

### **Some suggestions for writers participating in ANY fic exchange or fest:**

\*Before signing up for the event, make sure you know all of the important dates for. When is the deadline? Are there check-ins? Is there a drop-out deadline? Sometimes mods get busy or distracted and forget to make reminders of deadlines as they approach. Be a responsible participant and try to keep track of these things for yourself.

\*Before signing up, read the **ENTIRE** list of rules for the event. Though most fests and exchanges use a similar set of rules, each event will have some slight differences. Among other things, you should know the minimum word count requirement, whether incomplete works will be accepted, and any specifics regarding what you are allowed to prompt as well as the schedule of the exchange.

\*Whether the rules specify this or not (our rules do specify), it is always ideal if your work is **COMPLETE** by the final deadline. You should try not to turn in anything that is incomplete, even if it meets the minimum word requirement. If your work has chapters, all of them should be submitted by the event deadline. Make sure that the story has a definitive ending and can be read as a stand alone work without the promise of future chapters or parts in a series. Your work for an event, unless it is a self prompt, is a gift for the person who created the prompt. It is unfair for them to receive an unfinished gift, especially since muse is fickle, and we sometimes lose interest in our unfinished projects, leaving them unfinished indefinitely. Remember that it's possible to add to the world you've created later in the form of a sequel, prequel, or companion piece.

\*If at any time during the exchange your contact information changes, you should let the mods know immediately. If the mods can't contact you, you'll miss out on important reminders and instructions, and you might even lose your spot in the event. We offer a space for you to note contact information changes in your check-in form, but if your email address changes, you might not get the reminder email containing the link to the check-in form.

\*If you need to drop out or ask for an extension make sure to contact the mods immediately. This is especially important if your assignment will need to be reassigned as the mods need as much time as possible to find someone to replace you. If you request an extension, make sure to have the assignment complete by the date you promise, and if that is not possible, communicate with the mods to let them know exactly how much more time you think you will need.

\*Remember that the other participants are all amateurs, just like you. Respect them, their creative decisions, and their work. Support them when you can by leaving kudos and comments, especially comments that tell them *why* you like their work. Even keysmash and simple "I love this!" comments are appreciated, but if you don't have anything nice to say, just keep your thoughts to yourself.

\*Regarding the story gifted to you, be respectful of the author and their creative decisions, even if it isn't what you imagined when you submitted the prompt. If you choose to leave a comment (which you should, especially if the work is gifted to you), be honest but kind. Find something you liked about the story to compliment if possible, and thank them for the gift whether you like it or not, and if you didn't like your gift, even if it was just a part of it that you didn't like, keep that particular thought to yourself or contact the mods of the event if you believe all or part of the content goes against what you requested in your prompt. Sure, it was an assignment for the participant to complete, but most participants truly do try to write something their recipient will enjoy. It's always nice for that effort to be recognised, especially by the person who created the prompt.

\*As all authors in the event are amateur writers, please try not to set your expectations for your gift too high. You might have an amazing gift experience (we always hope that you do), but most of the time the experience is average, and sometimes it's just bad, especially if your prompt was unclear or the author misinterpreted it. All authors in the event also have lives outside of writing and sometimes run into complications that prevent them from presenting their best work in the time given. Please be understanding of this.

\*At least attempt to reply to comments on your story. If the event is on Ao3 and authors are anonymous during reveals, Ao3 will post your comments as 'anonymous creator' until the collection reveals authors as long as you are logged in. Even if all you say is "Thank you" it is polite to let a reader know that you saw their comment. This is one of the biggest reasons that readers choose not to comment on stories, even if they enjoyed reading. They feel like they're talking to a void when the author doesn't respond. You might not be such a popular author that you're getting a flood of comments on every story you write, but even if you are, most story exchanges post the stories anonymously at first. Appreciate your readers and they will be more likely to appreciate you.

\*Whether the rules require you to have your story edited by a beta reader or not, you should. Everything you write should be edited by someone other than yourself if possible. Because you know what you *meant* to say, your brain is likely to skip over typos and spelling/punctuation errors during editing that another person would see. Find yourself a good beta reader and never post anything without running it by them first. A good beta reader can make a good story great and a great story amazing.

\*Treat your beta well. I'm not saying that you should buy them dinner or send them chocolates every time they edit something for you, but definitely be kind to them, and don't forget to credit them for editing in your author's notes once authors are revealed. If you can post a link to your beta's work after authors are revealed, even better.

\*Try not to send your beta anything to edit at the last minute. This is especially important for works over 20,000 words. Most beta readers are amateurs with jobs and school and families, people who need time to read your story and work their magic, and most of them do it for nothing more than a mention in your author's note and your gratitude.

\*If a mod communicates with you outside of a mass message sent to all participants, please respond promptly. As a general rule, most mods will expect a response within 24-72 hours and will let you know exactly when they are expecting a response if it differs from this. Failure to respond might make them think they've lost contact with you, which can result in you losing your spot in the event, and if the communication is a message regarding a question from the person writing your gift, failure to respond in a timely manner can prevent the author from moving forward with their writing.

\*Share other stories from the event that you enjoyed reading. Tweet about them, link them on Tumblr and whatever other social media you use for fandom. Give other amateur authors like yourself an opportunity to be noticed. If you want to promote your own work but you feel it's too shameless to post a direct link, post a link to the entire collection. That way everyone wins.