weapons to go against Wrath. Which is definitely *not* his favoured fighting style, so he'll need more practice with that.

Pulling off his other band, he transmutes that one in to a straight piece of metal as well, before placing both of them on the desk. He wants to add the array on to the bands, like Mustang does with his gloves, so he won't need to clap to activate them. But he's going to put the array on the inside of the bands so that it isn't on display for everyone to see.

But before he can start working on that, the door to the main office opens and Mustang and his team walk in. Returning the bands to their normal state he slips them back on to his wrists. Before anyone says anything, Mustang taps his ear twice and Fuery dives for the machine to start scanning for bugs.

As Fuery starts scanning, Havoc looks down at the desk Ed was working at. "What have you been working on so early Boss?"

Ed follows his gaze down to the small stack of paper with arrays sketched out on them. "It's some Alchemy I've been working on. I finally got it to work." When Fuery gives them the all clear, Ed clarifies. "I've been working on Water Alchemy since I got here, I finally finished it." He claps his hands together, and a string of water connects them as he pulls them apart. After evaporating it, he flicks his wrists to bring attention to the metal bands. "You already know I use these to transmute weapons, but I'm going to use them as the basis for attacking with this Alchemy." He turns his head to look at Mustang. "I could probably make it more long distance like your fire, but I'm a close quarters fighter and so I need something to help it hold it's form. So I'm taking a page from your book and am going to etch the array I made on to both bands."

Mustang and Hawkeye are both staring at him in shock. "I'm sorry, you did *what*?" None of the others seem to be that shocked about what Ed said.

That's when Ed remembers that it takes *lifetimes* for people to create new Alchemy. Not a couple of years and not even working on it full time. Unlike the rest of the team, both Mustang and Hawkeye have been exposed to that fact first hand. Both aware of how long it took Hawkeye senior to create the Alchemy that Mustang uses. "Yeah, I started working on it while waiting for Granny to agree to give me a leg. I could probably have finalised it sooner but I've been busy. But don't worry, most of the reason I was able to complete it so quickly is because of my *numerous* trips through the Gate. You retain more information every time you go through it."

Having that information *does* seem to calm them both down. So after a second longer of pushing the shock away, Mustang points down at Ed's hand. "Are you going to 'call' Truth now?" He waves his hand slightly as he says it, unsure how else to refer to Ed's connection to Truth.

Ed nods his head in agreement. "Yeah. Are we still going with the illness explanation?" Mustang nods his head so Ed looks down at his hand and activates the array on it. They all watch as the array disappears from his hand, showing that Truth heard his call. Mustang and Hawkeye are both waiting for the sparks and eye to appear and for Ed to start getting pulled apart, while the rest of the team are just confused as to what's happening. When Havoc goes to speak, likely to make a joke about how nothing happened, the eye appears underneath Ed and the baby hands start pulling him apart. As usual, despite how painful it looks, Ed's face shows no pain. He looks completely peaceful as he waits for it to end, excited even.

## Chapter End Notes

Again sorry for no adult Ed yet but I \*promise\* he will be here on Wednesday

# Chapter 64

## Chapter Summary

Ed gets his body back

## Chapter Notes

I had this moment planned since like chapter 12. As I was writing it I just went to myself 'wouldn't it be cool if Ed got his body back?' and I then wrote the next 20 chapters thinking of a way to do it

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

Truth is smiling at Ed again when he arrives on the other side of the Gate. "So you're accepting my offer then?" Ed nods his head in agreement. "Very well." They hold out their hand for him to take and Ed notices how Truth starts growing taller as soon as he does so.

Ed knows that Truth appears as a mirror of whoever is with them in the Gate so them getting taller means his body has been returned. But he still finds himself looking down at his shoulder for proof. Knowing that if he is in his old body, then there'll be pieces of metal stuck in his shoulder, left over from his automail. Looking down at his shoulder, he sees the pieces of metal glinting in the bright white light of the gate.

Distracting Ed from staring at his shoulder, Truth speaks up. "I will not keep you here for long this time, Alchemist. But you must remember, your body needs retraining."

Looking up from his shoulder, Ed nods in understanding. "I know. I already have plans in place to get me back up to scratch."

Nodding in approval, Truth smiles at him. "Then that is all. All of your Soul resides within your true body once again." Ed chuckles at the reminder of what Truth had said about his Alchemy. About it being the other half of his Soul, which was nice to hear confirmed. Ed had had his suspicions when he gave it up. But to have the closest thing to a God that Ed believes in confirm it felt like validation. "I'm sure we will see each other soon, Golden Sun." With that, Ed is pulled back through the Gate.

All of the team are talking between themselves when Ed returns from the Gate, so Ed mustn't have been gone for long if Hawkeye hasn't threatened them to start working yet. Not that they stay distracted for very long after his return. After all, Ed's colouring makes him hard to miss

no matter what his age is. When they all turn their attention to him, he's pressing his hands against his side cautiously, like he's feeling for an injury that should be there.

Mustang stares at Ed for a solid ten seconds in shock and awe, before schooling his features. Not that it did him any good. Every member of his team bar Ed himself noticed the staring. "What are you doing?"

Ed looks up at him. "Pretty sure I've already told you I was dying when Truth sent me back here. I was testing for any pain where I was bleeding out from. Because like I told you, Truth put my Soul back in it's original body, giving me back all my reflexes along with all my scars and injuries. Speaking of." He taps his foot against the floor. "Yeah the nerve damage is back. Damn, I forgot how nice it was without that." Multiple eyebrows are raised at him in silent question. "I was *really* harsh on my automail last time around. My arm more so than my leg but I would get it extended and start running around on it without letting it rest. Not to mention I pushed the automail surgery and recovery process in to a year. There's a reason people typically don't do that." Ed glances back down at his leg. "Huh. Truth gave me back my automail as well. This is what I had when I was sent back here."

Hawkeye looks over at him. "Will that not be a problem? Is it not too advanced for Miss Rockbell to fix should something happen to it?"

Waving off her concern, Ed shakes his head. "Winry made this leg in the first place. If anything does happen to it though, Granny should be able to fix me up until Winry catches up to herself." Ed stretches his arms out in front of him. "Fuck, Truth definitely kept my body in the Gate. It's not damaged but now I definitely understand why Al used to complain about how stiff his arms and legs were." Wanting to stretch his arms out a bit more, Ed holds them behind him before locking his fingers and trying to lift his arms up above his head. "Damn. My flexibility's fucked too. Teacher's gonna have her work cut out for her. Probably have to get Avarice and Eris to help me out as well." After one last stretch, he picks up his papers and shoves them in to a pocket. "If it's alright with you, I'm going to head out to Dublith. I should be back to normal in a week." Mustang nods his head slowly so Ed heads out of the office.

As soon as Ed is gone and out of earshot, Mustang's team turn to laugh at him for his reaction to seeing Ed as he should be. But, honestly, Mustang doesn't think he can be blamed, he was caught off guard. He hadn't expected that Ed was supposed to look so handsome.

On his way out of the building, he makes a stop at Maes's office, only to be told he isn't due in today. Before he can leave the office, however, he's called out to. "I thought you were smaller than this?"

Ed turns to the officer with a small smile. "I technically was. I was ill until a few weeks ago, and only very recently did I recover all of my strength. My mother's illness got passed down to me and I physically couldn't hold myself up to my full height."

The officer raises an eyebrow at him. "Yet you've been running around Amestris for the past year and a half anyway?"

A small laugh escapes Ed. "I'm incredibly stubborn. I shouldn't even have been *able* to run around like that, my mum could barely stand. But I think it had progressed much further in

her before it was caught. I had started treatment long before that point. I've slowly been getting better for a few years now. I finally completed the treatment a few weeks ago."

Smiling sadly, the officer nods in understanding. "I'm sorry for your loss. Having the same illness as your mother and surviving must have felt terrible."

Letting out a small hum, Ed thinks about his response for a seconds. "Yeah. I feel guilty about it, but I know she'd just be happy I was alive. She was kind like that. If you hear anyone asking why I look so different, would you mind explaining. It would save me from having to talk about my illness to as many people." The officer agrees immediately, so Ed finally leaves Maes's office, giving the man a salute.

He wasn't *technically* lying to him. He didn't say having the illness felt bad. But he does feel guilty about lying about having her illness. But he was telling the truth in one aspect. Trisha was kind to a fault and would understand why this was how they chose to explain away his sudden changes in appearance.

## Chapter End Notes

I was meant to go to a concert last night but my friend was ill and I didn't really care enough about who we were going to see to go on my own. But I asked for a shift swap so I could go and so when I go into work today I'll have to explain that I messed them around for nothing. Fun.

(Also the tickets were *\*really\** cheap dw I haven't just wasted a load of money

# Chapter 65

## Chapter Summary

Ed and Al go back to Dublith

## Chapter Notes

I had a random burst of inspiration to start working on my original book again the other day. Which I'd love to do but it's so intimidating because I basically have no plot for it. Like I know the beginning and maybe three things that I want to happen in the book, but no actual middle or ending

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

Knocking on the door to the Hughes's home, he understands the scepticism he is met with when Maes opens the door. Respects it, even. "Hey Maes." The man stares at him for a few seconds, his eyes narrowing in suspicion before they widen in understanding and he opens the door fully to let him in.

After closing and locking the door behind them, Maes turns to Ed. "Al is in the living room with Nina." Ed nods in thanks and walks towards said room.

"Hey Al."

His brother turns up to look at him before his eyes widen in surprise and he jumps up from his spot on the floor. "Woah!" Al pokes and prods at him a little bit. "This is your real body?"

Ed nods his head with a small laugh as Al keeps poking at him. Al looks up at him and goes to speak before immediately closing his mouth again. Ed sighs, knowing what Al was going to say. "If you were going to say I look like Hohenheim, it's okay, I already know."

A few seconds later, Gracia appears in the room with Elicia on her hip. Nina looks up at her as she enters the room. "Why does big brother Ed look different?"

Gracia looks up at Ed for help explaining, so Ed steps towards the little girl and crouches down in front of her. "I was ill for a while." He looks up at Al with an apologetic look before looking back down to Nina. "Our mother was ill for a long while, and her illness was passed down to me. I was only recently healed from it."

Taking her daughters hand, Gracia tugs Nina gently towards the living room's door. "Why don't we get started on lunch so these two can catch up, okay Nina?" The girl looks up at



Gracia before nodding her head.

Once Gracia and Nina are gone, Ed turns to look up at Al. The look on Al's face is exactly what he didn't want to see. "I'm sorry." He stands up to look at his brother properly. "I didn't like the idea either at first, but it was the only believable way we could think of to explain away the sudden changes in my appearance."

Al sends Ed a small smile, a little wobbly, but a smile none the less. "It's okay, brother. You've had a lot longer than me to get over her death. If you think this is the best way around it then it's okay."

Ed smiles down at his brother. "You're the best, Al. I've never deserved you being my brother."

Immediately, Al shakes his head violently in disagreement. "You're an amazing brother." He launches himself at Ed, pulling him in to a hug.

Letting out a small laugh, Ed hugs his brother back. "Thanks Al." After a few more seconds, he pulls away from the hug. "I'm heading out to Dublith today. I need some training to get my body back up to scratch so I'm going to get Teacher, Avarice and Eris to help me out. You wanna come with me?"

Al nods his head immediately. "I want to come with you."

Humming in understanding, Ed checks the time with his silver watch. "I'll be getting the 3 O'clock train, will you be ready to leave by then?"

Before Al can respond with anything other than a nod, Gracia walks back in to the living room. "You will stay for lunch won't you Ed?"

Right at that moment, Ed's hunger decides to make itself known. "If I won't be in the way."

Gracia tuts at him. "Nonsense. I know Nina and Elicia will be thrilled to know you're staying for lunch."

An hour later, Ed and Tristan are leaving the Hughes's house, with Ed making a quick pitstop to pick up his suitcase before they're on the way to the train station.

When they finally make it to Dublith, Ed is tackled to the floor as soon as they're in eye sight of the Curtis house. Ignoring his brother's concern, Ed takes note of who tackled him. It's Avarice.

Oh, he forgot to tell the Homunculi that Father is practically a clone of Hohenheim didn't he? Slowly, Ed makes his way back to his feet, holding his hands up. "Avarice, I know I'm here to train, but I'd appreciate it if you didn't tackle me again."

Avarice backs off as he stares at Ed. "Pipsqueak? The hell happened to you? You look like daddy dearest."

Ed lets out a self deprecating laugh. "Trust me, I'm aware. Anyway, Izumi is going to help me with getting my body back to normal. I was hoping you and Eris could help with that. Just a couple rounds of sparring."

Quickly, Avarice agrees to help him. "I'm down for some sparring, but I'll ask Eris for you."

Looking over at Al, Ed hums in thanks. "I'll see you tomorrow then, I should let Al get settled and Izumi probably wants to kick my ass first." Avarice laughs at that, before nodding and heading towards the alley that leads to the Devil's Nest. Before Avarice disappears from sight, Ed calls out to him. "Avarice!" The man turns around to look at him. "Thank you, I appreciate you looking out for them." It's something he had mentioned to him once. Ed had asked Avarice if he wouldn't mind keeping an eye on Izumi for him. Not noticeably, and not every day, but checking on her once a week. Just to make sure the military weren't snooping around near her shop. Avarice gives him a toothy grin before turning back around and walking off again.

Izumi does indeed want to kick his ass, but that's her usual greeting for him so he's not surprised. After getting up from where Izumi had knocked him down in to the grass, she orders the brothers inside telling them they're just in time for dinner. Ed takes a second once the door is closed and they're away from the windows to undo Al's disguise.

## Chapter End Notes

This was my favourite reaction to Ed's body. Roy's was cute but the idea of Avarice just tackling Ed to the ground on sight was too funny for me to pass up on

# Chapter 66

## Chapter Summary

Ed returns to Central after getting his body back in to shape

## Chapter Notes

Don't worry, I haven't missed a chapter, I just didn't want to focus on the training so much this time. I wanted to keep moving the story forward

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

Ed spends a whole week in Dublith getting put through the ringer. But as he lays face down on the bed on Saturday morning, all of his muscles and limbs aching he feels satisfied with the results. He more or less has his reflexes back to the same level and his flexibility is back as well. Al is sat on the bed on the other side of the room, having packed up his things the night before. Ed instead, had pushed it off and is now regretting it as all he wants to do is continuing laying on the bed. Eventually, he forces himself on to his knees and reaches under the bed for his suitcase before he starts packing.

After having breakfast with Izumi and Sig, the Elric brothers make their way to the train station. But not before Al's disguise is put back in place. Ed turns to him as they make their way to the train station. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't be putting through this but I can't put you at risk again."

'You aren't practically invulnerable this time.' Ed thinks to himself.

Al gives his brother a soft smile and pulls him in to a hug. "It's okay, I understand." He doesn't risk calling Ed brother, despite how much he wants to reassure him that he *does* understand. "I understand your paranoia and I don't hold it against you. I appreciate you keeping me safe even if I want to help you."

Hugging his brother back for a second, Ed grins at him when they pull away. "Thank you." Al smiles back at him, glad he managed to reassure him.

When they get off the train in Central, the two split off. Al heads back towards the Hughes's home while Ed heads to the office, not bothering to get a room to drop his suitcase off in first. Arriving in the office, he finds a package on the spare desk addressed to him. He holds it up to Hawkeye, the only other member currently in the office. "It arrived for you yesterday. Addressed to you from Major Olivier Armstrong."

Confused, Ed returns to the package to the desk and stares down at it. He can't think of anything Armstrong would need to send him. Opening the package, he finds a letter and a smaller item wrapped in lots of brown paper. He opens the note first. It's a fairly standard note, but with the full context of what went on up at Brigg's the content reads differently.

To anyone without that context, it reads as such:

'This item was confiscated from Kimblee. I don't know much about Alchemy so it's your responsibility. Do what you will with it. Your leg should be fully repaired now, but I don't want to hear any complaining about the patchwork my resident mechanic did.'

To Ed, it may as well read like this:

'I took it from Kimblee before bringing him to Central. You better take care of it quickly, it's your responsibility to do so. Miles escorted your mechanic back home safely.'

After reading the note, Ed reaches for the item, unwrapping it to reveal Kimblee's second stone causing a smile to break out on his face. Hawkeye, who watched him unwrap the item, starts scanning the room for bugs. When the room comes back clear, he tells her his plan. "If Mustang's office is clear as well, I'll do it in there just so I don't risk coming back from the Gate with the door open or someone making a visit." She nods her head in understanding as he heads for the inner office. "If they all show up while I'm still gone, let them know what I'm doing?" She nods her head once more before he enters Mustang's office.

Once he's sure the room is clear of bugs, he settles himself on Mustang's couch before activating the array to send the Souls to Truth.

Truth is laughing at him once he materialises on the other side of the Gate. "You truly cannot resist this place, can you Alchemist?"

Ed just rolls his eyes at them. "It's safer to bring you the Souls immediately rather than hang on to them. It's not my fault that bringing you the Souls brings me to the Gate."

Immediately, a grin forms on Truth's face. They do so enjoy Ed's snark and sarcasm. So few Humans can entertain them like their Golden Sun. "Right you are, Alchemist. But I have no intention of changing that." Ed wouldn't be able to entertain them as much that way. "How is your old body? Everything you remembered?"

Looking down at himself, Ed taps his foot against the stark white floor. "Well. I can tell you that I didn't miss the nerve damage. It's my fault though, I accept that I was too harsh on my automail last time. Doesn't make it any more fun to deal with though. Other than that, yeah. Weird as it is it's reassuring to have all of my old scars back. It was weird to look down at my shoulder and not see remnants of my automail. Or look at my stomach and not see the giant scar that matches on my back from Kimblee's attempt on my life."

Amazed and amused, Truth laughs at him again. "See! This is why you are so intriguing." This is why he's their favourite. "Almost anyone else would be glad to be rid of such scars. But you, Alchemist. You take *comfort* in them." As the Gate opens behind Ed, Truth's smile widens. "Until next time, Golden Sun."

When he returns from the Gate, Mustang is sat behind his desk. "Going back there so soon?"

Ed rolls his eyes a little. "Olivier sent me Kimblee's second Stone. I wanted to get rid of it quickly."

Mustang nods his head in understanding, before putting his pen down. "So, where are you rushing off to next?"

Leaning back against the couch, Ed shrugs his shoulders slightly. "I need to get in contact with Scar. Hopefully he and Mei have been able to figure out the reverse transmutation circle by now. I'm also hoping that Olivier hasn't drawn the eye of the brass and shown her the immortal army or offered her a seat. She killed two of the brass last time and while I don't care about them, I'd rather not start that sequence early."

## Chapter End Notes

I'm dreading December, my work will be open an hour longer until Christmas and all the music I hear on shift will be Christmas music from tomorrow

# Chapter 67

## Chapter Summary

Plans are changing as Roy brings up a point Ed hadn't thought of

## Chapter Notes

It's getting so fucking cold where I am so assuming it's the same for all of you, please wrap up warm and take care of yourselves!

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

The two sit in silence for a minute before Ed looks back over. "What happened to Kimblee?"

Mustang raises an eyebrow at him. "He was arrested, why?"

Ed nods his head slightly. "The conflict at two points of the circle will be ending in two months even though the crests of blood are likely already carved. Meaning that the only one left will be the one up at Brigg's. With Kimblee being 'arrested' he's free to travel across the border and trick them in to attacking Brigg's again." Mustang nods in understanding but before he can question whether they need to take any precautions, Ed is speaking again. "Brigg's can handle himself even without Olivier there." He lets out a small huff of annoyance. "I need to handle Wrath and Pride soon. I can't risk leaving them both until the Promised Day. Wrath, at least, will have to be taken out before then. But even though Pride should be manageable to deal with, I can't risk them being far apart from each other and having to run across Central."

Silently, Mustang takes in all of Ed's rambling. What he's saying makes sense. After all, Ed is the only one who can activate the array to turn the Homunculi Human or take their Souls to Truth. But another thought hits him. "Why don't we take care of everything early? We'd need time to make a valid plan, but if we gather everyone who knows the truth, surely we could take Pride, Wrath and Father down before the Promised Day?"

Slowly, Ed looks over at Mustang, he makes a valid point. If Ed knows the timeline of events, they could write out the need for the reverse array. If they attack before the circle is completed, then they take out one of Father's main attacks. The only thing he'd have to worry about then is the immortal army. Which, the immortal army *is* a problem. But Ed knows how to deal with them. Or at least make it so they aren't a threat. Destroying or completely removing their jaws and limbs so they aren't a threat. Or straight up disintegrating them in Mustang's case. "That's not a bad idea. But getting all the people in the know in one place

might be dangerous. We'd likely need to get everyone together in Central, but I can't think of anywhere we could all meet safely."

Piping up from his desk, Mustang quickly solves that problem. "I might know of a place. How many people would need to be in on the planning."

Running through a list of all the people who know everything, Ed falls silent. Nearly three minutes of silence from Ed's end as he makes a mental list of everyone who knows, and everyone who needs to be part of the plan. Eventually, he looks back up at Mustang. "Twenty five. I would say twenty four but I think Al would shun me if I didn't at least let him in on the plan at this point."

After a thought of thinking on Mustang's end, he pipes back up. "Chris's bar should be big enough to house that many people. It'll be a bit of a tight fit, but there'll be enough room."

Ed looks over to him. "Chris? Your adoptive mother? Does she even know about all this?"

After a second of shock, Mustang shakes his head. "No. But if we explain everything to her with Riza backing us up she'll believe it. She knows I'm not one to make jokes like this."

Thinking through his original plan, Ed starts modifying it for the new plan. "If we're taking care of everything early I'll probably need to deal with Selim first. I'll ask if Truth can wipe his memories or revert him to a baby so she's able to keep her son. You'll probably also need to kidnap Mrs's Bradley at some point."

Standing up from his chair, Mustang walks around his desk to lean against it. "Why do we need to kidnap Mrs's Bradley?"

Shrugging slightly, Ed sits up properly. "I wasn't around when you did it last time. But from what you told me after everything, it was so that when the military labelled you insurgents you could use her as a sort of shield. Ross, Fuery and Breda took her to a radio station after they tried to kill all of them except you since you still had your uses for them. Still a viable option for a Human Sacrifice. There she announced to the nation that an attempt on her life had been made." He looks away for a second before returning his gaze to Mustang. "She found out about Selim last time. I returned him to her as a baby, but she never found out about her husband. "

Crossing his arms against his chest, Mustang taps his fingers against his arm in a pattern Ed doesn't quite recognise. "Are you going to tell her this time?"

Conflicted, Ed throws his head against the back of the couch. "I don't know. She's going to find out about Selim either way. She was sworn to secrecy last time and she kept that promise but I don't know whether it would be better for her to know or not. There isn't going to be a public attempt on Bradley's life this time, so it'd surely be *easier*." He lifts his head up to look at Mustang. "What do you think?"

Lowering his arms, Mustangs rests them on the desk behind him. "I think that despite how upsetting it will be to hear, it will be better for her to know. We should do what will make it

easier on us and have her find out about his true nature. Especially if you're going to be attacking him."

Throwing his head back, Ed taps the back of the couch with his head twice before resting it there again. "You're right. Besides if the mannequin soldiers do get released, Bradley likely won't be killing them. I can claim he was attacking his own men instead of them even if he wasn't." He taps his foot against the floor a couple of times before nodding. "You get in touch with Chris to let us take over her bar. I'll work on getting everyone gathered once she agrees."

Mustang nods his head before standing up straight. "I usually only meet Chris in person. Come with me to help me explain it all to her." Ed nods his head in understanding and agreement and stands up from the couch to follow Mustang out of his office.

## Chapter End Notes

Ten chapter warning!

I repeat we've hit the last ten chapters



# Chapter 68

## Chapter Summary

Mustang finds out about Ed's past with Winry

## Chapter Notes

I bought Cult of the Lamb the other day and I love it. I was in work yesterday and literally all I could think about was going home so I could keep playing. Highly recommend it

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

Before Mustang can announce their departure once they enter the main office, Havoc snaps his attention to Ed. Hawkeye just keeps her attention trained on her work. Clearly already given up trying to keep him in check at the minute, or stop him from saying whatever has made him so excited. "Hey, Boss. I've got the perfect name for you. We should start a petition to have your State Alchemist name changed."

Ed raises an eyebrow at him, deciding to take the bait. "And what would this 'perfect name' be?"

Havoc grins at him, casting a quick glance over at Mustang that Ed is slightly confused by. "Siren! Y'know, what with your Water Alchemy and all."

Sighing, Ed rubs his forehead a couple times in the same way Roy does. "Yeah, I get the connection. But why Siren?"

Breda speaks up this time. "Sorry about this Boss. We tried to talk him out of it, but he's pretty dead set on it. Your Water Alchemy mixed with your appearance gave him the idea and he refuses to back down on it."

After a second, Ed lifts his head from his hand. "My appearance?"

At that comment, everyone in the room gives him a disbelieving look. "Boss, you are aware that you're attractive right? Like if Havoc was an ounce less straight then he is he'd jump in to bed with you in a second."

Havoc nods his head in agreement. "Not to mention I know there are people that have already been taken in by your appearance."

Ed rubs his eyes once before heading for the door. "Right okay. I don't have the energy to deal with this right now."

He heads for the door knowing that Mustang will follow him in a minute. As he reaches for handle, Havoc calls over to him. "See you later Siren!" Ed lets out a small laugh despite himself before pulling open the office door and stepping out in to the hallway. Mustang glares at Havoc before following Ed out of the office.

Chris agrees to let them use her bar as a base of operations, so Ed sets a date to start planning before leaving to go get in contact with everyone they'll need. Chris gives her son a knowing look as the other Alchemist leaves her bar. Huffing in amusement when her son leaves as well a few seconds later.

A week later and Ed has finally gotten everyone needed together in Chris's bar. Chris gives Ed a nod of approval as everyone introduces themselves before turning to Mustang with a pointed look. Noting that everyone else is still busy, Ed pulls Mustang in to a corner of the bar. "Out with it. Why do people keep giving you pointed looks when I'm around?"

Mustang sighs at being found out, but he knew it would happen sooner or later so he explains. "When you returned from the Gate with your body back I may have gotten a little flustered. All of the team noticed and immediately decided to start teasing me about it, Maes soon found out himself and joined in as well. Chris found out last week when we came here to explain everything to her. She *did* raise me so I would be more surprised if she didn't figure me out."

Their conversation is interrupted when Ling tries to invade Chris's food supply. Ed turns around to face the future Emperor with a sigh. "Ling!" Said Prince turns to look at the Alchemist and Ed just raises an eyebrow at him and nods in Mei's direction. Understanding the silent threat (that he'd put Mei on the throne instead of him if he doesn't behave), Ling shoves one last piece of food in to his mouth before returning to his body guards. Chris gives Ed another appraising look to Ed, to which he shrugs his shoulders in return. "I'm used to Ling's antics. And I have a pretty effective threat to get him to behave." They're still waiting on Izumi and Sig to arrive, so Ed retreats further in to the room so he can listen in on Mei swoon over his brother. A small smile spreads across his face. They were so happy last time, he hopes they'll be as happy again this time if they do get together.

After a few minutes, Mustang comes over to him. "You didn't seem all that surprised to learn I find you attractive."

Ed shrugs his shoulders slightly before subtly moving further out of his brother's hearing range. "I already knew you found me attractive last time, so it wasn't that big of a thing to find out it's true this time as well."

Mustang raises an eyebrow at him. "How did you find that out?"

Ashamed, Ed turns his head away. "I'm not a good partner, Mustang. You shouldn't think about it too much."

Leaning on the wall next to him, Mustang nudges Ed's shoulder with his own. Taking the nudge for what it is, Ed explains. "I married Winry in my last life. But I didn't love her like that, not anymore. But by the time I had worked up the courage to tell her, we found out she was pregnant. With twins no less and I just couldn't leave her to deal with that alone. I refused to. I thought if I *tried* to love her how I was meant to it would all be fine." He shakes his head, turning it away again. "I tried so fucking hard to be a good husband to her. Tried even harder to be a good dad. Both of which meant distancing myself from you."

Mustang's eyes widen in surprise at that, not that Ed can see it, but he doesn't dare interrupt.

Pretending as if he didn't just drop a bombshell on Mustang, Ed continues. "It only happened once and while I wasn't drunk enough to not know what I was doing, I was definitely drunk enough that I couldn't think about why I shouldn't be doing it."

When Ed finally stops, Mustang finally dares to speak. "You didn't cheat on her for the sake of it though right? Or *because* you were drunk. You cheated on her because it was me and the alcohol made you forget about why you shouldn't. If you tell me you would've cheated on her with a random person, then yeah. You were a bad partner. But *once* while you were drunk with the person you were in love with? I'm not going to tell you that makes it okay but it *does* make it understandable and I don't think Winry would blame you. She likely already knew. That girl strikes me as intelligent now, I can only imagine how smart she'll be when she grows up."

Ed huffs out a harsh laugh. "Doesn't make me feel any better about having done it. Nor does it mean you should be okay with it because it was *you* I cheated on her with,"

Mustang shrugs his shoulders. "But it wasn't. Sure to you that's how it happened. But none of this has happened to me." He places a hand under Ed's chin so he's forced to look at him. "You're forgetting that I'm not exactly the best person in the world. Nor am I known for my stable relationships. Yet you still somehow managed to fall for me." He lets go of Ed's chin as a blush starts forming on his face, a second before the Curtis's walk in to the bar. Izumi immediately catches sight of Ed and the colour on his cheeks and raises an eyebrow in question. To which Ed's only response is to scowl and step forwards to grab everyone's attention.

## Chapter End Notes

The Siren joke that Havoc makes only comes up twice I think (this time being one of them). But I really love it I'm sad I couldn't fit it in naturally in more places but at least it's here

Also I tried to deal with the Ed/Winry situation as delicately as possible, because I am *\*not\** trying to make it seem like I condone cheating cause I don't. But I'm sorry if it comes across that way

# Chapter 69

## Chapter Summary

The plan starts coming together

## Chapter Notes

I'm ill yet again which is why you get this chapter at 3am because I am likely to forget to post it

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

He taps the bar top twice to ask Chris if he can climb up on to it. She doesn't exactly give him an answer, just gives him a look that tells him he'll be cleaning it after. Taking that as an allowance, he nods his head in acceptance before he climbs up to stand on the bar and loudly claps his hands together twice in order to grab everyone's attention.

Chris watches on in amusement behind her bar as her son starts making his way closer to the bar. Like he physically can't bear being away from the man stood on her counter. Which yes, she *will* be making him clean later.

Once everyone has turned to look at him, he sits down on the counter. "Okay. I know you all know the basis, but for this to work properly, you all need to be on the same page. So apologies to the people who I already know know *everything* but I'm going to give you all a run down of everything I deem important okay?" A couple people roll their eyes at him, mostly Scar and Olivier but they all nod in agreement anyway so Ed starts running through all the main points for hopefully the last time.

After about an hour of Ed talking to the group, he finishes up the run down. "Alright. Now that I know that everyone knows everything important, we can start planning." Roy, Maes and Armstrong step closer to the bar as he says that. "I'll be honest, I don't know how to go about planning an operation like this especially not one on this scale, so these three are going to handle the majority of the planning. I'll be part of the process so that I can tell them if something won't work and give input on who here I think would be best to handle what." Roy nods his head before turning to the room to explain what little of a plan they already have. Which really isn't much. It's not even currently a plan really, more like a list of things that need to happen.

Said list consists of these events. Mrs's Bradley will be kidnapped again or held hostage to either use her as a shield or to keep her safe in all the chaos. That Ed needs to take care of

Wrath and Pride before he can take care of Father. They can't risk them making what will already be a difficult fight more difficult.

Roy explains a basic layout for their plan before turning to Ed for his input. "It's not a bad starting point. But you are going nowhere near the lower levels of Central. The gold toothed doctor ambushed us last time and once I was brought to Father's lair he forced you to open the Gate." He turns to Hawkeye after a few seconds of thought. "Can I trust you to lead a team of non-Alchemists down there to take care of him and the would be Bradley's?"

Hawkeye nods her head in agreement instantly. "Thank you. And before you ask, they do have to be none Alchemists. You have to have a certain level of Alchemical knowledge and understanding to open the Gate. No Alchemists means the Gate can't be forced open. I would suggest taking Ling and his bodyguards. None of them are Alkahestrists but they're all skilled fighters. I'll warn you each now though, none of the fake Bradley's have a Philosopher's Stone but they're all just as skilled as the real thing."

After explaining a few more things that need to happen on the day, Ed thinks about what groups to put everyone in. After almost fifteen minutes of thinking, Ed decides on who will team up with who and which team will handle what part of the plan. Once everyone has been teamed up, they each go off to fine tune their parts of the plan. There's a lot of work to be done after all. Each team only has the basic information for what they need to accomplish, coming up with a full plan for their part of the mission is something each team will need to do themselves. After seeing that all the groups are doing fine on their own, Ed goes over to Al who is sat in the corner of the bar. "Al, please don't fight with me on this. I don't want to put you in danger." Al is the only one who doesn't have a role to play anywhere in their plan, but Ed truly did not want to give him one. He didn't want to put his brother on the battlefield *again*.

Al turns his head away from him. "You put me in danger when you told me about all of this."

Ed hesitates at that, despite the fact that he stands by that it was better that Al knew he wasn't his brother right away. Al is right, he's been in danger from the second Ed arrived in this timeline. "You're right. And I'm so sorry about that, you know I am. So please don't ask you to put me in more danger than I already have." His brother refuses to turn to look at him. "Al please. I get that you don't like that you don't have a part in the plan, but you're only fifteen."

Looking back up at him, Al frowns. "I was fifteen in your last timeline too!"

Nodding in acknowledgement, Ed fights to keep his temper down. "You were. But you're forgetting that in my original timeline I was only a year older than you and apart from your blood rune you were basically unkillable. That is very much not the case this time."

Al narrows his eyes at him in annoyance. "Just give me *something* to do. Let me go with *one* of the groups. Please. You know better than anyone that I'm skilled enough with Alchemy to be of help. I won't get in anyone's way, I can help!"

Finally, Ed's temper boils over. Luckily, he doesn't fully snap. But his tone gets harsher and his voice is much sharper. "Which team would you have me put you with? Hawkeye's, who's going to be taking on a bunch of possible Fuhrer's? Mine, in the heart of Central going after Pride, then Wrath and then Father? Scar's who along with Armstrong's will be the main lines

of defence against the mannequin soldiers? Or Roy's who will be in a city full of soldiers that could be given orders to kill everyone but him?" Al's determination shrinks with each word out of Ed's mouth and the elder is finally able to fully calm down. Kneeling down in front of where Al is sat. "I know you're a brilliant Alchemist Al. You know I know that, like you just said. But I cannot risk losing you."

After a second, Al's face finally changes from it's upset expression. "Okay. I understand, brother. I'll leave it alone now."

Ed can hear footsteps sound out in the now nearly silent room. Someone is walking over to them, and they come to a stop directly behind Ed. Without turning around, Ed is fairly certain he knows who it is before they even say anything.

"He can come with me Edward."

## Chapter End Notes

Got sent home from work yesterday because from before I even got in to the building and 4 hours into my shift I felt like I could throw up at any minute. It somewhat went away last night but I woke up and feel sick again I just hope it goes away cause I really don't want to have to phone in sick

# Chapter 70

## Chapter Notes

Forgot it was Wednesday so I very nearly forgot to upload this

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

Fighting back an eye roll, Ed turns his head to look up at Hohenheim. "You gave me the job that kept me furthest from you. Meaning it is also the safest. I know you don't care for me, but I'll look after him. I'll keep him safe."

Ed stands up to face him, at which point he notices the whole room is watching him now, but he doesn't care right now. Ed is very thankful for his returned body because he can stand eye to eye with Hohenheim. "I know you will, but I'm going to explain this to you very carefully anyway, just so I know you understand." He jabs his finger in to Hohenheim's chest. "If he is hurt at the end of all this. I will not ask Truth to leave a bit of life in your body when I hand over the Souls inside you. I will deal with Father and come right back for you. You will die on the other side of the Gate and I will refuse you the satisfaction of getting to die in front of mum's grave like I know you want to." Ed lowers his hand. "Do you understand?" Hohenheim nods his head but that's not enough for Ed. He reaches his hand back out to grab Hohenheim's collar. "Answer me. Do you understand?"

This time, Hohenheim responds verbally. "I understand, Edward. I promise, no harm will come to Alphonse while he is with me."

For a few seconds, Ed stares him down, before letting go of his collar and storming outside in to the cool night air to calm down. Completely ignoring how the room is stock still and completely silent. They've never seen Ed look so angry before and it's a little terrifying. Especially because they all know he would make good on his threat if anything really did happen to Al. Because it's *Al*. Ed cares about his little brother more than anything. More than his Alchemy.

When Mustang starts moving to check on him, Havoc tries to make a joke to lessen the tension. "Damn, I guess not even that display is enough to break the Siren's song." Mustang huffs a small laugh as the rest of the team start laughing, mostly at his expense. The others in the room can piece together most of the joke and it gets a few chuckles, but none of them are laughing as much as the team as they don't have the right context.

Roy isn't surprised to see Ed sat on the curb just outside the bar. "Things got pretty tense in there. Maybe Havoc should change your nickname to Poseidon." Ed just raises an eyebrow at him in question. "Poseidon, God of the sea. Also the God of flood, drought and earthquakes. The seas pretty tame in comparison to those things. Just like you compared to your attitude in there."

Ed snorts out a laugh at that. "I'll stick to Siren, thanks. Having people refer to me as a God is a bit pretentious. I'm not Father."

Nodding his head in acceptance, Roy leans against the wall or the bar. "Do you want to explain what happened in there?"

Placing his hands behind him, he rests his weight on them so he can lean back to look up at Roy. "I'm stressed alright. I've been stressed since I came back here. Now that we're getting closer to the end, there's so many things that could go wrong. So many people that could die and knowing Al wants to put himself at risk.... When it's my fault he even knows anything about what's going on.... It's just stressing me out even more. I don't want to upset him, but I want to keep him as far away from all this as possible." He lets out a sigh and glances back at the bar's door. "If I'm completely honest with you, it's part of the reason I put our bastard dad so far away from me. I knew if he was so far away from most of the danger he would deem it safe enough to bring Al with him after he inevitably complained." Pushing himself off the wall, Roy nods his head. But Ed speaks up before he can say anything else. "We should head back inside. I need to flesh out my plan with Ling."

Roy nods his head and offers Ed his hand, who accepts it with a fond eye roll. "I'm still not fond of the idea of you facing Bradley alone."

Ed lets Mustang pull him to his feet. "That fight won't be happening until the mannequins have been dealt with. So you should have ample time to get to the courtyard where that's going to take place."

Using his grip on Ed's hand, Roy pulls him in to his chest. "You've already told me that Fu and Buccaneer died last time to take him out. That Scar was heavily injured when Bradley finally *did* die." Roy places his hands on Ed's waist keeping him in place as Ed starts to step away. "Promise me you won't die."

Looking up at Roy, Ed shakes his head. "I won't die. I still need to uphold my promise to Truth. I can't do that if I die."

Ed can feel the vibration of the hum that Roy lets out. "Good. Try not to lose anymore limbs either." Ed lets out a laugh at that and allows himself to relax in Roy's hold for a few seconds.

Breda exits the bar followed by Fuery and Ross. Breda stares at the two of them for a second before turning around to the open door. "Havoc! You win the bet!"

After that announcement, Ed finally steps away from Roy. "Are you off to go get her?"

Closing the bar door, finally, Breda nods his head. "Yeah, according to the Xingese Prince, Selim seems to go for patrols around this time of night. So we're going to go collect her now."

Stepping away from Roy, Ed heads for the bar. "I'll get Ling and come with you. Seeing Selim be turned will probably help prove it to her." Nodding in understanding, Breda steps to one side so Ed can go collect the Prince. "Ling. Time to go." His bodyguards go to stand as



well so he shakes his head. "Not you two. I'm not getting Ling involved in the fight. Once Pride arrives he'll be on his way back to you." The two glare at him for a few seconds before returning to their seats.

Once they arrive at the Bradley residence, Ling informs them all that neither Wrath nor Pride are currently in the building. "But Pride isn't that far away so I assume he'll be returning soon." With the information he needed gotten, Ed sends Ling back to the bar. Without hesitation, Ling turns around and heads back the way they came.

For now, Ed follows the other three in to the house. He wants to ask Mrs's Bradley what she wants him to do with Selim. He can't be left as is but she should get some say. When they arrive in Mrs's Bradley's room, the woman is sat in an armchair reading a book, but her attention isn't on it for long as she's soon looking up from it to stare at the intruders.

They give her a very short explanation of the facts. Which is that both her husband and her son are inhuman monsters. They believe her husband is beyond saving but her son can be given back to her. Which leads Ed to ask his question, so he interrupts Breda's speech. "Mrs's Bradley, I can return your son to you at the age he is but without his memories, or I can return him to you as a baby. He will grow up to his current physical age in about a year or so before he starts to age normally. But I want you to make the choice."

She stares at him in silence, her hands tremble where they're rested on her lap. "I want to raise him in to the boy I thought he was. Give me the chance to make this right."

Ed gives her a short nod. "None of this is your fault. You haven't done anything wrong to need fixing, but okay. I'll return him to you as a baby. I would like to leave him with a watered down version of his power. He can control shadows, it will basically become an expression of Alchemy entirely unique to him, should he want to learn to use it." He stands up from his chair. "Is that okay with you?" She nods her head shakily, so Edward heads to the door.

## Chapter End Notes

I had a lot of fun writing the start of this chapter

Also I know the Poseidon bit kinda comes outta nowhere but I thought of the joke and wanted to put it in so I did

# Chapter 71

## Chapter Summary

Ed deals with Pride

## Chapter Notes

No longer feel like I'm dying! Hopefully I don't get ill again in two weeks this time

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

Only a minute after Ed leaves the Bradley home does Selim walk up the path towards the house. All of the lights inside had been turned off to create the illusion that Mrs's Bradley is asleep. But Ed can see two silhouettes peeking out one of the windows.

Selim barely pauses as he spots Ed standing in front of the door to his house. But Ed does spot how his eyes narrow at him. "Good evening Pride."

The 'boys' eyes narrow even further at how Ed addresses him. When Selim sends the first shadow after him, Ed can see how one of the silhouettes tries to move away, only to be stopped by the second. "How do you know what I am?"

Ed just smirks at him as he dodges the next shadow Selim sends his way. "Why don't you take a guess? I'd love to see how wrong you are."

Pride glares at him and sends multiple shadows at him. Ed swears slightly at the speed of them, but manages to avoid getting hit by any of them. "Why did you confront me if you know what I am?"

Ed doesn't bother responding yet. He needs to be closer to Pride before he can risk tipping his hand like that. Luckily, fighting people taller than him is still something Ed is more than used to, so it doesn't take him long to get inside Selim's guard. Knowing exactly where all the weak spots will be. After all Pride doesn't often fight his own battles. Whenever he deals with something for his Father, his host body is locked up nice and tight in the Bradley manner while his shadows are let loose. All of which, means that other then Sloth (who just doesn't bother to block any hits) he has the worst guard out of all the Homunculi.

Once Ed is inside his guard, Pride panics. But before he can back away or summon more shadows, Ed is clapping his hands. "To give your mother back her child." Pride's eyes widen even more before Ed places his hands on Selim's shoulders.

Truth is waiting for him on the other side of the Gate. An amused grin stretched across their face. "That was rather fast, Alchemist. I believe you said he would be difficult to handle."

After taking in Truth's words, Ed shrugs slightly. "I thought he would be. It didn't exactly take me long to defeat him last time when I returned him to his mother, but I know for a fact that Pride can be vicious. I wouldn't call him the best fighter of the bunch, couldn't since Bradley exists. But he knows how to use his shadows to his advantage. I assume his surprise and Pride got the better of him. Because I really was expecting him to put up more of a fight."

At the end of Ed's last sentence Truth starts laughing. "You sound almost disappointed that he didn't give you a challenge. Not to worry, Golden Sun. I'm sure the next two will be more than enough of a challenge for you." Ed huffs at Truth's almost teasing tone. "His mother wanted him back as a baby, correct?"

Ed nods his head in agreement even though he knows Truth knows they're right so he doesn't understand the need for confirmation. "Leave him with his powers though. I know he'll have no memory of being a Homunculus, but it still doesn't sit right with me to take his powers from him in light of that."

Again, Truth laughs at him. But he does nod his head in understanding as the Gates open behind him. "It will be done. I imagine I will be seeing you a lot tomorrow, Golden Sun. So I will not keep you long tonight." Ed just nods and lets the hands pull him through the Gate out of Truth's domain.

After returning from the Gate, Ed catches sight of baby Selim on the floor in front of him. As he bends down to pick him up, Mrs's Bradley runs out of the house and in to the garden where Ed is standing. "This is Selim? You did it?"

Nodding his head in agreement, Ed holds her son out to her. "This is him. Like I said he'll return to his previous age within a year or two." As Mrs's Bradley takes Selim from him, he lowers his arms. "I'd like to apologise in advance for what will happen to your husband tomorrow."

Mrs's Bradley doesn't respond for a few seconds. "Thank you." He doesn't bother saying anything else to her as she turns around to go back inside her home. All he can do is apologise for ruining her family. But doing so more than once would come across as insincere. For now, he should leave her be to come to terms with everything she's learnt tonight.

Once the soon to be widow is back inside her home, Ed turns to Breda. "I'm heading back to the bar. If you're going to be staying here to keep watch on her, just be careful and stay out of sight if Wrath comes home. Maybe stay out of her way for a little while as well. She has just lost her son and husband as she knew them."

Breda nods his head in understanding before turning around to re-enter the house himself. When the door closes behind him, Ed heads away from the Bradley house to return to the bar, where everyone else is getting ready for tomorrow.

Initially, Ed had thought that the plan was moving too fast. That they needed more time to plan everything. But with him knowing all the enemies that could appear, and the likely actions that Father will take, it cut down the need for extensive planning.

Upon arriving at the bar, he finds that Al and Mei are sat in one of the booths half asleep. Deciding not to disturb them, he instead walks over to Hawkeye who is finalising her part of the plan with Ling and his bodyguards. The four of them will be heading out just before sun rise to take care of the possible Fuhrer's. Hawkeye is under orders from Mustang (which is really an order from Ed that Roy put voice to) to shoot the gold toothed doctor the second he makes an appearance. With him gone, no one else in Central (other than Ed himself) will be able to force open the Gate to Truth's domain.

Ed listens in to their plans, reminding them that the spares they'll be fighting *will* be just as strong as the Fuhrer himself when Ling starts to get a bit too cocky.

## Chapter End Notes

I know the fight with Pride was over quickly, but I am a firm believer in the fact that if you take away his shadows (or nullify them/ get to close to the host body) that Pride is then the weakest of the Homunculi. Especially seen as he wasn't expecting to be getting in a fight that night

I hope it doesn't come across as me just trying to write Pride off quickly, but I genuinely believe that an experienced Ed could get rid of him this quickly

# Chapter 72

## Chapter Summary

Ed heads out for his fight against Wrath

## Chapter Notes

I'm thinking of posting two chapters on the 25th as a present for you all and I'm also thinking of posting one on the Saturday before new years before the normal Sunday update because part of me really wants this fic to be completely posted by or on new years day

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

It takes longer than Ed thought it would for Roy to walk over to him. Likely trying to avoid being teased by Havoc. Not that it works because Havoc still lets out a whistle. Before immediately shutting up at the glare Ed is sending him. He'd rather Havoc didn't wake his little brother up (or Mei who is also starting to doze off properly) because of something so stupid.

Roy leads him away from Hawkeye's group to stand in one of the corners of the bar. One further away from Izumi's knowing looks. She'd be a lot harder to make stop than Havoc. "How did it go with Pride?"

Ed lets out a small laugh at the way he's choosing to check up on him. The questions Roy is actually asking are how he decided to deal with Selim, as well as how he's holding up with destroying Mrs's Bradleys family. "I gave her the choice of what she wanted me to do with him. Whether she wanted him back as he was without his memories or to give him back as a baby she could raise. She chose to raise him up to be the boy she thought he was." He looks away from Roy for a second. "I left him with his power though. It felt wrong to take the powers away from only one Homunculi."

After a second of staring at Ed, Roy nudges his arm. "You're over the guilt then?"

Shrugging, Ed leans more of his weight against the wall. "Not exactly. But being guilty won't get her back her family. I've done what I can by giving her back Selim, but she'll still be losing her husband today."

Ignoring Ed's token protests, Roy tugs Ed into his side, rubbing small comforting circles into Ed's hip. After a few seconds, Ed relaxes in to his hold. Ed has never been much of a touchy

feely guy. But from what little he learnt (and can remember) about Roy from that one night, he's more of a romantic than his playboy persona lets on.

A few hours before sunrise, Hohenheim wakes up Al and Mei (she had wanted to stay with Al) and heads for the door to go start his part of the plan. He still needs to counter the last part of the circle. On his way out of the bar, Al comes over to Ed to say goodbye. As soon as Ed returns the goodbye, Al runs out the door of the bar.

Stretching his arms out a bit, he heads over to the booth Al just vacated to go get his own sleep. Bradley isn't set to be back in Central until the afternoon. Ed is going to wait until he arrives in Central command before he attacks him. No sense in causing mass panic for no reason.

When Ed wakes up, Hawkeye, Ling and his bodyguards are gone, telling him that it's at least early morning. Seeing Armstrong and Scar's groups getting ready to leave tells him it's about ten in the morning.

The immortal soldiers won't be getting released yet, hopefully not at all, but they need to get in to place before Ed starts his attack on the Fuhrer. Because once he does, the brass will know they've been found out and that's when they'll try to unleash the army. Stupidly thinking that they can demand them to kill Ed alone. At which point, both teams will take care of the soldiers, preventing as many as possible from making it in to the streets.

Seeing those two teams getting ready, Ed pulls himself up from the seat he was laying across. "It's about time you woke up."

Ed looks over to see Armstrong staring him down, fighting back the urge to roll his eyes. "It's not like Wrath has returned yet, but yes I see your point." She nods her head in approval at seeing him get up from the booth.

Roy has already left at this point, which Ed assumes means he's already met up with Breda. "You should get in to position. You wish to fight him in the courtyard correct?"

While pulling his coat on properly, Ed nods his head. "Yeah. I know Father lives underneath that courtyard but it's the closest place to everyone else. Meaning when they've all completed their parts, they can head there." Pleased with his decision, Olivier nods her head at him.

Soon enough, Ed is the only one left in the bar, so he nods his head in Chris's direction before heading out himself. There is a chance Bradley could arrive early, so it's better he gets there now.

Arriving in the courtyard, Ed finds a spot to settle down to wait for the arrival of the last Homunculus. Knowing he has at least two hours before Wrath arrives, he reforms his bands in to straight pieces of metal. Making sure to pull out an array to do so first just in case any of the brass are watching, he'd prefer not to tip his advantage *right* before his fight with Wrath. Not after keeping it so carefully under wraps for over a year.

With both of his reformed bands laying out on his knees he fishes around in his pocket for a coin he can use to etch on to the metal with. It takes him a minute but he does eventually find

one deep in his left pocket. Pulling a piece of paper from his pocket he sketches the needed array before reforming the coin in to a small sharp piece of metal. Sharp enough to etch on to his bands with, thin enough for the precision marks he needs to make on them.

By the time he has the array for his Water Alchemy etched on to both of his bands, and put them back around his wrists, Wrath appears on the other end of the courtyard.

Standing up from where he's been sat for the last two hours, Ed makes his way over to the Fuhrer. Wrath watches him as he comes closer. "Good day, Shining Blood. To what do I owe this visit?"

Thanks to his few lessons on Chi sensing courtesy of Fu, Ed can feel Hawkeye's team emerging from beneath Central, as well as Roy's Chi hovering around the entrance to Central Command. Likely leaving the well being of Mrs's Bradley to his men. Scar's and Armstrong's teams are still in position around Central command.

With that vague understanding of where everyone else is, Ed decides to stall for a bit of time. He doesn't know how long this fight with Wrath will last but the more people they have here when they go down after Father, the better.

## Chapter End Notes

I finally started reading the Odyssey because Epic the musical comes out soon and despite having owned the Odyssey for almost 3 months with the intent of reading it before the musicals release I hadn't touched it until two days ago. I'm not that far in yet but I'm actually really enjoying what I've read so far.

Speaking of Epic, if you liked Hamilton I genuinely think you'll love Epic. You can see a \*ton\* of snippets from the musical on the creators TikTok @jorgeherrans he also posts behind the scenes snippets

# Chapter 73

## Chapter Summary

The fight against Bradley

## Chapter Notes

I'll be honest I actually kinda struggled writing this fight. I didn't want it to drag on forever nor did I want Ed to just wipe the floor with him (this also goes for the Father fight)

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

As he had promised himself he would, Ed extends an olive branch out to Wrath. "I have an offer for you."

Bradley raises an eyebrow at Ed. "And what exactly have you got to offer me, Shining Blood?"

Ed physically holds his hand out to Bradley. "A chance to become Human again. To spend the rest of your days with your wife and son. You're the last Homunculus left. Even your creator will be gone by the end of the day. I'm offering you a chance to live as a Human. It's more than most other people would offer you."

A harsh laugh escapes Bradley. "I see, so you know about everything do you? I wonder how long you've known. But no, I will not be accepting your offer. Would a human agree to being turned in to a lesser being?"

Lowering his arm back to his side, Ed sighs at Wrath. "Fine. I already knew you wouldn't accept my offer, but I owed it to your wife to try." At that, Ed finally reveals his no array alchemy as he transforms his bands in to blades. From the corner of his eye he can see both Hawkeye's group and Roy arriving in the courtyard.

Once both of his knives have been transmuted, he uses his newly etched arrays to summon water whips that curl slightly where they meet the floor.

Making use of Bradley's shock, he won't be able to make him hesitate again after all, Ed snaps one of his whips forwards. Aiming to take out Bradley's eye, the one underneath his eyepatch. The Ultimate Eye. If Ed can get rid of Wrath's Ultimate Eye, then he'll become less



of a threat. It won't make *much* of a difference. After all, Bradley is still a force to be reckoned with without the eye.

Unfortunately, Ed misses his attack on Bradley's eye. The former Human comes back to his senses just as the whip snaps at his eye. The only thing Ed manages with his attack is to remove Wrath's eyepatch. Which really doesn't seem like all that good of a thing.

Wrath launches himself at Ed who only just manages to dodge out of the way of the attack. Dropping in to a crouch before throwing his leg out to try and trip Wrath as he moves back from his attack. Predictably, Wrath sees it coming and Ed is soon rolling out of the way of the sword swinging towards where his leg previously was.

Once Ed's stood on two feet again, he snaps his left arm in Bradley's direction, trying in vain to catch his wrist so that Wrath will drop at least one of his swords. Again, his attack misses and he finds himself throwing himself to the floor again to avoid having his head cut off.

Unable to stay still for long, Ed is back up on his feet again right as Wrath stabs his sword in the spot Ed's chest was. At this point, Ed really isn't sure whether or not Wrath is toying with him or not. Unsure as to whether or not he's still seen as valuable to Fathers plan. But Ed isn't willing to try his luck enough to find out. He'd rather avoid any life threatening injuries.

After a few more failed attacks, Ed throws his knives down, the water receding as soon as the weapons leave his hands. Close combat fighting is Ed's preferred fighting style after all. And for this fight, having empty hands is going to be a massive help for Ed. The second it would take Ed to drop his weapons in order to clap could cost him any opening he manages to find.

Almost as if they had planned it, Hohenheim and Al arrive at the edge of the courtyard just as Ed's knives hit the floor. "Brother!"

Refusing to take his eyes off of Wrath, very much not liking how his eyebrow had raised in intrigue, Ed shouts out to Hohenheim. "Keep him away from this fight or I'll uphold my promise here and now!" Immediately, Ed can see a wall form in front of Al and Hohenheim. Ed doesn't trust their bastard of a dad with much, if anything, but he knows he'll keep Al away. After all, even if Al *tried* to break the wall, without his no array Alchemy, Hohenheim could remove any attempts to draw an array instantly.

As if the new information has made his day, Wrath raises an eyebrow at Ed. "You have a brother? That wasn't on your records."

Ed growls at him as he dodges a sword strike. "You'll have to excuse me for wanting to keep my little brother safe from you vultures." Another swing from Wrath comes for him, one that Ed won't be able to dodge. At least not completely. Ready himself to take a hit, he breathes out a sigh of relief when Bradley has to jump back to avoid the torrent of fire and bullets that are aimed his way.

Risking a quick glance in their direction, Ed nods his thanks to Roy and Hawkeye. They both lower their arms, but Ed can see they're both still ready to jump in again. Roy's fingers are still in position to click and Hawkeye's finger is resting on the trigger of her gun.

With the reminder that he has an audience for this fight, of people willing and able to protect him, he launches himself back at Wrath. His immediate attack throws Wrath off as much as anything ever does, which isn't much. But that one second is enough to force him in to dropping one of his swords. Ducking out of the way of Bradley's returning attack, Ed picks up the dropped sword as he stands and throws it away from Wrath. Thankfully, it lands far enough away that Wrath will likely decide it a waste of his time to get it back.

As Wrath thrusts his sword in Ed's direction, Ed spots the smallest opening in Bradley's guard. Deciding it worth being stabbed, he claps his hands and runs in to the attack. The small break in Wrath's guard was exactly what Ed needed and he manages to activate the array, unfortunately getting impaled in the process.

As he waits for the Eye of Truth to open, he takes stock of his injuries.

For now, he puts the *sword in his stomach* to one side. That one is obviously a problem, but he needs to know if it's the only one.

There are a few scratches on his arms from quite literally throwing himself to the floor multiple times, one on his neck that thankfully doesn't seem to be too much of a problem. Which means that the only other injury that could be a problem, is the cut on his face, that stretches from his hairline to the middle of his cheek. He isn't quite sure when he received that one, he assumes it was when he dodged the sword aimed at his head but he didn't feel it when it happened so he can't say for certain. He got lucky with it though, it seems to be a superficial wound. Or at least, as superficial as any *any* face wounds are. It'll probably leave a scar though. Because it may be superficial but Ed won't be able to get it seen to any time soon.

Finally, once Ed has finished cataloguing his injuries, the Eye of Truth opens beneath them to take them through the Gate.

## Chapter End Notes

Happy Holidays! To anyone dealing with difficult family members this time of year or have to go back in the closet for whatever reason, I hope everything passes quickly and without incident for you. I love and appreciate all of yo.

Also, this is update one today I'll post the other later in the day probably around 6-8pm (Honestly don't understand time zones but that'll be UK time)

# Chapter 74

## Chapter Summary

Ed visits Truth and Father makes his appearance

## Chapter Notes

Hello again! Here's your second update!

Again I hope anyone dealing with difficult family has had an easy day so far with no problems and you've managed to enjoy yourself (that goes for each of you whether you're celebrating today or not). I love and appreciate all of you! ^^

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

Truth is staring at him in amusement as Ed opens his eyes on the other side of the Gate. "Reckless as always, Golden Sun."

Ed can't help but roll his eyes at them. "It got me close enough to him to use the array didn't it?"

Knowing it's a rhetorical question, Truth doesn't bother to deign it with a response. "What would you have me do with this last Homunculus?"

Unable to help himself, Ed raises an eyebrow at them. "Why do you ask? You always know what my decision will be before I even arrive here. Most likely before *I* even know. So why bother asking?"

A small smile stretches across Truth's otherwise blank, empty face. "Because I like it when you feel the need to explain yourself. I cannot be benevolent all the time." They tilt their head to one side. "That said, I am not truly omniscient. I know you do not believe me when I tell you this. But you do truly surprise me sometimes."

For a few seconds, Ed just stares at the apparently not omniscient Truth. Ed had truly believed that the fucker knew *everything* but apparently there are some limits. Like people's thoughts or thought process. "Alright fine. Just take the Souls inside of him. I cannot give Mrs's Bradley her husband back as baby as I did her son, nor do I feel right giving her back a husband with no memories. Not when she knows the truth about him. Knows he never truly loved her anyway. That's too cruel."

Truth laughs at him, their smile stretching even wider. "See!" They hold their arms out, gesturing to Ed for a non-existent audience. "You do so surprise me, Alchemist." They return their arms to their sides, smile still wide. "Very well. It shall be done." The Gate opens behind Ed.

As the hands start to grab hold of Ed, Truth's smile drops ever so slightly. "Remember, your body is injured. Do not fail me so close to the end goal."

Laughing at them, Ed grins at Truth, showing just too many teeth to be anything other than feral. "Since when have I ever failed to entertain you, Truth?" That gains another laugh from Truth as the hands start pulling on Ed more insistently.

Ed returns from the Gate alone and immediately collapses to his knees. Which, unfortunately, jostles the sword lodged in his stomach. Roy takes a few steps towards him, panicking about the wound. Turning ever so slightly to look at him, Ed winces slightly when the sword jostles again. It definitely hit something, but he's been in worse condition.

Roy is stood right in front of him now, moving to kneel beside him. "Roy, stop panicking. I've had worse." Before the other man can say anything in protest, Ed shushes him again. "Shut up. Just pull the sword out."

Immediately, Roy shakes his head. "You don't pull out the cause of an injury like this. You'll bleed out."

Fighting back a sigh, the best Ed can do is roll his eyes at the other. "Pull the sword out. I'm going to temporarily patch the wound." For a few seconds, Roy doesn't make any moves to touch the sword. But eventually, he grabs the hilt of the sword, ignoring the hiss Ed lets out as it moves slightly. He doesn't move it yet, waiting for Ed to tell him to.

Once Ed has his hands in position, he nods at Roy to remove the sword. Roy does so without hesitation, knowing that going slow would make it worse. As soon as the sword is out, Ed can tell that he had *somehow* managed to avoid it hitting any vital spots or organs. It's still a nasty wound, but the fact that everything inside him is undamaged, means he can just piece the skin back together for now.

He *will* need to go to a hospital for surgery later, but for now, this should hold up fine.

After allowing himself a few seconds to catch his breath, Ed pushes himself up on to his feet. Silently thankful for Roy sticking right beside him to lean some of his weight against. Once he's standing, Ed turns his head to look over at Hawkeye. "We're going to need some more ammunition to take him on. He'll need to drop his shield before I can activate the array. I might manage it once before his shield is up. If the army has been taken care of or hasn't been activated get Armstrong and Scar's teams here as well." Hawkeye nods her head in understanding and heads out of the courtyard to go gather some more soldiers. As Hawkeye leaves, Ed turns to face Ling and his guards. "Can one of you pinpoint where Father is for me?"

Before Ling or his bodyguards can even try to give Ed an answer, Ed hears the tell-tale sound of earth moving with the help of Alchemy. Groaning in annoyance, Ed pushes himself off of

Roy, to face where Father will emerge from.

Everyone must have figured out what he heard as no one questions his sudden annoyance or why he's turned to face a currently empty part of the courtyard.

Ed has a feeling that he won't be able to send all of Father's Souls through the Gate with just one activation of the array. Not only is Father made of so many *more* Souls than his children, he's going to fight to keep them. He's older than the country of Amestris, to have kept on to all of those Souls for so long, Ed doubts he'll be willing to give them up so easily.

Unable to tell Hawkeye about Father's appearance, Ed can only hope that Hawkeye will be back with their backup soon. It took a lot to lower his shield enough for Ed to be able to punch through it last time. He doesn't fancy his chances at doing it alone.

It doesn't take much longer for Father to appear stood in the courtyard as stoic and uninterested as always.

## Chapter End Notes

I still love Ed and Truth's relationship in this. Like it's so fun to write

(Also the musical I talked about in Wednesdays update released it's first saga of five today so if you have nothing to do.... maybe give them a listen??? Not trying to be pushy I just generally think it's great)

# Chapter 75

## Chapter Summary

The fight against Father

## Chapter Notes

Last three chapters!

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

Knowing that he's going to need some backup to help him get through Father's shield, Ed decides to stall for as much time as he can.

Luckily, Father seems to be in a talkative mood today. "So you are the one who has been killing all my children."

Ed throws an arm out at him, pointing at him accusingly. "Hey! All of them except Bradley are very much alive thank you. I made sure of it." That answer seemingly bores Father as he just stares at Ed blankly. Which leads Ed to think Father would've preferred it if his children were dead.

Father continues to stare him down. "You knew about my plan. How?"

Unable to help himself, Ed smirks at Father. "Well, I'm not going to tell you that. But I will tell you that Truth had something to do with it."

Immediately, Father starts glaring at him. His stare becoming less blank and more angry, perhaps even shocked. "You have spoken with a God?"

Making use of Father being distracted, Ed starts moving slowly towards him. "Still don't know if I'd call them a God. They're just Truth. But yeah." He's a little over an arms length away now. "Multiple times in fact." He pulls off the sleeve of his coat. Showing off the Sign from Truth. "You could say I'm working for them."

Father's stare switches from his face, to the mark on his shoulder. "You lie."

A laugh escapes Ed at that. "Then I suppose you wouldn't believe me if I told you I was Hohenheim's son either?" Before Father can say anything in response to that, Ed claps his hands and presses them against Father's stomach. There's a token resistance from the shield that Father tries to throw up once Ed touches him.

The shield works enough for Ed to need to back off, but it didn't go up fast enough to stop Ed from sending Souls from Father to Truth. Ed is just thankful that Truth knew Ed didn't have a strong enough Grip on Father's Souls to bring them all to the Gate. So they opened it enough to let the few souls he could grab through, without pulling Ed and Father through as well. "What did you do to me?"

Ed shoots him a cocky smirk as he sees Hawkeye leading a group of soldiers out to the field. "Wouldn't you like to know? It's a shame that I'm under no obligation to tell you isn't it?" He doesn't risk a look over his shoulder as he shouts to Hawkeye. "Please tell me you got some guns!"

She shouts across the field to him in reply, even as she makes her way back towards Roy, who's still on standby. "I did. Plenty of bullets too."

Letting out a sigh of relief, Ed points his finger towards Father. "Thank you. Now quite literally empty every gun you managed to find in to him. It should help kill his shield. Roy, I'm going to need you to help as well." He backs away from Father to pick up his discarded knives. "Ling can I ask you to keep my brother out of this fight?"

Ling stares at him for a few seconds before he understands that he also wants *him* out of the fight. He's only a year older than Ed's brother. Sure Ed's last Ling took part in this fight. But that version of him had a Homunculus powering his attacks with a nearly unbreakable shield. Ed himself was only a year older than his brother his last time. Which despite it sounding a bit hypocritical of Ed, it *is* different than him as an adult willingly letting them take part in this fight. "Of course you can. Me and Lan Fan will keep him where he is, but let Fu take part in the fight."

A few seconds pass as Ed stares at him in response before he nods his head. "Okay. His grenades could come in handy anyway." With that decided, Ed turns to the wall Hohenheim constructed. "OI! Bastard!" Hohenheim steps around the wall to look at Ed. "You have the same ability as this guy. So you're going to help me block any attacks he may throw their way." Hohenheim merely nods his head silently, perhaps knowing better than to test Ed's temper now.

The wall Hohenheim made is kept in place as a precaution to stop Al from immediately running in to the fight to help Ed. Once Ed has his knives back in hand, he immediately flicks them to form the whips again. He won't have the rage needed to help him punch through Father's shield this time because *nothing*, fucking *nothing* is going to happen to Al this time. Which means he's going to have to help chip away at the shield, which he's hoping to do by attacking with the whips. They'll keep him just out of the way enough that the soldiers can shoot at Father without worrying about shooting Ed instead.

Father has watched this whole thing go on passively, face as blank as usual. He clearly doesn't think much of their chances even with the surprise attack Ed managed on him merely minutes ago. "Come on then." He lashes out with his whip, a small smile forming when everyone takes his attack as their cue to join in. The line of fire that shoots right past him is stupidly comforting. The fact that Mustang can see where Father is this time and doesn't have to rely on someone else to help him aim. The sound of bullets just getting absorbed and negated by Father's shield is less comforting.

As the last of the first round of bullets hits Father's shield, he responds in kind. Creating and shooting stone bullet like objects and shooting them at every soldier around the field.

Doing what he was recruited for, Hohenheim creates walls around the soldiers lining the outside of the field while Ed creates a wall shielding the two of them as well as Roy and Hawkeye behind them.

Stepping out from behind the wall, Ed snaps his left hand out towards Father and if it weren't for that damn shield, Ed would have taken out an eye. Temporarily at least.

Speaking of losing an eye, the cut on Ed's face is becoming a bit of a problem. He may have written it off as superficial a bit too quickly. Because facial wounds always bleed a lot, after all there's a lot of blood in your face, but the cut is still lightly bleeding and despite how sharp Bradley's swords were, it doesn't seem to be as clean of a cut as Ed thought. Likely because he received it in the middle of a dodge. But it means that there's a fair bit of blood covering Ed's eye. At least all the dried blood has glued his left eye shut so the fresh blood isn't going to actually get *in* his eye.

Father tries to retaliate, but Ed just steps behind the wall he made which, unsurprisingly, Father immediately tries to get rid of after. Ed watches Father for his next movement before putting one hand behind his back, and making the sign for attack for Roy and Hawkeye to see.

Immediately, a wall of fire surrounds Father as Hawkeye and the rest of the shooters follow suit with their bullets. Ed smiles at the display before making another sign. Telling them both to keep the pressure up. Until the bullets run out at least. Another wall of fire shoots past Ed towards Father in response.

It takes nearly five minutes before the bullets run out. But Roy's circle is still up, mostly hiding Father from their view. Meaning they're also hidden from *his* view. Quickly, Ed turns around to face Roy, taking a few steps closer so he'll be able to hear him without Ed needing to shout. "Roy, keep that circle there for a minute. I'm going to jump in with Father. His shield should be nearly nullified by now." Roy stares at him for a few seconds, before looking back over to Father and nodding his head in agreement. "Thank you."

Flicking his wrists, Ed changes the length of the water, making them closer resemble swords than water. Hopefully, his plan is going to work.

Walking closer to the ring of fire, Ed turns to nod at Roy, telling him to make an opening for him. It takes a second, but eventually he does comply.

Stepping inside the fire, he sees Father watching the flames with an unamused expression on his face. "This is the best you can do? Caging me in?"

Ed nods his head at him. "Well it worked didn't it? After all you didn't just walk through the fire." Father turns his gaze from the flames to Ed. The wannabe God's gaze flickers down to Ed's weapons for a second, so Ed flourishes them, putting them on show. "Don't worry about these. I'd be more worried about your shield."



At that, Ed lunges for Father. The circle of fire Roy had made to cage Father in is small, which means that there isn't much of a distance for him to cross. So Ed's weapons hit Father's shield almost immediately. Crashing in to the shield, Ed's weapons practically bounce off the shield around Father.

Cursing him silently, Ed lashes out again, smirking to himself when he gets a little bit closer to Father before the shield pushes him away.

It only takes a few more full bodied attacks for Father's shield to give out completely in a flash of red light. Ed can see Roy's fire disappear from around them, probably worried about what the flash of light was. But he doesn't need the cage anymore so he isn't too worried. Father still has his no array Alchemy though so he tries to force Ed away. But Ed refuses to back down now, so he spares a second to reform his blades and slip them back on before getting back in Father's personal space.

Resorting back to his tried and true tactic, Ed punches Father in to submission. Forcing Father to take hit after hit until finally, he submits and stays down on the floor. Ed has new bruises on both his knuckles and a couple split knuckles but he was expecting those when he decided to start punching Father with his bare fists.

With Father finally down for good, Ed claps his hands once again. "Truth has been waiting a long time for these Souls. Make it easy for both them and me and don't try to hold on to them." He presses his hands on to Father's shoulders, waiting for the Eye of Truth to appear.

## Chapter End Notes

I honestly had so much fun writing this fight once I knew how I wanted it to go. I desperately wanted people to still watch Ed punch him in to the ground so I had to keep it in somehow

# Chapter 76

## Chapter Summary

Ed gives Truth Father's Souls back

## Chapter Notes

Two chapters left

I'm aiming to have the last chapter up for just gone midnight but I'm going to a new years party at my friends house tonight after work so I can't promise it will be

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

Truth is already applauding him when Ed arrives on the other side of the Gate. Which in all honesty, doesn't even surprise Ed at this point.

What *does* surprise him however, is the fact that Father is there with them. Kneeling in between Ed and Truth with his back to Ed. For a few seconds, Ed can't help but wonder what form Truth is taking for him. Whether he's seeing Truth take his own form or Ed's.

Almost as if they know what Ed is thinking, which wouldn't come as much of a shock to Ed, he still half believes that he can. "He is seeing the same thing you are, Golden Sun."

Hearing Truth address someone else, Father looks behind him to see Ed. He stares at Ed for a few seconds before he turns back to Truth. "This is supposed to be *my* Gate. There's not supposed to be anyone else here."

Ed can't help but snort at that. "You don't *have* a Gate, you absolute idiot. Do you not even understand what you are?. I brought you to Truth through my own Gate." Truth just smiles at Ed as he explains the intricacy of Truth's domain to someone rather than let Truth answer the question himself. Truth wouldn't let anyone else other than Ed get away with that. But they also know that having Ed, a human, explain Truth's domain to him instead of Truth himself will shock Father. It means that Ed is unintentionally telling Father that he is closer to Truth than Father ever would have been, which Truth finds incredibly amusing. Father just looks between Truth and Ed in silence. Almost like he's waiting for Truth to smite Ed for answering for him. But Truth is going to do nothing of the sort. To which Ed seems to have pieced together because he looks up at Truth. "You're enjoying this aren't you?"

Truth nods their head at Ed, their smile growing wider than before. "You know me well, Alchemist." They cast a quick glance down at Father, making sure he can feel their gaze even without eyes. "I must admit I am finding it amusing for you to put him in his place in my stead. Certainly saving me the effort." Their smirk turns feral as they look back up at Ed, letting him in on the joke. "Why, I'm sure you could take my place here. Join me even. You certainly know enough about this world."

It takes a second, but Truth knows the second Ed catches on to what Truth is saying. The moment when the gears lock in to place in his head and he *understands* Truth's point. When he *finally* understands that he would be closer to being Truth than Father ever could have been. That he already *is* closer to being what Father wanted to be. "Is that why you always seemed to be so amused by me, dare I say *fond* of me?" Truth nods their head once so Ed turns his gaze back down to Father. "As enlightening as this trip has been, if not slightly unnerving, I assume you brought him here for a reason. All the other Homunculi weren't here with us."

A second passes as Truth watches Ed. Watches the knowledge of being Truth's favourite Human settle in to his bones. Giving him a sort of confidence on this side of the Gate that many others have tried and failed to fake. Yet it is not cockiness. He doesn't *wish* for this position, unlike the one between them who tried so hard to gain Truth's favour. Then decided to devour him when he couldn't obtain it. Which makes it all the more obvious as to *why* Ed is Truth's favourite. "You have done well in upholding your end of our bargain, Golden Sun. I thought you would like to see the job through to the end."

Looking down at Father again, Ed can see his head swivelling to look between the two of them. His eyes alight with what seems to be desire when they look at Truth, either for their attention or to devour them Ed isn't sure. But every time his gaze lands back on Ed, his eyes burn with a hatred Ed hasn't had focused on him in a long time. "My side is not yet complete, not until Hohenheim's Souls and the Souls under Amestris are returned. But yes, I would love to see him taken care of."

With that decided, Ed watches on in fascination as Father gets thinner and thinner and smaller and smaller. His form giving way as the Souls he stole all those years ago are taken back from him. After five minutes of watching and waiting Father is no longer kneeling in front of them. He's reverted back to the Dwarf in the Flask, without the flask. Just a black floating blob hovering in between Truth and Ed. Truth smiles wildly at 'Father' floating between them. He holds his hand out towards the Dwarf and the first Homunculus finds himself floating over to land on their outstretched hand. "A fitting trophy, after all this time."

Ed just watches as the Dwarf disappears. "Is that him dealt with then?"

Truth nods, their hand returning to rest at their side. "It is indeed." Their smile returns to it's usual level of feral and smug that it's usually at when talking to Ed. "I know I will be seeing you here twice more before our deal is done. But I can tell you have a question to ask me."

Faltering for a second, Ed decides an answer to his question is worth Truth laughing at him, so he nods. "You actually do favour me don't you? You aren't just saying that to boost my ego while I recover these Souls for you." The confidence that had settled within him earlier wavers ever so slightly. Waiting for the God to deny it.

But Truth does no such thing, in fact Truth starts smiling widely at Ed as they open the Gate. "You are the closest to being me that a Human can be. There is a reason I chose *you* for this mission. There will be others in the future I could have used. More people who open the Gate thinking they know better than the others who have tried, that they'll be the ones to get it right. But none of them will be you, Golden Sun. They will not come back to me again and again to barter and trade like you have. They will not be as entertaining." With that, Ed is pulled through the Gate and out of Truth's domain.

When Ed returns from the Gate again he finds that all his adrenaline has worn off during his time in the gate. Which means that all of his cuts, bruises and wounds are making themselves known in varying levels. Immediately though, Ed can tell that the stomach wound he received from Bradley has reopened. Which, sure, Ed has incredible pain tolerance, but having so many different types of injuries in so many different places is definitely a bit more than Ed is used to. Which is why it doesn't surprise him when he feels himself start swaying on his feet, becoming woozy from blood loss and the pain.

Ed can feel himself start to pass out while everyone else is still trying to process everything they just saw. His body crumples in on it's self and collapses to the floor, but luckily Roy is there to catch him before he hits it. Which is probably for the best. The jolt of him hitting the concrete probably wouldn't have been good for his wounds. Roy sits down on the floor with Ed still in his arms, his head resting on Roy's legs. "I've got you Ed. But you need to stay awake okay?"

A few seconds pass and Ed can just about feel someone pressing down on his stomach wound, and a quick glance down shows Hawkeye kneeling at his side. "Not great is it?"

Roy laughs at him slightly before shaking his head, checking over the cuts on his face and neck as one of the soldiers barks out at another to get a medic. "No, no it's not. But you'll be fine." He tilts Ed's head this way and that, being gentle with the cuts and bruises surrounding his chin (again from continuously throwing himself to the floor). "Your stomach is the worst. Your neck will need cleaning to make sure there's no dirt in but that's it and your eye will need cleaning and covering." Ed nods slowly as Roy continues to describe his injuries, despite already knowing what they are, because he knows Roy is doing it so he has something to focus on. Because Roy is right, he really shouldn't be falling asleep right now.

It feels like an eternity until someone announces the arrival of a medic, but Ed knows it was probably only ten minutes. As the medics try to take him away, Roy stands away to let them transfer him to a car to take him to hospital, but Al is refusing to let go of his brother. Blearily, Ed tilts his head to look at Al. "Hey, Al. The quicker you let them take care of me, the quicker you can see me again. I'm sure Roy or Hawkeye will drive you to the hospital if you asked."

At that, Roy places a hand down on Al's shoulder. "He's right Al. Let's give them some space to work and we can follow their car to the hospital alright?" That does seem to work so Al finally relents and stands up from his brothers side. Ed shoots both Al and Roy a tired, but victorious, grin before the medics carry him out of the courtyard.

## Chapter End Notes

I think I might take a break of writing fanfiction when the next chapter gets posted. Nothing permanent so if inspiration for fanfic hits I'll write. But I'd love to get some work done on my original story idea (not that much ever gets done whenever I say this but I can dream)

# Chapter 77

## Chapter Summary

Six months later....

## Chapter Notes

Yes the last chapter is a time skip epilogue thing. I couldn't think of another way to end this. I think it's cute though and I'm quite proud of it

There were a few details that never made it in to the fic that I wanted to share with you all so there's a fairly long note at the end of all the details I really wanted to share with you even though they didn't make it in

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

Six months have passed since Ed's defeat of Father.

His injuries healed up nicely in the first month. As expected, only the ones on his face, neck and stomach had scarred and all to varying degrees. He wasn't allowed to leave his hospital bed at all for the first few days. For the next week or so after that he was only allowed to leave his bed to go to the bathroom, so Ed had to wait to send the rest of the Souls to Truth.

But two weeks after The Defeat, he managed to do it. Getting Al to bring Hohenheim to the hospital so he could return all the Souls he was forcibly given to Truth. Even managing to get Truth to leave him with a few more years of life so Al could get to know his dad this time around. After Hohenheim's Souls were dealt with that left only the Souls under Amestris. Which he sent to Truth by asking them to converge in to a stone first. Explaining to all those Souls that it would be easier to make sure they all get sent through together if Ed only had one object to focus on and not a whole country.

~~~~~

Upon returning the last Xerxean Souls to Truth, they held out their hand for Ed. Explaining that their deal is completed. "Take my hand again and I will remove my mark from you."

Ed had looked down at his shoulder, where the mark lays, before shaking his head. "I'd rather keep it. I know our deal is complete, but I will *hopefully* never have reason to open my Gate again."

Truth seemed to understand what Ed meant and lowered their hand. "Very well. If you wish to be marked by me forever, that is your choice. May you never set foot in my domain again, Golden Sun."

As the Gate had opened behind Ed, he smiled at Truth. "May you never call me to your domain again, Truth."

They had both grinned at each other in goodbye as Ed was pulled through his Gate for the final time.

~~~~~

Al barely left his brother's side for the whole first month after the Defeat. Which truly, Ed was okay with. After having Al live with other people under a different name, Ed didn't mind how his brother was with him six days a week. Spending each Monday with their dad instead.

A month after The Defeat, Ed confronted his brother.

~~~~~

They're sat in Ed's apartment having just finished their dinner. "Al, I love you, you know I do. But I don't want you to feel like you need to make up for lost time okay? I know you want to get to know Hohenheim properly, which I'm sure is hard to do if you spend every day except one with me."

Al stares at his brother for a second. "You won't go anywhere? Won't leave me behind?"

Immediately, Ed shakes his head in response. "I'm not going anywhere Al, I promise. And if the urge to go travelling hits me I will tell you."

For a few seconds, Al doesn't respond, but he slowly nods his head in understanding. "I *did* want to see the ruins you mentioned. The Xerxes ruins. Maybe I could ask dad to go with me?"

Ed smiles at him. "Make sure you take lots of water with you and wear white, but other than that yeah. I'm sure Hohenheim will agree to go with you."

The next day, Al and Hohenheim are setting off on a trip halfway across the desert to see the ruins of Xerxes.

~~~~~

By the second month, Ed and Roy had finished dancing around their feelings. Ed still felt a little guilty about being in a relationship with Roy some days. But Ed knew that it was just because he was used to grouping his feelings for Roy with betrayal of his partner. But those days came to an end by the end of the second month.

Meaning that by the third month after The Defeat, Ed and Roy are happy in their relationship. They began finding out new things about each other that month. Not big things. Even only a

month in to their relationship there weren't many big, important things about the other that they didn't already know, but there were plenty of small things to learn. Like how Ed enjoys coffee and always has one first thing in the morning when possible, while Roy prefers tea over coffee.

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Ed wakes up in Roy's bed at half six on a Wednesday morning. Roy is still asleep beside him, but once Ed is awake it's almost impossible for him to go back to sleep. So after stretching out his sleep stiff limbs, he climbs out of the bed. Ignoring the early morning chill that bites in to his bare foot, Ed makes his way out of the bedroom to the kitchen. Pulling down two mugs he throws some pre-ground coffee in to one of the mugs before filling the kettle and putting it on to boil. While the water boils, Ed opens the cupboard back up and rummages through it until he finds the box of ginger tea near the back of the cupboard.

Dropping a tea bag in to the empty mug, Ed then reaches for the honey. He won't add any lemon because Roy isn't a big fan of the taste of it. Once the water has boiled, Ed empties it in to the two mugs. As Ed waits for the tea to steep he adds a little bit of milk to his own drink and takes a couple of sips.

Once Ed has drank half of his coffee, he sets it down and takes out the tea bag from Roy's mug. After adding a bit of honey to the mug, Ed stirs it three times before heading out of the kitchen to go wake Roy.

Roy is starting to wake up when Ed opens the door to his bedroom, and he looks up at the door as Ed steps through. "You woke up before me for once."

Ed hums in acknowledgement and steps closer to the bed, pulling the covers off of Roy. "I made you tea as well, so you better get up quickly or it'll go cold." Roy smiles softly at Ed before climbing out of his bed.

Back in the kitchen, Ed picks his mug of coffee back up to finish it off. Roy follows after him and takes a few sips of his tea before smiling at Ed. "It's perfect, Ed. Thank you." He leans in to give Ed a quick kiss before he returns to drinking his tea.

~~~~~

Months four and five passed quickly and quietly without much happening. Al took off on another trip to visit Mei in Xing (Ed was happy to see them getting to know each other again). They weren't quite there yet, but Ed could see that they were getting closer to each other. Closer to what they were to each other last time. But other than that trip, nothing else happened. Grumman was still making the most of being Fuhrer before he handed the position to Roy upon his retirement.

~~~~~

Which brings us up to date. Six months after The Defeat, Grumman resigned at the start of the month, leaving Roy to take up the position. Six months after The Defeat and Roy has slowly but steadily been repairing relations with Ishval. Drawing up documents to legally



give them back their holy land. Allowing them to return home instead of living on the outskirts of Amestris.

Ed is currently sat in Roy's library waiting for the man to get home. They didn't *technically* live together. But Ed slept in Roy's bed more nights than not and all of his mail got delivered to the mans house. He even has a key to the door, but they've not actually talked about it yet. It just happened and it made more sense to make this Ed's address and give him a key. Tomorrow is a rare full day off for Roy. By which Ed means that Roy has promised he has no work to do tomorrow. Not that Ed is any better. He does Alchemy research in either Roy's library or Central's while Roy drafts up new documents. But both of them promised not to do any work tomorrow and just spend the day together.

Which more than likely just means that they're going to stay in Roy's house all day and read different books in the same room. But Ed's more than happy with that. Roy has only been Fuhrer for two weeks and already his life has gotten so much more hectic. They could both do with a day to actually relax.

Roy doesn't get back home until Ed has called it a night. Which should tell you something about how late Roy got home. So when Ed wakes up in the morning to Roy standing above him with a mug of tea in one hand and offering him his own mug full of coffee, he takes it from him with a smile, still half asleep. He never did get good at waking up quickly without some kind of emergency.

After taking a few sips, Ed pulls the covers back and gets up. He may not be good at waking up but Ed hates just sitting in bed once he is awake. Roy just takes a step back to let him get up. "Morning Shining."

Ed looks up at him with a roll of his eyes. "Morning Fuhrer Bastard."

Unable to help himself, Roy rolls his own eyes at Ed in response. "You don't have to insult me every time you know."

Standing up from the bed, Ed pokes Roy in the hip. "It's a term of endearment I promise. You know I'm not a fan of pet names."

Roy smirks at him. "I know, love." Ed grumbles at Roy as a small blush fights it's way on to his cheeks.

Making his way out of the bedroom Ed brushes past Roy. "Bastard." Roy just smiles at Ed as he follows him down the stairs.

Placing his mug on the counter, Ed opens up the fridge to check on their food situation. Roy is a pretty terrible cook so he never really buys proper ingredients. Ed's ended up taking on the shopping as one of his tasks because he knows Roy would half ass it.

Sitting down at the counter Roy gets comfy as Ed starts padding about the kitchen. The tap-clink, tap-clink of Ed's footsteps calming to listen to. "I just remembered something." Ed tilts his head slightly in his direction even as he reaches for the pan. "You never told me what your original moniker was. You said you'd tell me when everything was over."

Placing the pan on the hob, Ed rests his hand on the gas switch before turning fully to Roy. "It doesn't matter much to me any more." But he pads over to the counter none the less.

Tap-clink. Tap-clink.

He stands opposite Roy at the counter. "But it was Fullmetal. Because of my automail, I had a metal arm and leg last time. But like I said, it doesn't matter to me anymore. I like this one."

Roy stares at him for a second, unusually vulnerable. "Yeah?"

Ed catches on and nods his head. "Yeah. I'm happy here. I'm happy being the Shining Blood Alchemist and I'm happy with you." He leans across the counter to kiss Roy, pulling back after just a second. Roy smiles at him as he starts to lean back before pulling him back in for another kiss. "I love you. I don't love you because of him, I love you because of you."

An unusually soft smile forms on Roy's face. "I love you too, Ed. My Shining Blood."

## Chapter End Notes

- The final meeting between Ed and Truth is probably my favourite interaction between the two. My favourite type of goodbye when neither party *\*actually\** say goodbye or acknowledge that they'll miss the other but it's very obvious that that's what they're actually saying.

- The Defeat becomes an annual holiday. For the first few years it's more of a thank you for the people who were on the battlefield against Father and Ed specifically for helping them defeat him before he could finish his plan. The meaning eventually gets lost way further down the line and it becomes like Bonfire Night (or Guy Fawkes day) where people know why it exists but people celebrate it just for some fun rather than any other reason

- I cannot tell you how many times I rewrote this ending because I *\*desperately\** wanted it to end with Ed's moniker like it does in canon. I was exhausted by the time I finally managed it in a way that made sense

- Avarice ends up turning the bar in to a fully functioning business, with Eris working with with him and Sloth (who chose the name Álmos) working as a bouncer/ bodyguard

- Solaris ends up working as an on again off again member of Mustang's team. More like a freelance operative than an actual member of the military (Gulliver goes with her on her missions more often than not)

- Havoc never refers to Ed as Shining or Shining Blood again, only ever calling him Siren, to the point that people start to think that it's Ed's State Alchemist title before they're corrected

- Roy and Ed set to fixing the State Alchemist title and role. Actually making them Alchemists of the people again. \*Or\* they can focus on their research but there is an increase of people developing Alchemy to help the people rather than weaponised Alchemy
- One of the first things Ed does after his deal with Truth is over and he's settled down at Roy's is work on making his disguise Alchemy for Al more widely accessible. Using Eris to help him advertise it's uses (they actually refrain from using their own powers on their hair and eye colour for a while to help Ed out) using only Ed's array. (It catches on massively in the younger generation (and yes the gays hush they exist here unmarginalized because I say so))
- Al never gains his clap Alchemy but he does become known for having insane speed at drawing and activating arrays
- Al and Mei do eventually get together and get married again
- Ed and Roy get married two years after The Defeat (the only reason it took so long is because of how busy Roy was with being Fuhrer after they decided they wanted to get married). They were engaged for a year.
- Winry eventually reclaims her title as best automail mechanic
- Nina grows up to be a decent Alchemist but Elicia never cared for it

That should be everything I wanted to share with you (if not I'll add on to this list later)

I wanted to thank you all for reading this fic and for all your Kudos and comments. This is the longest fic I've ever written and seeing so much support from all of you and all your kind words never failed to make my day. I don't really know what else to say here except that I hope you all enjoyed this journey as much as I did and that I'm very happy to have had so many of you along for the ride!

Thank you again for reading I love and appreciate each one of you and I hope 2023 is a fantastic year for you and brings you good things

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