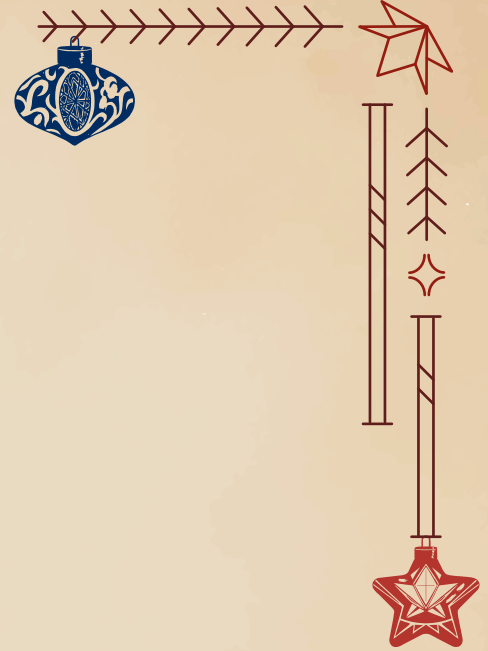


25
Days of
Ruzemas







Ruze:

The holidays are a time for families and friends to gather and celebrate together. A time to reflect on the year coming to an end. To celebrate our achievements and mourn our losses side by side. This project has brought a group of people from many walks of life together for one reason: our shared appreciation and love for you! The art and writing in this book is made by some of my favorite people in the whole world who I trusted to come together and celebrate the characters that acted as kindling for our friendship. This project is not only a gift to you this holiday season, but a memory shared between a group of friends who are inspired by you and each other everyday to create and keep on creating together. So thank you. Everyday. To a year creating, and to another with the new friends you let me meet.

— A Ruzader





Day 1

by rozee
@zeebadeebap





Day 2

by Hincaru
@hincaru



Day 3

by **Aromantic
Pigeon Madness**
@PigeonYei

nce upon a time, there was an angel. The angel was beautiful and kind but, more importantly, the angel was dying. Before they passed on, they needed to entrust someone with something precious to them.

And then there was Citrine, who didn't care that the angel was beautiful or kind. Truthfully, he cared very little that they were dying. But when the angel stopped him, clinging weakly to his robes, and begged him to protect the seedling cradled close to their chest, he hesitated.

"I must rest for a very long time," the angel said, "and I cannot bring anything of this world with me."

"That's sad but that isn't my problem."

"Without someone to shelter it in, it won't survive."

"Like I said, that's very sad but—"

Citrine made to shake their grip free but they only clung tighter. A moment of silence rang between them.

"Please," the angel begged, voice growing fainter with each word. "I shouldn't burden you but I have no one else to ask. My time is nearly at its end."

Silence. And then: "...alright, yeah. How hard can watching a plant be?"

So Citrine returned home with a small potted plant.

It wasn't difficult to care for. It flourished when attention was paid to it and curled in on itself when ignored. A few hours of sunlight or a half-empty glass of water dumped over it was enough to revitalize it.

Hardly a burden, but...

...an unwanted responsibility piled atop the others and the least important of them for it. He sat it outside one morning and, returning late that night, forgot to bring it back in. Another day, another week—it remained the furthest thought from Citrine's mind. Winter emerged from its long slumber, shaking free flurries of snow and ice from its coat. It wasn't until Citrine saw a snow angel left behind by a local child that he remembered the angel and their seedling.

Hurrying home, he searched for it. If he'd meant to lie to the angel from the start it would be one thing but he'd given his promise, albeit reluctantly, and he'd meant it. His own thoughtlessness irritated him. Irritation turned to self-scorn, self-scorn bloomed into guilt.

Teeth-chattering from the cold, he eventually uncovered the shattered remains of the plant's long-since broken pot. Collecting as many of the shards as he could find, he fell into a melancholy mood. Between his guilt and the silent snow around him, Citrine almost felt as if his remorse was a tangible thing left buried somewhere alongside the seedling.

The next day, while Citrine contemplated what to do with the shards, something caught his eye.

Dozens of small, bell-shaped flowers had pushed through the snow overnight. Indentations marked the freshly fallen snow, as if someone had knelt before them with large wings resting on either side.

A fragile air of hopefulness surrounded it and Citrine hoped it wouldn't be the last time the angel visited their seedling.



Day 4

by **nitrorugrat**
@nitroorugrat



Day 5

by Muse9420
@muse9420



Day 6

by Chilly
@thechillsdude



Day 7

by Siggy
@sigma_gold



Day 8

by Birb Mama
@birbmomther



Day 9

by Hoto
@Hoto_11010



Day 10

by Sorey
@Kitsunemob_707

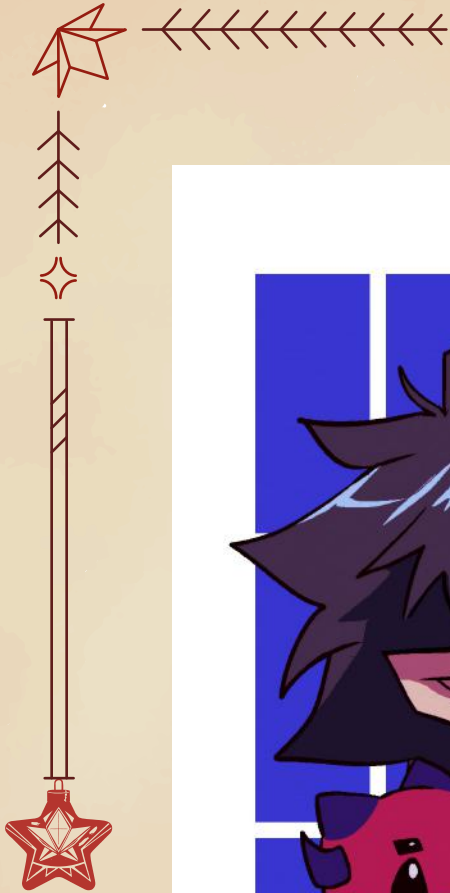




Day 11

by FlapJack
@FlapJackJackson





Day 12

by Siggy
@sigma_gold



Day 13

by rozee
@zeebadeebap



Day 14

by Danie
@danhae_gg





Day 15

by Birb Mama
@birbmomther



Day 16

by Kaiser
@KaiserThePermanente





Day 17

by PLUVi
@pluvidyori





Day 18

by HavingMercy
@HaveAMerc





Day 19

by Can Can
@QCanis





Day 20

by **sgwuo**
@shibe_spd



here was a time, once, when Turquoise was stirred by the sight of snow clinging to the ground in the morning.

It'd be his favorite time of the year. Turquoise and his family had never lived lavishly, but they were never left wanting, either— especially not for warmth and light. To the Turquoise of a bygone time, more than finding presents under the dawn's light, the first snow meant lazy afternoons cuddled up with his siblings in front of a crackling hearth, warm spiced cider in their hands. The winter holidays were one of the few times that all of Turquoise's family would be home together, too, so the house expanded and contracted with all of that new breathing in it, and Turquoise himself, being one of the bigger kids, often found himself squished between younger siblings and cousins at night.

He never minded. It was a wonderful thing, to be slightly uncomfortable because someone he loved found safety at his side.

Turquoise rarely sees snow anymore. His vessel resides in the Badlands, a region not terribly known for having enough humidity for snow, but still being blisteringly cold during the winters regardless, and his family is long gone— both the family that was blood related to him and the people he was close enough to call family. Adding to the dull ache in his chest is the way the cider he makes never tastes quite right, at least not when he's the only one drinking it, and with each passing year, the hero's memories of his past fade further and further.

He rarely gets to come out of dormancy for long enough to make new ones, either— Ruze has far too strong of a hold on the body's consciousness to let him out for too long. Even then, who would he celebrate with? Turquoise's closest companion in this place is probably Verdant, and Verdant has never been the celebrating type.

So Turq makes the moments he does get his own.

It's easy enough to slip out when Ruze lets his guard down, his body curled up in front of the tavern's hearth— Turquoise reckons that that wasn't by choice, but it's an opportunity nonetheless, and he takes the tankard of warm cider on the small table for his own. Untouched. Someone must've offered it to Ruze only for him to refuse.

Gentle chitters reach Turquoise's ears before he can see the source. Ruze's bugs must be cold too, having been so heartlessly forsaken outside of his jacket while he napped. Turquoise chuckles, and scoops as many of them up as he can manage, tucking them neatly into the pockets closest to his body. Slowly, the shivering bodies relax and melt into a blanketing silence.

Their horns poke into his waist or his chest, of course, and occasionally they steal sips from his tankard. Turquoise doesn't mind.

It's nice to be someone's safety again.





Day 21

by **Aromantic
Pigeon Madness**

@PigeonYei



omewhere that may or may not exist,
a woodcutter loses his axe.

It slips from his hands and sails through the air and he watches, dumbly, as the nearby water swallows it down. This is a problem. Today is Christmas Eve and he's been tasked with chopping down the Christmas tree. A task he'd meant to have done before now.

Sometimes time, like axes, had a way of slipping away from Vermillion.

"Well shit," he curses. With a groan, he tromps after it, dreading the task ahead.

The waters of the forested swamp are dark and deep. Save for a handful of the coldest days of the year, it never freezes neither. That's not a good thing—this time of year the water's cold enough to send a man to his grave. Not worth the risk for the rusted waste of metal Vermillion calls an axe except he doesn't have anything better and doesn't have time to get another one. Guests will arrive tomorrow morning and he'd hate to disappoint them after they've made the long, treacherous journey to his home.

There was one good thing about the swamp in winter: the ground was a helluva lot more solid than usual. He's pretty sure he won't get himself killed considering how well he navigates it when the earth teases at disappearing beneath his feet without warning.

"Lose something?"

Blinking, Vermillion searches for the voice's source and starts at the pale facing watching him from beneath the water. It's not the strangest thing he's seen in the swamp and he knows to be cautious as he approaches it.

"Lost an axe," he says, "Fell right into the water."

The creature rises, water slicking from his skin like a seal's coat. Aside from the vivid pink eyes, pointed ears, and sharp-toothed smile, he looks nearly human.

"A moment," he says before sinking back beneath the water. When he returns, he hefts a massive battle axe up alongside him and Vermillion eyes it wistfully, feeling strangely drawn to the weapon.

But he ain't a liar so when the creature asks if it's his, he shakes his head.

"A pity. Let's try again."

He disappears once more, returning with a felling axe in hand. Not Vermillion's, though. This one's head is made of gleaming silver, like a star suspended on the dark wood handle. Again Vermillion says it isn't his and again the creature vanishes before returning with Vermillion's axe.

There's something foreboding in his smile as he tells Vermillion, "Happy to reunite you with your axe, my friend. Your honesty should be rewarded."

And Vermillion means to turn down whatever reward he intends to give, he really does, but...

Vermillion drags home a tree and three axes that night.

The battle axe is surprisingly light in his hand. As much as he knows to be wary of gifts from otherworldly benefactors, he twirls it overhead and reckons he should just consider it a Christmas present from the swamp and be grateful.





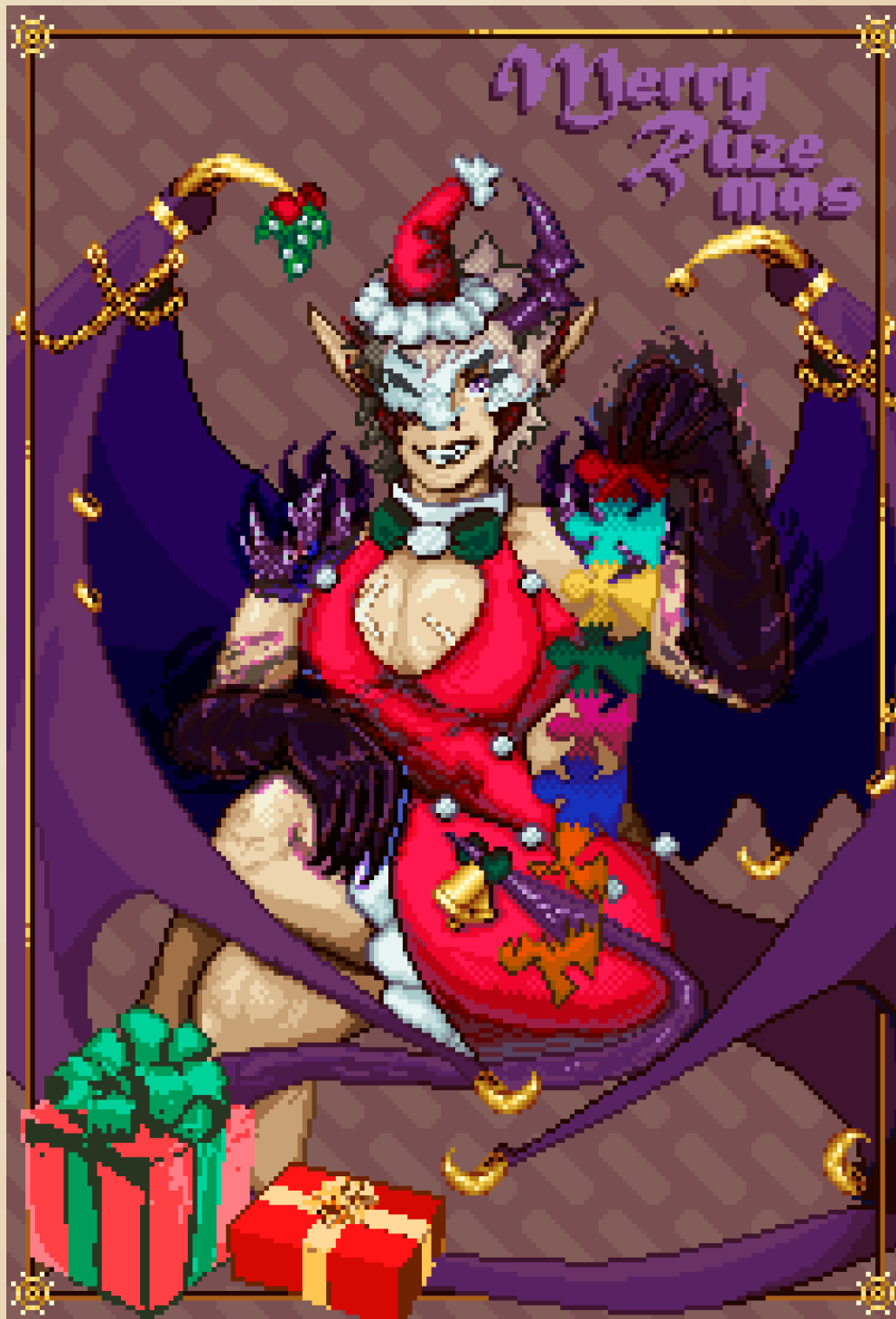
Day 22

by Nekonomicon
@nekonomiconvt



Day 23

by Dusk
@DuskLightsticks





Day 24

by **susu**
@susu4246



'was the night before Christmas and all the good little bugs are snug in their beds.

The pristine plain of snow glistened invitingly, their potential for snowballs, snow forts, and snow angels vast and untapped.

Crimzon Ruze, Elysium's greatest Monster Hunter, stood at one edge of this plain, testing Zephyr's blade and mentally going over the inventory of his many hidden knives. Opposite him, separated by several feet of powdery white flakes, a tall man wearing another shade of crimson garb stood relaxed, quietly savoring the sight of the carpet of stars above them. Behind him, a parked sleigh and a team of harnessed reindeers cordoned off the impromptu duel ring, the contested sack of presents sitting in pride of place on the vehicle.

"No hard feelings old man, but a bounty's a bounty," Ruze challenged as he hefted Zephyr onto his shoulders and took a fighting stance. "Those presents are coming with me."

The old man did not answer him, instead the air between them crackled with silent tension. A single spark of flint could have ignited the smothering pressure like so much tinder.

One heart beat, two heart beats, three-

Ruze sprinted across, easily covering the ground separating them in three breaths. Zephyr whistled in glee as it cut the air in a wide arc, missing the old man as he jumped unnaturally high above the deadly blade.

Undeterred, Ruze carried through with the momentum of the axe, twisted his body and aimed a kick up at his opponent using Zephyr

as his anchor. But no, the old man defied the laws of gravity, landed lightly on Ruze's outstretched limb and used it as a springboard to flip away safely over him.

"Stop floating around!" Ruze yelled as he let go of Zephyr and used his body to hide the motion of palming out a knife. He whipped the blade at where the old man must have landed. But instead of a meaty thunk he expected, the weapon sank softly into a pile of disturbed snow.

A thump sounded behind him as Ruze spun around too late. A large wrapped box sat demurely beside Zephyr's buried blade, a fading 'ho ho ho' accompanied by bells the only signs of what transpired.

Ruze grimaced and went to collect his knife, the forced draw sitting ill on his pride. But a bounty was a bounty, and a draw that ended in his payout was a win in his book.

T'was the night before Christmas and all the good little bugs should be in their beds-

"GO THE FRICK TO SLEEP ALREADY YOU ANIMALS," Ruze yells as he closes the storybook and turns down the lights. All around him the ruzaders scatter into their chosen corner of the tavern, chirrups and purrs fading quickly into squeaky yawns and snoozy snores.

Outside, the starlight falls in gentle showers over the Badlands. All is quiet in the holy night.

But what's that sound? In the distance Ruze hears jingles of rapidly approaching sleigh bells. He picks up Zephyr and grins.

Time for round two.



Day 25

by the ruzaders

Merry Christmas Ruze!
I hope you'll get tons of good food and
hot chocolate this year! Thank you for
always trying your best!
-Sorey

Merry Ruzemas,
Crimzmas?? whatever!
I wish you the best
my dear kami oshi~
-Damer
enjoy the book!

Happy Holidays~!
Thank you for another wonderful year!
May the seasons treat you kindly~
~Hany
Hany

Happy Holidays
oomph-cha!
I hope you have
the best day!
This is the
only time
I'll be nice~

Happy Holidays!
I hope it's a wonderful
time for you Ruze
-nitrograt

Happy Holidays and an Acceptably
Scary Solstice!
-Yei

Mew Cwim :3c
-Haiser

Happy
Holidays!
-Jesse
Haiser

Happy Holidays~!
Hope its awesome
all through next year too!
P.S. You're Cool.
-Carlan

Happy Holidays!
Hope you and the ruzaders
enjoy the season with good
cheer and good food-
-susu

Thanks for always
Being Cool!! - Siggyl

HAPPY HOLIDAYS RUZE!!! MAY HAPPINESS FIND YOU
AND KEEP YOU WELL & THANK YOU FOR ALWAYS BEING
A SHINING STAR IN OUR DARK SKIES.
-DUSK

OH BOY, I CAN'T WAIT
FOR MORE
CHRISTMAS COALS
THIS YEAR AGAIN
HERE.

MERRY CRIMZMAX
-CHILLY.

Merry Crimzmas
One And All
-FlipJack
Jackson

Happy Holidays
(suspiciously Christian Ruze shaped
present underneath tree)
-Jgww

Happy Holidays!
@NIKE
9120

Thank you for being the joy
in my life, ruz a ruzader!
happy holidays & let's keep
reading into 2026!
-ROBEE
reznick-hay

Happy Holiday Ruzes!
Im eepy but I have to
celebrate the holiday with you
and ruzaders!! *spit*
-this

Happy Holidays!
BEEN ON
CHRISTMAS YORE
4/ YALL & UERE
ONTO THE NEXT!
-RITAV

HAPPY
HOLIDAYS
Have an amazing holiday
& New Year!! Wishing everyone
a wonderful 2026!! ~ PLUVI

Merry 310 Days Until Halloween!
-Nekonomicon





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