The Emperor's New Consort

by Redleafmornings

Summary

The First Order is in control of the Galaxy, in a last ditch effort to save those who are left, they request negotiations. Only to find that for the Resistance to survive they only need to give up one thing small thing - the angry Senator Ben Organa.

Notes

based on the prompt http://tfa-kink.dreamwidth.org/4613.html?thread=10077957#cmt10077957

See the end of the work for more notes
Chapter 1

Things had been difficult for the Resistance from the start, but it was nothing compared to when Snoke finally fell and General Hux rose to power. Snoke had always been distracted with the force and the powers of Senator Ben Organa, it left him with a weakness. One that they had exploited for years.

Now there was no ending to the hunger for power that Hux seemed to feel, now naming himself as Emperor, and the resources of the First Order were far greater than what the Resistance had. They were losing, in fact they were beyond that. They had lost, the only thing that saved them was that Hux didn’t know it yet.

These negotiations were their last chance to save the few people they had left. Leia had been the one to call for them, Ben had been prepared to die taking them down. As far as he was concerned it would have been an honor.

Hux had arrived on time with his delegation, though it was mostly guards who tried to look impressive as they waited.

Leia was a fierce General, but she knew it was time to try for a truce, even Ben had to bow to her knowledge.

They needed the truce to go through. Ben had worked out the terms with his mother. They would get a small system that First Order would allow to remind occupied by anyone in the Resistance, it would forever be independent of the First Order. In return, the Resistance would agree to cease attacks against the First Order. At this point it was the best they could hope for.

Ben was staying back, they had both agreed that his temper would not be welcome at the talks. Just seeing the First Order scum made his blood boil. He’d lost a lot of good friends over the years.

Now they walked in invited, and he had to swallow down his anger.

As his mother outlined the terms the Emperor looked smug, which didn’t bode well for them.

“I’m not interested in your terms, we haven’t had any real problem defending your attacks in the last few cycles. To give up a whole system would be foolish. Your little rebellion is not even worth a full planet.”

Ben felt his stomach drop at the words and his temper flare up.

“We’re worth more than the whole lot of you.”

Leia shot him a look, but the Emperor only looked amused. That only made him angrier.

“Please forgive Senator Organa, sometimes he forgets himself.”

She shot Ben a look that told him to control his temper, he’d been seeing that look since he was a kid.

“No, it’s no trouble at all, he has a lovely voice.”

Ben didn’t hold back his snarl at Hux’s words, he dug his nails into his palms. He would keep control. He may have dropped out of his uncle’s academy, but he could still use the medication techniques to soothe himself. Ben started with a few slow breaths and focusing inward.
“What would your terms be then?”

Ben asked it with a steady voice, drawing himself up to his full height. He was sure he would be taller than the so-called Emperor if they were beside each other. Leia had taught him well, he would never be a simpering omega.

The Emperor crossed the room, with his guards flanking him. He was also taking deep breaths, and Ben could tell that he was being scented, and Hux was looking even more smug. As if this whole situation was so far below him that he was amused by it.

Ben struggled to hold in his anger, they had to make this work, they needed to save those who were left.

“Here are my terms; I’m been looking for a mate lately, someone worthy of furthering my line. It’s rare to find an omega, let alone one so lovely. I’ll give you your little system, and in return Senator Organa will be my mate.”

Hux was openly mocking, no longer hiding his contempt.

Leia looked as angry as he felt, but for once Ben felt clear headed. If he was prepared to die for the resistance, then he could give up his life for the resistance.

“There is no way that I will sell my s-”

“I’ll do it.”

The startled look on Hux’s face was almost worth it, startled rather than pleased. He recovered almost immediately and the surprise was hidden by an impassive mask.

“Then it’s settled, we can draw up the contracts.”

Ben took another deep drink of liquor and rubbed his sticky hand against his face. Maybe it would make him break out, but it was hard to care about his looks when he was going to bond the man he hated most in the galaxy.

“Everyone would understand if you backed out.”

Poe had said this already a dozen times, and each time it was just as tempting as the last.

They should have been at a party in Ben’s honor, a way for the resistance give back to him, but they had stolen two glasses and three bottles of some dark liquor. Now they were in a field that overlooked where the x-wings were kept.

They used to watch take-offs from there when they were little. It was the one place that was always safe.

“And be known as the boy that hid in his mother’s shadow for the rest of my life? It was bad enough replacing her as senator when she retired to become a full-time general, everyone still claims that I didn’t earn it. And you know damn well I did!”

Kylo waved his glass for punctuation.

“I am not going to hide behind her now, not when it can create one safe place in the galaxy. Besides shouldn’t you be happy?”
Poe made a face, it was over-acted but he was almost as drunk as Ben was.

“Why would I be happy?”

“Because you’ll finally be the best pilot in the resistance.”

The worlds bubbled out of Ben through almost hysterical laughter.

“I’m not going to miss you.”

Poe’s tone and expression belied his words. They had been best friends since Ben could remember, when Poe’s parents were killed Leia took him under her wing and they had been insiprable since. It helped that they were both omega’s who lived to break stereotypes.

When people accused Ben of cheating when he flew because he used the force, Poe was the only one who didn’t care, and who still challenged him to races. It was part of why Poe was better than everyone else by miles. Ben was sure if he didn’t have the force Poe would have beaten him ages ago.

“Did you see the Lieutenants that are staying to make sure that the system is properly tuned over?”

“You mean the ones left behind for one last attempt at intimidation?”

Poe snorted and finished his glass, his hands were sloppy as fumbled to cap off a new bottle. He refilled his cup and sloshed some over Ben’s hand and into his glass when he lifted it as well.

“Not all of them are bad, if you know what I mean. You see one who came up through the stormtrooper program?”

Poe gave a generous wink with both eyes and Ben felt a real smile on his face. The first one since he had sold himself.

“Do you think we can still message each other after I leave?”

Poe took a second to adjust to the return of a serious topic, and reached out an arm to pull Ben to him.

“Ben, it’ll take more than the First Order to stop us from being friends.”

Poe sounded so sure of that, but in the moment Ben doubted that it would be so easy.
Hux tucked in his second glove, looking at the mirror. He dressed in his finest Emperor’s regalia, prepared to put on a show. Even though he looked tired, he also looked carefully put together. He wanted ceremony to be the picture of love, so he attempted to soften his features. Hux started with practicing a pull at the corner of his lips, it gave the illusion of a smile without cracking his features. His advisors often commented that people responded to him better when he looked less severe.

He had meant his offer to Ben be mocking, positive it would be turned down. Hux couldn’t resist spitting in their faces while looking at the perfectly put together Senator trembling in anger, Ben was both striking and fierce.

Hux could not back down without looking weak now. It was not ideal, and he still felt the pull of doubts in his own chest, but what was good for the First Order would have to be good for him.

His advisors had been suggesting he mate, and he supposed it would look like a victory to the people of the First Order. The few senators left of the council were the only remaining hold-outs of the republic. With the bonding, it would look as if the republic was accepting the First Order as the rightful rulers.

He took one last look before walking from the room into the bonding hall. It was an ancient room, the ceremonies were no longer something done in public. The hall was perfect though, it would look like a giant reminder that Hux respected the etiquette of the planet, respected their traditions.

Once inside he walked to the bench in the center of the room and waited. He ignored the people watching, it was nothing compared to the speeches he had done. His nerves reminded him that he had never done something this intimate in public, or broadcast throughout the entire First Order.

The music went on a little longer, and just when he began to worry that he was going to be embarrassed across the galaxy, Ben entered from the other side.

He looked every bit the image of a virgin going to sacrifice. Hux was sure he wasn’t, but the little mutt was playing it up.

Ben was in white trousers and shirt, the fabric of both so fine that as he came closer Hux could see the pink tint where his nipples were, and the small constellation of moles that scattered over Ben’s body. Over it was a white and silver cape, dragging behind him. The clothing only made him look fairer.

White was not traditional, as it showed blood, it must have been a purposeful statement.

His hair was carefully done, the curls staying perfectly in place, and standing out against all the white. The only makeup to wore was the bush of pink over his lower lip, perfectly outlining his pout.

There was nothing to the image that made him look like a willing spouse, he was every inch a martyr.

The outfit was obviously perfectly crafted, it even made him look delicate, but Hux knew there was nothing delicate about the senator, he saw the muscle in his thick thighs and the broad span of his shoulders. That would be less noticeable over the broadcast.
He had thought Ben was handsome the day he saw him, but it was nothing compared to the image he presented now.

Hux kept the hopeful almost-smile on his face as he watched Ben take the last few slow steps. He held out his gloved hand and waited for Ben to take it. His hand was warm against his gloves, and Hux wished he had his hand bare. Gently he helped Ben sit. Once he took his hand back Ben turned and bushed the cape and his hair over one shoulder.

It was all part of the ceremony, but there was something startling over seeing that his entire back was bare. The shirt only attached with two strings of pearls, leaving his skin on show. His moles stood out more without the shirt and Hux wished again that he hadn’t worn gloves.

He sat himself and leaned over Ben, resting on hand on Ben’s hip and the other on his shoulder.

Knowing that no one would be able to hear a whisper, he spoke.

“You can still back out; I would love to turn the system into the First Orders new mining site.”

“And you can back out, and show everyone what lying cowards you all are.”

There was a pause, and Ben arched his back and tilt his head back a little more. He was offering himself up and waiting for Hux to lock in their future.
“Bite me already.”

Hux would love to see him cowed. Hux had heard how omegas were once they were mated. They were soft and kind and terribly relenting. Hux leaned forward and went through the traditions, laying a kiss over his scent gland, then one higher on his neck and then returned to place his teeth on him.

It was the right thing to do, it would be a death blow to the left over resistance, and so Hux sunk his teeth in. The taste of blood filled his mouth even though he knew it was only a few drops, and then there was a rush of emotion. He felt anger and humiliation and it felt like it was coming from inside his head. It made him dizzy and he pulled back.

Hux had never heard about bonding feeling like this, it was too intense. He would have ended it, but he already knew it was too far to back out.

Ben turned around to do his part and Hux managed to pull himself together enough to remember to tilt his head and offer his neck in return.
The pain was more than he expected and Ben didn’t bother with the customary kisses, he bit him like he wanted to take a chunk out of him.

The bond snapped into place and for a few breathes the world was anger, and then suddenly it was silent.

Ben didn’t lick his lips and they were still red as he sat looking at him. It matched the blood that was staining the collar of his shirt. It made the tradition look savage and Hux knew this was his point.

Ben held out his hand and Hux remembered the rest of the ceremony. He took the hand and helped him stand before standing himself. Together they walked through the door that Ben had entered through. With that it was finished.

It took seconds before Ben snatched back his hand.

Art by the fantastic Pandalolli

“We’re leaving this backwater before it gets dark, make sure that your belongings have finished being loaded up by that point. I expect you to be in my quarters when I arrive.”

Ben sneered at his words and then he turned and left without a response.

Hux hadn’t really expected Ben to be in his quarters when he arrived, not really. He had been feeling underlying hostility through their bond all day, hell he hadn’t even expected Ben to be on the ship. He assumed he would have to send a troop after him later.
Yet as he walked into his bedroom with his jacket undone, not only did he see Ben, but he saw most of him.

Ben had laid himself on the bed, his hair falling in such a way he must have arranged it. He was in undergarment that was similar to the clothing he had been wearing at their bonding ceremony, most of it sheer. It was a reminder of how handsome his mate really was. Hux thought to look away, but he couldn’t help gazing at the black mole on his inner thigh.

“Why are you surprised? I know what I agreed to.”

Ben raised his chin defiantly.

Hux wasn’t one to be tempted, but he really was. The only thing stopping him was that he knew Ben was unwilling. He could feel his anger and disgust seeping through their bond. It dampened his arousal, it made the deep need for sleep seem more important.

Mating was supposed to strengthen their bond, but so was touch and scent. Sleeping beside each other was as far as he wanted go tonight.

Hux kept undressing, taking out his nightclothes and ignoring the body in his bed. He decided to only wear the bottoms, it would allow for more skin contact, and despite the fact that Ben was prickly, Hux was craving it.

He finally decided to speak as he pulled up his pajama pants.

“You should change, I have no interest in unwilling partners.”

There was a huff behind him.

“I am not unwilling, I will fulfill my part of the agreement. You can’t squirrel out of our deal like this.”

“Compliance isn’t willingness, but you’ve already fulfilled all you need to for now, your rebels will get their system. Just get changed into something that covers a little more before you get back into bed.”

Hux tried not to look at Ben as he crawled into his side of the bed. Ben didn’t change, but he did join him under the blankets. Once Hux hit the lights he felt himself relax.

Ben smelled amazing. He had smelled good before, but now it was an addictive scent. Hux was sure it was part of the bond.

After a few moments Hux rolled onto his side, slipping an arm around Ben’s waist. He could feel Ben tense, but he didn’t push him away. The muscles on his stomach were something that Hux had never achieved. His skin was so soft that it made his fingers itch to stoke it. Hux didn’t allow it, he was made of stronger stuff than that.

When Ben started to relax Hux shifted closer. Ben’s long hair tickled his face, but the scent was worth it.
Ben felt safe, safer than he had since was a child. All the reasons why he needed to be alert, the constant need to move, the danger of living in a rebellion, they all seemed so far away. Instead he was drowsy with the weight of the blanket over him.

He started with wiggling his toes, the bed was softer than he remembered, the world felt softer than he remembered. It was that lack of anxiety that told him that something is wrong. Ben started to sit up in bed and noticed that there an arm around him. More than just an arm, a leg was tangled with his own.

Fear spiked through him again as it dawned on him that it was the bond. He never allowed himself to be dulled like this with the enemy. Although he supposed that Hux was no longer his enemy. A bond was not something to be broken, they would be together until they both died.

He had to get out of bed, and get those hands off him. Those warm safe hands. Ben was careful to slip out without waking Hux. His body lamented the loss, but the rest of him was glad to out. The air on the ship was slightly chilled and he shivered before walking to the one chest they allowed him.

Ben had been told the rest of his clothing and items would join them once they arrived at the palace. Until then they would be scanning and digging through every item he owned.

The chest held over a dozen outfits and had already been picked through, nothing that could harm the Emperor inside. It felt odd to be without his lightsaber, but he hoped he would get it back once they arrived. That or he would be kept apart form anything that could be dangerous until he died. Ben figured the rest of his life would be lived as a bird in a cage.

He settled on black leggings and a black tunic with hand embordered red lotuses blooming down his shoulder. It matched his mood, and he didn’t really feel like dressing up for his new mate. The anger that had carried him through the last few days was dulled. Now there was just dread settling in.

Once dressed he realised that he probably couldn’t leave the room, and that his captivity had already started.

Ben stole a look at the man who had caused it, his red hair was mussed from sleep and his face soft in sleep. He looked younger and softer than he had any other time he had seen him. In a moment that made his lip curl he saw that Hux was handsome under the constant sneering and hair gel. It was a thought Ben didn’t want to continue so he moved to the large transparisteel windows.

The chill was settling into him as he watched the tie fighters finish another drill. He already missed the freedom of flying, and his own deep red x-wing.
Ben was brought out of his thoughts by a warm hand running over his cheek, tucking a few curls behind his ear. Automatically Ben untucked it again, hiding his giant ears again. He turned his head, even though Ben knew who he would see. His alpha standing beside him, Ben hadn’t even heard him get up.

“Do you enjoy watching them?”

Ben wanted to spit out that no, he hated everything about the First Order, but something about waking up on a ship he didn’t recognise, and being surrounded by the people who he had spent his life fighting against made him tired and lonely.

“Yes, I miss it.”

The words were still bit out, as if he was being forced to speak. It was petty, but it was all he had.

Ben felt something through their bond, it felt like a push, Hux was trying to reach him through it. A regular bond was bad enough, little flecks of feeling that normally would happen, but when Hux had bit him, Ben felt more than that. It was a force bond, and only recognising it from his time being a Padawan made him able to shut it down. At least for a little while. It helped that Ben doubted Hux knew that he was even force sensitive.

He would never be as connected to anyone as he was to the emperor of the First Order.

When there was no response he figured that Hux had stopped trying, it was only when he felt a blanket wrapped around his chilled shoulders that he realised that Hux knew he was cold. Maybe he wasn’t as good at locking down the bond as he thought.

“Would you be interested in flying a Tie Fighter?”

Ben thought Hux was taunting him, but when he looked at his face he saw nothing that told him that.

“I would.”

“I will get one set up for test simulations. You won’t be able to shoot anything, or go too far from the Finalizer, but you will be able to test the full speed and control of the ship.”

Ben wasn’t going to thank him, but he felt relief. He would be allowed to fly, and Ben had always wanted to try a Tie.

He waited while Hux changed, taking a few peeks at his body as he sat wrapped in the blanket. Hux was thinner then him, not the usual cut for an alpha, but lean and attractive. His back was muscled and Ben watched them move as he pulled on an undershirt. When the next layer was added, Ben returned to looking outside.

The blanket was thick with Hux’s scent and he felt his body relax. His scent was wonderful, Ben had to struggle to keep from rubbing his face in it, but he wouldn’t give Hux the satisfaction.

It wasn’t long before Hux had slicked his hair down and tucked himself into a uniform. He looked only mildly more pompous than a regular officer.

At least the uniform was a reminder of who he was, that he wasn’t just Ben’s mate. It helped Ben keep himself cold inside.

Hux used a pad for a while, and Ben guessed he was giving orders. When Hux finished he set it
down and held out a hand to Ben as he had the day before.

“Ready?”

Ben considered being petty again, but he was going to get to fly, he didn’t want to risk that being taken away. So he took Hux’s hand, letting his bare skin touch Hux’s. When Ben was standing Hux still didn’t let go, and so they held hands all the way down to the launch bay.

He remained silent the whole way, but Ben’s mind kept wandering back to the thought of how well Hux’s hand fit in his own.

“Is the ship prepared?” Hux’s voice barked out at an officer.

Ben smirked as he watched the man jump.

“Yes, sire.”

The ship was beautiful, it almost looked brand new. Hux walked him to it, holding his hand until he was seated in the cockpit.

Ben touched the controls and felt a shiver run through him. It was going to be a better day than he expected.

“How does it feel?”

“Adequate,” Ben kept his voice cool.

Hux managed a half smile, looking so hopeful that Ben felt embarrassed by show of openness between them.

“You may keep it. The weapons banks are empty, and you may use it any time you feel the need.”

“But sire-”

The interruption of the voice behind him took the softness from Hux’s face.

“Do you have a problem officer?”

The man paled and Ben turned his head and smirked again, unable to help but enjoy a First Order officers discomfort.

“Of- of course not sire. If your consort has any further needs any of the techs will be happy to help.”

When Ben peeked back he saw Hux draw himself up into his full height and give a dismissive nod. The officer skittered away, and Hux turned back to him.

“May I ask for something in return?”

Ben felt his stomach drop, he should have known it was too good to be true, or course he would have to give something in return.

“What?”

“A kiss.”
Hux looked unsure of his request and Ben shifted in his seat, it was only one kiss. After being left to himself the night before he supposed it was the least he could do. After Ben nodded his consent Hux leaned over and laid one soft kiss against his lips. He didn’t try to push it, not even a flick of his tongue. It was merely soft lips against his own and then they were gone.

“I will see you tonight.”

With that Hux stepped back and shut the Tie Fighter. Ben lifted off, feeling like he was free again. Free other than the confusion he felt over the kiss. He'd enjoyed it.
Chapter 4

Hux founds the nights the hardest, getting to feel his bare skin against his omega’s and yet not go any further. He could smell the hints of slick from his omega, Ben’s body reacting from being so close to him.

In the mornings, he showered and masturbated until he felt like he could be around Ben without burning up. Yet Ben seemed unaffected, showing him no more affection to him after the one kiss and the occasional hand in his own.

Most days Ben spent working out in the officer’s gym and then flying his tie fighter until Hux was already in bed. Then he would creep in with his scent strong from a day of activity and press their skin together for their agreed upon nightly bonding.

It was torture.

Sometimes Hux could hardly concentrate and he would return to his quarters on his lunch just so that he could bury his face in Ben’s pillow and surround himself in the scent. He wanted his mate to scent him and then scent Ben in return. Hux wanted everyone to be able to smell they were mates, and not just know it due to the ceremony and the bite mark slowly healing on both their necks.

Three days, and yet it felt like a million without being able to touch Ben like he wanted to. It was his own fault they were still on the ship, he wanted to give Ben a small honeymoon aboard the ship, it was all the Emperor could afford to take away from his people. In an hour, they would be back at the palace and then he would return to his busy life, it hadn’t fully gone how he had hoped. Ben hadn’t warmed up at all, and he felt Ben was content now only because he was flying.

Ben was circling them like always in his own ship. On the bridge Hux could see each careful turn and twist, it was amazing to see him fly. Sometimes Ben joined the others during a drill, but would surpass even the First Order’s best pilot. It reminded him of the vicious rebel pilot in the red x-wing, managing to always escape, but he doubted that Ben would admit to that even if Hux asked him.

Despite that Hux felt pride as he watched Ben fly, everyone knew that it was his mate. Although he didn’t break his prefect military stance he watched Ben from the bridge, pacing it and pretending to keep watch on everyone.

Ben’s Tie started spinning wildly, coming towards the Finalizer. To anyone else it would have looked like he was out of control, but he could feel Ben’s confidence through their bond. Whatever he was doing was planned. Hux’s own confidence started to falter as it kept coming towards them.

As it came closer he had a moment of concern, but he already knew it was too late. Unlike the few officers who were already skittering from their posts, Hux stayed. A few steps wouldn’t save him from the full force of a tie lighter impacting against the transparisteel.

Tension held his jaw tight in the last few seconds. If Ben was going to kill himself to take him out, then he would meet death on his own terms. Ben’s eyes caught his own they were so close, and Hux could feel the amusement. Then at the last second the Tie peeled back. Relief and anger filled him, frustrated that Ben was taunting him.

His mood was soured, and after making sure everyone was back to their posts he left. Walking
through the halls and wondering if it was a mistake to try. Neither of them really had wanted this, but now that he had it Hux wanted more, and yet Ben didn’t change at all the omega’s he had heard of. If anything, he seemed more willful than before their bonding.

Hux wasn’t sure what to think, if it was his own failings as an alpha, that his father had been right about him. He could still remember his father telling him that he would never be able to keep an omega, that he was as useless as he was thin.

As soon as the thoughts came Hux shook off, he was too old to still listen to the voice of his father in his mind. Maybe it was just a mistake of the extra time spent in space, he should have gotten his omega situated in his home like a proper alpha would.

The thought gave him a bit of hope, he would just have to be more classical in his courting.

As soon as they arrived on the planet side, Hux waited for Ben, leading him to their shared quarters. It was a bedroom and off to each side they each had a suite of their own. It would allow them to come and go without disturbing each other as well as allow them to both have some privacy if need. The only thing shared would be the bedroom. Ben’s suite had been previously been empty in preparation for a mate, and now Hux hoped that someday he would be invited in.

He had asked for proper courting gifts to be left inside Ben’s suite, when he found out he would be mated and now it worked perfectly. It could be the start of proper courting.

They had entered through Hux’s side, Hux hoping his scent would put his omega at ease. He had heard omega’s were supposed to relax when surrounded by their mate’s scent. After the stunt Ben pulled in his Tie, it would be good to calm him.

Ben was walking slowly behind him, taking his time and looking at everything that was in Hux’s suite, but not so slowly that Hux had a reason to say anything. Once in the bedroom Hux turned to Ben and held out his hand. He could see the caution on Ben’s face, but he took the hand in his own and let Hux lead him to the bed.

“Now that we are here I think it would be proper if I began scenting you.”

Ben made a face, but he didn’t pull his hand back.

“After all, how can you show off your new pet, if it doesn’t smell right?”

The sarcasm had a bite, but Hux wasn’t going to be put off. After the taunting, earlier on the bridge Hux knew he had to put his foot down, even if just a little bit.

“No at all, this is not a situation that either us can get out of easily, and I think we should make the best of it. It will help you settle into a new home to be surrounded by the sent of your mate. If it happens to show unity to the people of the First Order, so be it.”

Hux hoped Ben would response to his teasing but he didn’t laugh. Instead he paused as if considering.

“Not full scenting.”

The fact that Ben was willing to negotiate was promising, Hux had expected him to turn it down without question. Hux ran this thumb over the back of Ben’s hand, feeling how soft his skin was.
“Alright, hips, stomach, chest, neck, arms, and wrists.”

Ben was tensing slightly as if preparing for a fight.

“Chest, neck, arms and wrists.”

It was less than he wanted, but still an agreement.

Hux had really wanted his stomach, it was an area of trust, but he supposed that was part of the courting. Slowly he would build the trust he needed.

“Agreed.”

Ben took his hand back and made a face, he didn’t hide his distaste as he slowly unwrapped his shirt and then slipped out of the thin undershirt. Other than their bonding night Hux hadn’t seen this much of him. His pale chest was speckled with dark moles, and Hux felt like he was lucky to be able to touch him. Though that might just be the bond speaking.

Hux slowly removed his uniform in return, knowing that he cut a smaller imagine that his omega. He hoped that Ben didn’t find him disappointing. It was different at night in the dark, scenting was intimate, there was no way that Ben wouldn’t notice.

Ben kicked off his shoes and laid down on the bed, shifting until he was in the center. He was tense, but slowly started to relax.

It felt oddly clinical, but maybe it was for the best that it started like that.

Not wanting to climb onto Ben too soon Hux started with his wrist, taking his hand and bringing his wrist up. First Hux laid a few soft kisses against the skin, lovingly nuzzling it. He could feel Ben watching him and so he started the scenting, not wanting to be reprimanded for the kisses. It almost made him feel like a lecher stealing kisses from his own mate. Scenting was a different type of intimacy than the kisses, it was warm and inviting and he could feel both of them relaxing as he continued. Their hormones seemed to sync with each other, Hux had never felt this calm around someone. Even if Ben was suborn as hell.

Hux started just at his wrist, carefully rubbing his scent over it before moving down. Not wanting it to end too quickly Hux made sure he scented each and every inch of his arm, rubbing against it until he got to his shoulder. Ben put his free hand on Hux’s bare back, rubbing circles as Hux continued. Hux loved the slow scenting, parts like his clavicle and neck were at an angle that allowed his lips to brush his skin again. Just like when they bonded.

It was intoxicating to be so close, and his trousers felt tight as he continued onto his neck. He kept on his knees so that Ben wouldn’t have to feel it. Though he could just catch the scent of slick.

Hux knew well that that wasn’t an invitation, but it did warm him to know that he was not alone in his reactions.

Once he finished his neck Hux moved down to his pecs, both impressed by the size and muscle on them, and wanting to suck on the already hard pink nipple. He kept from it though, knowing not to push it, only pressing one small kiss to one before scenting there as well. Hux could feel him shiver, from the kiss, and it was hard to think as he moved on.

When he finished the second Hux moved back up, scenting the other side of his neck and then starting down his arm. Hux didn’t dare look at his face, not wanting to see any hint of rejection, instead he continued scenting him, hoping that it would help with their bond.
By the time he got down to Ben’s other wrist, he was feeling terribly aroused, it was going to take another long shower before he was ready to face Ben calmly.

Hux ended it like it started with soft kisses against his wrist and one laid in his palm.

Ben let out a shaky breath, and finally Hux sat up.

“Thank you,” Hux said the words as he began to stand, but Ben caught his hand and pulled him back.

“I need to scent you in return.”

“I thought…”

Hux stopped himself, there was no way he was going to turn down a scenting, he already felt closer to Ben. He took his spot next to Ben and Hux felt confusion from the bond before it was closed again.

Ben started similar to him, except with no kisses against his wrist.

“You were the only one who didn’t run on the bridge. I was proud that my alpha was the only one.”

Ben spoke so quietly Hux almost didn’t hear it, maybe that was the point.
Ben was frowning as he scrolled through his pad. He hated looking at the First Order news sites, most of them talking about how the end of the Republic was heralded by his bonding. Some even dared to guess at when an heir could be expected. One even going so far as to comment on the beard burn on his neck from the scenting’s, saying that it would mean an heir before the year was out. The worst was cropped images of his stomach, with the claim that he was already full with a pup. It was partly why he was in a sheer shirt today, there would be no mistaking the folds of it for any sort of a bump. Yet it was still not as bad as seeing what was coming out of the resistance system.

After he attended Hux’s last speech there was images of him with his hand in hand with Hux, with the headline “Martyr or traitor?”. Ben’d given up his future for them and they already doubted his intentions. It hurt to see people he cared for already against him. Ben ended up closing out and checking his messages again. His mother still hadn’t talked to him since he had bonded to Hux, but Poe still gave him regular updates. There was another one from Poe, but he could already guess what it said.

A few days after he left Poe had become enamored in one of the First Order officers in charge of the hand over of the system. Although he was glad for Poe’s happiness, it tended to make his own life feel duller.

Ben was constantly torn with Hux and while he wanted to celebrate with Poe it made him tired to this of his own inner conflict. Ben was both the center of attention and unable to do anything he wanted.

He set down the pad, and look at the planet below. They were almost on Lothal, Hux needed to be there for trade talks and he had requested Ben come.

Having nothing better to do he had agreed, in the back of his mind he knew it was because he liked sleeping next to Hux. It was one of the few things that kept Ben from feeling completely alone. All he had was his Tie fighter and Hux. Ben hadn’t really planned on either, and yet now he didn’t want to be without them.

Ben wasn’t ready to admit that he had feelings for Hux either, even though his body so desperately disagreed with him. A week of scenting and gentle touches and he had already weakened enough that he looked forward to their nights together. Not that he showed Hux. Maybe the headlines were right, maybe he was a traitor and his future was just like the so-called journalists claimed.

Through the transparisteel Ben could see the transport landing.

A hand on his shoulder brought him out of his thoughts, and he looked up to see Hux looking prepared for the negotiations. Not that long ago it would be something he would have taken care of as a senator. In fact, he had, the Republic had offered extra rations in return for the retrofit of imperial ship manufacturing plants.

That was before the battle of Lothal, before he was just something nice for the emperor to wear on his arm.

He stood and took the offered hand. Even with the melancholy of his thoughts touching his alpha calmed his spirits, he knew it had the same effect on Hux. It was why Ben held his hand in the picture that was splattered all over the holonet. Ben had felt the tension in Hux and had reached
out, in a moment of weakness, wanting to make things work.

“I was hoping you would join me for a meal.”

It was a momentary break from his thoughts.

“Of course.”

He walked next to Hux as they disembarked, wondering if maybe he could ask for something more to do.

They walked up to a speeder and Hux got on, leaving Ben even more confused.

“Climb on.”

This didn’t feel like something an emperor did and that was partly why Ben listened, the other reason was that it let him bury his face in his mate’s neck and not feel like he was betraying the Republic.

He could smell himself on Hux, from their morning scenting and he held on tight as the speeder took off. Ben could feel the thin form under his clothing. As always there was the Emperors guards following, but for a moment Ben could pretend it was the two of them that the weight of the universe wasn’t there.

Ben allowed himself to press one soft kiss against the bond mark. He would have thought it went unnoticed but for a few seconds Hux took one hand from the handle and squeezed his thigh.

He wanted Hux, and every inch of his body knew that, but it didn’t feel right to give into that feeling. Not when he had fought against people like the First Order all his life.

It was almost disappointing when the speeder slowed and Ben looked up to see the field around them. A battle had taken place there a few years before but you wouldn’t know it. For once they were almost alone, and not only that, but the scenery was breathtaking.

He slid off and looked around. It felt like forever since he had been in nature. Ben reached out into the force and felt some kind of small animal in the distance. It was a moment of freedom.

Instead of the normal entourage, Hux started to set out a small blanket. On top, he started to set out their lunch and Ben smiled at how quaint it was.

“I hope you don’t mind, it’s probably simple compared to what you are used to.”

“I’m not as spoiled as you think.”

Ben scoffed, sitting down on the blanket. He opened a dish and picked up a soft ball with his fingers. Once it was in his mouth he could taste it was a herb infused cheese.

“I guess not, you couldn’t be if you originally came here for negotiations six years ago before the rebuilding. At that point, there wouldn’t have been much around here.”

Ben looked up from the fruit he was picking through, he hadn’t expected Hux to know.

“No there wasn’t.”

“You used to do a lot of diplomatic missions, I was rather impressed with how well you handled the negotiations with the Kubaz. It couldn’t have been easy.”
It might have been flattery, but it was well researched flattery and Ben found himself reacting. His cheeks colouring slightly even if he kept his expression schooled.

“Thank you.”

“I was hoping that once you settled you might consider using your talents and continuing some of your old duties for the First Order.”

Ben was sure his eyebrows couldn’t have risen any further than they were at that moment. It was more than he ever expected, it would be serious work, not just looking good beside Hux. Although he was torn with working for the First Order, he could also work from the inside, making sure that negotiations were fair.

It would be a piece of his old life back. At the very least he could try it and make sure the treaties were followed. Ben let Hux feel a touch of his excitement through the bond, and in return he only felt pride. It was the first time he knew that Hux wanted him for more than his looks.

“I would be willing to try.”

Hux leaned over, putting a hand on his shoulder.

“I would love for you to join me during the negotiations today, and if you feel inclined I would also like to see you take lead.”

Ben wasn’t prepared, but it wouldn’t take him long. He felt like he could kiss Hux in his excitement, and it must have shown on his face before Hux started to tilt his head. Ben met him, licking Hux’s bottom lip and tasting his alpha. He had wanted this for so long it was hard to remember why he hadn’t done this sooner.

The only thing that made him pull back was the guards standing not too far away.

For a few seconds Ben didn’t even feel guilty for the kiss.
Chapter 6

Not only had Ben proven himself to be as brilliant as he was handsome, he had also been fair.

When Hux turned over the negotiations to Ben. He had expected that Ben would weight the negotiations heavily in favour of the leaders of Lothal, and it was obvious that they had thought so as well. Instead Ben had fought to get the First Order what they wanted, which was more food production in the system.

It was amazing to watch him, still in his sheer golden tunic and pale doe trousers, both gifts from Hux, looking like he belonged in a holofilm rather than at a negotiation table. The way he acted though was nothing like the image he gave off, and he had been short and harsh the whole way through, not giving up until they got what they needed and yet making sure both sides were content in the end.

Hux had never been prouder of him. It was more than he had hoped for. Hux had thought over time Ben would slowly start helping the people in the First Order, maybe purposely bungling a few negotiations, but over time once Ben realised it was for more than just the army that would change. Hux thought it would take time before they actually benefitted, and yet Ben had surprised him once again.

Ben also seemed different, more in control after, as if he had pulled together even more confidence now that he was working again. It was almost arousing watching him, with the memory of his taste on Hux’s lips and the sight of his trousers clinging to his thick thighs.

As much as Hux wanted him he knew it went beyond the bond, after all his step-mother and father had been bonded before he was born. His father had never acted this way with her, he’s never even seen them hold hands. Hux couldn’t stop holding Ben’s hand.

He really wanted to kiss him again, but Hux understood that it was not his choice. He had seen how angry Ben was that first night when he thought sex was part of his duty. If Hux pushed he would get that anger back and it was only starting to fade now.

It was worth it though, Ben was slowly warming up to him. Ben was wearing his gifts and he felt how Ben’s hands lingered around Hux’s waist while they were on the speeder. His persistence in his courting was working. Hux felt both trust and respect growing between them.

Originally, he had thought having a mate only meant a way to secure his line, now Hux wanted so much more from it. At night after scenting as they lay together in bed, on the Finalizer on their way home, Hux could see a future, a future where Ben ruled beside him. He even thought of a day when they had their own progeny and not just as a way to continue his line.

Hux brushed the hair away from Ben’s forehead before pressing a kiss to it. Ben made a small ‘oh’ but he didn’t pull away.

Through their bond Hux felt a little bit of warmth, and he couldn’t resist a second one. Even though they slept in only bottoms so their skin would touch, feeling Ben’s skin against his lips was a special treat.

Ben tilted his head up and their lips brushed. Hux felt Ben’s tongue pushing between his lips and he opened his mouth. Hux could feel his own heart beating like he was a young pup in his first rut. It was incredible, and gave him a deeper rush than any battle had.
He shifted his position so that he could pull Ben closer and deepen the kiss. This wasn’t like the other two he had stolen, it was deep and hungry and Hux felt like he could drown in all the feelings that were bubbling through the bond. Ben had never allowed it to be opened, and now he felt the doubts, the fear, the anger, but most of all the hope, and the hint of want that was swirling around in Ben.

Hux didn’t have the same grasp on their bond that Ben did, but he tried to reciprocate and let Ben feel how much he had been wanting this. It must have worked because Ben and moved most of the way into his lap. He hoped Ben didn’t much closer because he would feel just how much Hux was enjoying him. Part of Hux wanted Ben to feel, to see if things would go past a kiss. A week of wanting and not being able to touch felt like torture even if it was for a good reason.

The reason was the soft lips on his own and the brilliant omega actually willingly in his arms.

He took Ben’s bottom lip in his between his own and sucked on it. He shuddered when he heard the first sound of pleasure from Ben. A little moan in the back of his throat.

Hux felt dizzy just hearing it, knowing that Ben had made the sound because of him. He wanted to hear so much more, and know that he caused it.

The kiss started to slow and he knew that Ben was trying to pull away. Hux also knew he couldn’t force more no matter how desperately he wanted it so he let Ben. Only stealing a few pecks before they parted.

Ben stayed close though, looking at his face as if it would tell him whatever answer he was looking for.

When he spoke, Ben’s voice was soft.

“Lothal was always poor since the last war, the last time I went there was starving people everywhere. Beggars desperate for the rations that we were going to barter. It made me feel sick to have to fight them for it, but we needed those ships, so I did my duty.”

With their bond open, he could feel Ben’s disgust with the situation.

“We all do what we must in times of need, even if it’s not what we want.”

Ben made a face.

“Did I need to? We lost in the end, I’m here, and now under First Order rule no one is starving on Lothal. The planet was desperate before and now I almost couldn’t recognise it. It felt good to go in there and instead fight over farmland that is going unused.”

Hux’s response was cut off by the whooping of the alarm ringing throughout the star destroyer. Maybe it was the kisses, or maybe it was because it was the first time he’d heard it since they mated, but for once his alpha side roared to life, making his teeth ache with the need to protect Ben.

Maybe it was why he tensed when he heard his comm near the bed beep.

“Stay here, get some sleep. I’ll take care of everything and be back in bed before my spot is cold.”

Ben grabbed his arm before he could slip out of bed.

“I can help.”
As much as Hux wanted Ben beside him, he also knew that he would be sharper if Ben wasn’t beside him. He would be concerned about Ben's safety unless Ben was in the belly of the ship.

“You’ve done enough for the Order today. The next time, my love.”

The endearment slipped out and Hux stiffened.

Ben nodded and seemed to ignore his slip, but there was something about the look in his eyes that Hux didn’t trust. He didn’t have the time to argue over it so instead he stole one last kiss before dressing. As soon as he was in his uniform he took his pad and typed orders while he walked. He sent out the first four squadrons of Tie Fighters from each of the three Star Destroyers.

It was an attack by one of the left-over rebellion factions, an all-out attack while he was traveling and at his most unprotected. Hux ground his teeth, they would not get the best of him.

Once he was on the bridge information was coming in at a faster pace and he could better command the defence. Thankfully it wasn’t much, thirty-two rebellion ships, and most of them small. It was hardly dangerous, and probably not even deadly. He wasn’t needed for this, the General who was normally in charge of the ship would have been able to take care of it.

It was only minutes before he was interrupted from his command.

“Sire.”

He snarled at the lieutenant distracting him.

“What?” Hux snapped.

The man had visible sweat on his forehead, the lieutenant swallowed a few times before he could speak.

“Sire, there was an attack in the docking bay.”

“Did we lose many ships?”

Hux was losing his already thin patience.

“Just one sire, the royal consort used some strange wizardry to overpower one of the pilots, he took one of the fully functioning tie fighters.”

Hux felt sick to his stomach at the thought, Ben was taking his chance and running while they were too busy to stop him. He’d thought they were making progress, he’d thought his feeling were starting to be returned.

“Was he harmed?”

“No sire, the pilot had been sent to the med bay and-”

Hux cut him off.

“I mean Ben!”

“No sire, the royal consort was well when he entered the ship.”

“Make sure our men know that anyone who fires on his ship will be executed.”
Hux dismissed him with a wave and looked out over the battle. His eyes followed several tie fighters before he found the one he knew held Ben. There was no mistaking that flying for anyone else. Except he wasn’t trying to escape.

It took a few seconds for Hux to recognise what he was doing. It wasn’t a sane battle tactic, Ben was trying to knock out the rebellion ships weapons without harming their flight capability. Ben was giving them a chance to get away. It was stupid and dangerous and just like Ben to do. Putting himself in danger for other people. Except these people were against the First Order.

Hux ground his teeth, this was insane.

“Take over.”

He snapped at the general waiting nearby, it was normally his ship anyway.

Hux stormed over to the comm officer.

“Put me through to the stolen Tie.”

It only took a few seconds, but they dragged on. Hux couldn’t take his eyes away from the screen, watching Ben put himself in danger. Ben might not be shooting to kill, but the other side wasn’t being so kind.

Hux had always treated every part of the First Order as expendable, including himself. He had built it to last so that if a part was wiped out, there would be a replacement. He’d never felt the tingling fear in his stomach until he watched Ben take his life in his hands.

“Ben, you need to return to the ship before you get shot down.”

“I’ve got it handled better than your other pilots.”

Hux could feel sweat dripping down his back. There was no way he could allow this.

“Ben, you will return to the ship immediately.”

He watched as a shot passed by Ben’s Tie, almost painfully close. Hux tried to push his fear and anger through their bond, wanting to make it obvious how important it was Ben came back to safety. His message must have not been clear as all he felt was red hot fury in return.

“I am not some weak mewling omega to be commanded by you.”

With that Ben cut the comm, and all there was on the other end was silence. Hux swore, and stormed up to the general.

“Send out a squadron to bring Ben in, if he is harmed every single person responsible will face consequences.”

He trusted general Mitaka with the ship, it was why he held the rank. There was no one who loved the Finalizer more.

Instead he started to head down to the docking bay. He wanted to be there when Ben came in, both to scold him and to pull him into his arms and feel him safe and sound. Hux was trying out a way to enforce stricter rules, somehow make it so that Ben couldn’t throw himself into danger.

It felt like time was stretching out even though he walked as fast as he could, their bond was starting to tremble with tension. He feared for the worst. Hux needed to be able to see what was
going on. If he was a better pilot he would go out himself, but there was no point in killing himself.

The lift felt slow for once, and Hux restrained himself from rushing once it opened, striding as quickly as he could while still looking calm. Once at the hanger flight control bridge he looked out of the hanger bay and strained until he could see Ben.

There were six ships after him and even more Tie-fighters attempting to pick them off. Ben was trying to save them even as they tried to kill him. The rebels must have somehow discovered there was someone important in there. Probably Hux’s own fault, sending the squadron to bring Ben in. Hux wasn’t thinking clearly, although he wasn’t sure he ever thought clearly when it came to Ben.

Two of the ships tailing Ben were shot down, and Hux felt like he could breathe easier. That was until the wing of Ben’s Tie blew in an explosion of colour. Hux wasn’t thinking about being restrained as pain flashed through their bond.

As the ship went spinning out of control Hux felt his throat aching. It took a few seconds to realise he was shouting.

Ignoring decorum Hux ran to the lift, he needed to get down there, he had to bring Ben back home.
Ben groaned, feeling faint after the crash. He’d tried to take it down as softly as he could and Ben was just glad they were near enough to Lothal for him to get his ship there. He would have been a sitting duck if he hadn’t been able to throw himself into the gravitational pull. It got him out of the firing line.

He’d had to do it one armed, the other pinioned in place by a piece of the missing wing, but now that he wasn’t moving all he could think of was the pain.

The transparisteel had broken when he crashed and something had hit both his face and side. Ben could feel the blood dripping down over his chin, and the wet feeling on his leg. Everything hurt, and when he tried to move the pain that was in his face was nothing compared to his shoulder. There was no way he could get free on his own. His own attempt hurt so much that all he could feel was fiery burn in his shoulder, and nothing beyond that. His stomach seized as it tried to evacuate on him.

He had recognised the rebel ships as soon as he saw them. They were an extremist faction, but Ben had known them, had to work with them in the past. Even with what they had done he didn’t want to see them die. He let out a hysterical laugh because he was pretty sure he was going to die for his attempt to save them.

Ben couldn’t bend, but he managed to puke to the side, only getting a little on his leg. He looked at it as black spots started to block out his vision. Ben hadn’t wanted it to end like that.

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When they’d found Ben his pulse was hard to find, he’d been so covered in blood that the soft doe coloured trousers he had put back on were soaked in it. If Hux hadn’t sent down a medteam he wasn’t sure Ben would have lived. As it was it was still touch and go.

Hux hadn’t been allowed into the same ship as him. Medical teams didn’t trust alpha’s not to get in the way with their need to touch their fading mates, or to not kill everyone if their mate died, although Hux could understand why. If Ben died he would have every single one of them executed and it still wouldn’t feel like enough. They’d already given him something to dull their bond, but through that he could still feel Ben’s pain.

He had paced the command shuttle until they had returned to the Finalizer, most of the rebel ships were taken care of and it was a smooth ride. It didn’t matter to him in that moment though, Hux just wanted to be with Ben.

The pilots had taken their time, and he knew Ben was already in the surgery unit aboard the Finalizer.

Knowing that the ship would be taken care of under the General, he rushed to the med bay, walking fast enough that his legs ached. Again, Hux was kept outside, waiting and listening to their bond to tell him that Ben would be alright. Ben was too medicated for Hux to feel anything other than just a warm fuzz.

It took a while before Ben was stabilized, then even longer for the surgery. Hux stayed in the medical bay the whole time, wanting to be there the second he could see Ben.

There was hardly anyone else there. The small battle had only resulted in three deaths, nine small
injuries, and just one major injury. That was his Ben.

His skin was clammy from feeling his mate struggling to live, and at some point, he was led to a bed himself. Hux stayed there unable to sleep. The fear was too strong to let him get some rest. Instead he ended up with a pad, getting some work down while he waited for Ben.

They had almost arrived home and Hux's eyes were aching when the door opened and someone approached him.

“Sire, he’s in a stable condition, but often bonds help a person strengthen. If you would be willing to give the royal consort skin contact there is a much better chance of him continuing to stay stable.”

Hux felt pure relief, and he slipped out of the bed.

“How is he?” Hux asked as he followed the medical staff.

“He’ll need a second surgery when we arrive, but we have done all we can for him with this ship’s medical capabilities.”

Hux understood, he’d once been in charge of the ship. It was built to put soldiers back together, they did what was needed to heal, they didn’t have what was needed to lessen scaring or any number of important medical functions. It was more important to use that space on board the ship to make sure that they could keep people from dying.

Hux was glad that they were getting close to their base planet where Ben could be properly taken care of.

The women paused, and didn’t open the door.

“I must warn you though, he’s burning through pain medication at an unusual rate so we had to mix medications. The royal consort will not be able to pull from his memory and may not be in his full mind during the rest of the flight, and as such you shouldn’t worry about anything he may say.”

In that second Hux didn’t care what abuses Ben might say, he had to see him. So Hux pushed past her and only stopped when saw his Ben bandaged in a bed. His head was lulled to the side and his face had a large bandage across it.

It was better than the gouge that had been showing the last time Hux had seen him. For the first time since he had seen Ben pinned in the tie fighter, Hux felt like he could take a full breath.

Hux found his step and crossed the room before looking back at the women.

“You are dismissed.”

He didn’t check to see if she had left before he started undressing. Hux needed as much skin on skin contact as possible. Even if he would be interrupted later, he needed to be reassured of Ben’s health and his strong heartbeat.

When Hux was down to his boxer briefs he climbed in beside Ben, their skin touching in the areas Ben wasn’t bandaged. Under it all Ben was in nothing, and Hux rested his hand on his muscled stomach, making sure not to touch the bacta pad on his side.

Ben’s breath was steady and for the first time since he had seen Ben bleeding in the ship Hux
allowed himself to be angry. Angry that Ben hadn’t listened and that he helped the rebels escape, angry that Ben had undermined him, but most of all anger that Ben had almost died. Bonds were for life, and if Ben had died Hux would have never recovered, as it was his hand still shook as he touched Ben’s skin to reassure himself he was alive and well.

He couldn’t act on it, but he let himself feel it for a few moments before he settled into worry. Hux just needed him to be better before he could let Ben know just how reckless and dangerous a thing he had done. Not to mention how foolish he had made Hux look by not listening to his orders.

Hux’s fingers moved, feeling all the muscle and yet thinking about how fragile Ben really was.

“You’re my mate. I can smell it on you.”

Ben’s voice startled him and he looked at the dazed smile on his face. His pupils took up most of his eyes and Ben looked calmer than he had since they mated. Including when Hux watched Ben sleep in the mornings.

Hux pulled his hand back, feeling embarrassed to be caught.

“No no. Don’t stop, I like it when you touch me.”

Ben’s voice was slurring, like his tongue was too fat for his mouth, or at least not obeying him.

It was strange and sad hearing him say it, most of his face obscured by bacta patches. Hux wondered what Ben would look like when they were removed.

Tentatively Hux replaced his hand on his stomach, bare hand spreading over skin, which earned him a lopsided grin.

“I knew I would find a mate.”

Ben sounded unlike the one he was used to hearing, he was smug and cheerful and open. It wasn’t difficult to realise that Ben didn’t remember everything, but it was startling to hear him like this. It was like there was a whole other person that Ben was, that he had never even seen a hint of.

“You sure did.”

Hux reassured him, still touching his bare skin. He was afraid to say to much, to either worry Ben while he was in this state or to scare him. Hux just wanted to keep him company until they arrived, part of him felt like it was taking advantage of Ben to even touch him, even though it was nothing that they hadn’t done before.

“Do we have pups?”

The question caught him off guard and he looked up at Ben, he looked so hopeful, and Hux wondered what this Ben would think if he knew how it really was between them. Instead he rubbed his bare stomach, and took his time answering.

“We don’t have pups, yet.”

Ben hummed and slowly blinked both eyes.

“Still trying then.”

It was then that Hux realised it was meant to be a wink. Hux couldn’t stop the fond smile on his own face.
It was odd to see Ben like this, he never acted like a regular omega, and if not for his scent it would be easy to forget. It made him think about what Ben may have given up in mating him, if hidden under all the snippy comments was disappointment. If Ben wasn’t so good at blocking their bond Hux could find out.

Again doubts filled him, neither of them had wanted this but it hadn’t taken Hux long to come around. Despite how Hux felt, he might never be the alpha Ben wanted, and maybe Ben would never see him anything other than the one thing that took his dreams away.

“Sleep Ben, you need your rest. I’ll be here.”

To be honest Hux needed his sleep as well, he hadn’t slept at all since Ben had been injured and when they arrived it would be time to wake again. His own eyes ached as he closed them, now that he was reassured about Ben’s health he could rest. In the morning, he could worry about all the angry things that needed saying, for now he would just enjoy the steady heartbeat and warm body of his mate.

It wasn’t long before Ben started making a rolling snore. Hux almost laughed until he noticed that Ben wasn’t asleep. His heart felt like it was going to stop when he realised that it wasn’t a snore, it was a sloppy omega purr.

Hux had never thought he would hear it again, his stepmother had never made the sound, and his only memory was from his real mother, soft in his ear as she laid beside him to chase away his nightmares. Her fingers were long and had brushed through his hair over and over again. It was a memory he had all but forgotten.

He felt thankful that Ben had returned it to him and Hux wondered if this was how it would be if there wasn’t a war between them.
Ben was still fuzzy when he woke, but although his shoulder ached, and his face was tight and there was a dull pain in his side, it was still nothing compared to the pain he had felt before. This was manageable, he could think of something other than how much everything hurt.

When he shifted Ben realised he was back in the palace in their shared bed. He looked around and Ben could see there was a monitoring patch on his chest. It would have probably have let someone know he was awake already.

He checked over his shoulder and Ben remembered seeing it impaled, now it was a mass of scars, but it was moveable. Ben’s side showed the same results. It was almost shocking to go from a few small scars to the masses that covered both his side and shoulder.

Ben tried not to think of the crash. Ben didn’t remember much, but what he did remember made his chest clutch and his palms feel sweaty. There was a wave of anger at the First Order with the fear. If he hadn’t had to go out there and protect the rebels from getting themselves killed.

He bought his hand up and felt that there was scarring there as well. That bothered him more than the others. Before the crash he had already felt a little trapped, knowing that he couldn’t fly too far, or even have his lightsaber back, he couldn’t imagine the changes now.

Ben doubted that Hux would even want him as his personal trophy, not with the scarring. Hux wasn’t in the room, he’d just dumped Ben off and had probably left on his next mission as if it was nothing. It was a strange thing to be both vindicated that Hux was as terrible as he had first thought, and hurt that his mate wasn’t there beside him.

His body ached when he shifted to the edge of the bed, but he wanted to see himself. Just as he was about to get out Hux appeared. Ben told himself that he wasn’t feeling relief. The last time Ben remembered hearing him was as Hux ordered him to turn around. Maybe the monitoring patch wasn’t for medical reasons. It made Ben feel trapped and tired, but he felt it was worth whatever consequences. Although it wasn’t working from the inside like he planned he had saved a lot of lives. Ben supposed that this was going to happen, that he would go too far fighting for what he felt was right.

Ben managed to ignore the dread in his stomach at having Hux look at him now, at least Ben wouldn’t be alone in his mixed feelings. He doubted that Hux wanted to be mated to him now, and he tried to pretend that it didn’t upset him.

“I was alerted you woke. How are you feeling?”

It wasn’t the lecture he was expecting, but there was still time for that. His head felt woozy, but Ben was positive he could pull together a counter argument. He'd spent his life learning to pull together arguments from nothing as he followed his mother.

“Sore.”

“You’ve been out for over a week. They felt it was safer while you were healing. A few people have woken while in a bacta tank and panicked and inflicted further damage on themselves.”

Hux was in his Emperor’s uniform, or at least that was what Ben thought it looked like. Maybe a reminder that he had also come from the First Order. It was hardly different from any officer’s uniform, other than the red stripes on his trousers and sleeves, and the careful gold embroidery.
Hux wasn’t one for overwhelming pomp when he was not giving speeches.

Ben tried to stand and the world spun. He didn’t stumble though, as Hux was soon there holding onto his arm almost immediately.

“Why don’t you rest, I can bring you whatever you need.”

If he hadn’t been so dizzy he would have been more suspicious about how kind Hux was acting, as it was Ben had to take Hux up on his offer. With a little help he sat back on the bed and took a few seconds before asking.

“Something to drink, and a mirror.”

Ben didn’t really want to see himself, but he needed to know how bad it was.

Hux listened to his request without question and that only made him more concerned. It was starting to worry him how calm Hux was acting.

It took a while for the requested items to arrive, first a glass of what on the nightstand and then after Hux returning with an actual mirror. Ben had just expected a pad.

“Thank you,” Ben’s words were tentative as he took it.

He hadn’t seen a real mirror in his lifetime, it was truly beautiful craftsmanship. Ben took a moment to steady himself before turning it over.

The picture was both worse and better than he expected, a large scar bisected his face, from forehead to his jaw, but it was thin. Much thinner than he has thought, even though it was still red from healing. He couldn’t concentrate on anything but the scar and Ben had to set the mirror down, not wanting to see it any longer.

He could remember how much it hurt, and the blood dripping down his cheek. For a second Ben’s heart was beating wildly and he felt like he was frozen in the memory. It was choking him.

Hux was still hovering over him and as Ben came out of the memory he wanted to yell at Hux to go away, instead he felt a wet trail run down his cheek. It wasn’t so much pain as it was just the overwhelming mix of feelings and the memory of dying. Before he could get it himself, Hux gently wiped it off his face, and then seated himself beside Ben, his hands still cupping his face.

While there had been a tentative peace between them since their bonding, Hux hadn’t made a move past the usual bonding needs other than a few kisses during scenting when they were already undressed, this was touch was out of place.

“It’s alright. You’ve been through a lot, you can let it out.”

The words were too soft and the sympathy broke something in him. His body was shaking as a few more tears slipped out. If asked Ben would claim it was because he was still weak from recovery, but he allowed himself to be pulled to Hux’s chest.

The smell of him was reassuring and he felt Hux’s fingers rubbing circles on his back. It only lasted a minute or two though. Ben was practiced with pulling himself together, he told himself there was no point in mourning what was lost, or letting himself think about what had happened.

Ben tried to tell himself he had given up his chance at a life the second he agreed to mate with the enemy.
Yet he still thought of the kisses they had shared before he left. Ben thought of the nights curled up against Hux, and the kind way that he tried to make him comfortable.

He pulled back and felt even more confused than before. Hux stayed seated on the edge of the bed, watching him. Ben didn’t want to open the bond for fear he would feel that Hux was being so kind because he had seen the monster that Ben had become and he felt pity for him.

“Why am I here rather than the medical ward?”

“Once you were removed from the bacta tank there was no further healing that they would do. I thought maybe you would rather wake up somewhere familiar. I also am not so busy that I can’t spare the time to look after your needs.”

Ben knew better, his mate was always busy, he would have to actually be making time to be around in the middle of the day. Was this kindness again or was it ulterior motives, the last time they spoke Hux had almost been spitting and now he was almost too calm.

Everything he had thought he knew about Hux was proving to be wrong and it made it even harder not to give in.

“Why aren’t you angry?”

Hux gave him the smallest smile, just the tilt of one side of his lips.

“I’ve had over a week to be angry, at some point I realise that what we really need is to talk. That can wait, first I want you to concentrate on healing. You’ve got a new shoulder in there, it’s going to feel odd for a while.”

The week he had lost didn’t bother him as much as the comment about his shoulder. He shifted it to feel the mechanics of the joint moving. It felt a little off, maybe too stiff for what he was used to. A touch of panic filled him as he thought what else they could have done to him in that time.

“A new shoulder?”

“The bone was shattered, it needed to be replaced. You might be a little slower, but you should be able to pilot again.”

Ben felt tired, and also annoyed. He didn’t like that he still felt fresh in the moment while Hux had had time to think about what had happened not only between them but think about their argument enough to be calm about it. Just thinking about Hux telling him what to do made him irritated. Half the reason he hadn’t mated yet was because he was sick of alpha’s trying to tell him what to do.

Ben wanted to be with Poe again, the older omega always was able to see through his confusion.

“I’m going back to sleep. You can get back to work.”

Ben laid all the way down and turned on his side so that Hux wouldn’t have to look at his scarred face. He could still feel Hux’s weight on the bed and he tugged at the blankets Hux was sitting on to make his point.

It didn’t work to scare him off, instead he heard Hux’s tentative voice.

“May I join you?”
Ben was starting to get used to Hux being around. Where the first few weeks of their bonding he was mostly out of their apartments other than nights and morning, now he spent a good amount of time there. He took multiple calls in the other room and would return to their bedroom as soon as he finished. Although Hux had a pad in his hand and was constantly typing, he also made time to ask if Ben needed anything.

The few times he had to leave for longer he got one of the lieutenants to wait on him like he was a cadet being hazed.

At nights Hux often woke him from his nightmares of the crash, and would hold him and reassure Ben that they were safe. It was the only time Ben would open the bond and feel the comfort coming through it. In the darkness there was no risking the disgust Hux might have felt over his scars, and Ben could forget that he was the leader of the First Order.

Twice a day Ben would go for therapy to work on strengthening the muscles that they had regrown while he was asleep. It was painful, but he could feel small improvements. The med techs weren’t all that bad, though a little brisk they reminded him of the ones back home.

His scars seemed to change the exchange between him and Hux now, Hux no longer kissed him when he scented him and he always skipped over the spots that were marked up. It made Ben feel even uglier than the reflection he now saw, even his mate avoided them.

Ben’s chest felt tight when he thought about it, but he kept their bond locked down so that none of it leaked through. He was starting to get used to denying his needs, he didn’t want to find out that his budding feelings weren’t returned, but more than that he didn’t want to be a traitor.

As always when he returned Ben was tired and sore. Already Hux was waiting for him, sitting at the small table by the tranparisteel windows. Hux had hardly slept the night before and under his eyes was dark. Taking pity on his mate Ben moved to the console in the wall and typed in an order for two cups of caf.

With the order placed Ben sat across from Hux and looked at how the sun shined through Hux’s hair. It really was beautiful. Ben’s own thick hair never looked like that, and he was temped to reach out and touch it. Maybe loosen up the gel a little.

Hux caught him staring and Ben looked out the garden below them.

“How are you feeling?”

“How are you feeling?”

“Sore, but I think I’ve got a little more movement back.”

“Good.”

Hux sounded relieved, and Ben looked back at him. He could only get so much from his expression and not for the first time Ben wished that they were only mates and that each show of affection didn’t have the weight of their lives on it.

Moments like this when he craved the touch of his mate, Ben also felt like he was betraying his family and friends for wanting it.

He was saved from the though by Hux speaking.

“I don’t know how to handle this, I’ve never even thought of courting a mate until we bonded. I had assumed that it was just me that you had a problem with. I want you to be happy here, not just exist at my side.”
Ben bit his lip, the words were close to something he had wanted so desperately to hear. The craving for touch was rewarded as Hux covered his hand in his own.

“Alright,” Ben said, encouraging Hux to talk.

“I need to know what you would need to be content, I want to work with you towards that. Please tell me what I can do.”

Maybe it was because he was lonely, or maybe it was his bonding hormones making him crave touch that he didn’t feel right taking, but the words left his mouth before he could think about them.

“Let me go home.”
Ben’s request had been one of the hardest things to hear, but almost losing his mate was enough that Hux had to consider it. That night he had hardly slept, only memorizing the feel of Ben’s body next to him. If he allowed Ben to leave he might never see him again, and if Hux didn’t he could lose Ben in a different way.

Long after Ben’s breath had evened out Hux had pressed kisses to the scar that now covered his shoulder, his lips barely brushing them.

He’d seen Ben wince when he touched his scars while he was awake and knew it took a while for regrown muscle to stop aching. Hux had been avoiding them for weeks, but while Ben was asleep he wanted to feel the proof that his Ben was stronger than most.

Hux had wondered at how much he cared for the man in his arms, when Hux had first met Ben he had found him handsome and not much else. He hadn’t really remembered falling in love, but in his attempts to make their bonding better for both of them it had happened.

Ben was everything he could have wanted, he was strong and able to defend himself, he had the ability to care deeply for others, he was intelligent and resourceful. Yet despite Hux’s feelings Ben was always out of reach.

They hadn’t shared another kiss since the crash, though often Hux held Ben after he woke screaming, telling him he was safe on the planet. Those times he was always more concerned with calming Ben down than with memorizing the feeling of him in his arms. It never felt like enough, like he was dying of thirst and yet not allowed to sip from the glass in front of him.

All his life Hux had felt romance was below him, he thought that being Emperor was how he would be fulfilled, and he had been. Now all his power felt empty without the ability to make Ben want him.

In the end Hux knew that although it would give Ben the perfect chance to leave, that he would lose Ben completely if he forced him to stay at his side. It took two weeks of planning and Hux pretended it didn’t hurt to see Ben light up with excitement at the thought of leaving him. It was bitter sweet to see his smiles, but Hux drank them in savouring the sight of his mate looking truly happy. Ben’s lips pulled up more on one side more than the other now that he was scarred, and his big eyes seemed to sparkle in his delight.

Hux had wishes of seeing that expression cast on him, but until then this would do.

At the end of the two weeks he watched his Ben look out the tranparisteel windows, and almost quiver with joy as they came closer to the system.

They had managed to get special allowance into the system to drop Ben off. After the last attack, General Leia had felt that keeping Ben safe was worth the risk of having a fleet of Star Destroyers drop him off.

It was harder than he expected, and Hux ended up getting on the transport, wanting to be with Ben until they had to part. Hux’s expression must have showed his feelings because Ben held his hand until they landed.

Then the quiet moment was gone and Ben was taking a step forward. It was almost like Ben was going to jump to freedom before the doors had even finished opening. Ben didn’t though, instead
he let Hux walk beside him until he was out. General Organa was already waiting, short legs eating up the ground as she hurried to her son.

There was a few people gathered, people Hux recognised from their dossier. A few of the pilots and possibly Ben’s father.

Ben seemed to have already forgot himself, pulling his hand away so that he could rush from Hux’s side and throwing himself into his tiny mothers arms.

Hux stayed back, watching Ben pick her up and twirl her around. He wasn’t ready to leave yet so he kept back to watch the reunion without interfering.

“Oh Ben, what did they do to you?”

“It wasn’t them, we were attacked by Calib’s cell.”

The name didn’t pass by Hux, as soon as he returned he would look into it. It would give him something to do while he laid awake in bed at night.

Maybe making them pay for harming his mate would ware off some of the frustration he felt.

He could feel Ben’s happiness trickling through this bond. Already it felt worth the ache at the thought of being apart. Knowing that their welcome wouldn’t be too long he finally made himself cross to Ben’s side. Waiting for them to finish hugging before putting a hand on Ben’s arm.

“The replacement guards will come in one week, and then in another week the fleet will return to bring you home.”

Ben nodded and leaned in to press a kiss to his cheek. It was a surprise, but a welcome one. It was the first show of affection that Ben had shown him without being prompted since the crash.

“Fly safe.”

Hux wondered if Ben would ever really think of the palace as his home, or if he would be angry when he found out the surprise scheduled for the next week.

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Ben woke up to the grumbling beside him, back in his old room, with a very hung over Poe struggling to sit up, it should have felt like nothing had changed. Except for some reason Ben felt lonely without his alpha’s touch, and he missed the soft kiss on his forehead that always woke him, though he pretended to sleep until Hux said his name. He passed the feeling off as just being used to their morning bonding.

It hadn’t been that long, and yet it was difficult to know that there would be distance between him and his mate. Ben tried to shake the feeling off, but it hung over him, putting a damper on his morning. It was an odd moment of realization of how much he had adjusted to being around Hux.

That and the lack of Hux’s scent. All Ben’s clothing had been washed but what he wore the day before, Ben didn’t realise how much he would miss it.

“There is water on the nightstand for you.”

Poe let out a noise of thanks and sat up enough that he could drain the glass.

When he finished Poe looked only vaguely more awake. The night before they had gone out for
drinks at a new bar that had been set up as people came to the new republic system. A lot of changes had happened in the last few months.

Though he had recognised the other pilots there had also been a bunch of new people, and even a few of the First Order troops that were helping with the hand over. It made things tense, but Poe quickly quashed that when he started talking to one he obviously knew well. Despite the fact that he was First Order, Poe had had to work with Lieutenant Eight-Seven and oddly enough a friendship started. Poe had said their affair was hush-hush, though to watch Poe that night Ben couldn’t tell that it was.

On the surface Lieutenant Eight-Seven seemed uninterested, but Ben could see the way he smiled though when Poe moved into his personal space and how his hand trembled when it rested on Poe’s hip for a few seconds. Poe on the other hand, polished off two bottles of the new swill they were making, and had acted like a young omega on his first heat. At least Eight-Seven was better at attempting to keep a secret.

When they got back Ben had helped a very drunk Poe into the other side of his bed, and he had got to hear the whole story of how they met and how Poe thought it was fate. He was in deep, and the next few months they had before the First Order pulled out fully and Poe tried to tell Ben his plans for how they would be mated and how Eight could stay with them.

It had suited Poe though, he was never one to be pursued, he tended to like to do the pursuing himself.

Ben had heard enough to know that Eight-Seven was one of the few Strom Troopers to move up to being an officer.

It was a rare occurrence, but since Snoke’s death things had changed in the Order, and good work and difference was rewarded when useful. It was weird to hear a few positive things about Hux’s rule speckled in with the normal dislike from Poe, they had been fighting so long that it was sometimes hard to remember that there were some good parts to First Order. It was like when he saw Lothal.

“Do you have a hangover shot anywhere in here?”

“No, I cleared this place out when I left. I didn’t expect to be allowed to come back.”

Poe turned over in the bed and his under eyes were dark. They weren’t as young as they once were, even Ben felt a slight pinch in his head and he hadn’t drank half as much as Poe. That was the problem with the fruit brew they had drank the night before, nothing in it to take away the hangover.

“I’m glad you’re back, how has it been?”

Ben understood the feeling and part of him shared it. It wasn’t always easy to be an omega that broke the normal standards for what an omega should be. They had that in common, being too wild, breaking from the normal body types, and hobbies. They had always had each other to share in their triumphs and frustrations.

“Even though you’ve got a new alpha to play with?”

Ben pointedly ignored the question and smirked. The expression changed into a wince as his scar pulled, not from pain, but from the reminder.

“Never thought I would miss that big nose of yours in my business, and it’s not play. I think I’m
serious about this one.”

Poe sniped, but he didn’t sound angry, instead he had that gooey tone in his voice that he always did when he talked about the lieutenant.

When Ben was silent Poe piped up again.

“And stop trying to change the conversation, how has it been? I know what you’ve said in your messages, but I am not so stupid that I think that the messages aren’t tampered with.”

Ben let out a long sigh and rolled over. He took his time thinking about how to respond, punching the pillow under his head until it formed into the shape he wanted.

“They weren’t, but I didn’t want to write everything. I didn’t know what he would read.”

Poe let out a slow breath.

“We all appreciate what you did Ben, but I want to know that it’s been alright. If it hasn’t, we could smuggle you out, we can’t be blamed if you run away.”

Ben couldn’t even consider it, one night and he already missed the body of his mate next to his own.

“It’s not…”

Ben didn’t even know how to say it, that Hux wasn’t horrible, that he had been kind at almost every turn, that Ben even liked the monster that they had fought against. Now Ben still fought, but it was against the feelings that were building, it was clearer here, removed from the situation.

Poe would probably call him a traitor, but it was nothing that Ben hadn’t been thinking himself.

“I like him, when it’s just us and he’s not being the Emperor, he’s so warm. At some point I started to like him, and I can’t seem to make myself stop.”

The words tasted like ash in his mouth, the admission he had been holding back for so long.

“Good.”

Poe’s response was like a shock up his spine.

“Good?”

“He’s your mate Ben, there’s no going back. You’ve done more than enough for us already, you deserve to find whatever happiness you can. You’re too much like your mother, always wanting to fight until there is nothing left.”

It wasn’t the vitriol he had expected and felt he deserved, and it left Ben stunned.
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Ben knew the change of guard was due to the fact that they worked in shifts and hardly slept. They would need to be alert and so half way through a few ships and a transport came through and the guard was switched.

What surprised him was that he recognised the armour. These were normally the emperor’s private guards. Maybe Ben’s lonely mind was tricking him, but he swore that he could smell Hux as they came off the ship.

It may have been wishful thinking, the last few nights he had woken up with the terror of the crash still clinging to him and when he reached for the other side of the bed it was empty. Instead would stay awake with the lights on until the memory faded enough that he could sleep.

Ben watched his own guard leave, clad in only their uniforms. The new guards looked more intense, and he wondered if he had done something to cause the change. Although his friendship with Poe was innocent he wondered if maybe it hadn’t looked so in the eyes of his guards, or maybe it was the fight he got in at the bar the other night. His cheek was still slightly coloured from a blow he had taken.

He tried not to worry over it, Ben had been sharing short holo messages with his mate, both keeping him up to date with what was going on, and taking the edge off the lonely feeling that had hung onto him since he returned. With the distance that was all he could do, there was something reassuring about seeing Hux’s serious face telling him about his day.

Hux told about his day as if he was giving a speech, the cadence of his voice almost touched Ben. When Ben was alone at night in his room he would play the messages while he got ready for bed.

The next time Ben was away he decided he would bring one of Hux’s shirts so that he would be able to smell him as he fell asleep.

It was already getting dark, Ben would try and get one last message out to Hux before bed. More than likely there would be one waiting for him as well. Ben felt like he caught the scent again, but that only made him speed up.

The guards followed him like always, and he wished he didn’t need them. Ever since he had agreed to mate with the head of the First Order every moment felt like it was watched and judged. The only time he was truly alone was when him and Poe locked themselves in his bedroom.

His old place was not too far, but it felt like a long walk with the memory of Hux’s scent in his nose.

As always, he had to wait while they searched his place and only after they finished could he enter. It was exhausting.

Most of the guards left and Ben rushed to his bedroom, wanting to check his messages. While he waited for them to clear out, after one last check around the room, Ben unbuttoned his tunic. One stayed behind and Ben pursed his lips as he hung up his tunic, his thin undershirt sticking to him from the heat of the day.
When the guard still wasn’t gone, he finally spoke up.

“You are dismissed.”

“You’re already sending me off.”

The vocoded voice came out flat, and Ben turned to look at the guard. He suddenly felt alert, Ben had trained to fight, he could probably take the guard, but the feeling of threat woke him up.

The guard raised his hands the hit the releases on the side of the helmet.

Ben’s breath seemed to disappear as he saw the plump lower lip he recognised, and then the sharp eyes and the bright red hair. Ben couldn’t find his words, but he closed the few steps between them and pulled his alpha to him, burying his face in his neck and taking in his scent.

He had missed this, more than he thought he would. Ben wanted to wrap himself in his scent and feel Hux’s skin against him. Finally, Ben wanted all of him.

“I hope it wasn’t too bold of me to come.”

As he relaxed into Hux’s scent Ben was able to pull himself together enough for a response. He needed to say something, he could feel how nervous his mate was.

“It’s too dangerous, what were you thinking?”

He felt Hux’s arms come up to wrap around him, pulling him tight against the armour. It wasn’t comfortable, but Ben didn’t care. For the first time since he returned he felt his muscles relax. His nose was still pressed against Hux’s scent gland and Ben didn’t want to move. Hux’s scent was so strong from the armour and it had been enough days that Ben had begun to forget it. Ben wanted to fill himself with it again, he never wanted to forget it again.

“Being around you makes me foolish.”

Ben couldn’t help smiling at Hux’s words, but anxiety was on the edge of his mind. It was insane and dangerous, the resistance might not be throwing any big attacks at the First Order, but if they knew the emperor was on the planet it would be doubtful that he would get out alive. Ben tried to push it out of his thoughts, Hux was here, he would enjoy it while he could.

“Don’t blame me, you were always foolish. Or you wouldn’t have asked a stranger to be your mate.”

“The beginning of my irrational actions.”

Hux let out a shaky laugh, and then Ben felt a kiss against his own neck. It started as just a tiny little peck, and then he felt Hux’s tongue licking over the scar where his bond mark lay. It made a shiver run down Ben’s spine, and he tilted his head to give Hux a better angle.

He could feel the slick building as Hux started sucking on it.

Ben lightened his grip a little so that he could start working on undoing the armour, starting on the lock. He wanted his alpha’s skin against his own, it felt like it had been ages, not just five days.

It took him a moment, turning the lock until it releases and then Ben feels the back and the front separate. The back fell to the ground but the front was trapped between them.

As Hux sucked a little harder Ben felt weak in the knees, he wanted his mate to mark him again. It
was hard to pull away, but Ben needed more skin, and with the armour in the way he couldn’t get at it. Ben’s skin tingled where Hux had been sucking.

“Help me get this off you.”

It was easier to give in here, Hux wasn’t the leader of the First Order, he was only Ben’s mate here. It made Ben feel free to enjoy him and stop resisting at least for while Hux was with him.

Hux started working on the arms while Ben kneeled and worked on the legs. In the past, he had taken off a storm troopers armour to steal it for later infiltration, but this was not quite the same, other than the fact that it was dark red and black, it was only a little harder to remove.

He’d only freed one leg when Hux was already finished his arms and he bent to help him with the other. Only when it fell away did Ben look up at him.

In his normal uniform, he looked thicker and more serious. With his hair messed from the helmet and in a black temperature controlled body glove, he looked young, thin, and wiry. It wasn’t the usual picture an alpha would cut, but Ben knew what strength laid there. He’d felt it when he was hurt, when Hux had helped him move in the bed. Most of all though, this was his alpha and that was enough for him.

Ben stood again and ran his hands up under the shirt, feeling Hux’s bare skin underneath. He could feel a dusting of hair under Hux’s belly button, but again he was unlike most alpha’s, his chest felt hairless except for a few around a nipple. Even Ben had more than that, with the nine sad black hairs between his pecs.

Ben had tried not to pay too much attention to Hux’s body before, other than noting that he was rather attractive, but now Ben was watching every inch that he revealed.

He’s never noticed the light freckles that dusted Hux’s chest, or how soft his skin was. Hux gasped as Ben’s thumb rubbed over his nipple, gently brushing it until it hardened under his touch. He wanted to feel it under his lips, so he pushed at the shirt more until Hux got the hint and slipped it over his head.

“Lovely.”

Ben sighed out.

His stomach was tense with want, but the feeling was tentative, both of them seemed afraid to move too fast as if it would break the delicate peace between them.

He met Hux’s eyes again and hooked his thumbs into his waistband, slowly pulling it downward. Hux’s hands covered his own and stopped the movement, instead taking a few steps towards the bed. Ben obeyed, walking backwards until the back of his legs hit the bedframe.

Ben sat down and pulled off his shirt as Hux removed the last of his clothing. The pull at his shoulder reminded him of what Hux would see on his own body. The scar that now jagged over his side, the mess that was his shoulder, he got to see beauty in Hux and yet all he would all reveal was disaster.

It slowed the movement, but didn’t stop him, after all he couldn’t help how he looked. This was all he had to offer.

Ben didn’t look up right away, instead undoing his trousers and pushing them down a little bit. Ben also moved to the center of the bed, kicking off shoes and the rest of his clothing while he did.
When Ben did look up he felt his chest clench.

In all his years Ben had never had someone look at him with the awe that was on Hux’s face. He looked as if he was gazing on an ancient monument, not his scarred-up mate’s body.

It brought a smile to his lips and he shook his head.

“Stop looking at me like that, and come over and scent me.”

Ben wasn’t ready to say what he truly wanted, for now they would start with scenting.

“As you wish.”

Hux’s voice held teasing as he got down onto the bed and crawled to Ben. It was the first time Ben had seen him completely nude, his cock half hard and big enough that Ben was glad this wouldn’t be his first time with an alpha.

There was no need for Ben to hide now, no thoughts but nerves, so he opened their bond. Ben felt the rush of warm feelings from Hux, as well as the excitement and slight wariness, as if wasn’t sure this was real yet.

Ben tried to reassure him, pushing his need through their bond.

With that Hux started to scent him, moving so that he was straddling Ben’s hips and going for his neck first. He started rubbing gently and slowly, pausing in the middle to press kisses over each spot he scented. When he got to Ben’s shoulder he hardly scented, spending time kissing the scar and nuzzling it. It felt odd, the nerves on his shoulder and side were still recovering and in spots he could feel the pressure of Hux’s lips, but not the actual touch.

Ben hated how it looked and thought about asking if the twisted skin felt as appalling as it looked. He didn’t realise that Hux could feel his disgust through the bond until he felt reassurance clumsily pushed at him. Ben was so used to it being locked off that it was strange to feel so close to Hux.

Hux moved on slowly, laying soft kisses along one of the scars that laced downward. It was almost painful to see Hux acting so kind to the scars he hated, there was no hint of distaste in their bond as he lovingly paid attention to each one before moving onto his chest.

There Hux gave up on scenting, instead kissing a line down to his nipple. Ben watched Hux’s tongue peek out and he licked gently around it.

Ben bit his lip to hold back a moan, except it was pulled from as Hux blew on the wet skin. He wanted more then the teasing, and he dug his fingers into Hux’s bright hair. It was softer than normal, no product since he had had the helmet on. It wasn’t often that Ben saw him like this.

As the apprehension over his scars eased his arousal took over. Hux started slowly sucking his hard nipple and Ben tightened his hand in his hair. It felt too slow, he’d felt ready since he realised that his mate was at his side again.

“I want you. Now.”

Hux looked up at him, his face intense. There was silence for a moment, his fingers trailing over Ben’s bare chest, pausing to squeeze his pec.

“I’ve wanted this for so long, I want to take my time to get to know your body.”
Ben understood the want to explore his mate’s body, but he also was wet with slick and was beginning to feel desperate to have Hux inside him.

“Hurry.”

Hux let out a little huff of laughter, fondness flooding into him from their bond. He bowed his head to lay more kisses against his skin, slowly moving downward. Hux really was taking his time, his hands and lips touching every inch of Ben’s torso.

Finally, Hux’s lips were close to his cock, Ben could feel his breath and it was driving him crazy. He knew that Hux could feel his need through their bond, how much he wanted him and yet his hands were resting on Ben’s hips and his lips were just below his belly button taunting him.

Hux passed it by, and sat up for a moment. As soon as Ben realised what Hux was doing he opened his legs and let his mate between them. Hux made a low growl in his throat as he moved between Ben’s thighs, lowering himself down and kissing his inner thigh.

He sucked a few small bruises into his skin, marking him. Ben shivered at the attention, gifting Hux with a small noise. Ben opened his legs a little more, hoping that Hux would get the hint. The pleased amusement through their bond told him that Hux did, that and the tongue lapping across the bottom of his shaft.

Hux had meant it when he said he was going to take him time, slowly moving upward until he had the tip in his mouth. It wasn’t often that an alpha would be willing to do something like this. It was enough that Ben started shivering. It was like a beautiful torture, and Ben couldn’t wait any longer. He pulled on Hux’s hair, forcing him up.

“Kiss me.”

Ben had been with enough alpha’s he knew how to get his attention. For once Hux listened to him, coming up to meet his lips. He started slow, Hux’s mood for the day it seemed, but when Ben pushed his tongue into Hux’s mouth he felt Hux’s slide against his own.

He brought his legs up around Hux’s waist, finally feeling his cock as it pressed against his own. He rocked his hips to give them both fiction and heard the sweetest little noise in his alpha’s throat. It wasn’t yet enough, but this was better.

Hux’s mouth tasted a little stale from the recycled air in the armor, but Ben didn’t even care. He wanted this.

He broke the kiss for a moment, just so that he could reach down and press Hux’s cock between his cheeks. Letting Hux feel how incredibly wet he was. Maybe it was that Ben had fought against his bond, but now that he had given in, it left him feeling desperate. It reminded him of his heats before he went on suppressants, the same deep need, but this time Ben was clear headed, he knew what he wanted.

When he kissed Hux again he felt the hunger in his mate this time, the façade of calm finally leaving him as he began to rut his hips against him. He felt smug as Hux broke the kiss.

“Are you sure you want this?”

Ben almost laughed in his face, he’d been the one pushing to this.

“Yes, for today.”
“Today?”

There was a slight bit of doubt but Hux gave a nod and Ben felt his understanding.

It was as far as he could promise for the moment, when they returned and the weight of who they were returned it might not be the same. Right now, though Ben wanted his mate to fuck him, he wanted his nose against his scent gland, Ben wanted every bit of Hux he could get inside of him.

Hux took his response and he shifted, reaching down to line himself up. Ben bit his lip as he waited, the tip just carefully entering him. Already the omega side of him was pleased, he was thick enough that it left a little ache and he felt more slick. Before he could push into it Hux pulled out again, and he could feel want and concern through their bond.

Ben had kept his mate blocked off for so long that it was almost overwhelming to get an echo of his emotions and touches. Though he wasn’t alone in the feeling, Hux was trembling slightly.

When Hux entered him again he shifted his legs up higher around his waist, giving both of them a better angle. Hux still continued to tease him, only pushing in a small amount at a time. Ben rocked against him just so that he could get a little more.

“How.”

He gasped, trying to express his need.

“Too much?”

“No.”

Ben wished he were on top, riding Hux. The next time, he promised himself.

“I’m not a beta, you can fuck me.”

He’s only said the words in frustration but the surprise on Hux’s face told him that he was the Emperor’s first omega. That would mean that Hux would be used to having to be terribly careful. There was a slight thrill knowing that he would be the first person that Hux knotted.

Hux started thrusting only slightly harder, going a little deeper and opening Ben up more. Although he was desperate to feel it all he realised it was better that Hux was careful, he was thick enough that there was a slight ache already and he had not yet let Ben feel the base where his knot would swell. His cock was rubbing against the spot where his knot would swell, sending sparks up his spine.

Ben moaned at the feeling and wrapped his arms around Hux, using his hands to set the pace.

“Better?”

Hux asked, though he didn’t need to, Ben was feeling the echo of his pleasure and knew that Hux would be feeling the same from him. If he concentrated on their bond he could feel shadows on Hux’s body, how tight he was around him, and the feeling of his slick on Hux’s cock. Hux was also using the bond to make sure that he found the right spots.

It wasn’t only that, he could feel Hux’s love warming him, and how deeply his alpha cared for him. The intense feelings made his eyes water.

He could hardly think, he had to shy away from their bond from getting overloaded, his own cock
already weeping against his stomach and only now was Hux fully inside him.

Ben could see why people wanted a bond so badly now, he’d been with a few alpha’s in his lifetime, and nothing had come close to the pleasure he was feeling now.

His name sounded wonderful on Hux’s lips, his accent changing it, making it sound like an endearment.

Ben loved the feel of Hux, being stretched open, the feel of his cock rubbing inside him. He felt like he needed this, to be with his mate. Every small touch, and every time they curled into each other in the morning had been leading to this. It felt right, their bond was clear, and the omega side of him had never felt so satisfied. Even as he pushed into the thrusts he felt a purr building in his chest.

That wasn’t the only thing, he could feel how close Hux was, he could feel it as it was his own body. He tightened around Hux, as he pulled out and he wasn’t sure if the moan was coming from his own mouth or not. The more he lost control the more things started to blur between them. The echo of pleasure mixed with his own was getting to be too much and for once he didn’t have to say it.

They were both chasing the same need as Hux started to thrust into him harder, and as his knot started swelling, he didn’t even have to ask if Ben wanted it. Ben knew that Hux could feel it. The last few thrusts were intense and he felt Hux’s orgasm inside him and his own followed as the knot hit all the right spots.

It was both too much and everything he wanted. Ben felt dazed in the aftermath, but he didn’t want to close the bond. Instead he let it feel overwhelming, and tried to quiet his own mind, to concentrate on the knot inside him and let the purr that had been threatening to escape to finally slid out.

Ben had never give in to the wants of his omega side, but now he felt how calming it was, the purr vibrating relaxed body. It was surpassingly comfortable, but the position they were locked into due to Hux’s knot wasn’t.

“Move with me.”

Ben hummed his agreement, the purr dying off as the two of them shifted and tried to get comfortable. There were a few angry hisses from Hux as Ben pulled on his knot too much, but after a few minutes Hux ended up tucked behind him with both of them on their sides.

As they settled Hux started rubbing the scar. Ben had assumed when he had first touched it that it was just part of sex, not that Hux would actually want to touch it.

“You’re so beautiful.”

The words surprised Ben, before the crash he would have believed it, but now it felt embarrassing to hear Hux say it, as if he hadn’t earned it. Ben squirmed on Hux’s knot pulling a moan from his lips.

“Oh come on, I mean it.”

Hux tutted when Ben stopped moving, and Ben realised their bond was still open. He didn’t bother closing it, though he did take the hand off his side and held it in his own instead.

“I love you.”
Hux’s voice was soft as he said it, as if he was afraid it would break their gentle peace.

“I’m glad you came.”

Ben didn’t know how else to respond, he just wanted to tell Hux that he cared about him in return, but those were things he couldn’t take back, so instead he squeezed Hux’s hand.

Chapter End Notes

There will be a short break in updates while I finish up my Kylux Big Bang story! Don't worry, as soon as I am finished updates will return to normal!
They had stayed up late, Ben allowing Hux to properly explore his body before they started a second round. This morning Ben had had one of his nightmares, and after Hux had held him and calmed him down, he seemed to realise he was nude and in Hux’s lap. It wasn’t long before Ben was guiding Hux’s cock inside him again.

Hux bit his lip, trying not to be too loud, Ben was riding him like he was expecting to get somewhere. He could see the sweat on his chest and Ben’s cock bouncing as his thighs worked. It was a beautiful show of Ben’s fit body. Now that the nightmare was chased away he was eager and needy.

It wasn’t like the few affairs he had had, where almost all sound was muffled and he always had to be terribly careful not to hurt the other person. Hux had never even knotted someone before, he hadn’t realised how good it would feel to have his omega spasming around his knot with his voice raising in moans and encouragements.

Hux also had never experienced their bond like this either. For the first time Ben was allowing him to use it, and to feel everything he was feeling. He had never felt so close to anyone before, and yet he’d never wanted to be this close to someone else before Ben.

He wasn’t sure that he had ever seen anything so beautiful. Ben’s long back hair was over his shoulders and each time he seated himself fully on Hux’s cock, one of his curls bobbed in the most delightful way. His face was relaxed in his pleasure and his dark eyelashes fluttering against his cheeks. Ben was so close to orgasm, and Hux was chasing it as well. His knot began to swell and Ben slammed himself down on his cock a few last times.

The omega orgasmed around him and as it tensed, Hux felt his release pulled from him, into Ben’s warm body. Hux pulled Ben forward, kissing him softly.

This was better than anything Hux had imagined when he had put on the guard’s uniform.

They were silent for a while, enjoying the feeling of finally being together. Hux ran his hand over Ben’s back.

“It’s too bad you aren’t free here, I would love to show you around.”

It surprised him to hear Ben say so, though the Ben he had met on this planet was different than the one that he had known since their bonding. This one seemed freer.

“We can, in the uniform no one will know it’s me.”

Ben let out a short laugh and shook his head, more of his hair falling over his shoulder.

“I would like more than to walk in your vicinity, though I suppose that will have to do.”

Much to Hux’s pleasure Ben kissed him again, his hands rubbing over Hux’s chest. A finger lingered to play with his nipple.

Hux felt fondness through their bond as his tongue slid over Ben’s. This morning he had the sweet omega taste that Hux had been craving.

Hux never wanted to return to how they had been, now that they shared this warmth he couldn’t go
back. This bonding moment meant almost everything to him. For the first time since he was a child Hux couldn’t understand how his father had betrayed his mate.

Ben kissed him while they waited for his knot to go down enough to part. It was a wonderful thing, being inside both his mouth and his hole. Hux had never felt closer to anyone, and not just because of the sex. Ben was so open to him here, with their bond open he could feel premonitions of what Ben was going to do or what he was thinking.

Hux could stay like this forever, he’d been wanting this for so long that now that he had it, it was hard to think of anything else. Plus, he knew that Phasma and General Mitaka would run the First Order well, things had settled down, now that resistance had given in, and the day to day wasn’t as difficult as it used to be. This one week with his mate was worth it, even if he hated taking his hands off the reins.

He hoped when they returned he could have both his mate and his empire.

His knot had gone down enough that Ben could slip off, yet Ben stole a few more kisses before sitting up and letting it pull out.

Hux could see his semen dripping down Ben’s thigh and he turned his head away as his skin flushed. Gazing upon Ben was like looking on the sun, he was so striking in his nakedness, but he also lacked the shame of a proper First Order citizen. Hux wouldn’t change it for the galaxy though, he didn’t need a proper First Order mate.

Instead of looking Hux busied himself with getting out of bed and making it before moving to the bathroom. There he took a quick sonic shower to get the slick out of his lap. Once he was clean Ben took the shower from him, again giving Hux a good look at his body. He had small bruises sucked over his nipples and a few more around his bond mark. As he stepped in Hux was tempted to shower a second time, and allow himself the distraction of his mate, but he also wanted to explore the planet that Ben had spent a large amount of his life on.

Not yet wanting to dress in the armour he looked through his mate’s clothing. They almost shared a height even if Hux was a small cut. It took a while to find loose tunic and trousers that fit, most of Ben’s clothing were too showy. Both would have been skin tight on his Ben, but on him it was flatteringly loose, without being shapeless. When Hux looked at himself in the mirror that took up most of Ben’s wall. He could see that he was thinner than his uniforms made him look, but otherwise put together well, even with his untamed hair. Except Hux didn’t look like an emperor, he could pass for some any well-off republic citizen.

“You look handsome like that.”

Hux was startled out of his thoughts and turned to see Ben standing nude in the bathroom doorway, not even bothering with a robe. He looked away again, not wanting to stare.

“I hope you don’t mind.”

“No at all, actually…”

Ben paused, coming out of the doorway and walking around him. Hux couldn’t help looking at his thick thighs while Ben circled him.

“You look different with your hair messed and in my clothing, if I didn’t know you so well I might have to do a double take.”

“It’s hard to look professional in ill-fitted clothing.”
“Not so ill-fitted.”

Ben paused and then looked him up and down. Unlike the other times that Ben had looked at him this time he felt hints of what he was thinking through their bond. Attraction, and fondness flashed through his mind and he hoped that Ben would keep their bond open longer this time. He always wanted to share the closeness with his mate.

It wasn’t the sex that made him feel closer to Ben, it was all the moments before and after. The thoughts and warmth that they shared, even though Ben was still wary in ways, it was different now. All the danger of his visit seemed worth it.

“I think you can pass for someone else dressed like this.”

Ben continued, bringing his hand up to cup Hux’s cheek.

“We’ll have to just have to comb another colour into your hair, and then I think no one would know.”

Hux could feel that Ben was both serious about this and excited. It was dangerous, more so than coming to the Republic system, but to walk hand and hand with Ben seemed worth a little risk.

“Armour today, and tomorrow we can attempt a walkabout.”

“I can get Poe to bring something, we can try it today.”

After Ben put his mind to something he got to work, first throwing on an airy outfit that consisted of leggings and a sheer red tunic, with only straps of opaque black over it. Hux noticed how Ben paused after he put it on, pressing the side with the scar. After he dressed, Ben started typing on a pad, he claimed Poe was on his way. It was only a few minutes before he heard the buzz. Hux knew there would be a little longer before he had to meet Ben’s friend, the guards would search him first and only then would he be allowed in.

Hux stole one last kiss, and Ben run his hands through Hux’s hair.

“Am I interrupting?”

It was a stranger’s voice and Hux jerked away from the kiss to look. He recognised Poe from the information they had gathered on the resistance, but he also recognised him as one of the people who had watched their bonding.

They haven’t even had the time to clean the bed and the room smelled like sex.

Poe was obviously tense being in the room, though he knew Ben would have warned him who he was.

“I brought what you asked for.”

He was obviously talking to Ben as he handed over a comb-in dye. From where he was standing Hux could see that it was a deep brown.

“Thanks Poe, I owe you.”

Ben’s voice was warm, a warmth that Hux had only recently heard.

Poe didn’t leave, instead he chewed on his lower lip.
“Actually, I have favour. Since I’m helping out and keeping your mates visit a secret, I know of something he could do for me in return.”

Poe looked directly at Hux before he spoke again.

“I want to bond with Lieutenant Eight-Seven, he’s shown interest, but he can’t because we won’t be able to be together once the First Order pulls out. I either want permission to enter into First Order territory, or I would like for him to be allowed to vacate his post and stay with the Republic.”

Hux remembered Eight-Seven well, he had been the first storm trooper that they had moved into officers training. Due to the battle with Snoke they had been desperate for competent officers. Phasma had picked out six storm troopers who she felt would be capable, ones that weren’t just good troopers but showed that they were able to think as well as follow orders. Eight-seven had been the first one to graduate.

He had a soft heart, that would be a weakness expect when it came to getting humanitarian work done. Eight-Seven had stayed up for days while he tried to figure out which planets could be remade to grow crops to feed the growing need in the First Order for steady food, and he’d even taken inhabittance into the equation. Now that the First Order was the major power in the galaxy people like Eight-Seven were needed more than ever.

Hux also had risked a lot in coming to the system, but it was a personal risk, he couldn’t harm the First Order for selfish reasons. He also could understand how hard it could be to be apart from his mate.

“I will arrange it so that you will have permission to enter First Order territory during his leaves, and if it comes to the point of bonding you would have permanent permission to stay.”

Poe narrowed his eyes and then gave a small nod.

“Could he also choose a name? A real name.”

The choice had already come up when he had been brought into the officers training, he had turned it down, most of them had, their numbers were the names they had always had.

“If he wishes.”

“Alright, I will hold you to that.”

Poe hugged Ben and then after giving them one last look left the room. With that Ben also relaxed, shifting back into the soft mood they had shared since Hux had arrived. His arms slipped around Hux’s waist and he stole a kiss.

“Thank you for not making that difficult, now let’s finish getting you ready.”

He pulled Hux towards the master bathroom and he went willingly. There was already a hint of excitement of the thought of seeing what Ben was like on his own planet.
If Hux asked Ben would never tell him that the last three days together felt better than the five before when he had been missing Hux. Ben just felt calmer when Hux was around. Even at night Ben still went out with his friends or mother with Hux staying in his old house, since the guards felt it would be unsafe for him to be out in a crowded bar. Even without Hux beside him Ben felt soothed to have his scent and know that he would see Hux soon.

Not only that, but when he returned still warm from seeing his friends he was happy to have arms to slip into. Here he never worried about the guilt of being with the emperor, Ben just let himself be with his mate. It was like escaping to a dream of what could have been.

Maybe it wasn’t the best idea to fall into the dream, but he wasn’t ready to end it now.

Today he was showing Hux his favourite spot, and treating him to a slice of air cake that he hadn’t really had since he was young.

He wished the guards could give them a little more space, so they could really enjoy the mossy hillside. Although he knew it might not be the best idea to keep having unprotected sex with Hux, even off heats there was a chance of pregnancy, that didn’t mean that he didn’t enjoy it. When he was younger he used to dream about watching the ships take off with his mate, and staying until dark so that it could become more.

Those dreams wouldn’t come true, much like a lot of other ones he had had.

Hux looked charming today, if not younger than usual. His hair had fallen over his forehead, giving him bangs. It was still a duller brown from the dye and while Ben missed the bright red he liked his hair soft like this, without his hair gelled into a helmet.

“I hope you enjoy it.”

“I do.”

Hux’s head was in his lap and Ben brushed his fingers through his hair. His eyes were closed and Ben could feel his contentment through their bond. It was worth the lightsaber digging into his hip in the position.

It wasn’t only Hux’s hair that was different. He was wearing Ben’s blue trousers with a soft peachy muscle shirt. Though the blaster strapped on his thigh stood out, he looked good. Hux was still unused to being on a hot planet and had suffered until today with thicker outfits. Hux felt it was inappropriate to wear what he was, but he had given into Ben and the heat of the day finally and Ben was glad for it.

Ben always made sure he covered Hux in lotion in the morning so that he wouldn’t burn, his ears were still pink from the first day. It had been a slowly and wonderful way to start the day. An excuse to touch his mate that quickly turned into more, and not long after that Hux had scented
him. There was no holding back, he made sure he left his scent over every inch of Ben. It left him feeling closer to Hux, something that he was adjusting to.

Even with the guards around them Ben didn’t let it ruin the mood. He kept playing with his mate’s hair as they looked down over launch pad. It was far enough away that the noise wasn’t overpowering, instead they could watch the ships take off without being bothered.

“We don’t have many days left here.”

Ben hated to remember it, but he supposed they would have to talk about it sometime. When they returned things would change. Ben didn’t want them to go back to how it was, but he didn’t know how he could enjoy being with the emperor of the First Order while his people were rebuilding. The guilt that seemed to live with him since their bonding trickled in.

Ben didn’t know how he could give up what they had found over the last few days, but he also didn’t know how he could live with himself if he didn’t. Poe’s words had helped, but at the same time he knew Poe was only one person.

Even if he only wanted to be beside his mate, each picture of them together looked like he was handing the republic over to the First Order.

“Only two.”

“I wish we had longer, but maybe we can return again.”

Hux caught the hand that was brushing through his hair and brought it to his lips. He kissed the pad of each of Ben’s fingers and brought his palm to his mouth. He felt the soft kisses against his palm and shivered. Ben’s stomach felt tight, he wanted him again.

He looked up to see the guards and Ben knew there was no way he could get away with much more than this. Ben was tempted to go home early and forget about the air cake.

“I would like that.”

Hux laid a few last kisses on his palm before he let Ben take his hand back. Ben could hear another ship take off but he didn’t look up, instead watched his mate’s peaceful face and then let his gaze trail down to his chest. He could faintly see one of his nipples through the light shirt. Only that morning he had felt it against his tongue.

Ben forgot the bond was open until he felt the want he was feeling returned.

“Why don’t we return to your place?”

Hux’s suggestion was welcome. Even though he wanted to watch the ships a little longer, he also wanted to make the most of the time they had left.

He didn’t have to speak for Hux to feel his agreement.

Even with that Hux was slow to get out of his lap, and they got up together. Ben took his hand and looked out over the field one last time. It wasn’t quite the dream he had when he was young, but it was good enough for now, better than they expected.

“We’ll get the cake on the on the way, we can eat it after.”

Hux bumped up against him and pulled on his hand, giving him the hint of a smile.
“After?”

They both knew what would happen soon.

“Shut up.”

Ben’s laugh took to any harshness out of the words.

The guards moved with them, as they walked down the side of the hill. It wasn’t the shortest walk, but it was always worth the view to Ben. He wondered if Hux would want to do this one they returned. The flight pad near the palace wasn’t as nice as this, but maybe they could make a place, a spot for them to be together.

It would be something private that they could share.

It might be the start of making the palace his home, something he knew he had to do no matter how torn he felt. There was no changing the facts.

“I wanted to talk to you when I arrived, but I have to admit I have allowed myself to become distracted.”

Hux brought his hands up and kissed his knuckles, his expression had shifted to serious before he continued.

“When you return I want you by my side. I want you to do more than just negations. I want a partner who will rule with me, but for that to happen there needs to be changes.”

Ben frowned, feeling slightly dizzy at the thought, getting the power to help people and yet to get it he would have to accept that he was part of the First Order. It was an easier thought when he was just doing negotiations, he could still pretend that he was not a part of them. Though he felt wary of the offer he wasn’t yet prepared to turn it down. There was also hope, for the relationship that was starting between them.

Hux must have seen all he had done for the Republic, he saw more in Ben than just an omega to breed. He must have seen the hard work he put in for his people.

People would misunderstand, but doing good would be worth any amount of hate that might be heaped upon him. He felt the same about the scars on his body. It was worth the lives he had saved.

“What changes?”

“We need to work together better, I need to speak with you instead of giving orders, and you will need to come to me to work out situations with me rather than jumping in and acting.”

Hux took his hand back and placed it on his shoulder. It still ached sometimes, but Ben understood his meaning. He couldn’t risk himself like that again. Though Ben wasn’t sure he could stand back if there was another resistance attack. They still were his people a few months couldn’t change that.

“I would like to work with you to make the First Order better, when we return we could work out the details.”

It was a diplomatic way to accept, without fully accepting. It would give him time to think.
“Of course.”

The hand slipped from his shoulder and back down to interwind with his own. He wasn’t sure if it was the reminder of his wound, but he felt unease at the back of his mind. They were almost down the hill and he squeezed Hux’s hand before letting it go.

“I think you’ll enjoy this, I used to eat it when I went out with my mother, she would always give me treats and tell me not to tell my dad about them. Then he’d do the same. Neither of them were around much when I was young, so they tried to make up in other ways.”

Ben tried to lighten the unease with the story, but it wouldn’t leave.

“Sounds lonely.”

It surprised him to hear it, most people envied him to have the heroes of the rebellion as his parents. No one had seen past that other than Poe. That was only because they grew up together. Ben had only become close with his mother again when he had taken in interest in politics, the same could not be said about his father. Though they saw each other, they never had managed to rekindle the bond between them.

The cakes were still a great memory though, no matter the reason.

“It was.”

“I know something about lonely childhoods.”

Ben managed a half smile, scanning the crowds around them before getting in the line. He could imagine it would have been, he knew how most of the officers in the First Order had started in a program while they were still children. It was part of what he had fought against.

He supposed he would have to make sure that was changed now, but instead of fighting he had to work with his mate.

“Two please.”

It he handed over the money and took the small package in return, tucking it into his belt. With that they started off again, and Ben felt his discomfort mounting. He just wanted to get back to his place so he picked up his step, Hux perfectly matching his stride beside him.

Ben was glad they were close in height, he’s always wanted someone who would make him feel less like a giant. Most omegas were around Poe’s height, when he was young he had felt like a freak, but over time he had accepted it and embraced it, though it felt good to have an alpha that matched him.

He supposed it would only take time to adjust to the scars, he still felt as if people were watching him.

It was that distraction that kept him from realising what was happening at first. That part of the crowd was pushing into their ring of guards, that they were moving to make up for it, and that the other side was opening up because of it.

It wasn’t until he heard the first shot that occurred that the unease wasn’t due to their conversation, it was the force trying to speak to him.
Chapter 13

It took a few seconds for Hux’s mind to place the blaster shot, and by then the burning in his arm told him he was grazed. It ached to move, and so he reached across with his other hand to pull out the blaster that Ben had strapped onto him. If Hux was going to die he would go down fighting.

Ben seemed to have the same idea, but it was like nothing he had seen. He’d unclipped the two lightsabers from his hips and was moving at a speed that it was hard to track with his eyes. Ben blocked a blaster shot, and sent it down at the ground. Something Hux would never had believed was possible. He couldn’t fully comprehend what he was seeing, but guards were already closing in around the two of them. Through Ben’s instructions moving them back the way they came.

The market was clearing, and it was easier to see where the attack was coming from, mostly all on one side. He couldn’t get a clear shot, and for once he cursed being emperor, he wanted to make them pay for attacking him with Ben so close.

Not that Ben seemed to need the protection, refusing to stay within the circle of guards as they led them up alongside the hill. He knew they would be going to the launch pad. Though there were no First Order ships for them to take, Hux doubted that Ben would give orders without a plan.

It costs the life of one of his guards but they managed to get to the pad. Movement was slow, the blaster fire heavy and keeping them pinned down behind one of the hangers.

“We just need to get over to that other one over there.”

It wasn’t terribly far, but it was doubtful everyone would make it. Plus, once the word got out that he was here there could be reinforcements, they needed to get to a safe place if just to figure out a way off the planet.

The guards kept laying down fire to keep the attackers back and Ben turned to him for the first time since it started.

“You’re bleeding.”

“It’s a graze.”

Ben frowned, concern creasing his features. Hux would see the scar pulling.

“It looks worse than a graze, can you use it?”

Hux knew he could, it was just excruciating to use the muscles in his arm and hand, but he doubted there would be permanent damage. His muscles seemed to all be working. The wound itself was mostly cauterised by the blast.

“It hurts, but it’s possible. At least I’m not going to bleed to death.”

The last was a joke, but it fell flat.

“We’re going to try for a push to the hanger, I need you to stay behind me.”

“I’m not going to hide behind you like a scared child.”

“I’m not going to let you die because you were too pompous to do what was best for you. Stay behind me, and the guards.”
Hux wanted to argue, tell him there was no way, but he wasn’t sure that they would make the last run if Ben wasn’t doing whatever it was that sent the blaster fire back where it came from. All his years of training didn’t matter when they were outnumbered and pinned down. No one had warned him or told him about whatever ability it was that Ben had, Hux didn’t know how to command it. He would refer to Ben.

When they were safe they would have to talk.

With Hux’s tight nod, Ben grabbed the front of his shirt and gave him a rough kiss before turning and starting to yell orders again.

“Behind me.”

It was the last thing he said before they started moving again.

The guards moved as a perfect unit, laying down cover fire as they rushed the short distance. One of them fell but another managed to pull them behind the building as well. Their leg was going to be a loss, but if they could get to safety their life would be saveable.

Hux tried not to think to hard about which one it was, and who he had already lost. It was the point of the uniforms, and yet he knew each one. As always though he pushed back any feeling he may have and ripped one of the sleeves from the outfit he was wearing. He could beg Ben’s forgiveness for ruining it later. For now, he started to use it to create a makeshift tourniquet.

He met their the place where their eyes would be as he wrenched it tight and he politely ignored their grunt of pain, just as they ignored the wince as the burn on his arm pulled painfully.

“Make sure they don’t come near.”

With that Ben took his blades and dug them into the wall of the building. The hot plasma melting through the metal.

It was slow but before long there was a big enough hole cut that they could fit through it.

Ben stayed at the hole, helping the injured guard through before pulling Hux through as well. Hux tried to take in the dark hanger. It was empty except one for one black x-wing on the far side.

“Hold it in place, I’m going to try and melt the metal back into place.”

Ben was still ordering his guards about, though three surrounded him while he looked around for anything that could be used to send out communications. Hux supposed if he could figure out how to get the x-wing on that it would do.

He started across the building and noticed they weren’t alone, a guard already had their weapon up. The figure slipped out of the x-wing and he felt relieved that he recognised the person.

“What the hell is going on?”

Poe shouted across the space between them. Now that he knew who it was Hux holstered his blaster and gave himself a moments rest. His wounded arm was aching from being joisted and he wanted to get a bacta bandage on it as soon as possible.

“There was an attack, we need to get a message out.”

As Poe came closer Ben started to his side as well.
“A message will take too long. Poe, help me get the x-wings out.”

“We can’t just steal ships!”

“Just borrow for a little while.”

Ben sounded like he was starting to fray, and Hux reached out to rest a hand against his shoulder. Almost instantly the tension started to ease. He understood what Ben was feeling because he was the same, their bond keeping them more clearheaded now that they were working towards the same goal.

“Ben.”

Poe’s voice held a warning but he followed Ben. It wasn’t long before the two of them started uncovering panels in the flooring. Then slowly the floor started to move away part by part, letting a half dozen x-wings arise. Most of them were tandem other than, one deep red ship.

These were the rebel x-wings he had seen before, including the deep red one.

The worst of the bunch.

Much to his chagrin his earlier guess had been correct and his Ben was already climbing inside. Once it was open Ben reached down a hand so that he wouldn’t have to use his injured arm and then helped him settle into the cramped space behind the seat. It was only made for one person and he didn’t have a real seat.

“I’ll just run through a crash course and then we can go, Poe will come with us in case they have any ships waiting. There should be a first aid pack back there, maybe something for your arm.”

With that he left Hux feeling rather useless, just as he had been feeling since the attack. Ben knew the area, and was also unwounded, so he knew it was the right choice to hand over the reins to him. If there was one thing that being Emperor had taught him, was when it was the right time to delegate.

It was also interesting to watch Ben like this, the hints he had seen when Ben was flying, and now seeing him in command of his guard. It made him wonder at who Ben was before they met, the rebel, the senator. It was parts of him that Hux had never had never seen more than glimpses of. In the future Hux would look forward to seeing more of it while they worked together.

Hux used the time to find the first aid kit, there wasn’t much, but there was a small pack of bacta gel that he carefully applied to the cauterised skin of his arm. It was blinding painful and then it was the most soothing thing he had felt in ages.

It didn’t take long for Ben to get everyone into ships, his guards fitting into the last few, with the injured one tucked in a gunner’s seat.

Finally, with everyone else taken care of Ben returned and was climbing back onto the ship.

“We’re going to have to take off as soon as the door is open, so that we don’t take a lot of hits. Brace yourself.”

Hux knew it was a warning about his arm and the fact he wasn’t belted in.

“You can do this,” Hux said calmly, reaching out again like he did before, putting his hand on Ben’s arm and giving it a slight squeeze.
He had no doubt in Ben, he’d seen him fly enough to know that Ben would do what was needed, but Hux also knew why he was tucked into storage space instead of in his own ship. His mate wanted him close to be reassured that he was okay. Hux could feel the worry each time Ben looked at him.

Hux understood the feeling, he had felt the same way after Ben’s crash, but he hadn’t had their bond for reassurance.

With that the hanger doors started to open and Hux held on tight. There was the first jolt as the ship lifted, and then a few smaller ones as blaster fire started up, and then the door was open enough. The next jolt was as their ship hit the people unwilling or unable to get out of the way in time, and then they were free.

Though his chest continued to feel tight until they were in orbit, and he told Ben the codes he would need to send out. The response was prompt, and they left for the given coordinates to be picked up.

It wasn’t too long of a ride, a star destroyer hanging back in case the Emperor needed it.

Though Hux was tired and his arm was getting sorer by the minute, he started for his office as soon as they landed.

“Where are you going?”

“I need to speak with to the republic leaders, I needed to get the body back of my guard so that I can properly honor them for their service and their life. I also need to work out the return of the ones that are at your apartment, and also the return of the ships. Though in all honestly, they are rebel ships, I should just keep them.”

“I’ll do it, they’ll be in a better mood if they speak with me, and you need to get that arm looked at.”

He tried to show Ben how much he appreciated him through the bond and the warm smile he got in return told him Ben understood.

“See if you can get a bed large enough for both of us, I’ll join you when I finish up.”

“I doubt I’ll be there long, just meet me in my quarters.”

By now Ben knew his personal Star Destroyer well enough, and all Hux wanted was to enjoy skin contact and get some rest.

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It took a while do get the burnt skin cleaned off and grafting patch carefully applied to keep the scarring minimal. It was similar to what they used on Ben’s face, which was why the scars were thinner and fainter than they would have been otherwise.

By the time it was finished Hux checked in on the wounded guard and was pleased to see that they were going to make it. With that he dragged his tired body back to his room and indulged in a real bath, and then a quick sonic before falling into bed. He looked through the reports that had been sent for the day while he waited.

Hux felt Ben long before his return, a storm of anger and distress that made his stomach turn. Hux didn’t want to lose the bond now that it was open.
Even then he heard Ben before he saw him, kicking their door as it was opening and stomping in like he was ready for a fight.

Pain had made him tired and Hux waited for Ben to bring the fight to him, he didn’t have the energy to engage.

The waiting drew out in the most unexpected way as Ben undressed and went to the refresher. The anger stilled down to a low throb by the time the refresher door opened again.

Ben was still nude, and Hux was sure he had never seen anything so beautiful. The scars had faded slightly, but they weren’t what he noticed, it was the soft lips that he loved kissing and the big eyes that seemed to hold every expression in the world.

“How are you feeling?”

“Sore, but better, and you?”

He held up his bandaged arm to show Ben, a wrap put on it to make sure the grafting patch wasn’t disturbed.

“I’m tired of bureaucrats.”

“Come to bed.”

Ben crossed the room and slipped in beside him. After a minute he pulled Hux into his arms and pressed a kiss to the top of Hux’s head.

Hux turned in Ben’s arms and took in a deep breath, it must have been their bond finally being allowed to open, because Ben smelt better than he ever had before. Just being together made it all so much better.

When Ben didn’t speak Hux found himself needing to know what was bothering him, he needed to sooth the anger if he could. At least now that he knew it wasn’t directed at him.

“What happened?”

“They think that me and Poe are traitors. Firing at Republic citizens, they will return your last guards and accept the return of some of the x-wings, but we’re not to set foot in the system again.”

Ben paused for a few seconds before speaking again.

“Well it’s not really what they think, but a reporter got in there first, it’s a PR nightmare and that is the only way they think they can justify returning the guards. I talked it through with Poe and we can’t let five people die because we want to be able to enter republic space.”

Ben paused again and buried his face in Hux’s neck.

“We’ll have to find a place for Poe.”

“Of course, besides we can pass off something nice as a reward for saving the emperor and his consort.”

“Poe did intend to stay with Finn.”

“Who?”
“Eightseven, before his officer training he was FN 2187, Poe found out and thought FN sounded like Finn and it’s been a new nickname.”

“I’ll make sure they are well taken care of.”

It was the least he could do, and anyway it would be good to keep Ben’s friend close. Hux couldn’t be everyone to him and he wanted his mate to be as comfortable as he could possibly make him at the palace.

“I’m just so tired Hux, I just want to go home.”

Hux tried not to feel disappointed, but he had known what the republic meant to Ben. Not only that but it was because he couldn’t wait to see his mate that this had happened. Of course, Ben would want to return.

“I’m sorry this happened, Ben.”

“It’s fine, you didn’t know, and besides it’s not that far now. I just want to curl up in our bed for a few days.”

It was then that he realised that Ben had called the palace home. He didn’t have the time to close their bond and he knew Ben would feel his spike of happiness.

They were quiet for a while, just taking in the comfort that their bond had to offer.

Hux thought of how the last time when Ben had been wounded it had been so different. There was none of the closeness that they had been building, but there had been one moment. When Ben was on medication that he had let Hux close.

The memory was enough that he let out a huff of laughter.

“What?”

“Just thinking about how different it was the last time one of us wound up in the medbay. You said some interesting things.”

He could feel the stewing anger starting to ease, and he turned a little more in Ben’s arms so that he could look at him.

“I don’t really remember, what did I say?”

“You asked me about pups.”

Ben wasn’t really one to blush, but now there was a tint on his cheeks.

“I did? I’m sorry that must have been uncomfortable at the time.”

He sounded disbelieving, but their bond told another story, embarrassment with a particular tint.

“You did, and don’t be sorry, I’ve been thinking that it wouldn’t be so bad someday.”

“Not too bad.”

Ben admitted, but the tentative warmth in their bond told him something his words didn’t. Someday their family would be more than just the two of them.
Hux kept the talk of what had happened and Ben's ability on the shelf for later. Ben needed rest and Hux would give it to him.

Just when he thought they had found peace for the night he heard Ben grunt.

“I left the aircake in my x-wing.”

It surprised a laugh out of Hux.

“I’ll send a lieutenant to get it for us.”
Chapter 14

Ben knew when he killed those men that the guards and Hux were as much his people as the republic. He supposed it changed nothing, that he would have to look out for the first order people just as he had the republic. It was an odd discovery and rather disconcerting. It was the only reason he could think that he was so tired lately, depression over realising that all those scandal rags weren’t wrong. Ben was as much First Order as his mate.

It had been a week since they returned and he didn’t feel like going out. Once they had a building set up for Poe on the grounds Ben had moved to his bedroom and almost shut himself in. In his irritability he scented the bed and ordered more of the wonderfully soft blankets so that he could pile them up and sit in any position he wanted. Only then did it feel like a proper home.

While he still went and ran through his training, he normally returned as soon as he finished. There had been holo’s taken of him, the first since his scars, with rumors going on about the republic doing something awful to him.

This morning Hux and him has discussed it and agreed to ignore it, other than making a small press release that the scars were caused during a flight accident. The war was over, they needed to start mending the wounds that it left. He didn’t need his face to be a reminder of the war.

Kylo had typed it up and sent it off and then Hux had left.

Today he knew Hux was dealing with supply shortage on one of the outer systems due to pirates. He didn’t need to be there so he let himself stay in the bedroom another day. Tomorrow he promised he would he there beside him, see if his offer was true. If they really would start working together.

It was probably childish to hide away but he had just lost the planet he grew up on and all the people with it and he was so tired. Ben figured a week of mourning was allowed. The only reason he even put on anything was that Poe had come over for lunch to share in his wallowing. Ben wasn’t the only one to lose his last tether to the republic, but a greedy part of him was glad that he at least had someone to share it with.

It was only when Poe left for the day to return his new home to prepare it for when Finn returned, that Ben fully got out of bed and moved to sit by the window. There was still food set out from when he had ordered earlier, he had only picked at it.

Ben knew he had to get over the low of what happened, and wasn’t one to wallow for long so he forced himself to take a few bites even with his lacking appetite.

At least the view out the window was lovely, he could see why the place was build where it was, easy to defend but also out far enough that there was real greenery when he looked out the window.

Flowers had been planted since the last time he was here and they were in bloom. A sea of red.

Although it was probably because of the first order colours, it made him smile to think of his mate’s hair. There wasn’t a lot of human’s coloured like him.

“You’re up.”

Ben turned to see Hux still in his uniform.
“Has it gotten that bad, that you’re now surprised?”

Hux’s features softened and he crossed the room, he leaned over Ben and kissed his forehead. As soon as it was finished Ben moved over to allow Hux to sit with him. They were still figuring out how they fit together, the days away had done a lot, but for once Ben felt like he was really getting to know his mate.

“It’s understandable. You need time.”

Hux’s hand covered his own and there was a light squeeze.

“Now open my coat, I have a surprise for you.”

It was an odd request but Ben’s curiosity got the best of him and he started undoing it. At the belt he had to pause.

“You don’t have to trick me into undressing you, you can just ask.”

He teased, but the rest of his comments died in his mouth as the furry little orange head popped out to greet him.

“I hope you like her.”

Ben watched her look around and them carefully helped her out, allowing Hux to finish taking off his coat himself. She was small, and so soft. Her voice was as tiny as she was, as she made noises at him.

“She’s like a lothcat, but different. What is she?”

“She seems to be similar, her diet mostly is small rodents and fish, but she is of a rather rare type. She would cost more than most people make in a lifetime. One of the systems sent her as a bonding gift for the two of us. Normally I wouldn’t keep an animal, but she’s rather charming, and I remembered our conversation about pups. I thought maybe we could raise her together first.”

He could feel how unsure of himself Hux was, as if he was prepared to take her away at any sign that Ben didn’t love her, or that he didn’t appreciate the thought.

Neither of them had talked about children again since the first day they got back. It still felt strange to Ben that someone with want them with him, someone who had been fighting since he was a child and spending more time in x-wings than on the ground. Yet here he had a mate, one that was trying to take the steps to get closer to him, that wanted him despite the fact that he would never be a proper omega. He never thought anyone would want him like this. Ben had to clear his throat from forgotten emotion before he spoke.

“I’d like that. Does she have a name?”

It might take a while before they decided to take that step, but at least Hux was making his intentions clear. When he had first bonded to Hux he thought he would be forced into it, a part of his devils bargain. He never thought he would become this close to Hux, that he would want this too with a tentative hope.

“I thought Millicent would do, it means work, because after all raising her will be our shared task.”

It was thoughtful and stiff, just like his mate and Ben bit the inside of his lip to keep from laughing. He wasn’t going to ruin the moment just because his mate was awkward when he tried
any type of courting. At least he was making efforts and that is what Ben appreciated.

“She’s perfect.”

Pleasure rang over their bond and Hux slipped out of his coat and moved close, pressing into Ben’s side and pretending that he was just looking at the kitten. The pretense might have worked if Hux hadn’t pressed a kiss to his jaw.

“They said she’s three months old and have sent along a pad with her care instructions. I’ve already read it on the way home.”

He pulled a small pad out of his pocket and laid it on the table. Ben didn’t pick it up, he was too charmed by the kitten. She seemed perfectly happy to rest in his hands and he wasn’t going to let her down.

“Her things will be here soon, I asked for them to be delivered a little later so I could surprise you.”

It was sweet, and with his hands busy he nuzzled Hux’s neck, giving his bond mark a soft kiss. A shiver ran through Hux, and Ben followed it with a second one. It was partly an invitation, and when an arm slipped around him he knew that was Hux was accepting.

He lifted his head from Hux’s neck so that he could lay a soft kiss against his lips. Even though things had slowed down a little since their return it was only due to how busy Hux had been. Ben couldn’t bring himself to close the bond and there was no denying how he was feeling when Hux was feeling it too.

Things had changed since their visit to the republic, and Ben didn’t want them to go back.

Hux responded with small pecks over his lips, and then taking Ben’s lower lip between his. When Hux sucked on it Ben couldn’t help a low moan in his throat.

The small meow made him break their kiss with a shaky laugh.

“I’ll have to set her down.”

“Her things will be here soon.”

Hux brushed Ben’s hair back, putting it behind his ear. It was nonchalant, but Ben could feel the emotions that Hux was feeling as he looked at him. Sometimes the intensity was a little much, Ben knew he liked Hux but the love that his alpha felt was almost enough to drown in.

“Stop it.”

Ben kept his voice soft, not wanting to come off as harsh. He was unwilling to shut down his bond and yet he needed Hux’s thoughts to tame. He looked down at nodding kitten in his hands.

“Hmm?”

“Don’t look at me like that.”

“I can think of other things to do.”

Hux leaned in again, a hand resting against his thigh as he stole a few more kisses, at least with arousal Ben knew what to do with it.

They were disturbed by the knock at the door and Ben could see the annoyance in Hux’s face. He
shifted in his seat, and Ben watched as he shifted his erection so that it wouldn’t be visible.

“I’ll take care of it.”

Much to his surprise Hux did, he brought the crate to the door and carefully unpacked the needed items for their new pet. It seemed like bowls and bedding and toys, after a few months they could move her out of their bedroom, but she seemed so small. Ben wanted her close while she was young.

Hux set out food and water and then came to him again.

“I think she’s fallen asleep.”

“Good then tuck her into bed so we can get to our own.”

Ben almost didn’t want to set her down, but he wanted his mate more. He knelt by the small bed and set her into it, so slowly so she hardly stirred. Ben had never had the chance for a pet before, other than feeding the progs when he was training under his uncle he never really had the chance for a normal childhood.

He was brought back to the moment, by hearing the closet door and seeing Hux half undressed and working on the top of his trousers. Giving Millie one last little pat he stood and moved to the bed, starting to work on his own layers. Not that what he was in was like a uniform, it only took untying the side and then the drawstring on his pants to leave him nude.

Ben gave Hux a look over his shoulder as he walked to the bed. He could feel the heat through their bond at the sight of him, scars and all.

It was beautiful to be wanted like that, and he had to admit as Hux worked on the buttons on his trousers he felt the same. Even though Hux was thinner than Ben he had a lean wiry frame that Ben appreciated. He was his alpha, but it wasn’t just that, Ben knew he could beat his mate in a fight, but there was a power to Hux, that was beyond his physical body. It was probably what pushed him to become the Emperor, and it was part of what attracted Ben.

“Come to bed.”

That was all it took for Hux to rush to finish undressing and rush to him. Hux’s skin was warm against his own and Ben pulled him close. This was the part of the day that he liked best, just him and his mate and none of the outside world to infringe on their time. He slipped his arms around Hux and pulled him close.

“Darling, you couldn’t keep me away.”

This time they took it slow, enjoying the feeling of their lips on each other. He could feel that Hux was already hard, and he pushed his hips into it. One of his hands slipped down, and he wrapped his hand around him. Slowly he started to stroke him as they kissed, enjoying the feel of his mate wanting him. It wasn’t as if it didn’t have an effect on him.

Ben was hard and he knew that Hux would be able to smell his slick.

Hux had kept his hands to Ben’s waist but now that Ben was touching him one started to slide down until it could slip between his cheeks. Ben made a welcoming noise into the kiss and that seemed to give Hux the confidence to run his finger over his hole. His slick made it easy for the tip of Hux’s finger to press inside him. He started to work it in him, encouraging his slick.
The sleepiness of the day was starting to wear off and he broke the kiss just long enough to speak.

“Our, I want to ride you.”

Hux’s finger slipped out of him and Hux moved to arrange himself on the bed, sitting up against the pillows and waiting. The eagerness was obvious in his body as Ben crawled across the bed to him and it swept Ben up in its intensity.

He moved into his lap and looked into Hux’s eyes. The same warmth and overwhelming feelings from before washed over him, but it didn’t feel too intense here. Here it felt right to be worshipped.

Hux pressed his fingers back inside him, two this time, and Ben moved down on them and fucking himself. Ben wanted more, but he also knew how much Hux liked the scent of his slick and this would only encourage it.

His scent had changed lately, Ben felt like it was the fact that they were getting closer, after all Hux smelt better to him now. In the mornings they would have lengthy scentings, and neither of them could get enough of it.

When Hux’s fingers were wet Ben finally gave into impatience and moved off, reaching behind himself to wrap his fingers around Hux’s cock. He let himself relax into it, as the tip pressed into his body.

Hux brought his fingers to his lips, licking off the slick as Ben sunk onto him.

“You taste better each day.”

Ben moaned in response, thinking about how Hux felt better. He swore the more they did this the more it felt like Hux was made for him.

Hux echoed his own moan as he settled on top of him. It was a wonderful feeling his mate stretching him open. With their bond open, it felt like they had reached perfection. Like they were one person instead of two, both seeking the same need.

He stabilised himself on Hux’s chest as Ben started to ride him. It also helped hold Hux in place, so that he was nothing but something for Ben to enjoy.

Sometimes Ben felt greedy, something that had been discouraged both in jedi training and during his service to his people, but here with Hux he could indulge in it. Ben could move to please himself, to make sure the swell at the base of Hux’s cock rubbed in all the right places.

Not that he was the only one enjoying it, Ben could feel pleasure blooming out from Hux with each movement. Hux’s hips moved with him, he might he the emperor, but here he served Ben. Their bond was humming as they used it to feel how to please each other.

He was so caught up in the feeling he didn’t notice at first, Hux’s licked clean hands over his own. Ben looked down at Hux, looking in his eyes and speeding up to further their need.

Sometimes he could feel the force stronger other than others, and since his visit to the republic it had been around him. As much as he could he used it to open their bond until it was more than just feelings, it was touch and pictures echoing through it. It was too intense to keep for long but as they found their end it was shared. Ben loved the feeling of his body milking his knot through their orgasm and the feeling of Hux’s release both inside his body and echo it coming from Hux.

It was almost blinding and he let himself get lost in it. Hux’s gasp made him came back to the
world. As the sound of heavy objects hitting the ground surrounded them, Ben realised that he had done more than he had meant to.

“What is doing that?”

Hux jerked in panic and they both made a hiss of pain as his knot pulled.

“I think it’s me.”

“You? Is this like the what you did when you were using the light saber?”

Ben nodded and could still feel the unease in Hux.

“It’s like that, normally it’s weaker. I’ve had bouts of power, but I was never good with control. I gave up once I could handle it.”

“What will happen again?”

“I don’t think so, I think it was just because of what I did with the bond.”

The nerves eased and Hux managed a smile. His hands tightened over Ben’s and even though he could feel discomfort through their bond he knew Hux was trying to reassure him.

“That felt amazing, if a little floating furniture is all that happens I don’t think too much harm was done.”

“I won’t do it again.”

“I didn’t say never, just when you feel you can control it.”

“I’m not always sure when I can.”

Hux brought Ben’s hand to his mouth and kissed his knuckles.

“I want to know more about it, when we’re in a better position.”

“Speaking of a better position.”

Hux understood his meaning and the two of them slowly moved together so that they could get into a more comfortable position. They ended up on their sides with Hux behind Ben.

Ben tensed around him a few more times purposefully milking him again so that he wouldn’t lose his knot right away. Hux moaned at the feeling but didn’t argue. Back when they were on republic soil Ben has done this so that Hux was knotted to him as long as possible, only once they returned he had stopped, just in case someone needed the Emperor. Now he was too greedy for the feeling to care. As always Hux couldn’t stop touching him, and rested his hand on Ben’s hip.

The silence was comfortable, but with a lull in his exhaustion Ben found himself talkative.

“I’d like to join you tomorrow.”

“I would like that.”

“I’ve been thinking about a few things, I would like to make changes to the storm trooper program. I was working up a bit of an outline. I’ve been talking to Poe and hearing more about what it was like for Finn and I had some ideas on changes that could be made.”
“My father started that program.”

Hux sounded defensive, but he wasn’t shutting it down.

“Then it’s probably time for an update.”

Hux didn’t respond through Ben could feel that he was mildly fuming, at least he wasn’t arguing. Ben wiggled on his knot and Hux growled playfully.

“That’s not fair.”

“We’ll work on this together, we can start with a test squadron and if it works we can start implementing it on a widespread scale.”

“A test squadron would be agreeable. Though I would like to go over the changes with you.”

Ben had expected as much, if they planned to work together they needed to know what they were doing. The way that Hux was responding was calming, it told Ben that his talk of them ruling together wasn’t a lie. Ben would feel it with their bond open.

Ben put his hand on Hux’s, moving it so that Hux’s arm was wrapped around him.

“I wanted to talk about another thing.”

Hux laughed behind him and this time it was his turn, shifting his hips so that his knot rubbed inside Ben.

“Is this your plan, trap me in place and make me listen to all the changes you want for our empire? I can promise you that if you bring it up tomorrow I will be more than happy to listen.”

Ben was fond of the easy teasing between them, a true sign that they were no longer on eggshells.

“I’ve just had too much time off I think, I need to work again.”

“Alright, then tell me while you have me here.”

There was a soft kiss pressed against his bond mark and Ben felt warm inside as he tried to place his words together.

“I was thinking about the pirate issues, and the fact that Poe doesn’t have anything for him here. I spoke to him today and he agreed. I may have a solution, I know there isn’t enough tie pilots to go around right now, but I was thinking he could start his own school, with civilians instead of First Order troops. They could start a guard for the ships with rations and medical equipment. Of course they would need ships, but it would be a long term solution, even if it would take a while to pay off.”

Hux was quiet for a while, but Ben knew he was thinking it over. This was a lot to ask, but in the end it could make up for their losses, and it would show the further systems that people were looking out for their well being. They needed stabilization.

“We will look into funding, though it will have to be built up over time. It will be good to have a project for you to start with, get my advisors used to seeing you and me working together.”

“I agree, too much too soon could harm the stability we have.”

Ben had a million ideas, the next would be a civilian council to make sure that the First Order
officers were preforming as ordered. That would also be a long-term solution to the pirates, he was sure corruption was part of why they existed. Ben knew his mate, he would need to ease him into the idea.

That one would wait, for now it was enough that they were talking and working towards a better future together.
Chapter 15

It had been almost two months since they returned, though it went quickly, they were busy setting new laws into place, and dealing with existing issues. There was so much to do, and the there was never enough time in the day. Though It was easier now that he shared it with Ben. Some duties he set for Ben to deal with permanently.

With their bond now open there was a trust there that wasn’t before. There was no lying.

Today would be the first real break from work, it was a celebration, one full year since the republic was pushed back enough that the First Order had control over the galaxy. The event that would lead Ben to him almost eight months later.

He still wondered at how lucky he was. Ben was perfect, even with his short temper and scars and stubbornness, he was perfect to Hux. More than he had ever hoped for or wanted.

They were only just starting their lives together, and yet it also felt like Hux was just beginning his as well. He’d never allowed himself to take the time to find joy in anything other than his work, and Ben was slowly showing him just how much he missed.

Ben been the one that had talked him into joining the celebration, though Ben found it a little distasteful. It would be a way to show the Galaxy that they were all in this together. That they had had one full year of First Order control and things were beginning to come together.

Part of that was the two of them being seen together, the Republic and the First Order working together to make a better future. Hux knew it wouldn’t make a huge impact, the hard work was what mattered, but Ben felt it was good for morale and he agreed.

Ben looked amazing, his tunic was soft doe brown with gold trim. Hux loved how he looked but it reminded Hux of what he wore the day his ship crashed, it looked so similar to that outfit.

That one had been a gift; this Ben had picked on his own.

The memory still made him want to keep Ben closer, as if he could protect him from the past, even though the fading nightmares were proof that he couldn’t.

He held Ben’s hand tight as they walked out onto the large balcony. Most of the party would be broadcast over the holonet and then before dinner he would give a speech. Ben and him had worked on it together, and he had practiced it until it was ingrained in his memory.

The only people who were invited were vetted and all people who might be symbols of the First Order in peacetime, all except for Phasma and her mate, but Hux wasn’t going to leave her behind now.

Everyone was silent as they were announced and then there was a cheer. The two of them waited for it to die down before Ben said a few words of thanks and the party started for real.

It would not be crazy or anything that would cause any type of scandal, but it was a chance for the people to see that him and his mate were human and to both endear them to the billions watching, but to also show how opposing sides now were working together.

As had been happening more often lately he felt his heckles rise any time someone got to close to Ben.
Some days he could hardly stand being apart. It was odd, in the start he never had a problem, but maybe it was the attack, since they returned he felt oddly protective. Hux was smart enough to ignore it, but he only felt like he could relax when Ben was tucked into bed for the night and there was no one there but them.

He looked for an excuse to pull them out of the middle of the crowd and found it in Unamo and her pup.

“Let’s go say hi, not too many little ones here today.”

Ben’s lips thinned and then he nodded, he would have known her from battle, but he made good on showing that he was a part of the First Order now. When they arrived Hux forgot himself for a moment and held out his arms for the Arie. The little boy threw himself into his arms and Hux spun him around. Before he mated Ben, he spent many of his free hours visiting Unamo, one of the few who had found a family in all the chaos.

“She let me bring my tie-fighter uncle Armie.”

He could feel Ben’s surprise at his first name being used, it wasn’t something Hux often allowed, and even Ben had fallen into only using his last.

Arie held out the ship and Hux took it, flying it around his head and making noises. It was when he remembered the cameras that he pulled himself together and handed it back to the laughing child. They would have to make time to play when the galaxy wasn’t watching.

“That’s very nice of her, it’s a really pretty tie-fighter, just like the one Ben uses.”

“Sorry Hux.”

She said softly, and Hux just gave her a grin. He would probably be a lot tamer with a toy than without, and at least it was mostly hidden in his little hands.

Arie looked up at Ben with the amount of distrust in his face only a child could manage.

“Mine is better.”

Arie claimed, and moved so Hux was blocking him from Ben.

Ben laughed, and it was a musical sound to Hux.

He wondered if this would ever be their life, with a pup and laughter. Hux couldn’t think of anything that would fit the palace better. He wanted more joy in their lives, something that wasn’t just for the good of the galaxy, and he wanted more of Ben.

For a moment it felt as if Ben was thinking the same thing because he could feel the warmth through their bond. He turned and smiled at him, and for once the warmth was echoed in Ben’s face.

They didn’t move on right away although they should, instead they stayed and played with the child, enjoying a moment of freedom before they had to return to their regular structured rounds. Each person they paused for a moment to greet them and when they finished they finally had a moment of freedom.

Ben held out his hand and Hux was happy to move into to arms. The music was soft but it was enough to dance to. At first it was just them, and it felt as if they were the only people in the whole
room.

Only once people saw what the emperor was doing did they all start to join in.

It didn’t matter though, all Hux was looking at was Ben. In the light Ben’s brown eyes look bright and soft, and Hux wished they were alone. It felt so good to have Ben in his arms. He knew that it wasn’t good manners but Hux still leaned forward and pressed a chaste kiss to Ben’s lips.

When he pulled back Ben peeked over at one of the camera’s and smirked.

“Naughty.”

“What’s the point of being Emperor if I can’t break the rules.”

There was lull in their conversation and as the song ended, he stayed, wanting one last dance before he gave his speech.

“I didn’t know you were such a good dancer.”

Hux laughed, he supposed it wouldn’t be something collected by Rebel intelligence.

“I’m sure there is a lot of things that you don’t know.”

“Like that you were good with pups?”

There was a real warmth in his voice that echoed what he had felt through their bond earlier.

“I spent a lot of time with the new recruits when I was younger. I knew what it was to be afraid and not have anyone to lean on.”

Hux felt comfort through their bond and this time Ben was the one to steal a peck.

“You have me now.”

For the rest of the night Ben’s words kept him warm until they were tucked into bed.

The night had been a success, and for a little while he had forgotten about being an Emperor. It was like Ben always had that effect on him. Hux would feel like a young foolish pup, and he didn’t even care.

“Hux.”

Ben sounded sleepy, like he was forcing himself to stay awake. Hux understood the feeling, once they were in bed and knotted together he often started to drift off himself.

“Yes, darling?”

“I love you.”
By the time they returned to their rooms they were both tired, though it concerned Hux more than it normally. His mate was so full of energy when they first bonded, he hadn’t expected Ben to be dragging his feet. It had been happening for months now, and he was sure something was wrong.

“You should go see a med tech.”

Ben had been stubbornly refusing for weeks, despite the worry it caused his mate. Hux could see his annoyance, Ben was fed up and had heard it too many times. Not that Hux cared, he would keep prodding him until Ben listened.

He needed to know his mate would be alright, and he needed Ben to take care of himself. Though Hux had been making sure he ate, ordering food for them whenever he started to feel hungry himself. It wasn’t like Ben was losing weight, but Hux’s alpha instincts had been in overdrive lately and he constantly felt the need to check on his mate.

He tried to do what he could, but knowing that the scans were clean would help.

“Actually I’m feeling much better the last few days, it’s just that I’ve been trying to get my training back on course. My pants hardly fit anymore, so it was time.”

“Well they are skin tight, they hardly fit in the first place.”

Ben laughed, he often called Hux ‘his imperial prude’.

“I haven’t been able to fit into any of the skin-tight ones in a month, if you haven’t noticed. It must be the rich foods here, I’d gotten rather used to rations we were stuck with the last two years.”

In all honesty Hux hadn’t noticed about the change in clothing, Ben always wore things that were beyond Hux, but Hux had noticed when the weight when they were in bed. There was a small rounding of his belly that was small enough that was only noticeable because he enjoyed resting his hand on Ben’s abs. Hux was rather fond of feeling it under his hand when they were knotted together at night.

There was always something that troubled him about the thought that Ben has been suffering the last few years because of him. Living off rations and not much else. It was always made the battle felt truly personal, that he had hurt his mate through his actions.

It had needed to be done, to stranggle out the supplies so that people deserted and the resistance weakened, but that didn’t make it easier. No matter how close they grew it would always be difficult, but he was thankful that he had the chance to move past it, that Ben hadn’t held it against him forever.

Now that it was over no one had to go hungry, and he would try his hardest to make sure it stayed that way.

“It’s probably a good thing, and maybe it’s time for a new wardrobe, you’ve hardly had any thing made for you since you’ve come.”

“I’ve been too busy taking them off.”

Ben teased, his eyes sparkling with laughter. Ben always thought he was so funny, Ben was lucky
that Hux agreed. They shared an amused look before Hux spoke again.

“I mean it Ben, I want you to see a med tech. Just a short checkup, I just want to make sure you’re doing alright, I worry about you.”

Ben went quiet until they entered their bedroom. He scooped Millie off their bed and sat by the window with her in his lap. She’d gotten a lot larger in the months that they had had her, the spoiled little thing, and she looked like she hardly fit.

That was his own fault he would admit. Hux had been taken with her since the second he saw her. Even if Ben hadn’t wanted her he would have kept her as his own.

Ben was quiet a little longer, but Hux didn’t push Ben to talk, he knew that sometimes he needed a moment to sort out his thoughts.

“I actually have been wanting to see a med tech. Do you remember our public appearance last month?”

It was a fond memory for Hux, one he thought about often. It wasn’t like all their other duties, which came with the weight of choices. It was just a remembrance and a celebration. When he played with Arie it had been recorded and with the kisses they snuck the First Order journals were still cooing over the appearance. Sometimes Hux would rewatch the holo’s himself, watch the stolen kisses and the warmth on his mate’s face.

They had been so busy lately it was one of the few times they had been able to take a breath and just enjoy each other. Hux wasn’t sure he was ever going to stop savouring the moment.

When they were laying in bed that night and Ben had told Hux he loved him for the first time it felt like it was the most perfect moment in his life. Hux truly felt like an Emperor when Ben had told him he returned his feelings.

Ben had said it a few more times since, and each time felt like a gift.

“Oh, of course.”

Millie bumped her head against Ben’s chin, trying to get a little more attention. He rewarded her with a scratch under her soft chin.

“I was watching you with the pup, and you were wonderful with him, Hux. I wanted to give you that, and I also wanted that for myself.”

Hux’s mouth gaped as he tried to find the words, the pure excitement and the concern that this was really what Ben wanted. Instead nothing came out but a few blurted words.

“You sure?”

Hux crossed the room to stand next to him, wrapping an arm around Ben in a half hug, unable to get more with Millie in the way. He pressed a few kisses to the top of his hair, not caring that curls got in his mouth. His mind was too full of the idea that they would have their own family someday. Something beyond the two of them.

“Yes, I’ve been thinking about getting my implant removed a lot lately. I know it’s something you want, and you’ve just been waiting for me to be ready. I just wanted to be sure before I told you.”

Hux laughed and tugged Ben closer, he was tempted to shoo Millie away just so that he could
probably hold Ben, but it was solved as she began to struggle. Ben let her go and with as much
dignity as she could muster she hopped from his lap. Finally they were able to fully hold each
other.

“That is wonderful, when it’s time we can bring the pup with us, and have a nanny for the times
when it’s not possible.”

He could feel Ben’s breath against his ear, and feel the emotion trembling through their bond.

“I’ll do it tomorrow, it will give us some time to set up a week off. My heat will hit fast once it’s
out.”

The words were whispered in his ear as if they were too special to say out loud.

Ben winced slightly as the incision was made and then the implant was removed.

It didn’t hurt, they had already frozen the spot on his shoulder, but there was still that
uncomfortable feeling of his skin pulling as it was opened. It was somehow worse than pain. Once
it was finished they carefully closed it and covered it with a strip of bacta bandaging.

“Is that all your imperial majesty?”

Ben was tempted to say that it was, that there was nothing else, but there were a few things that
concerned him, even if he refused to tell his mate. The constant worrying had made Ben more
stubborn, but he wasn’t going to seriously risk his health to prove a point.

“I’ve been getting little sparks of pain here, they’ve gotten a little worse lately. Also sometimes I
get a feeling like when you drop too fast on a ship and your stomach swims.”

He touched his abdomen, and let the tech bring a scanner over.

It took a moment to set it up, and then he waited while the tech decided to get a second opinion.
Not like it was needed, the information should be right there, but Ben was used to it. Everyone was
extra careful when it came to him, they knew what would happen if they let something happen to
the emperor’s mate.

Much to his annoyance they whispered to each other for a while before the senior one finally
stepped forward.

“I am sure you already know, your imperial majesty, but the pain is normal for this stage in your
pregnancy. The flutter is just the fetus moving.”

Ben swore he could hear ringing in his ear even in the silence of the room. The two techs shuffled
as they waited for him to speak and he was sure the dumbfounded look on his face didn’t help
calm them.

“This stage, what do you mean moving?”

The tech’s face told him that they just realised that Ben didn’t even know.

“Moving, your imperial majesty. If I had to guess I would say you were over three months, if you
would like it to the day we can get a proper paternity scanner in, and do hormones tests.”

“Three months?”
Ben’s voice cracked, and his hand roamed down to the small bump, he was sure it wasn’t big enough for that. It just looked like he had gained a little weight. He wasn’t sure if he was more panicked, or protective in that moment.

It meant he was almost half way.

“It’s only a guess, but looking at the babies growth, she is likely a little past that.”

Yet the tech sounded rather sure of himself, even if he was looking a little damp as the conversation continued.

“She?”

If anything, that only added to the anxious look the Tech had, who was now wringing his hands. Ben would normally try to put him at ease, but he was too stunned, it felt like a lot of information even though it was just one fact.

“I didn’t mean to sir, if- I mean your imperial majesty.”

He was stumbling over the words, and Ben waved a hand.

Ben wished he had taken up Hux’s offer to go with him, but instead Ben had told him to work on what Hux himself wanted to see in the civilian council instead. In a desperate attempt he reached through his bond, and pushed his feelings at Hux. It should be enough to at least get his attention.

Hux would come to him when he was able, Ben just needed to get back to their rooms so that Hux could find him.

Though he supposed it was lucky for the tech that Hux hadn’t joined him, Hux had no patience for fumbling and with the news he would probably be harder on them than needed.

Things from the last few months started to make sense, how tired he was, how much he just wanted to stay in with his mate, Hux’s protectiveness, his own need for scenting, and his many attempts at comfort. Ben had been fighting his nesting urges.

It had never occurred to him that it could happen early. He had just expected to take off his implant and then go into heat.

If Ben tried to track the timeline it would have been when they were on republic land, or shortly on their return. He felt a little joy in knowing that he brought a little of his old home back to his new one.

Ben briefly wondered if it was his own fault, because he made Hux knot him for longer, teasing him so that they would stay knotted together, and Ben could enjoy the wet full feeling.

“Leave me alone for a moment.”

The techs didn’t dare disobey him, and Ben was left on the med bed to think.

He lifted his shirt and got a better look at the bump, hardly able to believe that there was a pup in there. As the initial shock started to wear off he started to feel excited and a little bit of nerves. It was only a few months sooner, they could figure it out. Hux might be disappointed about the lack of a heat, but the results were going to be the same.

The excitement was quickly winning out as he felt another flutter.
It also meant Ben was a few months behind, he would need the time they scheduled off for his heat to catch up.

The techs approached him again and he waved them off again.

Although he planned on working, Ben also would have to figure out a new schedule that would allow him to nest as well. Part of him was relieved that his need to bury himself in their bed was nesting, that is wasn’t an underlying illness or a deeper depression. Ben had thought he had gotten over that, that he was content in his life, the tiredness had made him worry.

Knowing it was just nesting was a relief. He felt like a weight was lifted off him.

Ben covered himself up again and thought that maybe he could bother with the rest of the tests later when Hux could attend. That way they would share their first look at her, and Ben would be a little calmer since the news wasn’t just thrown on him.

If it was nesting that made him so tired maybe he could allow himself to indulge.

“I’ll come back tomorrow.”

One of the techs looked like they were about to argue, but a scowl from Ben was enough to keep them from voicing whatever concern they may have had.

The walk back to the main wing of the palace, where their personal apartment was kept, gave him time to think and wonder at how he was going to tell Hux. Most of all he didn’t want to wait, he wanted Hux to be one of the first to know.

When he arrived at the doors Ben typed in the code and entered. Immediately he relaxed and Ben wondered at how he had never noticed before. It all felt so obvious now, including how he teared up when he was watching Hux snuggle with Millie in the morning. It wasn’t something that had ever happened to Ben, but at the time he’d felt overwhelmed by emotions as he watched his mate be so gentle with her.

As soon as Ben was in their bedroom he stripped and tucked himself into bed. There were four blankets now on the bed, he’d been collecting them recently without realising why, much to Hux’s annoyance. It was easy to tuck himself into it and find the comfort he wanted now. He wondered how many times he had started preparing without knowing what he was doing.

It felt right being in bed, and the warmth was seeping into his body now that he buried in the blankets.

They still smelled of the scenting from this morning, and it was the most reassuring thing that Ben could imagine. He felt truly safe here and it gave him a real chance to rub the small bump and explore it. It didn’t feel quite real yet, but the thought was exciting. It was a piece of both of them, someone who would grow up in the galaxy they were making.

Most of all Ben knew he would have to push for the changes he wanted to see, Ben wanted his daughters world to be a little better every day she was in it.

The warmth soon did its job and he was starting to drift off when he heard the door. Ben pulled back the blankets enough to peek out.

“Ben!”

There was a hint of panic to Hux’s voice.
“You’re back early.”

Hux would have had to make an effort to come to him in the middle of the afternoon.

“I felt you through the bond, are you alright?”

His voice was tense with worry, and Ben let him feel reassurance through the bond.

“Undress and get in here.”

“Ben just tell me now.”

There was a pause and he knew Hux was checking their bond further; Hux was starting to be able to understand it. If he checked he would feel Ben’s excitement. At least it would put him at ease, because Ben found that he couldn’t just blurt out the words.

“I want to show you.”

Hux’s lips pinched but then he started stripping. He looked annoyed, but he got down to his underwear before climbing into the bed, coming under the blankets with him.

“What is it?”

“I’m not going to go into heat.”

There was a hint of sadness through their bond, and Hux brushed the hair out of Ben’s face.

“Oh darling, it’s okay. There are other things we can do, gene splicing and the like, or adoption. If you’re not ready yet we don’t even have to talk about it.”

Hux was starting to rain kisses over Ben’s face and Ben couldn’t help the slightly hysterical laugh as he realised the misunderstanding.

“No Hux.”

He reached out and touched Hux’s chest under the sea of blankets, following down his arm until he found his hand. Once he had it Ben rested it on the small bump. There was a moment of silence while Hux’s expression changed a few times, first confusion and then a mix of excitement and doubt.

“A pup?”

“They figure I’m about three months.”

“Ben,” Hux said his name like a sigh.

The sheer warmth in Hux’s voice brought water to his eyes again and Ben bit his lip lightly to get a hold of himself. Hux’s hands were chilly against his skin, but he didn’t care, he allowed Hux the same exploration that he has had only a short time before.

It was something truly theirs, a part of them not touched by the war. A family of his own, except they wouldn’t let their baby down like both of their parents had.

She would grow up with their parents around. Both him and Hux knew was it was to be lonely, they would not allow it to happen to their child as well.
Hux didn’t seem to be close to finishing, but at least his hands were starting to warm up. There was also his lips, mostly over Ben’s face, but a few peppering his neck as well.

Finally Hux spoke, between kisses.

“I thought you needed a heat?”

The last kiss ended and Hux beamed at him, letting Ben feel how happy he was.

“It’s rare but it can happen on suppressants, it’s not a proper birth control, normally there would be a second implant, but it makes me nauseous for about a month after it’s put in, so I always just use barriers.”

Hux’s smile started to turn smug and the hands slowed.

“I’ve never known an omega who got pregnant while on suppressants. I wonder if we can put that in the press release, the virile emperor managed to impregnate his difficult republic mate while-”

Ben grabbed a spare pillow and hit him with it. It was worth disturbing his nest.

“Of course you don’t know anyone else that happened to, the only omega’s you know are me and Poe.”

“And yet only one of you managed to conceive while wearing an implant.”
Ben laughed and shook his head and they relaxed into the joy and the idea of what was to come, it was easier now that he knew that they felt the same way. The laughter became giddy at the end.

He’d always felt like he could only show his strong side before he was mated, but Hux had always accepted him, all of him. Even the parts that Ben himself sometimes struggled with.

As they curled a little closer, and their legs tangled together, Ben felt fully content. This is what his body had wanted for months, a safe warm spot to nest and his mate nearby. The sound surprised him at first, a low purr rumbling through him. It wasn’t often he purred and it almost felt like a forgotten talent.

Hux made a reverent gasp, and the hand on his bump started to move again.

It wasn’t something that he could do on command, the feeling had to take him, when his body slipped into comfort. Ben only remembered a few times when he was younger, but the more he concentrated on it the more it faltered.

Instead Ben started to think about the hand on his stomach and the warmth of his alpha. Hux had dropped everything to come to him when he felt his surprise. Ben hadn’t felt like he could ever really depend on anyone other than Poe, and now he knew he could add one more person to that list.

Hux’s lips pressed against his neck, kissing his bond mark. Even though he knew they couldn’t stay in bed all day, he savoured the moment. Soon he would be meetings and working again, and he wanted to take in the comfort he could.

Ben put his hand over Hux’s and he reached out through their bond. He could feel how pleased Hux was with the news.

“It’s going to be a girl, they think. I wanted to wait before I did more of the scans. I was hoping we could find the time together, so that we could see her together.”

“I can make time, the galaxy can wait. Why don’t we go now, see our daughter?”

Ben could see the smile pulling at the corner of Hux’s lips. His expressions were never extreme, they were little hints, but Ben knew how to read them. He could see by the way the creases around his eyes relaxed and the little wrinkle by his nose.

“Can we wait a little longer? I just want to be with you for a little while.”

“Of course darling, anything you want.”

Ben couldn’t help smiling back at him, he knew the words covered more than just this situation. The break would be short, both of them were needed, but for now they would enjoy the thought of what was to come.
Chapter 17

Hux had felt both excited and nervous now that Ben’s pregnancy was really showing. Although they still hadn’t announced it, it was becoming obvious. Ben either didn’t want to hide it, or was just terrible at it. There was already speculation about the bump, though there had been speculation since the day they mated.

Normally Hux wouldn’t have cared. He liked working together with Ben. in fact, he loved it. Ben was as brilliant as he was handsome, and people who trusted Ben now trusted Hux as well. It was everything he had never allowed himself to hope for, yet it was also a strain on Ben not to nest properly. If they announced it Ben could be forgiven some of his duties, he could be allowed to rest like he should be, but Ben kept putting it off.

As it was, Ben wore a thin silken scarf wrapped around his face, one that Hux scented every morning to help him get through the day. The scent was calming for Ben, and it was the least he could do. The other thing Hux tried was to stay near him, lavishing him with touch when they got a moment alone.

The shortened omega pregnancies were harder to get through than a beta’s. The omegas actually needed the rest that they craved. Though he knew that Ben hated him worrying over him, Hux couldn’t stop.

At night they had started a few rituals. Hux had hoped they would convince Ben to take the time he obviously needed, carefully rubbing him down his lotion and kissing the little bump that held what would soon be their daughter. In those moments he could tell that Ben enjoyed nesting, but the next day he would get up with Hux even thought he looked exhausted.

Hux watched Ben nap during their lunch, leaned up against his shoulder. Hux wasn’t going to wake him yet. He carefully ate with his left hand so as not to disturbed him. Ben had been so tired lately and despite his promise to nest properly, Ben was still trying to keep up with Hux.

Ben had only just told his mother, acting as if the longer they didn’t announce it the longer he was fine to work.

Hux was sure that it was because of Ben’s plans: the council he was setting up, and all the changes he wanted to see before their daughter was born. There was so little time and so much that Ben wanted to do. Hux wanted to ease his nerves, and let Ben know it would all happen in time, but maybe that wasn’t enough.

Hux finished off the last bite of his lunch and looked out over the field. Lately his men had finished up work on a viewpoint over the landing port, a surprise he had hoped to show Ben while they ate lunch. Now Hux was putting it off and instead letting Ben sleep.

Once he set his utensil down Hux shifted slightly so that he could reach over himself and rest a hand against Ben’s bump. It was only recently that he had been able to feel her move. Little bumps under his hand, letting him know she was healthy.

He found where she was pressing against the skin and gently pushed back until she stirred. Hux kissed Ben’s forehead and felt him take a deeper breath, slowly waking.

“I fell asleep.”

“Yes.”
One of Ben’s hands moved to settle over Hux’s.

“You need to nest, darling.”

Hux continued, pressing a second kiss to his forehead.

“There is so much work to do.”

“That I can do for you.”

“I want everything to be ready for her.”

“And it will be, I’ll make sure of it.”

They both fell silent for a moment, Hux hoping that this time maybe Ben would agree to take it easy. Ben wasn’t someone he could just order around, even if it was for his own good. The scar over his face was a reminder of that.

“We should announce her, and then you can take some time off. The members of the council will understand the need for you to rest.”

The council wouldn’t work directly with him, so Ben was needed.

“It’s not just that. I like her being our little secret, something that is just ours.”

“I’m pretty sure she’s not a secret anymore,” Hux laughed.

He patted the growing bump, and searched Ben’s face to see if he was hiding anything, any other reason he might want to hide it. Hux had had nerves since they had found out, his father hadn’t been much of one, and he worried that he might fail as well. He always worried that Ben saw that in him. He just wanted to be the best he could for the two of them, they deserved it.

Hux tried to hide it from their bond, but he never had the control over it that Ben did.

“We’re going to be okay, she’s going to love you. At least as much as I do.”

Ben looked at him in a way Hux was sure he had never earned. There was so much warmth there. For a second their bond glowed with it.

“I’m not a normal alpha. I just want to set a good example.”

“Why do you think I never bonded anyone, and why do you think I love you? It’s because you aren’t normal. Because I’m not, either.”

Hearing the words always sent a shot through Hux, and he wished they could forget the rest of the day. He wanted to pull Ben back to bed and spend the rest of the day in his nest, showing him just how much he appreciated him.

“Me too.”

Ben responded to the feelings through their bond.

Hux laughed again, it was amazing to him how much his life had changed since Ben became part of it. He couldn’t remember the last time he laughed, before Ben.

“Stop that.”
“Can’t help it, the bond is just clearer to me lately. I just know what you’re thinking without trying.”

It should scare Hux, but he had nothing to hide. Ben’s face had always been an open book, and he could see how much Ben wanted him in return.

“Maybe we should announce it. If I’m nesting, we can take longer lunches.”

“Would you like to write up the release, or should I?”

“I think we should do a public announcement. It will be something positive for the people to rally around, until we get the council going. A meeting of the First Order and the Republic.”

Not that there had been much dissent; the food program was going well, and although it was still carefully rationed, at least no one was going hungry.

It would be a good moral-boost for the people though. Ben had quickly become their darling and there was already much joy over the speculation.

“I have a surprise for you, when we get to it we can figure out what to say.”

“A surprise?”

A little trill of excitement flowed through their bond. Ben took a few bites of his lunch and then slipped out from the other side of the bench. Today his belly was only covered by sheer red cloth. It made a particularly indecent shirt, but Ben liked the light black cape that came off it and would argue any time Hux brought it up.

Not only was it indecent it gave away any pretense of him not being pregnant. So it was for the best that they planned to announce it today.

In a way, it reminded Hux of Ben’s wedding outfit. He could see every one of his moles through that one as well.

He stood and took Ben’s hand, slowly leading him first out of the palace and then across the grounds to the new gazebo that made a shady spot for them to overlook the airfield.

It was a careful wooden frame, with heavy cloth they could let down to make walls if they needed privacy.

“This is amazing, Hux.”

Hux could feel the excitement clear in their bond, and he allowed Ben to hurry them so that he could get a closer look. Ben made little grateful noises as he tried each chair, sinking into the softness and then stood by one of the poles to appreciate the view. Hux slipped an arm around his back and rested the other hand on his hip.

“If we announce our daughter today, we can take dinner here.”

It was a bribe, but Ben nodded, accepting it.

“Why don’t we take a long lunch, too.”

The suggestiveness from earlier was back, and Hux was thankful that he thought to add walls to the gazebo design. After all, they hadn’t had much time to themselves lately. The pregnancy would be the perfect excuse for their tardiness.
“I would like nothing more.”
epilogue

Ben was beyond tired, weary all the way down to his bones, but as he looked into the little face of his daughter sleeping in his arms, only a few hours old, Ben knew it was worth it. She already had a fuzzy crown of dark hair, much like his own.

They were still arguing over names, but it didn’t really feel like it mattered anymore. Since she had been born all he felt were the fuzzy warm feelings from himself and the ones that Hux had been feeding through the bond, to keep him from concentrating on any lasting soreness.

“You should sleep.”

Hux brushed the hair from his face and Ben was sure he looked like a mess. He didn’t want to sleep though, he wanted to look at their daughter until he couldn’t hold his eyes open any longer.

“Mom will be here soon.”

Since he was banned from Republic space they had worked out how to bring her to him. It would take two swaps of ships and a few dozen scans, but it felt worth it to be able to see her, and to have her see her granddaughter. She had planned to be there before their daughter was born, but the baby was early.

Ben’s father had also expressed interest, but they would have to wait until Leia returned before they would allow another Republic citizen into First Order space. Ben didn’t mind, he was so tired that only one visitor sounded like a good thing.

He wanted time to adjust while his nesting hormones finally started to wear off. After all by the end of the month he planned to bring her along to the new council meetings.

“We still have a little longer alone.”

He felt Hux’s love though the bond and he smiled over at Hux, he never thought that they would make something so perfect, or so tiny. Their daughters lips pressed together and Hux leaned over him, kissing her forehead.

Then Hux shifted in the bed and pressed one to Ben’s forehead as well.

“You can catch a few hours and I’ll wake you when she comes.”

With that Ben leaned into Hux’s side, letting his body fully relax. Their daughter wiggled a little in his arms they settled together, and Ben let his mate wrap an arm around the two of them.

A long time ago Ben had thought that he would a kept thing once he had bonded to the Emperor, but at every step Hux showed himself to be a different person than Ben had expected. His Hux wasn’t the one he had fought against. They had changed each other, for better or worse, he wasn’t the same person anymore either.

Despite the scars they both had, and the difficult times they worked through Ben wouldn’t replace a single moment. He was Hux’s as much as the Emperor was his, and he wouldn’t change it for the galaxy.

Not that he would have to, the galaxy was already theirs.
The art was done by Pandalolli and Pandgolinpirate please go check them out!

End Notes

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