Et Cetera, So on and So Forth

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Summary

Ratchet trusts them- both of them- with his life. He's not so sure he can do the same with his spark.

Notes

I don't even know how to explain this, it just happened. This is dedicated to those in the server who did a big over this, I love you all. ♥
Chapter 1

Ratchet supposed that if it was in the capacity of a non-extant concept to have a sense of humor, Primus would have a terrible one.

And if he had deigned to exist, then he better have fragged right off and died, before Ratchet came to kill him. He supposed it was unfair to place as much blame as he wanted for his mishap on said deity's representative mech (he didn't care about fairness), but at the same time there was something to be said for the venting of ones frustrations.

But, Primes always could be trusted on to Prime, and he as the infamous Ratchet the Hatchet, could always be trusted on to rail against them.

Especially, but not limited to heat cycles that absolutely were not supposed to happen.

Ratchet's gestation systems had been permanently ( so he thought ) offline since early into the war, and he'd gone through the disappointment and devastation and acceptance that it was probably thanks in part to his fragged up code and fragged up head from the seemingly never-ending conflict.

But then he had to trap himself on a ship with Rodimus fragging Prime, and of course they'd decided to randomly kick back on.

"Randomly."

Even worse, Rodimus had shown up right on time to his forcibly scheduled maintenance appointment- the one thing the muley-headed mech had never ever done before!

The speedster had frozen stock still as the exam-room door shut behind him, spoilers raised- up until he started to circle the berthing at the center.

"Y'smell really good, Ratch." He murmured, voice dipping into a sultry register he'd have never thought the mech capable of. Ratchet, him of quick thought and quicker reflexes, began to circle the same direction. Rodimus' spoiler blades perked and his engine revved, some primal (hah) part of him anticipating a chase.

So much for Ratchet's privacy, not to mention his medical overrides.

And, so much for his plans of taking care of his immediate need before holing himself up in his quarters for a few days of sad masturbation.

His plan had been to monitor his strange Heat and report his findings to anyone amicable on the science staff, to figure out why he would have gone into one again after so long without. But, as one Rodimus Prime gave him a half vacant glassy-optic stare, some deep part of him knew exactly why he had gone into heat again.

"Rodimus." He stated, trying his best to sound even and level and not at all full of fear. "You're not thinking clearly, this would be something you regret- you don't want this- you don't want me."

Rodimus' optical ridges furrowed, as if he was trying hard to think through and comprehend what Ratchet was saying.
"But I do." He replied muzzily, as if dreaming. "I want you. Wanna put a sparklet in you."

Heat flashed through Ratchet's spinal strut, and his legs gave a tiny wobble as he continued his circle. Rodimus wasn't too much younger than him by truth, but he was strong and energetic and by Primus Ratchet hoped it was the heat telling him he wanted him back, and not just that strange magnetism Primes seemed to have.

Not to mention, Rodimus seemed to be in the process of getting surgically attached at the hip to-

"Drift." He murmured- barely a breath- but it served to tense Rodimus in a wave. "He and you -"

"Did you want him instead?" Rodimus said, some raw edge to his voice. "I got here first."

As if Ratchet was some sort of vending machine for interface. He pointedly ignored his feelings welled back up inside him from where he'd pressed them down and Rodimus' question, pointedly kept moving, motioning to the door almost behind Rodimus' back.

"You want him." Ratchet said, that rawness- which he could identify in himself as jealousy and envy and a sad longing coming out clear. "I've seen you two. Together." And scrap, if this was a bad time for this conversations and these unrequited feelings to show to the second last person he wanted them to, and a worse time for Rodimus to have passed that door. They were on the long ends of the berthing, again.

"You don't want to hurt him, do you? This would hurt him." Rodimus scowled, obviously trying to think through his haze and his rut. They circled a moment in silence, and Ratchet considered the likelihood of running into someone who would turn his crankshaft enough to get him distracted, if he managed to get out that door. He was close to it though, and he knew with the mediberth between them, it'd give him a head start on the speedster.

Deep in his thoughts and his plan of escape as he was, he didn't notice Rodimus' optics widening, nor did he hear the door- left unlocked from Rodimus' entry- open behind him.

He gave a mighty startle when arms closed about his middle, and a clawed hand gently latched itself onto his armor. With a soft, smooth susurrus of metal on metal, a helm pressed into the side of his, and a nasal ridge pressed into his neck cabling.

Ratchet froze in place, willing it not to be the one mech he knew it had to be, to dare to be so familiar with him so casually, where Rodimus had been still cowed enough to not try and reach out and touch.

A pelvic housing, flash-heated, rocked against his aft. "Ratch" came the breathless voice of Drift. "You smell good."
Ratchet's escape had not been his finest moment.

He'd managed to thrust his elbow into Drift's side just as Rodimus vaulted the mediberth and spun Drift around to collide with him as the Prime landed with a yelp.

With a slap of his hand on the ident pad next to the door, it shut and locked with a cheery beep. He about-faced on one pede and sped his way through the medbay, sending emergency pings with information on his condition to the rest of the medical staff.

He received affirmatives immediately, and transformed down into his alt mode, the door barely sliding aside before he could collide with it. Ratchet had his sirens going before his wheels fully hit the hall, and he was skidding to a stop in front of his hab before he could fully process the thought about it.

He could only vent when he'd locked himself in, and momentarily cursed that he'd given up the quarters directly attached to medbay to First Aid, but the thought flew away as he stumbled to his berth, and the storage unit he had in the wall beside it.

Getting his favorite false spike into his hands, Ratchet let out a moan the likes of which he'd not since he was millennia younger. Putting it inside himself was like a cool, blessed dousing of water on a blazing fire.

He was thrusting his hips before he could really think, rolling down and back on instinct more than anything else. He cursed Rodimus' name as much as he moaned it and Drift's peppered along in there. He couldn't help but imagine them, knowing they were either fighting over him or fragging each other into the next week.

Probably fragging, as it should be.

He'd watched them circle each other for a long time, watched them get close in a way he'd never could for them, for that care he felt for them, and this was a mess he'd hoped would blow over with a sheepish shrug and an apology about keeping hands to themselves.

And then he'd go back to quietly watching from afar, being glad to see them with each other. They were beautiful, and his mind floated to how strong Drift's arms felt around him. He knew Rodimus would be more than comparable, enhanced by his contact with the matrix as he was. He could be sure Rodimus would take him with a fervor, too. Ratchet gasped on an overload with the unexpected remembrance of Rodimus' words, his tone.

The moment he began to come down from it, the guilt settled back in.

Not guilty enough to get back up off the spike on the floor since it was stimulating him so nicely, but it was enough for him to give the cursory hang of his helm.

Damn Rodimus.

Damn the matrix.
Damn his systems, for being unraveled from whatever malfunction of a knot they were in.

Damn himself, for being stupid enough to allow those feelings in the first place, instead of ruthlessly stamping them out like he should have.

He was an old fool, and while he sure as hell didn't feel like he deserved the humiliation this whole situation brought him, he felt that he certainly deserved the pain.

Ratchet let out a great big vent and swiveled on the spike, letting his helm and shoulders rest on the berthing.

He'd offline his optics for a few minutes, and then get back up and prepare for the next round of torture.

When he woke up, it was to warmth and comfort. One of his few luxuries was his berthing, so that wasn't too surprising, but what was surprising was that slight feeling of restriction he experienced, on top of the warmth.

Moments before he onlined his optics, he realized that it had to be a blanket on his frame. That, or a tarp.

Moments after he onlined his optics, he wish he hadn't, and in his vulnerable state, instead of lashing out as he was used to, he shrank back into the safety of his covers.

Instantly, the faces before him changed, twin expression of concerns expressed in such different ways. Drift looked worried, like he wanted to reach out to him, where Rodimus' expression took on a look of surprise, and then something like the muted start of panic, or what could be panic.

"What are you two doing here?" He asked, voice raw and rough with the deepening humiliation of the whole matter.

As in, the matter of the room that stunk of lubricants and overload and sizzled circuitry and him.

Not to mention the fact that Ratchet knew very well he had fallen asleep on the floor with his favorite false spike sitting- ah yes, there it was.

Still on the floor in plain view.

"Hacked the door." Rodimus murmured, at the same time Drift said "Overrode the lock." with no small amount of false perk to his voice.

Rodimus' gaze snapped to Drift for just a moment, before focusing back in on Ratchet. Drift, in turn, lowered his head minutely, in a show of deference.

Well, that told the story.

And in that moment, those moments- where Ratchet was still lucid, before the heat hit again, Ratchet and his medic's brain cataloged the dents and scrapes on the pair's frame.

Fighting it was then, and Rodimus had come out the winner and their shared aggression had momentarily cleared their heads. But if that was so then...

His optics darted to Drift for just a moment in confusion, but Rodimus did nothing more than smirk in turn before he moved, the picture of fluidity, to get closer.
"We figured it out." Rodimus replied cryptically, and Ratchet's head spun in his effort to figure out what the frag his captain meant.

And then he was too close, and Ratchet did a ridiculous side-scoot to put some distance between them. Rodimus blinked at him, and in sure and true Rodimus fashion, he trapped him in the most ridiculous way possible.

And, with Rodimus straddling him to keep him in place, Ratchet petulantly brought the cover up to cover his face.

"Oh come on." Rodimus said, as if he hadn't done that exact thing on multiple occasions when he was being a contrarian. "I've seen the way you look at me." He said, as if it was simultaneously the most aggravating and exciting thing in the world. "And Drift, for that matter too."

Ratchet couldn't see him, but he could guess the myriad reactions could have gone with the sharp, soft in-vent of air Drift took in.

Then, Rodimus took hold of his literal security blanket, and peeled it down off his face.

Ratchet was sure he must have some sort of horrible expression on his face, for the way that Rodimus' morphed through a veritable cavalcade of emotion.

"Can I help you through this?" He asked, voiced gentled just so, and it served to heat Ratchet's ire, just so. "Can we help you through this? I'll leave you alone after, if you want, pretend it never happened. Whatever you want."

Rodimus looked back at Drift, obviously looking for affirmation and confirmation of his promise in Drift's own words, but whatever he saw there had his spoiler blades hike up in a sharp twitch.

"Uh, no promises for Drift. But we'll take care of you Ratchet, I promise we will."

There was some strange conviction to Rodimus' voice that made Ratchet's stressed frame want to relax, made the ire want to die away.

The heat had turned back into making him feel uncomfortable again, and Ratchet was painfully aware that all that separated their frames was the blanket, especially because Ratchet could feel the slick spilling out of him.

A little whisper at the back of his mind egged him to take him up on the offer, to succumb to this beautiful Prime and the mate he should have, just for the duration of his heat, let it happen and be done and then he could go back to moping and being as miserable as he wanted.

It might hurt him in the long run, he'd have to pick himself back up again and put himself and his stupid spark back together again, but the indulgence would be worth the pain, for those moments.

He sighed, mentally relenting before he verbally did.

All it would be was the best few threesomes of his life, that's it.

Beyond that and his broken spark, no more.
Oops, cliffhanger.

I feel like this is a fair point to leave y'all hanging, and will be good motivation to finish my other stuff before I come back to this.

Thanks for reading!
When he begrudgingly relented, Rodimus' first course of action was the yank the blanket away entirely in some kind of unholy glee. He babbled about how Ratchet wouldn't regret it, how he would treat him so well-up until Ratchet grabbed hold of one of Rodimus' helm crests and pulled him in close, kissing him with all the hunger he'd ever felt for the flame-colored mech.

Rodimus let out a squeak before responding in kind, plunging his glossa into Ratchet's mouth as best he was able, as if his thought mirrored Ratchet's in that this was the one time he would get to taste him. Ratchet moaned into the kiss, into the shocks of heat and sensation it sent into his frame in waves.

Oh, the huger was intense, and his heat intensifying yet- but Ratchet needed sated. There was no time to imagine Rodimus' mouth on his valve or his fingers inside him, he needed something else and he needed it now to quell the suffocating urges inside him.

Even as he unseated Rodimus in opening his legs, the Prime adjusted with a quickness, unable or refusing to stop in his kisses as he slithered himself into a smooth, closed-paneled rut against the swollen folds of Ratchet's valve.

Rodimus pulled his head back and left the cables of his neck in a beatific arch as he pressurized his spike directly into Ratchet's waiting valve.

If the false spike had doused his flame, just for an instant, Rodimus' spike inside him served as a soothing torrent and for a flash of a moment before Drift appeared in his hazy field of vision to kiss him, he loved and loathed how right it all felt.

Rodimus gained some hold of him about the hips and thrust in the same time that Drift delivered a delicate nip to his lips. Ratchet cried out, and it served to give Drift the opening he desired, and his turn taking and giving Ratchet's kisses. One hand cradled his helm as if he was some kind of precious thing as he kissed him, and the other was away from Ratchet's line of sight, but by the rhythmic motion of Drift's shoulder, he could guess where it had found itself.

It was bliss of the highest order, each minute bit of friction between the hard, ridged spike inside him and the nodes of his valve made Ratchet crave Rodimus that much more, paired with Drift's kisses it was as if he was given the sweetest high-grade to sup upon, in a vortex of never-ending pleasure.

Then, Rodimus' chest plating cracked open.

Ratchet took that split-second moment when radiant blue light washed over him, Drift and the room at large to be impressed by his own restraint and ability in the face of a fully bloomed heat and a Prime's spark. He slipped his hands from where they'd come to grasp at Rodimus' upper arms down just so before locking his joints, and letting his own reinforced chest plates open too.
He'd not let Rodimus bond to him, but even a shallow merge could help expedite the end of the heat.

Drift had stopped kissing him at the first sign of spark, and by that excited, awed and reverential expression he wore, Ratchet knew then he'd not be leaving his berthing tonight before having Drift inside him too. He wasn't just to be some kind of voyeur to Rodimus' escapades, else his spark would've never come into the picture, he was sure.

The coronas of their sparks entwined with ease, and the high-energy contact fed through Ratchet's systems in waves of pleasure before slipping back through in the whisper of a weak echo of what Rodimus must be feeling too. It was erotic in a touch of a strange manner, to feel and know in some manner that the younger speedster was getting as much pleasure as he was giving.

Ratchet's spark hungrily took and gave energy and affection for as starved as he and it were- of the two, his soul was more honest than he was.

Rodimus' expression crossed over into some kind of divine agony, the peak of pleasure and something Ratchet couldn't readily identify, but it was with that tell-tale bloom of searing heat in his depths that told him Rodimus had overloaded, and right where he needed it.

It was microseconds before the feedback hit his spark, before their shallow merge abruptly ended and it took Ratchet tottering to that edge of bliss and torture all at once. He cursed, as that edge skittered further from his reach.

Rodimus gave him some sort of apologetic look as he gently withdrew his oversensitive spike with a hiss, only to be gently bullied to the side and out of Drift's way as he crowded into Ratchet's space.

Drift was flushed and running hot, and as hurried himself into position, Ratchet could see the firm grip he kept on the base of his spike not let up until he began to ease himself into Ratchet's valve, slickened by Ratchet's excess of lubrication and Rodimus' spill.

Drift let out a soft gasp as he hilted and immediately caged Ratchet's frame with his own. His optics shown with some emotion Ratchet refused to identify as he opened his chest plates and so he looked away at the same time that he curled his hands around to take hold of Drift's shoulders.

It was for much of the same purpose that he held on to Rodimus- to keep the merge shallow, but it gave Drift the embrace Ratchet knew he wanted. Drift thrust slow and deep, obviously trying to prolong the inevitable of his overload, and it made something twist in Ratchet's intake to hear the whispered words accompanying each movement.

Their merge deepened just so as Ratchet let go with one hand, using it to cover Drift's mouth. Drift paused in his movements, and met Ratchet's warning gaze with softness. Ratchet felt him smile behind his hand and extend his glossa, tracing over seams and gaps in his hand. Ratchet could help but stare at him, even as Drift suckled at his fingers to the new rhythm of his thrusts.

Rodimus mumbled from his side somewhere about how hot that was, but Ratchet barely heard him through his brain trying to short out as Drift suckled at his fingers to the new rhythm of his thrusts.

It was so much, so fast, that Ratchet barely had any warning before his overload roared over him like an angry gestalt. He felt almost like he was half shunted out of his body for an overload so strong off the tail end of his weaker one earlier, could feel how he squeezed down on Drift and rippled the overload right out of him.
Pushed into heights he'd rarely experienced before that point, Ratchet's vision went white.

Chapter End Notes

:3c Thanks for reading, and all the comment left thus far! I appreciate each and every one, and the response I've had thus far to this fic. ♥ We'll see about having another chapter before too long.
And here we are, my friends! This is my last posting before the end of Tfcon proper. The convention itself is done for this year, but I don't go home for a while yet. ♥ This was a part of a flash poll on my twitter (@MeridianBarony) and this one won. It was so nice to meet so many of you there! I loved every moment of the time I got to spend meeting up with y'all. Enjoy!! ♥

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Ratchet's next lucid moments came in a haze, with strong hands moving his frame, those hands moving over his frame with a damp cloth that smelled like cleanser.

With warmth all around him, encompassing him from each side.

The soft sounds of what was probably quiet bickering.

And then he surfaced to another moment of solid lucidity, and he felt strange to be in the presence of others, in his berthing.

And then more surreal yet, that it was Drift and Rodimus, the former curled up tight on one side, using Ratchet's chassis as a pillow with a loose hold about his middle, and the latter with a leg and an arm flung over Ratchet's body and curled to keep him there. Unlike Drift's serene face, Rodimus had smooshed his into Ratchet's chest-plating, as if he was hiding there.

If not for the all-pervasive feeling of full soreness throughout his frame, and the sticky-slick on his inner thighs, he would be sure he was dreaming. As if sensing his awakening, Rodimus blinked awake, and lifted his head.

Ratchet met his gaze, some kind of amused in the strangeness of the situation. "Need more?" Rodimus asked, obviously mostly asleep still. His hand hooked into Ratchet's armor released for just a moment to pat at him in a manner that was likely meant to be some kind of alluring. "Hold on, I can fuck you again in a hot second." Ratchet couldn't help the chuckle that came out along with the sigh. Of course Rodimus would resort to calling it like it was.

He was surprised to find himself petting the top of Rodimus' helm, and his spark throbbed at how happy the simple action seemed to make him.

"I want to rest a while longer, before it hits me again." He said, surprised again by how softly he spoke. Rodimus smiled something gentle and radiant before letting his face smoosh back down.

Ratchet offlined his optics and let his awareness slip into restfulness, but that hot, itchy sensation of need was starting to build again.

He'd resist it as long as he could, and enjoy the illusion of togetherness the situation brought.
Resurfacing again found him deep in the throes of his heat again, and it took Drift taking him from behind, followed by Rodimus filling him from below that calmed him into momentary control again. It was a sight to see after, as the pair raided Ratchet's stores to find energon and coolant for him as they insisted they wrap him in a ridiculous blanket.

Ratchet tried his best to ignore the little voice in his helm counting down the moments to when this treatment was over. He knew he should just do his best to ignore it, to enjoy this small gift he was given, but it just wasn't in his nature.

When he peeled himself out from between them to get an actual shower, the two sleeping speedsters cuddled up close in his absence. It sent a pang through his spark, to see how well they fit, with the curled Drift in Rodimus' flailed out tangle of limbs. He turned away to get himself into his washrack, and refused to dwell on the feeling that he was a third-wheel in his own ill-prepared heat.

The feeling persisted as he cleaned their combined transfluids from his valve.

And thighs. And lower abdomen- Primus, they'd really just marked him everywhere, hadn't they?

He scrubbed away for a long time, until he could feel like he was some kind of passably clean. Ratchet stood under the shower in a daze a long time, until the prickles of heat had come back around to remind him of their hold over him.

He grappled with it mentally, with his urges and the whole issue of his own lack of consent with the matter. His body wanted some pitslag social ties and to reproduce, so it was a moot point anyways, since the latter wasn't able to happen and the former was already there, but in a different venue, that he was already well satisfied with, thank you very much.

Ratchet would have to go back out there and taste Rodimus' fire and Drift's gentleness and reconcile himself with knowing that the moment his heat let up his uncomfortable thrall over them would be done, and he would have to be okay with that.

He disdained the part of him that wanted to cower back, and asked himself since when- aside from the many times- that he'd let his anxiety get the best of him and stop him from doing what he needed to do.

For a moment he contemplated kicking the two of them out of reveled in the thought with a wave of grim satisfaction, held aloft by pangs of heartache. He leaned to rest his helm on the door out, and admonished himself, again.

He knew he was being stupid, and knew just as well that if he went out there and let them help, he wouldn't suffer longer than he needed to, even if he did deserve it.

His wallowing froze in a hiccup, as the sounds of soft shuffling came from the other side of the door. Ratchet had to give some credit to his imagination and his jealous little spark, as some imagining of one of his beautiful speedsters turning to the other to relieve the charge Ratchet's lingering scent was putting into their systems.

He absolutely did not want to examine that feeling, where his absence was also the source of his own jealousy.

Then, the door to his washrack opened and he stumbled, almost taking out the shuffler- Drift.

Drift caught him at the waist as he caught himself on Drift's arms, struck dumb another moment as Drift looked upon him with a strange mixture of surprise and relief in dim optics.
His brain instantly latched onto something that wasn't his own bad attitude and feelings, and with a lightning-fast optic, he diagnosed Drift as underfueled, though not critically.

A welcome feeling of annoyance washed over him. "You need to have some energon." He said, using his tone that would bring no quarrel that could stand up to it. "Why didn't you fuel when you fed me?"

Drift blinked, and answered with a tone of voice that was all too self-assured. "Ratch, it's your energon, you're gonna be the one that needs it." He sounded confidently like it was the simplest thing in the world, and Ratchet felt his optic ridges shoot up.

"You've never spent a heat with someone as the rutting party before, have you?" Ratchet said this with some kind of resignation that made Drift's face heat all the way back to his finials.

"I don't see how that - hey - what- Ratch-" Ratchet didn't wait for him to answer, just firmèd his grip and bodily moved Drift to sit as he went to fish a cube out of his mild clutter. When he brought it back and bullied it into Drift's hands, Drift looked at him, and it, as if he'd been given a gift beyond imagination before he gratefully drunk it down.

He grabbed a second- his last before he'd have to uncover his dispenser, and turned to look at Rodimus, who had woken up in the apparent absence of his berthmates and was sitting looking eagerly at him. Ratchet brought it over, ignoring how Rodimus' smile widened with every step closer.

Ratchet almost wanted to tell him not to look at him like that, but the sincerity of Rodimus' thanks caught the words in this throat. He just mumbled an impotent response and let him chug the cube down.

Ratchet stood awkwardly for a long moment, before Rodimus dispersed his cube and reached for him, pulling him and his heavy frame down to apparently cuddle. Ratchet wasn't surprised, as some slightly detached, clinical part of him saw the code opposite his own heat coding deciding that Rodimus, as a potential sire, wanted that closeness with his never-could-be carrier.

Drift was not far behind and he used his impressive flexibility to worm his way into the cuddle and Ratchet supposed to himself that it was as only right as it was wrong.

His frame however, as much as his mind rebelled, slowly went limp with relaxation. He examined it with less clinicality than he would've wanted, even as the two mechs surrounded him let their engines rev into a purr, warming him further in a most comfortable way. That most simple kind of pleasure, that of closeness and contact and togetherness washed over him, and sustained through until his heat next took him over.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! More Ratchet angst to follow. ♥♥♥
His heat ran for three more days, give or take some time for the addled mind. He woke up that last day feeling like he'd not been so lucid for eons, and stared blankly at the ceiling of his habsuite.

It was over.

He steeled himself and his mind to the fact before the veritable tidal wave of emotion could rear-up and strike him down with the pain of it all, and stared up at the ceiling of his suite with the absolute knowledge that he'd never get a moment like this beyond now, where he could be content with his spot and these speedsters, before they could wake up and be horrified with themselves and their behavior and of course, Ratchet himself maybe most of all.

But, it was for the best.

He'd accepted their coming together as easily as accepting that gravity exists, or that millions of years of war could damage someone irrevocably.

Ratchet allowed himself the indulgence until it was all too much to bear, and then he extricated himself from between them, marveling a moment at the changes to his living space in just that few days. Half the clutter had been cleared or put away, making the space look lived in, as opposed to a place Ratchet just came to sleep and store his extraneous crap.

He shook the thought away and continued on his trek to cleanliness, knowing well and true it'd be back to normal soon, and that they'd be leaving him even sooner.

Part of him wanted to hide away, as if it could prolong it, as if they'd not just leave in time anyways.

When he went back, Rodimus was sitting up, blinking off his haze, too. He looked towards Ratchet, expression some mix of desire and confusion under the growing clarity.

"How're you feeling?" Ratchet asked quietly, not wanting to wake the sleeping Drift, but needing very much to be in control of the situation as best he could. Rodimus smiled a crooked smile.

"I feel like I should be asking you that, Ratch. I'm okay- maybe a little chafed, but okay." His gaze roved as he spoke, from his face to his chest plating down to - ah, yes. His abdomen.

"And, Erm... Thank you, for the help." He said awkwardly, leaving off the fact it would've run it's course in time anyways.

Rodimus' expression softened, even as his smile widened. He got off the berthing as Drift blinked awake fully, and stretched. He took a step forwards, even as Ratchet took a step back, and froze.

"It was my pleasure." He said, watching him closely, optics hungry and countenance excited "And will be, to take care of you through:"
Ratchet's short, sharp laugh cut him off, and the medic shook his head, even as he gave in to crossing his arms over his chest.

"No no, you don't need to worry about that, Rodmus. Either of you." Drift sat up, watching the pair of them in confused silence. "This heat was entirely a fluke- the first I've had in millenia, so my gestational systems are shot." Realization dawned on Drift's face, but Rodimus still looked confused. There would be little to do except clear it up for him, beautiful daft creature he was.

In a way, it almost hurt to dash whatever excitement of creating the flame colored mech was harboring.

"There won't be any sparklets from this heat to worry about, Rodimus." He said firmly. "I'm infertile."

Chapter End Notes

I know this one is short, sorry! Hows about I make it up to y'all by giving you an official solstice-y/candlenights-y posting of the next chapter? That's only what, six days? maybe seven depending? ;):D

Thank you all for the comments too, your feels fuel my fire for this fic and I love these three dumbasses so much. ♥
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Happy Candlenights my friends!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

As he stripped the extremely soiled bedding from his berthing, Ratchet did his best to stop that echoing playback in his head and his own self-admonishment.

He'd aimed for the most casual manner he could when he turned his back to the two of them at his energon dispenser, and said he'd be taking Rodimus up on that offer of forgetting that this encounter happened.

He'd put on his work voice- the calmer one- when he said their privacy was of utmost concern to him, and he'd respect it by not spreading around what had happened there the last few days.

He was sure- for some reason- that he didn't need to extract the promise parroted back out of them.

Rodimus' following silence spoke volumes of untenable things, hung like a proverbial blade over all of their helms.

Ratchet's spark had lurched in it's casing when Drift said his name, tone full of emotions layered on a plea that Ratchet was too afraid to look into too deeply.

"It's what I want- that's what was agreed upon. You'll know where to find me if you have a medical issue." He'd snapped this quickly from his hiding place with his back to them, unwilling to take that risk.

It was just... too much.

And so, they left.

Rodimus turned and let himself out without a word, and Drift lingered only to further burn his optics into Ratchet's dorsal plating for that much longer, before he accompanied his captain out of the suite too.

Ratchet had locked his joints at the knees to prevent himself from sinking to the floor, out of spite more than anything. He wasn't going to let himself crumple like he was some kind of protagonist in a saucy romance bookfile, he was going to take his last day of recovery, sanitize his whole suite if he had the itch, and go back to work.

He knew very well he was going to feel strange on a physical level for a short while longer, as well as an emotional one, but it wouldn't do to deprive himself the creature comfort that routine brought him, no matter what the rest of the medical team would likely say about that.

Work would give him plenty of time to ignore those painful thoughts circling at the periphery and to avoid Rodimus and Drift. He knew very well First Aid wouldn't let him work triple shifts, but he wouldn't stop him from taking a shift concurrent with theirs, as used to Ratchet's idiosyncrasies he was.
They'd not be cornering him in the medbay on their off-shifts ever again, if he could help it.

Ratchet resolved to pick himself up and move on.

To his surprise, it worked for a while.

He resumed his shifts in the medbay on an altered schedule, saw his patients, performed his maintenance and saw neither speedster outside of official needs. The rest of the command crew had cottoned on to Something Having Happened™ between the three of them, but no one would dare comment.

Even Megatron seemed content to simply raise an orbital ridge at the three of them and say nothing at the awkward behavioral changes. Wonders never cease.

And then, he fell ill.

Or rather, he began to feel worse than his usual.

It was no secret that the majority of those like him- veterans of the war who had a life and time before it, had aches and pains and creaks and crunches in their everyday life. It was due to a disturbing mixture of self-neglect and the need for such in the war zones like they were used to facing. Who gave a frag about abraded protoform thanks to the lay of a frayed cable?

Not such a patient with such an issue, that was for sure, and yet they still had it in them to be surprised when heavy maintenance made them feel some thousand years younger.

Ratchet knew he was no different, knew that kink in his shoulder or the micro-grit still trapped in his ankle would only serve to hurt him more in the future if he didn't get them fixed. But heavy maintenance would take time, and the recovery after would take ten times that time.

And Primus fucking forbid he was out two weeks, and someone shot them-self up the aft or shot someone else up the aft- or one of the labs blew, or if the crew found themselves in some new kind of quantum-cosmic incident.

It wouldn't fly to just say No, sorry my captains, I'm convalescing from my maintenance overhaul, can we reschedule my life-saving surgeries until next week?

He'd put it off for a grievously long time, and for all intents and purposes, it seemed to have come back to bite him directly on the aft.

Of course, the upset in his tanks could be due in part to the extended bout of anxiety he seemed intent on putting himself through, beating himself up over having shared his heat with the last two people he'd ever wanted to.

It, along with the fatigue and aches and pains that seemed to have popped up overnight were easy to ignore and explain away- but spark pain- actual, non-metaphorical spark pain was nothing to be ignored, so with the petty fear of some kind of venereal infection running rampant in his frame, alongside the very real fear that he'd really put his maintenance off long enough to effect him down to his most vital systems, he went to submit himself to First Aid's tender mercies.

Chapter End Notes
Oof, Ratchet. Oof.

Thanks for reading and commenting, I'll see y'all in the new year!
Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Hello and welcome to my birthday!! in... Quarantine! haaaaah.

I accidentally finished this chapter when trying desperately to grasp for words, so I figured I could clean it up and post it all for y'all today!

Also! If you trundled over here looking on a reason for why I've not updated anything else yet, this has been posted on my profile:

I'm saying fuck it on WIP statuses for the time being. It's been months since I've felt properly productive and I can't stick to a plan right now. things will be updated when they're updated. I'm leaving the fic schedule there to be easy for the future, but until further notice, fics and fic updates will be posted spontaneously and without warning or regard for the length of time between other updates for other fics.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When First Aid appeared with an honest-to-Primus pamphlet in hand and a look on his face of a most grim satisfaction, Ratchet knew he was in for it.

"Never in my existence thus far have I had the pleasure of handing one of these out." He started, making Ratchet tense. "They handed me ten of these when I got out of medical school, and now I get to hand one off to you, before we talk about your options here."

Ratchet found the tri-folded piece of plasticine in his hands before he could properly respond and in a shade off of a pink that would otherwise be lurid, the words SO, YOU ARE GESTATING A SPARKLING screamed out at him.

Instantly, his ire flared. "Cut the slag, Aid. I'm having spark pain, of all things."

He tossed the offending item back at him, but the younger medibot seemed to anticipate such a response, and instead shoved a readout on a datapad into his hands.

For a laybot, it would look like lines upon lines of nonsense data, but Ratchet's trained optic picked out the differences in his stored basecode and his current basecode in moments.

His sparkchamber was successfully holding and strengthening a protospark, right against his, and his gestation chamber had gone through a series of resets to cycle the transfluids inside him to a usable building state for his forge.

For his clinical side, the simple signs of a carriage were irrefutable. For the rest of him, he felt his spark drop into his fuel tank and then try to crawl into his throat.

"I know what I'm seeing here." He said, tone flat. "But this is impossible."

First Aid gave him a flat look, but he continued. "Look at my medical history!" He said with a snap
"My gestational systems reported as non-responsive a sheer ten years after the war started in earnest." He said, flipping back through the pad to display the relevant data. "My spark output stopped spiking after my last heat, nearly a century after that."

First Aid heaved a massive sigh, and held up a hand mirror, as if he had some sort of Idea Ratchet would act this way.

"Open your chest-plating." First Aid said, tone tired but obvious he'd not garner any argument.

Ratchet scowled at him for a long moment before complying, hesitating only a little before his mentee. He took the mirror and angled it, and his vents stalled as the little ring of spark energy registered.

Ratchet's doctor's brain kicked in, and he saw that it- it, but almost a *they* had already formed the initial bulge, that would coalesce from the remaining ring and soon be a true protospark, and then a true spark not long after that.

To have progressed so fast before slowing showed that it was extremely healthy, and Ratchet had a good idea to why.

First Aid gently took the mirror from his hands.

"You're in spark pain because you need the sire, Ratchet." He said, using his soft, Understanding Doctor Voice. Ratchet hated it. "The protospark's used up the energy you generated and received from your heat." He said, as if Ratchet couldn't deduce that himself.

"There's that or the alternative, which I'm sure you already know- and from the look on your face, I can tell makes you feel, ah... conflicted." He caught himself in the mirror still in Aid's hands, caught that turmoil in his expression- and did his best to school himself.

He looked back to the datapad, scrolled to the deep data on the spark's coding entangled in his. It was too early to tell as of yet; the spark would need to descend before the data would solidify- but it looked like it was an even mix of the three of them, so far.

Primus, what a mess he found himself in.

"How long do I have on the supplements?" Ratchet asked, grasping for a touch of normalcy in the situation.

"You don't." First Aid stated plainly, tone dropping flat and unimpressed. "You've not gone through *any* kind of complete maintenance, critical or otherwise, since before the war."

Ratchet gave him a look of deep displeasure, but First Aid was undeterred.

"Your systems are so taxed that you have literally no recourse for your sparkling. You need the sire, you need supplements on top of that, or you need to terminate so that your systems and frame don't cannibalize in the forging process." First Aid was quiet only a beat as the silence hung thick between them.

"I'm not going to let you kill yourself with this either, Ratchet." He said, determined. "You arrange to take care of this in whatever manner, or I report you to the Captains."

Ratchet stared at him, anger and terror at First Aid's threatened betrayal over-riding the shock for a
"You have until the end of tomorrow." He declared, picking the pamphlet back up and setting it on top of the datapad in Ratchet's hands. "Send me a ping, and the day after we will talk plans, else I'll be submitting my report to the captains and removing you from duty."

"That- that isn't fair - it's not right, Aid, I have patients that need my care." Ratchet protested, finding his voice again. This was too much, too soon. "You can't just decide something like that without knowing the whole story-"

"And who's going to tell me?" First Aid said sharply, cutting him off. "You?"

It was a low blow. "I give you the run of this place, Ratchet, but I'm in charge now. Decide how this is going to happen and ping me, or don't, but you have until the end of tomorrow." Aid punctuated his point by moving to the door, and Ratchet got the distinct impression that if the younger doctor could slam the thing open and shut, he would.

"And after, regardless of your decision?" He said, looking back over his shoulder on the other side of the threshold. "Prepare to have your post-war maintenance."

The door shut behind him and Ratchet couldn't help but fume in First Aid's absence. The younger mech was correct all around and for a moment he hated him for it almost as much as he hated himself.

He'd learned from the best, after all.

Chapter End Notes

Oh Ratchet, we all knew it was coming, but now things will be so very different for you.😊😊

Thanks for reading, y'all!! Stay safe out there!!!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!