Overheated

by WriteAnythingAgency

Summary

Heats can be trying on everybody, especially the Omega. Yes, there's lots and lots of sex, but doing nothing but breeding for days at a time is physically and mentally exhausting. And they can sometimes happen without warning, which is something Phoenix has never had to deal with until this point.

A more realistic look at an Omega heat cycle, where instead of just displaying the sexy parts, we get to explore the not-so-sexy parts as well. 'Cause, when you really think about it, nothing sounds more painful than an Omega's heat. Or an Alpha's rut, for that matter.
Phoenix Wright, by his own admission, was not a very good omega. He wasn’t very good at being quiet or unassuming, or anything else that a stereotypical omega was for that matter. Cooking and cleaning, oh God no, Miles was the one who handled all that. Miles was the partner who needed a clean house, Phoenix was more than content living in his own filth. Phoenix for all his strengths, was not a great nest builder either. It was one of his many shortcomings as an omega; he just never had the energy to try and make his nests look nice. For him, the most important thing about nesting was being completely isolated, so there was really no need for it to be presentable. It had been that way since he was a child, and despite his mate’s gentle chiding, it wasn’t going to change.

Except for today, apparently.

He’d been at this for at least a few hours now, folding and refolding and shuffling bits of his nest around. Nothing was sitting right. He sat on his knees, sweating and frustrated, mussing with tatters of fabric and blankets way past their prime. It didn’t matter which way he lined them against the walls of the walk-in closet, or laid them out on the carpet, something was wrong and it was driving him up the wall. Maybe it was all the smells mixing together, he thought bitterly as he smashed a pillow against one of the corners. But that didn’t make a lick of sense. In the mess of comforters and soft things, there were only two defining scents including his own. He couldn’t smell his own scent, but he knew it blended well with Miles’s. It had to. How could it not, with the intoxicating, incredible, warm feeling it was currently-

“Am I interrupting something?” Phoenix leaped at his mate’s voice, jolting his face out of the pillow he was holding. He hadn’t even noticed he had brought his head down to bury into it. He turned red as he looked at Miles, standing in the doorway.

“N-no, of course not. I’m just- well, I’m trying to…”

Miles unfolded his arms and smiled softly, looking down on him. Part of Phoenix knew he should probably stand up, to meet his mate at his level. Most of him, the omega instincts inside of him, were cementing him to the soft ground like a child in a time-out. In the end, he ended up staying put, looking down at his nest in frazzled embarrassment.

“You’ve been in here all morning. Do you mind if I come in?”

Phoenix sighed. “You can’t make it worse. Sit next to me.”

The master bedroom had two closets, but you would never know it from the way that their clothes were all crammed into one. The other closet, much to Miles’s bafflement, had been where Phoenix had decided to make his nest. The prosecutor didn’t understand; even Trucy had the common sense to make her nest on her bed. But, in the end, it made his partner feel safe and comfortable, and who was he to judge as an alpha?

The closet wasn’t small, but with all of Phoenix’s comforters and blankets and every-bit-of-fabric-in-
the-known-universe, it was a bit of a tight fit for two full grown lawyers to sit side by side. Phoenix immediately placed his head in his mate’s lap, curled up at his side like a kitten. It caught the alpha off guard. He placed a hand on his forehead, palm down.

“I’m not sick,” Phoenix said, his fluttering shut involuntarily. This was as good as he’d felt since he’d started nesting. Funny how the nest became perfect once he shut his eyes. He mentally cursed himself for not doing that two hours ago.

“Could have fooled me. You’re sweating like you’ve just run a marathon,” Miles petted back his spikes, flat against his scalp, and Phoenix shivered. “It gets stuffy in here. At the very least, you need to let me put a fan down for you if you’re going to start laying about in here.”

Phoenix scoffed at that, “I was not ‘laying about’! I’ve been trying to restructure this nest!” He didn’t even have to look up to feel Miles’s eyes darting around the room, judging.

“Have you? It looks just as chaotic as it always has. Though now that I’m looking around, it’s nice to see where all our bath towels went.”

The defense attorney turned face down, groaning loudly into the prosecutor’s lap. Even though his words were muffled through the fabric, Miles could pick out something that sounded vaguely like “just kill me”.

“Dramatic as ever, aren’t you? Come on, we have some time to go get lunch before we pick Trucy up from school and take her to Kurain. Some fresh air would do you some good.”

“Can you bring food in here? I don’t want- “

“Wright, lift your head up, you’re drooling on me.”

Phoenix complied, shaking his head as he propped himself up on his forearms. “I don’t want to leave. I need to finish in here. Something is bothering me and I won’t be able to relax unless I fix it.”

“Hm,” Miles clicked his tongue and shifted his brow downwards. “Sit on my lap.”

The omega did what he was told, although not without a quip. “You think telling you what I want for Christmas is going to help me figure out what’s wrong?”

“You’re under the impression that you’re getting something? That’s presumptuous of you.” Miles leaned back on the wall and let Phoenix crawl over him, a leg on either side.

“And why would that be? I get lots of great presents from you. Remember a few weeks ago on my birthday? You did that thing with your- “

“We agreed we wouldn’t speak of that again.” The tone in Miles’s voice told Phoenix how serious he was. It was the same tone he had used, once, years ago, to lecture Trucy when she had gotten her first and only D- on her 5th grade report card. So, Phoenix being thoroughly unafraid of his otherwise intimidating alpha, pressed just a pinch more.

He leaned forward, pressing their upper bodies together into one heartbeat, resting his head close to Miles’s ear. “Aw, but you did such a good job, Daddy”, he whispered so quietly that Miles himself could barely hear it. Phoenix pulled back with a lighthearted grin, and Miles was just that little bit to stunned to reply right away.
“So, what am I up here for, Alpha?” Phoenix chipped, and Miles regained his composure enough to sit back up. Both of them knew the omega had won that battle, no need to continue that line of conversation. Good thing too, as Miles was starting to turn the same color as his suit.

“Er- right. Although, I think being that close to you confirmed my suspicions. I think I might know what’s been bothering you this morning, but I need to scent you properly to be sure.”

“How would you know what’s wrong? You don’t nest.”

Miles rolled his eyes, “I know that! But I might know what brought this on. Just give me your consent?”

Phoenix lifted his chin up, exposing his neck. “Do your thing.”

Even though they’d been mated for so long, Miles still swallowed at the sight of Phoenix presenting himself to him. It never failed to make his heart skip a beat, both out of instinctual alpha pride and the feeling of love and trust surging through his veins. He took a deep breath to still himself, clearing his mind and focusing on the task at hand. The omega didn’t rush him, knowing how overwhelming this could get for the opposite sex, and stayed as open and unmoving as he could be, waiting. It never took long for Miles to start, it just felt that way.

When he felt ready, the alpha closed his eyes and started sniffing at his omega’s neck, light and easy. He was feeling for something in particular, something that could potentially be buried deep within his mate. The smells of the house were gone, his oversensitive nose focused only on Phoenix’s scent. It was intense, getting scents within scents within scents, smelling the frustration on his mate’s skin. That was probably just worry about whatever was going on with his nesting instinct. Miles was going heavier now, into the crook of his neck and fingering behind just above the long-pierced mating glad, starting to get lost. But he was on a mission here, refocusing his mind with every new thing he took in.

Phoenix was balling his hands into fists, willing himself not to touch his alpha. He had to stay focused as well, he didn’t want to knock Miles out of whatever weird trance he was in. When they had first starting dating, right after the incident with the bridge, Miles could never scent him properly because Phoenix couldn’t keep quiet or still. It took hours upon hours of trial and error for him to be able to let Miles do his alpha thing.

And if he were being honest, the very first time Miles had successfully scented him, they were mated not even twenty minutes later. It was more than a little embarrassing on both their parts that they lost control of their biology that quickly, alpha and omega fully taking over (Miles had even howled, as much as he denies to this day) but it had worked out for the best in the end.

It was hard not to think of that night even now, since Miles was fingering around his mating gland and heat was beginning to pool in his groin. Phoenix knew that Miles had to do it, something about having to coax scents out of there and other things that the omega didn’t really grasp. It didn’t make it easier not to whine, or moan, or touch anything.

Meanwhile, the alpha was still on the hunt for a certain smell, massaging the gland on the back of his mate’s neck trying to get to it. His nose was pressed flush to where he’d claimed Phoenix all those years ago, teeth marks on top of teeth marks covering the original puncture. It didn’t take long to get what he was looking for, the first stirrings of his mate’s arousal coming into him. He wished there
was a less intrusive way to get this, but Phoenix knew what he was consenting to and it would all be over soon enough.

“Come on Phoenix, just a little more out of you, come on please-“

His thoughts stopped dead when his nose caught exactly what it wanted.

And on the other side, Phoenix knew exactly what was wrong with him the moment he felt his dick starting to strain against the fabric of his jeans.

It took everything in Miles’s power to tear out of the trance, to not fall back in and let his biology take over.

This wasn’t just a normal arousal, Phoenix could tell that just from the way his dick was feeling. It was hard for him to explain, even to himself, but something in his core was different and sturdy. Like it was preparing for breeding rather than release alone.

Phoenix started screaming, a single high-pitched wale that wasn’t entirely unlike the one he had when something wasn’t going his way in court. He wasn’t ready, it was still supposed to be two months away, he hadn’t had time to prepare-

Miles snapped out of focus and flew back against the wall, hitting the back of his head in the process. The screaming had given way to whining and heavy breathing quickly after the initial shock, with the omega trying to rationalize what was happening. Admittedly, Miles didn’t really know what omegas went through during their heats, let alone surprise ones like this. He was still trying to catch his own breath, smells of the house flooding his own system like an angry storm. He was choking on it all, but the concern for his omega won out as he guided Phoenix to lean against his chest.

“Shh, I’m sorry, I didn’t know it would effect you like that, please don’t cry, don’t cry, don’t cry…”

Phoenix wasn’t crying, but it sounded like the right thing to say in the moment. Although, given the omega’s tendency to cry over things whenever the two were alone, it was not a far-off sentiment.

“I don’t want- I haven’t made time… I’ve been taking my pills right, why am- “

Miles coughed, nose still trying to catch up to him. He breathed before trying to talk again, trying to steady his lungs, “You’ve been through heats before, you’ll get through this one just fine. It’s probably all the stress you’ve been under, with everything that happened in Khura’in and Justice going to work abroad. I’ll be here, don’t worry.”

That seemed to calm Phoenix down, but only enough to let him stop his heavy breathing. The two laid there for a minute in silence, Miles giving Phoenix the time to take the news in. They were close enough that the alpha could tell that he wasn’t hard anymore, sheer terror was usually pretty good at curing that problem, so at least they could take comfort in the fact that the omega’s heat wasn’t
starting right then and there. Miles was calculating in his head, trying to figure out exactly when Phoenix’s heat would kick in based on the strength of the scent he’d managed to get. No matter how he looked at it, it didn’t look good. And based on what he knew about Phoenix’s heat patterns, that scent told him that the omega was going to skip his pre-heat period altogether. No wonder he’d been working so hard on his nest, his omega nature was trying to prepare him in the only way he had time for.

“I’m about to start my heat.”

The voice shook Miles out of his thoughts, “Hm?”

“I said I’m about to start my heat, aren’t I?”

Miles sighed, “Yes, yes you are.”

“And you’re going to help me?”

There was an audible scoff from the prosecution. “Frankly, I’m the only one equipped to handle you at this point. I know your heats better than you do, Wright.”

“I suppose that’s true. How long do you think it’ll be until I start?”

The alpha looked up at the ceiling as if the answer to that question were floating, waiting for him to pluck it from the air. “It’s purely estimation on my part, but I think two days, maybe three if you’re lucky. In any case, Trucy will be away for the next week with the Feys’, so we’ll have the house to ourselves. Count your blessings.”

Phoenix suddenly sat up, concerned. “Wait, Trucy and I usually have our heats at the same time. She’ll be alright not being in her room, won’t she?”

Miles actually had to ponder that one for a second, eyes again going up to the beige ceiling tiles for the answer. When he felt he had one he started to speak, although it didn’t quite sound right even to his own ears.

“I highly doubt she’ll have a surprise heat just because it syncs up with yours. I don’t think that’s how that works, at least,” Miles reasoned, “besides, it’d probably just traumatize her to be around. When she’s on her own heat, she’s so preoccupied that she doesn’t notice that I’m taking care of you. She’d smell all of it if she wasn’t on her heat.”

Phoenix had to stop himself from gagging, but didn’t do a very good job of it. “Fine, fine, she’ll go to the Feys’. Just never bring that line of logic up again. Ever.”

“Fully agreed.”

There was a moment of amicable silence as Phoenix shuffled off of his partner, rustling some of the tatters of fabric in the process. Despite his earlier statement, Miles actually could see that the nest was just a little bit neater. Some towels were folded properly, for one. There was a proper wall of assorted bits lining the edges of the closet, forming definite shape instead of it all just being tossed around. It was arguably as neat as it could be with all the crap his mate had hoarded over the years.
“You might feel better about your nest if you decluttered some of this stuff,” Miles offered as Phoenix was situating himself next to him, “We’re going to have to wash it all anyway after your heat. Maybe we won’t put everything back in here.”

Phoenix shrugged, “I don’t know, it would be a pretty open nest without it all, wouldn’t it? It’s a big room, I don’t like having a lot of space in here.”

“Would you feel more secure if I put a proper lock on the door?”

“No, because then you can’t get in if you need to. What if there’s an emergency or something?”


“I was thinking more like a surprise heat. I wouldn’t be lucid enough to unlock the door, and you would be stuck in a rut outside. The door opens inward, so you couldn’t break it down without slamming into me.”

Ah. That actually was a pretty good point, Miles had to admit. Had he been thinking about this for a while?

“I could have a key”, he argued.

“Do you really think you’d be capable of using it when you’re rutting?” Another perfectly valid point.

“If I catch you early enough into it, I would.”

“And if you don’t?”

“Alright, fine, the lock is a bad idea,” Miles surrendered, “but if you ever decide you need one.”

Phoenix looked at him then, eyes shimmering in the florescent lighting of the closet. It caught Miles slightly off guard, had he really been crying earlier and he hadn’t noticed? It happened so often in moments like these, when they were alone and had their walls down. It was hard for the alpha to tell.

“Is there any way I can convince you to take a nap in here with me? We have time, right?”

Miles looked down at his watch, “I’ve only been in here five minutes, Wright. We still have a few hours before Trucy gets off of school. If you’d rather sleep than eat, then far be it from me to deny you that.”

“And you’ll stay with me?”

“If that’s what you want, yes.”

At any other time, the alpha would have refused the request with gusto, since laying in the closet was far from his idea of a good time. He could barely sleep at night, let alone nap in the middle of the day. Knowing that his omega was about to enter heat, though, made him feel rather accommodating towards him. It didn’t take Phoenix any time at all to settle in his arms and doze off, snoozing
peacefully against his alpha’s chest.

Miles couldn’t help but notice, either, that his mate was clinging to him, perhaps subconsciously, trying to take in as much of his scent as he could. It was sweet, even if he was holding on a little tight.

“Are you sure you don’t want me to go and pick up Trucy with you?”

The two had been up for about a half hour, Phoenix still just a little bit dozy. At Miles’s insistence, they had gotten up to eat something in the kitchen before the round trip to Kurain. This was the first time Miles had seen Phoenix leave his nest all day, so it was gratifying to know he would at least have one solid meal before he inevitably scampered back in.

“I can’t stop you, but I really don’t want you going out in your condition. What if you go suddenly into heat somewhere? I don’t like the idea of defending you from a bunch of rabid alphas.”

Phoenix couldn’t find any fault with that, as he picked at the food that Miles had laid out for him. He wasn’t particularly hungry, but for his mate’s sake, he was eating. He couldn’t say that he was particularly disappointed to be missing the trek in Miles’s car up the Kurain mountain range, but he didn’t like that the alpha would be stuck driving all alone. It didn’t seem fair to shove the entire chore off on Miles like that.

“You could mark me real fast”, Phoenix offered, slightly hopeful, “That’d let everyone know within a three-mile radius that I belong to you.”

“And potentially jump-start your heat? Not a chance. We’ll talk about it when I get back, though, if you want.”

Phoenix did want, but he didn’t say anything more out loud. He didn’t push Miles too hard on the matter, the alpha was right. He was better off at home, resting as best he could before everything in his body would be slowly torn apart.

Miles gave him a kiss before he left; a quick and chaste thing that in no way could get Phoenix riled up. When he did leave, the omega just stood there for a moment, suddenly feeling a little lost without the presence of his alpha. He waited for the sound of Miles’s engine to completely disappear from earshot before getting himself back to his nest and back to work, mussing about with the pillows again.

It didn’t take long to realize that his heart just wasn’t in it anymore, as he absentmindedly moved towels from one end of the closet to the other. No matter where he put things, it all felt about the same, and he quickly abandoned the idea for another nap. It felt weird, sleeping so much in the middle of the day. Something in him was telling him it was a bad idea, that he would never get a
regular sleep schedule back if he gave in, but the fact of the matter was he hadn't been sleeping at all lately anyway. So he pushed his uneasiness aside and slumped against one of the soft walls, shutting his eyes. It didn't take long at all to drift off again, snoring against the fabric where his mate had just been. One thing was for sure, that scent could lull him into a feeling of security faster than any old nest could on its own.

He woke up with a start an hour and a half later, drenched in his own sweat and blood pounding in his ears like an angry ocean against the shoreline. He reached up, grabbed his head, tried to sit straight, but the churning in his core let him know how bad of an idea that was. He was warm, not necessarily a bad warm but enough to let him know that Miles had been off in his estimation.

This heat wasn’t starting in a few days.

It was starting now. And it was starting strong.

Chapter End Notes

In my Alpha/Omega headcannon, scenting is less of something you do in passing and more of a relationship milestone. Well, it's a milestone kind of in the same way that kissing is a milestone, but you get the idea. Both Alphas and Omegas have a naturally song sense of smell, but properly scenting somebody lets you tap into their deeper emotions. And, yes, it can tell you if your partner is close to their heat/rut.

Smut starts in chapter 2. Get ready for the long haul, because I don't plan to skip over much of anything. Comments, constructive criticism, and hate mail are always appreciated!
Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It didn’t feel so bad at first. It wasn’t good, but it wasn’t quite painful either. It felt a bit like a light switch that was stuck firmly in the middle. One wrong breath and that switch was going to snap all the way up.

So, for the first few minutes, Phoenix stayed completely still, unwilling to unbalance the scale. He didn’t know how long he’d been sleeping exactly, so there was no way for him to gage how close Miles would be to home. Maybe he could go back to sleep, ignore the pulsing that was beginning to creep further and further south, and push his heat back for little while. Not forever, just long enough for his alpha to come home and take care of it.

If he were being honest with himself, he couldn’t clearly remember the last time he’d been alone for a heat. Up until this point, his heats were as dependable as the sun, coming and going at the same intervals on the same dates for years. He’d been able to schedule, to plan, to get things together before the five days of hell began. Now? He didn’t even know how long he’d be out of commission for. Two days? The full five? Longer?

Not to mention that he’d long forgotten his old tricks for handling a heat on his own. It’d been completely unnecessary after he was mated. There had never been one time, in the entire history of he and Miles being together, that the alpha wasn’t 100% on board with helping him out. Hell, there had been more (way more) than one occasion where Miles had gotten sick and tied of dealing with the pre-heat period and marked him, hard, kickstarting his heat by a few hours. That was why, in all of his gift in foresight, he was unwilling to mark his omega earlier when he was asked. He knew exactly where that rabbit hole went.

Well, at least the alpha wouldn’t have to use that trick this time. Phoenix knew his pre-heat well; it was a hazy, hormone-induced high where he didn’t really know what was going on, but it was slow and wet as his body prepared itself. This wasn’t that. And despite his best efforts, he couldn’t keep still enough to keep the inevitable at bay. His core was tightening, beginning to constrict around his middle and strangle any hope he had of returning to sleep.

The need was pressing, getting louder and louder with mental attempt to ignore it. He tried rocking his head back and forth, but the rustling of his spikes against the back of his neck were only spurring it on. For not the first time in his life, he cursed the way his hair grew out.

He didn’t remember giving his right-hand permission to start palming, but it did make him hyper aware that doing it over his jeans wasn’t going to be nearly enough of a relief. He didn’t make an effort to undo the zipper at first, giving one last effort to not fall completely apart.

“You aren’t 13 anymore, you can wait, you will wait, you will- oh fucking hell- “

His inner monologue was shot by the first hard pang of arousal, racking through his frame like a lightning bolt down his spine. His lower abdominal muscles crunched down hard, forcing the first bit of slick out of him. He doubled over in pain, mouth open but unable to get any noise out. He rode through the spasms that followed, each one a deep, dull pain that rang through his lower body.

The first one was always bad. The ones that would come later would be far worse, but at least his body would adjust to them. The first one was raw, unbraced for, and tore through his flesh like a dull
knife.

When the spasms faded away, all that was left was a pitiful amount of slick to start and the white-hot desire to be bred. He made use of the slick right away, after undoing his pants and shoving them off, to coat his cock and start masturbating as hard as he could. It wasn’t exactly what his muscles in his gut were screaming for, but he’d be damned if he was going to try and penetrate himself with nothing but his fingers. It wasn’t a pride thing, that went out the window when he started babbling his mate’s name to himself repeatedly, he just knew what the real thing felt like. It was hard to be satisfied with just your fingers after several years of being fucked with an alpha’s knot. His alpha’s knot.

Miles called him spoiled sometimes. And he was absolutely right.

The first orgasm was short, dry and didn’t do a thing to calm Phoenix down. If anything, it made his cock go just a little bit harder, and he cried out. He didn’t hear it himself, but he felt the strained noise come out of his mouth, and he bit the pillow in front of him to keep himself quiet. When had he even turned face down, anyway? He didn’t remember doing that. It made it harder to breathe, but all that did was add to the aching in his groin and he gripped himself tighter.

Miles called him a pain slut whenever they partook in breath play. He was right about that too.

Slick was coming out more naturally now, being fueled by arousal instead of being forced out. That was good, even if it still wasn’t anywhere near the amount the omega needed to properly cover himself. How was it that Miles was able to get it out of him so easily when Phoenix himself could get enough to go over the length of his throbbing, painful erection? There was a cleverness there, one that the defense attorney did not have the patience or mental ability to try and decipher at the moment.

The second time he started jerking, he screwed his eyes shut, willing himself to focus on something other than the overwhelming ache of heat. It didn’t take him long to find a fantasy, not when his birthday was still so close in his memory. Not when he knew there was a box of supplies up overhead, sitting unassuming on a shelf, and half of it still unused and new. That knowledge was almost enough on its own to tip him over, but he managed to stop before he had a repeat of the last orgasm he had. Two quick breaths, and he was on again, reliving that night in short flashes.

“So, what is it you want to call me for this? Master? Alpha?”

“I was thinking of ‘daddy’.”

*Miles had blinked, definitely not expecting that response. “Say again.”*

“Daddy. If you want.”

*Another blink, “Yes, that’ll work. I can handle that.”*

“Well, then, what doya wanna do to me, Daddy?”

Cum shot over his hand, and he yelped into the pillow in surprise.
“Damnit!”

On one hand, that was an utterly deplorable display of endurance that he was glad that Miles didn’t see. On the other, it felt great and gave him a momentary break from the fog he was in. And it managed to get him enough slick to not feel like he was rubbing himself raw, so that was a plus. In his brief moment of clarity, Phoenix took account of himself, managing to at sit up against the corner of the nest. It still wasn’t a perfect situation, but at least he wasn’t on the verge of suffocation anymore.

“As much as that’s an appealing idea, admittedly.”

He managed to count to thirteen before the stirrings of his heat started back again, which was about ten more counts than he thought he was going to get. The breaks would get longer as time went on, but the first twelve hours or so were always pretty intense. Not that his alpha had any trouble at all keeping up with it. They weren’t that old, yet.

“Focusing on him makes it worse, stop it.”

If only it were that easy. The scents lying around the nest made damn sure he didn’t forget that he was missing his other half. He didn’t let himself get so worked up this time around, one set of muscle spasms was enough thank you, palming cautiously while the warmth began to overtake his senses. Better to guide it with his own hand rather than be ambushed a few minutes down the road.

“Oh, fuck that, how did the rest of that night go? Let’s try to make it to one of the good parts this time.”

And so, it continued.

“Where’s Nick at?” was Maya’s first question upon Miles dropping Trucy off at the front doorstep. He didn’t get a chance to answer before the teenage girl next to him sprinted away, calling for Pearl. He’d learned not to take that too personally over the years, the two kids didn’t get to see each other nearly as often as they would have liked. If they had their way, they would be together every day, sewn at the hip, happy as clams.

“Hello to you too,” Miles answered over the far-off, happy squeal that Trucy and Pearl were emitting. He couldn’t see them, but he could practically hear the rib-shattering hug that the two liked to do. “He’s sick. But I’m good enough for this task, aren’t I?”

Maya, visibly not buying it for a millisecond, smirked at him with knowing eyes. “He’s not tied up and gagged somewhere, is he?”
If he had been drinking something, he would have spit it out. He looked like he had been punched in the gut, all the air going out of his lungs.

“Don’t be foolish, why would he be?” A pathetic excuse to save face. Maya didn’t buy that one either.

“He showed me the collar back in Khura’in, you boob. It’s about time, when alphas and omegas get together, usually that’s the very first thing they-“

“He did what?!” He didn’t mean to cut Maya off but he was just so stunned. “It’s not what he most likely made it sound like, I promise you. He wanted it, I just obliged him. That kind of lifestyle is so beyond my comfort zone that it aches.”

“Easy tiger, I believe you,” Maya laughed, holding her hands up, “Nick told me as much when he came down. Don’t you know we tell each other everything? We’re practically brother and sister! It doesn’t matter, I’d never tell anybody.”

“True as that may be, I’m afraid I’m going to have to kill him. I’m going to have to ask you to take custody of Trucy while I flee the country.”

“I don’t think she has enough clothes in that backpack of hers, so I’m going to have to say no. So, are you going to tell me what’s really wrong with Nick or not?”

Miles rolled his eyes, how was she so positive that he wasn’t under the weather? If he believed in the supernatural, he might consider the idea that the two had some kind of psychic tether connecting their minds together. It would certainly explain a few things.

“If you have to know, he’s about to go through heat. I didn’t want him out where he could be vulnerable.”

“Does he still do that thing where he nests in closets? Must be a tight fit for the both of you.”

“We are not continuing this discussion. I suggest you ask him if you’re so curious, as the two of you seem to talk about such things regularly. Tell Trucy goodbye for me, if you would. I don’t want to interrupt whatever her and Pearl are doing.”

“Yes, yeah, you big lug. Go take care of your omega,” Maya was still grinning like a Cheshire cat. He had the lingering suspicion that she quite enjoyed his misery, but he could never quite prove it to Phoenix. “And be sure to tell Nick, from one omega to another, he needs to consider moving his mating nest. Like maybe to a five-star hotel somewhere? With the amount of money you have, I’m sure he could keep one there permanently!”

Miles’s eye wanted to twitch something fierce, but he managed to restrain himself. “Thank you, Miss Fey. We’ll try to pick Trucy up on Friday, but if we’re a day or two late, now you know why. I’m sure she won’t have any objections to that.”

And with that, he started making his way back to where he came from, Maya practically snorting laughing behind him. That woman was a sadist, pure and simple. He wasn’t sure if she had been a bad influence on Phoenix, or perhaps the other way around, but the two were like peas and carrots when it came to putting him in uncomfortable situations. He swore the two got off on it in some capacity, but he had no evidence of that either.

However, speaking of getting off, he did have something to attend to back home. Miles was positive that Phoenix had gone back to sleep in his nest; he was usually pretty sleepy right before his heat kicked in. The alpha didn’t want to rush home and wake him up, Phoenix needed that rest in the
worst possible sort of way.

So, naturally, he didn’t see the problem with taking the long way home. It’d been a while since Miles had been able to see the countryside, what with work and all. It was nice this time of year outside, too. It would be good for him to get some fresh air before he was trapped inside a closet for the unforeseeable future.

He was cruising down the backroads, a couple hours or so from home, when he got to thinking about what Maya had said. A five-star hotel wouldn’t be a bad place at all for a heat. A bed wouldn’t be a bad place either, but it was whatever Phoenix wanted. He was usually placid enough after the first day or two anyway to be willing to move to the mattress, so how hard could it be to transplant him to a hotel room while keeping his scent under wraps?

Not hard at all. At least, not in fantasy.

The latest orgasm came and went without production, and Phoenix cursed. He couldn’t sustain himself the way he could with his mate; the masturbation wasn’t doing a thing for him. It wasn’t from a lack of effort, he was sweating hard and felt like his skin was about to melt off his skeleton. The puddle of sweat underneath him was, infuriatingly, much larger than the puddle of other bodily fluids.

If he didn’t start slicking soon, his body was going to take matters into its own hands. He didn’t want that; the heavy pulsing down there was making him sore enough without another series of spasms thrown into the mix.

“Come on, Phoenix, you’re kinkier than anybody has a right to be, imagine something sexy already and be done with it.”

Somehow, his less than encouraging inner monologue wasn’t exactly spurring him on. He was trying, he really was, but the moment he would start to drift away something else would start hurting and take him out of it. It was exasperating, his body was so clearly craving one thing and his mind was seemingly incapable of delivering.

One thing was for sure, the next orgasm was coming up. It was coming whether or not he wanted it, and it probably wouldn’t be bringing any slick with it. This wasn’t normal, what the hell was going on?

“Well, I don’t have my alpha, for one thing. If Miles dies before I do, there’s no possible way I can handle this on my own anymore. If he dies first, I will bring him back from the dead and kill him again. Or I guess I could use Maya, but that would be pretty weird and the implications gross me out. I think she’d probably do it if I asked nice enough. I’ll have to bring it up next time-”

His heat struck that line of thought down with a pang of anguish down his middle, warning him: “Get into it or it’ll be forced out of you”.

“I deserved that one.”
Where the hell was his alpha at? Surely, he had to be getting close by now; Phoenix felt like he’d been struggling for hours now, fluctuating between being just wet enough and bone dry. What was taking him so long? Did he have a court case that he suddenly remembered that he had to get to?

He joked, but with their professions, that was a frighteningly real possibility. Miles would call if something like that happened, wouldn’t he? He wasn’t a complete douchebag… anymore.

Another orgasm, not dry but humorously weak. There wasn’t even any consolation slick for that pitiful performance. Phoenix winced,

“Miles, where the fuck did you go?”

It was nice getting lost sometimes. The sereneness of the Californian landscape, the warm breeze coming through the window, it was all great. Miles had to remember to take these long road trips more often.

“Maybe I’ll even start taking Trucy up to the village every other weekend. She’d like that. I’d like that. We all win.”

Phoenix was probably awake by now. It was a shame, Miles could have done this for at least another hour or two. But he knew he needed to get back to his omega. He might have been wrong earlier; it was entirely possible that the omega could fall into a pre-heat at any time. While the alpha had no doubts that his mate could handle himself for the first half of his pre-heat, it never hurt to be present. At the very least, he needed to keep everything halfway clean. Pre-heats were notoriously wet.

Begrudgingly, Miles started heading towards home. He hoped Phoenix would be thankful for his presence, it was hard to tear away from the peace and quiet of back roads.

To say Phoenix was in agony would be a severe understatement. He was jerking as hard as he could, every which way he could think of, but there was no relief to be found anywhere. He wanted to be bred, needed to be held down on a knot and stuck there for a good long while. In a fit of anger, he went on and attempted to finger himself, pushing in hard and fast, ignoring the blistering dryness of it.

It was just as he’d thought: empty and unfulfilling. He gave up on it, going back to what he had been doing. It worked just as well.
The constricting of his muscles, this time, was just one more thing added to the already unbearable experience. He felt so small and so helpless to stop it that he gave up with the first wave of sharp, unrelenting spasms. He laid through it, the only motion in him being the convulsing of muscles, struggling to produce enough slick to function.

He didn’t want to cry. He hated that he did it so often, especially when he was alone and there was no one there to see. He’d done it for as long as he could remember, and despite his best efforts to grow a tougher skin, he’d still find himself sobbing over things from time to time. Sometimes it was over things that didn’t even matter, like having to handle a heat by himself.

Help wasn’t coming. At least, not anytime in the foreseeable future. He was tired and hurting and stranded, and as the last of the trembles of muscle started to roll in, the tears started going too. There was a sizable portion of the omega that was embarrassed at himself, but he was too far gone to pay much attention to it. He curled in, sniveling, as the warm got bad again and engulfed him into a fever.

Phoenix was done trying to help himself. If that meant dying alone in a corner of a destroyed nest, so be it.

Chapter End Notes

Maya is back in Kurain because the plot demands it. That is all.
Chapter 3

Miles knew there was something wrong the moment he walked in the front door.

He’d been expecting the scent of pre-heat, or at least the sight of Phoenix reading something lazily on the couch. No, the whole condo seemed deathly quiet, a far cry from how chaotic it typically was with all the antics that ran about. He also couldn’t smell anything out of place. There was his own scent mixed with Phoenix’s and Trucy’s, along with hints of their their colleagues and friends mingling in the air. The front room was so still that, if he closed his eyes, he could still pick out Maya’s scent lingering on his jacket.

Nothing was off about the room at first glance, but something was chilling him. As he tossed the keys on coffee table (a bad habit that he picked up from the omega), he couldn’t help but feel like he was supposed to be smelling something. It was as if a scent was trying to emit itself, but fell just shy of existence as it ghosted through his nasal passages. It was making him concerned, although he couldn’t place why.

Phoenix was still asleep. He had to be; if he were awake, Miles would have been greeted by now. There would also be noise littering the entire condo, since the omega was seemingly incapable of functioning without it. Miles didn’t want to wake him up, not when his heat was so near. But there was something about that absence of smell that was causing the animalistic side of him to growl and snarl, pushing him to go check on the resting defense attorney.

“Selfish instincts.”

No, Phoenix needed to be left alone right where he was. If he slipped into pre-heat, or even just regular heat, when he woke up Miles was certain he’d be able to smell it. It wasn’t exactly a subtle aroma, not that that was a bad thing. No, the best thing he could do for his omega right now would be to wait for him.

In the meantime, it had been a while since he’d eaten, and Phoenix would probably be starving after he got up from his nap. Preparing dinner would surely take the edge off whatever was causing the alpha in him to get all riled up.

“Must be the pheromones beginning to take hold. That’s why I’m so imbalanced.”

He hadn’t even made it that far into the kitchen before he was stopped dead in his tracks, mid-step. It wasn’t that much closer to the bedroom than living room was, but something in those ten-or-fifteen feet caused the previously elusive scent to morph into something concentrated and fearful. It wouldn’t have been potent at all if Miles hadn’t been searching for it, but now that he’d found it, it was overbearing every single one of his senses.

He couldn’t stop the growl that started at the back of his throat; something had gone horribly, horribly awry with his omega while he was away. The further he got into the condo, the stronger it got, and the faster he moved.

“Distress, pain, sorrow, weakness, isolation…”

It was more or less a sprint by the time he made it to the bedroom, although he wouldn’t admit it as he grabbed the closet doorframe and slid, kneeling into place just centimeters away from where the sea of blankets began. The nest door hadn’t been closed, thank God, but that small miracle was
quickly disregarded the second he and his mate made eye contact.

“And heat. Definitely heat.”

Miles wanted to hold him, Phoenix looked so shaken and displaced. The omega wasn’t even really looking at him, he was just staring in his general direction, unable to lift his head off the ground. He reached over the nest line to touch him, but stopped in midair and let his hand hover unsure. He opened and closed his mouth a few times, words failing him.

“Do you- do you mind if I come in?”

That prompted a smile out of the omega, who was soaked with sweat and tears but decidedly not with much else. The alpha’s heart tore at that dorky little grin.

“You can’t… make it any worse. ’M glad you’re home now,” Phoenix slurred, quiet and labored. With permission granted, Miles crawled into the nest. It was clumsy, but neither of them really cared as the alpha settled in.

The omega was curled in on himself, about as small as his mate had ever seen him, and it didn’t take much effort at all to completely wrap around him in a gentle embrace. His skin was hot to the touch, fuming through Miles’s shirt. He frowned.

“You’re running a fever.”

“Ye-yeah,” the omega nuzzled his face against his mate’s chest. “It happens.”

“We’re going to have to cool you down. You’re going to pass out if we have sex like this,” Miles cursed himself inwardly for phrasing it like that, but god damnit, he was fighting back a rut something fierce. The stench of heat was mercifully being blocked out by distress, but hints of it were peeking out and driving his instincts wild. Keeping himself in control, Miles checked Phoenix over with his free hand, looking for signs that would tell him how long he’d been suffering. Aside from his temperature, there wasn’t much evidence to assume that it had been very long. He couldn’t even find a trace of slick anywhere on him.

Miles sighed, “Did you just start? You’re awfully warm.”

Phoenix shook his head lazily. He didn’t know how long he’d been awake, numbers had stopped having meaning to him quite a while back. It’d felt like he’d been crying for hours before he mercifully had been able to fall back asleep for brief moments, only to be jolted awake by his body telling him to breed. In hindsight, he was probably just slipping in and out of consciousness, but it was blissful darkness nonetheless. As it sat, it felt like he could dip out right now, with his alpha holding him like this, poking at him for reasons he didn’t quite understand.

“Hey, don’t do that,” Miles shook him gently, and his eyes flew back open. Phoenix hadn’t even felt them close. “Not until I can put you in a cold bath and get you hydrated. This might feel weird, but hang in there, alright?”

Miles was definitely saying words. Sounds were coming out of his mouth, alright, and his lips were moving. The omega caught some of them, but they were gibberish, and may have been in German for all he was grasping right now. It didn’t matter. He was there, holding him close against his chest. Vaguely, Phoenix felt Miles bring his hand lower, but it was distant, like he wasn’t even being touched.

And then he started prodding around some of the more tender parts of his anatomy, and Phoenix screamed, hard. It was a white-hot, stinging, excruciating pain that momentarily blinded him. Miles
jerked back, alarm bells ringing in his ears.

“Christ, you’re bleeding!” He pulled his hand back, starting at the tiny droplets of red on his hand. “How the bloody hell…did you not even let yourself slick before you started abusing yourself?!”

To be honest, Phoenix didn’t know he’d been bleeding. This was the first he was hearing about it, but now that he knew, he was acutely aware of how badly he’d beat himself up. He started howling, not out of any deep-seeded omega instinct but because of how excruciatingly horrid the pain was.

“I tried!”

“You tried too hard!”

Couldn’t argue with that logic. Miles, gently but firmly, sat him up as the howls turned to sobs, surveying the extent the damage. In any other instance, Phoenix would have been mortified by the idea of so casually sitting with his legs open, but in this case, he just let Miles do whatever it was that he wanted. He was born an alpha for a reason; to take care of stupid omegas who couldn’t handle a heat properly.

Miles grimaced in disgust, highly sympathetic to Phoenix’s situation. It’d heal, but it would hurt like a bitch until it did. How they were going to get through the rest of the week with this development, the alpha wasn’t sure. What he was sure of was that he needed to get his omega out of his nest, preferably sooner than later, and into a bath where he could bring down his heat fever. And while he was at it, it wouldn’t be a bad idea to clean up the sores either.

“Can you walk?” Miles’s question went unheard, and he came to the conclusion that Phoenix wasn’t comprehending much of anything right now. Admittedly, if the situations were reversed, Miles was pretty sure he’d be crying too. It didn’t matter, it wouldn’t be the first time he’d carried Phoenix somewhere. It was something of a regular occurrence when it came to the omega’s heat.

It didn’t make the trudge to the bathroom any more graceful, but at least he could do it quickly.

“I am so sorry about this,” Miles said as he turned the water on cold, letting the tub begin to fill. If Phoenix was freezing, he wasn’t showing it, and the alpha started splashing on his skin, trying to get his temperature down. Despite being hot and sweaty to the touch, Phoenix’s skin was flushed white, a shade or two paler than its normal color.

How the ever-loving hell that he was able to stay erect up until bitter water hit him the was a mystery to Miles, but that’s something about omegas that was beyond his comprehension. Part of him wanted to experience a heat for himself, just so he would know exactly what his partner was going through. Most of him, though, was grateful that he got to avoid that mess altogether, and all he had to deal with was the occasional mistimed rut.

Much like the one he was trying to keep at bay right now.

There was a primal side to him, reacting strongly to the involuntary scent that Phoenix was putting
off. The omega was tender, Miles could deduce that by the way he flinched slightly when he was being
cleaned. He was obviously dry, but that was fixable. The alpha had enough strength in him to focus
on the situation and keep his instincts at bay, but it wasn’t easy with having his mate naked right in
front of him.

On the positive side, Phoenix seemed to be coming back around as the minutes went on. He’d been
fairly incoherent at first, switching back and forth between strained English and downright gibberish.
Thankfully, heat-fevers like this could be reversed with prolonged exposure to the cold and
hydration. If he’d been left alone in that closet for another 24 hours or so, he likely would have
required hospitalization, but Phoenix was far from that.

Even so, it was hard not to feel guilty and responsible for what the omega was going through. Miles
pushed those feelings away for the time being in order to focus on the task at hand, vowing to make
it up to him later.

By the time he’d been in the cold water for half an hour, Phoenix was responding to questions
nicely. So far, he’d gotten the date and the name of the current president right. He even smiled
brightly when Miles asked him if he knew what day his birthday was.

“How could I forget that? I still have the scars!”

Miles splashed him harder for that, and the omega laughed. That was a good sound to hear, even if it
was at his expense.

The alpha felt his forehead. Still a little too warm for his liking, but he was notably cooler. “You
seem to be doing well enough now, you should be able to finish this on your own, shouldn’t you?”

“That doesn’t mean I want to,” Phoenix pouted, “there’s enough room for both of us in here. It’s
nice!”

“Yes, but you also started out at 105 degrees. I’m amazed you didn’t sizzle when I put you in there,”
the alpha ran his hand through the omega’s mane of black spikes, which despite being dunked under
water multiple times were still fairly straight back. “Be good and clean yourself up for me, I won’t be
far away if you need anything.”

“And what are you going to do?” Phoenix asked as Miles was drying his hands off on the towel next
to him, one of the few remaining in the bathroom after the omega’s last fit of obsessive nesting.

“A few things. I need to go get all the ruined things out of your nest, for starters. We’re going to need
things like water and food within reach in case we’re incapacitated for a while, plus medication if
you need it. There’s a lot of running around to do before I get you settled.”

Phoenix huffed, “I guess you can go then. But only because I need pain killers in the worst possible
sort of way right now.”

“Yes… I’m sorry.” There really wasn’t an appropriate thing he could say to that. Miles had had some
agonizing ruts in his day, but nothing that resulted in the tearing of such sensitive skin. It wasn’t
much of a consolation, but he kissed Phoenix softly on the forehead as he got up, kneeling over him.
He closed the door to the bathroom on his way out, and Miles had to take a moment to recalibrate himself out in the hall before he went on to handle the chores. That last kiss of his had done him in; it had given him an intense burst of his omega’s scent, and that was just more than he could take. It was his turn to get hot under the collar, struggling to not lose control right then and there. Claiming what was his would be so, so easy if only that stubborn resolve of his would give and let him have a good time.

He growled, but this time at himself as he forced the rut back once again, allowing his sense of moral responsibility and obligation to regain his concentration. The need was still there, and he could only hold the alpha in him back for so long, but Phoenix needed to be taken care of and goddamnit, that’s what he was going to do. He went to go and get the food and water ready, feeling ill prepared to enter his mate’s nest so soon after his relapse. A minute or two of gathering things would be enough to get his mind clear.

When it was time to go in the nest, Miles still had to mentally prep himself. He placed the bottles of water and bits of food right outside the mouth of the nest, easy to reach but not in the way. He took a few deep, calming breaths as he started at his next task. It wasn’t his place to go in there, he wasn’t an omega and didn’t want to mess anything up. Phoenix had long since given him consent to go in and clean during heats, but it still didn’t feel like a barrier that should be crossed by him.

“I really don’t mind, it’s not like it’s ever really organized in there anyway” Phoenix had said, many years ago when they were still learning each other and what their bond signified. “Just take out what needs to be taken out and don’t move anything else. I trust you.”

So that’s what he did.

When he got over the mental hurdle of entering the nest alone, he was rather surprised to see that there wasn’t much carnage. Nothing was slick soaked, and there were only one or two rags that had visible cum stains. There were a few towels that were still damp with sweat, but the only thing that stuck out was the rather noticeable puddle of blood in the middle of the floor. It wasn’t a small patch of it, either, there had clearly been bleeding going on for quite a while before Miles had gotten home. It made him wonder what Phoenix possibly could have gone through to make him suffer so much, and guilt struck him hard and heavy in the gut.

He should have made an effort to come home sooner, to be there while his omega was suffering through something awful. What was done was done, but it was hard for Miles to place the stained blankets in the takeaway pile knowing that he wasn’t there to help stop the bleeding. He was supposed to be an alpha; a strong, protective alpha who would do anything to ensure the safety of his omega. He’d kill somebody if they’d let Phoenix bleed when he was hurt, but Miles had done just that by deciding to take the long way home.

He felt sick, but carried on anyway because the least he could do is be there for his mate now. After making sure there was nothing else that needed to be cleaned, he hauled out and deposited the wreckage in the washing machine a few doors down. He went ahead and started the cycle. Even though Phoenix’s nest was so full, he usually still managed to wreck most of his fabrics before the heat’s end. Getting a head start on the laundry now would be the only way to catch up when the mess really started getting bad.
When Miles returned to the bedroom, Phoenix was already back in his nest and dressed. Why he bothered putting on his old nightshirt was anyone’s guess, but it was something that he usually did in-between rounds of sex, so it didn’t concern him too much.

But that didn’t mean he wasn’t going to pick on him for it.

“You know you’re going to have to take that off, right? I cured you of heat-fever once, I really don’t want to do it again. Such a pain.”

“So was waiting for you earlier, but I did it.”

Ouch, low blow. Miles sat next to him at the closet’s opening, but once again stopping just before the nest began.

“I’m really sorry about that. I thought you were sleeping, I didn’t want to disturb you. If you’ll let me in, I’ll promise I’ll make it up to you. Tell me what you want.”

Phoenix paused, gripping his chin over dramatically to show that he was thinking about it. Miles could have done without the theatrics, he was only about half an inch away from being able to let go and claim and breed and knot. He really hoped that Phoenix wasn’t seeing his control start to crumble, but this was still his courtroom rival. Of course he was seeing.

“There is one thing I was wanting you to show me. If you can do that, I’ll let you in.”

“Name it, it’s yours.”

“I don’t know how to slick,” Phoenix said, bluntly, “when I was alone, I kept trying to get myself horny enough to do it, but I couldn’t make it work. Maybe you could show me, Alpha?”

There was a slight emphasis on that last word, deliberate and heavy, and the effects went straight to Miles’s groin. This setup was too good, like something in a pornographic film that he would never admit that he liked to watch. It was hard for him not to salivate on his next sentence, and he used the last of his self-control to get the words out:

“Oh, that’s all? I think I can help you out with that, Omega.”

And with that he crossed over, and the games began.
Chapter 4

“You drank some water, didn’t you?”

Amazing how, even while shedding off his clothes like a madman, he was still able to think of things like that. Even more incredible was the speed at which he was neatly taking fabric off and folding it at his side, one article of his suit at a time. Buttons and knots were undone with a grace that Phoenix could never hope to match.

“Phoenix. Water.”

“Yeah,” he faltered, and pointed to the entrance of the nest without taking his eyes off his alpha. Miles looked, briefly, confirmed that there were at least four empty plastic bottles laying in a disorganized heap, and went back to what he was doing.

“And I took the pain pills too, don’t worry, I should be fine,” Phoenix added quickly. He had seen Miles’s mouth start to open, and he knew the nag was coming. Miles shot him a mildly aggravated look, which confirmed it.

“You know we can’t stop once this starts. If there’s anything left you think you need to do, go and get it done. I don’t know when we’ll be able to break apart.”

Phoenix thought for a second, and took account of himself as best he could. It was hard to focus on bodily needs when the scent of rut was suffocating him, making his own heat light back up into a flame.

“N-no, I’m ready.” Something in his gut panged, warning him that slick was about to happen whether he took action or not. Even though it wasn’t a rigid pain, he was still oversensitive from earlier in the day, and he doubled over.

Miles didn’t have a chance to push back the feral growl that came out of him in response. To his alpha biology, the sight of his omega so tender and vulnerable was like a huge, wet, enticing treat wrapped up just for him. It threatened to tear a howl from his throat, but he didn’t let it develop. He hated howling. It was deplorable behavior from an alpha; he needed to be more in control in order to handle himself efficiently.

With a great deal off effort and restraint, Miles managed to bark out one last question:

“Do you want my clothes in the nest or out?” It might have come out through clinched teeth, but it was a proper sentence, which is more than could be said of what came out of Phoenix’s mouth.

“I-I don’t, God, jus-just…”

That was about as coherent as a heating omega ever got, Miles reckoned, and with his last ounce of logical thought he tossed his clothes out of the nest, just far enough that they were out of danger of being ruined.
And that was the end of the pleasantries. Phoenix was fine, Miles was confident about that, and now it was time to *breed* and *claim* and *fuck* as the world went out around them. It only took a split second for the alpha to pull Phoenix up against him, rid him of that horrible sleep shirt and pin them chest-to-chest so that they were one heartbeat.

They stayed like that for a moment, close enough that they were sharing breath. All at once, Phoenix found himself burning and needing. He was overrun with lust, this time without any fear of losing the spark that would guide him through the night. He had his alpha, after all, what was there to fear?

Miles was the first to sink into his partner’s neck, with Phoenix following suit. They were sloppily scenting one another, nipping along the way. It was a primal race, a gnash of teeth on skin to see who could get to the other’s mating mark first.

Phoenix lost, he and the rest of his kind always did. While omegas instinctively clean their mate’s marks with their tongues before they bite, alphas show no such attentiveness and simply chomp down as hard as they can when they find their claim. It took no effort at all for Miles to rip through the old scars as he sunk his teeth in deep, filling his senses with his mate’s scent and a razor sharp need to get in and knot, quickly. Phoenix, despite being close enough to his partner’s mating mark that he could taste it, couldn’t find the strength to bite down as his world went white and blazing.

In the very back of Phoenix’s mind, barely loud enough to hear over the booming of sudden pleasure and belonging, something notified him that slick wasn’t going to be an issue this time. He shuddered in his alpha’s hard and unrelenting grip.

Miles hadn’t loosened his bite yet, still milking the scent down to the very last ounce. It was thick, full and intoxicating, like the first drinks of water after a week of thirst. He could feel his omega teething at his own mark on the back of his neck, but it wasn’t enough to pierce the dense skin. It came close a few times, small punctures threatening to split open. It was maddeningly teasing, and Miles bit down even firmer in a fit of revenge. He was tasting blood, but he didn’t care as he struggled to hold it together. The high-pitched whine that filled his ears was drowning out the begging moans of the omega in front of him, pleading him to let him go so he could mark his claim.

In the end, neither party could hear the pitiful words falling out of Phoenix’s mouth. The harder and firmer the bite, the less Phoenix could feel of the outside world. It was a slow and gentle fade back to reality as Miles gradually released his mouthful, bit by bit, until his teeth were completely out and an open scar was left in their place. The alpha licked over it, quick and messy without the attention to detail that an omega would have had. He didn’t have time to admire his work; the job was only half done. The rest was up to the shivering omega heaving against his chest, trying to catch his breath.

“When you’re ready.”

That was all that needed to be said. Miles’s voice was coming out deep and commanding, and Phoenix couldn’t ignore it. He obediently went over and licked his claim, cleaning the tiny pinpricks that had already been made in the skin. There were marks over marks over marks, each one a
different time and place. There was one particularly deep one, buried under thick, sweating skin and a
dozen other imprints, that the omega cleaned especially well. He’d made that years ago, when he
was freshly disbarred and infuriated, and he lost control where he shouldn’t have. He hated that scar,
wished he could take it away, wanted anything else but to be reminded of the time he’d let his alpha
down.

“Phoenix…hurry…”

He stopped tonguing when he heard his partner moan his name, and gently placed his teeth over the
skin. It was so easy to get sentimental during this, it was a wonder to him that Miles was able to take
care of him so efficiently every time. When he’d found the place he wanted to make his mark, he bit
down swiftly and easily, trying to cause as little pain to Miles as possible. There was nothing painless
about tearing through flesh and muscle, but if the alpha minded he had a terrible way of showing it.
He didn’t sit and whimper like Phoenix had. No, he was growling, forcing out instructions even as
the omega tightened his bite.

“I can take more than that! Don’t move, don’t move, go harder!”

Backing up his bold claims, Miles was squirming hard, trying to make Phoenix’s mouth slip and cut
a bigger scar down his mating gland. Typical alpha. They hated being marked unless it came to their
chosen mate, in which case they wanted the biggest marks to display to the world. Omegas could fall
in love many times, but alphas only mated for life. That was the stereotype anyway, and Miles
Edgeworth fell straight into it despite his protests to the contrary.

Phoenix, however, was not about to give him that satisfaction. He hated hurting his alpha. He got
what he wanted from the bite: a hot, intense burst of his mate’s scent. After he felt he’d gotten
enough, he withdrew his teeth completely and began tending to the damage. Even through Miles’s
shouts of objection, Phoenix remained firm and thoroughly treated the raw scar.

It was hard to fault the omega for doing what he was programmed to do, but it was also difficult to
conceal the frustration from the gentle marking. Without thinking, Miles reached his hand down to
where their dicks met and grabbed for his partner’s out of habit. He’d intended to bring him to a
rough, short first climax, but that plan was shot when Phoenix screeched and jolted away, shielding
his crotch with his hands.

“Shit! I’m sorry, I forgot- “

“It’s ok, it’s ok, it’s ok…” Phoenix chanted, clearly trying to convince himself and not his partner.
He rocked back and forth, trying to soothe the sting, rather obviously holding tears back. Miles
couldn’t say he blamed him, but now he felt like shit twice over. First for putting his omega in a
situation where he felt compelled to rub his dick raw, and twice for inflicting enough pain on him to
make him cry. What on earth was wrong with him today?
“...Do you need to stop?” Miles certainly didn’t want to, not after being freshly marked and feeling ready to knot at any second. His own cock was standing at attention, undeterred and telling him to go ahead and take. This wasn’t about his rut. This was about Phoenix’s heat, and if he needed to stop, well, Miles was going to find a way to fucking stop.

“N-no, please don’t-, “ Phoenix whined, and Miles let out a breath he didn’t know he’d been holding. Oh, thank God, he didn’t want to stop, this could be saved. There was still opportunity to redeem himself here. Miles held out his hand, trying to invite his omega back to his side. What Phoenix did instead was rub his face up against it, as if he were a cat that wanted to be petted. Well, that could be arranged too, if that’s what suited him.

“Can I still touch yours?” the question was quiet, like Phoenix had been ashamed to bring it up. It was amazing that he felt that he even had to ask for consent after all this time, as if they hadn’t been in this damned closet thousands of times just for the fun of it. Miles stared at him for a second, disbelieving, but quickly shook himself out of it for the sake of calming the ache in his cock.

“Yes, yes Omega, come here,” he pulled Phoenix towards him and sat him back where he had been. Just to be on the safe side, Miles reached his hand back down in-between them to check and see if Phoenix was slicking properly. If the resulting moan from his partner was anything to go by, it seemed as if the damage had not spread further south between his legs. Small victories. The alpha had never been happier to feel that Phoenix actually was managing to soak the sheets underneath him. Usually that just meant more laundry, and it still did, but now it signified that it was alright to move ahead. Miles wasn’t going to hurt him any further.

If were possible to get even harder, his body had just found a way. He growled, undiluted and possessive, bearing his teeth. Phoenix quivered in his grasp, mewling with want and need and very little else. It seemed as though the pain had passed for the time being, or at least was being dulled with heat. Miles had taken a sigh of relief and braced himself, ready for far-to-light touches on his cock and shy, slow strokes to start off with. Phoenix seemed to be in that kind of mood, not that that was a problem in the slightest.

So when Phoenix seized his alpha’s dick, hard and intent at the base, Miles almost finished on the spot. He thrusted on reflex, pushing the two skin-to-skin, and Miles just knew, deep within his core, that he didn’t have long. He was going to knot like this if he didn’t get inside his omega right the fuck now.

It wasn’t hard to turn Phoenix around, not when he needed it just as much as his alpha did. Phoenix took it the rest of the way, laying himself down and presenting. There was a moment of clarity as Miles got into position, where his logical side was screaming at him not to go straight in like an animal. Phoenix hadn’t been stretched, or prepared, and slick or not it was important-

“Please, Alpha, please, fuck me, do it, please…” Phoenix was babbling disjointedly. It was doubtful that he was even aware what was coming out of his mouth. But that was still an invitation, and
before he had the chance to debate the ethics of it with himself, Miles took it. He buried himself as far in as he could go, and even though he was completely sheathed in wet heat, he kept thrusting trying to get more. He was as deep as he could possibly get and that still wasn’t close enough to soothe his inner alpha. He was ramming against something as he snapped out and back in, and his instincts howled at the feel of it. This was something that could be broken or shattered in half, something that clearly existed solely for him to destroy. He thrusted harder, bracing himself against his screaming mate.

Phoenix wasn’t in control; his world had flashed white and starry at the first penetration, a feeling which got renewed with every slam against him. Release was close, the impending orgasm bursting splashes of color behind his eyelids with every passing second. He needed the knot worse than he needed air in his lungs, and he tried to shove himself back into Miles in a vain attempt to take some control back. Miles pushed him back into place with a firm hand, pinning him motionless against the ground. Phoenix had already been crying- he usually did during this- but that one simple act of dominance prompted it to become an all-out sob. He kept begging through it, loudly, wanting his alpha to hurry it up and breed him already.

“~Faster, faster, yeah right there, don’t stop, please Alpha~”

One last crash against his omega, and there it was. Miles tried to shout out a warning, he really did, but all that came out was a panicked grunt as the knot constricted and orgasm racked through his frame. He was still trying to thrust as he was cumming, milking everything out as it flooded his omega. Phoenix desperately rocked back on the knot, filling him deeper, aching for that last bit of contact that would send him over the edge. Miles grabbed hold of Phoenix’s hips and pulled him in with a groan, spending the last bit of himself as he mumbled to his partner.

“You’re so good, you did so good, I’m proud of you. I love you so much.”

That was all it took, and Phoenix choked as he finally, finally found release, clinching hard around his alpha’s knot. The feeling wasn’t great on Miles’s end, muscles spasming against his oversensitive member causing him to bite back a shout of pain. Phoenix couldn’t help it, and he didn’t need to feel guilty about finishing just a moment too late. Miles let him ride out his orgasm, mumbling out bits of praise as he came down from the high.

“That was great, you took that so well, thank you for that. You’re such a good boy, you know that?”

Phoenix laughed, softly and without an ounce of malice. “You’re going to get me started again if you keep talking to me like that.”

“Hate to tell you, but you’re going to ‘get started’ no matter what I tell you. You’re in heat,” Miles sighed, wanting nothing more than to rest while they waited for the knot to go down. Usually, it took
more than one release to calm Phoenix down, but Miles could tell from his mate’s peaceful scent that that wouldn’t be the case here. At least, not for a while. Miles was more than a little grateful for that, since keeping up with his partner during this was absolutely *exhausting* at times. A break, even a little one, was a Godsend.

It took a minute of maneuvering, and some not-so-graceful rustling of fabric for the two to comfortably rest laying on their sides. When they got there, though, Miles held his partner tightly up against him. He kissed the mark on the back of Phoenix’s neck, still red and raw. It went to show just how tired the omega was that he merely yawned in response, rather than making some snide comment about overly proud alphas.

“Don’t fall asleep, you know you can’t stay in here.”

Phoenix stirred lazily, groaning. “We didn’t make that much of a mess.”

“Says the person with ejaculate splattered all over his chest.”

“And on my face. I hit that too.”

“The prosecution rests.”

Miles tentatively tried to back his knot out, and it didn’t take long to know that it was good and stuck right where it was. It’d be fifteen minutes, maybe twenty, before the two lovebirds would be able to separate.

“So, what do you want to do in the meantime?” Phoenix asked, still tired but back in good spirits. “You won’t let me sleep and we can’t move, so I assume you must have some sort of game planned?”

“Don’t be foolish. The day we bring our chess set in here is the same day that I jump off a burning bridge.”

“I don’t recommend that as a lifestyle choice,” Phoenix deadpanned, and Miles mentally smacked himself in the face. He was the undisputed king of making horrible decisions today. At least his mate wasn’t keen on rubbing it in. “I was thinking more like twenty questions? Or I-spy?”

“We are in a dark closet, Phoenix. We can’t ‘spy’ anything.”

“I like to think of it as added challenge. And what else do we have to do?”

Miles sighed, “I think I like it better when you’re delirious during this part.”

“So, you’ll let me sleep?”
“…only if you’ll wake up long enough to walk yourself to bed. I carried you once tonight, I’m not interested in doing it a second time.”

“You carried me? When?”

“Never you mind,” Miles hushed him. If he didn’t remember being carried, he probably didn’t remember almost being dropped on the way to the bathroom either. At least he’s managed to save some face on that front. “Go on to sleep, Phoenix. I’ll take care of the knot.”

It was amazing how quickly Phoenix could doze off when he wanted to. It didn’t matter that he was laying on the floor with a cock stuck in his ass; when he decided it was time to sleep, he was out like a light. Miles wished he could be born with that blessing, instead being cursed with the remnants of long-resolved nightmares.

But that was just one more item on the list of things that Miles, really, really admired about his mate. Not that he’d ever tell anybody that he kept such a list hidden in the back of his mind, especially not Phoenix himself. Better not to spoil him all at once and let all the praise go to his head, because it would, and Miles would never hear the end of it.

To the omega’s credit, Phoenix did fulfil his promise to wake up once the knot softened. Miles didn’t have to shake him; the sensation of a long length of flesh pulling out was enough to shoot him out of dreamland.

“Gah!”

“Yes, I know, I’m sorry, bear with me here,” Miles grunted, going as slowly as he possibly could. Phoenix rolled his eyes,

“Miles, there’s going to be a mess, just let it happen.”

“Well, there should be a medical way to decrease the amount. We aren’t trying to get pregnant, it’s just a pain,” Miles was still half in, fiddling around trying to find the perfect angle that would produce the least amount of spillage.

“I’m going to have to disagree with you there. I need it, and besides, I’ve been meaning to ask- “

“When you sit up, don’t do it all at once, you’ll just get it everywhere,” Miles interrupted, now most
of the way out. “How do you feel? Hot? Hungry?”

“Tired. Everything hurts and I just want to sleep”. Phoenix massaged his head with his hands. He’d ask later, this wasn’t a great time anyway.

“I can handle that. Just promise you’ll wake me up when you need to mate, I don’t want you to suffer in silence like you did earlier.” Miles said, the last of it sliding out easily. Phoenix didn’t have to be facing him to feel the grimace on his partner’s face.

“I don’t know why you get so grossed out by it. It’s yours. You swallow mine like you actually like the taste of it.”

“You aren’t the one that does the laundry afterwards,” Miles reasoned, and Phoenix didn’t have an answer to that. Miles rolled him over on his back, though there was no way the two could see each other within the dark nest. There had been some daylight coming though the bedroom window when Miles had first come in, but night had swiftly fallen, leaving them in pitch black.

Still, Phoenix didn’t need to see to know that they were both thoroughly wrecked, soaking with sweat. As exhausted as Phoenix was, he did have to admit that the feeling of a debauched, attentive Miles hovering over him was almost enough to make his body go back into overdrive.

“Let’s get you clean and into bed. You need your sleep, even if it will only be a few hours.”

“Yeah,” Phoenix sighed, dreamily. Even something as mundane as cleaning up sounded sexy when they were in this position. Miles gave him a kiss, dry but firm against his lips. Phoenix held his mouth agape in invitation, and whined softly when Miles pulled away and sat upright.

“Are you sure you aren’t hot?” It was a growl, low and predatory. But there was a bit of playfulness there too, like a dare whispered hot across his skin.

“Depends,” Phoenix growled in return. Even though he wasn’t an alpha, he felt big enough to play their games. He ignored Miles’s earlier request for him to sit up slowly, instead springing upright to meet his gaze. Wet mess dripped down in-between his legs, but if Miles had any objections now he sure as hell wasn’t voicing them.

“Are you going to finish what you started, or are you going to run while you can?”

Miles met that challenge, kissing Phoenix against him and crashing their mouths together hard. They didn’t need words after that, their tongues were too busy doing more important things.

This was going to be a long night.
Chapter 5

Miles had to admit, as frustrating as his mate could be at times, Phoenix was absolutely adorable when he slept.

The last couple of rounds had been a little much. He knew he shouldn’t have pushed that last one when Phoenix was so overtired and drained, but it was hard to say no to a begging omega in heat. Phoenix could be very convincing when it came to this sort of thing anyway, but as soon as the omega in him took over, Miles was completely powerless. Despite what he’d always been taught about being an alpha, there was no doubt in Miles’s mind that Phoenix was the one controlling him.

And he didn’t have a single objection to raise to that.

Phoenix had fallen asleep after the last time, and it went to show just how exhausted he was that he didn’t even stir when Miles pulled out. It was far too late into the night to care about the mess, and the limp knot was freed without production. There was a deep, primal urge for Miles to lie down, bury into the crook of Phoenix’s neck and fall asleep. It was cradling him, taunting him, trying to get him to forget about the damp blankets and the ruined towels. And if it were anybody else, they would have given into that temptation without a second thought.

Miles, however, was not anybody else, and the feeling of filth touching his skin was beginning to make him nauseous. He usually didn’t even like sleeping in unmade beds, so this was so far outside his comfort zone that it ached. Oh, the things he did for this idiot. His idiot.

Phoenix was so peaceful and content, snoring softly in the darkness, it seemed like a shame to wake him up. He had so much of his heat left to go, and who knew when he’d get the chance to sleep so soundly again? But Miles was shifting against wet fabric, every position more unpleasant than the last, and he knew he had to shake Phoenix awake. For his own sanity and peace of mind, he started nudging his omega.

“Wright, come on, let me clean you up and then you can go to bed. It won’t take long, alright?”

Phoenix grumbled under his breath, voice still heavy with sleep, “’s not my name.” He turned over, clutching his alpha with one arm and nestling against his chest.

Everything in Miles’s body cringed when he felt Phoenix’s stomach against his own. He was caked in slick and release, and even though it didn’t seem to bother Phoenix it sure as hell was putting every nerve of the alpha’s body on edge. He shook Phoenix harder. “It is when I need you to be serious. I know you’re worn-out, but oblige me here.”

Despite Phoenix visibly not being in on the plan, Miles sat the two of them upright, forcing the
omega to sit on his own. Phoenix rubbed at his eyes, yawning loudly. Miles didn’t have to be able to see his face to know that he was going to be back asleep within a matter of seconds if he didn’t get a light on overhead. Phoenix protested as Miles got up shakily and reached for the light switch at the entrance of the closet.

The moment of truth was upon him. How badly had they wrecked the nest this time? Miles shuttered to think; between the excessive amounts of semen, slick, sweat, and possibly blood, just how much laundry was going to be in his future before he’d be able to go to sleep? It wasn’t like he could just leave it for the next day, Phoenix was going to need to get back in there sooner than later, and it didn’t matter to him in the slightest how clean it was in there. Omega instincts were stronger than logic when it came to that, and even though Miles couldn’t comprehend it in the slightest, he’d come to accept it as a part of his mate.

Still, Miles had to brace himself for a moment before flicking the switch. It never ceased to amaze him how much damage the two of them could cause in a few hours’ time, but here they were. With a deep breath and shut eyes, the light came on and Phoenix hissed.

“I’m up, I’m up! Damn it, that hurts!”

“I tried to give you some warning. My apologies,” Miles opened his eyes slowly and scanned the nest as his vision came into focus. It wasn’t the worst they’d ever done, not by a long shot. By some miracle nothing had managed to get on the wall or ceiling. They’d completely wrecked the blankets underneath them, streaking them white. Something had gotten ripped up, but for the life of him Miles couldn’t tell what.

The worst looking thing in the nest, predictably, was Phoenix himself. There was not a piece of skin on him that wasn’t wet, or white, or bitten, or bruised, or some combination thereof. It was impossible for Miles not to feel innate pride swell in his chest as he went back down to look him over more carefully, kissing Phoenix on the top of his head and running his fingers through the messy spikes.

“How on earth did it get in your hair?”

Phoenix laughed, “Probably the same way it got in yours.”

To his horror, Miles’s hand flew to his head and discovered that Phoenix wasn’t joking. He hadn’t even thought to take account of himself in all of this. He must have looked just as bad as Phoenix did, if not worse. After all, Phoenix was the one that clawed and bit and sucked and marked everywhere he could reach. God, this wasn’t a normal heat, neither of them had taken proper time off of work for these things to heal, everybody was going to see-
“You worry too much,” Phoenix said with an easy smile. It was uncanny how easily he could read Miles’s emotions. It had to have come from all the time in court they’d spent opposing each other over the years, there was no other explanation for it. “It’s not like this is a secret. You aren’t exactly subtle.”

Miles scoffed, “No, you are the one who lacks subtlety. Do you know what Miss Fey told me when I dropped Trucy off this afternoon?”

“Something inappropriate that she said solely to get a rise out of you? That is one of her favorite things to do, you know. She keeps a scrapbook for it.”

Well, at least he seemed to be waking up alright. On the other hand, he was back to being his usual smart-ass self. Miles resisted the temptation to roll his eyes, especially when he needed to look angry in this moment.

“As much as I believe that’s true, this one falls on your shoulders,” Miles looked his partner in the eye, and pointed up to lone cardboard box that was stored overhead. Phoenix didn’t even have to break eye contact to know where this was going, and he couldn’t contain the wide grin that spread out over his face. He knew when he’d been caught.

“Yeah, and?”

“Yeah and?! Wright, you weren’t supposed to get into the box!”

“Oh, I’m Wright again. Ok, Edgeworth, I concede that I broke our oral contract and opened the box without you being with me. However, I would like to present the counter argument that it’s being stored in my nest, and that the only thing I removed from the box was my collar, that you gave me.”

“Why did you even take it out to begin with? It doesn’t do anything on its own, it’s just something that clips around your neck,” Miles posed, legitimately asking. “Without a dominant partner to tug on it every now and again, what use is it to you?”

Phoenix didn’t even have to consider the question before speaking, “It means more than you think it does. It has your scent on it, for one. You probably don’t see the value in that, Alpha, but it’s comforting. I also like knowing that I belong to somebody. I need that too.”

Miles visibly recoiled at that, “You don’t belong to anybody, you’re every bit as important as I am in this. I’m not keeping you hostage.”

“I know you don’t understand,” Phoenix sighed, scratching the back of his neck. “I can’t explain it. I don’t know if it’s an omega thing, or if it’s just a quirk of mine, but it’s just…I dunno- something that I need to feel whole? It’s just different. I’ve been asking for a collar for so damn long, Miles.”

Miles decided to drop that argument for the time being. He still couldn’t claim that he completely grasped that dark desire of Phoenix’s, not even after years of having it explained and reexplained to him. He’d been told multiple times, by multiple sources, that it was the most natural kind of play when it came to their genders. It was enough for him to know that Phoenix wasn’t abnormal for
wanting it, but rather that the problem lied within himself.

“That being what it is, you didn’t have to parade it around like some kind of trophy. From what I do understand, being collared is a personal situation, yes?”

“I did not ‘parade it around’”, Phoenix justified, “It’s just Maya! We tell each other these things. She’s my best friend.”

Miles coughed a bit louder than was necessary. Phoenix caught his mistake and patched it.

“Besides you. She’s been waiting for you to collar me for years, what was I supposed to do?”

There was so much about that sentence that Miles needed to deconstruct in his own time. In the edges of his mind, there were some pangs of jealousy that were beginning to ring, even if he knew that Maya was completely harmless. Phoenix had been up front in regards to his relationship with Maya from the very beginning, and it was so silly to hold a grudge against what had happened between her and Phoenix, once, over a decade ago.

It was still there, though. It didn’t bother him, it wasn’t worth getting angry over, and logically it was just a petty thing to hold onto. But it was still there.

“Are you ok?” Phoenix said, eyes wide with concern. Miles cursed himself inwardly, he must have been staring.

“Yes, yes of course,” Miles held his hand out for the omega to clasp, but for the second time that night Phoenix misread the gesture and nestled up to it instead. Miles raised an eyebrow, but thought very little of it as he obliged his partner by running his hand through ruined spikes. That reminded him, he’d turned the light on for a reason. There was at least a load of laundry, two showers, and one battle to get Phoenix to eat something ahead of him if he actually wanted to stand a chance of getting more than an hour of sleep in. He motioned upwards, getting the attention of the defense attorney.

“Come on, you can take the first shower. There’s no way I’m letting you anywhere near the bed in this state.”

“Can’t you take it with me? It’s lonely by myself,” Phoenix said, hopeful. Miles shook his head,

“You’re a big boy, I think you can take a little separation anxiety. Unless you want to trade positions with me and do the laundry yourself.”

“Fine, fine, you’ve made your point. Want to meet back up in about fifteen minutes?”

“Better make it twenty,” Miles was looking down at the floor around them, and only now had he managed to figure out what had gotten torn up. It was a pillowcase, and it hadn’t been ripped by hands either. If the imprints were anything to go by, it had actually been gnawed over a much longer period of time. Phoenix usually did bite down on something to muffle his voice, come to think of it. Geez, maybe that rubber gag that was being stored up overhead had more use than Miles had originally bargained for.
“You’ve got to eat something.”

“No, I don’t. I’ll get sick.”

“Not if I get you something small. You trust me, don’t you?”

“Yes, but I know my heats.”

“So do I. You know what happens when you don’t eat.”

It was this argument again. It was the famous “get Phoenix to eat something during his heat” argument that they’d been having ever since they originally started dating. It was to be expected just as much as the knotting, and the remarking of their mating glands. Miles could never really bring himself to hate his omega, except for this one facet of their relationship. It was this shit right here that would drive him up the wall.

“Wright, listen to me. You’re not going to get sick, I won’t let that happen. If you don’t eat during these breaks, your body is going to try to- “

“I know, I know,” Phoenix buried his face in the mattress, as if that was going to get him out of this conversation. He’d put his nightshirt back on and gotten in to bed within the same minute that he’d finished his shower. He’d been hoping that he’d be able to avoid his overprotective alpha’s wrath, but that just wasn’t in the cards.

Having showered and cleaned out the nest, all Miles wanted right now was to feed Phoenix and go to sleep. It was like dealing with a fussy toddler; didn’t he know that he was burning a lot of calories during this heat? Even knowing where this phobia of getting sick was stemming from, it didn’t make it any less frustrating to deal with.

“One granola bar. That’s all I’m asking, then I’ll leave you alone. Fair?”

Phoenix turned to look at him, and reluctantly took the bar out of his hand. He wasn’t looking too sure even as he unwrapped it. He was psyching himself out, Miles knew it, and deep down, Phoenix had to have known it too.

The story went- Miles could recount it word by word since his mate had told it so much- that not even a year after Miles had moved away, Phoenix had presented. It’d been traumatic for him, having
only one caretaker at the time who was a beta and ill-equipped to handle an omega’s heat. On top of that, he’d presented quite young, much younger than schools begin to educate children in secondary genders. It’s common knowledge among adults that heating omegas can’t eat full meals because of the stress put on their bodies, but how was the 10-year-old boy supposed to know that? He’d made himself violently sick during his first heat. And even now, grown and in his 30’s, he was hesitant to even look at food unless he was on the verge of passing out.

Even now, he was looking slightly nauseous just holding the granola bar in his palm. Feeling pity, Miles took it back and snapped it in half, handing back the equivalent of two bites. It wasn’t a lot, but it had enough protein in it to last a while. Phoenix ate it down, forced himself to swallow even though his brain was telling him to spit it out.

He’d be hungry for the other half later, Miles had been more concerned with getting something in him right then. It was hardly dinner, but the only other meal that Phoenix had eaten that day had been light at best, and it was important to keep something in him. The last thing he needed was another heat-fever in the middle of the night.

“Thank you,” Miles said as he handed Phoenix a glass of water, which he drained straight away. The alpha had to wonder if he really was that thirsty, or if he was fighting to keep the bar down. It was only when Phoenix was halfway relaxed again that Miles turned the light off and laid down next to him. He was utterly and completely exhausted, slightly uneasy at the knowledge that his mate could need to breed again at any given time.

Phoenix huddled against his chest, and Miles planted a kiss flat on top of his head, content.

“Love you.”

“I love you too. Even if you’re a total food Nazi,” Phoenix yawned on the last word, making the sentence less than bitter. He was back asleep within a matter of minutes, as to be expected, snoozing softly against his alpha’s skin. From here, there was a countdown clock running rabid in Miles’s brain.

Would he be up again in two hours or only one? There was no way he was going to get through the night, not during the first 24 hours of a heat. If the digital clock shining red on the side of the bed was correct, it was just shy of being midnight. Ok, that granola bar should be enough to get him through sunrise without needing to pass out, no worries there. It probably wouldn’t be until tomorrow afternoon that Phoenix would start getting hungry on his own, in which case he’d need something filling but light. That was usually soup. They had that in the pantry, didn’t they?

It was at that moment he realized that, in all his fretting about his omega, he’d forgotten to feed himself. At some point he’d have to sneak away and take care of that. A spreadsheet of potential times and actions filled Miles’s thoughts, trying to put together a schedule for an unscheduable situation. He was clicking everything into place as best he could up until the very second that sleep
snuck up on him and struck him on the head.

It was admittedly a light sleep, finicky and dreamless, but that was better than the alternative. As far back as Miles could remember, he’d never had dreams, only night terrors. He’d wake up every now and again, not completely, just enough to readjust himself or maybe plunk another time into his mental agenda that he’d forget by morning.

When Miles woke up for real, it was to a trembling omega who wasn’t quite awake himself. Phoenix was mumbling something incoherent, tossing and turning against the comforter, fists balled up in the bed sheets. The scent he was putting off was heavy and distinctive; the stench of heat so strong that its effect on Miles was immediate, shooting pleasure straight through his frame like a lightning bolt to a metal rod. It jerked his body upright, and with a presence of mind that shocked even him, Miles checked the digital clock.

3:15, better than he estimated. Not a great night of sleep, but there would be naps later on. Miles grabbed ahold of Phoenix’s shoulder and shook him to life, the omega’s breath and heart rate skyrocketing. At the realization of the situation he was in, Phoenix got scared. Not horny or passionate, just scared and on the verge of tears.

“Shh, Shh, I’m going to take care of you, alright?” Miles sat up and pulled the quivering omega into his lap. The alpha caught himself as he reached down to stoke Phoenix’s cock, hand stopping cold in mid-descent. Phoenix took Miles’s hand, and placed it on the back of his neck right above his mating scars. Miles got the hint and drew the two closer, pressing their lips together. The omega practically melted into his arms at the contact, drinking down the kiss like it was the only thing keeping him alive. Whatever it was that Miles was doing with his tongue, Phoenix was taking it and moaning, getting acclimated to his state-of-affairs quite nicely. This wasn’t his nest, but he was so close to Miles that if he closed his eyes he couldn’t tell the difference.

Well, almost. Part of him was still acutely aware that this wasn’t an enclosed space, and that was never too far away from his mind. However, Miles was doing incredible things with his hands, touching and gripping and feeling him just right. That could overshadow the apocalypse as far as Phoenix was concerned.

“Heh, looks like somebody figured out how to slick,” Miles husked, teasingly. It took a second for Phoenix to register what he said through the fog, but when he did, he turned bright red. Miles had a hand on his ass, and he was suddenly very, very aware that he’d soaked through his boxer shorts. There was nowhere for him to hide from it; he could only face his partner, knowing what he’d done.

“S-sorry,” this was humiliating, he usually had enough control to hold it back until they got in the nest. He couldn’t even remember starting, had he done it in his sleep? That just made it worse. He wasn’t sure how old he’d been the last time he’d slicked the bed, but he was pretty positive that it was before his voice had fully dropped.
To Phoenix’s surprise, Miles didn’t look too upset over it. He actually looked kind of intrigued? That was interesting. Phoenix had been expecting some kind of reprimand, but Miles was looking more like he’d just had a burst of inspiration.

Honestly, that was scarier than any death-glare that the prosecutor could have possibly mustered. The last time Miles had had an idea of where to take their sex life, it ended with one of them in cosplay and the other one in drag. Phoenix still didn’t like to admit which part he’d played in that little fiasco.

“What are you sorry for? This is the point, isn’t it, to get you wet enough for me to take you? I’d say you’re doing your job.”

Phoenix recoiled, “Ye-yeah, I guess.”

“But you do need to be punished for this. You swat a dog when they wet on the floor. You spank a child when they wet the bed. Why should you be any different?”

The omega nodded, mouth slightly agape. He was following, but he wasn’t believing. Had he heard that word right?

“Punished?” he repeated, thoughtlessly.

“In one way or another, yes. I think I know what I want to do, if you’ll let me of course.”

Let him?! Phoenix’s brain short circuited, becoming more and more scattered by the second. This was a wet dream; a heat induced, middle-of-the-night-and-horny-as-hell fever dream. Miles must have gotten tired of him sputtering, trying to come up with a response, because he placed a single finger on the omega’s lips to quiet him.

“You’re going to like this. You trust me, don’t you?”

Only with his life, soul and everything that Phoenix ever was or would be. But somehow, all that Phoenix could get out was a simple nod, eyes wide and curious.

Maybe slicking the bed wasn’t the worst thing he’d ever done after all. If it lead to such nice consequences, maybe he'd consider having his heat up top more often.
In his haze, Phoenix could only remember snippets of Miles laying him down over his lap. It went without saying that this wasn’t going to be a big production; Phoenix was too far gone to consent to anything that wasn’t painfully vanilla. And for that matter, Miles’s own brain was foggy with rut, unable to conjure up a more creative punishment.

“Tell me it’s ok,” Miles demanded, giving his partner very little room to argue. It had been easier to act dominant and suave when Phoenix facing him. Now he had a heating omega presenting himself right below him and god, it was hard to bite back a predatory howl at the sight. Phoenix nodded again, hard, but that wasn’t good enough. Miles had to know that Phoenix was actually hearing him through that thick skull of his, for his own sake. He took his omega’s chin gently, turning his head towards him so that Phoenix would have no other option but to look him in the eye.

“Phoenix. Tell me.”

Phoenix met his gaze, eyes cloudy but able to focus on his mate. He opened his mouth and closed it to gulp, words trying to form but just falling short. Miles just sat there waiting for the verbal go-ahead, even though his internal dialogue was pleading with him to get the spanking over with. He brushed those feelings off, as far away as he could fling them, knowing full well that they’d boomerang back even harder. This had to be done responsibly.

“Wha-what’re you going to do?”

Miles almost laughed at that, but the urgency of the situation made him swallow it. Phoenix was always a little thick in the head on the best of days, but heat made him into a goddamn child.

“What do you think?”

“I can’t!” It was a frustrated whine, bitter and honest, “I don’t care what you do, I need something, it doesn’t matter what it is, just make it hurt and fuck me-“

THWACK!

Well, if he insisted, Miles didn’t see any point in not giving it to him. If this had been at any other time, the prosecutor would have made a conscious effort not to hurt him. However, he was rutting, he needed to fuck, and this was getting in the way of that.

THWACK!
In a startling amount of foresight, Miles moved his opposing arm against his partner’s chest to prevent him from flying off the bed. The first hit had nearly thrown him off his lap entirely, effectively turning Phoenix into even more of a mewling, blubbering idiot. The second, when he crashed up against Miles’s forearm, only served to make him louder.

**THWACK!**

Something about the third one made Phoenix lose his words altogether. He coughed on his last moan, let it simmer into nothing, and then went limp and quiet. Miles very quickly looked to him, more curious than concerned. He was biting down on something indiscriminate, Miles couldn’t really tell what in the barely-existent lighting.

Had…had he really always done that? What a weird thing, especially since he had no reason to be quiet now. Miles reached around and attempted to pull the thing— which was now obviously just a bit of the comforter- out of Phoenix’s mouth. He was met with a resistance that he wasn’t expecting; Phoenix shaking his head as his alpha tried to gently pull the fabric away.

“Spit it out. I want to hear you.”

Another tug, still tender but more intentional than the last. There was a murmur around his hand then, small, deep, and definite. Miles threw his hand back, stunned.

“Are you- did you just…” He hesitantly tried it again, just a hair lighter. The result was louder this time, the unmistakable sound of an omega’s possessive growl.

**THWACK!**

“Since when do you- why are you- how do you even know HOW to-!” Miles wasn’t even forming sentences. Of course Phoenix could growl. Both sexes came by it naturally, in equal amounts. Phoenix could also howl, and bark, and snarl, and all of those other deplorable behaviors that came with not being a beta. He just…*didn’t.* Not out of anger or possessiveness. When he did, it was usually because he was hurt, or trying to be playful. He had never done it out of disobedience.

He’d never done it to *him.*

**THWACK!**

“You are going to do what you’re told!” Miles wasn’t to far off from barking the order himself, “*You* don’t get a choice in the matter!”

Another growl, louder, this time unprompted.

**THWACK!**

He jerked Phoenix up by the shirt collar, hard enough to make Phoenix gag and lose his hold on the comforter. With far more force than was necessary, Miles threw him upright and yanked him close, close enough for them to taste each other’s breath.

That son of a bitch was smiling.

“You…you-“ Miles didn’t quite know what to do with that. He took a breath and felt the enraged
alpha in him simmer out. It was obvious now that Phoenix was doing this on purpose, but why? He loosened his grip, let Phoenix slink down onto his lap. He was still looking at him, eyes bright and mischievous.

“I could have hurt you,” is what Miles ultimately decided on.

“Um…yeah? That’s kind of what I want.”

“Why?!” Miles bit, and Phoenix could practically hear the unsaid Why are you making me hurt the one thing I love the most laced in his voice. All at once, his face fell, and it was Phoenix’s turn to feel guilty.

Phoenix opened his mouth to say something, but nothing fell out. The sudden change in atmosphere had left him cold, momentarily chasing the heat away. It’d creep back; there wasn’t anything on earth that could keep it away for long. Miles let the grip on Phoenix’s shirt go lax, opting to slump back and let his hands run along his partner’s body lazily.

There were a few moments of amicable silence. Phoenix went down, laid right where Miles had positioned him, let his alpha hold him for a while. Miles continued touching him, rubbing circles along his back as if manually trying to restart the heating process. Phoenix wanted to tell him he could go back to sleep, that he would go to the nest and work everything out himself.

“You know I love you, don’t you?” Miles broke the quiet and shuffled slightly to kiss Phoenix on top of his head. It was so precious and out of character that it almost was enough to make Phoenix tear up a little. It wasn’t that Miles couldn’t be loving; he was an absolute saint during heats after all. It was just that, with the complete insanity of their lives, it was hard to find the time to be so intimate. The contrast of Chief Prosecutor Miles Edgeworth and the man that was currently running a hand softly along his spikes was like night and day.

Phoenix nodded, not trusting himself to say something coherent. Miles was seamlessly transferring his attention from his hair to the back of his neck, inching closer with every stroke back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.

“That’s where I marked you, isn’t it?” Miles tapped a finger directly above his still-swollen mating gland. It wasn’t quite on the mark, in fact it was maddeningly just a little bit off. Phoenix shuddered uncomfortably at the tease. “Right there?”

“Mmph,” Phoenix shook his head, trying to guide Miles the half inch further down, but the pressure stayed precisely where it was.

“You’re not the only one who can be manipulative,” Miles said, then traced his fingers exasperatingly slowly around the base of the gland. It was like turning a dial all the way up, and in the seconds it took Miles to make the complete ring around the mark, Phoenix’s vision was back to being foggy and unfocused. “Serves you right.”
“We need- we need to move,” Phoenix warned, “I’m- I’m going to-“

“You’re going to what? Slick? Go ahead, the sheets are already ruined anyway.”

Phoenix had honestly forgotten about that in all the commotion. He was still soaking wet…which made him realize that neither one of them had bothered to get undressed during any of this. It was almost funny in a weird way, until the realization hit him that both their sets of clothes were probably ruined. Despite what Miles would say, Phoenix actually did feel bad about the amount of laundry that heats resulted in.

“What’s wrong? Having trouble?” Miles asked as he finally, finally pressed down on the gland. Phoenix doubled over and moaned loudly against his alpha’s chest, his world once again fading into white. Over the sea of white noise, Phoenix could almost make out the feeling of Miles undressing at rapid speed, along with his own nightshirt being yanked over his spikey head.

Apparently, Miles hadn’t realized that they hadn’t undressed yet either. And even though he was crashing back down to earth, Phoenix couldn’t help but laugh at that a little bit.

Chapter End Notes

Long delay is long, but here’s a new chapter for you guys anyway! It's a bit short, but I promise I'll make up for it next time. Thank you all for being patient!
Chapter 7

4:47 AM.

Miles did a double take at the clock, because with everything Phoenix had needed, it felt like he’d already been up half the night. The sun wouldn’t even be up for another hour. He pinched his forehead, groggily and mildly annoyed that so little time had passed.

And, well, he could only blame himself for the additional laundry. Phoenix had asked, pleaded even, to go back to the nest. What could have been a simple changing of sheets turned out to be two additional loads of bedding. It wasn’t like Phoenix hadn’t warned him. Repeatedly.

In the end, though, he’d gotten his wish. Miles looked over as he gathered the last of the pillowy carnage in his arms at the lazy, sleeping heap of sated omega snoring softly in the closet. He hadn’t even bothered to throw a blanket over himself; after getting clean he’d thrown on the first oversized shirt he could find and fallen asleep on the nest’s floor.

“It should be over soon. He’s so far off the regular cycle; the heat can’t sustain itself. Tomorrow, he’ll be back. And until then…”

Miles tossed the last bit of sopping fabric halfheartedly into the basket, cringing silently when it hit the rest of the pile with a snap.

“We curse this entire blasted process. And love, too. It was never half this messy on my own; Why do we even have omegas- “

After getting what he could in the laundry machine and shifting what had been there already to the dryer, Miles came back to the mouth of the nest. Phoenix hadn’t moved, as to be expected, and could be mistaken for dead if not for the soft, barely audible snoring. It was criminally precious; the way he curled in on himself while holding onto whatever he could get his hands on. And if Miles hadn’t been so freaking tired, he likely would have seen it that way too. But as things sat-

“Wright, wake up, can I come in or not.”

A demand, not a question. Phoenix shifted but didn’t open his eyes. “mm’mm. Not m’name, though.”

Miles crossed over, planted the clean fabrics he’d retrieved from the dryer on the side where Phoenix had collapsed, and threw the first blanket he could grab over them. He was just starting to get comfortable- well, as much as he could be given where the nest was- when Phoenix rustled his arm.

“Hey,” his voice was deep, laced with the impending threat of a yawn. All at once, Miles felt his body tense up.

“What are you starting again?”

There was a bit of a pause, as if Phoenix were actually running a diagnostic on his physical state. Miles let out a breath he hadn’t known he’d been holding when the omega followed up with,

“Don’t think so. You know you don’t have to ask to come in here, right?”
“Don’t be senseless, Wright,” Miles said as he was interrupted by a yawn of his own, “Of course I do. It’s basic propriety. Omega nests are sacred, I don’t just go trifling about where I don’t belong.”

“Still not my name,” Phoenix let go of the old comforter he’d been holding onto, shifting so he could cling to his alpha instead, “But you belong here just as much as I do. It smells mostly like you.”

“Only because you steal my things to put in here, not that I mind necessarily.”

“So, you’re saying that you’ve forgiven me for that suit jacket that I accidently wrecked?” Miles could practically hear the small, peaceful smile that Phoenix often wore at home, when he had no reason to be guarded. How he’d lived for over two decades without ever seeing that smile, Miles didn’t know.

“Don’t get carried away with yourself. I will hold you accountable for that until the day you die.”

It was said in good spirits and they both knew it. Phoenix laughed softly he nuzzled down into Miles’s chest, rougher than he would have at any other time. Whither he was doing it consciously or not, Miles couldn’t say, but it was painfully obvious to him that Phoenix was trying to cover his scent with his own. It was classic omega behavior, so deeply imbedded that it might as well have been knotted with his DNA.

Miles should have minded. He usually detested it when Phoenix clung to him in the middle of the night, if only because he tended to root in and not let go. Here though, under these conditions…it was kind of nice to slip into his role as alpha. It felt good to have somebody who was so devoted; somebody who needed to stay close to his side just in order to feel whole. It felt right, like the last piece of a puzzle sliding into place.

As he started to drift off to sleep, Miles made a mental note to have Phoenix bring his collar to him at some point during this heat. If that’s what Phoenix needed to have this level of contentment, Miles would find a way to oblige him. Even if he really, really didn’t want to hurt him at all in the process.

“Are you still awake?”

It came to Miles as a whisper, one that he would have easily missed if he hadn’t been nestled so close to Phoenix.

He brushed a loose spike out of the way of Phoenix’s eyes, “Yes. Do you need something?”

A reply didn’t come right away, but against his chest, Miles felt the opposing heartbeat begin to race, heavy. It was absolutely pounding against his stomach as Phoenix struggled below him for words.

“You wouldn’t repeat anything I say in here, would you?”

Miles blinked, not knowing where this conversation was going. “I never have. Why, what are you thinking about?”

Another pause, more banging against his ribcage. Phoenix’s heart must have been halfway up his throat the way it was going, choking him up. What could possibly be running through that thick, stubborn head of his that would be getting him this worked up?

“For Christ’s sake, Phoenix, tell me! You’re a step away from hyperventilating; I swear if it’s just
another one of your asinine fantasies, it isn’t worth getting this stressed out over—“

“I think we should try for a baby,” Phoenix blurted out, awkwardly and without any warning. “I mean, not this time, obviously, but my next heat…Trucy’s getting older and we’re still young enough and…”

Phoenix was still talking, but Miles didn’t hear a word of it. A baby? Like, a human baby? He couldn’t have heard that right. There was no possible way that Phoenix could really be asking that, not when their professional lives were decidedly not suited to raising an infant. Trucy was one thing, she was already eight years old when she got dragged into their world. Purposely bringing children into their fucked up, murder infested, never-ending-therapy needing lives would be…well it would just be abuse.

“Miles, please say something.”

Miles looked down at Phoenix, his eyes blown wide with concern. What was he supposed to do with this? He wanted nothing more than to walk away, sit at his desk down the hall, and carefully write a well-crafted and tenderworded response. He wanted to write down everything that possibly could go wrong with conceiving a child, from the birth itself to all the events down the line, anything he could come up with that would dissuade Phoenix from this terrible, terrible life decision.

But Phoenix was looking at him now, wanting an immediate response. With every second that ticked by, Phoenix’s expression further changed from worry to frustration. He was practically daring Miles to say something, anything.

“It wouldn’t just be one child,” was what Miles came up with. There were so many more objections he could raise, so many more pressing points of contention, but this one seemed the gentlest. “Alphas and omegas together…single births just aren’t a thing. With us being what we are, we’re far more likely to conceive triplets.”

“…and?”

“And?!” Miles didn’t mean to snap at him, it was a kneejerk reaction. Once he got on this path, though, it was hard to stop. “We don’t even know what childhood is supposed to look like, and you think we’re capable of giving three or more lives a decent one? I’ve never even held an infant before, Wright!”

“My childhood wasn’t that bad! The part with you in it was fine.”

Miles rubbed his forehead, somehow even more exhausted than he already had been. It wasn’t like he was going to get to sleep anytime soon, not after this. Even if Phoenix dropped it, it would still be there, hovering over him like a bad court case that just wouldn’t end. A dozen horrible scenarios that never would have entered his head were now stuck in there and festering, all resulting in the deaths of three helpless infants. It would be all his fault for not talking Phoenix out of it.

Miles sighed. Phoenix might have been helplessly optimistic, but all Miles could see were three tiny targets for their enemies to fire at. You didn’t get into this line of work to make friends, and over the years both of them had made powerful people angry. Powerful people, he might add, that didn’t care if they had the blood of children on their hands.

“Just promise me you’ll think about it? It doesn’t have to be so soon, I can wait.” Phoenix must have
sensed Miles’s uneasiness, because he shifted his voice into something soft and comforting. He nuzzled up against his chest again, as if trying to get back into his alpha’s good graces.

“It’s something that’s been on my mind recently, you know, with Trucy getting older. It’s just… I don’t know, I kind of feel like I’m not done yet? I don’t know.”

Miles curled inward and kissed him on the forehead. He couldn’t stay mad at him. Frustrated, yes, maybe even a little concerned for his partner’s state of mind, but it was hard to storm away from somebody who was so patient and understanding even without him saying much of anything.

“I do want to think about it. Get back to me after we’ve gotten you through this heat, I don’t want to say something I’ll regret later.”

Phoenix nodded, “That’s fair. Thank you.”

Miles didn’t know what Phoenix was thanking him for. He was essentially brushing him off after yelling at him; what kind of a response was that after being asked something so personal? Miles felt sick at himself as Phoenix began to nod off again into a peaceful slumber, uttering a quiet ‘I love you’ before drifting off.

It was a bad idea, a dangerous idea even that would have life-altering consequences that Miles never wanted to face. Trucy herself had gotten caught in the crossfire more than once; what chance did their natural born children have?

And that was ignoring all the normal issues that arose when it came to having babies, Miles realized suddenly. Where would they all sleep? What daycare would they go to? Would either of them even make good parents at all? Between Phoenix’s lack of a consistent parental figure and Miles’s… everything, what on earth made them qualified to have children? The fact that Trucy turned out so well-adjusted was a miracle in and of itself. What made Phoenix think they would be capable of pulling off the same feat multiple times?

No, Miles wasn’t going to sleep tonight. Not at all. If criminals didn’t kill his children, their lack of parenting-skills would surely be the thing to do them in.. There was no positive outcome, only heartbreak. This was setting the scene for having three (or even more, Miles grimly reminded himself) child equivalents to Maya Fey. The last thing that Miles wanted to do was to catalog any more ransom notes in the back of his desk drawer at the office. He could practically stitch together a scrapbook from all of Maya’s incidents alone.

…Which was kind of a funny thought in a humorless sort of way. God, why did Phoenix have to test him so? Not only was he an idiot, but he was a cruel idiot as well.

And so the night went by, second by second. Miles felt every single one of them individually as worse and worse and worse thoughts crept along preventing him from getting any sort of rest. Instead he watched the sun come up through the blinds of the bedroom, light slowly inching up along the walls.

At 6:30, Miles couldn’t take it anymore. He carefully slinked out of the nest and out of Phoenix’s tight grip. If he was going to be up, he might as well be doing something productive. Food
preparation was something that needed to be done, despite Phoenix’s claims to the contrary. When he was well rested, Phoenix’s stints of heat could go for hours. Breaks would get shorter and less frequent. Sometimes, there would be time to run to the bathroom and nothing else. Having something to eat that was ready to go was absolutely essential.

Honestly, what would Phoenix ever do without Miles’s forward thinking?

*Starve, Miles thought bitterly, and pass out, and die of heat fever. So helpless…”*

He dug around in pantry, plucked out the first two cans of soup he saw and plinked them down on the counter. It wasn’t great, but if Phoenix and Trucy minded they didn’t show it.

Oh, right, Trucy wasn’t there. It was force of habit; Trucy’s heats had always synced up perfectly with Phoenix’s. Trucy never left her room during her heat if she could help it, which was probably for the best. Miles typically opened her door just long enough to throw a Thermus full of soup her way and left it at that.

He put the extra can back in its place and started absentmindedly stewing the rest. Did it even matter what flavor it was? All the cheap stuff tasted the same after a while. There was a point in time where Miles would try to make something halfway decent a few days in advance, but he’d stopped when it became clear that neither of the omegas had a preference. It just hadn’t been worth the extra effort.

Still, Miles liked to at least pretend he was making something, anything that wasn’t three-for-a-dollar canned broth. So he stood there, stirring and staring, as if waiting there patiently would magically enhance the taste any. Miles wasn’t sure if he felt like crying or worrying or what, but he did know that the stillness wasn’t doing him any favors.

If anything, it was numbing him, making him tired. So, so tired that he didn’t know what was holding him upright anymore. What had he even left the bedroom for, being so sluggish?

*BRIIIIIING!!!*

Miles jolted upright at the sound of the landline ringing to life. When had he closed his eyes, exactly? He flung the pot he’d been using off the burner (how long had he been dead on his feet?) and grabbed the phone off the wall, putting it to his ear.

“Who is this?”

“Good morning to you too, Sunshine.” Maya. Leave it to her to be ready at the phone with a quip this early in the day. Miles rolled his eyes.

“I assume you called here for a reason?”

“Yes, actually. Is Nick able to walk to the phone right now, or is he being punished?”

“Very funny,” Miles would have countered with something else, but there was something off in her voice. Despite what she was saying, there was nothing cheery about her tone. It was almost as if she hadn’t been able to get any sleep last night either. “He’s sleeping. Is it something I should wake him up for?”
“No, no, you’re good enough,” a deep breath on the other end of the line. That couldn’t be good. “Trucy went into heat last night”.

Miles nodded, before remembering that Maya couldn’t see him. “You’re an omega, I’m sure you have the proper means to get her through it.”

“It isn’t that.”

A pause. If that wasn’t the reason she was calling, what exactly was the problem?

“…what else is there? Is she sick?”

“Um, no, no, not exactly…” Another breath. “Look, I promised I wouldn’t embarrass her, ok? I don’t want her to get in trouble, it really wasn’t her fault. You can’t tell her I told you, alright?”

Well, now Miles’s nerves were on red alert. Thank God that Maya hadn’t requested that Phoenix be the one to take this call; he’d be halfway packed to go to Kurain right now, despite his condition.

“It depends on what it is. What happened?”

“When she went into heat in the middle of the night, it caught everybody off guard. Especially her, like I said, nothing that happened was her fault really, she’s been through a lot recently.”

“M’mm.”

A deep breath from the other end of the line. “The girls share a room when they’re here, it’s always been that way. And well, they were in such close proximity when it happened, and Pearly really hasn’t learned how to control her rut.”

“Only alphas have ruts,” Miles corrected. It was a little sharp but it was also early in the morning and he was running on two hours sleep, so his patience level was next to zero. “I can’t speak for what betas go through, but I know that it’s nowhere near the severity of a rut.”

“Pearly isn’t a beta, Miles,” Maya replied with the same level of distain that one would treat a misunderstanding child.

“Really? I would have thought that-“

“You thought wrong. Trust me, no one was more surprised than I was when she presented last year. Alphas don’t traditionally run in the bloodline but, well, here she is.”

Miles had to digest that one for a second. It was hard to picture the teeny tiny, unintimidating, cute little Pearl Fey to be an alpha. If either of the girls were going to present as alpha, he would have bet everything he owned that it would have been Trucy. She was confident and brave and naturally very protective of what was hers, she’d surprised him a bit when she presented as omega when she was 13.

Wait a minute.
“So, hold on, if Pearl is an alpha, and Trucy went into heat- “

“It isn’t as bad as you think,” Maya interjected, “As far as I can tell, they just nipped at each other a little bit. Pearly felt so guilty about it that ran into my room in the middle of the night crying. I’ve got them separated now so they both can calm down. Trucy is ok, she just has a few bite marks on her.”

“How bad?” Miles was growling, and he didn’t bother to check himself. Trucy was still so young, too young to have anything even remotely resembling an alpha’s mark. She might have been seventeen, but Goddamnit, she was still just a pup to him.

Miles couldn’t be sure, but he was almost certain that he heard Maya recoil over the phone. Even though Maya was about as comfortable around him as anybody could possibly be around anybody, it was clear that he’d made her jump. It occurred to Miles that she’d probably never heard an alpha growl directly at her before.

“I-It’s superficial, nowhere near the back of her neck. It’s just a little mark on her collar bone, honest.”

It was at this moment that Miles realized that he’d been baring his teeth. He covered his mouth with his opposite hand, swearing inwardly at his lack of control.

If he- a grown man who’d been an alpha for more than half his life- couldn’t even stop himself from snarling at the cabinets, how could a little girl be able to rein in a rut?

There was a moment of amicable silence over the phoneline as Maya mercifully let him recollect himself. As the static buzzed in his ear, he wondered if it was truly because she was showing sympathy, or if he really had startled her.

“Is she asleep?”

“Last time I checked, yes. It took a while, but I finally got both the girls down. I think she’s more afraid of what her dads are going to say than anything.”

More static. Miles clicked his tongue as he formed his response.

“Good. Keep her away from Pearl. I’m quite fond of her, but she’s proven that she can’t help herself. It isn’t a knock against her. It’s hard for any alpha to fight back against nature. I’m quite amazed that she had the presence of mind to break away and run to you. I can’t say that I would have had the same restraint at that age.”

“Yeah, she’s a good kid,” Maya acknowledged, and Miles could hear just a smidge of pride peeking out even through a crappy landline. “Trucy turned out pretty good too. I hope you don’t embarrass her too much when she comes home.”

“I won’t, but I can’t guarantee that Wright will have the same resolve,” Miles said, frowning. “Miss Fey? I’m sorry if I frightened you earlier. It was unbecoming of me to- “
“Oh, save it,” Maya laughed. It wasn’t quite her usual, chipper giggle, but Miles figured it was still too early in the morning for even her to have that level of energy. “You’re a good alpha. Any little kid would be lucky to have you for a dad.”

“Yes…lucky…”


“You’d better get back to your omega, Tiger. I wouldn’t want Nick to cut his wrists while he’s struggling in handcuffs. I’ll handle everything here.”

“Right. My omega…” Miles repeated, thoughtlessly. How could he possibly be expected to perform his role as alpha when such horrifying visions were looping in his head? “Thank you, Miss Fey.”

“Anytime. Go get em’, big boy.”

And with that, she hung up, and Miles was left with a dial tone hanging in his ear. He didn’t make an immediate effort to place the phone back on the hook. That would require the motivation to move, and Miles just couldn’t find that in himself no matter how deep he dug.

How on earth was he going to be able to process this?
Chapter 8

He didn’t remember falling asleep on the couch. After he’d gotten off the landline with Maya, he’d packed the soup he’d been “cooking” in a thermus and sat down to check his phone. At what point he’d drifted from reading his backlog of email to falling asleep, Miles wasn’t sure. What he did know was that he’d just woken up, he’d somehow managed to slink halfway to the ground, and his phone was lying face down beside him on the carpet.

And also, Phoenix had woken up. Or, at the very least, he was about too. The stench of heat made Miles’s head spin in five different directions, and he wasn’t even all that close to the bedroom. He willed himself to sit up, despite wanting very much to curl back up and return to sleep. He pulled his head in his hands, breathed deep, tried to collect his thoughts before he’d be forced to go in and preform his role.

It wouldn’t be the first time he’d be doing this when he wasn’t in the mood for it. That was just a thing that happened sometimes, when life was chaotic or he had a lot to think about. Through the imminent threat of sleep overtaking him, Miles bitterly forced himself to recall all the times that Phoenix had saved his ass during his own ruts. The time it happened right in the middle of a trial. That one time on a 15-hour transatlantic flight. The many, many, *many* times where he’d woken up rutting for absolutely no fucking reason at 2 AM.

…The evening when Phoenix had lost his badge, at the worst possible goddamn time. And not once did he ever complain, or snap at him, or tell him to go and take care of it himself. Not ever.

Miles cringed, hard, as he rubbed the mark on the back of his neck. That particular scar was still there, faded and marked over but still very much visible. He was glad it never healed. It reminded him that even at the lowest point possible, he had a pack. He had a family.

And it also meant he had a lot of favors to repay. So, even though sleep sounded really, *really* good right now, he slogged his way down the hall, and almost bashed himself against the doorframe as opened the bedroom door.

Phoenix didn’t say anything to him initially as he knelt down at the mouth of the nest. At some point, Phoenix had gotten himself flipped around. He was looking up at Miles, head resting on the pillow that served as the boarder between the nest and the bedroom. His scent was so thick that Miles was practically choking on it, though Phoenix didn’t look particularly distressed. If anything, it was eerie how peaceful he was as Miles brushed the stray hair out of his eyes.

“Where’d you go?” It was a little quiet but completely understandable. At least he hadn’t been in this state for very long, if his ability to form sentences was any indication.

“I had some chores to do. It wasn’t worth waking you over,” Miles said. It wasn’t a complete lie. He had made food, taken a call, and made his way through at least one unread email before crashing. “Would you like some privacy, or can I come in?”

“Please,” Phoenix practically moaned as he grabbed his hand and pulled. Miles crossed over, was about to ask some stupid question about how he’d gotten so turned around, but he didn’t get the chance. Phoenix cut off his breath with a searing kiss, effectively suffocating any further small talk.
before it could form. Phoenix was clinging, drinking in the kiss like it was the only thing keeping
him conscious, clawing at the back of his alpha’s neck, trying to tear open the scars. Miles threw
himself on top, pinning Phoenix down so he couldn’t break away if he wanted. It didn’t matter what
he gave him, Phoenix was taking it and giving it back twice over. Miles slipped down further on his
omega’s neck, leaving bruises under his jaw as he bit.

“I’m going to mark you,” Miles growled. It was a warning, not a question. “Say your word if I go
too long.”

“N-no.”

There was a fraction of a second that Miles considered protesting that, but he was already canine-
deep into Phoenix’s mating gland before his brain caught up. There was no stopping once he started,
awkward positioning be damned.

It didn’t take a lot to split the gland open. It was already soft from earlier in the evening, a bright
purple bruise bleeding across it. It barely took anything to start tasting copper, and even less for Miles
to get intoxicated by the scent. He was hooked in deep, only loosening his bite every so often to take
a quick breath. He was lapping around with his tongue as he pressed in, hard and with a purpose. He
was so drunk, couldn’t think, couldn’t control how the rest of his body was constricting his omega
around him. Couldn’t control how hard he was, how desperate he was to spend himself inside. He
could feel Phoenix wetting, slicking underneath, muscles tensing up all throughout his body in
response to his alpha’s own actions.

The power high to end all power highs. Any more pressure and he’d bite straight through, he was
teetering directly on the edge on his omega’s pleasure and pain. Tears were forming in his eyes, it
was so hard not to go over, to give completely into his inner alpha and completely wreck the omega
below him. Keeping the balance was so sinfully, wickedly good, he almost failed to register warm
liquid pulsing over his chest in large spurts.

There was a flash of terror amidst the adrenaline rush, before Miles realized that it had been
Phoenix’s release and not his own. As he drew his teeth out, he immediately started tending to the
wound with his mouth. He was still too far gone to do more than what his instincts told him to do.
And so, he licked, and mouthed, and kissed around the damage as Phoenix was coming down below
him. He was just coherent enough to catch the tail end of his omega’s blabbering.

“~not done, don’t stop, please, please, don’t stop, please~”

One final kiss to the mess he’d made, and Miles pulled back enough to look at his omega’s face. He
was still absolutely starving as Phoenix turned his head to meet his gaze, pupils blown wide with
lust.

“Need you, Alpha.”

Miles brought their lips together, lighter than before but still enough to spark a flame. He let Phoenix
dictate the kiss from the bottom, let him take what he needed before he rocked his world. Phoenix
was grinding up against him, hard and deliberate, and Miles let him. It was a bit unorthodox to give
an omega so much lean during breeding, Miles knew that well enough from all his experience. He
loved giving Phoenix just a little bit of control, though, on the few occasions that he wanted it. It cast
shadows of their regular sex life, when neither of them were slaves to their secondary genders.

Miles broke the kiss, and Phoenix looked up at him expectantly. Miles couldn’t help but smile down
at him. He was so cute when he was desperate.

“Are you going to present yourself, or do you need me to turn you around?”

Phoenix moaned something that might have been an affirmative, and he flipped over. Miles didn’t waste any time taking in the sight, instead going straight to work on getting them aligned. He was still painfully worked up; he could feel the beginnings of his knot starting to swell just from the prospect of what he was about to do. He didn’t ask for permission this time, because he felt the answer was obvious enough. He thrust in without much resistance, almost ruining himself on the initial push. Through tremendous self-restraint he had managed to hold back, but just barely.

“I can’t give you much,” he barked out, fast. A couple more thrusts, and his fate was sealed. One last push and, “I-I’m about to- “

He couldn’t spit the warning out fast enough as he sped over the edge, the first wave of orgasm knocking the air out of his lungs. There wasn’t much he could do as he just kept spilling, and spilling, shallowly thrusting his hips with each onslaught. He buried himself in the crook of Phoenix’s neck as he went, breathing in his comforting scent as the last of the rut faded to black.

As he caught his breath, Miles had fleetingly hoped that Phoenix had finished without this notice. Of course, he couldn’t be that lucky. Phoenix was still moaning, fingering around himself trying desperately to get some relief. He was also, rather obediently, not fucking himself against the knot despite urgently needing too.

I suppose that’s the one advantage of giving him that damned collar. He’s become patient.

Miles reached around and placed his hand on the crest of Phoenix’s collar bone. There wasn’t a lot of pressure behind it, just enough to draw him in.

“It’s alright, love,” Miles whispered coarsely, “Go on. I’ve got you.”

Phoenix started moving, and Miles met his thrusts. It was not comfortable on the alpha’s end, to put it lightly. There were some that claimed that the best sex only happened when there was a knot present, but Miles had to disagree completely. It was far too tight and oversensitive for him to draw any pleasure during this.

Phoenix, however, seemed to be having a fantastic time with it. The first couple of movements were slow, cautious. It didn’t take him any time at all to lose control of himself with the knot there. He was back to top speed within a matter of seconds, revving himself back up as if the interruption had never happened. Miles obliged. It wouldn’t be long, it never was with heat.

Especially when he knew exactly what he had to say to shove Phoenix over the edge.

“Such a good boy,” Miles husked, a smirk creeping on his lips even though the unholy friction. It felt ridiculous, but it never failed to speed things along. “You’re doing so well, I’m so proud of you. Look at how big and strong you are~”

“Ah!” Phoenix came with a shout, shuddering through his climax. Miles cringed as muscles convulsed around him, hard and unforgiving. It felt about as pleasant as being nailed in the crotch
with a baseball, and he had to bite his knuckle so Phoenix wouldn’t hear him cry out. Phoenix had enough on his plate with his own body right now. The last thing he needed was to be worrying about his alpha’s; that just wasn’t how this sort of thing was done.

Phoenix was calming down, trembling softly below him. So pretty, even though the pounding pain that was only just beginning to dull. He must have sensed that something was wrong, because Phoenix had turned his head to look at him, a subdued look on his face.

“M’ sorry—”

“Shh,” Miles wouldn’t let that sentence develop even if his life depended on it. At the very least, his pride certainly did. He brushed Phoenix’s hair away from the now-violet mark on the back of his neck. He certainly wasn’t going to be able to hide it, that was for sure. “You’re far too good. Do you need another?”

Phoenix nodded quietly, eyes fluttering shut as if he were going to fall asleep at any moment. Miles knew better. He was just being placated by the knot; the scent of heat was still surrounding him in spades. It wouldn’t be long at all before he’d be hot again, desperate for contact and out of control.

Right now, though, he was high as a kite on endorphins and pheromones. And messing with him in this state was far, far too fun for Miles not to take advantage of.

“Phoenix, do you know what day it is?”

“I dunno, tuessay?”

“Nope, try again.”

“Ele’phant day.”

Miles chuckled, still admiring the mark he’d left on his omega. “Elephant day?”

“Yeah, think so. Lotsa ele’phants. Marchin’ around the street. Where do they g’ off, walkin’ all ‘round here? So rude.”

“You brought up elephants during your last heat as well. I’m starting to think you have some sort of bias against them.”

“They’re ok. Jus’ don like their friends.”

Miles twisted a spike around his finger, smiling absentmindedly. It was wrong to pick on him when he was so vulnerable, but damnit, the things that fell out of his mouth were hilarious. More than once, Phoenix had gone on long tirades about his job, the cases he’d been working on, or the people around him. Nobody was safe. Every single sex-ed pamphlet that Miles had ever read on omegas had explicitly mentioned not to engage them when they were like this. It was cruel.

On the other hand, they still had a good few minutes of being knitted together, and Miles had never been the type to get high in the afterglow. What else was he going to do to pass the time?
“Do you know who our president is?”

“Maya.”

Miles couldn’t help the snort that came out. “Really, Wright?”

A little nod. “Uh huh.”

“Alright. If Maya is the president, who’s the vice president?”


That got an honest laugh out of him. He’d have to remember to ask him about the elephants when he was back in his own mind. For now, Miles had felt he’d bullied the poor omega enough. It’d do both of them some good to get a sniffle of rest before the next round set in, boring as that may be.

“You’re delirious, but I love you regardless,” Miles placed a kiss right below Phoenix’s scar. It was a bit of an awkward reach, but it was worth it to feel the small chill that ran up the omega’s spine.

“I love you too. You’re gonna be a great dad someday.”

Ice shot into Miles’s blood, deep enough for a sickle to pierce his heart. He hadn’t forgotten about the conversation he’d had with Phoenix earlier, but he’d managed to cool the panic in his core down to an inhibited simmer. Miles shook his head, as if that would fling the images of children’s funerals away. Now wasn’t the time for that.

He felt his knot go slack. Whither it did that all on its own or it was a reaction to stress, he wasn’t sure. He looked at Phoenix, still resting peacefully against the pillow. He’d begin to stir in a moment, when he realized that he was wet, empty, and decidedly not pregnant.

Shit, Miles hoped not. Now that it was on the table, it felt like an actual possibility. He hadn’t worried about birth control efficiency since he a teenager, now it seemed wildly insufficient. Should they be doing more? Was there even more to do?

He groaned, finally pulling out entirely as he rolled completely on his back. There was a rut ahead of him; he could feel it starting to grind in his core without his consent. Phoenix was beginning to sober up and slick, he didn’t have to look over to confirm it, the scent made it hideously obvious. He had to get this out of his mind. He had a responsibility to somebody, distraction wasn’t an option.

Even if he was scared.
“Shh, it’s alright, I’m not leaving you.”

It had been one hell of a morning, and Miles didn’t have a lot more to give. Phoenix was so worn-out that he was shaking, hard, no matter what position Miles tried to put him in. It had stopped being pleasurable about an hour ago, for both partners. There was nothing that could be done for it; they could only wait for this round of heat to wear itself out. For Phoenix’s sake, Miles silently prayed that the end was just around the corner. For as much pain as he was going through, Phoenix was being tortured by his body.

The feeling of every muscle in Phoenix’s body convulsing against his own as he held him was nauseating. There was always at least one of these during the cycle, and the fact that Phoenix had already suffered from heat fever made him all the more subjectable this time around. Miles was put in a rather helpless position; all he could do was fuck the pain away. And that was proving to be quite the challenge, since his rut had long since run its course.

“It hurts so bad…” Phoenix was all but crying. The only thing that separated this ache from the one he’d had the night before was that, with Miles being right there, he was still lusty. There was a sense of need and wanting underneath the agony. The problem was more the fact that he’d been in this state for so fucking long that he was exhausted. All he wanted to do was finish and be done for a while. The heat just wasn’t letting him.

Miles kissed whatever patch of skin was closest to him, right now it just so happened to be a shoulder blade. “I know, Love. Keep working at it, ok? We’re almost at the end, I promise.”

He let Phoenix bite as much as he wanted, even positioned him higher up on his chest so he could nip around the back of his neck. Without the ability to jack him off (his cock was still very much out of commission), the only thing that Miles could think to do was let him scent and mark. The hope was that it would be enough for an orgasm, but all it seemed to be doing was driving Phoenix deeper and deeper into insanity. Miles was getting creative whenever he got a free hand, but most of his strength was spent holding Phoenix against his chest.

His mind was sprinting to come up with something, anything, that could bring the end of this wave. His own body was trying to rut in response to his omega, but it just wasn’t going. There just wasn’t anything left in him, so to speak. He was well aware of his instincts heightening, trying desperately to spark the motor that would allow him to run, only for it all to freefall around him in an instant. Everything from his stomach down was cramping horribly, but all he could think about was how worse off Phoenix was. There had to be a way to make this end, somewhere he could touch, something he could trigger.

A flash of inspiration. It was a long shot, partially inspired by a few casual observations he’d made earlier, but it was worth a try.

“Do you need something to do with your mouth?”
Phoenix pulled back from the garish bruise he was leaving on the underside of Miles’s jaw. The response was trembly and unsteady. “Wh-what?”

“Do you want a gag or something? We can make something work- “Miles released one hand and fumbled around, searching for just a tatter of fabric that was reasonably dry. The options around him weren’t ideal, but a bit of digging produced an old washrag that had been decently protected. He held it out to Phoenix. “There. Do you want me to tie it?”

He shouldn’t have been surprised at Phoenix’s enthusiasm, but he was.

“God yes, please, tight as you can,” Phoenix panted, voice shaky. When he didn’t take the washrag right away, Miles was confused. It took a moment for him to realize that Phoenix was waiting for him to give the instruction to open his mouth.

“Your subservient tendencies are going to ruin you someday.”

“Don’t care, just-“

Miles pushed the makeshift gag into his mouth before he could say another word. The cloth was too short to fully reach around the omega’s head, so Miles had to improvise by holding the two ends together with his fist. A single look into Phoenix’s desperate, drained eyes told him that it didn’t matter.

God, he hoped this worked.

“Are you able to hold your breath?”

Phoenix visibly perked up, but only for a moment as the muscles in his core clenched down. He nodded quickly. Miles wasn’t quite sure of Phoenix’s judgement, but he decided to go with it anyway.

“Do you remember your signals?”

Another nod. Miles decided to go along with that one too.

“I’m going to give you a three-count, alright? Ready yourself.”

This wasn’t exactly a foreign experience for either of them. Breath play was a thing that had been in their relationship, more or less, since they were children. The act of covering somebody’s mouth and nose in order to time how long they could hold their breath had started as a playground game amongst their classmates. It was just one of those dumb, meaningless games that children were drawn too. Phoenix and Miles, for one reason or another, had a tendency to take it to absurd levels. If one of them managed to hold for sixty seconds, the other would turn blue in the face if it meant making it to sixty-one. After Miles passed out once, the school banned the game altogether. That didn’t mean they didn’t still play it when they were alone, though.

Fast forward two decades, and very little had changed except for the fact that the game now had
quite the sexual pull to it. There wasn’t anything else that worked better for foreplay; nothing got them harder faster. Neither one of them had ever tried to twist it into anything more than that… until right this second.

Miles got to three and put his hand over Phoenix’s nose, just like they’d always done. The sensation was different, with both his hands occupied and with the washrag filling the omega’s mouth. He was used to having an empty hand to tease him with, but this time he’d be relying solely on his words to get the job done.

Thankfully, Phoenix was pretty predictable with what he wanted to hear.

“You’re doing so good, you’re so eager. Won’t even breathe unless I tell you too, so obedient. You’re hurting so bad and you’re still working so hard. So strong.”

It never sounded any less insipid to Miles’s ears, but the effect it was having on Phoenix was hard and instant. He was beginning to struggle against the cloth, his eyes falling shut as he shook. He could usually hold it for two minutes or so, but this wasn’t their normal game. Lo and behold, it hardly took any time at all for Phoenix to tap once against Miles’s arm; their signal for “I need to breathe, but I want to go again”.

Miles let go, gave Phoenix a moment to catch his breath, and started the three-count again. This, at least, was the one thing that both of them could do on auto-pilot.

“Good boy, you recovered so fast. You have an extra hand, you know. You can treat yourself if you want too. I’m a little tied up, making sure you behave.”

It was obvious that Phoenix hadn’t thought of that. He moved just a little too dumbfoundedly for Miles to write it off as him simply waiting for an invitation. In a startling act of clarity, given what they were in the middle of, Miles had the mind to glance downwards and see exactly where Phoenix was palming. After hurting him that first time, he’d been nervous about going anywhere near that area out of fear of doing it again. It’d be great to have a clear idea about what was pleasurable and what wasn’t, especially as the rest of the heat rolled on.

Miles made a mental note as he watched Phoenix grip the skin around the base of his cock. It seemed as though that part had managed to go fairly unscathed, when compared to the rest of it. Everything underneath was also seemed to be fair game, given how freely Phoenix was moving around his balls.

Miles found himself so into the show that he missed the first tap on his arm, prompting Phoenix to punch him to get his attention. It wasn’t light, either, Miles must have accidently ignored him for a while. He made sure to give him lots of extra time to recover from that one, only restarting the three-count when Phoenix began to glare at him.

“You’re lucky that I like to spoil you, Phoenix. Anybody else would have spanked you for that”, Miles smiled weakly, “of course, you’d love that.”

Phoenix, despite (or maybe because of) almost being suffocated, was visibly nearing his release as he began to tense up. He was teetering on and off the edge of no return, and Miles could feel the frustration as Phoenix gritted his teeth against the gag, ripping into the threadbare fabric like a pit bull on a rawhide. He was so close, all he needed was one little shove and he’d be forced over. If he lost momentum now, they’d be back at square one, and Miles was just about out of ideas to satisfy his lover without there being a knot involved.
In true lawyer fashion, he panicked and said the first thing that popped into his head.

“If it’s this good for you without me even touching, imagine what it’s going to be like when I can finally breed you.”

Mismatched eyes shot open, fiery and sober. They might as well as been aimed directly into Miles’s soul as he felt the weight of those words plummet in his stomach. The instant feeling of regret froze him into place, and the sense of warm liquid splashing onto his stomach might as well have been molten lava covering his skin. Miles dropped his hands, and Phoenix crashed down against his alpha’s ribcage, heaving to catch his breath as the last of the orgasm tore through him.

Miles felt sick. When Phoenix looked up at him with those longing, trusting, devoted eyes, he had to fight the urge to bolt out of the nest and vomit. How could he have possibly said such a thing to an omega that wanted so desperately wanted to carry children?

For the first few moments, Phoenix was just nuzzling him, kissing him, so excited that he couldn’t get words to come out of his mouth. Miles just couldn’t respond to it. What was he to say exactly; ‘I’m sorry that I took your heartfelt request for a child and used it against you so that we both might be able to sleep sometime soon’?

As the seconds ticked on into minutes, and Miles still wasn’t giving a response of any kind, the happiness began to drain from Phoenix’s face rapidly. Miles couldn’t bring himself to look at his partner in the eye, instead glancing just off to the right of the closet’s doorframe and into the obscured bedroom window. The sun was full in the sky, it must have still been early in the afternoon.

Phoenix took Miles’s chin gently, turning his head back towards him. The alpha had no choice but to watch Phoenix’s expression melt from concern to understanding to disappointment, and the hurt cut deep. Miles reached out and held his partner’s hand in a lazy clasp as Phoenix silently drew the obvious conclusion, guilt settling in his gut like a half-ton rock.

He opened his mouth to apologize, but Phoenix beat him to the punch.

“You don’t have to say anything. I’m not mad,” he said with unmasked sorrow, as though he were grieving for something that had never even existed.

Or someone.

“I know what you had to do. Just, please, maybe try not to say something like that unless you mean it? I mean, for my sake. I’m not getting any younger, and my job is kind of an emotional warzone. Getting that excited that quickly in my off time can’t be good for me!” He laughed a kind of humorless laugh and shot one of those shallow grins that he’d become somewhat famous for when he was a rookie. Miles could never tell if those smiles were an attempt to fool everyone around him or himself, but either way, he just felt awful.

He somehow managed to feel even worse when Phoenix reached up and placed a short, chaste kiss on his lips. It was so sweet and pure that it made Miles wonder what he possibly could have done in his lifetime to deserve such a perfect mate.
Partially out of guiltiness and partially out of the intense desire to get to sleep as soon as possible, Miles gave in to Phoenix’s request to shower together after they emerged from the nest. They were both a little dead on their feet from exhaustion, but Miles still made the extra effort to wash his omega’s hair for him. It wasn’t exactly a kink of Phoenix’s, but it was something that he enjoyed a fair bit.

“Oh, come on, just one more time? Please?”

“Phoenix, I have rinsed your hair out thrice already. Any more and your scalp is going to start burning from all the soap.”

“I will happily accept that risk. I’d do yours if you’d let me.”

Miles grimaced at the very notion of having somebody else touch his hair. “You will do no such thing. Ever. And I’m only going to accommodate you now because I still feel terrible about what I said.”

Phoenix’s eyes widened as Miles squeezed more shampoo onto his hand. “So, not that you have to feel bad or anything, but exactly how many times are you willing to do this?”

Miles sighed, bitterly, “As many times as you want me too.”

Even though Phoenix was facing away from him, Miles could still feel the opportunistic smirk that his partner was no doubt sporting. “Ok, in that case, maybe we should make this a bath instead of a shower. I don’t know if I really want to stand that long.”

“You know, the worst part is, I can tell you’re serious.”

“You’re damn right I am. Go on, pour the hot water, we have guilt to absolve!”

“…I really despise you at times.”

Ever true to his word, Miles rinsed out those ridiculous spikes a half dozen times more. And it possibly would have dragged on even longer, had Phoenix been able to hold his eyes open past that point. As it were, Miles had barely been able to get him dried off and dressed before he collapsed into bed, falling asleep the instant that his face hit the pillow. He’d ended up on the wrong side of the bed, but that was alright. As the alpha went along with the necessary business of cleaning the nest, he himself had to fight the urge to not to doze off in the laundry room.

Not that it would have been the first time that happened, but it wasn’t an incident he really wanted to repeat. Phoenix still liked to tease him about the time he’d found him dead-asleep, hunched over the dryer. And yes, that was where he had been, not curled up in a laundry basket like a kitten as Phoenix liked to claim, thank you very much.
As Miles crawled into bed at 2:42 in the afternoon for what was hopefully a long, peaceful sleep, he couldn’t help but think that the domesticity of their life together was truly staggering. Stunning, even, given their broken upbringings and their chaotic professions. How they managed to have a relationship that was halfway normal, let alone healthy, really was a miracle in and of itself. As everything surrounding him faded fuzzily into nothing, Miles thought to himself that this was the happiest he’d ever been.
When he opens his eyes, he’s twelve years old again.

Honestly, Phoenix isn’t sure how he knows his age. The room he wakes up in, dark and inhumanly sterile, had been something of a second home to him for most of his youth. As he sits up and focuses on his surroundings, he’s confident of only three things. The first is that he is undeniably twelve years old.

The second is that he’s been pulled out of the best dream he’s ever had, and he’s been forced to wake back up in hell. He hates this heat hotel. He hates what this place brings out in him, what it makes him do. He hates that he has to come here so often. He hates that he’s the littlest one who comes here, both in age and in stature. He hasn’t even had the chance to lose his baby fat, never mind hit puberty. His voice is still as high as the day he presented, and that doesn’t do him any favors in a place like this. He hates the people who drop him off here. Who was going to be the person to pick him up?

The third thing that Phoenix is sure of, and it’s the only conclusion he can draw based on the fact that he’s even this goddamned building at all, is that he must be in heat. Either that, or should be scheduled to start very, very soon. His aunt has a history of dropping him off a week early to “find some friends”. Not that he’d ever want anybody that approaches him here to be his friend. In this wing of the hotel, there were mostly greased up teenagers looking for quick relief. Nobody younger, nobody older.

And Phoenix might not have been the smartest child, but he knew danger when he saw it. Even now as he got up and cracked his bedroom door to peek out into the hallway, the few kids he did see might as well have been twice his size. Giants. No thank you, he didn’t need comfort that badly. He shut the door and locked it, standing on his toes to slide the deadbolt into place.

At least there weren’t any alphas here. Alphas didn’t use these kinds of places, as far as Phoenix knew. Why would they? They weren’t the people who needed protection when they were vulnerable.

The only other door in the room was on the opposite wall, the one that the doctors and nurses would come through periodically. It was connected to some sort of medical bay. They’d never let Phoenix back there, and he wasn’t one to ask many questions anyway. All he knew was that if something went wrong, that’s the room where he’d take his last breath. The only people he could trust in this entire hotel would come through that door, his one link to the rest of the world.

Of course, he could mingle with the giants if he wanted, but he never wanted. That was the entire idea behind putting all the kids together on one floor, away from the much scarier, bigger adults. Maybe when he got older and could look some of them in the eye, but certainly not today. Not when there were stories floating around about things that happened to tiny omegas who got too brave for their own good.

Lonely and a bit uneasy, Phoenix starts building a nest to calm himself. He drags his bedding off the twin mattress on onto the floor and arranges the blankets into a mess underneath. There isn’t anywhere to hide but under the bed. There aren’t any closets that are accessible on the kid’s floor. Only the rich kids have in-suite bathrooms, which Phoenix decidedly isn’t, so he makes do with what little he has. Thankfully, he can still fit under the bed, though it’s a much tighter fit than it was
when he started coming here last year. He tries not to think about the day where he can no longer fit beneath the box springs. It rattles him too much.

He’s just gotten himself settled when the second door opens. Phoenix can tell apart the staff by the colors of their sneakers. He’s never been away from his nest long enough to learn anything else about them. The woman who enters wears pink sneakers with white laces, a nurse named Belladonna who was barely old enough to be out of the kid’s floor herself.

She seems nice enough. Phoenix doesn’t have any desire to get to know her further.

“Hey, sweetheart,” her voice carries through the dark room like a song as she walks closer to the makeshift nest. He pulls his top lip up in a snarl but doesn’t make any sound. His voice hasn’t deepened enough to be able to growl. At this stage in his life, his bark sounds more like a yip, which discourages him from trying to make any noises at all. “I brought you some lunch. Promise me you’ll eat what you can, alright? I don’t want you to pass out like last time.”

She leans down and places a tray on the floor, and a large Styrofoam cup filled with water beside it. Phoenix hadn’t realized how thirsty he was until he saw the condensation slip to the floor, and suddenly it felt as if his throat was about to crack from dryness. He licks his lips, not caring at all about the food but desperately craving that water.

“Press the button if you need anything, alright Sweetheart? I’ll try to get back to you before you start your preheat. Press the button if you need me, ok?”

She smiles at him, though Phoenix can’t see it. Even if he could, he likely wouldn’t have caught it anyway, being so focused on the water cup. He waits for her pink sneakers and white laces to walk away and the door to click behind her before he starts thinking about what he wants to do. As thirsty as he is, everything with heat has a tradeoff, even something as basic as water.

He evaluates his self-control, and he knows instantly that he doesn’t have any. If he reaches for the cup, he’s going gulp the entire thing down before he can stop himself. He’ll feel better, but eventually, he’s going to have to go to the bathroom. The closest one is down the hall, past six or seven other rooms. That isn’t an option, and he knows from experience that none of the nurses are going to let him go through the medical bay to use theirs. So then he evaluates how much the accident is really worth it, and ultimately, it isn’t. He’s gone through that route already and he doesn’t want to go through it again. He knows that as long as he’s a minor, he’s going to have to have his heats here. The last thing he needs is a reputation for wetting himself. That’s the kind of reputation that never dies no matter how old you get.

Even though he doesn’t want to, he makes himself turn away from the tray and the water. He decides to just look the wall instead, or what little he can make out of it. The room, as well as the rest of the floor, were kept intentionally dim so that none of the kids would get overstimulated. Phoenix was actually grateful for it; when he was really young he’d had a seizure from overstimulation during one of his first heats. He was told that the sensitivity to light would go away as he got older, but he didn’t quite believe that. Not when even the indistinct light bouncing off the grey wall was starting to make him sick to his stomach.

He closes his eyes, but he knows that sleep won’t be coming. Nothing in this hotel can rescue him
from his solitary confinement. Not sleep, not unconsciousness, and definitely not any of the medical staff. There are a dozen other kids close by, Phoenix can smell them all individually and it’s giving him a headache, and they all have to be checked on. The closest thing he has to heroes are those nurses, and they are going to be busy making sure that everybody stays healthy while their still-growing bodies are ripped apart.

There isn’t any noise bleed through the walls, no matter how much Phoenix wants to hear anything other than the sound of his own heart pumping blood through his veins. The air is crisp and cold, it’s almost painful to breathe as he lays still against his blankets. He desperately wishes that he had something that smelled like home to layer his nest with, but that’s the kind of thing that his aunt would ever allow. The nest smells like nothing. The pajamas he’s wearing are barrowed from the front desk. There is no comfort.

In the time it takes for his eyelids to blink, he’s in heat. There is no transition in-between him lying motionless on the ground and all out war. One second he’s coming to grips with his situation, and the next he’s in so much pain that he can’t even scream. It feels as though his ribs are snapping like branches, crushing his lungs under their weight. He can’t even gasp; he’s forgotten how to take in air and his vision turns to stars. His muscles are turning into stone and his skin feels like it’s about to be split wide open from the pressure.

He doesn’t hear the second door open. He doesn’t see pink sneakers with white laces walk towards him. He doesn’t feel her dragging him out of his tight little nest and into her lap. All he knows is suffocation and the sensation of oncoming death until she sits him up. She does something then, something that Phoenix has never felt before. She must have sprayed something or done something to the air vents on her way in, because suddenly, Phoenix can breathe. His chest unlocks and his throat unconstricts, and he’s making himself sick on the air, heaving as he struggles to take in enough of it.

“You’re going to be just fine, Sweetheart,” Belladonna holds him as he fights to regain the color in his face. There’s nothing sweet about that voice and she shushes him, coos at him like he’s a newborn instead of a middle schooler. She pets his hair back, presumably to get the spikes out of the way of the stream of tears that Phoenix is sobbing out. It doesn’t feel right. Something isn’t right.

This goes on for minutes as Phoenix gets ahold of himself. She just holds him, pets him, and Phoenix longs for an opportunity to escape. He can’t will himself to move, his body is simply refusing to do it. There’s this pleasant scent in the air, something like warm spice that’s keeping him clinging to Belladonna’s scrubs dependently. It’s doing something to him; even though heat is rushing through him like a charging ocean, he doesn’t hurt. It doesn’t feel normal, but it certainly isn’t bad. If he loosens his grip, surely this newfound sense of calm will go away, and the agony will swell up again. Out of fear for his life, he doesn’t let go.

“You never go play with the other omegas. It would hurt so much less if you’d group nest like everybody else. Don’t you know that heats aren’t supposed to hurt? They’re a good thing.”

Yeah, right. Phoenix has never had a nonpainful heat in his life, and they’ve only gotten worse as he’s grown. It’s unfathomable to him that anything that forces his body to contract in unnatural ways
would ever be anything but awful. Everybody keeps telling him how good heats are, and he doesn’t know what they mean by that.

“Come on,” Belladonna says as she tries to shuffle him away. There’s a flickering second where Phoenix thinks that he’s going to be allowed to go into the mysterious medical bay. Surely, this means that they’re going to give him medication to suppress his heat. He might be able to have somebody get off work to come and pick him up within the hour. This might be over! Naively, he lets Belladonna raise him up on shaky legs as he continues to cling to her. He’s just begun lead to the second door, as if she wasn’t well aware of its location.

He feels all of his organs flip upside down when Belladonna begins to take him towards the first door.

“Let’s find you some friends. You’ll feel better. I know some kids who aren’t that much older than you—”

He doesn’t hear the rest as blood rushes into his ears and freezes. At first, the world is silent as he begins to beg. If he has to die, he’d rather it be in his own room, in his own shell of a nest, underneath his own weight. He doesn’t want to be murdered, which he’s sure is what will happen when the giants get ahold of him. He’s bawling, howling, pulling, fighting to get out of Belladonna’s grip, but she pushes him onwards anyway.

“You’ll feel better,” she says, “it’s for your own good”, she says. And soon they’ve attracted the attention of the rest of the doctors and nurses as they rush in, supposedly to help the omega in distress.

“You’ll feel better,” they all repeat. “We know what’s best for you”.

“No you don’t! You don’t know anything about me!” Phoenix is screaming, and while he might have been able to hold himself against Belladonna, there’s no way he can overpower nine or ten adults. They’re pushing him like he’s nothing, and Phoenix is struggling to keep his feet on the ground as the medical staff tries to lift him up. The words that come out of his mouth morph into unintelligible cries as he fights against them. He’s almost got one foot out that open door, and he can practically feel the giants lining up to have their way with him. He can hear one smacking their gums just inches away, and another growling territorially. He shrieks as he’s finally thrown over the threshold, fully expecting to be eaten before he has the chance to hit the ground.

“Gah!”

He jolted awake with enough force that he fell off the bed, striking his head on the nightstand for good measure on the way down.

Phoenix blinked as he came to, and it took a second for him to collect himself as he held the stricken line on his forehead. He didn’t have nightmares gracefully like Miles did. He didn’t shake softly and weep. No, like everything in his life, he had to have a fare for the dramatic, even if it was completely beyond his control.

His life started to fade back into his mind bit by bit; dreamland separating further and further from
reality as the seconds ticked on. He hadn’t been in that shitty heat hotel since he’d turned eighteen. He hadn’t seen the family that dropped him off there for well over fifteen years. Nobody had ever thrown him over the threshold; the nurses would just set him in a group nest silently as he slept.

…Which, actually, had been even more traumatic in hindsight than the fantasy that his subconscious had dreamed up, but Phoenix chose not to think any more about that. That part of his life was over with.

He looked around, a little lost, confused as to how he’d managed to fall down on the wrong side of the bed. He never slept on the right side, mostly for this very reason. This wasn’t his first rodeo; Miles had taken away his nightstand years ago so that he wouldn’t keep hitting his head.

Phoenix was a little cloudy with heat, logic wasn’t flowing as easily as it should have been. He was still fairly shaken from the nightmare, even though he knew he was awake now. He’d forgotten how much nightstands hurt when you caught the corner of them. He pulled his hand back tentatively and looked. No blood, thankfully. It’d probably just be another bruise on top of what Miles had already given him.

Oh, right. Miles. Phoenix perched himself up, peered over, and was relieved when he saw that the alpha was still asleep where he ought to be. All at once, there was a blanket of safety wrapped tight around him, and he relaxed.

Oh, get a grip. Where is he going to go? Europe? Not with those markings. I know he wouldn’t even go near the windows in that condition, let alone leave the country. He’s going to get tired of me if I keep being so insecure. I’m getting pretty sick of myself right now.

He sat there for a moment on the ground, a bit disgusted at himself for his dependency. He didn’t like putting so much pressure on Miles. Miles had enough going on without having to constantly monitor his grown ass partner’s physical and emotional state. He didn’t ask to be an alpha.

And yet…

Goddamm was it hard to fight his instincts. As he got back up on the bed and bundled himself back up as quietly as he could, all he could focus on was holding and belonging and don’t let him forget that you appreciate his ownership of you. Backwards and rather pathetic, and still very much present. Honestly, it was more embarrassing than endearing.

Maybe just a bit closer. Just a little, for my sanity.

“A bit” very quickly turned into “I could taste his breath if he were turned the right way”, and Phoenix was still itching. He curled in on himself, not wanting to bother his mate but longing for that contact. He wondered if his own scent was as bold and overpowering as Miles’s as he inhales deeply, so close but so far away. It was just so…strong, and authoritative, and if it had a real-world counterpart, Phoenix hadn’t found it. The closest thing that it could be compared too was library binding, and even that didn’t sound quite right.
“Are you purring?”

The question startled him as he flinched away, practically leaping to the other side of the bed in surprise. Miles turned around, still groggy, and Phoenix was left feeling dumb as he looked at him with that half-awake stare.

“You fool, get back here. I haven’t heard you purr in months. I thought you’d finally outgrown it.”

“I…” Phoenix says the only thing he can think of, “I-I’m sorry I woke you.”

Miles tilted his head and looked at him strangely, like the apology was the most bizarre sentence that he’d heard that week. “You worry too much for your own good. Come back to me.”

Phoenix didn’t. He was stuck in place as his brain darted between phrases like Shit, I don’t want to bother him anymore and Do what you’re told while his mouth hung open stupidly. Miles didn’t have the patience for it as he grabbed the collar of Phoenix’s shirt and pulled, effectively dragging the poor, dazed omega across the sheets.

Miles didn’t speak at first. He just lays back down and waited for Phoenix to do the same. When he does, Miles let him nestle in his arms and cling. It was relieving as all hell as Phoenix found himself drowning in the scent of his alpha, even though he’d only been fighting the temptation for a few minutes.

“You don’t have to talk if you don’t think you can,” Miles says, brushing his fingers through Phoenix’s hair and around his mating scars, “I can see that you’re struggling. It’s alright. I rather enjoy it when you’re quiet for a change.”

I’m bothering him. He’s being polite but he should still be asleep. God he smells so good does he even know He shouldn’t have to do this, I’m an adult, why can’t I-

“Ah- “Phoenix didn’t know what he was trying to say as he buried himself deeper, but he couldn’t help but feel that he ought to say something. “I-I, you, uh, li-like-“

“Let it go,” Miles made words sound so easy in comparison. “Relax for me. What are you hanging on for?”

“B-but-“

“Shh,” he pulled Phoenix’s head down towards his shoulder, effectively catching the omega’s mouth against the blade. “You’re alright. We’ll fall together.”

It was too sweet of an invitation to ignore. It took nothing at all for Phoenix to drop off, and it took even less for Miles to tumble down after him. If either one of them had had the presence of mind to glance over at sunlight streaking through the window, they would have known that they hadn’t managed to catch more than a few hours of precious rest time. That didn’t matter right this second though, as tongues met and hands wandered, sleepily but sure and needing.
This was what people were referring too when they called heats “a good thing”. Phoenix might have only figured it out late in life, and Miles had definitely taken even longer, but they had it now, and they had to agree with the masses.

“I love you so much.”

“I love you too. More than you’ll ever know.”
“Let me see you,” Miles had said, lightly pulling Phoenix’s hands away from his face. “You’re beautiful like this. Don’t you believe me?’

“Yeah, I-I do it’s just…” Phoenix trailed off, still trying to bury himself behind something, anything. This wasn’t something that he couldn’t articulate on the best of days, and trying to explain it right then would be a joke. The reason why he nested in closets, or really any confined space for that matter, was something so innate and raw that Phoenix couldn’t begin to put it into words.

Miles leaned over him and kissed around the barricade, cleaning the skin with his tongue with long and heavy strokes for good measure. He husked quietly in Phoenix’s ear, “Nobody is going to see you like this. Just come undone, the only one that’s going to know is me.”

Phoenix shivered, and he wanted to throw his head back in voluntary surrender, but something in his mind just wouldn’t let go. He wouldn’t, couldn’t, lose control in an open space. He’d managed to rough it out earlier at the insistence of his insatiable alpha, but he didn’t think he could do it twice. Doing it just the once had taken a lot of self-motivation that Phoenix couldn’t find in himself right now. He was too far gone, and honestly a bit too fuzzy in the head to dig up the necessary discipline.

“Please, please, not here. I can’t.”

Miles pulled back curiously, and Phoenix was suddenly chilled at the lack of body heat.

“Look at me, Love,” Miles rouged, quietly but firmly, and Phoenix finally gave into him. He lowered his hands low enough to reveal his eyes. There wasn’t any reason for him to be uncomfortable, especially since he was the one who’d started it to begin with, yet here they were. Miles surveyed him with the same level of intensity that he had over potentially important evidence during an average murder trial, and Phoenix went meek. He didn’t like that look. That was the look that could so easily turn into disappointment, or anger, or a merciless combination of the two. He fought the urge to throw his hands back up over his eyes, as if that would protect him from the wrath that was surely about to follow.

“You’ve already done this for me,” Miles said, the fondness in his voice throwing Phoenix through a loop. It shouldn’t have, but that’s what happened when his brain was only firing on half a cylinder.

Phoenix blinked, “But-“

“Let’s go,” said Miles, a little too eagerly for it to be solely for Phoenix’s benefit. “Let’s get you where you need to be.”

Miles didn’t leave any room for Phoenix to argue, nor did he give him any time to be self-conscious. He could see it lurking under the mist of those concerned, widened eyes, clear as the daylight streaking through the half-shuttered blinds. He didn’t mind looking after Phoenix when he was in heat, even though the omega seemed convinced that that wasn’t true.
The truth of the matter was that, even at his most needy, Phoenix was the lowest maintenance omega that Miles had ever been with. By a considerable margin, actually. Though admittedly, his experience was limited, and his bias was completely slanted in Phoenix’s favor, but the point remained. An awkward shuffle to the nest (walking with an erection for any distance is never a graceful experience) really wasn’t a lot for Phoenix to ask for.

Miles watched Phoenix bat the blankets around once they gotten undressed and settled on the floor. Watching Phoenix work to line the corners of the closet was oddly calming, though he obviously rushing through it.

“I’ll wait for you to get comfortable. Take your time if you need too.”

Phoenix shook his head as he patched the last of the four corners with a fistful of washrags, pressing them into the space without any organization at all. He flopped down next to Miles when it he apparently felt it was good enough. Miles truthfully couldn’t see much of a difference, but it didn’t matter when he had a purring omega creeping onto his lap, nuzzling at his bare chest.

If Phoenix had said that he needed to re-wallpaper the entire closet just so he could feel comfortable enough to purr, Miles would have gotten him a sample booklet within the hour. That’s how tightly the omega had him wound.

“Mm,” a moan managed to escape his lips as he sank and let Phoenix rest on top of him. “I missed your purr.”

Didn’t know you liked it

Phoenix didn’t say it. He was too content to say anything, finally safe in the tight confines of his nest. It was like a block had been lifted and thrown far, far away. Arousal spiked through his core, and he shuttered, racking against his partner’s frame.

“Shh, you’re alright,” Miles whispered. Phoenix glanced upwards at him, only to see that the alpha’s eyes were already half-lidded with want. Someone was definitely about to fall first, and for once, it wasn’t the omega. “You’re alright. I’ve got you. Let go and I’ll take care of you.”

It was amazing how Miles could be far gone and still form complete sentences. Phoenix couldn’t find it in himself to form a single coherent syllable as he slid up on his alpha’s body to steal his lips in a kiss. It was the very last thing that Phoenix could remember consciously doing before Miles pulled him in closer, getting him drunk with the contact. After that, both of them were gone, helplessly intoxicated by heat.

Neither Alpha or Omega were compelled to change positions right away. Outside of heat, Phoenix was usually the one on top anyway, so reverting back to their standard felt a lot more like home. Miles could almost close his eyes and simply forget the biological pull of pheromones, block out the induced rut and feel the natural arousal run through him. Almost. This kind of sex was more intense by design and had an enhanced payoff as a result, but it was nothing like their normal lovemaking. It had little resemblance to “beta sex”, as it was crudely nicknamed among alpha and omega circles.

Truthfully, Miles preferred the latter. But this was almost close enough, with the way that Phoenix was laying over him, running hands slowly over his exposed skin. He was teething softly at the
junction of his neck and jawline, adding to the disaster that was his heavily-marked body. Phoenix was a biter, even outside of heat, and Miles had long learned to relax and let him do it. It was sinfully good, when he didn’t worry about how he was ever going to hide the bruises.

Miles didn’t bother to fight back the moan that escaped him as he tilted his chin up, baring his throat. It was a gesture more closely associated with omegas; Phoenix did it for him all the time, sometimes even subconsciously. It was something that alphas weren’t expected to do outside of scenting, and even then, it was somewhat taboo. It certainly wasn’t something that any alpha would admit to doing, especially during heat cycles when they were supposed to be the ones dominating their omega.

Miles, however, truly didn’t give a toss. It hadn’t started that way, but Phoenix had worn him down pretty quickly and now it was just part of their routine. No matter how commonplace it became, even when his mind was wrecked with heat, there was always a split second where Phoenix paused whatever he was doing (usually nipping somewhere around the neck or chest) and kissed him wherever he happened to be before he moved back up. It was such a little act of gratitude, easily missed and maybe not even intentional, but it never failed to make the alpha’s heart clinch up and skip two beats.

You’re welcome. You’re so, so welcome. I’d bare anything you’d ask me to so long as it kept you happy, Phoenix.

Phoenix didn’t use the opportunity to scent. That’d never really been something he was good at, though he rather liked it when Miles would do it for him. Instead, he preferred to mark around the collar, lapping his tongue around the jugular notch. He supposed that it went hand and hand with his fondness for breath play, and his partner’s as well if his hitched moaning was anything to go by. He usually didn’t leave marks any higher than that, both out of fear of accidentally hurting Miles and ease of being able to conceal the aftermath. That didn’t mean that he didn’t like to clean around there though, if for no other reason than to hear his alpha’s increasingly desperate cries as he went along.

If it weren’t for the horrible, piercing ache in-between his legs, Phoenix wouldn’t have minded dragging on further. Much earlier than he would have liked, he pushed up far enough to make eye contact with his (also very much in pain, if the rock-hard flesh bolting upright against his leg was any indication) alpha. Miles was panting hungrily, thoroughly worked up after what Phoenix had just finished. Phoenix braced himself, waiting for Miles to flip them in that violent, possessing, domineeringly sexy way that seemingly only a rutting alpha was capable of doing. After a few moments passed without the switch, Phoenix gave Miles a confused glance.

He was even more confused when Miles finally did maneuver them, placing himself so that Phoenix was sitting upright on his lap with a leg on either side. Miles had to admit, the head tilt that Phoenix gave him was adorable, but he had a problem he needed resolved. A very, very, large problem that was currently sitting very, very, very close to its solution. He placed his hands on Phoenix’s hips, tightening his grip in a way that should have made his intent insultingly obvious, but the message was still not getting through. Phoenix was just looking at him blankly, waiting patiently for further instructions.

“Love, just do what we do normally,” Miles said in a pitch that was an octave lower than its usual volume. Phoenix looked at him, then down at his lap, and then back again. It took about four rounds
of this for the final piece to click into place, and Miles could see the exact moment that realization struck him like a brick to the back of the skull.

“Ca-can you knot like… “Phoenix’s voice trailed off as his face went red, as if this wasn’t their standard position. How cute.

“Don’t you dare worry about me now,” Miles moaned out as he helped get Phoenix aligned. He wasn’t too concerned with Phoenix being able to take it. One of the few advantages of heat sex was that the things that needed to be stretched and wet did that all on their own, so that was nice. Miles theoretically could have finished the job on his own, shoving the omega down on his dripping, suffering cock. He didn’t. It always felt better when Phoenix moved on his own accord and set his own pace. So, Miles just stabilized his hips, gripping them tightly as Phoenix shivered and moaned above him.

“A-are you-“

“Yes.” Miles interrupted him with a growl, “Yes, I am. Go.”

Phoenix sunk himself down onto Miles’s cock, and both of them cried out. Phoenix took a second to adjust, and the noises that Miles were emitting were downright feral as the omega contracted. It was just the right amount of tightness, just painful enough to be pleasurable and just pleasurable enough to be painful. Miles found himself edging right out of the gate, and it didn’t get any better once Phoenix found his rhythm. He wished he could say that his stamina had only recently worsened with age, but no, it’d always been this bad with his rut. Even after Phoenix. Especially after Phoenix.

At least he could take comfort in the fact that the omega wasn’t much better. Phoenix was struggling through his warning shortly after he started moving in earnest, just as Miles was opening his mouth to announce his.

“I-it’s gonna~”

“Let it,” Miles barked as fought, trying to hold off for Phoenix to finish. He didn’t know how much longer he’d be able to force back the knot that was already beginning to swell at the base. Even without it being fully formed, Miles could feel it already beginning to stick inside Phoenix. It was getting harder and harder for the omega to pull up and back down, and Miles was moaning so loud that it was morphing into a scream. Too much more and he’d be unable to keep himself from howling like an animal in, well, heat.

“There’s going to be a lot, alright?” Miles rushed out, and Phoenix took notice in his haze, momentarily knocking him out of his trance. “It- it might overwhelm you.”

“It wo-“Miles thrusted up, hard, before Phoenix could even get the words together. It absolutely slammed against that one perfect spot, and he lost it. His vision went first, everything shot into a radiant white and blinded him. His hearing went next. Miles was saying something garbled, but Phoenix couldn’t understand a word of it. The feeling of Miles against his skin went last. It felt like he was in a void, floating, not registering a thing outside of white smog that Miles had so effectively thrown him into.

Outside of the void, Miles lost it the second that he felt release pulsing against his chest. It wasn’t the additional pressure against his cock as Phoenix found orgasm. The truth was that he was too far out
there to even be aware of the compressions as they began to roll in. No, the thing that did him was that initial jet of cum, and the signal that he didn’t have to hold back anymore.

He wasn’t the type to subspace. Phoenix certainly was, but Miles wasn’t. He stayed together for every single second of his orgasm, intense as it was. It knocked a few tears out of him just from the relief alone, and a few more from the absolute bitch that his knot was proving to be. Sometimes, when he was really into it or he’d held on for longer than he should have, his knot formed bigger than normal. It was fine, perfectly healthy as a matter of fact, but the purpose of it was to form a tighter seal to better hold a larger release.

This was a larger release. The orgasm Just. Wouldn’t. End. It wasn’t bad, how could it be, it was just a lot to shoot in one go. He was still shuddering in climax when Phoenix came back to the world of the living a few seconds later.

“Shi-shit, are you still-“

“Shh.” Miles bit out. He had just gotten to the end of the last peak, he was letting go blanks now more than anything, and just needed that moment of silence to concentrate and let that last little bit roll out. To his credit, Phoenix stayed quiet as Miles finally stilled, brushing the hair out of his eyes as he blissed out. He gave him a solid ten, maybe twenty seconds of peace and quiet before-

“Damn, what was that, 45 seconds? Not quite your personal best, but fuck, I’m proud of you.”

“Piss off,” Miles laughed as he said it though, taking away any hint of malice that he might have had. He usually didn’t swear, unless he was really comfortable and content. Or, alternatively, if he were insatiably horny, but this time it was definitely the former. Either way, Phoenix was typically the only person who got to hear those words come out of Miles’s mouth, and that was just one of those little things that he deeply treasured.

Miles put a hand low against Phoenix’s stomach, disgusted and a little proud of himself at the same time when the omega recoiled slightly at the touch. “How do you feel?”

“Bloated. What did you do, take something when I wasn’t looking?”

“Hardly. You can’t even handle me without, what makes you think you can take me on with?”

There was a mischievous glint in Phoenix’s eye, despite the fact that he was very clearly spent for the time being. After a horrendously long wave of heat, having a small one was rather nice. Day one was going pretty darn smoothly, all things considered, even though Miles could smell that the heat still had a while to go. Another day or two, maybe? He’d been wrong before. Maybe three at the most?

“What are you thinking about,” Phoenix asked, shifting to lay down as best he could given their current position. The end result was a little awkward since he was basically perched on top of Miles, but they’d been stuck in worse. Much worse. “Are you thinking about me?”

“Yes, Phoenix, I’m thinking about you,” Miles sighed contently, chuckling slightly to himself at what he was about to say, “I’m thinking about that time, when we were eight- “

“Please don’t,” Phoenix interrupted. Lots of things happened when they were eight, but he knew that Miles only began one story that way. “Let it die.”

Miles smirked. “Sorry, I can’t do that. I’ll never let you forget that you are solely responsible for
corrupting an otherwise innocent child.”

“Oh please. You were born corrupted, I just helped you figure it out a little sooner.”

“You lie. You made me this way,”

“Ok, what about what you did to me? I remember that day crystal clear, and you committed the exact same sin as me,” Phoenix said, smiling, but he wasn’t about to let Miles win this. The memory was a pretty embarrassing one in hindsight, only made funny by the fact that he and Miles had ended up bonded years later. If it were anybody else, it would be downright mortifying, but since it’d all worked out the way it had…well, no harm no foul.

Miles didn’t waste any time on his rebuttal. “It was your idea, Love, sorry to tell you. That makes me absolved of all accountability. I remember that day clearly too. There I was, eight years old, having not ever thought an evil thought in my entire life-“

“Are you really going there?”

“Afraid so. You asked me what I was thinking, and now I’m obligated to tell you. So, anyway, there I am. And then you come along and ask if we can go and play in that treehouse you made. And me, being pure of heart and unsuspecting, says yes.”

“Oh, freaking objection right there,” Phoenix interjected, ”You were the ass who once stole an answer sheet for a math quiz. And that was BEFORE this.” It was Phoenix’s turn to smirk, but Miles just shook it off like it was nothing.

“That’s neither here nor there. I think that every child is guilty of theft at some point, it’s hardly a point of concern. Do you know what isn’t typical childhood behavior? Inviting your best friend over to your isolated treehouse, playing catch for two hours, then comparing penis sizes before heading home.

“Hold it!” Phoenix sputtered, “That’s not what that was, and you know it.”

Miles’s eyes widened, “Oh really? What was it then?”

“Nothing. I knew better. You knew better. Maybe I wanted to see another one for reference, I have no fucking idea. Why’d you go along with it?”

“Because you’d never had a bad idea before that. After that, I started questioning you more, and then I made the unfortunate discovery that you were a fascinatingly dumb kid.”

Phoenix laughed, “Yeah, the fascinatingly dumb kid that bonded with you fifteen years later. Whose cock is currently stuck up who’s ass, again?”

The bickering lasted well into the evening as the two waited for the slightly-larger-than-normal knot to go down. It took an extra half-hour, which gave them just enough time to further debate who-turned-who gay at age eight thanks to childhood curiosity. It was always a fun conversation, though
that was a memory that both of them would rather take to their graves than tell anybody else about. Ever.

Chapter End Notes

I actually had to pull out one of my college textbooks to remember what the "jugular notch" was called. About 20 minutes of research went into using those two words correctly. #CrazyWritingLife
Chapter 12

After unknotting and taking a few minutes to clean up, Miles decided that it was as good a time as any to have dinner. Or, as close as they could get at 8:43 in the evening, anyway. He was absolutely starving, never mind the finicky omega who had been wary of the idea. While Phoenix had taken his turn in the shower, Miles took care of himself by fixing a sandwich. He took care of Phoenix by heating up the soup he’d “made” that morning. He would have made something more substantial to go with it, but soup was about the only thing he’d found that Phoenix could keep down without much difficulty.

And believe him, he’d tried.

Even still, Phoenix was still stirring his bowl around at the table more than he was actually eating. They usually didn’t leave the confines of the bedroom during heat, partly because of Trucy, but mostly because it was just easier for Miles to control the situation from one room. Without the excuse of Trucy being around, there was no reason for them not to eat in the kitchen. This was much easier when Phoenix was in the nest, and Miles could just lift a thermos to his lips and gently coax him into eating. Presenting it as a meal like this, best intentions aside, might as well have been the same as giving him a bowl of rot.

It wasn’t like Phoenix wasn’t hungry, Miles could hear his stomach growling from across the bloody room. The internal struggle was transparent as glass, between him clearly wanting to eat but not trusting himself. When asked, the omega would claim up and down that it was a result of that disastrous first heat of his. After a few minutes of watching Phoenix fight to justify putting the spoon to his mouth, though, Miles wasn’t so sure.

He knew that Phoenix had been in a heat hotel extensively when he was younger, though a lot of the details were left blank even to him. Most of what he knew of the conditions of heat hotels came from research he’d done on his own accord, bolstered by the few scant details that Phoenix had let slip over the years. He didn’t know a lot about how mealtimes were handled in such establishments, but he found it difficult to believe that there wasn’t some competition involved. Young alphas who hadn’t learned to control themselves tended to be very territorial around their food. Miles couldn’t say for absolute certain, having not experienced it himself, but he supposed that young omegas were very much the same. And having dozens of them all together, heating and vulnerable and dubiously policed?

Yeah, Miles had his suspicions.

How it all tied together into the mess that Phoenix had become about it, who could say? They didn’t talk about it. Just like Miles had demons that went understood but unsaid, Phoenix had his own unique set.

Eventually, it went on long enough, and he snapped. Miles couldn’t take the sight of Phoenix brawling with himself and took the spoon from him. He was used to handfeeding him in one way or another during heat, so why not this? It wasn’t like either of them were clinging onto a single scrap of dignity anyway, not within these walls. Not in the same place where Phoenix had been collared,
where tears had been shed and memories dug up by the roots and pulled. Comparatively speaking, this was nothing.

“Here. Open.”

Phoenix cocked his head through lidded eyes, unimpressed. “I’m in heat, not disabled. I think I can eat on my own.”

“This isn’t about you,” Miles said, continuing to hold the spoon out for him. Phoenix could see that wasn’t going to let this go. “I’m being selfish. Let me do this.”

Defeated, Phoenix opened his mouth halfheartedly and ate. It was still slow-going, swallowing wasn’t coming easy even though food was getting in his mouth, but it was progress. Miles didn’t particularly care how much time it took, sitting patiently between each spoonful. As long as he knocked out the grumbling in Phoenix’s stomach, that was all that mattered.

A few bites in and Phoenix fell into a rhythm, just as Miles suspected he would. Once that element of control was taken away from him, it didn’t take Phoenix very long to give into what Miles wanted him to do.

\[
\text{Shame I can’t get you to follow me so easily outside of heat. How much easier would life be for you if you just let me do everything?}
\]

Miles smiled at the thought, though he didn’t mean a word of it, even to himself. Traditionally, yes, Phoenix would be this compliant no matter what state of mind he was in. Omegas weren’t expected to be much of anything up until a few centuries ago at best. Alphas were the ones who went out and accomplished things, along with the slightly-less-successful-but-still-very-capable betas. There was a time where if Phoenix wanted to eat at all, it would have been in a manner very similar to what they were doing right now: By his alpha’s hands or not at all.

It didn’t have a place in modern society. It was impractical and backwards and morally bankrupt, but echoes of that time still came through at certain points. Spoon-feeding his omega felt like the most natural thing in the world. It seemed to bring Phoenix’s appetite back up to snuff as well, his initial hesitation giving way to hunger.

Miles didn’t say anything in of fear of startling Phoenix out of eating. He just kept repeating the motions, adjusting as necessary to match Phoenix’s pace. He’d simply keep feeding him as long as kept acting like he wanted to eat.

The bowl was halfway eaten when Phoenix finally seemed satisfied, which was about right. He wasn’t a big eater on the best of days, never mind what heat did to his system.

“Are you all done?” Miles asked, putting the spoon down for the last time. Phoenix avoided eye contact as he nodded, a bit pink in the face. Miles didn’t know what he had to be embarrassed of, it wasn’t his fault.
In all honesty, Miles rather liked the codependency every now again. It did fantastic things for his ego and gave his inner alpha something to do, other than get in the way.

“Thank you for letting me do that, I know it’s not your favorite thing,” Miles leaned in and kissed the omega on his hairline, grooming some of the rogue spikes behind his ear. Phoenix was glancing up at him in that breathless, awestruck sort of way, as if Miles had done something dashingly romantic instead of just pumping him full of salt and monosodium glutamate.

Shit. I started something.

“You look like you’ve just realized something. Care to tell me?” was what actually came out of his mouth. He wasn’t about to turn down a rut if that’s what Phoenix needed from him, but he also didn’t want to overstep his bounds. The last thing he needed was an overwhelmed, oversensitive, and overtired omega breaking himself trying to satisfy his alpha.

That line wasn’t a fun one to cross. He would know.

“Would you- I want to show you something,” Phoenix all but whispered. “It’s not exactly your favorite either, but…”

Phoenix trailed off, and Miles responded by kissing right above the curve of his ear. The resulting whine that came from the omega was quiet enough that Miles would have missed it entirely if he hadn’t been listening for it specifically.

“I’d really appreciate it if you showed me. You need it, don’t you?” He husked, confident that he had a pretty good idea of what it was that Phoenix was trying to ask him. He was nothing if not deductive, and it hadn’t gone unnoticed that the omega wasn’t exactly forthcoming when asked about where his collar was earlier in the evening. Miles suspected it to be somewhere buried in the nest all along, but he hadn’t pried. He never doubted that Phoenix knew exactly where it was; he figured he was just holding onto it until an opportunity arose.

Well, if that’s what Phoenix wanted, fine. Miles was willing to throw him an opening. Phoenix seemed happy to take it as they went back to the nest. Absolutely convinced of what was about to happen, Miles took the initiative of turning all of the lights in the bedroom off except the one that was overhead in the bathroom. Dark enough to hide all shame, but bright enough in case something went awry. All in all, Miles was feeling pretty damn clever with himself by the time he was settled down next to Phoenix.

“You’ve got my attention. Go ahead.”

He was slightly wrong about where the collar was. He realized that quickly when he saw Phoenix prodding around the ever-growing pile of clothes that were stacking up in the corner of the closet. The omega had asked to keep them there, something about the scent being soothing, and Miles hadn’t thought about it any further.

“I keep it on me, but you already knew that, didn’t you?” Phoenix glimpsed in his alpha’s direction as he dug through the clothes he’d started this entire ordeal off with. Miles actually hadn’t, but he couldn’t feign surprise after the interaction he’d had with Maya yesterday.
There wasn’t any need to elaborate on it any further. Phoenix had purposefully made this as simple as possible for Miles to figure out, while still giving himself plausible deniability on the off chance that he missed the cues. Bloody clever, potentially accidental, but wildly unnecessary regardless. Miles would have done it anyway even if Phoenix had asked him outright.

Phoenix felt the collar in his hand for a brief moment before he offered it, running his thumb along the black stitching. The thing itself was plain, with nothing remarkable or descript about it. It’d hardly stand up to use from a real pet, given how thin it was. Miles had never actually intended on getting him a collar, he himself being iffy about what it represented, but it had come bundled in with one of the other toys. He’d failed to intercept it before Phoenix got ahold of it, and he’d grown so fond of the thing that Miles couldn’t bring himself to take it away from him.

Miles certainly didn’t value it very highly. If Phoenix found meaning and comfort in it, that was fine, but it meant little more than fetish to him. He clicked it around Phoenix’s neck, careful around the sensitive bruises that were overtaking his nape, and dropped his hands. In hindsight, it probably would have been a wonderful idea to ask questions before securing the band, but the deed was done. Whatever Phoenix wanted, that was going to have to be fine.

“What are you wanting, Love?” Miles petted him just behind the ear, and Phoenix’s eyes rolled back and shut. He didn’t know what the omega was going to ask him to do, but he was expecting something demeaning. Phoenix really and truly got off on that kind of thing, even though Miles couldn’t make heads-or-tails of it himself.

Phoenix hummed, leaning into the alpha’s touch. “I want to lay down with you.”

Miles just started at him, waiting for the other shoe to drop. He wanted to lay down and what, exactly? How much rope was this going to require, and how often was he going to have to breathe? When Phoenix didn’t say anything further, Miles naturally assumed that he was too embarrassed to elaborate. Well, that just wasn’t going to do.

“You can tell me, it can’t be that bad.”

Phoenix smiled easily at him, not wanting to appear condescending but amused nonetheless. “No, that’s it. That’s all I want. I just want to belong to you for a while, nothing else.”

Miles blinked, thoroughly blindsided. “Don’t…don’t you already? I bonded you, I mean, we’re bonded to each other…You are taking my mark, aren’t you? It’s supposed to be permanent, isn’t it?

“It’s alright, I know you don’t get it.” Phoenix truthfully didn’t mean to laugh, but it just came out. Miles was obviously trying his hardest, and that meant everything to him. “I just…I want to relax for a minute. I don’t want anything else to matter, I just want to let go. I want some time where I don’t have to make any choices, because you’ve already made them for me. Whatever you say, that’s what I want to do, because I trust you so much that I’d never want to do anything else. I want some time, just a little bit, where nothing I do matters and I can be weak, finally.”

Miles felt like he should be saying something, anything, but he could only bring himself to gape at the omega. The sentiment in Phoenix’s words had struck him, hard, momentarily leaving him blank. That made sense. Everything Phoenix said had been perfectly logical, stunning in its simplicity. It
wasn’t about being humiliated or being forced into pain, it was about the loss of control. It wasn’t about alpha or omega and playing the parts that’d been assigned to them, and it wasn’t about suppressing all forms of self in order to please one partner. It was about being able to let go of the wheel and being able to spin out safely, without fear of harm.

Phoenix had never been trying to downplay his self-worth. He’d never literally wanted to put himself in a place lower than his alpha. The poor thing had just been trying to get some goddamn relief from the daily stress-fest that was his life. Miles could understand that. Fuck, Miles could downright sympathize with that.

“Are-are you alrig-“

“I’m so sorry,” Miles grabbed him into a hug and pulled him close against his chest. It happened so suddenly that it initially knocked the wind out of Phoenix. Once he was in his grip, though, the embrace was really quite tender. “I should have collared you years ago. You’ve been hurting.”

“Hey, don’t- don’t feel bad,” Phoenix wasn’t aware of the breakthrough that was going on in Miles’s head, but he knew that it wasn’t worth all the apologizing he was doing. “I’m still alive, aren’t I? And have you, so how much hurt could I possibly be in?”

Ah, it was sappy. Phoenix knew it the moment it left his mouth, but what good did it do to be self-conscious at a time like this? There wasn’t any pressing need to try and get out of the hug, either. Why bother? The way Miles was holding him, unguarded and tentatively tracing his fingers along the loose fabric of his collar, was almost exactly what he’d been desiring in the first place.

“You’re such a good omega,” Miles started to release his grasp, stalling when he realized that Phoenix didn’t have the slightest desire to let him go. He slumped back against the wall, letting Phoenix breathe and scent against his chest. “You’re much too forgiving towards me.”

“It’s my omega complex acting up. I think they have a prescription to get rid of it,” Phoenix deadpanned, though its edge was significantly dulled by the lazy sneer he had going.

“Don’t you dare. I wouldn’t change a thing about you, not even your insufferable sarcasm.”

They both chuckled gently at that, stillness taking the moment over. It was a nice kind of still though, a moment that Miles was hesitant to break by shifting into a more comfortable position. As it turned out, he didn’t have to. Phoenix shattered it for him.

“You can take the collar off if you want. I shouldn’t make you-“

“No,” Miles interrupted, sternly, “No, I think I finally understand. I want you to have it. After we can leave the house again, I’ll go out and get you something proper. Maybe something in your own color?”

Phoenix purred as he stretched out alongside his alpha, flat atop the soft underbelly of the nest. “Mmm, no, I think I’d prefer one in yours. If we even have to upgrade at all, the one you gave me is perfect.”
“It won’t last you long. It’s too thin, and I plan on choking you. You’re going to need a spare when that one starts to fail you.”

“It’s whatever you want. It’s not really mine to begin with, you know? You just let me show it off.”

“That’s…” Miles pet his hair back again, drawn into that cocky, smart ass grin that he was giving to the floor, “…something we’re going to have to have a conversation about. Later. For now, get some sleep. I’ll be right here when you wake up.”

“I know you will. You’re a good alpha. I love you.”

It was an awkward reach to get that last peck on the lips in, but it was worth the extra effort as Miles made that warm connection. Phoenix watched him in the same way he’d done just a few minutes ago, dewy and devoted, utterly romanced. It was a good look for him. Miles thought so, anyway, sleep beginning to overtake them both. Over a decade of being bonded, and he was still fully capable of sweeping his omega off his feet. Talk about chicken soup for the ego; the image of Phoenix being wholly taken aback with love was going to be boosting his morale for weeks.

“I love you too. More than anything else.”
Chapter 13

“So, that’s all that’s happening with Trucy. Promise me you’ll restrain yourself from teasing her, the poor thing is probably mortified.”

Phoenix twirled the television remote around in his hand absentmindedly, attention torn between Miles’s recap of Maya’s phone call and a commercial for coffee grounds. The television in the living room hadn’t been used since…hell, Miles couldn’t even remember turning the thing on in the last year and a half. He’d walked off to use the bathroom for five minutes, and he’d come out to find Phoenix awake, out of the bedroom, and flipping through channels.

He’d bitten back a sarcastic comment about the eight hours of sleep being so exhausting for him that he needed to take a break from it. Miles had just been happy that, somehow, they’d managed to get eight hours of sleep in the first place. Perhaps that meant that the heat was beginning to fizzle out, and they could get back to their lives sooner than later.

Well, at least for the next eight weeks. Phoenix still had his regular heat coming up, provided that this hadn’t knocked him completely out of his cycle. Miles was just a little bit hopeful that that would be the case. Two heats a year were more than enough for any two people to handle, thank you.

“I just can’t believe you didn’t remember that Pearl presented last winter. There was a party. That you were invited too. You bought her a gift card,” Phoenix was mocking him openly, an easy smile gracing his face as he did so. Miles hummed in response. He couldn’t find it in him to bicker back. Especially not when the alternative was to stay where he was. He was laying behind Phoenix, spooning him, nose pressed flat against cheap black thread. He doubted that Phoenix even remembered that he still had his collar on, but it didn’t matter. The sensation wasn’t unpleasant, even if it was hindering access to the nape of the omega’s neck. The scent still flooded through, clear as the sunrise that was beginning to streak through the windowpane.

It felt silly to want even more sleep after just getting up, but this position was rendering him helpless. Phoenix smelled so familiar and safe, his heartbeat was steady and comforting, Miles was slowly being lulled into another long nap.

“I have such a lazy alpha,” Phoenix said softly. His own eyes were beginning to get heavy, apparently not finding the early-morning informercial very stimulating. Miles nuzzled into the back of his neck, breathing in as much of Phoenix as he could take in. He always smelled so strong during his heats.

“Then why don’t you turn that blasted thing off and go to sleep with me,” he asked, voice just the slightest bit groggy. “Then I’ll fuck you as much as you need me too.”

“I’m never going to get used to hearing you curse, I swear to God,” Phoenix mumbled, but he complied, switching off the screen and letting the remote fall to the ground with a thud.

“What can I say? You bring out the worst in me…” Miles’s voice trailed off, planning his next few words. It wasn’t that what he was about to say carried any weight to it, he was just finding it harder
and harder to speak as the threat of sleep kept pulling him in. “Can you do something for me?”

“Anything.”

Miles sighed, “Purr for me, please? I’ve missed it horribly. You do it so perfectly.”

“Of course,” Phoenix chuckled, “though, you haven’t purred for me recently either.”

“You know I’ve lost that. But I’m very grateful that you still can, so…” Miles drew Phoenix just that little bit closer, “indulge me. If you would.”

Phoenix closed his eyes and took a breath. Purring in general was beginning to get more and more difficult as he got older. For all intents and purposes, he really shouldn’t have been able to do it at all anymore. Alphas and omegas tended to lose their purrs around their early 30’s, presumably because nobody wanted to see a grown-ass adult show that kind of vulnerability. It became a hindrance to their ability to draw in a mate, essentially, so the body would naturally forget how to do it. Miles had lost his right on time about a year ago, but Phoenix would still find himself purring involuntarily every once in a while.

It was usually in his sleep, actually, and Miles would have to reach over and bop him to wake him up to get it to stop. That’s where he’d gotten the idea that Miles didn’t like it. Turns out, he just didn’t like it at 3 AM on a worknight, which was reasonable.

It took a second for Phoenix to get it situated the right way, but his purr was still fine. In a way, it was a little disappointing to know that it still sounded pretty much just like it always had. Miles’s purr had been weak for the last few months of its existence, until it ultimately tapered off into nothing. Phoenix would probably still be stuck with his for at least the next year at this rate. It was the last lingering reminder of his youth spent as an omega. All of his previous scars had faded along his neck, with the exception of one he’d gotten in his 20’s that he didn’t mind keeping around.

He only kept a few things from his time in the heat hotel. He had a blanket that he didn’t want to part with. There was a set of children’s magazines that the staff had initially gotten for him when they found out how young he’d been. And finally, there was his purr, the last physical remnant of his past. Honestly, he didn’t care how old it made him seem; he was looking forward to the day his purr finally up and left him.

For the moment, though, Miles seemed to like it. And that was fair enough. Miles had to go through a lot during heats. He basically had to be Phoenix’s brain most of the time since his own simply refused to function. The way Phoenix figured it, he had to be babysitter, protector, decision maker and a sex god all at once.

So, yeah, he was getting anything he asked for, no matter what it was. If he wanted purring, that’s what Phoenix was going to do.

“Mmm, there you go,” Miles said quietly, burying himself deeper into the white cotton of Phoenix’s shirt. He had his hand pressed firm along the omega’s chest, right below the junction of his throat, and the purr spiked. Phoenix was able to calm it back down instantly, slow and heavy, but the
damage was done. Miles chuckled warmly against his neckline.

“So precious. It’s criminal what you do to me, I should be pressing charges,” Miles said. It was a well-spoken sentence, made even more impressive by the fact that it was immediately followed by his grooming instinct taking over. It was a drive that he really shouldn’t have had, given that omegas were traditionally the ones who cleaned their partner, but Phoenix wasn’t about to question his nature as Miles’s tongue dragged against his exposed skin. It felt right. Everything about this position felt right. Phoenix didn’t even have to consciously control the vibrations for very long; it was happening all on its own before he knew it.

He couldn’t tell if Miles was trying to soothe him to sleep or seduce him. Grooming wasn’t inherently a sexual act despite the intimacy of it, and he felt like he could go either way depending on the alpha’s intentions. It was whatever Miles wanted to make of it; his vocal cords were too tied up at the moment to be asking much of anything. Besides, he hadn’t forgotten the position he put himself in.

He was all too aware of the collar clasped around him, and the sensation of Miles lapping over it as if it were just another part of him was something that he hadn’t known he craved. He already had a master’s set of kinks, but this was a new one, and it was...rather intriguing. If he had any capability of doing so, he would have moaned out for it. Miles wanted purring though, so he breathed through it, taking great care to stay still. If Miles actually was wanting a nap, writhing around would be counterproductive, especially being pressed together as tight as they were.

“He went off entirely, and Phoenix’s eyes flew open. That didn’t sound good, whatever it was. “Shit!”

The first thing that came to Phoenix’s mind was that he must be about to fall back into heat. Miles could smell that before Phoenix could feel it, and they were definitely close enough for Miles to pick up on it. Damn, it must have been coming up quick to get that kind of a reaction, maybe he should be more concerned than he was.

“Damnit!”

Phoenix flipped over to face him with the very little free space he had. He’d meant to be reassuring, offer to help get things together before the heat set in, but that didn’t happen. The scent hit him before he could put together anything smart to say, and the words that came out were a blunt, stupid:

“Oh, you’re rutting.”

Miles shot him a look, but stopped himself just short of sarcastically saying Thank you for informing me, I had no idea. Silently, he was mortified that he hadn’t been able to fight this one back, it took him over so suddenly that he hadn’t had a chance to will it away. This felt like one of the ruts he would force him awake in the middle of the night, when there was nothing he could do to prevent it.
Ruts just didn’t sneak up on him when he was wide awake anymore. What was he, 16 again?

Once again, Phoenix chimed in with something dumb.

“So…you need help?”

“Don’t feel obligated, I did this, not you,” Miles said. He wasn’t even fooling himself with that as it halfheartedly tumbled out of his mouth. Of course, he wanted help. Growls were already beginning to settle in the pit of his larynx, and he covered his mouth. It wasn’t just to muffle the sound. He felt like he was about to bite something, and he felt like he hadn’t given Phoenix enough of an opportunity to back away.

“I’m going to retrigger your heat if you don’t go. You want to rest, don’t you,” was what he came up with. And, shit, his voice had already dropped half an octave in the in the intervening seconds. What the hell was even happening to his self-control these days? “You could give yourself another fever if you stay.”

His other arm had gone in-between them, shielding Phoenix as if this was something he had to be protected from. Phoenix could have rolled his eyes if he were feeling the least bit sarcastic, but that was the farthest thing from his mind as he clasped Miles’s hand in his own.

Phoenix sighed. “It’s going to happen anyway, so- “

“Wright…” it was more of a whine than anything. Aw, poor alpha, too proud to ask for help when he was supposed to be the protector here. Fair was fair, wasn’t it?

“Not my name, and I don’t care if I get sick or not.”

“Wright, last warning”, Miles said, the threat of a bark looming behind those words. Fuck, he wasn’t kidding around this time, Phoenix could see the hunger of a starving wolf straining through those panicked eyes. “You’re about to make me lose it.”

Phoenix didn’t even blink. “Let go, then. I’ll see you when you’re done.”

Miles started to uncover his mouth, but changed his mind partway through and kept his hand there. Was he worried about something? “You…I- “

“You can’t help it, it’s ok. Go.”

He only needed to be told twice. Miles was back on him, marking whatever scrap of skin he could teethe against, before the omega had the chance to take a breath. It was pretty standard for the beginning of a rut, truthfully. Phoenix actually had the presence of mind to be a little disappointed at his alpha’s opening move, even as he suckled along the already violet scars on his jawline. He’d been so hesitant about something, Phoenix was kind of expecting to have the fear of God put in him as all. Oh well, this was nice. Maybe he just needed a push in the right direction?

“Y-You gonna claim me? You gonna flip me over and bond me, make sure that everyone around us
knows who I belong to,” he tried to tease. Dirty talk was more of a him thing, but hey, why not? He was about to turn back over on his own, before Miles could even think about doing it himself. The alpha caught him by the collar before he got the opening. He sat up, yanking Phoenix hard by the D-ring to force him to follow.

“No, me.” Miles was talking through his teeth. Phoenix was still so stunned by the sudden change in demeanor that he didn’t connect the dots.

He swallowed. “You…”

“Do me.”

“…Not saying no, but how-“

He was cut off by a burning kiss, the kind of kiss that didn’t leave any room for guesswork. With one swift jerk of the metal in Miles’s hand, they were crashing against each other, wet and forceful. Instinctually, Phoenix gave a counter for everything Miles had for him. It came with years of experience and a stubborn desire to prove himself worthy of affection. Every lick, every moan, every touch, Phoenix had an answer, and Miles just gave him more in return.

Phoenix distantly felt something spark to life inside him. It was vaguely warm, not unpleasant in the slightest, and shift in power happened unconsciously like it so often did. A few brief flashes, and it was no longer a matter of Miles and Phoenix trying to outwit each other with their mouths. It was a case of Alpha getting what he needed from Omega.

Miles broke the kiss, desperately needing air. Phoenix naturally tried to reach back up and continue, thirsty for the contact, but Miles refused him. It was hard not to take the rejection personally, no matter how minor it was. The sting was quickly taken away by the realization that Miles was bearing his neck to him, fingers still laced tightly around the ring of the collar.

Oh. *That’s* what he was trying to ask for.

“Ok,” Phoenix whispered through hitched breath. “Ok.”

Miles gave him just enough leeway to tuck himself in behind the crook of his neck, but not an inch more than that. He’d managed to turn the collar around to where he was dragging Phoenix from behind rather than pulling him forward, which was either an incredible display of forward thinking or proof that even Miles Edgeworth had moments of dumb luck. Either way, Phoenix didn’t have the space to get distracted. He couldn’t go through with his grooming instinct because there simply wasn’t enough wiggle room with the collar, which was both maddening and enthralling at the same time.

Even when he was technically in the dominant position, Miles literally had him by the throat. He didn’t have even the faintest semblance of control when he should have had the most, and it was *fucking amazing.*

It felt completely wrong to bite down without preparing the area any. It went against everything in
his nature, everything he’d ever picked up from every single partner he’d ever been with. It felt even worse when he dug his canines in, deep as he could ever remember going, and staying firm with it until he tasted metal. But despite how it played against everything he usually did, it was completely intoxicating to throw it all away for the moment. He couldn’t hear anything other than his own heartbeat pounding through his ribcage as he acted on the impulse, which was the only tragic thing about this situation.

It wasn’t everyday that he got Miles to shamelessly beg. That was something that he would have stayed in his fantasies for years to come if he hadn’t been to overwhelmed with his own arousal to hear it. It was a shame, not that he’d ever know the difference.

Phoenix would have kept going along like that for at least a few more minutes had he not gotten interrupted. For what had to be the first time in recent memory, Miles actually had to pull Phoenix off of him and not the other way around. It wasn’t hurting or anything, quite the opposite actually, but it was getting him closer to finishing than Miles would ever care to admit. Phoenix could get away with it because he didn’t have a knot to worry about, but Miles…well, if there was one thing more painful than having sex with a knot, it was having nothing to knot into in the first place.

He didn’t mean to choke him when the tugged at the collar. Phoenix had just picked that exact same second to sink down to the very edge of the gland, not quite biting through but not far from it at all. Instead of nagging him back gently, he ended up jerking the ring and knocking the air fully out of him. In hindsight, it was lucky that Phoenix released his bite instantly, otherwise he really would have torn right through the skin. That was a set of stitches that Miles really didn’t want to have to receive again.

“I’m sorry, I’m so sorry,” Miles apologized profusely as Phoenix coughed. Rutting or not, Phoenix was still in heat (quite literally now, as a matter of fact) and that protective predisposition of his was something that was impossible to kill. He clicked the collar off of him and tossed it away. It wasn’t putting him in any danger currently, but Miles just wasn’t thinking that way as he ran his hands along his omega’s neck trying to examine him further.

“I’m good, just- “He was preempted by another small coughing fit that sent Miles soaring straight into red alert.


“Miles, I’m fine, just…keep going. Please. Alpha.”

Miles still wasn’t sure even as Phoenix fell forward into him. He was still catching his breath but he was also clearly wanting to be loved on, sliding down against him and toying with the waistband on Miles’s boxers. He really was a cute omega when he wasn’t being a smartass, and Miles had definitely awakened the beast with this horribly timed rut of his.

Plus, he wanted to knot. Badly. It was starting to hurt and Phoenix was going from playful to
“You don’t want that,” Miles warned, though its severity was ruined by the moan that followed directly behind it. He went on anyway. “You’ll have to keep pressure on it until it goes down.”

“That’s why I want it,” Phoenix didn’t so much as look up as he pulled Miles out completely. “It’s your favorite, right?”

“That’s hardly the point,” Miles wasn’t exactly rushing to try and stop him. Phoenix was more than capable of handling it, they did this all the time during random ruts. And… yeah, it totally was his favorite, but he felt guilty about letting Phoenix doing it during a heat. He needed the knot just as badly as Miles needed to give it.

“You’ll get me next. C’mon, let me do this,” Phoenix finally looked up at him, and fuck, who was Miles to say no to that face. He was so pretty, just like that, cheeks just the slightest bit damp from being choked earlier and his hair tussled in a dozen different ways. He had this way of looking so innocent and coy even as he had the head of Miles’s cock pressed softly against the red of his lips. “Y’know you want me too,” Phoenix said tenderly, warm air grazing on sensitive skin. Miles shuddered, and that was the end of him feeling the least bit guilty about what they were about to partake in.

“Then quit being a tease and do it.”

When Phoenix went down, Miles saw stars. There were several judgements that one could make on Phoenix as an omega, every single one of them right. He nested horribly. He was naturally very stubborn. He talked back and had his own motivations and didn’t take Miles’s word as the gospel. One thing that could never be said, however, was that he wasn’t skillful. He might have been a weak omega through no fault of his own, but as far as Miles was concerned, he had something that was far better than mindlessness.

Phoenix Wright was an absolutely incredible lover.

There were plenty of other things that Miles admired about his mate of course. He actually found his stubbornness and self-motivation to be unbelievably attractive qualities, but his lovemaking abilities were undeniably a perk. He was just so good, eager to learn and please and put his partner’s needs before his own. It was like his mind was constantly thinking of things he could do to make it feel even better, even in the moment as he worked.

And, seriously, the things he could do with his mouth was no laughing matter. It wasn’t any secret to Miles that Phoenix had one hell of an oral fixation, and the ways he’d learned to suck and use his tongue were incontestably exquisite.

Phoenix might not have been able to take him all in, not during rut anyway, but it hardly mattered when he knew how to use what he did have. He had a firm hand, but his mouth was the thing doing
most of the work, licking around the head and hallowing out his cheeks to get just the right amount of pressure.

Miles tried to warn him, but he suspected that Phoenix already knew. The knot had started to form halfway, and of course Phoenix just had to get a taste of that too. The way he drank him in, so fully and completely, Miles had to wonder if Phoenix secretly liked how things tasted down there. He’d say the opposite whenever he was asked, presumably to save whatever face he still had left around his alpha, but he wasn’t sure. He was using the flat of his tongue just a little too much for somebody who claimed to be repulsed by what he found there.

As talented as Phoenix was, he couldn’t swallow everything. He never could during rut, and that wasn’t a knock against him; nobody could take that much so quickly. He got a lot of it, though, which Miles found to be rather impressive in its own right. There was only a small stream of it pooling down from his chin to his shirt when Miles came down. He wasn’t even making an attempt to clean himself up, lest he accidently let his mouth slip and lose the knot.

He was keeping pretty good pressure on it too. It honestly wasn’t all that distinguishable from how an anal knot felt, and it might have even been better just because of what Miles had to look down at. Phoenix was just always so content during this part that it was hard to not find it endearing.

“You did so well,” Miles said warmly, running his hands through Phoenix’s hair. As much as he wanted to clean him and take him back to the nest, Phoenix was doing something rather important, so it was better not to jostle him around too much. That didn’t mean he was exempt from getting his ego scratched just the way he liked it, though.

“You’re much too good for me, you know that? You’re such a good boy. You look good like that, there’s a reason why you’ve made this my favorite…”
Phoenix managed to hold himself still right up until the knot deflated, and not a second longer. He sputtered as he let his jaw fall slack, using the hem of his shirt to catch the mix of drool and cum that followed. The last few minutes had been a battle against his gag reflex, which would have been wildly out of character for him if he hadn’t been pushing back a wave of heat at the exact same time. There were only so many stresses his body could take.

“We need to go,” Miles said, reaching down and helping to clean up in whatever small way that he could. Phoenix had done a phenomenal job of fending off the inevitable, but his body temperature was rising fast and his eyes were rapidly beginning to unfocus. He was going to fall deep into heat in the middle of the floor if they didn’t get a move on.

It wouldn’t have been the first time that happened, admittedly, but it was a bitch to clean up and Miles liked to avoid it at all costs. It wasn’t like the closet or the bed, neither of which were seen regularly so it was ok if they were a little unkempt. Everybody could see the living room.

“Can you talk?”

Phoenix nodded, which didn’t answer Miles’s question directly. He was at that weird, brief stage where words weren’t coming easily, but he was comprehending. Good. That meant they still had a minute.

“Alright. I want you to go to the nest, right now. Don’t stop for anything, you’re not going to make it. I’ll meet you there in a moment.”

It took a split second for all of that to crack through the fog, but it got there. Phoenix did exactly what he was asked, walking to the bedroom without so much as a glance to any of the other doors.

The only reason why Miles made Phoenix go ahead of him was because he needed to restock the front of the nest back up. They’d run out of water at some point, and he had the gut feeling that they were going to be tied up for quite a while. There was this divergence in Phoenix’s scent that Miles had learned to catch onto, musky and sugar-sweet, that signaled an oncoming peak in the heat. Supposedly, this would be the point where Phoenix would be at his most fertile if they were actively trying for a pregnancy. On the pill though, only hints of the scent were able to slip through. Miles was only able to pick it out because he’d been with Phoenix through so many heats.

For the sake of his peace of mind, Miles ignored that knowledge for the time being. He grabbed a case of bottled water and piled some granola bars on top of it, on the off chance that he could actually convince Phoenix that he needed food to survive.

He stood in the kitchen as he took one final check of himself before entered into the sex dungeon of no return. He wasn’t hungry. He wasn’t thirsty. He wasn’t in pain. He was a bit of a mess, but that wasn’t an issue considering he was about to go into a closet and rut for several hours. All good. He hiked up his supplies and went on into the bedroom, ready to return Phoenix’s favor.
Phoenix, for his part, did manage to stay lucid just long enough to cross into his nest. He was huddled up in the corner, still dressed and looking deeply into nothing. It was damn cute, Miles could see the exact point where his brain had completely crapped out.

“If you mind me coming in, do something.”

One. Two. Three seconds, no response. It was basic, but it did the job. Phoenix did reject him every now and then, so it was always better to ask, even when the answer seemed obvious. Miles didn’t waste any time once he went over the line, hustling over to where Phoenix was curled up. He fumbled with both their sets of clothes, clumsily shedding nightshirts and boxers. That little spice of sugar, unassuming as it may have been, never failed to make him dizzy with rut. He didn’t get Phoenix undressed before he hooked his fingers into his shirt and yanked, causing him to crash bonelessly against his chest. Miles buried his nose behind the crook of his neck, flat against his bond mark.

Phoenix babbled in a mix of English and gibberish that couldn’t be untangled. It was all bits of the same: “I need you”, “I love you”, “Alpha”, “need more”, “too much”, all garbled and spit out unconsciously. Miles grazed his canines over the abused skin, snagging it just enough to cut a scar and scent. If he could have gotten away with sinking his teeth in and marking him completely, he’d have done it. The sad fact was that he’d already done it twice in a short amount of time. Any more, and they really would have to make that trip to the emergency room for a set of stitches.

The gland had coated itself with a tangy, chemically tasting gel to keep Miles from doing just that. It was a natural defense mechanism, held over from years of omegan evolution, and Miles couldn’t stand it. But he wanted more of that scent. He cut more scars, surface scratches really, tongue darting frantically over his teeth in a vain attempt to get the acidy substance off.

He only stopped when Phoenix started fighting against the fabric of his shirt. He couldn’t pull it off with Miles keeping him locked against him, as much as he tried. Miles released his grip enough to push back and see what all the fuss was about. He was flushed, sweat dripping down his forehead, overheated as all hell.

“So hot,” Phoenix slurred, panting, “help…”

Miles jerked the shirt over his head in record time, balling it up and throwing it as far out of the nest with as much force as his right arm could muster. There would be an argument about that later-Phoenix preferred to keep their ruined clothes in the nest during heat- but for now it didn’t matter. Phoenix had been nothing but patient for the last half hour, holding a knot in his mouth and allowing Miles to scent for as long as he wanted. He couldn’t wait anymore. His body was burning for a knot, pleading to be bred.

Miles helped Phoenix to lay on his back, hastily working himself out of his own clothes when he was over him.
“I’m sorry,” Miles turned into a babbling mess, repeating himself like a madman with a mantra as he peppered his omega’s skin with short licks and love bites. It was too frantic to be effective grooming, but it satiated the alpha in Miles nonetheless. The position wasn’t their usual fare, be it in heat or out of it. It was a lot more work to knot facing while facing each other, bordering on painful. Phoenix loved it. Miles tolerated it. It was strictly a *sometimes* position, reserved for birthdays and particularly bad court days.

Or, in this case, a reward. He deserved one.

“Like this?” Miles hovered over him, husking over the shell of his ear. “You want a treat?”

Phoenix responded by grinding himself up, and a low growl tore out of Miles’s throat. He hooked his legs around Miles’s waist halfway, sliding around as he fought to find his grip. Miles had to help him into place, easing their bodies together.

“Ah…” Miles moaned as the head of his cock found Phoenix’s entrance. He was soaked with slick, ready and begging. Even before he pressed in, Miles could feel the complete lack of resistance. It was too much, he rumbled out swears as he sheathed himself fully in wet heat. “Oh, fuck~”

One long, hard thrust was all it took on Phoenix’s end. He arched up as he lost it, splattering himself with jets of white. He rocked through the orgasm, not satisfied at all, whimpering for more. Miles thrusted slow, finding his rhythm, but didn’t stop as Phoenix tensed and tightened beneath him. There was no rest period. Phoenix stayed agonizingly hard, jutting upward and leaking obscenely.

This was another reason while Miles was lukewarm on this position. He could never last long. Between the desperate strain on Phoenix’s face, the thickness of his aching cock, and the unrelenting scent of raw heat, it was all sensory overload. He didn’t have the best stamina anyway, but how was he ever supposed to stand a chance against *this*? The bulb on his shaft swelled up, threatening to tie them both together. He grunted and held steady, determined to give Phoenix at least one more release before the knot popped.

“What you have to. As many times as you need to. Go.”

“Do,” Miles spoke between heaving breaths as he met Phoenix’s increasingly broken demands, “Do what you have to. As many times as you need to. Go.”

“IT HURTS.”

“I know. Hold on for me.”

Miles picked up the speed, his own body damned. There were a few things that Phoenix never said lightly, and ‘it hurts’ was right at the top of that list. If he knotted, he knotted, but Phoenix needed relief and quick.

Phoenix climaxed just as Miles blew his knot, clenching down hard as it expanded within him. Miles’s vision ran from white to red as he slammed in one last time and locked in, everything being milked out of him. It was the kind of finish that only happened in porn: euphoric, loud, and synchronized.

Phoenix was still writhing when Miles came down, tossing his head back and forth as he adjusted to the knot. After a minute passed and he still hadn’t blissed out, Miles knew that something wasn’t
right.

“Phoenix?”

If he heard it, he didn’t react at all. He wasn’t making big enough movements to displace the knot, but he clearly wasn’t happy either. He kept on pawing at his eyes, like he was trying to shield himself from a bright light.

And then it clicked.

“Be still. I know it hurts, but I need you to be still, alright? You’re going to make it worse if you don’t calm down,” Miles said, bringing his voice down to a coarse whisper. “Shh, shh…”

Miles reshifted his weight onto one hand in order to reach down and pet Phoenix into place. The omega melted into the touch as his breathing settled back into a predictable pattern, eyes still scrunched shut. He finally, finally, started to feel the knot and let the endorphins overtake him. Miles didn’t dare say anything else after Phoenix’s body went lax, too afraid to startle him and start the tossing and turning again.

It had been awhile, at least a year or two since Phoenix had gone full omega on him. Miles supposed it made sense; if his body was so overwhelmed that it launched him into an unscheduled heat, it wouldn’t be out of the question that he’d be especially vulnerable. He’d already had two bouts of fever, the omega in him must have been snapping at the joints trying to keep up with all the stress.

Miles sighed, it was always worse for Phoenix than it was for him. After the knot ran slack, Miles used the few precious moments he had in-between the waves of heat to draw the curtains and darken the room. He thought briefly about closing the closet door, but the idea of being stuck in a room with hours of uncirculated sex air made him reconsider. He couldn’t make the bedroom pitch black, but it was dark enough to where it wouldn’t cause any problems.

He laid his head back down beside Phoenix right as the omega opened his eyes and adjusted. Miles curled around him and waited, ready to follow whatever pace Phoenix set.

“Thank you,” Phoenix said, not fully present in the moment. The sweet scent was still coming off of him had become so heavy that Miles could taste sugar lingering on his tongue. It was a wonder that he was being coherent at all.

“You’re more than welcome. Is there anything else?”

Phoenix flipped onto his stomach and presented, stuck somewhere between a purr and a growl.

“You. Just…just you.”

Any thought other than rutting that might have been in Miles’s head at that moment was stomped out, kicked, and shot out of the room with such force that it may very well have been sent into orbit.

Miles held his mouth open stupidly, opening and closing it a few times to try and force a coherent sentence out. He took the gift, growling from the back of his throat in pleasure as he let the alpha in him come out to play.

Neither of them had to say anything else for a while after that.
Miles held Phoenix close to his heart, chest still heaving from their last round of sex. It’d taken more effort to sit himself up against the wall than he’d care to admit, and getting Phoenix in his lap had been another chore altogether. Everything was from his headache down to his cramped-up legs were buzzing, and the fact that his omega liked to nest on the floor suddenly seemed a cruel joke.

He rested his head limply atop Phoenix’s own and tried to think. What was the last thing he remembered? He could vaguely recall being bitten, hard, to the point of being knocked out of ecstasy. He reached up to the front of his collarbone and immediately regretted it. He hissed at the sting, and pulled his hand away with dried bits of red covering it.

It'd been a hell of a fight, whatever it was. One glance down at Phoenix revealed a matching bite on his shoulder, and two more along the right side of his neck complete with drips of dried blood. Though their heats together were expected to be rough given their status as a mated pair, Miles never felt any less resourceful. He didn’t even remember it.

He hoped Phoenix had gotten at least one more deep cut in on him somewhere. The bite further down his neck was already violet, and Miles was wincing just looking at it.

“Mmph,” Phoenix slurred as he began to stir in his arms, opening his eyes one at a time to adjust to the barely existent light. “Wha happened?”

“You went into heat. I took care of it. Like always,” Miles grunted, resting his head back down on Phoenix’s. Phoenix didn’t make any attempt to shake him off, accepting it. “How do you feel?”

“I can’t.”

“Must be nice.”

“It is. Was I conscious the whole time?”

Miles sat back up, concerned. “I’m…I think…yes? Why?”

Phoenix shrugged, discovering the bite on his shoulder for the first time. He covered the wound with his other hand, shuddering. “Damnit! What did I do to deserve that one!?”

Miles pointed to his collarbone, and Phoenix visibly recoiled. “Probably that. I don’t remember myself. Now answer my question.”

“That’s the thing. I remember less than I normally do, that’s why I asked,” Phoenix almost, almost shrugged again before his memory kicked in. “It’s probably ok.”

Miles raised an eyebrow at him, “Are you sure? Come to think of it, I did have to put the curtains down earlier. You know what happens if you ignore- “
“I’m good! I promise,” Phoenix interrupted, a little too quickly for Miles’s taste. “If it ever isn’t, I’ll let you know.”

Miles planted a kiss flat on the top of his head, displacing a few of his spikes. “You better. So help you God, you better.”

Chapter End Notes

I apologize for the long delay. I've been spending the last few months focused on this fic's sister story, A Series of Firsts, which so far has been taking up all of the time I have devoted to writing fanfiction. I need to do a better job of alternating between the two, because this poor thing has been waiting on Chapter 14 since September. Gross!

Thank you all for being patient!
Chapter 15

Phoenix turned out to be a lot of things that morning. “Good” wasn’t one of them.

Flags as bright as crimson flew upright in Miles’s head from the moment Phoenix asked that question in the nest. ‘Did I stay conscious’ indeed, Miles couldn’t say for certain. What counted as consciousness anyway, when heat stripped away their memories? It was a natural phenomenon, common as slick when it came to couples who had permanently sealed their bond. It didn’t make Miles hate it any less.

They used to fight it. For years and years, they’d medicated themselves in an attempt to keep some semblance of composure when Phoenix’s heat came around. The results were mixed, even before their bond became all-consuming, but they always tried.

Then they got older, and their bond became permanent through sheer repetition. After that they just…stopped. It didn’t seem necessary anymore. They’d been through disbarments, resignations, parenthood, sickness, recovery and everything in between, all together. If they were going to kill each other during heat, it would have happened sometime when the stress was at its height. Not now. Not when everything had settled down as much as it ever could for them.

So, they stopped. They let nature take its course. It was an educated and well-researched decision that was going really well. For the most part.

Phoenix was still a weak omega. That wasn’t just an observation, it was a proper medical diagnosis, and a fairly serious one at that. Miles honestly forgot about it most of the time, it was such an easy thing for him to overlook. There were a few obvious things that set Phoenix apart, like his fiercely independent and stubborn spirit that could make any secondary gender specialist put their head on their desk and weep. To Miles, that was just what Phoenix Wright was like. Perfectly normal. Obnoxious, but normal.

It did mean, however, that he was at risk for things that stronger omegas wouldn’t be.

“I told you were going to get sick.”

“I’m not.” It might have made a more convincing lie if Phoenix wasn’t shivering, locking himself so close against his alpha that Miles could feel every single tremor that coursed through his skin. He’d reclaimed his fever and fast, Miles hadn’t even had the chance to clean anything after the last wave of heat. They were still slumped against the wall in the closet, wet and sticky, and things were speeding downhill at a record pace.

Miles breathed through his nose, mostly tired. It would be an easy enough fix if Phoenix would cooperate, which he wouldn’t. When did he ever do anything that Miles wanted him to do on the first go?

“You need a bath either way,” he cringed, “We need a bath either way. I’m dripping wet.”

Phoenix buried his face deep into the crook of Miles’s neck, inhaling as he shook his head. “Don’t
“I’ll take it with you.”

“No,” Phoenix said, voice muffled. “No, don’t go.”

“Phoenix…” Miles sighed, and let the issue drop. There wasn’t a lot he could do outside of asserting his dominance, which he tried to avoid if he could help it. Phoenix would do whatever he told him to if he barked at him enough, but he didn’t like to invoke that if it wasn’t strictly necessary.

He wasn’t in the business of training omegas. It was a big part of why the idea of giving Phoenix a collar had put him on edge for the better part of a decade; it was skirting the line between partnership and ownership in a way that didn’t quite gel with him.

“What do you purpose we do, then?” Miles said, trying with all his might not to let his annoyance bleed through. It took self-control, but he’d gotten good at it.

“I need you.”

“Don’t lie,” Miles brushed through a spike out of habit, “I can’t smell any heat on you.”

“I need you.”

“You need to given a bath and put to bed. If you’ll let me. You’re going to make yourself sicker.”

Phoenix whimpered into Miles’s shoulder, nuzzling, trying to mask his scent. He was more than likely picking out his own scent mixed in with his alpha’s, it was more than strong enough after all they’d done there. Miles was definitely getting hit in the face with the lingering smell of his own rut, and he’d be lying if he said that it wasn’t beginning to mess with his brain.

Miles rubbed his forehead with the arm that Phoenix hadn’t claimed for himself. “Humor me. Let me help you.”

“Ok,” Phoenix whispered, despite not moving a single centimeter out of place. He did release his death grip, but only enough to let Miles push him away enough to where they were looking each other in the eye. The room was only illuminated by a few rays of dim sunlight that struggled to shine behind the curtain, but Miles could still make out how drained Phoenix really was. He was swaying a bit as he sat up on his own, undeniably dizzy, enough to where Miles still supported his weight by his shoulders. He had a slipperier hand on him than he would have liked. It was in part due to the nauseating amount of bodily fluids coating him, and the fact that he had to be careful to avoid the bite mark that had only just begun to crust over.

“Do you trust me?”

The corners of Phoenix’s mouth tugged upwards a bit, and he replied foggily, “I don’t know why, but yeah.”

Miles snorted, entirely caught off-guard. Phoenix’s fever was trying to spike itself up so high that it would kill the average beta, but of course he was still making jokes.
“I’m glad to hear it,” Miles said, and he meant it. “I’m going to need you to trust me all the way to the bathroom, and all the way back to bed. If you still want to die after that, I’ll leave you to it.”

“S’ kind of you,” Phoenix slurred, and as cute as that crooked little smile was, Miles did want to kick this fever in the ass before it had the chance to become a problem. As slowly as Phoenix would allow, he stood the both of them up. He knew Phoenix too well, he couldn’t handle being dizzy in the slightest and would fall over like a top-heavy bag of sand if he put his equilibrium through too much.

True to form, he slumped onto Miles more than once on the way up, and the walk to the bathroom wasn’t any less graceful. That was alright, there was nothing that could be done for it. At least he wasn’t acting nauseated, this scenario was exactly why Miles had been forced to invest in an emergency bucket so many years ago.

Miles kept his word, and they took the bath together. It wasn’t like it was a tight fit or anything, standard tubs in complexes designed for alpha/omega use were oversized for a very good reason. He just preferred to bathe alone, simple as that.

He generally only took baths with Phoenix if there was an immediate threat of him drowning if he were left to his own devices. It did happen with omegas on occasion, as asinine as it sounded. It didn’t happen a lot in modern times, ever since education on secondary genders became mandatory in public schools, but it used to be one of the top three causes of premature death for mated omegas.

Miles did not want to help make that statistic valid again. He didn’t let Phoenix actually do anything, not that his omega was making an effort to clean himself anyway. Phoenix, for his part, wasn’t doing a very good job of even staying awake. Miles was the one that had to prop him up.

In the end, Phoenix got a great bath. Miles barely got to rise his hair out. He supposed that was the kind of sacrifice that perfectly at peace with, if it meant making sure that they weren’t going to be making the evening news.

“I’m kind of hungry.”

Miles almost dropped the open bottle of water he was holding. He choked on whatever he had in his mouth and looked at Phoenix like he’d grown an extra head.

“You’re shitting me.”

Phoenix wasn’t even able to lift his head up. He shot Miles a tired, longing glace from where he was laying dressed on their bed. “Please.”

“You’re just going to throw it up.” Miles said before he could think better of it. He hated to shut down any desire of Phoenix’s to eat, since he wasn’t great at it even when he was functioning at full power. However, “You can’t even keep soup down when you’re like this.”

“Can I try?” Phoenix asked the question so quietly, Miles feared he shamed him into never requesting food or water again. “Please.”
Miles looked over to the mouth of the nest, and let out a breath he didn’t know he’d been holding in when he confirmed that there were half a dozen empty water bottles littered around it. He couldn’t remember either of them reaching for them, but it was one of those things that wasn’t thought about in the middle of heat. Phoenix must have drunk at least one of those at some point, right?

Right?

“Let’s see if you can handle water first. Here,” Miles walked up to the bed and handed off the half-full bottle to Phoenix. He looked at for a moment, as if he were contemplating its existence. Miles could see the gears screeching together in his head, struggling to make a connection that just wasn’t there. He picked at the top, like the cap had morphed into a puzzle that he couldn’t figure out.

Miles didn’t say anything. He lifted the bottle out of Phoenix’s hands and flipped the plastic mouthpiece up with his thumb. Phoenix looked downright dejected as he took it back.

“…Sorry.”

“You worry too much,” said Miles, “Try to drink that down while I get the laundry in. The bucket is on your side, if you think you need it.”

Phoenix nodded slowly, trying not to make the room spin any faster than it already was. Miles thought about watching over him longer, but decided to give him a few minutes of space. If nothing else, being able to breathe some fresh air away from the influence of alpha pheromones might help him think a little clearer.

Still, Miles didn’t let himself wander too far away. He’d never head of anybody dying from having water go down the wrong way, but that would have just been Phoenix’s luck. He had to drag himself through the nest. He had to force himself to go five feet down the hall into the laundry room and switch out fabrics. He had to diligently remind himself with every step that he had a responsibility, even while every bit of alpha in him was screaming hysterically to go make sure Phoenix hadn’t passed out and died.

He slammed the dryer door shut, came back and threw everything into the nest. When he was finally able to give into his instincts and go protect his omega, he found Phoenix exactly as he’d left him; looking up at him dumbly with a bit of plastic in his mouth. He had managed to drain the bottle at the very least. He was gnawing on the mouthpiece, making tiny indents on the surface with his canines.

“Ah,” Miles sighed, gently taking back the bottle before Phoenix had the chance to inadvertently swallow any plastic shavings. He whined, but he didn’t put up any resistance as the thing was unceremoniously eased from his mouth. “I see. Wait here.”

Phoenix, who was currently lacked the strength and resolve to even roll himself over, made an annoyed grunt of agreement as Miles scurried away to scavenge his usual hiding place.

Their shared office was technically supposed to be a tiny guest room, but they made it work. The
five or ten feet that Phoenix had to play with on his side was littered with pictures and mementos of years gone by, it was difficult to maneuver around without disturbing anything he wasn’t supposed to. Miles only needed a single item from his partner’s cluttered desk, a silver key that was hidden at the bottom of an overflowing pencil jar.

He produced the key after accidentally jabbing himself with the pencils. Stepping over to his own, much neater corner of the room, he slid the key into the slot on the bottom drawer of his desk. It creaked open easily, revealing a sea of file folders, prescription bottles, and a few unmentionable items that highlighted the struggles of being endowed with a secondary gender. Miles grazed over the files with his fingertips, all organized by date. He doubted Trucy managed to break in since the last time he opened the drawer, but he briefly checked everything over anyway.

There were some things that she wasn’t ready to know about.

All of the documents they were legally obligated to maintain were there, including summaries of each and every visit any of them had ever made to the doctor’s office post-presentation. There were even black and white photographs in the corner of each one, just so they could never deny their medical histories.

Trucy did not need to stumble across anything that was in Phoenix’s files. Miles’s files weren’t filled with wholesome events either, but he had the luxury of having the bulk of his documents submitted in German. The first decade of Phoenix’s journey as an omega read like a medical journal out of hell. At least until she fully matured into her secondary gender, Phoenix didn’t want to scar her. Miles couldn’t agree more.

Satisfied that their secrets were still secure, Miles pushed aside the paperwork and dug through the rest. Heat suppressant, rut inducer, a box of emergency adrenaline shots, government-issued booklets with medical instructions all went through Miles’s hands as he burrowed towards what he was actually going for. He came across his muzzle, a brown leathery monstrosity that he was legally bound to keep with him for the rest of his life. Every alpha was issued one at presentation, to protect society from them in case they ever turned feral. Miles doubted that his would ever get any use, but it was there, resting heavily atop a thick cardboard box.

The box was what he’d been after in the first place. Plucking it out, he checked the expiration date on the top. It was close, but they were still good. He stacked a single prescription bottle on top of it and put the rest into the drawer. He locked it up, dumping the key and the pencils back into their proper place on his way out.

Phoenix sniffed at the box when Miles set it down in front of him. He shot Miles an uncertain look, as if he couldn’t determine if this were a test of character or not. Miles pushed it closer to him.

“Go ahead, take one. It’ll give you something to chew on.”

Phoenix eyed him skeptically. “You too?”

“I’m not the biggest fan of rawhides” Miles said calmly, and that was an understatement. There was nothing inherently wrong about rawhides, the ones intended for human consumption had numerous
health benefits that came with them. The taste wasn’t bothersome either, or the lack there of. The problems he had with them were all based in social stigma. Rawhides and teething bones had been something of a symbol for alphas and omegas for decades in the media, unfavorably likening them to animals.

Phoenix adored the things though; public perception be damned. The ones that they kept hidden in the drawer were his own stash, Miles only got into them when his anxiety was at its worst. Phoenix was more than aware of Miles’s opinion on rawhides, so he didn’t chew on them when he was around.

He couldn’t remember a time where Miles had actually offered him one. There probably had been, but Phoenix’s heat-dulled brain couldn’t recall any. He wasn’t aware that he had a corner of the comforter in between his back teeth before Miles gently tugged it out, replacing it with a chunk of artificial bone.

Miles said more words after that, something about pills and water, but most of it was drowned out by the sound of his own teeth gnawing against the hard surface. He only broke himself free of it when his alpha offered him two tablets and a glass of water, both of which he took without thinking twice about it in order to get back to chewing.

Miles stood thinking for a moment, but there was nothing else that he could do on Phoenix’s behalf other than be with him. His fever would be knocked out by the medication before the next wave of heat set in, and all Miles had left to do was wait and see.

Phoenix instinctively shuffled in next to him when he got into bed, warm, heavy, and perfectly dumb. With any luck, this would be the last of the sickness, and the heat could fizzle itself out normally over the next day or so.

Then again, when was anything ever easy for either of them?
Chapter 16

2:14 in the afternoon was a hellish time to try and wake up for the day. Miles’s vision was swimming and overdosed with sleep as he groggily made out the time on the alarm clock beside him. He immediately wished he hadn’t, and groaned as he faceplanted his pillow and rolled back onto his stomach.

There was no way to keep a coherent schedule during a heat. It simply could not be done outside of the morally vile (but by no means illegal) practice of beating an omega’s body, over and over and over again over the course of several years. It was technically possible to trigger heats on demand, but Miles chose to live in a reality where that wasn’t common knowledge. Whether that was for the best was up to debate; He did feel like shit, sleeping in the middle of the day.

It didn’t help that Phoenix had been threatening to wake up for the better part of two hours. He’d begin to stir, stuck in that grey void that made up the difference between reality and sleep. If he hadn’t been so damn tired himself, Miles would have shaken him back to life and faced his consequences. That would have been the medically advisable decision, but Miles couldn’t wake up enough to make it. Instead, he growled where he was, something deep and rumbling to simulate the purr he no longer had. It did its job. It kept Phoenix resting for an extra couple of hours, which in turn bought Miles an extra couple of hours longer to nap.

Miles hadn’t been overly concerned, or conscious for that matter, when he first felt Phoenix getting up. He figured that he was probably just going to the bathroom or something, certainly there was no cause for alarm. This was the point where Miles saw the bright red 2:14 blinking on his nightstand, saw that the day was a lost cause for any sort of productivity, and tried to get back to sleep.

It didn’t last long.

A few minutes later, the whining started up.

Phoenix had this barely-existent, breathy, insufferable whine that pretty much only existed when he was distressed. Every omega had one that was as unique to them as their fingerprints; a call that served as a siren to signal their alphas that something had gone terribly, terribly awry. For someone who could be so loud and so boisterous, Phoenix’s whine was unnaturally silent. Miles knew it intimately.

It came as a shock to his system when he drowsily reached over out of habit and Phoenix wasn’t beside him. Miles sat up, and even checked under the covers to no avail. He flicked his gaze around the room frantically, trying to pinpoint where exactly the whine was coming from. It was the closet. It had to be the closet. He got up and perched beside the boarder of the strewn-together nest. Phoenix had buried himself against one of the back corners. He was tucked in so tightly that Miles couldn’t get a good read on him no matter which angle he took, but the sound that was leaking out of the corners of his omega’s mouth didn’t leave a lot to the imagination.

Miles could all but feel the deep, splintering pain tearing against the walls of his veins as it splashed through like acid, pouring down the length of his entire body. He got some of the sensation through
the bond itself, where pain could occasionally seep through to the other partner. Most of it was sympathized. No matter how it came to him, Miles had it, and seeing Phoenix in that all-to-familiar state brought it through him in blunt force.

This was what happened when a heat began to end. Phoenix was going straight from being sick and feverish to barreling towards the climax of his heat, and there was nothing that Miles could do to aid him other than to follow his biological impulses.

In other words, he had to fuck the heat out of him. It was the only way to end it. Miles buckled over as a phantom tremor laced its fingers around his heart and clinched. It took the air out of his lungs, even though his own chest wasn’t the one being shredded by muscle spasms. He gasped as he caught his breath, one hand splayed on the ground on the other side of the nest’s boarder. He was ready to help in whatever primitive way he could.

“Don’t snap,” Miles whispered, slowly maneuvering himself fully into the nest. “Don’t growl. It’s just me. Is that alright?”

“Y…y-yeah,” Phoenix struggled. He didn’t budge from his place in the corner, forehead pressed against the wall. “I can…I can talk. S-sorry I woke you up.”

Miles smiled weakly in relief, but kept his approach slow. Even though he was able to speak, Phoenix could still get spooked so easily when he was like this. Miles had found himself on the receiving end of a reflexive bite too many times to not be careful. When he was close enough, Miles stopped short just shy of where they could touch. He laid down on his back to show that he wasn’t a threat, and kept still. Phoenix would ultimately either come to him or call him over when he adjusted to his scent.

“I’m glad you did,” Miles offered as he stared at the ceiling. “It’ll all be over soon. Just hold it together a little longer, you’re almost done.”

Phoenix’s breath hitched sharply in a sob. “Am I?”

“Yes, of course you are. Only a day more, Love. Only a day more.” It was a white lie, and Miles knew it. The heat itself might be dead within 24 hours, but the aftermath wouldn’t be. All the back and forth that Phoenix had been enduring, fever and mating, fever and mating, was definitely going to result in a bitchy recovery period. And that was saying nothing of Miles, who himself had his entire system thrown out of whack so he could accommodate Phoenix.

Miles cringed. That wasn’t going to be fun once all the pheromones stopped numbing the pain, but that was the last thing that Phoenix needed to think about. Right now, he only needed to be focused on one of three things: resting, eating, or-

“Mm, c-could you come? I need you…”

Fucking.

“Shh,” Miles sat up and immediately began the process of getting Phoenix unattached from the Goddamn wall. It was not as easy of a task as it sounded. He couldn’t have been alone for more than ten minutes, but that was more than enough time for him to throw together a little cocoon of blankets
and bury himself in it. The scientific jury was out on why omegas felt the need to hide themselves away at such a crucial point in their heat, but every single one of them did it, and they were stupidly effective.

What Phoenix lacked in nesting skill, he made up for in his ability to burrow. It took a minute or two for Miles to disassemble the layers, gently laying them down in the order that he peeled them as to not distress Phoenix any more than he had too. His reward was his first real look at the state of his omega.

The fact that he was already naked was a welcome surprise, but the rest of the scene wasn’t nearly as inviting. Miles couldn’t smell a lot of anything on him, even as the barricade of fabric was pulled away. There were hints of fear and sickness, mostly masked by the not-so-subtle fog of heat. The thing that was most concerning was the lack of something. Miles went over him and dug his nose into the crook of Phoenix’s neck in a sloppy search, but only got more of the same.

The heat and the arousal were there, but he was dry. He was trying to slick, and it just wasn’t happening for him.

“Fuck, you’re really hurting, aren’t you,” Miles said quietly to himself as he locked around Phoenix, sliding to where he was cradling him from behind. Phoenix leaned back into him and relaxed, melting against his skin. His breaths became desperate and deep, as if Miles had untied a noose from around his throat just with his presence alone.

In a sense, that’s exactly what had happened.

“I’m not going to do anything,” Miles promised as he held Phoenix against his chest. He purposely avoided the nape of his neck as he placed a kiss behind the shell of his ear, as if to seal his words. “Just breathe. Let it pass.”

“Y-you can. You have my…my…” Phoenix stuttered as he forced the sentence out. Miles could tell that he knew exactly what he wanted to say, but everything was getting jumbled up in route from his brain to his mouth. He was getting more frustrated as kept trying to talk, but nothing was coming out.

After over a decade of being bonded, Miles liked to think that he had a pretty good read on his partner. He responded as if Phoenix had been able to finish, taking his place in the conversation.

“I know. You’ve always given me your consent, and I love you for that. Not this time, though. You can’t take a knot like this.”

“You...you need too…”

“Let me rephrase. I’m not going to let you take a knot like this. I’m alright.”

“B-but you’re...you’re rutting.”

“Yes,” Miles agreed plainly. He couldn’t deny the obvious, he’d gone over that cliff the instant he’d gotten his first hint of heat, and it wasn’t showing any signs of slowing down. Even in his current state of mind, there was no way that Phoenix wasn’t aware of the erection that was pressing into the small of his back, or the onslaught of alpha pheromones that were no doubt beginning to act as a sedative on his body.
Still, even if there was no amount of willpower that could real the rut back in, Miles could at least try to ignore it until Phoenix’s body could react to it. And if it wouldn’t, well, he still had his hands. It wasn’t an ideal solution, but there was no way in hell that he’d knot Phoenix dry. Nothing that Phoenix had ever done in his entire life, no matter how impulsive, ill-conceived, or legally dubious, warranted him to endure that kind of agony.

Miles placed a hand over Phoenix’s chest, pushing him flush against the fabric of his shirt. He could feel the shiver that rang down Phoenix’s spine as he went limp in voluntary surrender. Miles growled low in Phoenix ear, “There are ways that I can get you to slick for me. If you want.”

“I want,” Phoenix replied so quickly that his mouth was working faster than the rest of him could keep up with. “I want. It hurts so bad, I just wanna slick, make you happy, make you so happy. Take your knot, fill me up, make you feel good, Alpha. Alpha…”

Miles licked over his neck as he babbled, pressing the fronts of his teeth against the hot skin of his collarbone. He had no intention of biting, just wanted to show Phoenix that he could. He sat up, leaning most of his and Phoenix’s weight against the wall as he pulled him along, letting the omega slump back against him entirely. Phoenix’s head fell back as he looked up at Miles, blubbery nonsense even as another spasm began to rock his frame.

“It’s ok, shh…” Miles talked over him. His vision had gone fuzzy around the corners, and he couldn’t keep himself from grinding his hips upward in the fight to keep himself composed, but some of him was still there and conscious. For the moment, anyway. He ran his hands over Phoenix’s body, all the way up and all the way down so there wouldn’t be any surprises. With one arm locked over his chest to hold him firmly in place, Phoenix fell silent as Miles finally dipped down below his cock and rested his fingertips against his taint. His breath hitched as he spread his legs wider, any sense of dignity having burned up along with his last bout of fever.

“That’s my good boy,” Miles said in a moan, almost losing himself to rut right then and there at the sight of Phoenix being so subservient. He held on through pure stubbornness, knowing that he only had to keep it together long enough to see if Phoenix was going to be able to slick for him. Just a few more minutes, and he’d either be able to rut in his fists or in his omega. Either one would do, waiting was making him unbearably desperate.

“Does that feel good? Use your voice, show me how much you like it,” Miles’s husked as he went on fingering him, carefully collecting the small amount of precum that was leaking from his tip to coat his fingers. He only pressed in enough to tease, prompting Phoenix to arch his hips upwards like the obedient boy he was.

“Alpha~”

“Mmm,” Miles had to clinch his eyes shut in order to stay sane. One glance down at Phoenix being penetrated like this, and he’d be a goner. His own cock was dripping, making a mess of the clothes he’d worn to bed that morning, but it wasn’t nearly enough to help Phoenix comfortably take a knot. He pulled out of Phoenix much to the omega’s protest, and he reached down for himself in a last-ditch effort. Miles bucked into his own hand, pooling as much precum as he could in his palm. Using that, he lubed his fingers back up and cranked his efforts up to eleven, fucking him in earnest.

Phoenix was begging incoherently, screaming and crying and writhing all at once. It might have been enough for him on any other day, but during his heat it was cruel. Fingering alone couldn’t give
him the fullness that his body was aching for. In the same breath, Miles was about two minutes away from snapping like a twig. The things that were coming out of Phoenix’s mouth were speaking directly to his dick, and his scent. Oh, his scent…

In his slow decent into madness, Miles got sloppy. His rhythm fell apart, some thrusts being deeper or shallower than others. At his wits end, he accidently bumped directly onto Phoenix’s prostate. Everything in Phoenix tensed as his moans went dead silent, and for a split second, Miles thought he’d killed him. His eyes few open just in time to see his hand get flooded with clear, thick liquid as Phoenix fell limp in his arms.

“Ah,” Phoenix sighed in a mixture of relief and arousal. That had to have felt euphoric after all the cramping and muscle spasms. At first, Miles didn’t move, just watched the mess accumulate on him and drip down onto to floor, mesmerized by it. Slick didn’t actually smell like much of anything on its own, but it had two entirely different functions. In addition to being a highly effective and indispensable lubricant, it served as a powerful aphrodisiac.

Specifically, it was an aphrodisiac that nature had perfectly designed to seduce alphas into rutting. It was a big part of why alphas were so immobilized by their partner’s heat; If the scent of heat itself didn’t do them in, the slick definitely would. In recent years, Miles had completely taken slick for granted. He’d almost become numb to it, as often as it was subjected to him.

But this time, it’d been missing.

And now he had it again.

It was on his own skin, warm and full and it was doing sinful things with Phoenix’s scent. He’d already been hot. Now the whole room was an inferno, burning him up from the inside out, and he couldn’t shed his clothes off fast enough to avoid its wrath.

For his last conscious act before he fell backwards into lust, he barked as he was pulling the suffocating bits of clothing off his body. It was the simplest, loudest, most direct way he could think of at that second to give Phoenix some kind of warning, just anything that would give him some indication of what was about to go down.

It went to show how far Phoenix had already fallen that he barked back without a moment’s hesitation. It stunned Miles stiff for a fraction of a second; he did it so rarely that he’d forgotten what his bark even sounded like. But there it was, both an invitation and a challenge, hanging thick in the air especially for him.

He tugged Phoenix up towards him, forcing his nose flat against the back of his neck. He snarled with his teeth flush against the mating gland, making damn sure that his omega knew his place. It was all over after that, Phoenix didn’t have an ounce of fight left as he let Miles take and take and take. The only noises that tore from his throat were encouraging little moans and whimpers that only served to fuel Miles’s arousal.

The last thing that Miles could remember clearly, before his memories faded into various shades of grey, was the taste of acid spilling onto his tongue as he bit down onto the mating gland. Everything that happened afterwards mixed together in a mess of rutting, licking, biting, barking and screaming.
Even without much light, Miles just knew he’d woken up in hell.

For starters, he was face down on damp fabric. He never slept in the nest when it was filthy if he could help it, and this time he apparently couldn’t. Whatever his rut had done to him, it’d exhausted him so badly that passing out in here had been the only option.

Second, Phoenix was pressed tightly up against him, dead asleep and not showing any signs of waking up anytime within the next decade. The way he’d come to rest on his side, tangled up in Miles’s own arms, a distinctive wet mess lingering between them both… it was more than apparent that they’d fallen asleep as Phoenix was taking a knot. They’d gone so long and so hard that they never really had a stopping point. They just passed out, ostensibly in unison, after their bodies couldn’t bear to move another centimeter to please the other.

Third. As he woke up, snippets of memories were coming back to him, each one worse than the last. He groaned, not wanting to believe some of what he’d done, but the evidence was plain in his mouth. He tasted blood and tang on the tips of his teeth, and the coolness of slick along his tongue. He’d evidently surprised Phoenix somewhere along the way, because even though he couldn’t see it, the harsh bite that had landed behind his ear was throbbing.

What position had they even attempted where Phoenix had been able to snap at him behind his ear? He wasn’t going to be topping while he was in heat, so Miles was at a total loss for how that came to be.

Fourth. The heat wasn’t dead. Miles knew exactly what Phoenix smelled like when his heat had passed. It was a calming scent, sweet like fruit and honey that brought him home. This was still heat. They hadn’t killed the beast yet, there was still more to do.

Fuck.

“Phoenix. Phoenix, wake up,” Miles shook Phoenix gently on his side, unsure of which side the bite wound on his shoulder was on. He entertained the idea of letting Phoenix rest, lord knew he needed it, but he couldn’t get over the mental hurdle of leaving his omega behind in a soiled nest. Phoenix didn’t want any of it.

“Hmph, go away. I wanna sleep,” Phoenix slurred as he covered his face in his arms, as if that would protect him. “Go away.”

“You’re pressing me against the wall. I can’t go anywhere.”

“That’s your problem. Lemme sleep.”
Miles couldn’t hold back a grin as he shook him a little harder. He wanted him to cooperate, but he’d missed hearing that backtalk over the past three days. The appeal of having a wholly submissive Phoenix Wright at his disposal was hardly lost on him, but with that said, this was closer to the man he’d fallen in love with. Stubborn. Insufferable. Hellbent on doing the opposite of what Miles wanted him to do. He was perfect like that.

“Let’s go, Baby, let’s go get you cleaned up,” Miles hummed, letting the horrible pet name slip past his lips. Phoenix had wracked up a couple of them over the years, none of them ever leaving the bedroom. He’d been Sweetheart, he’d been Dear, he was Omega most of the time. “Baby” was one that Miles used as sparingly as possible, exclusively for the most intimate of moments.

There was a reason for that.

Phoenix shuffled, turning on his opposite side to face Miles. He was still so, so tired, sleep was threatening to overtake him at any time, but there was light in his eyes as he looked at Miles.

“Did…did you just…”

“I think you heard me,” Miles said, bringing his lips down to the crown of Phoenix’s head. It wasn’t a kiss, but it was close enough to become one. “You need a bath. Your hair is wet.”

“Your fault, Alpha. You marked me.”

That got Miles’s attention. Had he? That wasn’t like him. He was usually the one telling Phoenix not to do that in the nest, though they both had a fetish for it. Most alphas and omegas did. It came along with all the other animalistic bullcrap they had to lug around with them.

Of course, now that he was sniffing for it, it was obvious that he had. He pulled back, furiously wiping his mouth with the back of his hand.

Well. At least that got Phoenix awake. He was laughing like an idiot, despite how drained he must have been.

“C’mon, Alpha, it’s not like you’ve never had piss in your mouth.” Phoenix was baiting him with his own pet name, and Miles glared at him knowingly.

“You more so than me, Baby. All the more reason to let me give you a bath, I have no idea what I did to you.”

Phoenix flashed a weak smirk in his direction before stretching into a yawn. “Mm. I think I remember more than you this time. I’ll clue you in. Later. Right now, I just want a bath, then I want you to take me to bed and let me sleep for-fucking-ever.”

“Since when have you decided that you want to be a brat?”

“Probably about the same time that you decided that you wanted me to be your baby.”
It took whatever was left of Miles’s self-control to not swat him for that on their way into the bathroom. He had the opportunity, Phoenix didn’t need any help walking this time around and his flank was immaculately exposed for such a thing. Phoenix was tired. He was tired. He didn’t want to stir up any more trouble than he already had by breaking out both he and Phoenix’s favorite pet name.

After all, the heat wasn’t over yet.

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