

Amongst the Flowers

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/18580561) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/18580561>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warnings:	Major Character Death , No Archive Warnings Apply
Categories:	F/M , M/M
Fandom:	Red Dead Redemption (Video Games)
Relationships:	Annabelle/Dutch Van der Linde (mentioned) , Abigail Roberts Marston/John Marston , Hosea Matthews/Bessie Matthews (mentioned) , Andrew Milton/Unnamed wife , Hosea Matthews/Dutch van der Linde
Characters:	Hosea Matthews , Dutch van der Linde , Arthur Morgan , John Marston , Josiah Trelawny , Karen Jones (Red Dead Redemption) , Charles Smith (Red Dead Redemption) , Javier Escuella , Sadie Adler , Abigail Roberts Marston , Jack Marston , Tilly Jackson , Sean MacGuire , Mary-Beth Gaskill , Susan Grimshaw , Uncle (Red Dead Redemption) , Simon Pearson , Bill Williamson , Leopold Strauss , Kieran Duffy , Bessie Matthews (Mentioned) , Annabelle (Red Dead Redemption) , Orville Swanson
Additional Tags:	Angst and Hurt/Comfort , Angst and Feels , Hanahaki Disease , Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence , Canonical Character Death , I Can't Believe I Wrote This , Pain , Arthur Morgan Does Not Have Tuberculosis , Protective Arthur Morgan , Period-Typical Homophobia , Period-Typical Sexism , Homophobic Language , torture but not the kind you're thinking , Dutch is Prime Dumbass , Blood and Violence , First Kiss , Love Confessions , Anal Sex , Anal Fingering , First Time With Each Other , Explicit Sexual Content , Angst with a Happy Ending
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2019-04-24 Completed: 2019-06-12 Words: 19,889 Chapters: 16/16

Amongst the Flowers

by [SargentCorn](#)

Summary

It started with a cough.

Hanahaki Disease Vandermatthews.

Notes

Yeah, hi. Please don't hurt me too much, but this idea kept bothering me. I'm sorry.

Petals

It started with a cough.

Diseases like this always started with a cough. At first, Hosea brushed it off as a simple cough that one of his combinations of herbs could handle. But as the weeks dragged on by near Blackwater, in the mountains, and finally at Horseshoe Overlook, he could no longer deny it as a simple cough. Seeing a doctor did not help his already troubled mind, but the man was incapable of healing whatever had invaded him. His body, it seemed, had decided to fail in a crucial time where Dutch, and the gang, needed him most. His heart clenched at the idea of leaving behind his sons, Arthur and John, the gang, and his lifelong friend Dutch Van der Linde.

Leaning against the rock a few hours ride from Horseshoe, Hosea found himself focusing more on the relationship he had with Dutch. How he trusted him, kept faith in him, and loved him. How Dutch was one of his first few true loves — that even when he was married to Bessie — never truly died. Something she had caught onto during their marriage but never once commented on. She merely smiled at him whenever he spoke about Dutch. Tears pricked his eyes at the thought of her lovely face, and voice. God, how he missed her.

Slowly his thoughts swirled back to Dutch as they often did of late. He didn't know when he first fell for the man, but he knew he had fallen hard. But at the time, Dutch had Annabelle, and he Bessie. However even if they did not have their respective lovers, he doubted that Dutch would love him romantically. Dutch showed no signs of such, and so Hosea buried the feelings deep inside him. There was, of course, the stigma surrounding such a relationship, which, even if Dutch returned his feelings, would have ended both of their lives if caught.

The sun of the Heartlands warmed his old bones as he hid away from everyone. Told Dutch he needed some time to find leads for them, and figure out how to sell the bonds they had stolen from Cornwall despite his protests. And it was true to some extent. He wasn't just hiding away from the camp, away from Dutch, for a bit; he was looking for a lead. But mostly, he knew he was primarily hiding away from everyone. Having a few moments to himself to breathe, think, and mourn the future he may never get to see. A future without Dutch, the one who had stolen his heart so long ago.

He leant forward to rest his face into his palms only to have a coughing fit descend on him. Each breathe hurt more than it usually had lately, as if his lungs were being choked by something. That worried him. Had whatever disease he had progress faster than what the doctor thought? Was he even going to live long enough to make it to the next chapter of the gang? Would he just drop dead in the middle of a job and screw everyone else in the process? Would... would Dutch forgive him for dropping dead in the middle of a job? The coughing stopped, and Hosea felt something drop from his mouth and into his hand.

Pulling his hand away, he glanced down to see a singular purple petal there, and his heart sank. He knew what he was staring at, and that made everything worse. There was no true cure for Hanahaki Disease save for either his love, which he knew was Dutch, confessing

(which he also knew probably wouldn't happen), having surgery to remove it, and therefore his feelings for Dutch dying along with it (something he knew he wouldn't do), and finally, succumbing to the disease and having roots grow in his lung till he suffocated and died. Lifting the purple petal to inspect it, Hosea found it ironic that he would be coughing up petals of a bellflower, which often symbolized affection, constancy, and everlasting love. He rubbed the petal in his hands not quite ready to throw it away just yet.

The sound of horse hooves made him glance up only to find himself staring at Arthur, his adopted son, gazing back at him. Something must be present in face since he can see honest concern on Arthur's face instead of the man hiding it as he usually did. Slowly, his son slid from his mare and cautiously walking over to him. "Hosea?" Arthur questioned softly. "Is... is everything alright?" Exhaling, Hosea closed his eyes before motioning Arthur forward. Kneeling next to his father, Arthur placed a hand on his leg. One of Hosea's grasped his, and the man finally opened his eyes to stare sadly at him. "Is it Dutch?"

Swallowing the cough, the older man nodded not wanting to lie to his son. He opened Arthur's hand placing the petal delicately in his hand. "I coughed this up just now." Hosea confessed, and Arthur inhaled sharply familiar with what it meant. "It seems my love for him will be the death of me, because we both know I won't do the surgery. And," His voice wavered a bit, "I doubt Dutch will... would love me back. He's too caught up in Annabelle's death. We both know that." Arthur's hand tightened around his.

"Pa." His heart cracked when he heard the emotion in Arthur's voice. "I... God."

"I know, son, I know." He watched Arthur lean against him slight tremors going through the younger man. He transferred Arthur's hand to his other, and used the now free hand to pull Arthur close. His son snuggled to closer to his shoulder, and let out a choked sob. Hosea let his hand wrapped around Arthur move up, and softly stroke the blonde locks of hair just like he did to calm him down when Arthur had been a young scared teenager. "I'm proud of you, son. You are the son Bessie and I should of had." Arthur borrowed closer into him sobs now openly rocking his body.

"Not... not like this, Pa." Arthur spoke between sobs. "You shouldn't have to die like this, Pa. It's not fair." Hosea sighed.

"No, it's not, but what choice do we have really? Do you truly think he has feelings for me, Arthur? When he so clearly pines after Annebelle after all these years?"

"No. Hell, Molly is... is just..." Arthur trailed off unable to find the words. Pulling back, he wiped the tears from his face before leaning forward with his elbows on his legs.

"I know." Hosea reached out and patted Arthur's leg. "But enough of this deary talk. We still have a camp to tend to, and I have a lead. Come with me." Standing up, he stretched out tired muscles before packing up the tiny camp he had made.

"What... what kind of lead is it?"

"Ah, a small one where we might be able to fence some coaches and wagons from time to time. Near Emerald Ranch."

“Well, sure beats tracking a thousand pound grizzly.” Arthur teased earning a chuckle from him.

“That it does.”

Petals 2

Chapter Notes

New chapter. The disease progresses a bit. I'm also toying with the idea of making this angst with a happy ending instead of pure angst.

Arthur considered himself the protector of the gang. When their numbers had grown, he took on more and more jobs to help his small family. Through the hardships, failed jobs, and a traitor, he stayed a rock, a silent guardian that watched over the others. It wasn't uncommon to see him patrolling the camp after the others had long gone to sleep. Arthur pushed himself as hard as he could to provide what safety and protection he could. Yet, here he was helpless. How could he protect his father against a disease that had few cures?

As he rode behind Hosea, Arthur found himself wanting to scream, to cry, to do something to prevent Hosea from dying from the disease. He wanted to drag Dutch by his collar, slam the other man he considered a father onto his knees and scream at him what he was doing to Hosea. Show him how he was going to lose his friend of twenty years. How Hosea had loved him for years, and kept it a secret even though it risked his life in different ways. But, Arthur knew better. Dutch would never return Hosea's feelings, and Hosea would choke and die on the roots of his love for the other man.

Speaking of Hosea, Arthur turned his gaze to his Pa riding ahead. He didn't understand how he could be so calm knowing he would die painfully. Hanahaki Disease never killed its victims painlessly. He would cough up blood and petals until full flowers appeared. Then roots of the flower would grow in Hosea's lungs before suffocating the man. It was not the way Arthur imagined his father would die. He had hoped that it would be peaceful, either in his sleep or a quick bullet in a fatal area. Not by choking on roots, petals, and flowers.

As if sensing his pain, Hosea turned to him. "I can hear your thoughts from up here, Arthur." The older man slowed Silver to a trot so the younger could ride beside him. "Still thinking about my disease?" He questioned, gaze and voice soft. Arthur had to swallow before he could answer.

"Yes." He twisted the reins in his hands. "It's... I..." Arthur found himself unable to form any words. How could he explain to his Pa how he felt? How much he wanted, no, needed Hosea to stay by his side. How he couldn't imagine a life in the gang without the man who taught him how to read, draw, and gave him his first journal. A hand covered his own.

"I know, son." Hosea started. "But there's nothing we can do about it." Slowing Silver, the older outlaw moved his horse off the road, Arthur following. "And I know nothing will dull the hurt that my death will bring you. All we can do is enjoy the time we'll have for the time

being.” One of Hosea’s hands landed on his shoulder and squeezed. “There is something I want to ask of you, before my life comes to an end.”

Arthur swallowed again. “What is it, Pa?”

“When the time comes, I want you to get John and his family out of here. No matter what.” A pain shot through Arthur’s heart. Hosea was telling him to leave the gang after he passed, and to take John and his family with him. He didn’t know if he could do that.

“Pa, I...” He started gazing in disbelief. The hand squeezed again.

“Arthur, please. Save some of the money you earn... yes, I’m telling you to donate less to the camp. I know how much the gang means to you, but we both know this is going to end one way or another.” Hosea maneuvered his horse next to Arthur’s. “You, John, his family, and a few others have the chance to move on from this life. The rest don’t. You grab these people, and you get them out when the time comes. I know you can do it, son.” The younger outlaw took in a shuddering breath, and closed his eyes. A tear ran down his face before he glanced back at Hosea, who leaned forward to wipe it away.

“I promise, Pa. I’ll make you proud.” Hosea smiles.

“You already make me proud, Arthur.” He returned to the road. “Now, this lead might make you some money. In fact, should we make a deal with him, you’ll be able to make some easy money to save up. A safe place to steal and fence coaches, Arthur. Something the both of us can easily do; especially you. And if we’re unable, then the two of us ought to hang up our hats.” Nodding slowly, Arthur exhaled as they continued the ride to Emerald Ranch.

Seamus seemed to be a weaselly sort, but despite that, Arthur would have a safe spot to fence coaches provided they stole Seamus’s crooked cousin-by-marriage’s coach. The thought relaxed Hosea a little. Provided nothing went wrong each time Arthur stole a coach to fence after this, then he would be able to gain some money to get him, John and his family, as well as a few others, out, when the time came. Something deep in his gut spoke to him that this would not end well. That Dutch... Dutch would damn them all. A cough accompanied by a flower petal escaped his lungs. Letting the petal fall from his hands as they rode to Carmody Dell.

A pain grasped his heart as they rode in silence, but what could he truly do about it? The age of outlaws was ending, and the man he had loved for twenty plus years was slowly ignoring all of his advice. Now that love was killing him slowly from the inside. He tried to push the thoughts away, focus on the job, but the pain in his chest refused to allow him that much. Pulling Silver off the road, Hosea let out another cough, another petal.

A hand rested on his back. “Pa?” Arthur sounded scared and worried. Hosea held onto Silver’s neck as he glanced up at the man he called his son for twenty years as well. Reaching over, He patted Arthur’s leg trying to relax his son, although he doubted it would help considering he just coughed up another petal.

“I’ll be fine.” He wheezed. Arthur’s brows furrowed.

“Maybe we should go at night, Pa. It’ll be easier, and you won’t have to worry about trying to sell something to Seamus’s cousin.” Arthur opened his mouth to speak more, before quickly snapping it shut. Hosea motioned for him to go ahead and speak. His son fidgeted, rubbed the back of his neck before he went on. “If you start coughing up petals in front of the man, then it’d be easier for him to set a bounty on us.”

“Good idea, Arthur. Let’s get closer then wait for night.”

Petals 3

Chapter Summary

Slowly the plot grows. SeewhatIdidthere? I'msorry.

The canvas that provides as cover for his, Bill's, and Lenny's tent cover greets him as he blinks away sleep. It's been two weeks since they've moved to Horseshoe Outlook, and where he's found that his death is sealed regardless of how he wanted to go. Death by choking on flowers was certainly not how Hosea imagined going, yet, it was how he was going to go. Sitting up, he rubs the rest of the sleep from his eyes and finds himself staring at Dutch's tent. Something twists his heart, and another cough shoves its way from his chest. Another bellflower petal comes out, and he sighs.

Shoving the petal into his pocket, Hosea stands, stretches, then heads over to the pot where coffee, or what barely passed as such, was boiling. He shouldn't dwell too much on his fate, he's lived a good life despite everything he's done. And yet, he still hopes that he could confess to Dutch regardless. Shoving the thought away because there's no hope to wish for something that's never going to happen, Hosea crouches down to pour coffee into his mug before he heads over to the cliff to enjoy the view for a bit.

Susan passes him, and they both greet each other quietly not wishing to wake those who are sleeping nearby. Bones creaking he makes himself comfortable on the rock while overlooking the land below. Taking a sip, Hosea enjoys the quiet moment he's been given. Between the Reverend's drunken singing, John's – who needed to get his head out of his ass — and Abigail's screaming matches, and Susan's yelling at the girls, the camp can be rather noisy sometimes, and that's when Dutch wasn't playing his music. Shaking his head, Hosea takes another sip. Despite that, he loves the gang deeply even though loving deeply will be the death of him.

A hand came down on his shoulder, and the warm voice of Dutch sounds in his ear. "What's got you in a rut, old man?" He turns to find Dutch standing at his right side, expression twisted into concern. The older outlaw know the younger cares for him, even if he wouldn't love him back.

Gesturing with his coffee, Hosea replies, "Oh, you know, the usual." How else can he answer Dutch's inquiry? Tell the other man he's dying from a disease made of love? No, he knows that wouldn't go over well. A dark eyebrow twitches, and Dutch sits next to him, his hands clasped in front of him.

"You think I've gone crazy, haven't you?" The question startles Hosea, but he shoves the emotion down. Running a finger across the rim of his mug, he thinks on how he should proceed, because the question feels loaded, and he doesn't trip and fall. It's taken from him

before he can formulate an answer as Dutch waves him off. “Nevermind.” A hand plucks the coffee from him, and he watches Dutch drink; watches the other man’s Adam’s apple bob as he drinks. Wishes it was him on those lips, and not the mug. Wishes he could know what it felt like to have Dutch’s lips on his. The mistake of allowing those thoughts to wander slams him in the chest as he erupts into coughing again.

Dutch’s hand pounds his back as he coughs already knowing the petal will appear soon. Deftly moving it from his mouth and into his pocket, he turns to Dutch. “I’m fine, I’m fine.” A frown answers his statement, and he can see the thoughts running through the other man’s mind.

“You ain’t fine, Hosea. You’ve been coughing a lot lately.” Dutch inspects him. “Have you seen the doctor in Valentine yet? We can afford to pluck some money from the box to cover the check up.” Thick fingers tilted his head up, down, and around as Dutch continues to inspect him. Sighing, he pulls the hand away, and shakes his head.

“I already know what it is, Dutch. It’ll pass, it’s just a cough.” It’s the wrong thing to say because Dutch instantly grows angry.

“You’ve been coughing since Blackwater, that was about a month ago, Hosea.” Dutch shakes his head. “Normal coughs don’t last that long.” Both Dutch’s expression and tone softened when he speaks again. “Please, tell me.” The fingers return to press against his forehead, and his heart skips a beat at the touch. But before he can answer, Lenny suddenly bursts into camp screaming about Micah. The two of them stand, and head over to where the second youngest gang member stands panting.

“Lenny, calm down, son. Breathe.” Dutch orders as he lays a hand on Lenny’s shoulder. A group gathers around, and Hosea sees Arthur nudge his way forward.

“It’s Micah.” He gets out as he leans forward hands on his knees. “They’re going to string him up in Strawberry.”

“What happened, Lenny? Tell us everything.” He asks before Dutch can, and Hosea can feel Dutch’s stare on him.

“We rode over to Strawberry as you asked for us to do. By the time we were halfway over there, Micah was half-soaked, Hosea.” Out of the corner of his eye, he can see Arthur’s fists tightening into balls while anger slowly grows on his face. “Then we met up with some old friends of his, drank some more, and then the next thing I know half the town wants to kill us. I just barely got out on my own, Dutch.” Lenny has now turned to face Dutch who rubbing his chin as he thinks. “He’s got a crazy side to him, Dutch. You should have seen him!” There’s murmur amongst the crowd when Lenny finishes, and pure anger can be seen on Arthur’s face.

“John, get Lenny a drink, the rest of you return to work.” Hosea orders, and John complies while pulling Lenny away.

“He’s getting to be a huge problem, Dutch.” Arthur growls from his spot. Arms crossed, and expression angry, Arthur paints the prefect of a brute if he was actually one.

“You don’t say that about Bill, Arthur.” Dutch replies. “Surely, there’s been a mistake. A-” He’s cut off by Arthur to spits back out.

“Bill can at least control himself where he doesn’t kill nobody, Dutch. Hell, Davey and Mac could too.”

“He has a point, Dutch.” Hosea agrees. “Even Bill doesn’t get soaked on a job, even a simple one like scouting.” He can see something flash in Dutch’s eyes when he says that. Hosea almost lets out a sigh.

“You think I can’t see past-”

“It’s not about you, Dutch. It’s about the safety of the gang!” Arthur interrupts again, and Dutch’s head seems to snap back a bit. Even Hosea is a bit surprised at the fierceness in Arthur’s tone. “You gave the me position as the enforcer, the, the protector of this gang, Dutch.” Vaguely, their son gestures towards Strawberry. “I see a danger in front of us, Dutch. Danger that Micah and his damn murderous tendencies is going to bring us! We’re supposed to be lyin’ low. Not getting into fights that kill people in the middle of town.” Dutch begins only to be cut off by Arthur for a third time. “Don’t you bring up my bar fight at Valentine. I didn’t kill nobody, and I wasn’t arrested. Neither where Javier, Charles or even Bill. And even when I was arrested it was never for murder, just drunken violence!” Arthur moves close to Dutch’s chest and Hosea pushes the two of them away before it can escalate.

“Arthur has a point, again, Dutch. You know how we’ve felt about Micah.” Dutch’s eyes flutter shut and he breathes in and out before opening them again.

“Alright, alright. I… understand, Arthur, Hosea. We’ll, we’ll cut Micah.” With that said, Arthur moves to join John and Lenny; no doubt to tell them the news. Dutch’s shoulders deflate, and Hosea can see the exhaustion slip through Dutch’s carefully carved mask. Knowing he’ll regret it later, Hosea lets his hands go to Dutch’s shoulders and grip them.

“I know it’s bothering you, and I’m actually quite surprised he was that forceful with you, but you know how fiercely protective Arthur can be when it comes to our family, our gang.” Rubbing Dutch’s shoulder with his thumbs, he watches some of the exhaustion slip away from Dutch who seems to be leaning into his touch. Hosea tries not to think about it as he goes on. “We should be laying low, Dutch. Not starting murder sprees in a town not to far from Blackwater.”

“You’re right.” Hanging his head, another sigh escapes Dutch. “And I’m sorry. I messed up at Blackwater.”

Hosea chuckles. “We’ve messed up before. So long as we don’t do it again, we’ll be fine. Now let’s focus on getting money, and finding an escape plan.”

“Right. You’ll be with me to the end, Hosea?”

“Always, Dutch, always.” He guides Dutch to his tent. “Now, about escape routes, I might have an idea once they’re done scouting Blackwater for Sean.” That gets him a raised eyebrow.

“Do tell.”

Petals 4

Chapter Summary

Arthur finally tells John about Hosea's sickness. And what Hosea wants Arthur to do.

Arthur ran his hand down his face marching over to John and Lenny. The pair looked up at him when he stopped in front of them. "So?" Lenny asked while thumbing the beer bottle in his hand. Taking off his hat, and plopping it on the table, Arthur took a seat and snatched John's bottle. For once, John didn't complain. Taking a sip, he thought about how to word it, before deciding that the best way was to be utterly blunt about it.

Handing the bottle back to John, he turned to Lenny. "We're letting Micah go. It's one thing to start a bar fight in a town leagues away from Blackwater, and another to start a bar fight that ends in murder in the same goddamned state as Blackwater." Lenny nods and takes another drink of his beer. First the news about Sean, then Hosea dying, and now Micah. Letting out another groan, Arthur ran his hands through his hair again. There's a nudge from John's foot and he peers at the man.

"You alright?" His brother stares at him, inspects him even. There's worry in John's eyes while the man gives him a quick glance over. Leaning away from the table, Arthur got up swiping his hat and placing it on his head where it belonged.

"No, a lot on my mind. Lenny, sit and try and take your mind off of Micah." He turned to John. "The two of us need to talk... now. And alone." Arthur gesture for his younger brother to follow him to the outskirts of the camp. Bill comes up as John is leaving.

"Where you two going?" John turns to look at him.

"Arthur and I need to talk about something private, Bill. Have the rest of my beer and forget about it." He grumped before finally following his older brother. With a huff of his own, Bill threw up his hands and took a seat at the table snatching John's beer as he did.

"So, what are we doing about Micah?" He asks making Lenny groan in response before telling him to ask John later. The youngest outlaw wanted to drink to forget Micah for now, so Bill obliged him for once.

It's a rare sight for John to be following Arthur, and Arthur to allow him. So much that Abigail comes up to him suspicion in her eyes as she questions Arthur if he's finally do them all a favor and kill John. John would have shot something back if not for Arthur telling them both to quiet down. "Come on you two, follow me." The older man huffs resuming the path he was taken, the two younger following after sharing a look.

“What is it, Arthur?” Abigail questions when they’re a good distance away from the camp. The two can see a wave of several emotions pass through Arthur’s face, and that tells them it’s not something they’re going to like. The older outlaw clenches his fists and teeth trying to think of what to say. Wary, Abigail inches forward placing a hand on Arthur’s chest. “Arthur?” She’s concerned when he doesn’t answer, and glances at John who can only shrug.

“It’s Pa.” Arthur finally speaks while holding a gaze with John. Confusion spreads itself across John’s face who’s staring at Arthur waiting for an explanation. “He’s... he’s dying, John.”

“What, no!” John surges forward and grasps Arthur by the shirt collar. “You’re... you’re lying, Arthur.” John’s eyes are searching his trying to find Arthur’s telltale signs of lying. When he finds none, his younger brother takes a step back shock coloring his face. “How... how?” There’s a crack in his voice, and Arthur finds himself hating that he heard it. One quick glance at Abigail shows the same.

“Hanahaki Disease.” Arthur finally breathes out the words. “Yes, that one.” He confirms when John and Abigail furrow their eyebrows in disbelief. “I saw the petals, John. And... and Hosea he confirmed it. You know he won’t lie to us about something like that.” His brother’s shoulders drop as he leans against a tree eyes down.

Abigail rests a hand on John’s arm before asking, “Who is it?”

Arthur has to swallow before he can answer. “Dutch, of course. Who else would it be?” Waving his hands around in a hopeless manner, he went on. “But there’s nothing we can do.” John’s head snaps up and glares at him. He would have spoken if Arthur hadn’t leveled his own glare at him. “Dad... dad cares about Pa, there’s no doubt about it. But, he doesn’t love him, John. You know that, I know that. He’s too caught up on Annabelle!” At that, John’s glare withers because he knows it to be true. Two hands clamp his shoulders, and the younger brother glances up to see his older brother gazing softly at him. “I know, John. I want Pa to live as much as you do, but... Dutch, he... he’ll never lover Hosea back, and Pa’s never going to do the surgery for it.” John can feel something in his heart break, and tears prick at his eyes. A soft hand slips into his, and he sees Abigail’s there squeezing his softly. She loves Hosea just as much as they do.

“Now what?” John croaks barely trusting his voice.

“Pa wants me to save up money to get you, Abigail, Jack, myself and anyone else who’s willing to come out of here when he passes.” Arthur’s voice takes a turn cracking when he mentions Hosea’s passing. “So, that’s what I’m going to do. I’m going to save up some money, and get us outta here.” Arthur gives his shoulders a squeeze before dropping his hands away. “Okay, John?”

“Okay.” He keeps his hand holding Abigail’s while Arthur stalks off no doubt to get money. She moves closer to him and placed her other hand against his cheek.

“You gonna be okay, John?” She’s not judging when she asks him. There’s nothing but kindness in her eyes when he looks.

“I... no.” He admits softly. “Hosea, Pa... he was meant to live to old age, Abigail. Not, not like this.” Her thumb strokes his cheek, and John finds himself leaning into the touch brows furrowed and eyes fluttering shut. “Goddamnit.” He hoarsely whispers. “I want to punch Dutch.”

“Only if I can get one in too.” Abigail responds softly, and John finds his eyes opening. A grin breaks through his sadness, and he starts chuckling. John has to admit to himself it’d be funny to watch Abigail punch Dutch in the face, and the mental picture of her doing it sends him into a fit of laughter. Guessing as to what he’s laughing at, Abigail joins him. Soon, the laughter dies out leaving the two softly gazing at each other.

“I guess I can allow it.” Bringing a hand over Abigail’s, he quietly asks, “Can you stay here for a bit. I... don’t want to be alone.”

“Of course, John. I understand.”

Petals 5

Chapter Summary

Naturally I had to include this scene.

Sean is back, and Hosea can't quite say he's happy to see the man. A rage still burns in his chest for the attempt Sean had made on Dutch's life. Personal reasons for him hating Sean aside, Hosea was happy to see his sons smiling as they sat around the main campfire. Especially since John confronted him a few days ago about the flowers growing in his chest. He should go over, join them, and celebrate, but he can't quite find it in himself to do so. Standing from the chair he had been sitting in, Hosea meanders over to the horses feeling the need to run a brush against Silver's fur. The flighty young man that was Kieran Duffy greets him from where he's working on a saddle near the rock, but nothing more comes from him. Not that Hosea can blame him, after all Hosea still is the second in command; even in his old age, he cuts an imposing figure.

Bending down to grab one of the brushes, Hosea sighs running his fingers against the bristles. Passing the Count, Hosea pets his nose briefly before standing next to Silver. "Hey, boy, how ya doing?" He questions softly running a hand through the black mane. Silver nickers at him before promptly shoving his face into Hosea's coat pockets. Laughing softly to himself, he takes out a peppermint only to see it disappear in a matter of seconds. Shaking his head at the sight, Hosea moves to Silver's right side and begins softly brushing his horse. The horse relaxes under his touch, and minutes pass by quickly the party in the camp steadily growing as more people grow drunk.

After he finishes brushing, he glances up to see Dutch dancing with Molly, and his heart aches. Everything in his body wishes it was him in Dutch's arms, guiding the other man while they danced to the opera Dutch often listened to. Wishes it was him hearing the sweet nothings Dutch would whisper, and they'd chuckle about. Wishes he could openly dance with him, openly love him. So many wishes he could never have all because he fell for both the right and wrong person. A cough erupts from his chest, and two petals come from his mouth. Turning away from the sight, Hosea exhales before glancing again at the petals. Two petals, and a bellflower has a total of five. Sadness washed over him as he inspects the petals. The disease is starting to progress, and he knows soon he'll be coughing up three petals instead two or one. He lets the petals fall from his hand, lets the wind take them away from Horseshoe Outlook. Giving Silver one last pat for the night, Hosea moves to the tent he shares, grabs a beer, and nurses it at the table in front of the tent.

Memories stream through his mind, and he lets them. Memories of him, Dutch, Arthur, John, Bessie, and everyone else. Happy times, sad times, angry times, they all come back to him. Hosea takes a sip of the beer greeting the memories wordlessly. In a camp of outlaws, misfits, and unwanted, Hosea feels alone, cold, and hurt, but more alone than anything else. How

could he explain his feelings for another man to any one else. Arthur may understand, but their relationship is father and son, and there are things you can never tell your child, no matter how much you wish you could. Sighing, Hosea places the bottle down, and rubs at the bridge of his nose before placing his hand on the table. His chest is full of sorrow, love, petals, and everything in between. Another cough, more petals, and a voice breaks him from his thoughts. A warm voice, Dutch's voice.

"How you keeping, old man?" His partner lumbers to Hosea worry on his face. It makes Hosea's chest burn, but he manages to keep the cough in.

"Oh you know. Been better." Hosea replies watching Dutch sit across from him. Dutch watches him before speaking.

"We... have had quite the ride, huh?" Distantly the two of them can hear the camp's half drunken singing. It makes Hosea smile when he glances over to the group, and Dutch smiles as well.

"Oh yeah, quite the ride." Hosea agrees thinking of the times they shared up till the present. Leaning forward, Dutch calls him back from the memory trip.

"They ain't strung us yet." There's a grin on Dutch's face when he says this, and it feels Hosea's heart with warmth.

"No." Hosea wheezed out, a small cough coming from his chest. Concern flashes across Dutch's face, but before he can voice it, the older outlaw goes on, "Maybe they never will."

"They won't." Dutch agrees placing his hand on top of Hosea's. It takes everything in Hosea's power to not inhale sharply at the touch. Dutch's hand is warm and strong like always, and he could hold it for hours if it was up to him. "I'm going to get us out of this one. We have been stuck before." A chuckle sounds from Dutch as he pulls away. "You... do you remember that mine?" Dutch's chuckles grow, and Hosea can't help but join in.

"Of course."

"That, oh, that nauseating popinjay, in that frontier town." They burst into another round of giggles. His chest aches, but in a good way, even that good way won't last very long. But he's thankful it's there at least; he's still alive for now.

"Of course." He wheezes out again in laughter, not in pain. Dutch's hand is on his again once he's finished laughing. A part of him wishes Dutch would keep it there and never let go, but he knows it won't happen.

"We did it, Hosea." The words are said so softly that Hosea sharply inhales. They had achieved one of their goals, and that was to make a small gang, a small family. The warmth of Dutch's hand on his hand seems warmer than he thought, and a part of him is surprised to see it there still. "Whatever else happens, we did it."

"I know." Hosea's response is soft as well, and he finds himself staring eye to eye at Dutch. The want to kiss the man in front of him is overwhelming, but he subdues the urge. But God

does he want to. Patting his hand a couple times, Dutch gives him one last smile before getting up, and heading back to the party leaving Hosea to stare at his back. The sadness comes swirling back as he watches the man he loves move gracefully.

Petals 6

Chapter Summary

The ending will make you hate me, and I regret nothing.

The sound of birds chirping greets Hosea the next morning. Letting out a soft sigh while wiping the sleep away, he stands from his bed roll. A quick look at his left shows Bill and Lenny still passed out; no doubt from last night's party. Letting a soft smile grace his features, he moseys over to the coffee pot where Susan is already standing near, cup in hand. Greeting her softly, he bends down to make himself a cup before standing next to her. "Quite the night last night." He mused looking over the sight of passed out outlaws huddled in their bed rolls. Susan follows his gaze before sipping her coffee.

"Sure was, Hosea." She peaked at him. "How have you been? Noticed you've been coughing a lot, and Arthur and John seem to be on edge from it." Susan inspects him, feels like she's staring into his soul and picking everything out. Susan knows him too well to notice any of his usual ticks when he's lying, and he knows she'll keep whatever he says a secret.

"Hanahaki Disease." He finally says. Susan's eyes land on Dutch's tent, then back to him. Swallowing, he nods before drinking his own coffee. A hand gently touches his back before leaving, and he's thankful she keeps it a light touch. The conversation dies out, and silence reigns as the two enjoy each other's presence. Despite the brief presence of a depressing topic, the morning is peaceful as the camp sleeps off the night's partying. "I don't know about you, Susan, but I don't miss drinking that hard." He joked earning a grin from her.

"No, I certainly don't." The sound of dragging feet greet them, and they turn to see Arthur and John awake, but still feeling the effects of last night. Both men mumble a greeting in passing before they dunk their heads into the cool water making Hosea and Susan laugh.

"Someone kill me." John groaned.

"How much you payin', Marston?" Arthur asks earning a kick in the shin from his younger brother. Arthur shrugs it off, before kicking him back, and dunking his face again. Susan looks to Hosea and rolls her eyes with a smile at the boy's antics, he can only smile back.

"Well, good morning, boys." Dutch laughs joining Hosea and Susan at the fire. "Looks like someone had fun last night."

"I want to die." Arthur grumbles into his hands. Dutch barks at laugh at his older son.

"How much *you* payin', Morgan?" John bites back, and Hosea and Susan have to hide their grins. Arthur pulls away from the bucket to dunk John's face back in. John flails a little

before Arthur lets go. The younger brother pounces on his older brother the moment he can sending the two men to the ground. A tussle broke out between the two.

“I see the two of them haven’t outgrown that yet.” Dutch observes hands on his hips.

“No.” Hosea agrees taking another sip of his coffee. They watch in amusement before Susan gives the rest of her coffee to Dutch, and snaps out a quick ‘boys!’ breaking the two apart, sheepish grins on both brother’s faces. She drags the two of them up by their ears, and drags them away. The sight has Dutch and Hosea almost roaring in laughter, and it’s not long before Dutch turns back to him.

“Feelin’ better this morning, Hosea?” There’s a softness in his tone when he asks, and it melts the inside of Hosea’s heart. Swallowing, he lets his gaze roam around camp, before he feels like he can answer.

“For now, the peace of the camp feels nice for once.” Dutch hums in agreement before finishing the rest of Susan’s coffee in one swing. Hosea bites the inside of his cheek to keep his thoughts from going where they shouldn’t. Tossing the cup to the ground, Dutch wipes his mouth with his sleeve before gripping Hosea’s shoulder and heading back to his tent. Finishing the rest of his coffee, Hosea picks the cup on the ground up, and places it next to Pearson’s wagon with his own. Turning around, he nearly knocks over Abigail. “Sorry.” He mumbled moving to steady her, but she waves him off.

“It’s fine, Hosea.” Quickly, Abigail inspects him before glancing to the side, and seeing Arthur walk by, axe in hand. “Arthur!” She calls moving to the other man who turns at the sound of his name. “Can I ask you do something with Jack?” Arthur furrows his brows.

“Why not ask John?”

“He said something about a planning for a train robbery. And Dutch wants to know when he’s done with it.” Shrugging, Arthur put down the axe he had been holding.

“Sure. I’ll take him fishing by the river. Hosea gave him a fishing rod, I believe.” Arthur looks to him for confirmation.

“I did.”

“Thank you, Arthur.”

“Of course.” Arthur moves to let Abigail walk past him, before turning to Hosea. “Wanna join us, old man?” There’s a small teasing smile on Arthur’s face when he says it.

“Sure, why not, child.” He playfully shoots back as they head towards Jack. Arthur grins and bumps his shoulder with Hosea’s before leaning down on his knees.

“Hey Jack, Grandpa Hosea and I are gonna go fishin’. Want to join us?” Jack glances up and looks between the two of them.

“Fishing?”

“Yeah, fishing.” Hosea joined in. “We’d enjoy it if you joined us, I won’t make you read tomorrow if you do.” Something in Jack’s face lit up, and he sprung up.

“Okay!”

“Still have that rod I gave you?” Jack nodded. “Well, go get it then while Uncle Arthur and I get the horses ready.” With a quick ‘okay!’ Jack ran off to his and his mother’s tent. Arthur gave him a long look.

“Where was that offer when I was growing up?” He pouted making Hosea chuckle.

“‘Fraid you weren’t as cute as Jack is.” A groan sounds from his oldest son who mounts up on his horse. Shaking his head at Arthur, Hosea moved over to Silver and mounted just as Jack rejoins them. Arthur takes the smaller fishing rod, and tucks it between his leg and the saddle before hoisting Jack onto the front of his saddle. Seeing Arthur interact with Jack warms, just as it saddens, his heart. Arthur had been robbed of his chance to be a true father to Isaac; too caught up with the gang to leave, and Eliza unwilling to join them when Arthur offered. But, that had long since passed, and Hosea could only hope when Arthur left the gang after his death that he would be given the chance again.

The ride to the Dakota River is swift with Jack setting the pace. The boy practically shouts for Arthur to ride faster, who does, as he leads them to a spot where Arthur had spotted a decent fishing spot. Helping Jack off his horse, Arthur quickly peaks a glance at Hosea after dismounting himself. Warmed by his son’s concern, Hosea slips from the saddle easily, and grabs his own fishing rod before joining Arthur where he and Jack are standing. Leading Jack over the water, Arthur patiently instructs Jack while Hosea happily watches on. Eventually, Jack grows quickly bored as four year olds often do. Setting his rod by Arthur, they watch him start gathering flowers.

“Whatcha doin’ there, Jack?” Arthur inquires.

“Making momma a necklace of flowers.” Arthur opened his mouth to reply, but another voice cuts through before he can.

“Well, isn’t this quite a domestic sight.”

Petals 7

Chapter Summary

Ah, if that last chapter didn't make you hate me... this one might.

They turned to see two well groomed men staring at them. One of the men leveled a shotgun at them as the two inched closer. Hosea pulled Jack behind him, and watched as Arthur took a step forward putting himself before them. The strangers shared a laugh and a grin between each other, before the one not holding a gun spoke up again, "You can relax, Mister Arthur Morgan I presume." When the stranger spoke his name, Arthur locked his jaw, and tensed up. The gaze landed on Hosea for a second, and the grin grew wider. "And Mister Hosea Matthews too. Two of the top three leaders of the Van der Linde gang right in front of me." The man purred.

Placing his hand on his gun, Arthur spat out, "And you are?"

"I'm Agent Milton, and this," Milton gestured to the man with him, "is Agent Ross. We're with the Pinkerton Detective Agency." Hosea's blood goes ice cold, and he pressed Jack closer to his leg. Sensing his grandfather's tension, Jack buried his head into Hosea's leg trying to hide. A soft snarl exited his son's chest making Milton laugh. "Now, now, Mr. Morgan, let's be civil about this. Don't want any harm to come to the boy, yes?" Milton's mouth morphs into a lazy grin when he finishes. Something ripples through Arthur's body, and Hosea knows if they want to avoid a bloodbath, he needs to calm down Arthur.

"What do you want, Agent Milton?" Hosea speaks up trying to sound polite as he possibly could.

"That's easy, Mr. Matthews. I want Dutch Van der Linde alive until I can deliver him to Blackwater where a rope will take care of his neck. That's all. The rest of you can run off, and pass on somewhere else. I just want to watch Van der Linde to face justice for Mrs. Heide McCourt." The way Milton speaks so casually of hanging Dutch shoots pain through Hosea's heart leading his mind to places where it shouldn't go. A cough breaks from his mouth before he can hold it back, and three petals fall to the ground.

Stillness settles around the group while the offending petals fall from Hosea's mouth. Dread creeps up his spine at the sight of three petals when only last night he had been coughing up two. The sharp inhale from Arthur, and taunting laughter from Milton, makes him look up again horror crossing his face before he quickly drags it away through effort. "Well, isn't this a surprise, Mr. Ross?" Milton jeers turning to his partner. "The infamous Hosea Matthews has caught the infamous petal disease, which will eventually bring him a painful end. Such a shame." The two agents snort out laughter making Arthur grit his teeth. "Well, this changes things, although only slightly. Here's the deal I offer you two; bring Dutch alive, and we'll

spare your pitiful gang, and pay for the surgery so you can live longer if you so choose to, Mr. Matthews.”

“Why,” Hosea has to steady himself, “why should we take your offer, Agent Milton? Why should we turn in Dutch?” A tightness wraps around his chest, and Hosea can feel another bout of petals stirring in his chest. Thinking of his own death doesn’t bother him, but to think of Dutch swinging on the rope, his chest struggling for air, body twitching in response before the rope finally breaks Dutch’s neck isn’t something Hosea wants to muse on. More petals fall from his mouth before he could stop them, and Arthur goes rigid. The grin on Milton’s face more grows when he sees more petals; the pieces are coming together for Milton, and Hosea hates that fact, but he can hardly stop the sudden torrent of petals coming.

“Well, Mr. Matthews, I suppose you don’t have much reason too, but what your... ‘sons’, and the boy, hm?” Milton starts to back away, Ross following. “I’ll let you two think about this. If you do decide to accept you may find me at Saint Denis in a week’s time. Don’t worry, I’ll know if you step into the city. Good day, gentleman.” The detectives mount their horses, and ride off towards Strawberry.

Arthur stares the two down making sure they disappear from sight, before turning to Hosea. “Pa, you alright?” Worry laces his tone, and Hosea wishes he could erase it, but there’s no use. Before he can offer some reassurance, a tiny hand tugs at his own, and he turns to see Jack also worried.

“Grandpa, you coughed up petals!” Sharing a look with Arthur, Hosea has to swallow before he can look at Jack.

“I did.” He starts off slowly, while kneeling before Jack. “And it’s nothing to worry about, okay? It’ll be fine, Jack.” His grandson’s nose scrunched in the same way John’s did, and it made Hosea wonder why John didn’t think Jack was his. Bopping Jack’s nose, he went on before Jack could interrupt, “But I need you to keep silent about it, however. I don’t want Grandpa Dutch worrying about it, okay?”

“Okay...” Hosea can tell Jack’s disappointed with the response, but he doesn’t need Dutch finding out.

“Where’d your necklace for your mother go, Jack? Have you finished it yet?” His grandson’s eyes went wide, and he bounced over to where the necklace had laid forgotten for a time. Holding it, Jack inspected the necklace with all the seriousness a four year old could muster. Nodding in an almost sage like manner, Jack waddled over to them, and handed Hosea the necklace. Smiling, Hosea made a show of inspecting it. “It’s beautiful, Jack. Your mother will like it very much. Don’t you agree, Arthur?” Arthur inspect Hosea, before gently taking the flower necklace out of his hands.

“It looks fine, Jack.” Arthur drawled handing his nephew the necklace back. “Why don’t we head back to camp so you can give it to her?” Beaming, Jack nodded while bouncing on his toes. A soft chuckle exited Arthur’s mouth. “Well, come on, let’s pack up our fishing rods.” Bending down, Arthur picked both his and Hosea’s rods while Jack scattered over to his. They walked over to the horses, put Arthur’s and Hosea’s fishing rods into saddlebags before Arthur mounted, tucked Jack against his leg and the saddle once more, and bended down to

pick up Jack while Hosea mounted as well. Driving their horses to the road, Arthur let Jack chatter on while he sent his father a look saying they would need to talk later. Tilting his head in response, Hosea let his eyes return the road while Arthur answered questions from Jack about the men that had came by. Pinching the bridge of his nose, Hosea could only hope that Jack would keep his promise, and Dutch wouldn't find out about his feelings. It was the last thing the gang needed at this time.

Petals 8, final

Chapter Summary

The calm before the storm.

Horseshoe Outlook remains undisturbed when they come back. Hosea lets out the breathe he didn't know he had been holding. The Pinkertons knew they were in the area, they just didn't know where. Climbing the slope with their horses, they find Bill on lookout duty, and Arthur slows down to whisper something to him. The other man looks alarmed before nodding, and Arthur kicks his horse forward with Hosea following. Arriving at the hitching posts, Hosea can't help his gaze looking for the man of his affections. Thankfully, he can see Dutch speaking with John about something. His son clears his throat forcing Hosea to look away from the man he so dearly loves, faults and all.

Abigail meets them at the hitching posts, and Jack happily shows her the flower necklace he's made. The sight puts a smile on both man's faces, but it's quickly chased away by the unspoken words hovering around them. And while Abigail isn't the smartest woman, she surely isn't the dumbest and catches on to the uneasy air between father and son. Shooting them a questioning look, Arthur mouths he'll speak to her later. Stafisited, Abigail shoos Jack away following behind, and leaving the two men to finally speak with Dutch, and John.

The walk to Dutch's tent feels long, and already he feels wary not wishing to deliver the news they're bringing. However, there isn't much he can do about it; if he didn't bring it, Arthur would. So, he sets his shoulders and marches with Arthur to the tent where John notices them. "How'd the fishing go?" Out of the corner of his eye, Hosea notes Arthur's jaw clenches.

"It was alright till we got some unexpected visitors." His older son's gaze lands on Dutch while he speaks. "Pinkertons, Dutch. They were Pinkertons." Tension fills the men standing before them, and Dutch's expression turns concerned. Before the man could speak, John blurts out.

"And they let the both of you go?" His younger son is glancing between the two of them in shock. "I mean... Hosea, you're the second in command, and Arthur you're the next after him. They had two good hostages, and they let you go?"

"They don't want us. Just Dutch." Arthur replies. "Offered everyone's freedom in exchange for your life, Dutch." Hosea shifts unconformable at the reminder of the 'deal'. He can feel a cough budding in his chest already, and it'll do no good for him to start into a coughing fit. But leading into thoughts just a bit turns the fit from a bud to full cough. Everyone glances at him worriedly, and he has to quickly shove the petals into his pockets waving them off. Dutch's gaze lingers on him longer than their sons before snapping to Arthur.

“Everyone’s freedom for my life, huh?” Dutch inquires gesturing for them to go into his tent. John guides Hosea into the chair present in the tent while Dutch sits on his cot, and Arthur stands arms crossed.

“Yes, everyone’s freedom for your life. Said it in front of Jack too.” Hosea watches John clench his hands into fists, and it makes him proud that John is finally stepping up in regards to his own family. Glancing at Dutch, he sees the man holding a disturbed expression.

“What are we going to do, Dutch?” Hosea finally speaks up; only now just trusting his voice. Dutch’s gaze lands on him, and Hosea could stare into his brown eyes forever. Shoving away the thought, the oldest outlaw watches the gears work in the other outlaw’s brain. “We should at least send someone out to scout a possible new location. Just in case.”

“Charles. We should send out Charles.” Arthur tucks his thumbs into his gun belt. “He can move faster than anyone of us here, and probably find a good place to lie low.” Dutch shifts rubbing his cheek, before nodding.

“John, will you go tell Charles to head south, find us a good place hidden in the trees if he can, then go be with your family.” Nodding, John squeezes Hosea’s shoulder before striding out of the tent. Leaning his head into his hands, Dutch lets out a sigh, and Hosea reaches over placing his hand on the man’s leg. The man’s gaze lands on Hosea’s hand. “I’ve screwed us over with that ferry job, didn’t I?” He says after a moment’s silence.

Hosea squeezes his leg, before speaking softly, “We’ll be fine. Cutting off Micah, sending one man out to scout a location, and laying low will keep our chances from being found low.” Dutch sends him a small smile only for it to fade at Arthur’s snicker. The older men turn their heads to look at their son.

“Well,” Arthur started slight mischief in his eyes, “I think we’ll definitely be fine if you don’t play your gramophone so loud.” A sigh exits Dutch’s mouth, and Hosea can’t help the twitch of a smile on his face. Staring at Hosea for the briefest of seconds, Dutch leans over playfully swatting at their son’s leg.

“Get out, you.” Dutch spoke humor coating his tone. “Your fathers need to talk on where we went so wrong with you.” Cracking a grin at Dutch, Arthur tipped his hat before sauntering out closing the tent as he did. “That boy, Hosea, I swear. Where’d he pick up that sarcastic humor from I wonder...” There’s humor in the other man’s face, and it almost eases the pain in Hosea’s chest.

“I wouldn’t know, Dutch.” The humor in Dutch is infectious, and he can feel it seeping in. “Surely, it couldn’t have been from me.” His companion snorts unconvinced. “Ah, blaming it on it me, I see. But from what I remember, you deliver those type of lines far more than I do.” Dutch’s foot lightly bumps his shin, and Hosea can’t help but laugh, Dutch joining in seconds later. Hearing Dutch’s warm laughter sets a fire in his chest, and how Hosea could listen to it for hours. Wishes he could hear it more for that matter, whether it be in private or public. Before he can chase the thoughts away a coughing fit breaks from his chest. A fist pounds on his back, and he feels petals coming from his mouth.

“Hosea?” Dutch questions, and he has to tighten his fist least Dutch sees the petals.

“I’m fine.” He lies, and the look Dutch gives him tells Hosea that the other man isn’t convinced, but he doesn’t push farther. Slowly, the older outlaw stands from the chair staring at his younger companion. “I’m going to read for a bit, it’s been a long day.” Dutch lets him go, and Hosea takes a few steps from the tent glancing down at his hand. Five petals sit in his hand mocking him. Slumping his shoulders, Hosea lets his hand drop and heads off to read. He never sees the fifth petal drop. Never sees Dutch walk out of his tent from watching him, and picking the petal up. Never sees or feels the man’s gaze land on his back, too absorbed in his own thoughts.

Flowers 1

Chapter Summary

Feel free to rage at me in the comments for the ending of this chapter.

A week has passed since the fishing incident, and Charles returning from his scouting trip. No more Pinkertons have appeared, however that doesn't relieve some of the tenseness that hovers over the camp. Dutch, Hosea, Arthur, and Charles are hovering over a regional map showing the state of Lemoyne. Charles is pointing to an area called Clemon's Point. "Here. It's a small grove hidden mostly by trees and water."

"You think it's good, Charles?" Arthur asks looking up at the man.

"Oh yeah. It'll keep us well hidden so long as we keep our heads down better this time." He looks over to Dutch. "I stayed for a day or two there, no one swung by. Seems like no one is using it anymore." Slowly, Dutch raises his hand, rubs the back of his neck, and nods.

"Alright, if you think it's good, then it's good. We'll leave in five days then, but for now, Mr. Smith, I'd like for you and Mr. Esculla to scout the surrounding area around Horseshoe Outlook until we're ready to leave, but keep it spread out enough not to look suspicious." Making a circle with his finger around where Horseshoe was, he glances up. "We don't want the Pinkertons lead back here or to Clemont's Point, nor do we want them surprising us on the way." Pulling himself from the table, Dutch runs his hands through his hair. "I don't want anyone causing trouble until we're completely out this mess, that includes when we get to Clemon's Point. Arthur, Charles, please let everyone know of my orders."

"Sure, Dutch." Arthur leads Charles out of the tent leaving Hosea and Dutch alone. Slumping into the chair by his cot, Dutch exhaled closing his eyes. Footsteps sound in his ears, and Hosea's hands land on his shoulders massaging the tense muscles. Leaning his head back against Hosea's stomach, he finds himself asking.

"Am I doing the right thing, Hosea?" The younger man stares into the concerned brown eyes of his best friend. "Is this the right move to make?" There's a twitch of the older man's mouth before he nods.

"We stay out of trouble, and we'll buy ourselves more time with that." Hosea pauses to pat Dutch's shoulder. "We can do this. If it's one thing we can do, it's run from the law." A shy smile appears on Hosea's face. "It's not like we haven't been doing this for twenty or so years." Dutch's laugh is loud and warm, and he rests his hand on Hosea's squeezing before letting go.

Hours pass, morning turns into the afternoon, and when Dutch is alone by a tree, he finds himself staring at the petal Hosea dropped a week ago. He's not stupid, he knows what it means when someone is coughing up petals. Rubbing the purple petal, his heart breaks at the idea of losing his most trusted friend to such a disease. And who was the person Hosea pined, or missed, for to the point the disease infected his lungs? He highly doubted it was Bessie since he knew of no cases where someone manifested the disease after the death of a loved one. That left an unknown variable Dutch didn't like. Had Hosea fallen for one of the older widows in Blackwater; had he forced his friend to leave a potential new lover behind, forced him to give up another chance of happiness?

Brows furrowing, thoughts swirling, the leader of the gang wondered who might know until his thoughts stopped on his sons. Arthur and John would mostly likely know, they've both, mostly Arthur, been more protective of the older man lately. And he knows Hosea wouldn't lie to the two. Another thought stops him before he can move. Hosea had brushed him off before; didn't answer his questions about the coughing. And while he knew Hosea probably told their sons, he also knew that Arthur wouldn't tell him if Hosea asked him not to inform Dutch of the cause of the coughing. Which left John, who suddenly stepped up to take care of Jack like he should have been before. Would John tell him who the object of Hosea's affections were, or did John swear not to tell Dutch?

The questions burns his mind, and his heart. Had Hosea thought so little of him, he'd hide such a serious thing, and have their sons swear to him that they wouldn't inform Dutch of what Hosea might die from? A sob nearly breaks from his mouth, and now with the petal in his hand, he can see how much of an idiot he has been. He stares blankly at the petal in his hand till a female's voice breaks him from his worrisome thoughts. "Dutch?" It's Molly, and she's staring at him with a worried expression. "Are you okay? You seem forlorn."

He hands her the petal, and the concerned expression on Molly's face morphs into sadness. "Hosea, he, coughed that up. Didn't notice it fell from his pocket." The fear he's been feeling rushes through his chest. "I don't think he was going to tell me what he has." He pauses swallowing, then the question comes out before he can stop it. "The petal, what... what flower does it belong to? Do you know?"

"I think it's a bellflower." She replies inspecting the petal. "They say it means affection, constancy, and everlasting love."

Affection, constancy, and everlasting love. The meaning could refer to his love of Bessie after all these years, but Dutch still doubts it. The answer escapes him even though one lingers. It's full of hidden desires he's kept locked away for years never acknowledging them in fear of tearing the family he's longed for. Shoving the feeling to side, he inquires, "Either way, I'm a fool, aren't I?" She presses her lips together tucking the petal back in his hand. She's thinking, probably doesn't want to offend him yet he can't bring himself to care if she does.

Before Molly can answer him, his name rings out. "Dutch!" Javier and Charles come riding into the camp before looking disheveled. "Dutch!" The man calls again pulling him away from Molly. Worry paints both men's face when Dutch walks up to the pair, and a crowd has already started to gather again. The horses are drenched in sweat, and so are their riders

slipping from saddle. Javier nearly trips stumbling over to him, and Dutch has to steady the man. “It’s... they...” Panic tinges his voice, his body, and his face.

“Breathe, son, breathe.” Dutch soothes, and when Javier is still unable to speak, Charles does.

“It’s Hosea, Dutch. The Pinkertons have Hosea.”

Flowers 2

Chapter Summary

OKAY! Glad you guys hated that ending. But before you start this chapter, I want everyone to know that with the next chapter, the rating will go up from G to T, and tags will change with the next chapter. I've had this idea since nearly the start of this story, and I'm now finally coming to it. I will announce the new tags in the notes. And in a few more chapters the tags will change again, but I'm not saying till the next change comes. In the meantime, enjoy!

A nervous ripple covers the camp, and everyone is looking at Dutch. Shock hits Dutch like a freight train, and his mouth drops at Charles' words. "Wh-what?" The man squeaks out terror now filling his chest when the words finally seep in. "Ho-how? Charles, how did they get him?" It's fight with himself to control the trembles of his body, and they only stop when a hand lands on his arm. The touch is soft, and gentle, and reminds him of Hosea. Out of the corner of his eye, he notices it's not Hosea's hand, just Arthur's. Sending Arthur a thankful nod, his son removes the hand, and turns to the two.

"We were out scouting like you asked me and Charles too." Javier speaks finally steady enough to speak. "We were near Flatneck Station, heading towards the New Hanover/Lemoyne border, and saw Hosea in the distance, I think he was hunting. Just as he was about to aim, a group of men dressed in suits came up to him guns drawn. Hosea raised his hands, and one of them rode forward." Dutch swallowed to suppress the shudder that nearly tore through his body. "Charles managed to get close on foot to hear what they were saying." Turning to his companion, Javier turned the reins of the conversation to the normally stoically quiet man.

"Hosea seemed to know the leader, called him 'Mr. Milton.'" Arthur swore behind Dutch's shoulder. "They talked for a few minutes about the deal he offered Hosea, and Arthur. Then Agent Milton mentioned for one his men to arrest Hosea, but he told Milton he'd come willingly on Silver Dollar instead." Panic beats Dutch's chest. What was Milton planning to do to his friend? "We tracked them to the oil fields, and Dutch, it's heavily guarded there. Pinkertons crawling all over the place. And not just them, we saw Micah strolling around freely." The nervousness turns into anger that rolls through the gathered crowd.

"Dutch," Arthur grabs his attention by speaking, "Micah knows we were thinking about heading here. We need to leave now rather than later." In his mind, Dutch knows Arthur is right, and yet he can't help but want to charge the fields in a rage till he reached Hosea. One of Arthur's hands lands on his shoulder, and the man softly whispers, "*Dad.*" It breaks the fog that clouds him, and he nods slowly.

“You’re right, Arthur, so very right.” Forcing himself to calm down, and think on how Hosea would want him to move the gang to safety, he turns to look at the crowd behind him.

“Everyone, I would love to go after Hosea right now, but we can’t lead the Pinkertons back here, it’d make the rescue attempt worthless, and we all know Hosea would smack us across the face if we did that.” Nervous laughter rips through his gang, his family. “So we need to move before we can rescue him. So everyone get packing then follow behind Charles with the wagons. He knows where we’re going. Alright?” Everyone nods, and without him prompting the gang moves to pack up save for Arthur. He gestures for his son to follow him.

“How we gonna do this, Dutch?” Something about the way Arthur speaks pulls in his gut, and it takes him a second to figure out what. Arthur is nervous, his — no thier — son is nervous. There’s a trembling in Arthur’s hands, and Dutch find himself reaching out to comfort Arthur.

Grasping the man’s forearm, he gently says, “We’ll make a plan at Clemen’s Point. We need to leave, Arthur.” With that said, he moves, and no doubt surprises gang, to help pack things. Arthur stares at his back before moving to help the others as well. In his heart, he knows Dutch is right, and he knows he said they needed to leave no rather than later, but he also wants to charge those fields in a murderous rage, rescue his Pa, and bash his Dad’s head in for being a moron to the other man’s feelings.

The ride to Clemen’s is tense, with Dutch sending out a couple of out riders, but everyone nearly breathes a sigh of relief when they arrive. It’s exactly as Charles described to him, Arthur, and... Hosea. Fear, pain, and another emotion Dutch doesn’t want to dare place a name to, curls around his heart. His best friend is in the grip of the Pinkertons, Cornwall, and even under the sight of Micah Bell, a traitor. He fears what they’ll do to Hosea in order to hurt him. Hosea’s reputation as second-in-command is well-known, and Dutch wouldn’t put it past Milton to something utterly vile to Hosea. The stopping wagon breaks him from his thoughts reminding him he has the others to take care of as well.

“Everyone, gather around!” He calls jumping from the wagon, and when everyone has gathered he speaks again. “We unpack, get everyone settled, Arthur and I will start planning tonight, and finish in the morning. I want everyone to rest, we’ll do Hosea no good if we worry, and lose sleep. Now, let’s get settled.” Dispersing everyone, Dutch found himself staring north before moving to help. God have mercy on the Pinkertons if they did anything to Hosea.

Clang! Machines in the Cornwall oil field groan out in a machine tone mockery of music. Workers stare at Hosea as the group passes towards the largest building where more Pinkertons and workers stood. Milton rides in the front of the group postured in such a way that reminds hosea of a strutting rooster; not that Hosea could blame him for acting as such, he has the second-in-command of Dutch’s Boys in his grasp. For a man that’s been chasing them since Blackwater, it’s a small victory.

Twisting the reins of Silver, Hosea can only hope Dutch knows that he’s been taken, and not run off to rat on the man he’s been a partner in crime with for over twenty years. And God knows what Milton would do to him in exchange for indirectly hurting Dutch. And not just Dutch, but their sons as well. Swallowing to hold back a sob, Hosea finds himself scared in a

way he hasn't felt since Bessie had gotten sick and passed. His thoughts turn traitor, brings back Dutch to the forefront of his mind. What was Dutch going to do? Would he charge on this place like idiot, or would he plan? Would... would he even come for Hosea, or would he cut him loose? Fate was cruel for him to fall for a man he couldn't even love back. Coughs break from his chest, and a full bellflower splattered with blood falls from his mouth. His heart nearly jumps to his throat, Milton laughs, and a voice he could have dealt without hearing mocks him.

“Well, you were right, Mr. Milton. He's a Flower Lung alright.”

Flowers 3

Chapter Summary

Added tags are period typical sexism and homophobia, slurs and torture. I thought I'd be adding more this chapter, but I guess it'll be over the next several. I'm still bumping this story to T from G. Enjoy, and feel free to hate me for that last sentence.

Leaning up in the saddle, he sees Micah Bell standing a few feet away from the group. There's a smug smile on his face, and with no Pinkerton surrounding him, Hosea can only assume Bell has ratted on them. He hopes that Dutch has at least moved the gang to Clemen's Point if it becomes apparent Hosea has disappeared. One of the nameless Pinkertons takes ahold of Silver's reins while two stood to each side. Repressing a sigh, Hosea dismounts, wobbles, and coughs again another blood splattered bellflower slipping from his mouth. Letting the bellflower float away, he lifts head walking forward trying to maintain any dignity he has left. "Mr. Bell." He manages to keep his tone level despite the rage building in his chest.

"Mr. Matthews." Micah saunters over to him. He hates the way the bastard in front of him walks. It's like he's trying to mimic Dutch poorly. No one can replicate the way Dutch walks, talks, and thinks. His heart clenches at the thought of Dutch; brings another blood covered bellflower from his mouth, makes him want to scream. "I always thought something was off about you. Turns out I was right. Should have known you were a queer. And to fall for Dutch Van der Linde no less!" A weaselly hand lands on his shoulder, and the other man smiles fiendishly. "We can get it removed when Dutch comes and gets killed." The hand that's on his shoulder moves down towards his waistband making him stiffen. "And don't worry, I'll treat you right after poor... little... Dutch... dies knowing his so called best friend lusted so badly after him that said man nearly killed himself with a flower disease." A mixture of fear and anger sinks into his belly hearing Micah's words, and the thought of Dutch dying has him coughing a bellflower into Micah's face. The man shrinks away, wipes the flower off him, and punches Hosea straight in the stomach. He nearly collapses but two Pinkerton agents, much to his surprise, catch him. "Bastard!" Micah spits at him. "How dare you spit in my face, you little Nancy!" He would have gone for another punch, but Milton's voice rang out.

"Mr. Bell, Mr. Matthews'... peculiarities aside, you are still a guest, and a wanted man, here. I'm well within my rights to look you up as well." The agent reminded the rat faced outlaw who steps back from the bent over outlaw. Milton spares a glance at him, before gesturing for the two agents to drag Hosea into the large building. Gathering some energy, he manages to send Micah a glare before sluggishly following the agent, hands off the two agents hovering near his body least he refuses to walk. He's led into a mini factory, up stairs, and into a room where a desk has been moved to the side, and a table with two chairs opposite of each other sits. "Sit, Mr. Matthews." The agent orders sitting down in the chair that is closest to the door. "We have a lot to talk about."

The two agents moved to each side of the guard, and Hosea shakily sits down in the other chair. "I'm sure we do." He wheezes a choking feeling settled into his lungs. All his effort is put into showing he's shaking. The disease is starting to reach the final stages, and he's alone with three Pinkerton agents. Dutch may not make it in time to rescue him. He can only hope Arthur has saved enough to get himself, John, and John's family out of the gang. Can only hope that Dutch will not go too hard on them for agreeing to one of Hosea's last wishes. The face of Dutch appears in his mind, sadness, want, and love fill his heart and mind. Spring forth, another cough racks his body, and another bellflower is coming from his mouth.

"We do indeed." Milton turns his head to the side. "Agent Ross!" A man appears after opening the door. "Get Mr. Matthews some water. I don't need him dying just yet." The cold gaze lands on him. "I have yet to get what I want, and we are waiting for another guest to join us." Agent Ross mutters something Hosea can't hear before disappearing. Micah struts in sitting in another chair that's been placed in the corner next to another still empty one. Crossing his legs, Micah settles with his hands behind his back, and a smug grin plastered on his face. Bell is clearly enjoying the show laid out before him.

When Ross comes back, it's with another male about Hosea's age. The new arrival is dressed in a fine suit, and when he sees Hosea, the man's neutral expression turns into pure fury. "So, you've found Dutch Van der Linde?" Bell barks out a laugh only silenced by Milton's glare.

"No, this is Hosea Matthews, Mr. Cornwall." Shock slams into Hosea hearing the name. Cornwall was here. Cornwall deemed the gang enough of a threat to come down himself. Robbing the train in the mountains was a big mistake just as he thought it to be. The glass of water is placed in front of Hosea's hands, and Agent Ross moved behind Milton. "Now that you are here, we may begin." Fear is starting to get to Hosea, and it's only by his own willpower it hasn't consumed him. "So, Mr. Matthews, let's start with the botched ferry job of yours. What made Dutch kill Heidi McCourt." Swallowing the fear, Hosea decide he'll play along, not that he has any other choice trapped here, and weakened by a disease.

"You'll have to ask Mr. Bell about that. Wasn't my idea." He gaze turns to Bell. "It was his. I and Arthur were across town running a real estate scam. I wasn't there to see what happened." Milton turns to Bell a questioning gaze on his face.

"Is this true? Remember, you're here on my grace alone."

"It's true. It was my idea, Agent Milton. I even encouraged Dutch to kill the bitch." Milton's fury lands on Bell now who shudders at the man's icy face. Letting out a sigh, Hosea is glad that, even for a few seconds, Milton's gaze isn't on him. "I needed you guys to place a larger bounty on him, and what better way to have him shoot an innocent woman splattering her guts across the ground?" The occupants stare at Bell with various levels of disgust. The entire reason behind having Dutch attack the ferry was to put a bigger bounty on his head. Forced them to run and hide, to have to watch their backs, and for what? So Micah could turn in several bounties at once? To watch them hang while he became rich off their dead bodies, off Dutch's body? The thoughts make him sick causing another coughing fit, another blood splattered bellflower. Milton turns to him with a cruel smile before speaking.

"Agent Ross, arrest this man. He's no use to us now." Ross is quick to smash the butt of his shotgun into Bell's stomach, and drag him away with the help of one the silent agents leaving

only four occupants in the room. “Well, not that’s been sorted, what about Mr. Cornwall’s train, hm?”

“Another job I wasn’t on.” Hosea wheezes out clutching his chest. He’s starting to truly feel the effects of the Hanahaki Disease. “But I warned him not to rob you, Mr. Cornwall. That it was a mistake.” But Dutch didn’t listen, and here he was in the hands of the Pinkertons as a result. And mostly likely going to die soon after Dutch’s failed rescue attempt. A longing caresses his heart, and how he wished Dutch was here by his side. The man’s presence was often warm, trusting, and loving, and every other wonderful word Hosea could think of. Tightly holding onto the table, another fits slams into his chest, and instead of a single bloody bellflower, it’s two. Staring in slight horror, his eyes lands on Milton’s widening cruel grin, and it dawns on him what Milton is doing. Slight horror morphs into pure horror. Milton doesn’t have to torture him information, he merely needs to make Hosea think of Dutch, and let the disease do all the work.

Flowers 4

Chapter Summary

This chapter is really stretching the limits of Hanahaki Disease, but since i couldn't find any information this wasn't allowed, I decided to go ahead with it. I'm not sure what the average flower count for the Bellflower in bouquet is, so I went with something random. I also decided to spare everyone of the torture. I figure this story has been torture enough.

New tags: Hosea Matthews/Bessie Matthews(Mentioned), Andrew Milton/Unnamed wife, and Dutch is Prime Dumbass.

“Figured it out, I see.” The agent purrs tapping his fingers on the desk. “You see, Mr. Cornwall, Mr. Matthews here has Hanahaki Disease, and for none other than Dutch Van der Linde. And if I were to guess, Van der Linde has no idea what the cause of the disease is, if he knows Mr. Matthews here has it.” Milton looks proud of himself leaning back into the chair.

“And how does this bring us Dutch Van der Linde?” Crossing his arms, Cornwall’s expression reveals nothing of what the businessman is thinking. The old outlaw isn’t sure if he should be relieved or concerned with the question. Milton shifts in his seat placing his hands on his stomach, and one leg over the other.

“It doesn’t, but it does help weaken him. Regardless of what Van der Linde’s affections are towards Mr. Matthews here, the man still does care. He’ll come to rescue Mr. Matthews, and when he does, we show him the pitiful state his partner is in, he’ll have a momentary lapse of judgement. Which makes it easier for us to capture him.” There’s a fiercely proud expression on Milton’s face as the agent watches Cornwall think. Gripping the side of the table, Hosea has to force himself not throw up at Milton’s plan. He was being used as bait to bring in Dutch, and he was probably going to die here as a result. Hosea won’t be wasting away from the disease per se, it’ll be brought from him to weaken Dutch. To force the man watch Hosea die from choking on flowers born from Hosea’s love of the man. Pain pounded on his chest reminding him of the roots growing in his lungs. Now, here in the confines of the office, does Hosea realize he should have taken a chance, and confessed to Dutch in Horseshoe Outlook. Regardless of what the outcome of the confession would have been, at the very least the disease couldn’t have been used against him, and by proxy, Dutch. He should have done it when the Pinkertons had first shown their faces to him and Arthur.

A predatory grin creeps on the agent’s face when the man’s gaze turns from the still thoughtful businessman to the fearful outlaw. Hosea has no way of escaping this building, running to Dutch, and confessing to the man. No way to spare Dutch of the imagine of Hosea choking on flowers, thorns, and blood. When he had willfully surrendered, his weapons had

been taken from him, and the group was extremely aware of his reputation of a con man. None of his usual bag of tricks could be played here. The old outlaw was nothing more than a declawed cat in the mouth of a lion. What a fool he was; damning Dutch, and the gang, to die at the hands of the Pinkertons simply because he couldn't control his feelings towards Dutch. Pain grasped his throat and lungs followed by three bloody bellflowers falling to the table. A bellflower boquete ranges from five to seven flowers; he still has time left, but not much. Feeling the stares of everyone in the room, Hosea finds himself unable to focus on anything but the predatory grin on Milton's face.

Whatever cat and mouse game Dutch had was destroyed by something they hadn't thought to plan for. But in a way, it gives them an advantage no one had predicted. Love may be his killer, but it'd be his savior as well. Slowly, he removes the handkerchief from his pocket wiping the blood from his lips. With a new resolve forming in his chest, Hosea levels his gaze on Milton who seems interested by the change of posture in Hosea.

Hosea's not sure if his crazy idea will work, but he has no other choice. Steeling himself, Hosea thinks of Bessie and the love they shared. How she knew what his choice of career was, and how she knew whom he loved. And despite all that, Bessie stuck with him through all the highs and lows of their marriage. Hosea searches for a ring on Milton's fingers, and smiles when he finds it. "Tell me, Agent Milton," Hosea keeps his voice steady, and thoughts on Bessie in a desperate attempt to hold off the inevitable, "do you have a wife? The ring on your finger tells a story." Milton squints his eyes at Hosea trying to figure out what his plan was; not that Hosea knew what it really was.

"I do." The agent finally answers after considerable silence. "I fail to see how relevant this is." Biting the side of his cheek, Hosea admits to himself that Milton is right. It's not relevant, but he needs to take control of the conversation lest Milton manages to progress the disease further.

"Well, we don't know when Dutch will be here." Hosea starts, and silently pleased when his voice doesn't crack on the other man's name. "And it seems that you've received all the information you needed from me, so I don't see why we can't have a friendly conversation." Putting all his acting skills into it, Hosea knows he needs to stall; for what, he's not sure, but he knows needs to stall. "Humor me Milton. You can't have the disease progress too much, or you lose me as a valuable tool against Dutch."

Milton cocks his head to the side, and even Cornwall looks mildly interested in what Hosea's pulling. "You're correct on that front, I suppose. I lose you too early, and I could lose my change against Van der Linde." The agent's fingers tap on the desk again. "I still haven't figured out what you're playing at, Mr. Matthews, but assured, I most certainly will." His mouth twitches into a half-smile at Milton, thoughts moving back to Bessie in an attempt to shield him from the disease. So far it seemed to be working.

"Clever of you to figure out I'm planning something." Milton is a smart man, and Hosea won't deny that. But it does little to stop Hosea from leaning forward ready to start speaking again when the door slams open, and Ross appears. Everyone turns to stare at the slightly breathless Pinkerton.

"Milton, it's Van der Linde. He's here... alone."

Flowers 5

Chapter Summary

Enjoy! We're heading towards the end here, folks! Don't know how many chapters are left, but we're close!

Chapter Notes

New tag: blood and violence.

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

“Well, isn’t this a surprise.” Milton rises from the chair, and gestures for the agents at the door to stand behind Hosea. “Shall we go meet him, Mr. Matthews?” The agents grab onto his arms lifting him from the chair forcefully. “I think we should. It’s clear he certainly care enough to come alone.” Swallowing, Hosea lets himself be dragged from the room Milton leading, and Cornwall taking the rear. Dutch is here, and Hosea wonders why. Does Dutch value him far more than he originally thought?

At the end of the stairs, Milton takes ahold of Hosea, places his gun to the other man’s head. “Walk with your hands raised. Whatever trick you were playing in there ends now.” Raising his hands and complying is the only thing Hosea knows he can do now. The barrel pressed to his head reminds him of such. He’s led out of the building and towards the entrance facing Valentine. The sight he sees has him catching his breath.

Dutch is mounted on the Count alone. His shoulders are straight, and when he sees Hosea at gunpoint, his jaw clenches. Hosea can feel the anger radiating off the man from here. The older outlaw knows the younger hates it when people try to make him a fool. And the Pinkertons have done just that by kidnapping Hosea. Catching the gaze of his best friend of twenty years, Hosea mouths ‘run, I’m not worth it.’ Dutch’s eyes widened before he shakes head no. Hosea feels sick to his stomach watching Dutch slip from the saddle.

“Well, this is quite the surprise. Are you finally turning yourself in, Van der Linde?” Milton calls keeping a steady hold on his prisoner. “Or are you truly here for Mr. Matthews despite he’s dying from Hanahaki Disease with you as the cause?” Fear curls around Hosea’s spine at Milton’s words. The agent has outed his feelings to Dutch, and Hosea can no longer hide the fact. Nor can he fight the sudden burst of coughing, three blood dipped bellflowers falling from his mouth. Pausing, Dutch’s gaze lands on him, his expression is unreadable to Hosea, but he can see some fear rolling off the man’s shoulders. Fear of what Hosea doesn’t know, almost doesn’t want to. “Ah, you didn’t know, did you?” Milton gloats. “Well, at least you

found out now rather than later I suppose. You can watch Mr. Matthews choke on his love for you. Such a tragic end.” The agent mocks.

“Mr. Milton, please let my friend go.” Dutch pleads stepping forward slightly. Whatever his feelings are on the revelation of Hosea’s love for him, he keeps locked away where no one can see them. “I’m the one you want. I’ll willingly surrender for his life.”

“Your friend? Why should I do that?” Milton gestures with his gun at Cornwall. “Several people want you dead, Van der Linde. Including Mr. Cornwall here, whom I believe you robbed his train in the Grizzlies according to Mr. Matthews here.” There’s twitching in Dutch’s body, and Hosea feels as if he’s gone cold. In one sentence, Milton has confirmed that Hosea has talked about the gang. In one sentence, he has doomed Hosea truly. Even if somehow they made it out of this alive, Dutch would not forgive him for ratting out the gang. Closing his eyes, he accepts the fate that’s coming. Not just from the disease that’s building in his chest, but for speaking against the gang. Four blood doused bellflowers drop from his mouth like the silence that has wrapped around those gathered.

“We did rob the train.” Dutch confirms after the tense moments of silence. The gang leader raises his hands slowly walking forward again once more. “But please let my friend go.” Snapping his eyes open, Hosea finds himself staring at Dutch in disbelief. Hosea has ratted out of the gang, and yet Dutch still wants him to go free. Slowly, Dutch drops his hands moving from outwards from his chest to above his head. He doesn’t see Milton’s triumphant grin when he motions for an agent to disarm Dutch.

“Well, it looks like--” The words are cut off by a gunshot and Milton falling away from Hosea. Dropping to his knees, Hosea watches Dutch easily kill the agents near him while more bullets fly from the hill above the oil fields. Dutch hadn’t come alone; the gang had been near, and in wait for, Dutch’s signal. There’s shouting amongst the gathered agents, and none drag him from the crossfire. They’re all focused on Dutch, and it’s their mistake. Several agents fall from gunshots in the back, and he sees several of the gang members riding in. A cry catches his attention, and he sees Cornwall falling to his knees blood pouring from his throat.

Hope builds in Hosea’s chest when he snaps his head to see Dutch towards him. It’s a miracle when the younger man reaches him without being shot. “Come on, old man. Let’s get you out of here. We can talk on to camp.” Dutch drags him up, and towards the Count who charges forward at Dutch’s whistle. Climbing up onto the saddle, Dutch helps Hosea mount behind him before the Count dashes forward. The stallion is a white bullet at a gallop, and none of the agents are able to hit them. One of Dutch’s hands slip from the reins to tightly grip his, and Hosea can feel his heart nearly jump out of his chest.

“What about the others?” Hosea manages breath out. “What about Silver Dollar?” The hand wrapped around his tightens.

“Don’t worry about them. They’ll be fine, and Arthur will get Silver out of there.” Dutch replies still focus on the road heading south. “You, on the other hand, need rest. I moved the gang to Clemon’s Point before coming to get you. Arthur... Arthur had to remind me to do so. Now hush. We have a lot to talk about when we get to the border, Hosea.” Falling silent,

Dutch urges the Count faster as the pair winds their way through the Heartlands, and to the state border.

Only when they hit the border does Dutch slow down the Count, who's foaming under saddle from the ride. He guides the horse to a cluster of trees near the water. Slipping from saddle, Dutch tugs at Hosea's arms, and helps him from the saddle catching him before he can fall. The younger of the two steadies him, and guides to the trees. The Count moves to the water to greedily drink from.

The cluster of trees are small, but it's enough to hide them, and the Count, from prying eyes. Stopping in the middle, Dutch turns to him various emotions present on his face too many for Hosea to sort them out in a matter of seconds. "Dutch, I'm sorry. I had little--" A finger pressed to his lips cuts him off with Dutch shaking his head. The touch has Hosea weak in his knees, and nearly trembling.

"I don't care what you told them, Hosea. I doubt it was much since we haven't been really do anything." Dutch is searching him with his eyes looking for everything he's kept hidden from the other man. The finger slips from his mouth, and is replaced with Dutch's thumb stroking his lips softly. "What I know to know, is whether Milton was correct. Is the cause of your disease, your coughing, me?" Dutch's face held an intensity he's never seen since the man pined over Annabeth.

"Ye-yes." Hosea breaths out fear settling in his stomach. His body is shaking in fear, in honesty, and in love. The older outlaw wants the younger outlaw before him. Wants his love, his possessive streak, and everything else Dutch could give him. "I'm... I'm in love with you, Dutch Van der Linde. I have been before Bessie, since Bessie, after her, and now. I'll be in love with till this disease ends my life." The confession pours from his mouth before he can stop it, and at this point he doesn't care. Shock appears, before being snatched away from Dutch's face. The thumb starts stroking his lips cause him to become pliant in the owner's hands. Hosea lets his body react the way it is, lets his eyes shut halfway, and lets desire and love shine in his eyes. Dutch knows now, and the cards where in his hands.

Whatever Dutch is thinking about, Hosea can see the decision made in his eyes. The younger outlaw moves forward, and to the older outlaw's surprise, their lips connect into a soft testing kiss. Pulling away, Dutch inspects him before dragging him into another kiss, and Hosea's arms wrap around Dutch's waist while Dutch's hands move to Hosea's hair. The feeling of Dutch's lips on his makes Hosea almost fall to his knees only being caught by the man he's holding onto. "It turns out, Hosea, we are both fools." Dutch whispers holding the other man close. "Annabelle, Susan, and even Molly had it figured it out before I did." Breathing catching in his throat, Hosea searches Dutch's face for any one the soft tells Hosea knows because Dutch can't be saying what Hosea thinks he's going to say. When he finds no tells, a breath shakily escapes from his chest. "That's right, Hosea." Dutch pulls him into another kiss before breaking it.

"I love you too, Hosea Matthews. Before Annabelle, since Annabelle, after Annabelle, and now."

Chapter End Notes

Changed tag: Hosea Matthews/Dutch Van der Linde (one sided) changed to Hosea Matthews/ Dutch Van der Linde.

Also added: First kiss and love confessions.

You're welcome. :)

Flowers 6

Chapter Summary

I'm glad the last chapter was well-received. :I almost didn't do it. Very brief thought about Hosea dying there in Dutch's arms not believing Dutch truly loved him. Almost.

No new tags added. But there will be in the future, but I don't know which ones save for the last.

Shock settled into his body as he absorbed the words spoken. Dutch loved him back just as long as Hosea had. The pair had been too blind to notice the other's affections, but they now knew where they both stood in the other's heart. Warmth filled his chest gazing into Dutch's eyes which held the amount of love he had for Hosea. "We're a pair of fools alright." Hosea agreed before he could find himself lost in Dutch's eyes. "But at least we know before it became too late."

"That we did." Dutch pulled him closer to his chest where Hosea settled before inching his head up a bit to nestle his face into the crook of the other man's neck. Strong rough hands roamed his back lovingly making a sigh escape Hosea's mouth. He could stay like this forever wrapped into the warm embrace of his now lover. Dutch adjusted himself to sink his nose into the blonde grey locks of hair. A smile found its way onto Hosea's face when he felt two lips place a soft kiss into his hair. "I love you." Dutch repeated holding Hosea closer. "And will love you till the end of my days, Hosea." The words had Hosea almost melting in place.

"I love you too, Dutch, until the end of my days." Nuzzling closer, Hosea inhaled the scent of leather and cigars that curled around Dutch's body. Even though he didn't want to say the next sentences on his mind, Hosea felt he should clear the air. "Arthur and John will be glad to know we're together now. I, uh, told them about the disease, and said not to mention anything to you. We... I feared you wouldn't react well to the news, and I didn't want to start anything that would tear the gang apart."

"I understand. We're all under the impression I was still pining for Annabelle when in reality it was you I wanted." Dutch pulled to cup Hosea's cheek a soft smile playing on the man's lips. "But they, nor you, need to worry any more, Hosea. Everything is out in the open, and everything is well." Tipping Hosea's head down, Dutch places a kiss to his forehead before adjusting his head to look up at Dutch again. Sharing Dutch's smile, Hosea leaned into the hand cupping his cheek again. Let his eyes flutter shut while Dutch stroked his cheek. Let his now clearing lungs breathe in a gulp of fresh air. Feelings returned Hosea wasn't going to die, and his death wasn't going to tear the gang apart. A sense of peace since before Blackwater finally settled on Hosea followed by a warm chuckle.

“What?” He questioned without opening his eyes, cheek still pressing into the large hand holding it.

“You look beautiful, Hosea, is all.” Came the reply followed both hands cupping both cheeks. Lips took hold of his own, and knowing who the owner of the lips where, Hosea barely resisted against the kiss. In fact, he eagerly returned the kiss pressing into Dutch’s body. He wanted to stay as close to Dutch as he could while they were able to stay hidden. Wanted to keep his lips against Dutch’s, and his hands wandering over the man’s body. He would have gotten further if not for Dutch pushing away.

“As much as I would like to continue exploring you, my dear,” Dutch breathed no doubt looking just as flushed as Hosea was, “I did tell Arthur and John where to meet us regardless of what happened to you. They should be here soon, and while I’m sure they’d be happy we’ve gotten together, I highly doubt they’d like to see me pounding you into the ground.” Dutch purred into his ear. A shiver went down his spine at the idea of being underneath Dutch earning him a soft chuckle. “I see someone likes that idea.” And, of course, Dutch, being that man he was, ran a hand down Hosea’s chest, thighs, and across his groin electing a groan from Hosea.

“I suppose you’re right.” He agreed through a pant. “I certainly wouldn’t have enjoyed seeing my parents, or figures whom I could have called that, in such a compromising position.” Tilting his head to the side, the older man couldn’t help but grin. “Although, it would have been amusing to hear their screams of disgust.” Blinking, the younger man stared at him before roaring with laughter.

“I love the way you think, my dear.” The pet name sends warmth throughout Hosea’s chest. He was Dutch’s dear, and he was perfectly fine with being such. Hands pulled him back to Dutch’s chest, and Hosea resumed nuzzling his face into Dutch’s neck. “I love you.” Dutch mumbles into his hair again. It’s something Hosea never wants to stop hearing from his lover’s mouth.

“I love you too.” He whispers back clinging tighter. The sound of horse hooves break them apart however. Dutch’s hands move to his guns as he steps in front of Hosea. While the thought of Dutch dying wasn’t something Hosea liked, he couldn’t deny the feeling in his chest seeing Dutch step in front of him intent on protecting his new found lover. Seeing a familiar hat tied with a string makes the both of them relax. Arthur is here on Silver Dollar with John on Old Boy leading Arthur’s stallion.

“Arthur! John!” Dutch greets dropping from his stance. Moving forward, he places his hand on Silver’s reins while their sons dismount. “How’d it go?”

“Well. Milton and Ross are dead, and so is Cornwall, so we may not have Pinkertons trailing after us, but I wouldn’t relax just yet.” Arthur’s eyes land on Hosea taking in his appearance, before turning to Dutch again. John hovers in the back eyeing Dutch as well. “What did Milton say that had you shocked?” There’s tension in Arthur’s jaw while he asks. Hosea can’t help the smile on his face at his oldest son’s fierce protectiveness.

“He told me what Hosea’s disease was, and that I was the cause of it.” Dutch answered honestly. Turning around, he holds out his hand for Hosea to take, which he does. “But you

don't need to worry, son. It seems we're all fools." Pulling Hosea closer to him, the silent statement Dutch is making is clear to the four gathered men. The fathers watch as relief pours from their sons. Sharing a glance, their sons suddenly walk towards the two and pulled them both into a hug.

"We're glad, Dad, Pa." Arthur breathes out showing a rare moment of fragility for him. "We were scared of losing you, Pa."

Patting his back, Hosea softly responds, "I know, son, I know. But just like Dutch said, you don't have to worry anymore."

"No, that we don't." Dutch agrees. "We're a family, you two, and we're going to remain that way." Dutch pulled back to place each of his hands on his son's shoulders. "I'm proud of both of you, and I want you two know that. Now, speaking of being a family, we should get back to camp. Arthur you can tell me the rest after we finish celebrating Hosea's return. And don't you dare argue about it, 'Sea. You're worth it."

Flowers 7

Chapter Summary

No notes for this chapter, the next chapter has the added ones!

The ride back to Clemen's Point was unrushed. John and Arthur rode in front while Dutch and Hosea rode behind often peaking at the other with a smile. Biting his lip, Hosea had to hold down the laugh building in his chest. The last few hours had been long, confusing, and wonderful. All of those years of pining over a man he thought he couldn't have, and it turned out he could. His cheeks flushed when he saw Dutch admiring him when he thought Hosea hadn't been looking. Arthur turned around to wink at his father before suddenly pushing John nearly off his horse. Sputtering, John yelled something at his older brother before chasing after the man who had urged his horse into a canter. "We better go after them least they do something stupid, Dutch." Hosea laughed watching their sons chase each other around the countryside, and towards camp.

"We should." Dutch's eyes twinkled. "Reminds me of the old days." Kicking the Count into a slow canter, Hosea following on Silver. "Think we'll have to toss them in separate corners of the camp again?" Laughing, Hosea watched as Arthur easily dodged John's attempt of swiping him off his horse.

"We might. Do you think we could convince Miss Grimshaw into helping wash John? I can see the dirt from here." He snickered with Dutch joining in. Nudging their horses into a faster canter, Hosea called out, "Boys! That's enough. Don't make me get a lasso to tie you together and force you to behave!" Their sons turned to Hosea with wide eyes.

"You wouldn't." John huffed while Arthur hovered in the background. Raising an eyebrow, Hosea stared down his younger son daring him to try. Opening his mouth, John started to say something before quickly shutting his mouth and turning Old Boy back in the direction of camp. "Your fault, Morgan." He bit at his older brother who looked sheepish for a second.

"You're too easy of a target, Marston." Arthur shot back leading them into the corpse of trees that hide their new camp. Turning his head, Hosea shook his head at Dutch who smiled in return. Walking their horses through the dirt path, Hosea felt Dutch's hand land on his. Entwining their fingers together, the older outlaw lifted the joined hands to kiss the younger's hand. Dutch sucked in a breath, a hint of a smile creeping onto his face.

Reaching the hitching posts, Hosea slipped off Silver only to find two little arms wrapping around his leg. "Grandpa!" Jack greeted looking up at him. Laughing, Hosea lifted the boy into his arms to hug him. "Pa said you would come back, and you did! Did you bring me anything?" His grandson looked up to him expectantly.

“No, sorry, Jack, not this time. How about next time?” Hosea inquired adjusting his grip on Jack walking to the campfire where the gang was gathered, drinks already in hand. Various members greeted him with raised bottles and calls of his name. Wiping away the sudden wetness in his eyes, Hosea smiled at the gathered. Abigail walked over to grab Jack from his arm, but the boy refused stating he wanted to stay with his grandpa a while longer. “It’s alright, Abigail. I missed him dearly.” He could feel Jack tucking his face into his grandpa’s neck, so he gently rocks Jack from side to side.

“Alright.” She placed a hand on his free arm. “We all missed you, Hosea, and we’re glad you’re back in one piece.” A cheer goes up from his family warming his heart. Pressing a small kiss to Jack’s head, he openly stares at Dutch coming to stand next to him.

Wrapping an arm around Hosea’s waist, a clear statement being made without him saying anything, Dutch begins to address the gathered. “My friends, my family, we have rescued Hosea from the Pinkertons! He comes back to us healthy, and that is not all. Arthur has informed me that Agents Milton and Ross are dead along with Mister Cornwall and Micah Bell, who not only sold us out to the Pinkertons, but spying for the O’Driscolls as well. Seems he was trying to play everyone, but let us not worry about that tonight. Tonight we celebrate the safe return of Hosea! Tomorrow we look to our new future! To the future!” Dutch saluted drink in hand.

“To the future!” The gang cried back before breaking out into song. Laughter roared around the fire as the afternoon turned into night. Several rowdy jokes and songs were told and sung, and in the middle of it all, Hosea noticed Jack had fallen asleep. Seemingly sensing the fact her son had fallen asleep, Abigail appeared with a smile, holding her arms out for him. Gently, Hosea handed his grandson over.

“I’m going to put him, and myself, to bed. Goodnight, Hosea, Dutch.” Pressing a quick kiss to Hosea’s cheek, Abigail turned marching back to John’s tent where she and Jack now stayed finally. Now free of Jack’s embrace, Hosea feels Dutch stand behind him and wrap his lover in his arms. Sighing softly, Hosea leans back into the embrace, and Dutch places his chin on top of Hosea’s hair. Everyone is far too drunk to notice their leaders proximity to each other, although some of the gang members, if they had been sober, would have finally lifted their hands in the air and shouted ‘finally!’

“Still sober?” Dutch inquires moments after embracing his lover. He mulled over the question, not quite ready to leave the arms wrapped around him.

“Very, why?” He questioned back. Dutch’s head moved from the top of his head to his ear where Dutch’s breath gently brushed. Furrowing his eyebrows, he was about to ask what his lover was doing until he felt teeth nibble on his ear lobe. Swallowing down the gasp that nearly left his mouth, Hosea’s eyes widened.

“I believe I promised you something earlier today. A pounding into the ground, if I remember correctly.” His lover purred into his ear sending sparks down his spine. “And everyone looks drunk enough to not miss us till the morning.”

“You remember correctly.” He managed to get out without moaning. “But what about Molly?” Hosea whispered back when he felt another brush of Dutch’s teeth on his ear.

“Don’t worry, she knows, and she’s okay with it. She’s the one who pointed my feelings for you to me. Gave me her blessings.” Dutch’s mouth moved from his ear to nibble his neck, and Hosea swore he could feel his pants tightening. “So?”

“Yes.” He whispered without thinking. “Take me to bed, Dutch.” A soft growl left Dutch’s mouth pulling Hosea from the fire and towards his tent. They never saw Susan smile, or John and Arthur clink their drinks together watching their fathers head to Dutch’s tent.

Flowers 8, final

Chapter Notes

New tags: Anal sex, anal fingering, first time with each other, explicit sexual content, and angst with a happy ending.

Rating has gone from T to E. Enjoy! :D And I don't normally write bottom Hosea, but for this story I felt it worked far better.

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

“Get out of those clothes, Hosea.” Dutch hissed closing the flaps of his tent. “Need you bad.” The younger man spoke starting to strip himself. Another smile took its place on Hosea face as he unbuttoned the vest and shirt he was wearing. Desire flared in his lover’s eyes watching Hosea strip for him. Knowing that, the con man found it in himself to give Dutch a bit of a tease. Sending his lover a mischievous grin, he left the vest drop slowly to the floor followed by his neckerchief.

The growl that Dutch emitted from his chest sent a wave of desire to Hosea’s groin. His breath caught in his throat watching Dutch, nearly naked save for the pants he still wore, stalk up to him. Hands smack his away from the shirt, and fingers easily opened the buttons. “I said get out of those clothes, Hosea. Not tease me, you can do that another time.” Dutch growled before latching his mouth onto Hosea’s neck. Groaning softly, he let his head fall back some allowing Dutch full access to his neck. “Good boy.” mumbled Dutch never stopping his movements. Hosea never knew that hearing Dutch praise in such a voice would have him harden even more.

It’s not long before his shirt falls to the floor, and the younger man is pressing his body closer to his. Leaving his neck to drag Hosea into kiss, the older man can feel their erections rub against each other through cloth making both men moan into each other’s mouth. “Dutch.” He moans out when they’ve broken for air, hands still wandering the other.

“Yes, my darling?” There’s a flush in Dutch’s cheeks as the man stares at him. Rough hands grip his ass, and Hosea can’t stop the moan that breaks from his mouth. “What do you need, my dear?” Thrusting his hips against Dutch’s, he tried to convey through action what he can’t quite bring himself to say aloud. Shaking his head, Dutch doesn’t move and repeats himself. “Darling, what do you need? I want to hear you say it.”

Whimpering, Hosea thrusts against Dutch again before whispering, “I need you, Dutch. I need you inside me bad. Please, Dutch.” Mouth open slightly, he begs with his eyes at the man still holding him firm against his body. Slowly, his lover moves forward bring him into a

kiss while his hands run down to unbutton Hosea's pants, then his own. A hand teasingly runs across his cock retrieving another moan from him. Dutch laughs in his ear before pulling away and stroking both Hosea's cheeks.

"Beautiful. Absolutely beautiful." Dutch whispered a lovingly expression on his face. He traces Hosea's cheekbones before pulling him into another kiss then pushing him towards his cot. Arousal shoots through his body with Dutch standing over him taking in the sight that is a naked Hosea on his cot. The red flush that covers Hosea's upper body is a beautiful for him. And the way Hosea stares at him expression full of love, want, and arousal stirs a warmth in his belly. "Stay right there, Darling. I wanna get something to make easier for you." He whispers pulling away to grab the bottle he had stolen from a lady of the night. At the time he didn't understand why he had stolen it, but now he understood. Subconsciously his body ached for the other man long before he knew it did.

Smiling, Dutch leans down to kiss his lover. "I could kiss you all day." He whispered generously dousing his finger into the liquid before urging Hosea to rest his legs on both of Dutch's shoulders. Rubbing his finger around Hosea's hole, Dutch watches Hosea squirming under him, a sight he realises he absolutely loves. And when he gently starts to slip his finger in, the moan that exits the man's mouth has down nearly cum right there. The flush on Hosea's body grows a deeper red as the man arches his back feeling Dutch's first finger slip all the way in.

"Du-dutch!" Hosea whimpered out bucking his hips slightly when he feels the finger start to slowly move. Part of him wishes he could forgo all the foreplay, and pound Hosea into the cot right there, but he doesn't want to hurt his darling. If it's one thing Dutch doesn't want to do is hurt Hosea during sex. His preference is to make this normally suave con man into a sobbing mess from pleasure, not pain. Slipping in another finger, Dutch leans down to kiss Hosea who returns the kiss eagerly wanton moans slipping from his mouth. "Soon, my darling. I don't want to hurt you." He whispered finger fucking with both fingers instead of one. Mouth opened, cheeks flushed, and hair askew the man underneath Dutch's teasing fingers makes for quite the sight Dutch would hope for, but it's not quite the sight he wants.

The sight he wants to see is Hosea crying out with each thrust of Dutch's cock inside him. Curling the two fingers Dutch watches in delight at the loud moan from Hosea's mouth. "Duuutch!" Hosea whimpered out, pupils blown wide in love, want, and pleasure, and hands gripping the sides of his cot. "Please. I need more."

"Sh, soon, darling, soon. You're not quite ready yet." Dutch shoothered. "Almost there I promise." Slipping his fingers out for a second, and gaining another whimper from his lover, he pours some of the liquid on his clean hand to rub it on Hosea's cock, then his own, and finally his dirty fingers for good measure before pushing three fingers in. Arching his back, Hosea opens his legs to allow more room for Dutch.

Grinning at his lover's eagerness, Dutch curls his fingers again to watch Hosea's eyes nearly roll back into his head. It's clear that it's been awhile since Hosea has someone touch him. Soft 'uh, uh, uh's pour from the older man's lips, sounds that are memorizing to the younger. "Beautiful. Handsome. Wonderful." Dutch whispers pulling his fingers from Hosea's ass only to slip the tip of his cock in seconds later. Hosea smiles lopsidedly at him, and Dutch returns

the smile. Watching Hosea's face for any sign of pain, he braces each of his hands on the side of Hosea's head before he finally, and slowly, pushes his cock in further. "How does it feel, my love? Like everything you wanted?"

"Yes. Oh God, yes!" Wrapping his legs around Dutch's waist, and arms around the man's neck, he pulls his lover into a slow kiss enjoying the taste of the other man's lips. "Take me, Dutch, please. I'll all yours." He says pulling away from the kiss. The words send Dutch over the edge, and he starts to slowly thrust into Hosea groans with each thrust. "God, Dutch, you feel so good inside me." Hosea panted.

"Yeah? Feels good to be inside of you, love." Dutch leans to nip at his neck. "So good."

"Har-harder, please, Dutch." The older man begged with a soft thrust of his hips. "I need more. I need you to pound into me, please." Each thrust has Hosea slowly unraveling from his usual cool and calm exterior. Even though this wasn't the most passionate or long lasting or rough sex with Dutch, it was still something he had dreamed about. To be taken by the man on top of him. To feel the other man's cock inside him. To hear the soft moans slipping from Dutch's lips as he thrust inside Hosea. To hear gentle 'I love you's, and have gentle kisses shared.

"As you wish, my love." With a gentle smile followed by an equally gentle kiss, Dutch snapped his hips harder bringing an almost wail from his partner. It pleased Dutch to see Hosea unravelling underneath him. Sends a jolt of arousal straight to his cock, and Dutch knows he's not going to last longer. Taking ahold of Hosea's lubed cock, he timed his pumps with his thrusts to give the man he so dearly loved the pleasure he was begging for. He can feel Hosea's tightening around his cock, and it's not long before white ropes of cum splatter over Hosea's chest. The sight, and the feeling, pushes Dutch into his own orgasm. Pushing into Hosea as hard as he could without hurting him, Dutch let out a low whine as he came into him.

"God, Hosea." Dutch whispered staring down at the man he loved, and now knew intimately. "That was wonderful." Hosea reaches up to cup Dutch's cheeks with his hands. Dutch turns his head slightly to kiss each palm.

"It was. I look forward to when we can do it again."

"Don't worry, once we've settled town truly, I'll be christening our home with you over every damn surface." Laughing, Hosea pulled him into a gentle kiss.

"I'll hold you to that."

Chapter End Notes

Wow. Didn't think we'd be hitting the end so soon, but here we are. I want to thank each and every one of you for reading Amongst the Flowers. I'm glad to know you enjoyed the story with every chapter, and that's ups and downs. It was a pleasure to write this, and to

read your reactions to each cliffhanger or twist I put on this story. I hope it lived up to what ever you wanted from it, because I know it did for me. Once again, thank you for reading Amongst the Flowers, a Hanahaki Disease Vandermatthews story.

I'd also like to note that I've given permission to crevili to write an alternative ending where Hosea does die in Dutch's arms not believing the other man actually loves him. I look forward to reading what will become of that, and I hope everyone will enjoy it too.

Before you leave, I want you to know that an update for Ghosts Around the Fire will be coming, or for at least those who read that story, and I'm working on an a/b/o vandermatthews fic with Alpha Hosea, and Omega Dutch, in which Dutch gets the whump. The first chapter will be up after the next update of Ghosts. I also have another oneshot for the H0me, Sweet Home series coming up as soon as I'm done with that as well.

Once again, thank you for reading Amongst the Flowers.

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