

THE JOURNAL OF NXX INVESTIGATION TEAM BEHAVIORAL STUDIES

a compilation of Tears of Themis fan analyses
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All analyses arranged via order of posting from earliest to latest, cuz a lot of analyses reference previous analyses.

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FOREWORD

Hi, I'm Zak (actualbird on Tumblr, reptilianraven on AO3, and zakatao3 on Twitter) and from August 2021 to February 2022, I wrote a bunch of character analyses for the characters of Tears of Themis. I wrote so much that I decided to compile all the current analyses (aka all the ones I wrote up to this day, February 12, 2022) into this PDF as an early Valentine's Day gift to all the kind people in this fandom who have been reading my works. And also a gift to myself because this is the kind of nerdy ass bullshit I love.

The works within this compilation are exactly the same as how they were posted originally on my Tumblr, sans adding a few little edits where I saw some typos/errors. "In hindsight" side comments in the footnotes have also been added though for entertainment purposes because good lord, you downloaded this PDF file of ANALYSES, I have to make you smile somehow!

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Content Disclaimer: Many of these analyses will contain spoilers for specific cards or even future content from the CN server so like, tread with caution if you don't want spoilers. I'll warn for the spoilers in every analysis but I won't warn for stuff that's in like, the Main Story episodes that have been out for a long time or Personal Story 1 for any of the boys cuz I assume that's common knowledge by this point. Additionally, all the analyses in this compilation are my own thoughts and interpretations. This compilation should not be in any way taken as "word of god." I'm not god, I'm just some guy.

Feel free to share this compilation with whoever you want! And I hope you enjoy reading:D

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ARTEM AND LUKE'S STUBBORNNESS

original post date: August 17, 2021 ([link to post](#))

no spoilers

among the NXX boys, it's pretty clear that the "doers" are vyn and marius while the "kindadoesnoters" are artem and luke. i mean this in the sense that vyn and marius, in their own ways, do something to address their love for MC, while artem and luke try but are (at least for now, with the current two episodes they each have for their character stories) held back by a stubborn refusal to be more candid about their romantic feelings towards MC.

which is interesting to me because like. luke is pretty honest with his emotions and doesnt shy away from outright sincerity. meanwhile artem, while sincere in his own way, tends to hide from being completely upfront about what he feels. and yeeeeet, in terms of like, how bad their stubbornness is, one would think that artem would be worse, given his emotional repression. but nah. nah.

luke is worse. i mean this in the most loving way possible

see artem's stubbornness stems from like, pretty normal reasons: shyness, inexperience, and his general tendency to be more restrained with his emotions.

but luke....luke seems to make it a matter of MORALITY. it's like...

artem: it's...hard for me to be emotionally vulnerable. it doesn't come easily to me, with my personality, so i having trouble expressing romantic affection. i want to be honest, but i need to get better at it.



luke: i Cannot be honest about my romantic feelings because it would be a Cruel Act, it would be Selfish and Wrong, to Inflict myself onto this person i love with my love, to Burden Her, to Ruin Her Life. i have the capability to be honest, but i choose not to be. because that is the only way i can be Good.



it drives me bonkers^{1, 2}

¹ In the tags of the original post, I said "[...] either way I still think this is funny somehow" and somebody reblogged it referencing that tag and said "OP are you satan?" and like. Yeah. I am, a little bit.

² This is the first thing I posted that I categorized as an analysis. It's so short. Things get longer and more convoluted from here on out.

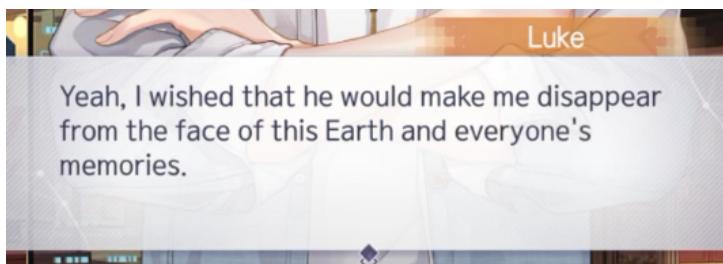
LUKE PEARCE: ON THE BURDEN OF MEMORY AND THE CONCEPT OF “BETTER IF IT NEVER HAPPENED AT ALL”

original post date: August 23, 2021 ([link to post](#))

spoilers for Luke SSR Shape Of You, Luke Personal Story Episode 2, and Luke SR Radiant Sunlight

the first time i encountered memory as a key story theme for luke was in SSR Shape Of You. to recap, luke takes MC to the starry light show festival, an event MC had avoided because of an incident in the past when luke and MC were both kids where luke went missing during the festival for such a long and worrying time that MC's parents called the police to find him. local religion says that during this celebration, the local god wanders around among the people, and if you can find them, they will grant you a wish.

later in the story, luke eventually admits that the reason he went missing all those years ago was because he was looking for the local god, and he wanted to make a wish. the wish being:

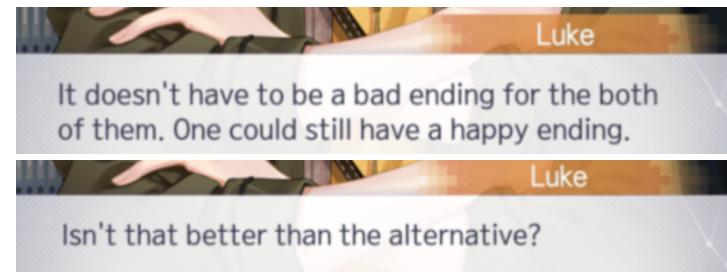


luke tells MC that he wanted to make this wish because he heard relatives talking about how he was robbing MC of attention and love from her parents. he then goes on to say that now, he thinks his old childhood wish was foolish and that he no longer wants that, that regrets ever even thinking it, and vows to personally return the love he “robbed” from MC back to her tenfold.

and yet despite the regret he expresses for his wish, it still is telling of how luke was (and subsequently how that could have possibly fed into how he currently is). children can get very emotional and wish terrible things in the heat of the moment, but emotions come from somewhere. upon hearing about how he was supposedly a burden, he did not wish to be better (to make up for his crime) or to be lesser (to give MC space and opportunity), no, he wishes to be gone. not just from the world, but from everybody's memories.¹

memory is an extension of life, an archive of all the experiences a person has gone through. to want to be gone from the memories of everybody is not just a desire to disappear now, it is a desire to have never existed in the first place.

in luke's character story 02-09, memory is brought up once again. i'll spare you the entire detailed rundown but for context, MC becomes frustrated and upset at a character erasing themselves from their lover's memory because they were terminally ill and wanted to spare their lover from the pain. she wonders out loud why it had to be like this, and luke expresses his opinions:



¹ Quick shoutout to this card (and this specific scene particularly) for being the first card in this game to make me cry REAL TEARS. This was only the beginning. Being a Luke stan is unending pain

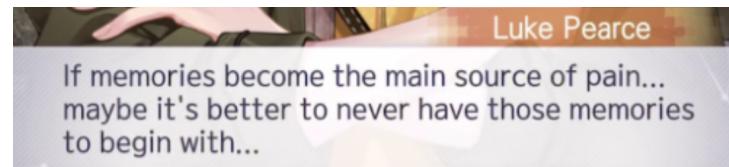
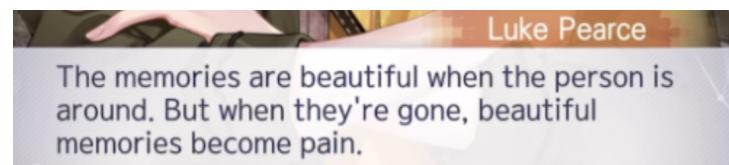
SSR Shape Of You showed that luke had once thought that him being in somebody's life (and, in turn, their memories) is a burden that he wished to be erased. in 02-09, luke sides with the terminally ill character (which, duh, because that character is basically him, that character did the same things he originally planned to do), once again (indirectly) expressing that his existence is burdensome, but adding on a very very key fact.

he says that this, living with no memory of a person who is gone, is better than the alternative, continuing to live with those memories of somebody who is no longer here.

02-09 is in the latter half of luke's episode 2 character story, but still in the middle of it all. by the end of episode 2, luke admits to aaron that he will no longer plan to leave MC's life, changing his views like in the previous story.

now last story but not least is SR Radiant Sunlight,² a story that is completely entrenched in the concept of memory. the story begins with MC showing luke her old high school and college graduation photos and through this, she learns that luke has no graduation photos of his own. to cheer him up, she organizes a graduation photoshoot for him, but they are both eventually interrupted when an old man comes into the antique store and asks luke to restore an album full of damaged photos. luke and MC, both moved by the old man, then work tirelessly to restore the photos. when they are done, they see the old man's life in snapshots: the early photos had him with a woman, his wife, with him, but at some point she vanishes from the pictures, the man remaining there on his own, a sadness apparent in his eyes.

after seeing all this, luke says some things that are pretty in line with what i've quoted before:



taking all this in to account, it's clear that luke has a certain view of memory; that his presence in the memories of others is burdensome, and that if his presence in memories cause pain, it would be better off if he were never there to begin with.

at first glance, this seems like an utilitarian mindset.

luke is viewing his life and how it intersects with other lives as something of an investment that can only have positive returns, can only result in effective and positive utility. if it doesn't, then the conclusion is that it never should have happened, for the good of everybody else.

however, utilitarian, for luke, isn't because he is dismissive of emotion. it's quite the opposite.

it is exactly because he values emotions so much that he has this view, with the caveat being that he seems to only care for emotions that aren't his. among the strongest emotions is the experience of pain, and the pain of others, especially loved ones, is so important to luke that he wants to erase it completely.

² SR Radiant Sunlight, the ONLY NON LIMITED LUKE SR THAT HAS YET TO COME HOME. Luke, why do you make loving you so painful. I've got three Vyn SRs at full 5 stars and then some. Come home, Luke SR Radiant Sunlight. I've been yearning for so long...

it's almost paradoxical. the emotions of other people matters so much to luke that, however unintentionally, he has the desire to control and change them. luke surrounds himself with the so called rationality of his views, but in actuality, theres something almost childish about it all. childish in the sense that it's immature, to be against the agency of others to experience their pain, but childish also in the sense that it's...fragile. it stems from a place not of malice, but of the frail and young want to be good.

and that's it. luke wants to be good. and he's like this because he's scared he won't be.

i know this is all very depressing, but there is hope.

in all the instances i quoted, in every single instance where luke expresses this kind of sentiment, MC is there immediately disagreeing with him. she pushes against his logic and challenges how he thinks, urging him to see the other side to all this. the side that says, yes, life hurts, memory hurts, but that doesnt mean they shouldnt exist. it means that we need to be more honest, more appreciative, and cherish the present before it becomes the past.

for MC, it is clear. the existence of pain is not synonymous to throwing everything in the trash.

it is a call to live better.

and if there's something that luke values more than anything else, more than his own views and beliefs, more than even his fear, it's her.

THIS DUDE NEEDS TO GET SOME SELF-VALUE



AND ALSO THERAPY, PLS

LUKE PEARCE: HE'S AN ENNEAGRAM TYPE 2 WITH A TWIST

original post date: August 25, 2021 ([link to post](#))

no spoilers

let me preface this with the disclaimer that all kinds of personality typology should be taken with a grain of salt because all humans are multifaceted and different and there's no true way to categorize every single one of them. however, it is immense fun to slap some labels onto characters in an effort to understand them more. additionally, this is all just my own personal interpretation and opinion and should in no way be taken as the word of god.

with that outta the way, i've had luke pearce down as an enneagram type 2 ever since the beginning. mostly because my litmus test for how to choose an enneagram type for a character is to listen to every single one of Sleeping At Last's enneagram songs and seeing which clicks the most, and man. Two by Sleeping At Last¹ is the most luke pearce song out there. just look at the lyrics

Like a force to be reckoned with
A mighty ocean or a gentle kiss
I will love you with every single thing I have
Like a tidal wave, I'll make a mess
Or calm waters, if that serves you best
I will love you without any strings attached

It's okay if you can't catch your breath
You can take the oxygen straight out of my own chest

I know exactly how the rule goes
Put my mask on first
No, I don't want to talk about myself

Tell me where it hurts
I just want to build you up, build you up
'Til you're good as new
And maybe one day I will get around to fixing myself too

I don't even know where to start
Already tired of trying to recall when it all fell apart
I just want to love you, to love you, to love you well
I just want to learn how, somehow, to be loved myself

which is just yeah, that's him!!! but upon further reading, i got even more interested. type twos, according to the Enneagram Institute website, are described "empathetic, sincere, and warm-hearted. They are friendly, generous, and self-sacrificing, but can also be sentimental, flattering, and people-pleasing." i agreed, this fit with how i see luke. and then i read that this description stems from twos' basic desire: to be loved.

which immediately made me tilt my head and go hmm...that's not quite right, for luke.

because yes, luke does show his desire to be loved, but if i had to word it differently according to my own interpretation of him.

i would put it this way instead: luke's basic desire is to be good.

¹ By the way, I completely believe that best and most accurate personality test is actually listening to all of Sleeping At Last's enneagram songs and seeing which one makes you cry because it hit so close to home. For me, it was Five, and yep, the official test designated me as a Type 5. The song, Five, made me fucking bawl.

i think this because to be “loved” implies some kind of want from another, but luke seems to do things regardless of what he gets in return. love is a great huge plus, but it seems he is happy contribute in positive ways no matter what.

this changes some things, about the typical description of type twos, especially concerning how twos become when they veer into the unhealthy territory. unhealthy twos have the tendency to want to oppressively establish themselves more in other peoples lives, to make themselves be important and needed. they want to be loved, and so they have to be there.

when luke is at his lowest though, when he's hopeless and resigned, he does not focus on his presence. instead, he focuses on his absence.

in the end of luke's ep1 character story, luke writes the following lines in his diary:

"I know I can't be with you until the end of your days. That's why I held back the urge to come see you."

"Yet, as soon as I saw your smile, I faltered."

"I want to stay by your side for as long as possible."

"But I can't be so selfish. I won't scar you for life just for my momentary happiness."

"I will end this thing between Sphynx and me, and then bid farewell to you."

from this, it's clear to see why he's thinking about his absence. due to his terminal (for now, mhy, i'm begging you to give this dude a cure, PLEASE) illness giving him a limited lifespan, he's come to the conclusion that the inevitable heartbreak he will cause overrules whatever he can do with the time he has left.

presence can cause being loved, but that's not luke's core desire. he wants to be good, and, when he's at his lowest, he thinks that his absence can do a better good than his presence.

this causes a domino effect of luke pearce's bad coping mechanisms, most interesting to me being his 1) desire to hide (which includes dishonesty and secrecy, which is just rich from luke “tell me everything, don't keep things from me!” pearce, talk about a hypocrite) and 2) desire to leave.

luke is middling in terms of the healthiness scale of being a two, in my opinion. his greatest challenge, emotionally, will be to go against those bad habits he has.

to be honest.

to stay.

he may not realize it yet, but those two things can do much more good than he thinks.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ARTEM AND LUKE'S SELF FLAGELLATION

original post date: August 26, 2021 ([link to post](#))

no spoilers

Anonymous¹ asked:

u rly got me thinking abt luke and artems two distinct brands of self-flagellation. luke will take something that isn't remotely his fault (his own d****) and routinely punish himself for how its going to affect other people, meanwhile artem is out here like 'I Can't Have Nice Things Because God Hates Me, Thats Fine- Oh Look A Nice Thing' and then miss when he reaches out to grab it and feel both that thats completely his fault and also that it was inevitable. its almost like they're both a study in futility and the effort or lack thereof hmm AM I GONNA WRITE AN ESSAY ABOUT OTOME GACHA??? PLEASE I HAVEN'T BEEN TO SCHOOL IN FIVE YEARS!!

My response:

kJBIAKJFKSJFKASKFASJ ANON THIS BRINGS ME SO MUCH JOY. i don't mean to enable you, if to write this essay is not what you want, but, if it IS WHAT YOU WANT. then i definitely have some thoughts

luke pearce's self flagellation is something i see coming from a Righteous kind of shtick. righteous in terms of virtue and good and moral rightness. i've written several luke character studies that delve deeper into this, but long story short, i think luke's whole thing is the desire to be Good For Others. so anything he perceives going against Good For Others is thus "bad". luke punishes himself due to his belief that his wants/actions/thoughts/etc. go against the Good he wants for other people

artem wing's self flagellation is something i see coming from his entire life being built upon success and hard work. his whole deal is that he put in the effort to get the rewards he has in his life, so he comes to the conclusion that he can get a reward Only When He Has Earned It. this plus his kinda sad image of himself (in many card stories he expresses that he thinks himself boring and not fun to be around) pluuuuus the fact that he's a frigging perfectionist = him thinking that he has not done the Cool Fun Guy work to merit getting the rewards a Cool Fun Guy gets (i.e. friends, company, love). artem punishes himself because thinks he hasn't (and thanks to his self esteem, will have immense trouble ever believing otherwise) reached the standard he has set for himself for when he will allow that reward

in simpler terms:

luke pearce looks at himself and his needs and goes "NO! NO DESIRES! YOU ARE SELFISH, GREEDY, BAD!"

artem wing looks at himself and his needs and goes "NO! NO DESIRES! YOU HAVEN'T EARNED IT, UNDESERVING, UNWORTHY!"

but that's just my interpretation kjabfjksfka

¹ FOR CONTEXT (cuz I just realized how jarring it is that this ask mentions dicks, HAHA): this ask was sent to my Tumblr while I was writing an Artem/MC smutfic where Artem is just so, so guilty about finding MC hot. Which I also did with Luke in a Luke/MC smutfic I wrote before the Artem/MC one. Guilt seeps into so much of my writing, it's the lapsed Catholicism in me, my bad.

VYN RICHTER: A THEORY ON CONTROL

original post date: September 4, 2021 ([link to post](#))
spoilers for the Mysteries of the Lost Gold event

im thinking about vyn richter...which is a surprise to me because ive been putting him on the back burner the most in terms of playing his stories (he jus didnt interest me at first, i haven't played a single bit of his character story) but thanks to lost gold and 5.3 i'm getting to see more of him and...

this is Not a character analysis¹ (bc as i said i don't know much of him yet) it's more of a character hypothesis/theory. because it's fascinating to me that in almost every situation, vyn has a very strong tendency to, more often than not, leverage himself into a position of control.

in contrast to luke who tends to make himself a protector/shield or an attacker/sword, marius who tends to put up facades/masks that best fits to get what he needs/wants, and artem who tends to go through situations using facts/logic/information to move forward. (wait, actually, all these statements of mine deserve a post of their own explaining further, omg, these are Just My Opinions but i did come to these conclusions for a reason. BUT I DIGRESS, BACK ON TOPIC).

i'm reminded of the scenes in main story 5.3: vyn talking to hugh and using his knowledge to put hugh at a disadvantage, vyn talking to luke and shifting the accountability of the cryptex to luke so that vyn himself is not responsible for any consequences. and then here in the lost gold event, his o2 personal story

route, vyn is again very upfront against zachary clarke, no bullshit, using his expertise to shift control to himself.

and then i realize that, based on what ive seen thus far, this control seeps into so many things he does. investigation, interrogation, normal ass conversations, and even flirting sometimes lol. vyn's first instinct seems to be to maneuver the situation so that he can sway where things go. there are some negative connotations to wanting control, but it's obviously not inherently bad. like all character traits, the strengths and weaknesses of it depend on the scene in which character trait is deployed in.

this is hugely fascinating to me and has interested me enough to make me (finally) go through his card stories and character story bc i want to know mooooore. but also it is fascinating to me because

this behavior from vyn richter reminds me of other characters ive seen in other medias ive been into in the past: characters who have to be in control

and the thing about those characters is that, once they're broken open like a geode, what's inside is usuaaally (not always, but it's tasty to me when it does happen) a very lasting instance of that character not being in control. powerless and helpless, that instance leaves such an impression on them, resulting in the current behavior.

¹ Okay, while I said here that this isn't a character analysis, this post did end up informing a lot of my future actual analyses (once I had a deeper understanding of Vyn) and I referenced it so much to the point that it's gotta be here for context skjdbfkjsdkgsd

i reaaaally wanna learn more about vyn's backstory now, sir, u have me Hooked Now. i don't really care if that last paragraph's theory is going to be proven right or wrong because either of those options is fun to me in their own special way. just

//shakes vyn richter vigorously. tell me. tell me everything.

THIS ANALYSIS HAD AN ANNOYING TINY BIT THAT NEEDED ANOTHER PAGE SO FOR THE EMPTY SPACE HERE, I'LL JUST PUT A VYN

MAN, HE KNOWS HE'S HOT.



I'M STUDYING HIM LIKE A BUG UNDER A MICROSCOPE AS REVENGE

LUKE PEARCE: LOVE AS AN EXCUSE

original post date: September 5, 2021¹ ([link to post](#))
spoilers for the Mysteries of the Lost Gold event

i am never not thinking about luke pearce but the lost gold event (slight spoilers for that event in this post!!!) has really just hammered in my interpretation of a key aspect i have of him

that his love and care for MC sometimes meshes too well with the disregard he has over his own life

luke pearce who immediately told MC not to go with him in the island investigation, only allowing her to come along when she promised to put her life above his, when he made her promise that if he was in danger, she would focus on herself and not him.

luke pearce who had the worrying foresight to even bring up the possibility that he may be in danger—that worst case scenarios may happen—partly because his job is dangerous, but also because, in a sense, he thinks he's a walking worst case scenario himself.

luke pearce who in so many instances makes it so clear that he thinks himself either a burden or a danger or an overall inevitable negative.

when i say his love meshes “too well” i mean it in the sense that his love for MC sometimes gives luke the excuse to treat himself, to see himself like this. he gets to make her happy while at the same time continuing to establish his flawed views. two birds, one stone.

i love luke/MC soooo much, but for them to truly

work among many other things, the both of them would have to accept the other as of equal importance, not putting the self lower. in other words, luke needs to get his head out of his ass. luke has to stop putting him and MC at odds, as if only one of them can be the winner here, and that he's planning for the winner to be her. that's not how a good relationship works, dude. he has to care about himself along with her. bc in a relationship, i think, there shouldnt be one person above the other.

it should be them side by side.

that's a much stronger kind of love and devotion, imo. one that allows a little bit of fear and uncertainty, yes, but in turn, allows something i think is beautiful:

the brave choice, in spite of fear and uncertainty, to trust and have faith.

¹ September was such a wild month. I wrote a whole fanfic consisting of in between scenes of the Lost Gold event ("filler episodes of the lost gold" on AO3) and busting out an analysis regularly. The only thing that stopped this deranged train of constant writing and posting was getting COVID at the tail end of the month, ksjbfbjksgsa

MARIUS VON HAGEN: FACADE VS. SINCERITY, HARSH TRUTHS VS. PERSISTING HOPE

original post date: September 6, 2021 ([link to post](#))

spoilers for the Mysteries of the Lost Gold event and also Marius' Personal Story Ep 2

man i am Thinking about Marius von Hagen.

i've played through a bunch of his card stories and am one bit away from finishing his chara story ep2 and i'm farthest in his lost gold route and just. i'm kind of obsessed now about the recurring theme of facade vs. sincerity and harsh truths vs. persisting hope.

facade vs. sincerity is the first theme i picked up on, since it's pretty obvious. thanks to his status and background, he constantly has an Image Of Himself to keep up and establish. in investigations, he tends to put on masks and acts the exact way he needs to to get people to slip up. here, facade and sincerity are at odds.

but then also marius casually has the tendency to "act" a certain way to get things like praise and reassurance, which could arguably interpreted as him using facades (which in this situation i think is actually him just saying they're facades, they're actually sincere, but he hides that, says it's just an act) to acquire the deep seated sincerity he wishes. here, facade is a medium by which to acquire sincerity from others.

let's swerve now to harsh truths vs. persisting hope. i saw this first in his chara story ep2 where he had that conversation with that forger painter dude (i forgot his name, sorry). marius had said to that dude something along the lines of like "hey don't you believe in art, i think you do, deep down."

and that dude laughed at him, called marius naive, said that art in this world is about money because of the harsh realities of capitalism (mood lol). the story then goes onto reveal that marius was right, actually, that dude did believe in art, did have genuine emotionally-driven reasons for doing what he did. here, the persisting hope trumps the harsh truths.

but then in the lost gold event, marius route 02-06, his hope gets himself in danger. he tries to talk bryce out of his search for immortality, he has hope in bryce that he will change. when marius realizes he can't stop bryce, marius still appeals for bryce to be good and honest and answer his questions about the overarching case. bryce responds by pulling out a fucking knife, presumably to stab and kill marius. here, the persisting hope is attacked by the harsh truths.

but facade vs. sincerity and harsh truths vs. persisting hope aren't two themes in a vacuum. they converge through marius' life, through his actions, through his personality.

like, why does marius crave sincerity? because he has hope. why does marius employ facades? because harsh truths are painful. sincerity is a truth, but truths to marius can be scary. a facade is a wall he ultimately puts up to protect himself in case his hope is wrong.

these fascinating intersections make it so apparent that marius is the youngest.¹

¹ I'm OLDER THAN HIM. Like, not just cuz the game is set in 2030. Even if I currently was in 2030, I'm a year older than him. As someone who's been active in fandom since 11 years old, it's a fuckin' trip now being older than some of the fictional characters I'm obsessed with, HAHA.

he's the youngest in the team, he's the youngest in his family. im not saying that hope and fear are exclusively young traits, but that it does fit in with how his life has gone so far.

marius was a kid with honest dreams he was allowed to pursue with a father and brother who supported him. then his older brother goes missing. then he's thrust into a world of corporate snakes and responsibility. then he's a young guy who was forced to grow up very quickly under the weight of the circumstances he's in. when that happens to somebody, when they have to grow up in such a short time, they put up walls, they protect themselves, because the light inside of them yearns for something they're not sure they can get anymore.

facades, sincerity, harsh truths, persisting hope, all of that comes together in a hodgepodge, creating a character that, at his core, just wants to be okay

maybe marius von hagen's basic fear is this: he doesn't want to get hurt.²

SMIRK ALL YOU WANT, ASSHOLE (AFFECTIONATE)



I'M ONTO YOU

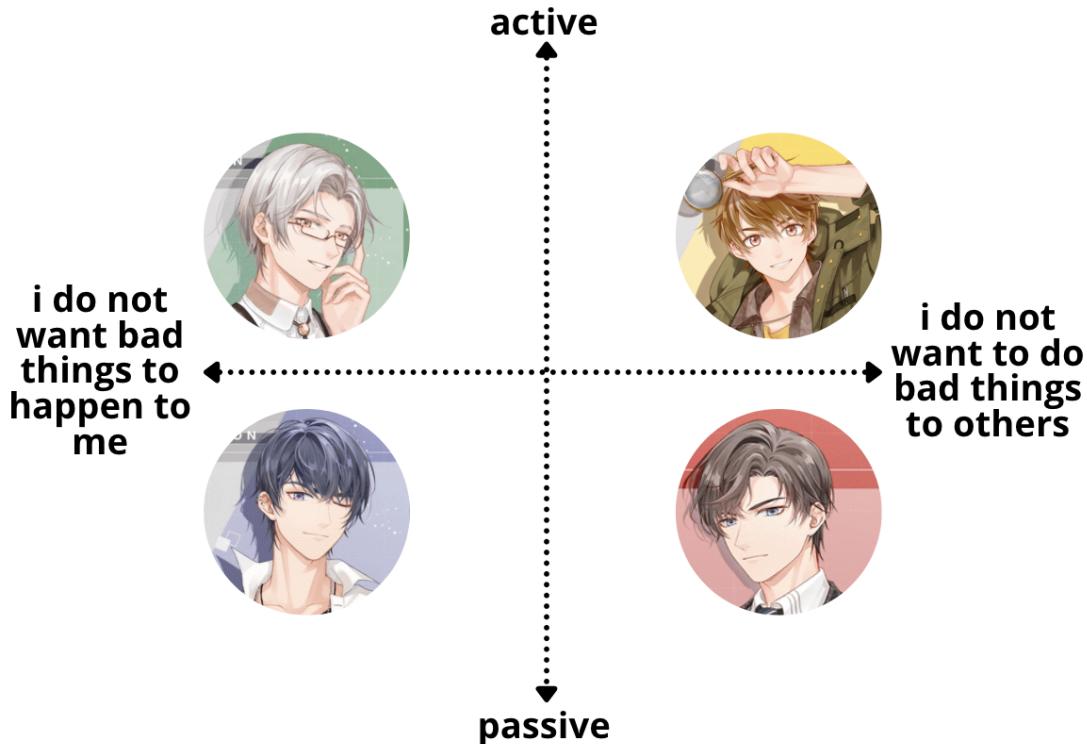
² This is also, I realize, VERY ALIGNED with the enneagram type I've pegged Marius as, Type 7: The Enthusiast. "Sevens are extroverted, optimistic, versatile, and spontaneous." and "On a very deep level, Sevens do not feel that they can find what they really want in life" and "Key Motivations: [...] to avoid and discharge pain." All from enneagraminstitute.com

THE NXX BOYS: "BAD THINGS"

original post date: September 11, 2021 ([link to post](#))

vague unspecific spoilers for stories all around

okay so ive made a chart ¹ and it's gonna look like A Lot but i swear i can explain myself fully if you read to the end



this chart is visualizing what each nxx boys' tendencies, behaviors, and actions seem to lead back to.

on the left side, we have vyn and marius.

i havent played too many of vyn's stories, but thanks to some discussion with my friend kathleen (miladymiss on tumblr), somebody who HAS played a bunch of vyn's stories, ive come to the vague conclusion that vyn has this general perception and

belief that the world is cruel. he has an expectation that everybody has some kind of ulterior motive, that people will cast out those who are not in accordance with the mainstream, that people will hurt others. he does not want bad things to happen to him mostly because he expects that bad things will happen. to counter this, he leverages himself into a place of control more often than not (see prev analysis "vyn richter: a theory on control" on page 11)

marius on the other hand seems be the opposite in

¹ When I made this chart I showed it to my younger sibling and they said something along the lines of "Holy shit. What the fuck." I know. Believe me, I know.

in the sense that it's actually his hope that people can/will be good that gets him into hot water. he employs facades and acts to protect himself from bad things happening to him (see previous analysis “marius von hagen: facade vs. sincerity, harsh truths vs. persisting hope” on page 14), because lol that actually has already happened a bunch, and yet he still has some a belief that people can change, something that makes him go to many lengths to try and prove. if vyn expects that bad things will happen, marius does too, but marius, deep down, still wants to be wrong about that. to counter the danger his hope may cause, he puts up walls to mask his sincerity and true self.

vyn actively puts himself in control so that bad things do not happen to him. marius passively protects himself with his masks so that if bad things do happen to him, he'll get out of it somewhat unscathed (or at least that's what he hopes, rip king)². vyn is taking charge while marius is taking precautions.

but i want to immediately nix the thought of “i do not want bad things happening to me” being a purely selfish desire, because this desire, when pushed by friendship and/or love for another person, branches out into “i do not want bad things happening to you.” that's pretty damn selfless! it's protective! vyn and marius caring about another person would be them thinking something along the lines of “don't be too trusting, that will only get you hurt.”

now on the right side, we've got luke and artem

let me go to artem first (because i want to save my ultimate fave for last HAHA). the thing about artem and the “bad things” he doesn't want to do is that it manifests in the form of failure. ive said in a bunch of posts (can't link them bc they're scattered over several posts hhh) that my vague conclusion on artem is that he holds himself to a merciless and meticulous

standard because his life has been all about earning things, and the only way to earn things (sometimes things that do not need to be earned, like...happiness, artem, u good???), is to work tirelessly for those things. artem is scared of being underserving, and if he underserving, if he fails, he is committing a sort of passive “bad thing” to those around him.

luke, on the other hand, is in my opinion, frigging nuts. ive written an analysis on how luke perceives his existence and effect on other people's lives as an inevitable negative (see previous analysis “luke pearce: on the burden of memory and the concept of “better if it never happened at all”” on page 5). in this analysis, there is no “if i fail,” like artem. to luke, he thinks he's already done it. and it's not that he's failed, it's that he's a bad thing completely (or at least a bad thing waiting to happen, and for him, that's fucking close enough). luke is both simultaneously scared of not being good and resigned that he is not good. he thus thinks that almost all of his desires are selfish and/or greedy somehow, because hey, im bad, why do i get to even want the rewards of being loved, that's not right! to luke, he is actively committing a “bad thing” to those around him at every given moment of his current life.

artem passively stops himself from being a bad thing by repressing aspects of himself he thinks to be faulty and/or not perfect (most of the time, emotions) to protect those around him. luke actively stops himself from being bad thing by putting the lives/desires of others above his own life/desires as some kind of penance for the people around him.

now i want to immediately nix the thought that “i do not want to do bad things to others” as a purely selfish desire. it looks like that at first, but when this concept is pushed by friendship/love onto another person, it branches out into “i do not want to do bad

² Recently, I've been thinking about Marius' NXX Codename, King, in terms of chess. The most important piece, yes, but also the most vulnerable one. Protected only by the strategy of other pieces.

things to you." which, sure, is noble, but is also very focused on the self, on wanting to control the self and self's effect on other people's lives, even parts that should not be controlled like other people's emotions or perception.

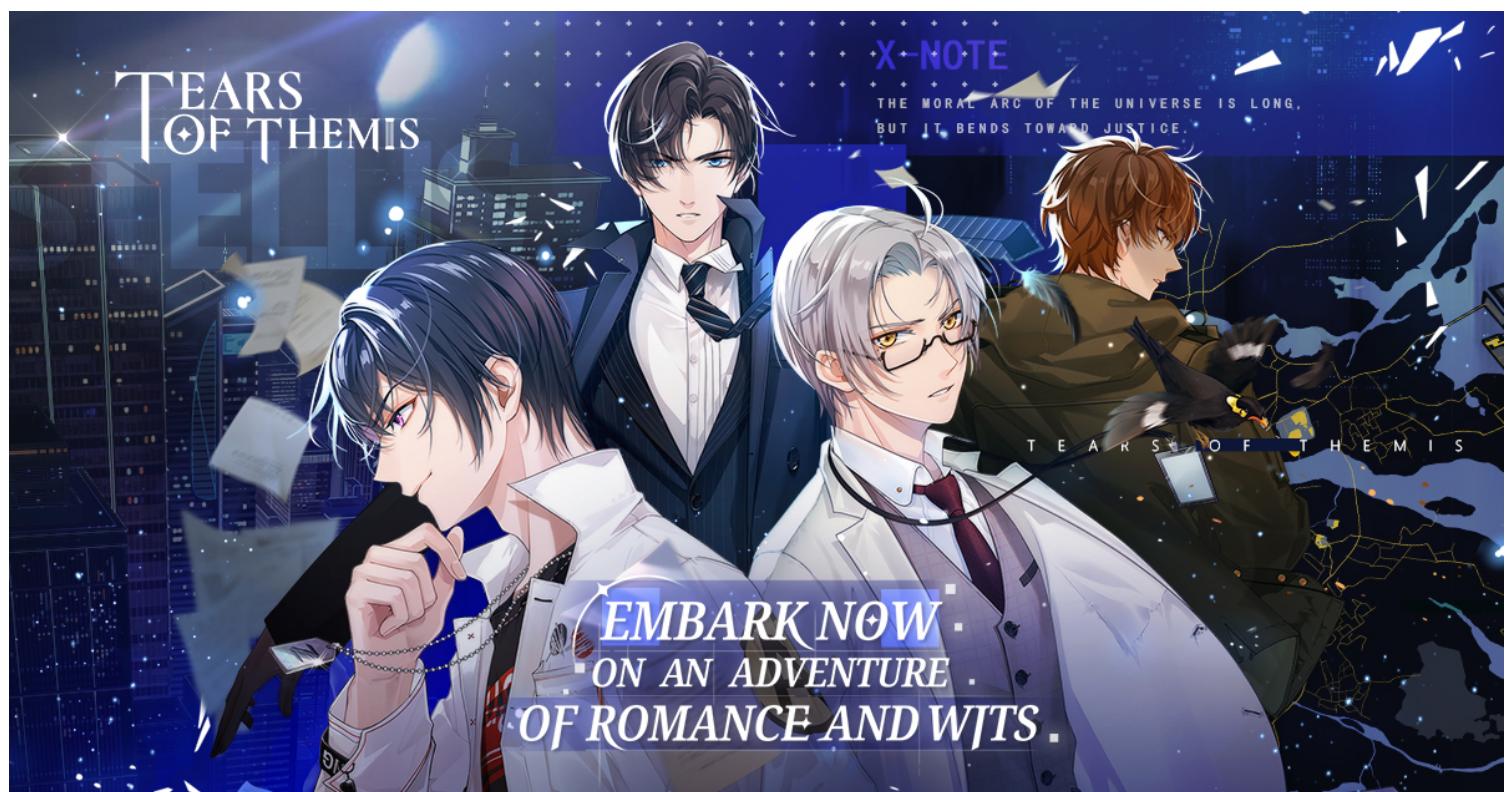
vyn and marius are worried about the threats from the outside while artem and luke are worried about the threats coming from themselves. all of them have their specific ways of dealing with this worry. all of them have their pros and cons, their strengths and weaknesses, but damn.

doesn't it feel great to see it all compared and contrasted on a chart???³

**ANOTHER BLANK SPACE HERE, SO
HERE'S MY OLDER SISTER'S CAT**



"ROMANCE AND WITS" THEY SAID.



"MY PLAYGROUND OF OVERTHINKING" I REPLIED

³ Somebody on Tumblr reblogged this post and accused me of being a Psychology major in their tags. I found this hilarious because 1) I'm not and 2) I nearly failed my Intro to Psychology class in college. I was a Creative Writing major, which, on some points, is much more pretentious than psychology.

MARIUS VON HAGEN: HE'S ALWAYS BEEN IN GIANN'S SHADOW

original post date: October 9, 2021 ([link to post](#))

spoilers from the CN server in regards to what Austin von Hagen looks like

Anonymous¹ asked:

Marius be like "I'm the hottest out of all the nxx bitches" but are you the hottest in your family? Check mate
My response:

KJBDFBKJSD, ANON??? TODAY YOU CHOSE VIOLENCE AGAINST MARIUS VON HAGEN COMPLETELY UNPROVOKED, IM LOSING MY MIND!!!

i (predictably) want to analyze² this for too many words than is strictly necessary tho so LET'S TAKE A VISUAL LOOK AT THE VON HAGEN FAMILY!!!



hey, quick question, why is this family so good looking? i know the answer, it's because of genes, but good LORD. gonna skip over marius because we all know hes hot but HEYYYYY, AUSTIN VON HAGEN, ARE YOU LIKE....FREE THIS FRIDAY NIGHT? i jest of course but he looks great (sidenote: his sprite in game is actually shorter than marius,³ so the tall genes must have come from dead mom, rip, but man, i wanna see mrs. von hagen, tall waman, sign me UP). but like, looking at how attractive marius is due to how elegantly beautiful austin is,

¹ FOR CONTEXT: This ask was sent after I answered another ask on Tumblr that had Marius saying "Everybody here knows I'm the hottest one in the team" or something like that.

² LMAO IM SO SORRY that this post begins with deranged thirst about the von Hagens and also it's gonna turn into silly HCs for a bit but a swear, there's analysis eventually. Stay with me, here.

³ THIS IS FALSE?? I only later realized and I don't know why I misremembered Austin's height to be shorter omg

giann must look SO GOOD.

i already [screamed about how i think giann would look like in this post](#)⁴ so i'll move on to how the other nxx bitches, as youve dubbed them, react to how giann looks like!!!

vyn has reacted long ago, marius hasn't met vyn yet when vyn meets giann. vyn and giann founded the Giannovyn Research Center together (guys you have GOT to get better naming skills, u two rlly just put ur names together, it's ridiculous) so vyn knew giann!! and he probs found giann attractive but in a passing way since they were both working on setting up a mental health center together.

artem also got to meet giann at some point. since neil and giann were the original members of the nxx and neil was very very close with artem before he went missing, i figure neil introduced the two. i dont think artem found giann hot because artem only finds people hot once he's drunkenly expressed his deepest insecurities to them, or something.

LUKE AND MC HOWEVER....

okay luke and MC maybe passingly know what giann looks like since giann was like, a Huge figure in society. but they saw him through skimmed news articles or magazines here and there, they never really looked. so when the day giann (and neil, no nxx bitch left behind!!) is safely found from wherever the fuck they went missing to, after the initial YAY UR BACK vibes, luke and MC are like

luke: your older brother is hot

MC: yeah hes very good looking

marius, covering his ears: I DONT WANT TO HEAR THIS ABOUT MY GODDAMN BROTHER, GUYS, WHAT THE HELL?????

but it's all very playful lol. after a few jokes about it, everybody moves on.

however

if marius is in a relationship (and choose whichever ship you fancy, MC, one of the nxx boys, full polycule, i support it all) and the other party/parties of the relationship express this joking appreciation of giann...

something very dark and afraid hisses in marius' heart

marius is the youngest child. when he was growing up, giann always called marius his "baby brother" which makes sense given that theyre 10 years apart but also. youngest child syndrome is fascinating. giann was the one who took on the business, he was one of the people who started the nxx, he was the one who did things big and meaningful and marius, ever since he was a kid, always felt as if he was in his older brother's shadow.

giann was never bad, of course. he always treated marius well, if a little bit protective in shithead-y (a von hagen trait i assume is consistent thru them all) way. he never did anything to make marius feel inferior. but marius couldnt help but feel that he wasnt good enough. that he'll always be a step behind giann and he'll never, ever be able to catch up

hes never been great. and he never will be.

marius tries to not let it show. he hides his fear under overdramatic annoyance, his own dumb jokes,

⁴ I really hope we get to see Giann von Hagen in full sprite glory. Like, ToT can kill him off, fine, I'll be devastated, but fine. But only AS LONG AS THEY SHOW US WHAT HE FRIGGING LOOKS LIKE.

but when you're in a relationship, whatever you feel will always be known somehow.

marius doesn't know what's worse: the fact he feels like this, the fact he thinks he doesn't have the right to want assurance for this, or the fact that

all of this makes him feel so young

he wonders, is he ever going to grow up?

MARIUS @ THIS ANALYSIS, MAYBE



HEY, MARIUS, YOU COPING ALRIGHT WITH CONSTANT COMPARISON HAUNTING YOUR LIFE?



THE NXX TEAM: BIOLOGICAL FAMILY AND FOUND FAMILY

original post date: October 11, 2021 ([link to post](#))

spoilers for character backstories within and i can no longer remember if it's in future CN server or global server

so the biological families (aka families related by blood) of everybody in the nxx investigation team are hugely fascinating to me. this is because each of their biological families creates a character that would LOVE to have the found family (aka people who are not biologically related coming to form very close bonds with each other) trope

lemme go thru everybody one by one



marius is the most obvious. the von hagen family isn't just a huge presence in society but a huge presence in his life. hes never just been marius hes always been marius von hagen. his family has a history and thanks to circumstances (cough, giann just blooming off of the face of the earth, cant wait to see u, giann!!!) a huge responsibility has been put on marius' shoulders to continue what the family does whether he likes it or not. in some card stories, it is implied that marius is seen by others as the weakest link in the von hagen

family. he's a brat, he's a kid, he doesn't know what he's doing. marius is bombarded with responsibility and people doubting if he can follow through.



artem is a bit more lowkey than marius but his biological family also has a history. both his parents are also renowned lawyers and if im not mistaken, it was mentioned somewhere that those parents had Huge Expectations for him in terms of success and shit. his responsibility to carry on the family history is more muted than marius' but also more consistent, if that makes sense? marius had to be a von hagen only after giann disappeared while artem had to be a wing since he was a kid. the responsibility on artem's shoulders is both something that was placed onto him and something he perpetuates himself.¹

the above two are examples of biological families with a legacy, so to speak. it's clear that marius and artem, despite their family, worked hard independently to be

¹ Can I just say "mood"? kJBFGKS. Like, listen, as somebody from a family of teachers and legacies in various academia spheres, I FEEL U, ARTEM.

the competent people they are today. their success is because of them. but one of the reasons why they had to go to do that is partly because they know that they dont exist in a vaccuum. they arent just their own person. they are a member of their last name's legacy.

(which, sidenote: marius and artem's family shit is, among the boys, the most glaringly culturally asian² to me, HAHA. ofc i cant speak for all asians, but personally as a south east asian, the attitude of "carrying on the family legacy" and "you are not just you, you are your biological family" is just. ive seen those types of families, ive met them. hell, im IN ONE. moving on.)



vyn is a bit trickier. SPOILERS AHEAD, but vyn is the son of a duke, lol. hes a fuckin royal blood. absolute hilarity to me but he obviously hated it and made a choice to actively leave it. he did not erase his biological family history, he just skedaddled from it. noped himself out of there and then established himself as an individual independent from his royal bloodline. the background of his family is hugely still apparent in him but he doesnt rely on them and doesnt do anything for them as well. this is his life now, he seems to be saying. fuck off, he says as well, elegantly.



luke is depressing, but whats new. his biological family was ripped away from him the moment his parents died and he became an orphan. in a literal sense, he has no more blood history. theres no legacy, theres no responsibility, theres no past Pearce to call on. of course, he did get taken in by MC's family and that did come with its own set of history and legacy, but it's a bit different because he was adopted (and bc MC's fam history is...well, thats in the next paragraph). but yeah, luke doesnt have a biological history.



and lastly, MC. MC's family (aside from growing up with luke) is largely left up to interpretation. her parents were there during childhood and at some point disappeared for a "secret government research" which

² Nobody asked, but here are my personal nationality HCs for the team that I'll never write into a fanfic cuz it'd be a nightmare. Artem is Stellan-Japanese, Marius is Stellan-Chinese, Luke is Stellan-Some Kind Of Asian Diaspora (I haven't figured it out yet), MC is Stellan-Filipino (I can project, as a treat), and Vyn is Naturalized Stellan-Svartish (which would be ToT European). I wanted to tell you this because it's so funny to me all the time that Vyn is the only white dude on the team, in my mind. Play that funky psychology, white boyyyyyyy!!!

lord, i hope that gets addressed at some point jKBJJSKF. but me has some kind of biological history. we just dont get to see it.

vyn, luke, and MC have biological family situations that are more focused on the Lack Of It. vyn left, luke lost, and MC just has [REDACTED] over hers. they all, like marius and artem, establish themselves independently and work hard to be who they are now but theres less of a looming shadow of family legacy over them.

so whats this about found family?

i love nxx investigation team found family. ever since i started playing this game, i wanted all five of these idiots to come and love each other one way or another. but looking at all of their biological families, it makes me even happier because now i realize that these five idiots would very much enjoy a found family.

heres the thing (among many things) about found family that sets itself out from biological family: it's a blank slate that can only be written on by the members of the unit.

biological family, well, that's been there before you were even born. you can write the future, but the past is set in stone. you can make choices on how to deal with it but you can't change what has already happened. found family is a collaborative effort of a new history. a new chapter. one where everybody present has not only the choice but the power to make whatever this means whatever they want it to mean.

to metaphorize: biological family does not dictate who you are but their fingerprints, so to speak, will always be on you. found family also does not dictate who you are, but for once, there's no fingerprints of the past.

it's new and you've got a say somehow in how the love of it can play out.

i feel like all of them need this.³

a blank page that can be built from the bottom up. no legacies or histories or lacks or whatever. just like

a bunch of people stumbling into the nxx hq and eventually, one by one, saying to themselves "yeah, i'm gonna ride or die for these idiots."

and then setting forth to write their story together.

OTOME, MHY SAID



FOUND FAM TIME, I SCREECHED

³ I also need this ("this" being the NXX Investigation Team as found family, not a found family for myself, LMAO)

MARIUS VON HAGEN: INFERIORITY COMPLEX AND YOUNGEST CHILD SYNDROME

original post date: October 23, 2021 ([link to post](#))

spoilers for Marius SSR Fabulous Feast and other marius related spoilers but i cant remember if i got that from global server content or CN server

steal-the-stars-from-the-sky asked:

okay i could have sworn i saw it on your blog (or maybe it was a wishful fever dream?) but i really thought you said that in your pool of fic ideas you had a :: marius fic where he has like a competence thing?? or maybe feels incompetent compared to the other nxx members?? and whether thats in your idea pool or not:: i would . love to see either idea . BUT ALSO take care of yourself you write so much so consistently:: which is Wow (positive)

My response:

hello!!! okay so i must preface this with the fact i am SO FORGETFUL omg. when i read this i was like “.....i have no memory of this¹ idea” so i dug thru my blog and found 2 things i THINK you might be pertaining to?

theres [this short answer i wrote from a few days ago talking about how marius finds the competence of the other nxx team members INCREDIBLY HOT](#), and then theres [my analysis on marius von hagen being scared that he'll always be in his older brother's \(giann\) shadow](#) (which isnt Really competence/incompetence but it's Very Related, imo)

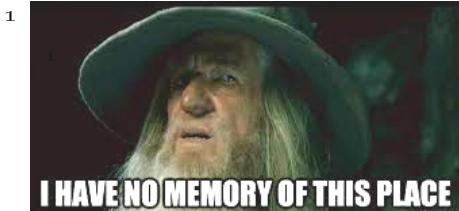
THAT BEING SAID, THANK U FOR THIS ASK (and also ur kind words, yes i will take care of myself, hehe) BC I HAVE BEEN WANTING TO TALK MORE

ABOUT marius von hagen's inferiority complex + youngest child syndrome = dude...r u ok...

an inferiority complex is, at its simplest, the prolonged/constant state of feeling inadequate in comparison to other people. i posit that marius has got one hell of an inferiority complex because of him being the youngest von hagen kid.

being the youngest child in a family has the tendency or possibility to create an attention-seeker. attention-seeking behavior happens because a youngest child is not alone, their sibling/s came first. the older ones got the love and praise and time before they could get any of it. now that the youngest is here, thats another kid the family has to pay attention to, and the youngest will do a lot of things to get that attention (because theyre “secondary”, the family already had other kids, so theyre used to the song and dance of raising kids, yeah? youngest has gotta work more to make themself stand out). theyll play the agreeable charmer to get positive attention from the family. (keyword: positive. because negative attention...i'll get to that later)

but why is the youngest working so hard to get attention? surely, they must know that attention will come to them naturally, yes? well, when youre a “secondary” member, when you come to see yourself



as a footnote to another person, attention from others seems harder to just get naturally. the youngest is not alone, there are others now, and where there are others, there will always, always be somebody “better”

(sidenote: it's pretty obvious that marius is an attention-seeker, yea? i dont have to prove that, right? because uh. just go thru any card story of his kJBKSJDF. //whiny marius voice. JIEJIIEEEEEE [PLEADING EMOJI])



anyway, the seeds of inferiority are present already, they're getting sown into the ground of the mind as early as childhood. the notions of second best and stuck in another person's shadow can already begin to take root (see previous analysis “marius von hagen: he's always been in giann's shadow” on page 19)

the von hagen family is pretty small tho, when marius is brought into the world. mom von hagen died very quickly after marius was born which only left dad austin and older brother giann. i dont think austin or giann did anything outright to make marius feel inferior, the family seems to be a kind one to each

other and marius has mentioned he loves his family a LOT but like, even if u dont mean to make somebody feel inferior, it might just happen for a lot of reasons anyway.

one huge thing that hammers the inferiority complex further into marius' mind is how people OUTSIDE the von hagen family see him, especially when marius takes on the mantle as CEO of PAX. marius is saddled with a whole lot of responsibility and duties and work and that in itself is hard enough but then oopsie daisy, the attention-seeking personality is now hit with its worst nightmare.

aka he gets attention but in the Most Negative Ways. hello negative attention!!

marius doesn't even have to lift a finger to get bombarded by people thinking he's doing a shitass job at running the company. people think him a brat who doesn't know what he's doing. in some instances, marius is compared to his father or older brother. marius is pit against them and he's the loser, the weakest link in the von hagen family, the kid who's out of his depth.

in SSR Fabulous Feast, we get to see Mr. Darby act as a microcosm of people who are against marius for this reason. MC witnesses Darby shittalk marius behind his back (and MC was SO CLOSE to marching over there and throwing her cards at him, god bless her heart).

it's marius though who explains Darby's behavior to MC. Darby was apparently an okay dude back when giann was in charge, but when marius came in, that's when Darby changed. marius then says:

² I play using the JP dub so what I hear constantly from this bastard (affectionate) is actually "Onee-saaaaan [PLEADING EMOJI]" but the JIEJIIEEEEEE is so frigging iconic though skjfbsd. I'm scared for what'll happen if an ENG dub happens cuz...there's not really a suitable English word for honorifics like this. Sidenote: in the forbidden PH dub of ToT, Marius gonna be like "Ategirl [PLEADING EMOJI]" and that's why a PH dub can't happen either.



Feast, Darby is brought into marius' performance, the spectacle of his “donation” is used as a threat, and then the performance and spectacle traps Darby into doing what marius wants. this is....a WHOLE OTHER ANALYSIS ACTUALLY ABOUT how marius has lived his life with performance and spectacle as his own shackles and thus knows how to weaponize it. BUT IM GETTING OFF TOPIC. LEMME GO BACK)

RECAP: marius is the youngest -> being the youngest lays the bedrock of inferiority -> the inferiority is further cemented by outsiders ->now what?

well im going to loop back to ur actual ask, HAHA.

u said “[marius] maybe feels incompetent compared to the other nxx members...” and personally i think this is VERY POSSIBLE YES. because hes in another group. and as he slowly grows to trust them all, i see the nxx team turning into a found family, thus another family where he is STILL THE YOUNGEST.

yeah he works his ass off just as much as everybody else in the team, but the fear is hard to shake, yknow? marius will hide it behind smirks and jokes and slightly asshole-y vibes, but deep down hes scared he isnt good enough for them, like how he isnt good enough for so many people in the ENTIRE WORLD. when the team start giving him positive attention (something he thinks he has to earn by being the charmer and whatever the hell else they want him to be) a new fear can surface:

...when will they see hes nothing but a whiny brat trying too hard for scraps of love?

.....when will they stop giving him positive attention because of this?

granted, after MC is like UR NOT INFERIOR, dont compare urself to others!! (again, bless her heart, i lov her sm). marius then goes on to say “no no. i AM inferior to giann but also thats okay because i have my own special way to solve problems” and then for the rest of the story he goes on to solve the problem just like he said thru an unconventional yet incredibly effective way

(sidenote: it's fascinating to me that marius' way to solve the problem in Fabulous Feast (and other problems, like that journalist in main story 5.3) is to use Performance and Spectacle as a method, then as threat, then as a cage. in main story 5.3, marius gets the information from that journalist by first acting dumb (performance as method) and then once the jig is up marius goes on to say how this will be a bad scandal for journalist (spectacle as threat) and THEN goes on to trap journalist into folding bc of prev points (performance and spectacle as cage). same in Fabulous

marius feels incompetent not because he actually is incompetent in reality. he plays an important part in the team, just like everybody else. marius feels incompetent within the team because the patterns and experiences of his life has calibrated him to think himself inferior.

if i were to write a fic exploring all of this (and i use the word “if” because my gdrive folder for tot fic wips is...IT’S A LOT....) i would write a fic where the team is kinda just like...“hey is marius okay because lately the media has been particularly ruthless towards him, unprovoked”

and marius waves away whoever asks him and hes like “im fine, but awww, you’re worried about me, that’s so sweet!!! you like me more than you let on, eh ;)” and then after luke or vyn or artem or MC rolls their eyes at his antics hes like “[internally] good they’ll NEVER KNOW that im actually getting hugely worn down by the current media shitstorm and that their worry means so much to me but if i let them help they’ll see me as the incompetent brat i am and they can NEVER SEE ME LIKE THAT OR ELSE I WILL WITHER AND DIE”

and like the team obviously see hes upset and they try to help. every instance of help hammering more and more fear into marius. the more help he needs, the more “useless” marius becomes

and it’s a whole mess but eventually the team and marius come together and like, FRIGGING TALK HONESTLY ABOUT FEELINGS and then nxx fluff time of emotional healing

THIS ANSWER NEEDS TO END NOW IT’S TOO LONG³ KSFDSJ. I HOPE THIS MAKES SENSE!!

MARIUS @ ME WRITING MY LONGEST ANALYSES FOR HIM



I'M A LUKE STAN BUT
MARIUS IS JUST SO FUN TO
CRACK OPEN LIKE A
GEODE

³ “Too long” I say, continuing to write just the longest bullshit all the time, LMAO.

THE NXX BOYS: ARE THE MOST ANNOYING CLASSMATE IN AN INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY CLASS BUT LIKE, FOR DIFFERENT REASONS

original post date: November 12, 2021 ([link to post](#))¹
no spoilers at all hehe

vyn “please stop, you’re scaring the homies”
richter: the nexus by which reality exists is cruelty. i am not saying that good does not exist, i am simply saying that what keeps the fabric of everything tied together is the experience of getting hurt. change, growth, experience, is that not all brought about by hardship? there is no way to exist that does not invite struggle. suffering is the only universal constant.



marius “he’s an art grad student, ‘nuff said”
von hagen: yknow, kudos to roland barthes for the whole “the author is dead” and “creator and creation are independent of each other” but also fuck him because theres some things in this world where the author isn’t dead. where creator and creation and intention are intrinsically linked and theres no wrenching them apart. do you think god is dead? do you think god is absolved of what he’s done to us because he had made us? i guess one way to sever the connection of creator and creation IS to kill the author. to be fully realized, then, should we kill god?



¹ This is like, only 75% an analysis cuz I did put thought into what kind of philosophical stances each boy would have based on what kind of people I interpret them to be. Just like, so very very hyperbolized. Also, I almost failed two of my Philosophy classes in college because I hated the professor (HE WAS AN ASSHOLE) and I deliberately wrote a lot of salty-fuck-you essays for the homeworks. So uh, I’m not a good example for morality.

luke “dude, get your vague catholicism outta here” pearce: listen, any action that does not result in uncontested good for other people is a bad action. there’s no grey areas. there’s only good and bad. and doing something that results in good solely for one’s own benefit is the definition of selfishness! and—what, intent? intent only matters when somebody is doing a good action on the motivation that it feels good for themselves, and by that i mean it matters in the sense that the egocentric incentive renders any “good” intent completely null and void! furthermore! we should all feel VERY guilty about all this!

artem “what do you MEAN there’s no correct answer?” wing: so...what you’re telling me is that philosophy’s very nature is the fact that there is no true right answer? or wrong answer? that the core of the study and concept is that we will forever be engaged in a discursive conversation where nothing is absolutely correct or incorrect? that’s...that’s horrible.



THE NXX BOYS: FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY POST

original post date: November 12, 2021 ([link to post](#))

very small spoiler for Artem SR Fixated On You

Anonymous (ghost!anon) asked:

In that intro to psych post I feel like Marius and Luke would get in a fistfight with the professor, Cynthia will make the professor cry, and artem will have a mental breakdown -ghost

Anonymous asked:

Artem wing hates the inherent avoidance of definition itself and others postmodernism confirmed¹

My response:

hi ghost! hi anon!!!

ghost im assuming u mean philosophy (because the boys in an intro to psych class is a WHOLE OTHER DISCUSSION) and dkjfbkkJBKJ

irt to ghost's ask:

marius and luke get into a fistfight with each other because any time morality or goodness is brought up, luke is always in the vaguely catholic camp of “IT HAS TO BENEFIT OTHERS, THERE ARE NO GREY AREAS. GUILT IS A REQUIREMENT, HOW ELSE ARE WE GOING TO KNOW THAT WE MUST BE BETTER?” while marius would believe “guilt is valid and does have merit in identifying things to work on, but the lack of it doesnt mean ur bad and can never improve. get therapy, babe. also, everything is grey areas!!” and nobody will be able to tear them apart except for MC who comes in with a roll of newspaper,

thwacking them on the head until they behave

EDIT: OH I MISREAD. GHOST, I THOUGHT U SAID MARIUS AND LUKE WILL HAVE A FISTFIGHT WITH EACH OTHER. U SAID WITH THE PROFESSOR KJFBKGJKG. okay, luke wouldnt, hard stop. hes too nice for that, hes only punching the professor if they made MC cry or if theyve done a heinous crime. marius also wouldnt, not because hes nice, but because he'd MUCH rather enjoy watching the prof steadily get more and more frustrated. the prof wants to punch him. and hes daring them to.

artem is sitting there with his head in his hands because if theres no correct or incorrect answers, WHAT IS HE SUPPOSED TO DO???? HOW DOES HE NAVIGATE A WORLD WHERE NOTHING IS A FAILURE????? his answer, for now, is that He is the failure.

i assume ur autocorrect turned “vyn” into “Cynthia” and that made me laugh for a good 5 minutes. vynthia richter would not make the professor cry, i think, but he will be sent out to think about what hes done. his input is intelligent and valuable! but jesus christ, lighten up, will you?

irt to anon's ask:

forgive me, it's been a few years since ive been in college so i may be wrong but my understanding of

¹ I very much am aware that I'm a dork because of //gestures hands at all these words. But also getting asks like this, asks that link ARTEM WING FROM TEARS OF THEMIS to frigging POSTMODERNISM, well. That tells me that everybody in this fandom, perhaps, is a big dork (so so affectionate)

postmodernism is that it is the rejection of the widely accepted definitions, the rejection of the Grand Narratives that modernism before it had put into place. theres something very rigid about modernism, something that does fit artem's own rigidity, but....not quite?

because i think artem's shtick isn't so much disliking the avoidance of definition, more so that i see artem as somebody who sees the world (or more accurately, his actions and life and personality) as something that needs to be **Correct** and **Successful**. which, in itself, is a definition, ur right! but idk, it's not that he wants everything to be defined, he just wants so badly and so desperately to be what is **Correct** in the situations and relationships that he pursues in life.

like, even when he's picking TOMATOES [SR Fixated On You] he searches for the Most Correct Tomato, the one that is the Pinnacle Of What A Correct Tomato Is Supposed To Be.



it's funny, actually. in artem's quest to embody what he thinks is the **Correct** answer for things, what he's doing is actually creating his own unattainable definition of **Correct**. artem wing's brain is literally working so fucking hard to make his own life more difficult for him LMAOOOO.

sidenote: when i write luke, i always use the words "good / bad" whereas with artem, i always use the words "correct / incorrect" or "wrong / right." ive mentioned this before in past posts, but i see luke's whole thing being morality while artem's whole thing is something more "empirical" which, like, lol because artem, honeypie, theres gonna be a LOT of things with no empirical answers. luke and artem are two sides of the same coin actually, both of them tend to see the world in black and white. i just make them use a different language, based on their personality in canon.

can you believe how much thought im putting into these otome men? i feel deranged every day

WHY ARE WE HERE?



MARIUS VON HAGEN: BREAKING POINTS (WHAT WOULD HAVE TO HAPPEN FOR HIM TO PUNCH THE OTHER BOYS)

original post date: November 18, 2021 ([link to post](#))

no specific spoilers but this analysis doubles as a minfic because i also put a bunch of mini fanfic scenes, so content warnings for slight violence (just punching in the face + some blood), me abusing every single one of marius' weaknesses and fears, ANGST

candiukas1 asked:

So only now I just finished Marius personal story
I'm level 47 😊 He's just my least favourite character, okay? But he's growing on me, that bastard ❤️ and him punching someone in the face was very unexpected, which got me thinking... What would need to happen/not happen for Marius to punch one of the other three ToT guys? I would think it would have to do with him being viewed as weak or incapable of doing something? (Your post about Marius made me fall in love with him a little bit more and think more about him as a person). I just had this image in my head of him punching Luke in the face (at least in my opinion Marius gets along the best with Luke so it would be really shocking for everyone). That's it. That's all I have. I have like a story in mind but I think it's very OOC 😊 The Hibiscus anon

HALLO HIBISCUS!!! congrats on finishing current marius personal story! HE REALLY GROWS ON YOU!!! that being said i dont remember marius punching another person kJBKSJFG. I DONT DOUBT IT HAPPENED, im just laughing at my shit memory. what i remember most from his personal story is when he almost got stabbed. god. can we stop almost stabbing marius? please? either get the knife IN HIM or dont tease!!!! BUT ANYWAY YEAH. heres what would have to happen for marius to punch the other nxx boys (like a forreal punch, not a sucker puhch)

for marius to punch artem, artem has to keep believing that giann von hagen went darkside

this is most likely to happen in canon: artem continuing on his suspicion (that he explicitly expressed in main story 5.1) that giann von hagen had something to do with neil hume's disappearance.

i tackled this briefly in [chapter 3 of my fanfic “filler episodes of the lost gold”](#) but i'll reiterate what i bring up there: both marius and artem have lost somebody very important to them. artem saw neil not only as his mentor, but as something of a father figure as well. and marius is self explanatory, giann is his older brother and canon crumbs have told me that marius was quite close with giann.

in main story 5.1, artem says that hes suspicious of giann for having a hand in neil's disappearance because theres nobody else neil would have trusted to meet up alone (or something along those lines, my memory is bad). marius is obviously pissed, says his older brother has not and will NEVER go darkside and sell out his partner. but like, this scene is so good for me. because if we push it, it can lead to something that could, if worst comes to worst, deadass drive a stake between artem and marius' entire relationship

because it's about trust. artem needs to trust marius'

¹ Only like a full day after I posted this on Tumblr and it had gotten a bunch of notes did I learn that "sucker punch" actually meant "surprise punch" and not "punch that is super light and not really gonna hurt you" like I thought. Everyday I learn new English sayings I'm using COMPLETELY INCORRECTLY KJDFBG

view of his brother. marius needs to trust that artem will trust him. if the trust falters on artem's end, it's not just artem saying "i dont believe what you say about giann" it's also somehow saying "i dont believe you."

now all that will make marius hurt and slightly angry. we already saw in main story 5.1 that marius, bc of artem's suspicion, got prettyyyyy testy. but what would make him angry enough to go for the punch?

pairing ALL THIS by adding in the salt of not believing marius BECAUSE marius is naive and puts too much hope into people (see previous analysis "marius von hagen: facade vs. sincerity, harsh truths vs. persisting hope" on page 14)

AND AND AND JUST TO MAKE IT WORSE add in that artem thinks like this because marius is young. (see previous analysis "marius von hagen: he's always been in giann's shadow" on page 19 and "marius von hagen: inferiority complex and youngest child syndrome" on page 25)

like, artem isn't being a bad dude. hes just being Him. hes being logical and wants to look at all the facts, even the ones that hurt others. he doesn't provoke marius on purpose, he just doesn't realize how much what hes doing hurts marius.

heres a scene!!!

"I'm not fucking asking the whole world of you, Artem!" Marius snarls, and Artem knows he's playing with fire here. Marius already has him pressed against the wall, his gaze close and burning with too many emotions Artem can't parse through. "All I'm asking is

for you to trust that I know my own goddamn brother! He wouldn't sell Neil out. He's a good person."

"And how many times—" Artem says slowly. Carefully. "—have you been wrong about people's goodness before?"

Marius falters. A blaze of fire flickering into a weak flame.

Artem doesn't need to say any names, he's sure they're all flashing in an itemized list in Marius' mind. Family friends, relatives, business partners. So many people Marius trusted, so many people Marius was sure he knew. And he was wrong.

"I do trust you. But you always trust the wrong people," Artem continues, trying to keep his words gentle. "And I understand that it's hard. You're still young and so it's natural to have this naivety—"

And then all at once, with his fist flying forward, Marius decides he wants to make Artem burn.²

for marius to punch vyn, vyn has to tell marius that he's using him

vyn has to poke another fear i think marius has. vyn, a person marius cares about, has to tell marius that he is using/has used him. vyn is the most like, "psychologically" perceptive of the bunch. he KNOWS what everybody's pressure points are, most probably. he knows that this is marius'. if artem (and luke, but that's later) end up getting punched because they unknowingly hit a pressure point, i think vyn does this ON PURPOSE.

² Extended metaphors go brrrrrr. Actually, something interesting I just realized. In terms of like...elements, I associate fire with both Marius and Luke (though Luke is more focused on light and shadow and Marius is more focused on how fire burns) while I associate Artem with earth and Vyn with water or nature (like, forests). I have no analysis rationale for these, it's just the vibes I get from them.

but wait lemme go back and explain the “being used” thing. ive got an he that because of marius’ status and family, a lot of people in the past have used him one way or another. and thats fine, he gets it, hes a great stepping stone. hes the supposed weakest link in the family, the best one to trample over to get to the rest of the power/wealth the family has. when marius is used by other people, usually hes okay with it. like yes, it fucking hurts him and he makes sure it DOES NOT HAPPEN because manipulative ppl can hurt his family, but overall hes not too bothered about himself or his value.

but if it’s somebody he cares about? somebody he trusts? oh marius is not only hurt, hes fucking angry.

but why would vyn do this? a lot of reasons! but the one i like best is that maybe marius is getting a little too close for vyn’s comfort (vyn is also a cagey dude). and when vyn gets scared or aggrieved or feels as if he is even one inch out of control, he has shown a tendency to take control once more by knocking the other person down a peg. because control is SO IMPORTANT TO HIM (see previous analysis "vyn richter: a theory on control" on page 11)

coming to care and trust another person is something that, for many, can feel very much like you are losing control. youre letting another person see you, your best parts and your worst parts. thats terrifying. the instinct of somebody who wants to stay “safe” and “unhurt” (see previous analysis "the nxx boys: "bad things" on page 16 in regards to vyn not wanting to get hurt) by the vulnerability care necessitates, is to push back and create distance. attack the pressure point to create that distance. to create that safety.

vyn strikes me as the kind of person who would go for somebodys weakness with the intention to hurt that

person ONLY because he himself is scared. i’d like to make it clear that vyn isnt a bad person! hes just stupid sometimes.

heres a scene!!!:

“I only started caring about you because Giann³ asked me to,” Vyn says. Which is the truth, he supposes. But as he got to know Marius, he knows his motivation changed. He’s here because he cares about Marius, but Marius is starting to care a bit too much for him. So his next words are lies and Vyn knows it will do the needed damage. “It was never for you. It was for him.”

“So...” He can see the pain in Marius’ eyes. The way his hands are starting to tremble. “...that’s all I am to you? A debt you have to pay off?”

“Yes,” he says, looking away. For he knows that Marius is perceptive as well. If he looks into Vyn’s golden gaze, he’ll see the lie for what it is. “You are an obligation. And perhaps a way for me to cope, as well, with Giann’s disappe—”

And that’s as far as he gets before Marius lunges.

for marius to punch luke, luke has to try and control marius

luke is the most interesting to me because since he joins the NXX at the same time as MC, hes got no beef with vyn, artem, and marius. clean slate on this dude!! and luke has been wielding this clean slate responsibly, thus far in canon. sure he still joins in on the petty insult hurling, but he gets along with everybody pretty well! i think he will continue to do so for like, forever. because luke never gets mad at

³ It's my HC that Vyn and Giann were pretty close. I see them having been pretty damn good friends before Giann up and left. I don't have evidence for this aside from the fact they founded the Giannovyn Research Center today but I think it'd be very interesting if Vyn also had stakes in the whole current missing persons boogaloo.

other people (unless they've hurt somebody he loves). he is only ever getting mad at himself.

desperately, luke wants to be Good. he is simultaneously scared of failing this and resigned that he's ALREADY FAILED IT. and yet he persists to be Good in every way, even the ones that would make a therapist go "jesus christ, no, dont do that". self sacrificial actions, putting others above himself at ALL TIMES, and many others. but heres the one that'll get marius angry: luke has the tendency to want to control others.

not in the way vyn does. vyn's desire for control is more like, he needs to have a say in every situation's outcome, because this way, he is safe. luke is different. he desires to control people very specifically he wants to control people's emotions.

luke wants to be good, yes? that means he does not want to cause bad. pain is an emotion that feels bad. luke wants to get rid of any pain he causes other people.

taken further, luke wants to control the good emotions of others too. if others feel happiness with luke and luke believes that he is bad, then he will want to get rid of that good emotion. because they're wrong or their judgement is clouded. luke is bad, nothing about him is good, he needs to "set the record straight" by doing his damned best to convince other people what he thinks is the deserved emotional reaction to his existence. (see previous analysis "luke pearce: on the burden of memory and the concept of "better if it never happened at all" which, towards the end, discusses luke's desire to control how other people feel)

enter marius. marius who has never in his life been

Just Marius, he's always been marius Von Hagen. a life in the limelight, a life of responsibility, a life of so many people telling him what to do and marius saying "no, fuck you, im doing things my way and it'll work" and it does.

marius values personal agency. fuck with or question his free will, and he's already pissed.

but to get to the punch, luke has to hurt him more and so heres one last thing about marius that'll let this disaster happen: marius feels so deeply so much but he's scared of getting hurt because of that. he hides sincerity behind a metric fuckton of masks and jokes and deflections. so when he's being honest, when he actually shows another person his true feelings, that took a lot of effort.

he's putting his trust in that person. showing his feelings truly.

and the worst thing somebody could do in that situation is to tell marius that these feelings are wrong.

heres a scene!!! not of the punch tho, after instead hehe, and also THIS IS VAGUELY MARLUKE⁴ BC I CANT CONTAIN MYSELF:

"You should fix your stance," Luke rasps, bringing the back of his hand to his face to staunch the bleeding. It's a lost cause though; even with an untrained stance, Marius managed to break his nose. If the situation was appropriate, he would have been impressed. "Next time, you should—"

"Stop fucking telling me what I should do," Marius cuts him off. Luke can't see him like this, sprawled on the floor. Marius stands a few feet away, his back

⁴ Listen, I really love Marius/Luke. If I had to pick my OTP for this game, it'd be a tie between Luke/MC and Marius/Luke. "But OTP means One True Pairing?" well the economy is different now. I can't have all my feels in just one ship, I gotta invest in, uh, more stonks. Ship stonks. I don't know how economics works. I actually ship every iteration of NXX pairs and polycules, these two are just my most faves kjbkjgsd.

turned. "That's all you've done tonight. 'Marius, you shouldn't love me', jesus christ, that's not for you to control, asshole."

"Doesn't mean I'm wrong though," Luke replies. He pulls his hand away, looking at the blood on his fingers. He'll never get to hold Marius ever again, after this. That's what Luke deserves. Because Marius deserves so much better. "You should—"

"Shut up!"

Luke's words never make it past his lips. Not at Marius' anger, but at his anguish. He's still turned away, but Luke heard the tears in those two words. Luke can see the tremble of Marius' frame. He's crying. He's crying because Luke knows that just moments ago, Marius had given his heart to Luke. He'd trusted Luke with something fragile and beautiful. And Luke had tossed that to the side, he had told Marius to feel something different. Something better for someone better.

His blood drips off of his fingers. Luke wonders how much Marius is bleeding now too.

hoo boy, that was a lot!!! sorry for how many prev analyses i linked, it's just that everything i write ever is building off of a bedrock of characterization ive laid earlier sjkfgbkjdsdg

additionally, sorry for hurting you so much, marius!

yeah, no, i'm not sorry at all. i love writing angst
♡(○ω○人)⁵



⁵ Somebody reblogged this post with so many great and sweet tags but the one that piqued my interest the most was their tag of "Imagine all of this happening one after the other. Thus begins Marius' falling out with the NXX." And holy shit. Man, now that'd be something I'd like to see. Marius, overwhelmed with pain, breaking away from the team. I am looking with my angst loving eyes, HAHA.

VYN AND ARTEM: THESE TWO ARE MORE ALIKE THAN YOU (AND THEY) THINK BUT ALSO END UP SO DIFFERENT THANKS TO THEIR RESPECTIVE EMOTIONAL METHODS

original post date: January 15, 2022 ([link to post](#))

general vague spoilers ahead for both vyn and artem's backstories

part 1: vyn and artem have a similar core desire

before i go anywhere, let me define the terms ive made up here.

in this analysis, a core desire pertains to something something one wants so much to the point it informs so much of who that person is. stuff like that person's ambition or what theyd like to experience in the lives or a certain image of themselves they want to embody for people who see them. u want something and u want it so bad that that desire paints a bunch of ur personality or actions or values.

an emotional method is basically what it says on the tin. it's a way someone pursues something, and in this case, the way someone pursues a core desire. but also this method doubles as a reason, almost, for why they desire what they want in the first place. this thing is like, both how and why that person pursues what they want.

with that all in place, i think a core desire of both vyn and artem is to Be A Perfect Person, tho the definition for what a Perfect Person has some slight deviations for both of them.

vyn seems to want to be seen as perfect irt having no weaknesses, no flaws, no cracks in the armor of who he is. vyn wants to be seen as learned, refined, and always on top of every situation. artem wants to be seen as perfect more in the sense that he needs to be

Correct, he needs to live up to all expectations set of him.

this desire of theirs shows in their personality and what they do. vyn, for example, doles out true vulnerability sparsely because vulnerability means showing another person parts of yourself that are "weak" or "ugly". and artem is just, ykno, //gestures to his entire life of overachieving and his whole reputation.

of course, how this desire manifests isnt a linear and perfect (haha) desire, there are instances where this desire is actually like, a curse of sorts. im not too sure about vyn (im VERY behind on his cards, apologies), but artem has mentioned various times that he wishes people didnt put him on a pedestal (examples off the top of my head are in SR Sparks and SR Fixated on You) and yet in spite of this, his actions are still ones that align towards wanting to achieve his kind of perfection anyway.

so they both want to be seen as perfect. thats a similarity they have that informs a lot of who they are. so if theyve got this in common, why are they such different people? why are they at odds with each other in canon? why cant they recognize this part of themself in the other, or, if they do, why do they not meet that with empathy?

it's cuz while they have that same core desire, their emotional methods to pursue it are a bit different

vyn's method to pursue that core is fear while artem's method to pursue that core is guilt.

aka

vyn is like that because hes scared.

artem is like that because hes sorry.

part 2: vyn “if you kept a snake in your eye line, it wasn’t gonna bite you” richter

the line in the above quotation mark is from the documentary “Joan Didion: The Center Will Not Hold” and the full quote goes:

“I, myself, have always found that if I examine something, it’s less scary. We always had this theory that if you kept a snake in your eye line, it wasn’t gonna bite you. That’s kind of the way I feel about confronting pain. I wanna know where it is.”

which, i think, is a great kind of explanation¹ for how and why vyn tackles a lot of things, among them, the perfection situation.

vyn, in so many cases, always exhibits and aims to have control over the situation. he always wants to have the advantage, the power to be able to sway whatever is happening in either his direct favor or in the direction he needs it to go (like for nxx investigations). ive talked about this control thing in many past analyses but it’s key here in conjunction with the above quote. he does this to “know where the snake is”

but he goes past knowing where the snake is, goes past having the information and examining that information. he doesnt just want to know, he wants to

he wants to be at and expertly leverages himself to a higher level over that information.

to continue with the metaphor; he damn well knows where the snake is. and so he takes care to either be far enough away that it cant strike or he takes action and attacks first.

all this because at the end of the day, the snake—and lemme give the snake some names now: pain, hurt, things that are out to get him, things that will belittle him, things that will cast him out, and more and more because a lot of who vyn is as a person is strange to many people, it’s other, and vyn is of the belief that the world regards things that are different with cruelty and scorn. and the sad thing is that hes right—is scary. it is something he is afraid of.

and when vyn is in control—when hes using his knowledge to run circles around people in conversations, when hes using his expertise to get the dominos to fall the way he wants, when hes setting up even just the image of himself in the way he does—it’s way harder for things to hurt him.

vyn is on the defensive and offensive to protect himself. and a person protects themself from things they fear.

part 3: artem “to make up the fact that it’s me” wing

ive got a line quotation marks above again and this one is taken from the essay “Ugly, Bitter, and True” by Suzanne Rivecca. the scene where that quote comes from goes:

¹ This analysis started out without these quotes I used. Before the quotes from Didion and Rivecca, I hit a bit of a block writing this cuz, ironically, I was missing a method to pursue the meanings I wanted to articulate. Once I decided to use other pieces of writing as a framework, the rest of the analysis fell into place.

"I don't know what's going to come out of me," I told her. "It has to be perfect. It has to be irreproachable in every way."

"Why?" she said.

"To make up for it," I said. "To make up for the fact that it's me."

which is, once more, a pretty damn good summation of how and why artem strives for perfection.

artem is a textbook overachiever. youngest senior attorney, always working, constantly striving for such high standards in everything he does even the things he enjoys like his hobbies. a bunch of this is because artem is like, holds a lot of value in the concept of rules. theres a proper way to go about everything and it just so happens that the proper way for him in particular to exist is to achieve all these things and continue to do so for the rest of his life.

and the reason that this is the proper way for him is because it's artem's apology for who he is as a person.

in many many stories, artem has expressed this sentiment that hes both too little (boring, not interesting, not fun to be around, has hobbies that arent exciting, inexperienced in emotional situations, all in all just a personality thats bland and not worth the effort of getting to know) and also too much (too intimidating, imposing to the point that coworkers and colleagues are afraid of approaching him, an unreachable paragon on a pedestal too high).

this kind of contradiction must be hell for artem, somebody quite rooted in logic. how can he be lacking and overflowing at the same time? somewhere, theres a fault in the system of who he is and this fault affects

everybody around him and hes so, so sorry.

in a sense, hes apologizing through his striving for and achieving the so-called perfection he desires. he does this because he needs to make up for it.

to make up for the fact that he is who he is.

part 4: the same but different. what does this mean for them?

it means that we have one (among many) reasons for what we see in canon; vyn and artem at each other's throats.

oftentimes it's in a comedic context but this animosity between them also crops up in more serious contexts (main story (forgot which parts specifically): artem angrily saying that he and vyn are NOT friends, vyn expressing his relief that artem was not with MC when he evaluated her) and like. canon hasnt given us a reason for this yet, haha.

like, marius and artem are iffy at each other because theyve both lost somebody close to them and theres a possibility that their respective missing person could have a hand in the missing-ness of the other respective person. marius and vyn are iffy at each other because ksdjbkgksjd working with ur teacher/student cant be all that great at first. (and from the sidelines, luke waves with a friendly smile, clean slate and no beef against the others)

but what about artem and vyn? theres no history given, so it may be because of hidden beef we dont know, may be because of just personalities clashing

but it may be because of this whole core and method thing i wrote about here.

to artem, vyn may seem to effortlessly exude the image of perfection that artem wishes he could be. vyn is not a contradiction, vyn wields himself expertly, vyn does not fumble, and for all that vyn has the higher ground, it's not in the lonely way that artem experiences. artem is guilty for who he is while vyn seems to bask in himself.

to vyn, artem may seem to be a glaring example of what hes afraid may happen to him; so focused on perfection that if someone were just to look in the right place, all those actions would lead to obvious faults that are being apologized for. vyn is afraid of showing weakness and artem is a case study of how perfection can point to those weaknesses anyway.

in each other, they might see a mirror image of something that exists in themself. but it's contained in a person that sparks jealousy in artem because artem feels shame and vyn seems to not. it's contained in a person that sparks apprehension in vyn because artem doing all this and it still might fail if vyn doesnt play his cards right.

so theyre similar

but also different in juuuuuust the exact direction to make the original guilt and fear even worse.²

BRO, WE ARE FOILS TO EACH OTHER



BRO, I HATE THAT



² Of all the analyses in here, this is one I was simultaneously really proud of and also most scared of posting. Vyn and Artem are the characters I've analyzed the least and I was gosh dang worried that this analysis wouldn't ring true for a lot of people, the Vyn enjoys and Artem enjoys especially. That being said, I was relieved and pleasantly surprised that this analysis is actually one that really, really took off. It got reposted to FACEBOOK. Can I tell my parents I'm a cool person now? HAHA. That being said, a good 55% of why I wrote this analysis was so that I could get a better grasp of Vyn and Artem's relationship so I could, in the future, write Vyn/Artem fanfic khbsdhVKSBDG

TEARS OF THEMIS ON MEMORY AND HOPE

original post date: January 24, 2022 ([link to post](#))

spoilers for the A Love Letter to Skadi event, small spoilers for Mysteries Of the Lost Gold and Symphony Of the Night

man.

i'm quite sure others who are way smarter than i am (and also not currently nerfed by booster shot fatigue) have discussed the story of the manor of hermes¹ so i wont talk about that specifically i

wanna talk about a common theme in event plots thus far on global

lost gold, symphony of the night, and skadi. these r the three events with full plots to explore. and they all have something in common:

the injustice cannot be undone. but it can be discovered, respected, and protected. and that matters

for lost gold and skadi, the injustice quite literally happens in the past. the murder gang violence treasure boogaloo in lost gold happened years ago and its ripples had reached far to characters who were still alive, who brought the story back into the present due to revenge, desperation, or greed. erin and winter's story in skadi similarly happened in the past as well. you cant change the past. you can only do things in the present and moving forward in the future.

in symphony of the night, it's a bit different but also not. the team investigate with the hope that medilla can still be saved but then later realize hes been dead

all along, they were too late. you cant change the past.

that is constant. you cant change the past. the injustice has happened and theres no undoing that ever. people got hurt, people died, people are never going to be the same after what happened to them in their stories.

but what the team does in reaction to all of this is what makes me really frigging emotional

in lost gold, the team bring all the truth to light and get the people who are still alive and guilty of shit to justice. in symphony of the night, they launch medilla's program to destroy centipede and they fulfill lilith's wish of doing the AI equivalent of dying. in skadi, the team learn the horrible story of the manor and the two innocent people who suffered so much in it and their final point is this:

respect what has happened, protect these people even if they're gone, do as much as you can in the present and the future because you cannot change the past

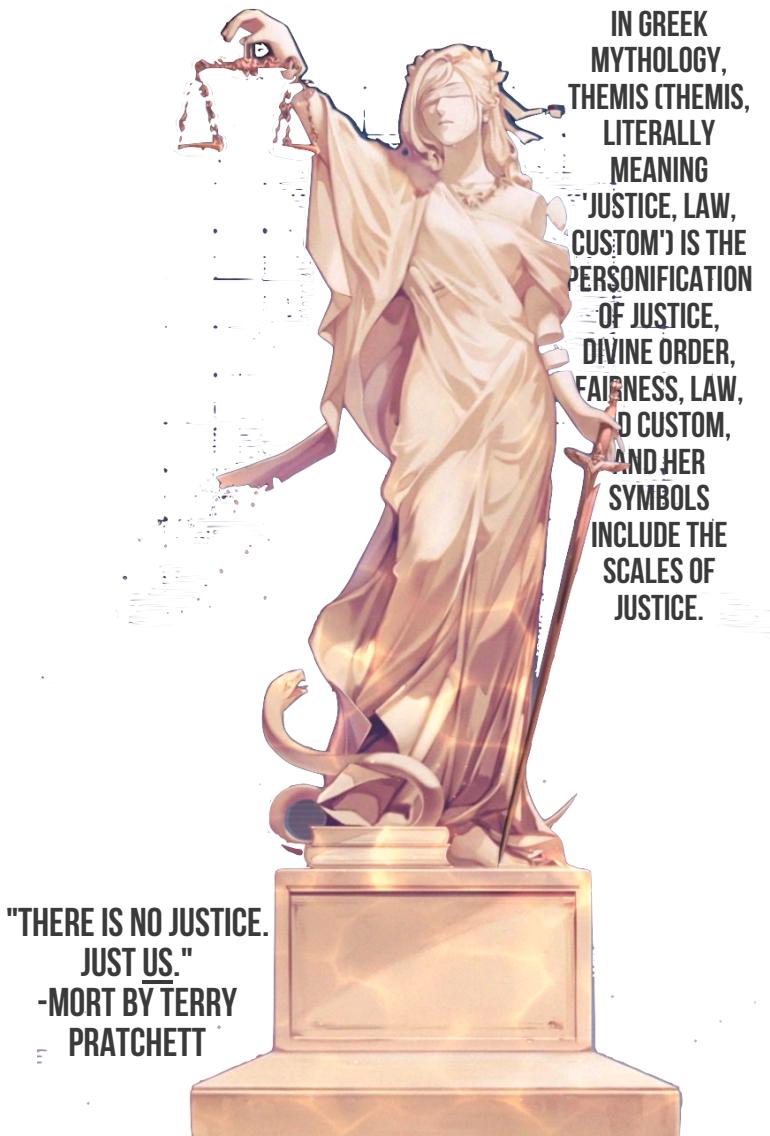
it's bittersweet, hell, it's fucking depressing in some viewpoints; that no matter how smart and skilled the nxx investigation team is, there are cases theyll take that are just done already. the story is frigging over. theres no helping a corpse, some would think.

¹ I quite literally finished the manor exploration plot on the last day of the event and only 9 hours left before the event disappeared into the void. PROCRASTINATION NATION!!

but the story and the team posit that action can still be taken. it can be taken by bringing remaining living people to justice, by discovering the truth wholly, by respecting the full story in its sadness, and by continuing to go on anyway as like, protectors of what has happened.

this is in line with the whole game, thematically, which is focused on the law and bringing people to justice. but i dunno, maybe im overthinking this, but it's an important thing to me irt to like....life. like, what can you do for somebody who isn't here anymore? they've already suffered, they're already gone, what is there to do after every culprit has been taken down?

the answer seems to be this: learn the full story and remember it. learn everybody involved and commit it to memory. what's important about past tragedies is working to make sure it doesn't happen again, and for that, memory is essential pragmatically. it's also essential in a more emotional sense that like...in remembering what happened, an aspect of all of it is still alive. commit the names to memory both for justice and for humanity.



"**THERE IS NO JUSTICE.
JUST US."**
-MORT BY TERRY
PRATCHETT



AFTERWORD

Thank you to everybody on Tumblr that voiced their support and excitement for this. I give a special shoutout to Tumblr users samsspambox, cheri-cheri, surely-galena, and kamiaka for leaving some awesomely supportive replies to the very first interest check I made about this back in November 2021.

Thank you also to some buddies, katie who “doesnt know anything about the game except for this zine” and Tumblr user sopaeros who “also doesn't know anything about the game except for zak's posts on her dash. thinks artem should get some soul destroying [redacted] bc he's got such sad kicked cat energy” for helping me check my layouting and the general visual readability of this whole thing. I'm pretty sure I missed like, a BUNCH of apostrophes cuz fuckin' Canva has a shit CTRL+F function, but still, your help was greatly appreciated especially since you guys doN'T EVEN PLAY THIS GAMEJKFGFD.

Thank you as well to all those on Tumblr/Twitter/AO3 for being so kind to me in this fandom cuz that definitely contributed to my already deranged obsession to write for it.

And lastly, thank you, dear reader, for downloading and supposedly reading my nerdy ass bullshit!

If you'd like to see my other ToT works (I write fanfic, hes, aus, sometimes I even draw fanart) check out my accounts below:

Tumblr: <https://actualbird.tumblr.com>

AO3: <https://archiveofourown.org/users/reptilianraven>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/zakatao3>

I hope you had a fun time OwO