

All the Other Things We Do

She's never late, not like Adrien. We meet at the same spot, every time, just over the wall from the record store. Her favorite place in this part of the town.

Same dress, same purse. Perhaps the lipstick is different sometimes. I can never tell. We always begin with a small talk. *How's your day? It's a lovely evening, isn't it? The city is beautiful at this time of the year.* We talk until it gets uncomfortable, then we kiss. Just a small reminder of why we're doing this.

In my head, I always think of this as a patriotic act, it is no different from what I did in the battlefields of the Great War: crossing over the border, burning bridges, conquering my territory, and the most important of all, pledging our allegiance to the pleasure, not to the consequence.

It takes us thirty minutes to get to her place. A few seconds to get undressed. One hour for me to leave but will take decades to forget. She always puts Adrien's picture down, maybe she's still uncomfortable. I'm getting used to it by now. There is no one left to speak of what we do. And no one brave, lonely or free enough to question us.

"Same time next week?" she asks.

But I don't say anything, just a simple glance is enough. All I have to do is walk away, and she'll understand what I mean.

On my way back, I remember the things I did in war. The things I did to Adrien. And the things he did to me.

When I think of what I know about my country, I think about kissing my best friend's wife, and all the other things we do.

