### Forging Bonds

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**Summary**

After the Tournament of Power, as part of a Universal Exchange Program, Katopesla from Universe 3 is selected to train with the Pride Troopers in Universe 11. Jiren, still trying to make connections with people again, is initially not impressed with the space policeman, yet soon finds himself falling for Katopesla.

Naturally, Jiren has no idea how to handle this. Hilarity (and angst) ensues.

**Notes**

I've been working on this thing since Super ended. It started out as me just wanting to write porn for both of these characters and deciding to pair them together to save time and it kind of went off the rails...

Like, holy shit I think this is the single longest thing I've ever written that wasn't divided into
chapters.

I actually had to cut OUT sex scenes!

So... yeah. Enjoy?

See the end of the work for more notes.

“GREETINGS, FELLOW PEACEKEEPERS!”

Jiren scowled as the Pride Troopers’ new guest bellowed his hello to the assembled members, striking a ridiculous pose. Universe 3’s Katopesla had been one of two warriors from the Tournament of Power who had been invited to Universe 11 by Toppo to train with the Pride Troopers. Beside him, the other guest, a bespectacled saiyan who Jiren recognized as the son of Son Goku, Gohan, smiled kindly.

“Um… hi everyone…” he said, clearly a little nervous about being around a bunch of people he’d helped wipe from existence a few months ago.

Toppo, standing between the two guests, clapped one massive hand each on their shoulders. “These two fine warriors have agreed to participate in the new Universal Exchange Program. They will be staying and training with us for a little while. Gohan here can only stay for two weeks, due to commitments he has back home.” Gohan smiled apologetically at that. “While Katopesla here has volunteered to remain with us for a few months.” The space policeman struck another dumb pose. “As you know, for our part of the exchange, Kahseral has gone to train in Universe 9, Tupper in Universe 2, and Dyspo in Universe 10.” Probably for the best, Jiren knew his speedy teammate still held a grudge towards Gohan for knocking him out of the ring. “While they are here,” Toppo continued “I hope you’ll treat them kindly, as you would any other member of the Pride Troopers.” The giant alien’s eyes fixated on Jiren at those words, the other Pride Trooper could read the intention beneath them loud and clear: You’re making friends whether you like it or not!

Jiren forced himself not to wince. Ever since the tournament and his own personal revelation, he’d been… struggling… to forge friendships. Toppo, the first person Jiren had felt comfortable calling a friend since his master’s death, had been incredibly patient with him, encouraging the grey alien whenever he could, but it had been slow going. Quite simply, Jiren didn’t know how to make friends. There was the comradery with his fellow Pride Troopers to build on, sure, but every time he tried to actually do “friendly” things, he ended up coming off as abrasive at best, and rude at worst. Cocotte had even slapped him once! (Apparently, people don’t like it when you point out they should take a shower after exerting themselves, or bring to their attention how their uniform needs to be patched up, or how they shouldn’t indulge in too many sweets, or that they’re not focusing enough on missions. Honestly, he didn’t mean to insult people! He was only trying to help!)

Toppo dismissed the assembled Troopers, but for Vuon and Kunshi, who were asked to show their two guests around the base. Once they were alone, the large alien approached Jiren, no doubt grinning beneath his bushy mustache. “So…”

“Don’t.” Jiren growled out. His warning went unheeded.

“What do you think of our guests?” Toppo asked.

Jiren closed his eyes, trying to keep himself from just walking away without answering like he would
have before the tournament. “The son of Son Goku is a fine strategist. He showed as much in the
tournament. He is a big part of why Universe 7 was victorious. His intellect will be a valuable asset
for the Pride Troopers, no matter how brief his time here might be. As for the other…” Jiren scowled
“His mode change, while an intriguing technique, does little to make up for his incompetence. I seem
to remember him slipping off the arena during the tournament. He may be more of a hindrance than
of use.” Upon opening his eyes, Jiren saw Toppo giving him an exasperated look. “What?”

“I didn’t ask for a tactical assessment, Jiren.” Toppo chided “I wanted you to tell me what you
thought of them as people.”

Jiren blinked, confused “I just did.”

Toppo facepalmed. “Just… try and become friends with them.” He said with a sigh “I understand
that making connections with others has been… difficult for you, but I have it on good authority that
Katopesla and Son Gohan are both incredibly empathetic men. They should at least be able to give
you an idea of what you’re doing wrong.”

Jiren’s scowl was back “Why should I waste time with that? I am not going to seek them out. I have
far more important duties to attend to.”

Toppo’s eyes narrowed dangerously “Actually, no. You don’t.”

Jiren’s brows furrowed, this didn’t bode well. “What do you mean?”

“I have assigned you to train with the two of them.” Toppo said, a smug glint in his eyes. “You will
be working closely with Son Gohan and Katopesla for the entirety of their visit here.”

Jiren’s eyes widened so much they practically popped out of his head “You what?!”

…

Damn you Toppo! I should be out there protecting people! Not babysitting a child and an imbecile!
Jiren mused angrily as he easily deflected another punch from Son Gohan.

He’d been sparring with the Trooper’s two guests for the past few minutes. Gohan had ditched the
glasses and was currently wearing the Pride Trooper uniform he’d been given. A faint, clear aura
enveloped him and a strand of his hair had fallen over his face. Supposedly this was Gohan’s
“Ultimate” form. Jiren didn’t really see what the big deal was. The child of Goku was strong, true,
but he was still no match for the grey alien, even when Jiren was holding back; his actions had too
much thought behind them and not enough instinct, and he frequently let down his guard (like father
like son in that respect, Jiren guessed).

Jiren caught Gohan’s follow-up kick in one hand and effortlessly tossed the young half-saiyan aside,
quickly moving to block an attack from his other opponent. Katopesla had politely declined the offer
of a Pride Trooper uniform, stating that he required his normal suit to fight. Currently, the policeman
was in his “Whirlwind Speed” mode, probably hoping that he could disorient Jiren by running all
over the place at speeds that might have even rivaled Dyspo on an off day. Unfortunately for him,
Jiren had sparred with Dyspo more than enough times to be prepared for a speedster’s tactics.
Katopesla was even more pathetic than Gohan when it came to fighting Jiren’s power. A single light
punch was all it took to send the policeman flying across the sparring ring and crashing into the
forcefield surrounding it.

“KA-ME-HA-ME-HAAAA!”

Jiren sighed and held up a hand, stopping Gohan’s Kamehameha right in its tracks and rebounding it
back at the half-saiyan, causing a large explosion. Before the smoke even had time to clear, Gohan was rushing him, launching into a flurry of punches and kicks. Jiren blocked or dodged every single blow, countering with a single punch to Gohan’s stomach, knocking the half-saiyan out of his Ultimate form and bringing him to his knees.

“MODE CHANGE!”

Rolling his eyes, Jiren lashed out with a kick behind him just as Katopesla, now in “Raging Battle” mode, had attempted to strike the grey alien from behind. Jiren’s foot connected with Katopesla’s chest, sending the policeman flying into the forcefield once more.

Sensing no new attacks coming his way, Jiren glanced around the sparring ring. Gohan was currently trying to struggle to his feet and catch his breath while Katopesla had hit the forcefield so hard he’d left an impression in it.

“Jiren!” Toppo shouted from the stands “You are supposed to train with them, not beat them into submission!”

Jiren glanced up to the stands at his friend and flashed what he hoped was a playful smirk (though knowing him, it probably ended up becoming an intimidating snarl). “I am training with them. This is just the warm-up.”

(Dyspo had been encouraging Jiren to snark more. If he were here he’d be so proud!)

Toppo’s shoulders slumped, and Jiren suddenly felt a pang of immense guilt in his chest. He knew Toppo was just trying to help him get more comfortable with people again, but Jiren was fighting him at every turn. His friend didn’t deserve this treatment from him, especially not after standing by Jiren so closely through all of his missteps these last few months. With a sigh, Jiren turned towards Gohan. The half-saiyan had managed to regain his footing and his breath, and was now looking ready to continue. Katopesla, on the other hand, was only just now getting to his feet, and looked a little tired.

“Katopesla,” Jiren called out “Take a break, I want to go one-on-one with Gohan for a little bit.” The policeman gave him a thumbs up, clearly still too winded to speak, and shuffled out of the sparring ring. Glancing up, Jiren saw Toppo giving him an approving nod, relieved smile just barely visible beneath his moustache. Satisfied that he’d made the right decision, Jiren turned back to Gohan and got into a fighting stance. “We’ll resume whenever you’re ready.”

Gohan took a deep breath and nodded “Right.”

Instantly, Gohan’s aura flared to life around him. While his opponent powered up to his Ultimate form, Jiren allowed himself a moment to review his strategy. He would stick primarily to defense this time around, allow himself to see just what Gohan was capable of so that he might better advise him on how to improve. Out of the corner of his eye, Jiren saw Katopesla climb into the stands and reach up to remove his helmet. Having never actually seen the policeman’s face before, Jiren indulged his curiosity and diverted a small amount of his attention away from his opponent.

Slowly Katopesla pulled the helmet up and off his head…

Jiren’s eyes went wide, mouth falling open in shock as his brain suddenly stopped working…

*WHAM!*

*THUD!*
When Jiren’s brain rebooted, he found himself lying on the sparing mats flat on his back, a dull throb in his left cheek and Gohan apologizing profusely above him.

“I’m so sorry! Are you alright?! I thought you were ready! I didn’t realize—”

Jiren held up a hand, silencing Gohan. Sitting up, he felt his sore cheek. It wouldn’t bruise, but Gohan had landed a solid hit on him. “That was a good punch.” He stated.

Gohan winced and holding out his hand to help Jiren up “I’m so sorry, are you okay?”

Jiren took the offered hand and got to his feet. “Yes, yes. Don’t apologize, the fault was mine, I allowed myself to become…” he glanced over to the stands where a concerned Toppo and—sure enough—a helmetless Katopesla sat with a confused look on… his… face… Abruptly, Jiren forced his gaze back to Gohan, making the half-Saiyan recoil from the intensity in his eyes. “…Distracted.”

Gohan’s brows furrowed “Do you… do you want to continue?”

Jiren nodded, perhaps a little too hastily. “Yes.”

As he and Gohan moved back into their fighting stances, Jiren did his absolute best to wipe all thoughts of the policeman sitting in the stands from his mind.

Especially thoughts about how stupidly handsome he was…

Dammit.

…

The mess hall of the Pride Trooper’s base was usually busy at any hour, but lunch hour was by far the busiest. Before the Tournament of Power, Jiren would have simply come in, gotten his food, and left, the cacophony far too unpleasant for him. Recently, however, he would find himself one of the Troopers he was more familiar with and sit with them, trying to engage in small talk. (If he managed to get through lunch without accidentally insulting someone, he considered it a good day.) Now, however, when he went to find a seat, he hesitated. Sitting with his friends(?) were Gohan and—more importantly—a helmetless Katopesla.

For a moment, Jiren considered running, but he paused, distracted by the light glinting off Katopesla’s white-gold hair, the radiance of his blue skin, the twinkle in his sapphire eyes, his chiseled features, the gleam of his white teeth when he let out another booming laugh, that intoxicating smile that made Jiren want to—oh sweet Supreme Kai above! WHAT WAS HE THINKING?!

He had to get out of here. He clearly needed some alone time to get his head on straight. Resolute, Jiren turned to leave when a familiar voice called out over the mess. “Hey, Jiren! There you are! Get over here, buddy!”

Dammit, Jiren snarled, stopping in his tracks. It’s Kunshi. Figures that the least observant member of the Pride Troopers would be the one to spot him.

Reluctantly, Jiren turned around and headed over to the table. Vuon, Kunshi, Kettol, Cocotte, Zoiray, Gohan and Katopesla were all sitting around the same table. Upon seeing him, Cocotte’s eyes went wide and she hurriedly excused herself, mentioning something about training and walking off, Zoiray watching her go with an amused expression on his face. Jiren sat down at a vacant spot next to Kettol that gave him the worst possible angle on Katopesla so that he could more easily eat without being distracted by the policeman, nodding in greeting to his fellow Troopers before starting
to eat.

Gohan glanced in the direction where Cocotte had disappeared to before turning to shoot Jiren a confused look. “What was that all about?”

Jiren paused between bites “She likely still hasn’t forgiven me for telling her that her long hair is a liability in combat.”

Zoiray snorted, muttering under his breath. “Yeah, sure, let’s go with that.”

Gohan cocked an eyebrow. “Um… that doesn’t entirely…”

Vuon cut in “What Jiren meant to say is that he told Cocotte she should ‘change her hair’. Dear Cocotte took his meaning to be that her hair looked bad long.”

“I was trying to suggest she put it in a bun during missions so it didn’t get grabbed or caught in things.” Jiren grumbled, not enjoying being reminded of how badly he had handled that situation.

Gohan frowned “Okay, but even that doesn’t sound like something you’d get too mad about. It was a misunderstanding wasn’t it?”

Kettol chimed in “Cocotte’s species takes an incredibly long time to grow their hair, it’s taken her most of her life and a great deal of care to get it that length. By implying her hair looked bad, he’d insulted all of the work she’d done on it over the years.”

“Oh,” Gohan grimaced “I guess I can understand that now.”

Suddenly, Katopesla’s booming laugh echoed out, and he leaned forward to give Jiren a blinding grin “Looks like someone isn’t exactly smooth with the ladies, eh Jiren?”

Jiren froze as his eyes locked with Katopesla’s. Hearing his name spoken in that voice, seeing it form on those lips, had sent shivers up his spine. It took all of his willpower not to stutter as he said “I suppose.”

Unbeknownst to Jiren, Zoiray was looking between the grey alien and the policeman, a devilish grin forming on his lips.

Jiren forced himself to look down at his food. He suddenly didn’t feel very hungry. “Forgive me, I have something I must attend to. I should be going.”

He got up, ignoring Kunshi and Kettol’s protests about how he’d only just sat down, and moved to leave the mess. He would never admit it aloud but Jiren was too afraid to look back, lest he see those sapphire eyes gazing after him, because Jiren had a horrible feeling that if he met them again, he’d never want to leave.

…

Jiren didn’t sleep. He couldn’t. Or rather, he wouldn’t. In sleep he was vulnerable, in sleep he was powerless. Sleep always brought nightmares, nightmares of his parent’s broken corpses, his friends dying around him, his master sacrificing himself to save him, being abandoned by all the “friends” who’d survived, and, worst of all, the face of the villain who had caused all of this, the villain who remained at large to this day. So instead of sleeping, Jiren mostly meditated. It gave him enough rest that he could manage perfectly fine without actual sleep, which he only needed to do once every few months at most, and it came without any of the unpleasant memories. So here he was, hovering in the air over his bed, eyes shut and trying to clear his mind of all thoughts so he can fall into that deep,
soothing nothingness.

It wasn’t working.

“Jiren…”

The memory of Katopesla speaking his name snapped his concentration like a twig and his eyes shot open as he fell back onto the bed. With a frustrated groan, Jiren clenched his head. This was the fifth time he’d failed to meditate thanks to that damned policeman’s voice penetrating his mind. Why? Why couldn’t he get that accursed imbecile out of his head? Why did the way he said Jiren’s name elicit a frightening, tingling sensation in his gut every time he thought about it? Why? What was wrong with him?!

Jiren groaned and glanced at the clock. He had another training session with Gohan and Katopesla tomorrow. It wouldn’t do for him to be tired, and if meditating wasn’t working then he’d have to…

Jiren’s shoulders slumped, his exhaustion outweighing his apprehension. He’d have to try and sleep. Maybe he’d be lucky and the nightmares would let him get some rest this time…

…

The nightmares had not let him rest. A small part of Jiren had hoped that Katopesla might invade his dreams like he had Jiren’s meditations and protect him from the memories, but no. It appears that not even whatever hold the policeman had on him was enough to drive away Jiren’s demons. He was tired the next morning, and the next, and the next, and though he did his best to hide it, Toppo was quick to figure Jiren out, pulling him aside during breakfast after the third night in a row of him not getting any rest.

“Jiren,” Toppo said, faced creased with concern “Are you alright?”

Jiren didn’t respond right away. He felt sluggish, and while that still meant he was far more alert than most people, to him it felt like walking underwater. “I… I haven’t been getting much rest…”

Toppo’s brows furrowed “The nightmares?” Jiren nodded “But what about your meditation?”

Jiren glanced away “Meditation has been… elusive… recently.”

Face creased with concern, Toppo’s voice was gentle as he asked “Do you want to talk about it?”

No, Jiren really, really didn’t. This wasn’t something he could just confide in somebody. He was Jiren the Grey, not some hormonal adolescent. The fact that one man merely saying his name had messed with his rhythm so much was disgraceful! He was supposed to be better than this, stronger than this!

Shaking his head, Jiren said “No, I’m sure that this will pass soon enough. It will not affect my performance.”

Except it was. While he had yet to go on a mission since the Trooper’s guests arrived, his exhaustion was still showing in his training. He was getting slower, making mistakes he normally wouldn’t, and he knew that the others had noticed it too. He rarely spoke during lunches, opting to sit there silently and eat while the others talked around him, hoping desperately that Katopesla wouldn’t try and talk to him again. Jiren knew he was starting to rebuild the walls around himself he’d spent the last few months trying to chip away at, but he had no idea how to fix this.

Jiren considered it a mercy that Gohan was the one to approach him and not Katopesla. He came to
him after training on the fifth day of Jiren being unable to rest. “Hey, uh… Jiren?” he said, looking uncertain “Do you mind if I ask you something?”

Jiren hesitated for a moment “Very well.”

“Are you doing alright?” Gohan asked “You’ve been… different since our first day of training, and your friends seem to be worried about you.”

Jiren tensed briefly, but forced himself to relax “I’ve been having some… issues resting is all, it’s nothing to be concerned about.”

Gohan’s brows furrowed “What kind of issues?”

Jiren almost wanted to tell the half-saiyan it was none of his business, but something in the other man’s expression made him hesitate. He already knew about Jiren’s past thanks to that blabbermouth, Belmod, there couldn’t be much harm in telling him at least a part of the problem. “I have… nightmares about my past, the people I’ve lost. That is all.” He turned away, intending to end the conversation with that, but Gohan had other plans.

“I can relate.” When Jiren turned back around, Gohan’s expression made him look decades older, and Jiren suddenly realized just how wrong he’d been in thinking of the young man in front of him as a child. “I was only five the first time I saw someone die in front of me. And I was the same age when I first killed someone too.” Jiren frowned, but allowed the half-saiyan to continue “I know I’m lucky, that most of the people I’ve lost were able to be revived by the Dragon Balls, but that hasn’t really helped the nightmares go away.”

Jiren nodded in understanding “I see. Yet you seem to be managing well enough now.”

Gohan shrugged “Well, having my friends and family helps. I know I can count on them if I ever need to talk about it. I’m sure your friends would be happy to be there for you too, if you gave them a chance.”

Jiren glanced away, mind drifting back to Toppo’s earlier offer. “I’ll… consider that.”

Gohan nodded, giving the grey alien a pat on the shoulder “I suppose that’s good enough for now. I’ll see you at lunch.”

It hadn’t helped much with the central problem, but Gohan’s talk had certainly made Jiren realize just how silly he’d been with his comrades over the last few days. He was letting these strange feelings he had for Katopesla damage what relationships he had built up over these past months. He’d forgotten the key thing in any relationship was trust, and if he couldn’t trust his allies to be there for him, how could he ever hope to make friends again? Perhaps, if he came clean to one of them about what was keeping him from meditating, he could find a solution.

He decided to start with Zoiray, the smallest Pride Trooper was known for being remarkably intelligent and perceptive, as well as trustworthy. He was not one to go around spreading rumors, he could be trusted to keep this matter private. Jiren approached his fellow Trooper that evening after dinner.

“Zoiray,” Jiren said as he walked up to the smallest Trooper, currently dozing on a bench outside the Pride Trooper’s base, as he often did after eating. There was no one else around that he could see or sense, they should have privacy. “Could I speak with you for a moment?”

Zoiray cracked open an eye “Sure, why not?” The little imp sat up, stretching briefly. “What is it?”
Clearing his throat, Jiren said “I… have been having difficulty meditating due to… distracting thoughts. I would like your advice on the matter.”

Zoiray smirked “Is this about how you’ve got the hots for ‘Pesla?”

Jiren’s eyes widened and he was suddenly at a loss for words. “I… but… how did you…? Where did you…?”

Zoiray rolled his eyes. “Nowhere, genius, I just used my eyes.” He tapped his temple “You’ve been staring longingly at that pretty face of his since the moment you saw it, and he can’t say more than two words to you without you getting all flustered. Hell, I’m surprised *more* people haven’t caught on!”

Jiren quickly looked away. He hadn’t been *that* obvious had he?

“Yes, yes you *have* been that obvious.” Zoiray chimed in, as if reading his mind. “At least for me anyways.”

Jiren winced and sat down with a sigh next to the imp. “How do I get rid of these… feelings?”

Zoiray cocked an eyebrow “If I knew that, I’d be a therapist, not a Pride Trooper.” He shrugged “These things just go away with time. Didn’t you ever have a crush back when you were a kid?”

Jiren remained silent; truthfully he hadn’t. Back then he’d been far too focused on training and getting his revenge. He’d had no time to worry about such petty matters.

Zoiray frowned “I’m going to guess that’s a ‘no’. Typical.”

“How do I fix this?” Jiren asked “I haven’t been able to get any rest in days.”

“So *that’s* why you’ve been even grouchier than usual.” Zoiray said “Have you tried jacking off?”

Jiren froze, taken aback by the suggestion. “I… what?”

“You know, masturbating.” The imp said with a grin, making a jerking motion with his fist “You *do* know what that is, right?”

“Of course I do!” Jiren snapped, then, wincing, reeled his anger back in “I-I mean, yes… I am familiar with the concept.”

“Have you ever actually *done* it?” Zoiray asked. Jiren’s silence was its own answer. “Yeesh, no wonder you’re so grouchy all the time.” Zoiray lay back down on the bench as he said “Try it, who knows, maybe it’ll work.”

Glancing over to his teammate, Jiren said “I’ll… consider it. Thank you for the advice Zoiray.”

The imp waved dismissively, closing his eyes “Eh, don’t worry about it. It’s what friends do.”

…

Jiren lay naked on his bed, staring up at the ceiling, not entirely sure how to proceed. He knew the basic theory behind masturbation, but he’d never actually practiced it. Gingerly, he reached down and took hold of his cock. He knew his length and girth were considered impressive, but Jiren had never really felt like it was anything to be proud about. Uneasily, he began stroke up and down his cock. Nothing was happening, was he doing it wrong? Maybe if he closed his eyes and thought about Katopesla…
Oh.

Jiren imagined the policeman was lying naked next to him, that it was his hand stroking Jiren, not his own. Jiren’s cock responded, growing harder and erect in his hand. Jiren pictured that Katopesla was gazing into his eyes, charming grin on full display. He pictured the policeman leaning close to him, lips centimeters away from Jiren’s own. Jiren imagined what it would be like to hold him, to be held by him, to kiss him, and to be kissed by him...

“Ugh!”

Jiren grunted as his cock suddenly spasmed in his grip. He felt something wet splatter his cheek, his chin, and all over his torso as blinding ecstasy he’d never known overwhelmed him. When the aftershocks faded, Jiren opened his eyes to see that he had cum all over his chest and even his face. Frowning at the sticky, unpleasant fluid already starting to cake into his skin, Jiren quickly got the towel he’d prepared beforehand and wiped himself off. Once he was clean, Jiren got up and moved to his meditation pose. He was left feeling strangely… content after the orgasm, so perhaps he might be able to actually remain focused enough to fall into the blissful nothingness of his meditation. Sure enough, there was no Katopesla ruining his concentration, and Jiren found himself quickly lost to his familiar trance.

Jiren awakened from his meditation, feeling better rested than he had in days. Satisfied that he was finally past his annoying problem, Jiren was actually eager to begin the day. That morning, of course, was when Katopesla decided to speak with him.

The policeman approached Jiren right before breakfast with a friendly wave. “Hello there Jiren!” The grey alien felt a now familiar shiver go up his spine at Katopesla saying his name.

“So much for being past this.

“I was wondering if you were free right now.” Katopesla said. He was thankfully wearing his helmet, making speaking with the policeman marginally easier for Jiren, since he didn’t have to see those damned enchanting eyes and vibrant grin and-

Nope, not going down that rabbit hole again. Jiren forced himself into nonchalance. “For what?” He’s not going to proposition you, don’t be moronic.

Katopesla placed his hands on his hips “Why for a quick spar of course! I’ve always found that some exercise right before breakfast was a good way to wake up in the morning and we haven’t actually had the chance to go one-on-one yet!”

Because Jiren had been deliberately trying to avoid going one-on-one with Katopesla. He was still struggling with this inane “crush” of his, and he was worried that if he were to fight the policeman alone, he might do something incredibly stupid. “I appreciate the offer but-”

“Excellent! Let’s head there now!” Katopesla grabbed his hand and, with a surprising amount of strength, pulled Jiren along with him towards the sparring ring.

“I didn’t say- what are you- let go of me!” Jiren could probably break out of the policeman’s grip if he wanted to, but the fact that Katopesla was holding his hand was making his heart do backflips in his chest, paralyzing him with indecision. This… this was just pathetic. He was Jiren! He was respectable! He was not some lovesick dog to be led about by the hand like a child! What was
wrong with him?! And now all of the people they passed in the hall were staring at him! Was that Toppo? Oh Supreme Kai above, it was! Jiren was sorely wishing he’d remained erased right now. They couldn’t have reached the sparring ring any sooner in Jiren’s opinion. The second Katopesla let go of his hand Jiren was clenching it into a fist and withdrawing it back to his side, despite how a (small! SMALL!) part of him was already missing the contact.

Katopesla stepped into the ring, quickly shifting into his Raging Battle mode and taking a fighting stance. Reluctantly, Jiren followed him, moving to the opposite side of the ring and readying himself. “Ready?” Katopesla asked.

Jiren had barely finished nodding before the policeman was upon him. Katopesla opened with a kick at Jiren’s side, but the grey alien merely blocked the blow and countered with a quick palm to his opponent’s chest, sending him flying back. Katopesla landed on his feet and was instantly charging him again, this time jabbing a fist at Jiren’s gut. Again Jiren blocked, but before he had time to retaliate, he had to duck beneath the sudden kick that was sent at his head. He backed up to gain some distance, but Katopesla didn’t give him an inch of breathing room. The policeman pursued Jiren relentlessly, launching punches and kicks at such a high rate of speed that for a moment Jiren actually wondered if the policeman had changed into his Ultimate or Speed mode when he wasn’t looking. Of course, it was child’s play for him to block or dodge each of Katopesla’s strikes, but he refrained from going all out and retaliating. He was intrigued, wanting to see just what the policeman was planning with his assault. Surely he knew that he couldn’t breach Jiren’s defenses. So why…?

Katopesla sent another kick at Jiren’s head, but he sidestepped the strike with ease.

Too late he realized that was what Katopesla had been counting on…

The yellow highlights of Katopesla’s suit began to glow, and the policeman’s leg suddenly hooked around Jiren’s head. Jiren’s brain stopped functioning when he realized that his face was suddenly very close to the policeman’s crotch, and before he had processed what Katopesla was doing, the policeman had grappled him onto the floor. The next thing Jiren knew he was lying on his back, hands pinned above his head, Katopesla straddling his hips.


The highlights of his suit had turned green, his visor had gone yellow, and there was a large green “G” placed in the center of his chest. Shivers ran down Jiren’s spine at the sight of Katopesla looming over him, tantalizingly close. To his horror, Jiren could already feel his erection starting to form, and considering how skintight his uniform was, there was no way the policeman wouldn’t notice.

“In this form, my grip is unbreakable! You cannot escape my gra-AAH!” Katopesla’s continued boast was cut short when Jiren suddenly surged up and pushed the policeman off of him, sending him flying into the forcefield.

Quickly, Jiren jumped to his feet and turned his back to Katopesla to hide the clear signs of his arousal before the policeman could recover. “That was a good move.” he said briskly, moving towards the exit to the sparring ring before he could embarrass himself further. “We should go get breakfast now.”

He was almost to the door when Katopesla’s voice stopped Jiren in his tracks. “Have I truly offended you that much?”

Careful to keep his erection out of sight, Jiren turned his head to look over his shoulder at the policeman. “What?”
Katopesla got to his feet and placed his hands on his hips, head tilted to one side. “You have been acting incredibly standoffish with me ever since the first day we trained together, far more than you have been with Gohan or the others. You have refused to spar with me alone, you rarely say more than a word to me, and you always make yourself scarce whenever I’m around. I had hoped sparring with you would tell me if you were angry with me, but still you remain closed off.” His shoulders slumped “Have I truly offended you so much that you cannot stand to even be in my presence? Could you at least tell me that? I have no idea what I even did that has caused you to despise me so…”

Jiren winced, and suddenly found himself too ashamed to look at the confused policeman behind him. “No I… no it’s nothing you’ve done. The fault lies with me. I’ve…” Jiren bit his tongue. How could he even say this? *I think you’re incredibly attractive and I don’t know how to deal with that? I’m such a broken and warped individual that even forming the simplest of connections is an eternal struggle?*

“Yes?” Katopesla asked uneasily.

Jiren sighed “I’ve… I’ve just been having some bad days recently,” he half-lied. “Memories I’d rather forget resurfacing and all that. I guess I’ve just been taking my frustrations out on you without realizing it. I apologize, you didn’t deserve such treatment from me.”

Suddenly, Jiren’s felt Katopesla’s hand lay on his shoulder, startling him. Glancing over his shoulder, Jiren froze when he saw that Katopesla had removed his helmet, leaving that accursed face unobscured, concerned expression and all. “What sort of memories?” Katopesla asked.

Ah, that’s right, Katopesla had been erased before Belmod had blabbed about Jiren’s past. Gulping, and trying to ignore the electricity radiating from where the policeman’s hand was touching his shoulder, Jiren turned around, his erection having died down enough that it wouldn’t be noticeable. “I-I…” his voice caught in his throat.

Grrrrrrgle…

Jiren and Katopesla’s eyes went wide simultaneously, both looking down at Jiren’s growling stomach. Katopesla let out a laugh, patting Jiren’s shoulder as he made to walk passed him. “Perhaps we should get something to eat after all. You seem mightily hungry, Jiren!”

“Yes…” Jiren said, not quite sure if he felt relieved or disappointed…

…

Things started to go more smoothly after that. Jiren’s stomach still did flip-flops whenever he saw Katopesla without his helmet, but he started to have an easier time talking with the policeman. He still occasionally had problems meditating, but it seemed that masturbation really was a good fix for that. (Jiren tried not to think too much on how his fantasizing had grown far more detailed ever since Katopesla had pinned him. He didn’t particularly want to examine that part of himself.) He never actually got a chance to tell Katopesla about his past, before long the two of them and Gohan were going out on missions together, taking down all assortments of criminals and evil-doers together.

Jiren still wasn’t very talkative, but he at least made the effort to start participating in conversations more. He eventually managed to hold a full discussion with a helmetless Katopesla and he didn’t even stutter once! Jiren was glad for that, over the past week he’d found himself genuinely enjoying the policeman’s company; he was far smarter than Jiren had first believed, though he was still a bit of a buffoon, but Jiren was starting to find it endearing instead of grating. He’d even started to think that Katopesla’s poses weren’t entirely dumb. (Gohan had once made the mistake of telling Jiren that the
Pride Troopers did the same thing. Jiren had curtly retorted that the Pride Troopers didn’t have *poses*, they had *stances*. It was completely different!) The crush was still there, lingering in the background, but before too long, Jiren found he was able to ignore it.

Then, far too soon, Gohan had to return to Universe 7. The half-saiyan had explained that he had a wife and child, as well as a job to attend to back home and that was why his stay was so short. Jiren understood, but had to admit a part of him would miss going out on missions with the younger man. There was a level of understanding between them that was refreshing. It wasn’t until Gohan was leaving that Jiren realized perhaps the half-saiyan understood him a little *too* well…

They were saying their goodbyes outside of the Pride Trooper HQ. Whis was standing off to the side, humming away. Toppo, Katopesla, and the rest of the people Gohan had befriended during his stay had already said goodbye, Jiren was the only one left.

“Thanks for everything, Jiren.” Gohan said with a smile, holding out his hand “You’ve really helped me get stronger.”

Jiren smiled back and shook Gohan’s hand “It was a pleasure to train with you. Tell your father I’m looking forward to our rematch.”

Gohan chuckled “I’m sure he’ll be delighted to hear that.” Gohan briefly glanced over to the side where Katopesla stood before flashing Jiren a knowing smirk and a wink “Good luck. I think he feels the same way.”

Jiren blinked, brows furrowed in confusion, it occurring to him that Gohan wasn’t talking about Goku anymore. But before he could ask for clarification, Gohan had stepped to Whis’ side and in an instant, he was gone.

…

“*I think he feels the same way.*”

Gohan’s words wiggled their way through Jiren’s mind, their tendrils embedding themselves in his brain like a parasite that refused to let go. Could it be true? Could Katopesla really feel the same way about Jiren as Jiren felt about him? It seemed preposterous. Yet even so, Jiren found himself noticing things he’d overlooked before: how Katopesla’s gaze seemed to linger on him more than was necessary, the brilliant smile he broke into whenever Jiren entered the room, how, on the rare occasions Jiren got hit on missions, Katopesla would rush to his side, furiously knocking away whatever had dared to touch him and hurriedly asking if he was alright, despite the fact that the number of things in the universe that could actually *hurt* Jiren could be counted on one hand. In retrospect, the idea that Katopesla might feel the same way about him was starting to seem more and more likely.

And Jiren was starting to realize that he wasn’t much better. He got irrationally angry whenever someone managed to land a good hit on Katopesla, became worried when he and Katopesla were sent on different missions, and was always far too relieved whenever Katopesla came back unharmed. The crush he had thought suppressed had actually, beneath his notice, taken root and bloomed into something far, far deeper and far, *far* more frightening. The final confirmation that things had intensified between them to a terrifying degree was the day Jiren finally told Katopesla about his past…

They had just finished another mission apprehending members of a terrorist cell called “Machina Horizon” that had taken a school full of children hostage and were currently taking a break atop the school’s rooftop. Katopesla had removed his helmet and Jiren was bandaging a gash on the
policeman’s arm, gained when a clawed cyborg had managed to slice through his suit. (Said criminal was then punched so hard by Jiren that he would likely never be able to properly use his claws, or any other limb, ever again.)

“You really don’t have to do this.” Katopesla said “The suit’s nanomachines will repair any damage to it or myself, and the wound isn’t even that deep.”

“You’re my teammate,” Jiren stated as he finished tying off the bandage “Any wounds you receive during a mission are my responsibility.”

Katopesla sighed, “Yes, so you’ve said.”

Once he was certain the bandage was secure, Jiren leaned back, putting a comfortable distance between them, yet perhaps a bit closer than was proper. “There, that should do it.”

Katopesla glanced down at the bandage before flashing Jiren another blinding smile. “Well I suppose thanks are in order, even if it is a bit redundant.”

Jiren couldn’t quite stop the smirk that passed over his lips (though maybe he wasn’t really trying all that hard). Turning his attention back to the parking lot below, he observed as tearfully relieved parents were reunited with their shaken, but unharmed children. “We did good work here today.”

Katopesla nodded. “I’d hate to imagine what it’d have been like if we hadn’t been here. These kids aren’t much older than my nieces and nephews. To see any of them get hurt…”

Jiren didn’t say anything. Katopesla had talked frequently about his family; his sister and two brothers, and the uncle that’d raised them. It was clear from how he spoke about them that the policeman cared for his family dearly.

“Jiren,” Katopesla said suddenly, breaking the silence “It occurs to me, you’ve never once mentioned any family. Do you have any?”

Weeks ago he might have grown ashamed and closed himself off, uncertain of how, or even if he wanted to answer. Now however… “No,” he said quietly, “They died a long time ago.”

There was a moment of silence and then Katopesla asked “My apologies. Do you mind if I ask what happened?”

Jiren shook his head “No, I don’t,” and he told him. Everything. From the massacre of his parents, his rescue by his master, his training, his battle against the monster that had murdered his parents and subsequent defeat that ended with his master dead and his friends either dead as well or abandoning him.

When his story was done, there was a long, heavy silence before Katopesla asked “Did you beat them? The villain that did this to you?”

Jiren hesitated before answering “No… I…” he swallowed, his tongue felt heavy in his mouth and his throat was dry. Looking away from Katopesla, he said “I’m still… I’m still not strong enough.”

There was a long beat before Katopesla quipped “And here I thought the most terrifying words in existence were ‘they’re serving mystery meatloaf in the mess today’.” Jiren snorted, unable to hide his amusement. Suddenly, he felt an arm wrapping around his shoulders as Katopesla pulled Jiren against him. “Thank you for telling me.”

Jiren turned his head to meet the policeman’s sapphire gaze. Katopesla’s eyes were glinting, the
evening light framing his chiseled face. Unconsciously, Jiren found himself drifting towards the other man, as if pulled by some unseen force. It wasn’t until their foreheads were pressed together that Jiren realized Katopesla had been leaning towards him too. Jiren allowed his eyes to drift shut and, for a moment, just bask in the warmth of their embrace. It would so easy to fully bridge the gap between them, to tilt his head up and press a kiss to the policeman’s mouth. Before he could gain the resolve to do it, however, Jiren felt something else: the light brush of Katopesla’s lips against his own…

Instantly Jiren’s eyes shot open and he recoiled away from the policeman as if burned, breaking the embrace. Abruptly, he stood up “We should report in.” he said brusquely, ignoring the strange tingling on his lips from where they’d touched Katopesla’s.

A myriad of emotions flickered across Katopesla’s face in an instant: confusion, hurt, shame, and finally, stoic professionalism as he replaced his helmet. “Right... of course.”

Jiren turned and flew off towards the ship, his mind a jumbled mess of conflicting emotions as he tried to forget the lightning that had shot through him in the instant that their lips had met...

He needed to talk to Toppo.

...

Jiren knocked politely (loudly) on the door to Toppo’s quarters once more before resuming his pacing back and forth in front of it. They had gotten back late so the Pride Troopers’ leader was probably asleep, but Jiren couldn’t wait. The second their ship had landed Jiren had rushed off to find his friend.

He was about to knock for the fifth time in the past minute when a bleary-eyed Toppo opened the door, blinking confusedly at his visitor. “Jiren…? What are you doing here? Especially at this hour?” Upon noticing Jiren’s almost panicked look, his expression darkened and he straightened up to his full height. “What happened?”

Jiren suddenly realized how this looked. Waking up his commander in the middle of the night, acting the way he was. Even without the emergency alarm blaring it was no wonder Toppo thought something serious had happened and he was needed urgently. “I’m sorry for disturbing you at this hour.” Jiren said, looking down at his feet “Nothing’s happened, I just... I need to talk.”

Toppo’s shoulders sagged in relief “Ah, I see. Come in, come in.”

Toppo’s quarters were slightly larger than Jiren’s own to accommodate the man’s bigger size, and it was definitely better furnished (though that was more due to the fact that to call Jiren’s quarters “spartan” would be like calling a desert “dry”). Toppo set a pot of coffee brewing in his kitchenette while Jiren stood by the wall, waiting anxiously.

“So,” Toppo said, turning to Jiren “What seems to be the matter my friend?”

Jiren hesitated before answering, picking his words carefully “Toppo... what do you do when you... like someone and... and you think they might like you too?”

For a long, painful moment, Toppo just stared at him, blinking slowly, as if not quite able to process what he’d been asked. Then, without warning, he broke out into a huge grin beneath his mustache. “Oh ho!” Toppo exclaimed, his eyes twinkling “So Cocotte finally made her move, huh?”

“Oh.” Toppo’s eyes widened in horror “I… uh… forget I said that!” awkwardly, he cleared his throat. “Ahem. So… who is this lucky individual that has caught your fancy?”

Jiren glanced away, suddenly feeling embarrassed “You’re going to laugh.”

“I would do no such thing!” Toppo exclaimed, aghast “Especially not to a friend!”

Jiren nodded and, letting the tension fall from his shoulders, took a deep breath. “It’s… Katopesla.”

For a long moment, there was silence, Toppo’s face an unreadable mask, then… “What?”

Jiren felt an eyebrow twitch “It’s Katopesla.” He repeated.

“I… see…” Toppo said, voice strained.

Jiren’s eyes narrowed. Was Toppo…? He was! “You’re smirking.”

“I am not!” His “friend” said defensively, crossing his arms over his chest. Despite the denial, Jiren could clearly see the grin hiding beneath Toppo’s bushy ‘stache.

A myriad of emotions flared up within Jiren: rage, embarrassment, hurt, all were blending together, boiling just beneath the surface. “It’s not funny!” he snapped.

The large alien’s grin only grew. “It’s a little bit funny-”

SMASH!

Toppo recoiled in shock “Jiren!”

Jiren blinked, barely registering through his turmoil that he’d punched a hole through a nearby wall. Shame pooling within his belly, Jiren slowly withdrew his fist from the hole, noticing distantly that his hands were trembling. He was pathetic, such reactions should be beneath him, and yet here he was. “Toppo…” Jiren said finally, looking up at his friend, voice little more than a whisper “Toppo I… I don’t… I don’t know what to do… these feelings they are… they are unknown to me…”

Toppo’s expression softened and he walked up to Jiren, placing his ginormous hands gently upon Jiren’s shoulders. “You’ve really never dealt with anything like this before, have you?”

Slowly, Jiren nodded “It terrifies me. Please I… I need to know what to do…”

Toppo sighed “That, I’m afraid, is something you must figure out on your own. No one can tell you for certain the right way to handle these things, Jiren.”

The grey alien’s shoulders slumped “I was afraid of that.”

After a moment, Toppo gave him a smile, “You care for him, correct?”

Jiren looked down “I… yes, I do.” It was strange finally stating it out loud. It felt… definitive… final. He could no longer deny it, not to others, and not to himself. He had feelings for that buffoon of a policeman from Universe 3.

“And you think he has feelings for you?” Toppo asked.

Jiren hesitated “I… believe so, yes.”

“Then, if I may make a suggestion?” Toppo said “Tell him how you feel.”
Jiren’s eyes went wide and snapped back to his friend’s, “But what if he rejects me?”

“Then he rejects you.” Toppo stated gently “And it will hurt, but you will know where you stand with him.”

Jiren’s shoulders fell “Is that all I can do?”

“No.” Toppo said kindly “There are many other options for you, I have given you but one. It is up to you to decide what you will do, but know whatever you decide,” Toppo gave Jiren’s shoulders a gentle squeeze “I will be there for you to help you through it.”

Jiren nodded and Toppo released him. As uncertain as Jiren still was, Toppo’s words had, had an effect on him. Jiren shot a glance at the new feature he’d given Toppo’s quarters and said sheepishly “Sorry about the wall.”

“Feh, don’t be,” Toppo scoffed “it matches all the others.” He gestured to the other holes in his quarters’ walls left there by the grey alien during similar talks over the last few months. “I think they give the place some character.”

Jiren had to smile at that.

…

Jiren had intended to seek out Katopesla the next morning, but it turned out he needn’t have bothered, Katopesla came and found him.

Jiren had been just leaving his quarters for breakfast when he found the policeman standing outside his door, helmet tucked under one arm, his expression grim.

“Jiren,” Katopesla said “I wanted to apologize for my earlier behavior.” He bowed “You confided in me and I took advantage of you. That was highly dishonorable of me, and I’m sorry. I would understand completely if you no longer wished to work with me.”

Jiren just stood there for several moments, blinking confusedly at the policeman still bowing before him. Katopesla was… apologizing? Why? Did he think- Oh. Jiren suddenly realized with no small amount of embarrassment that his actions the previous day could easily have been perceived as a rejection. Clearing his throat, Jiren said quietly “I… um… I didn’t mind…”

Katopesla’s head snapped up, eyes wide “Beg pardon?”

“I…” Jiren looked away, suddenly feeling incredibly self-conscious “I didn’t… I mean… It wasn’t…” he sighed “I was just… scared.”

Katopesla straightened up, a confused look on his face “Scared?”

Jiren nodded, choosing his words carefully “I… have been… infatuated with you for… quite some time. These… feelings… they are… new territory… for me.” He forced himself to look the policeman in the eye. “But I wouldn’t be opposed to… exploring them with you… if you want to…”

For a moment, Katopesla stared at him in dumbfounded shock, then suddenly broke into the biggest, brightest grin Jiren had ever seen. “Why Jiren…” he said coyly “Are you asking me out on a date?”

Jiren froze, not quite knowing how to respond. “Um… yes?”

Katopesla laughed, clapping Jiren on the shoulder “Excellent! If memory serves we’re not on-duty
today, so why not tonight? Say, around 1800?”

Jiren blinked, a little taken aback by the policeman’s sudden energy “Um... yes. That sounds... acceptable. However... I’ve never actually been on a date before. What am I supposed to do?”

Katopesla beamed “Don’t worry! Leave everything to me! Just meet me outside the base at 1800! Oh, and wear something nice!” Jiren’s brows furrowed in confusion at that. Was his Pride Trooper uniform not nice? Before he could ask, Katopesla was jogging backwards down the corridor, “I’ll see you then!” he gave Jiren a quick salute, starting to turn and face the way he was running, yet still looking at the grey alien over his shoulder, clearly reluctant to lose sight of him just yet. Which meant...

Jiren’s eyes widened “Katopesla, there’s a-

SLAM!

Jiren winced as Katopesla planted face-first into a wall as the corridor took a turn. The policeman staggered back, shook his head clear, and, flashing Jiren one last smile and a thumbs up, disappeared around the bend.

Jiren let out a sigh. This was going to be... interesting.

...

“So Jiren,” Zoiray said as Jiren joined him, Cocotte, Toppo, and Vuon at their usual spot during breakfast. ‘Pesla blazed through here in a panic asking if anybody knew of any good places to go on a date around here. You wouldn’t have had something to do with that, would ya?”

Jiren paused as he sat between Toppo and Vuon, considering whether or not to tell him. Toppo and Zoiray already knew about his feelings for Katopesla, and Vuon and Cocotte would probably learn about it sooner or later, there was no real harm. “I might have.” He said simply, before taking a bite of his breakfast.

Cocotte’s eyes went wide, Toppo grinned beneath his mustache, and Vuon choked on his steak, leading Jiren to slap the reptilian Trooper hard on the back, making Vuon spit out the treacherous piece of meat. Zoiray smirked “I knew it! So, which one of you was brave enough to finally admit it? It was ‘Pesla wasn’t it?”

Jiren shook his head, casting a quick glance at Toppo. “Actually, I was.” Toppo, in the middle of chewing his food, gave Jiren a knowing wink.

Zoiray cocked an eyebrow “Huh, is that so?”

Vuon, having finished gasping for air, whirled on Jiren “When did this happen?!”

“This morning.” Jiren stated between bites.

“No, not the date!” Vuon clarified “Since when did you have the hots for ‘Pesla?!”

Zoiray rolled his eyes “You’re even denser than Kunshi sometimes, you know that, Vuon?”

The reptile bristled “I am not!”

Zoiray smirked “Kale.”

Vuon’s mouth snapped shut, chagrined at the reminder of his disastrous attempt at bringing down the
“So…” Cocotte said, brows furrowed “You and ‘Pesla, huh?’

“…Yes?” Jiren eyed his female teammate warily. She had forgiven him for the comment about her hair several weeks ago, but there was still some tension between them. “Is there a problem?”

For a moment there was a heavy silence, then Cocotte broke out into a big, warm, smile “No, I’m happy for you.”

Toppo placed a hand on Jiren’s shoulders. “Congratulations, Jiren.”

“Guys, it’s not like the wedding is tomorrow.” Vuon interjected “They haven’t even gone out on a date yet. Save your congratulations ‘til later.” He gave Jiren a friendly nudge, “And hey, if the worst happens and it does go bad, come find me. I know some great ways to blow off steam after a bad date.”

“Have a lot of experiences in that regard do ya?” Zoiray chimed in.

“Suck both my dicks Shorty.” Vuon retorted, pointing his fork at the imp.

“Well, seeing as nobody else will…”

“Do you need help with anything to get ready?” Toppo asked, ignoring the two bickering teammates. “If memory serves, one’s first date can be rather intimidating.”

Jiren paused, thinking back on what Katopesla had said “He said to ‘wear something nice’. What did he mean?”

Cocotte’s brow furrowed “You know, nice clothes.”

Jiren frowned “Is my uniform not nice?”

Cocotte’s brows shot up to her hairline, and Toppo groaned, putting his face in his hands “Oh, Jiren…”

Jiren blinked in confusion “What?

“Do you… not have anything other than uniforms in your closet?” Vuon asked warily.

Jiren shook his head “No. Why? Do you?”

“Jiren, everyone has casual clothes.” Zoiray said. “Toppo has casuals and he bleeds Pride Trooper.”

Toppo didn’t even bother responding to that, they all knew it was true. “But why would I need anything other than my uniform?” Jiren asked, still confused.

Cocotte facepalmed, Zoiray rolled his eyes, Toppo’s head was still in his hands, and Vuon snickered “See, ‘Cotte? Aren’t you glad you don’t have to deal with this numbsk- ow!” the reptile recoiled, rubbing his hands over where his female teammate had flicked his snout. “You know I don’t like it when you do that!”

Ignoring her whining teammate, Cocotte got to her feet and pointed a finger at the befuddled grey alien. “Right then. After breakfast, you and I are going shopping for some proper clothes.”

Jiren frowned “But I have training-”
“Not any more you don’t!” Everyone at the table was taken aback by Cocotte’s forceful tone. Cocotte sighed “I’m sorry, I just… I want this to go well for you.”

Jiren studied his female teammate’s expression for a moment before nodding. “Very well, I will accompany you to find suitable attire.” With any luck this would be over and done with quickly and he might manage to get some training in. They were just buying clothes, it wouldn’t be too much hassle.

Right?

…

“No, no, no!” Cocotte said, pulling Jiren away from another rack of shirts for the fifth time “You are not wearing a tank top on your date!”

Jiren frowned and cast a lingering look at the rack but allowed himself to be dragged off by his teammate. They’d been at this for far longer than either of them clearly would have liked. At this rate, they wouldn’t even be back at the base in time for lunch. It looked like Jiren wouldn’t be getting any training in today after all. “I fail to see the problem with them.”

“They’re not exactly ‘nice clothing’ Jiren!” Cocotte said, pinching the bridge of her nose. “Ugh, this is going nowhere. Want to take a break and grab something to eat?”

Jiren nodded “Perhaps that would be best.”

They went to the food court of the mall they were in and, after grabbing their sandwiches, found a place to sit and eat on the edge of a fountain. There were a couple other Pride Troopers about in their uniforms among the civilians, but no one Jiren recognized more than in passing.

After a moment of silence, Jiren said “This is far more complicated than I’d thought.”

“You’re telling me.” Cocotte sighed, glaring at her sandwich “I don’t normally do this whole ‘shopping for nice clothes’ thing.” she admitted. “I’d forgotten how tedious it was.”

“Then why offer?” Jiren asked.

Cocotte briefly looked up at him before glancing away, her cheeks darkening “I just… I want your date to go well. You… you deserve some happiness in your life.”

Jiren’s brows furrowed as he took a bite out of his own sandwich. Something Toppo said the previous night came to mind and, after swallowing, Jiren said “I’m sorry.”

Cocotte shot him a confused look. “You don’t need to apologize for this. I volunteered to help if you’ll remember.”

“No, not about the shopping.” Jiren clarified “Toppo said something when I went to ask him for advice about what I should do about Katopesla.” He took a deep breath, knowing that this could very well be a big mistake, but he didn’t want to leave the matter unsettled. “Before I told him who it was that I had feelings for, and suspected also had feelings for me, he’d initially assumed that you were the one I was talking about.”

Cocotte’s eyes went wide and her cheeks flushed. “Oh.”

“That’s what I’m apologizing for,” Jiren continued “never reciprocating your feelings.”
There was a long silence where Jiren prepared himself for the worst. Perhaps Cocotte would grow angry and leave (probably slapping him too for good measure). Or maybe she would burst into tears (also slapping him for good measure). Or perhaps, he had completely misread the situation and she’d become offended that he’d assumed she had feelings for him (and of course, slapping him for good measure). Regardless, Jiren was fully expecting to get slapped in the near future. So he was caught off-guard by what his teammate actually did.

She giggled. “You’re some guy, Jiren…”

The grey alien in question frowned “I don’t follow.”

Fighting down her giggles, Cocotte said “I appreciate it, but you don’t need to *apologize* for not having feelings for me! I honestly never expected you to reciprocate in the first place, and I was okay with that.” She shot the befuddled alien a warm smile. “I’m more than fine just being your friend.”

Jiren stared at his teammate incredulously “I had expected you to slap me again.”

Cocotte snorted, a twinkle in her eyes “Well I’m not, so stop worrying!” With that she took a bite out of her sandwich. Accepting this, Jiren also returned to eating. They finished their food in companionable silence and once done, Cocotte balled up her wrapper and looked out over the food court, “I meant what I said, you know. I really do hope things work out between you and ‘Pesla.” Turning to flash Jiren a grin, she got to her feet. “So let’s get back to it! We want you looking nice and sharp for your first date, after all!”

Jiren gave Cocotte what he hoped was a grateful smile and stood up to join her. They started walking towards a different clothing store, Cocotte musing out loud what sort of outfit Jiren should wear. They were passing a display booth with a number of nicely dressed mannequins when Jiren saw it out of the corner of his eye and he came to a halt.

“Jiren?” Cocotte asked in confusion “Why’d you stop?”

“Would something like this work?” Jiren asked, gesturing to the mannequin that had caught his eye.

Cocotte’s eyes lit up as she beheld the model and, with a smirk, she put her hands on her hips. “You know what, I think it could!”

Jiren made his way towards the spot he was supposed to meet with Katopesla. The clothes Cocotte had helped him buy felt weird on him; it was strange to not be wearing his uniform, he couldn’t remember the last time he’d gone out in public without it. He actually felt more naked than he would have if he was *actually naked*. Hopefully Katopesla thought he looked decent. Toppo and Cocotte had both given Jiren their approval before he’d set out to meet with the policeman (Toppo had even shed a tear, oddly enough), but for some reason, Jiren’s stomach hadn’t stopped tingling for the past few hours.

Katopesla was waiting outside the base, just like he’d said. For the first time since Jiren had known him, the policeman wasn’t wearing his suit. Instead, he wore a purple buttoned-up shirt and white slacks. His white-gold hair was somehow even more impeccably groomed than usual and the light of the city was glistening on his chiseled features.

Jiren hesitated for a moment, the tingling in his stomach intensified and Jiren suddenly had an intense desire to run, yet his feet seemed bolted to the ground. Could he do this? What was he even supposed to *do* on a date? What if Katopesla changed his mind? What if Jiren made a fool of himself,
or worse? What if-

Katopesla finally noticed Jiren and gave the Pride Trooper another one of his brilliant grins. “Jiren! You’re right on… time…” Katopesla’s voice trailed off and his jaw dropped as he fully took in the grey alien’s attire.

Jiren felt his skin prickle beneath the policeman’s gaze and, clearing his throat, asked “Is… is this presentable?” He wore a tight, red, high-collared shirt that snugly hugged his muscles and had a thin V that dipped between his pecs, slightly revealing a small strip of his grey skin. On his legs he wore a set of no less tight black slacks, held up by a belt, and a pair of black dress shoes.

Katopesla blinked, as if suddenly realizing he’d been staring, and beamed “Yes! Yes of course! You look fantastic Jiren!”

Jiren smiled weakly and glanced away, heat rising to his cheeks at the compliment. “Thank you… suddenly realizing he should probably repay the admiring comment, he added “You… uh… look good too?” Supreme Kai above! He was already ruining this!

There was a long pause where neither of them spoke. Finally, Katopesla chuckled, nervously rubbing the back of his head “We… um… have a reservation… we should get going.” He held out a hand.

For a moment, Jiren just stared at the hand dumbly, not sure what to do. Suddenly, it occurred to him that Katopesla wanted him to take it. “Um… yes… right…” he mumbled and gingerly, Jiren slipped his hand into Katopesla’s.

…”Stop shoving me!”

“Then move over!”

“Quiet! Someone will hear!”

Toppo’s ears twitched as he heard whispered voices coming from a nearby hallway closet. For a moment, he considered just walking away, but his intuition told him to investigate. As quietly as he could, Toppo moved to the door and tapped the keypad to open it. Inside Vuon, Cocotte, Zoiray, and Kettol were all sitting around a holo-pad in Vuon’s hands and looking very much like they were just caught with their hands in the cookie jar.

“Um… hi there boss…” Zoiray said sheepishly from his position on Vuon’s shoulder. “We were just… uh…"

“Watching a movie?” Kettol supplied.

“Yeah, that!” Vuon agreed quickly.

Cocotte at least had the decency to facepalm.

Toppo’s eyes narrowed as he looked down at the holo-pad. He recognized that make… and on the screen… wait. His eyes widened “Are- are you using one of the Justice Drones to spy on Jiren and Katopesla’s date?!” the large alien asked incredulously.

The four simultaneously winced “Um… no?” Vuon said.
Toppo’s glare could have set a forest aflame “That is a gross misuse of Pride Trooper resources, and a deep violation of your friend’s privacy! I expected better of you all!”

“Look, we’re just making sure everything goes well.” Zoiray said carefully “We don’t want Jiren’s first ever date to go badly, after all.”

Toppo cocked an eyebrow, “Really?”

“Yeah!” Vuon added “We’re just cheering him on!”

Toppo glanced at Cocotte, wondering if the female Trooper was going to join in on her companion’s excuse. “Hey, I spent all day getting Jiren ready!” Cocotte protested “I need to see if all my hard work was worth it. I’m not missing a moment of this!”

“Unless they fuck.” Vuon interjected.

“Unless they fuck.” Cocotte agreed, though clearly not without some disappointment.

So they have some boundaries. Toppo mused before turning to look at Kettol to see what excuse he gave.

“I helped ‘Pesla set the date up.” Kettol shrugged “I wanted to see how it turned out.”

Well at least some of them are honest. Toppo sighed, shaking his head. “I’m sure Jiren would appreciate your ‘concern’ but this is—”

“Wanna’ join us?” Zoiray interrupted, a grin on his lips.

Toppo frowned, taken aback by the offer. He was about to angrily refuse when he hesitated for a moment. He shouldn’t, he really shouldn’t, but on the other hand… “Alright,” he said begrudgingly, “make room.”

Jiren stared down at his full plate, not feeling particularly hungry. They had gotten to their reservation at some fancy restaurant Jiren had never heard of, were seated, and asked their orders. Conversation had been sparse while they waited, usually Katopesla trying to ask something and Jiren giving an incredibly curt response. Thankfully, the awkward atmosphere lasted only a little while, as their food was soon delivered and the policeman had eagerly dug into his meal. Jiren picked absently at the food on his plate with a fork, it certainly looked appetizing, but his stomach was so busy doing flip-flops in his gut Jiren wasn’t entirely sure he could hold anything down.

“Is everything alright, Jiren?” Katopesla suddenly asked.

Jiren’s heart skipped a beat as he looked up at the policeman’s concerned expression. “Y-yes… I’m just…” he lowered his gaze down to his plate, not quite knowing how to articulate the sensation he was feeling.

Katopesla smiled “Nervous?”

Jiren nodded “Apologies, I know it’s silly…”

“Not at all” Katopesla said suddenly, catching Jiren off-guard “This is your first time going on a date right?” Jiren nodded “Then it’s only natural you’re feeling apprehensive.” He chuckled “Why, I remember the first time I went on a date I was so nervous I threw up all over the poor girl!” the
policeman grinned “Needless to say, I did not get a second date.”

Jiren allowed himself a smile, letting the tension start to slip from his shoulders “I’ll try to refrain from vomiting on you.”

Katopesla smirked “Don’t worry, even if you do, I won’t hold it against you.”

…

“What are they talking about now?” Kettol asked impatiently.

“I… think they’re talking about fighting?” Vuon said uneasily “My lip-reading is a little rusty.”

“Jiren looks like he’s starting to relax.” Cocotte said cheerfully “I think he’s having a good time!”

Toppo grunted from where he’d squeezed himself in behind the four other Troopers inside the closet, his eyes fixated upon the image of his friend on the screen in Vuon’s hands. The grey alien had started eating at least, so that was a good sign. On the pad, Katopesla said something and Jiren laughed. Not a chuckle, an actual laugh! Toppo had never seen Jiren really laugh in all the years he’d known him. It was so different from how Jiren had always acted before it was almost surreal, but Toppo found his heart warmed by the sight. He couldn’t help but grin beneath his mustache.

“What’d they say this time?” Zoiray asked.

“If you guys would stop asking I might be able to concentrate long enough to find out!” Vuon hissed.

“You could hear them if you got closer.” Kettol pointed out.

“Yeah, and get spotted!” Vuon retorted.

“Would you two knock it off?!” Zoiray snapped.

“I’m going to smack all three of you if you don’t be quiet!” Cocotte growled.

Toppo sighed. At least someone was having fun…

…

Conversation had come much more easily as the dinner went on. Jiren finally managed to calm his nerves enough to actually eat some of his food and Katopesla was more than happy to talk about anything Jiren asked. He’d even found himself laughing to some of the stories the policeman told about his adventures, and Jiren couldn’t resist adding in a few tales of his own, like the time he’d been roped into distracting Dyspo for an hour while the other Troopers prepared a surprise birthday party for the speedy alien, or when a rookie had decided to draw a smiley face on the back of his head while Jiren was meditating and it had taken hours for Jiren to figure out why everyone was giggling at him (he’d learned to always put up a barrier during meditation after that). Time seemed to pass far too quickly, and before too long, both their plates were empty and they were paying the bill. Katopesla tried to pay for their meal, but Jiren had insisted he be the one to do it. After all, he’d built up a large amount of money over the years due to rarely spending his salary from the Pride Troopers, it only made sense that he pay for it.

Before long, they were standing outside the restaurant, enjoying the evening air. “This was… fun.” Jiren admitted, a small smile dancing along his lips.
Katopesla grinned, “It’s not over yet!” He started walking down the street, gesturing Jiren to follow him. “I found something I want to show you!”

Confused but also intrigued, Jiren fell into step besides the policeman as they walked through the busy streets. Without even realizing it, Jiren’s hand reached out and took hold of Katopesla’s, yet once the vigilante’s fingers intertwined with his own, Jiren felt lightning shoot up his arm and warmth bloom in his chest.

…

Cocotte gasped “Look! Look! Look! They’re holding hands!”

“I can see that!” Vuon growled “Now be quiet- Ow! Don’t flick my snout!”

“Then don’t be a jerk!”

Toppo facepalmed.

…

Jiren had never really taken the time to explore the city before, so he was surprised when Katopesla brought him to an overlook within a small park that looked out over the metropolis. “Quite the view, huh?” Katopesla said, releasing Jiren’s hand, much to the grey alien’s disappointment.

Jiren put his hand on the railing guarding them from the sheer drop on the other side and gazed out over the city, its lights were glittering in the night like stars, a gentle breeze blew through the air and brought with it the distant sound of millions of lives, all mingling together. “I’d never taken the time to look at it all.” He said quietly.

“That’s a shame,” Katopesla said, leaning against the railing and joining Jiren in looking out over the city. “I think it’s important we take a moment sometimes and acknowledge the things we’re protecting.” Suddenly, the policeman’s expression darkened “The things we fought for…”

Jiren frowned and turned his gaze towards the policeman. He’d never seen Katopesla look so bitter, it was unnerving. “What is it?”

“Huh?” Katopesla blinked, clearly having not realized he was brooding, then cracked a smile that didn’t quite reach his eyes. “N-Nothing! I’m sorry, I’m ruining the mood aren’t I?”

Jiren’s brows furrowed and he turned to fully face the policeman. “What is it Katopesla?”

The policeman sighed, glancing back over the city “I just… suddenly remembered that all of this, this beauty, this life, even if only for a few minutes, it was all wiped from existence just a few months ago, like it had never even existed.” He turned back to look at Jiren, eyes dark with a seething rage boiling just beneath the surface. “What right does anyone, even the highest of all gods, have to decide it no longer deserves to exist?” Katopesla grit his teeth “It goes against everything I’ve ever believed about what was right and good in the world.”

Jiren frowned, not really knowing how to answer. Still, he said “The angels told us the Omni-Kings always intended for the universes to be brought back with the Super Dragon Balls. They never truly wished to erase us.”

Katopesla sighed “I know, I know. But still… I can’t get it out of my head…” he chuckled “Look at me, moping about on a date.” He looked up, flashing Jiren another half-hearted smile. “You’ll have to forgive me, I’ve gone and completely ruined the mood.”
Suddenly, Jiren had an idea, and he stepped forward, placing a hand on the policeman’s shoulder. For a long moment they just stood there, staring into each other’s eyes. Then, Jiren cracked a small grin and said “Better you ruin it than me I suppose.”

Katopesla laughed, not his normal hearty, full laugh, but a breathless, relieved one. “I suppose so.”

Jiren allowed his hand to linger for a moment longer before reluctantly dropping it from Katopesla’s shoulder. “Feeling any better?”

Katopesla grinned “Heh, a little, yes. Thank you.” They both turned to look out over the city again, standing shoulder-to-shoulder. Somehow, Jiren’s hand had found Katopesla’s once more when the policeman asked “So, you enjoyed tonight? Minus the whole conversation on existential dread of course.”

Jiren nodded, turning to meet Katopesla’s gaze “Yes… it was… fun.”

Katopesla flashed a smile. “So… what do you say to doing this again sometime?”

“Yes.” Jiren said a little too quickly, then, realizing this, cleared his throat and said “I mean… I would like that.”

Katopesla’s smile grew, white teeth flashing in the light as he reached up his free hand and gently took hold of Jiren’s chin. “Then… do I have your permission to finish what I started the other day?”

Please. Jiren’s voice had suddenly abandoned him, so he settled for quickly nodding his head and then Katopesla’s lips were upon his…

Jiren’s eyes fell shut and he melted into the other man’s embrace. His free arm wrapped around Katopesla’s waist and pulled the policeman flush against him, while the one still holding Katopesla’s hand squeezed tightly around the other man’s fingers. Jiren allowed everything else to drift away, the park, the city, even the very air itself, and focused solely on their embrace and the sensation of Katopesla’s lips pressed against his own. It was a bliss Jiren had never known before, had never even thought existed, yet now that he was finally experiencing it…

He never wanted it to end.

…

“Eeeeee!” Cocotte squealed in delight “They’re kissing! They’re kissing! They’re kissing! They’re kiss-”

“We know!” Vuon, Kettol, and Zoiray said simultaneously, Zoiray adding, “Honestly, ‘Cotte, we’re not blind- Wait, Toppo, are you crying?”

Toppo was, in fact, weeping tears of joy. For a moment there it looked like Katopesla of all people was the one getting depressed but somehow Jiren, whatever he did, managed to snap the policeman out of it. And now they were kissing. Finally. Toppo had only dreamed this day would come: that Jiren might finally forge that irreplaceable bond that so many craved and, perhaps, he would finally start to heal the scars of his past. “I-I’m j-j-just s-s-so h-h-happy f-f-for h-h-him!” he blubered through the tears. Kettol handed him a tissue and Toppo graciously accepted, loudly blowing his nose into it.

Vuon shot his leader a confused look “Boss, it’s just a kiss, it’s not like they’re getting engaged- Ow! What did I tell you?!”
“You’re ruining the moment!” Cocotte snapped.

Toppo continued crying happily.

…

Sadly, they eventually needed to come up for air. When Katopesla pulled back slightly, breaking the kiss, Jiren opened his eyes and gazed longingly at the other man. “That… was…”

The policeman smirked “Good?”

Jiren nodded, Katopesla’s fingers still cupped Jiren’s chin, lightly stroking across the smooth grey skin. Jiren leaned into the touch as he said “Very good.” Suddenly, a strong gust of wind blew from the city, sending shivers up Jiren’s spine. “We uh, should probably head back to base.”

Katopesla nodded, yet for a second neither of them moved, not truly wanting to end the moment. Unfortunately, another gust of cold wind blew through the air, and Jiren reluctantly allowed himself to part with the policeman, but only partially; as they slowly wandered through the city, Katopesla’s hand never once left his. All along the walk back to the base, Jiren felt as if he was floating on air, and if it weren’t for Katopesla’s hand anchoring him, he might drift away into the night sky.

Far too soon they found themselves back inside the Pride Trooper’s base, standing in front of the door to Jiren’s room. “Well then,” Katopesla said, releasing Jiren’s hand “I suppose this is where we part ways for now.”

Jiren nodded, a little disappointed that the evening had finally reached its end. “Yes, I suppose so… I guess I’ll see you tomorrow?”

Katopesla smiled “Tomorrow.”

…

“Invite him in.” Zoiray hissed at the screen “Invite him in you daft idiot!”

“Shut up and watch!” Cocotte snapped.

Toppo was still weeping with joy.

…

“When do you think we will do this again?” Jiren asked “We won’t have a day off for another week at least.”

Katopesla, stroked his chin thoughtfully “Perhaps I will leave that to you.” He grinned mischievously “I’m curious to see what you’ll come up with.”

Jiren’s eyes went wide in horror “I… very well then. I will… handle it.” He most certainly could not handle it! He had no idea how to plan for a date!

Katopesla clearly noticed Jiren’s apprehension as, with a small smile he said “I have complete faith whatever you decide on will be enjoyable.” That didn’t put Jiren completely at ease, but it did help a little. “Now,” Katopesla said, “There is one other matter before we say farewell.”

Jiren cocked an eyebrow. “And that is?”

Katopesla grinned “Why, a kiss goodnight of course!”
Jiren couldn’t help the smile that appeared on his lips. Deciding that this time he would be the one to take the initiative, Jiren stepped forward, placed a hand on Katopesla’s cheek, and leaned in to press his lips against the other man’s. The kiss was shorter this time, but no less sweet, and when they separated, Jiren found himself eagerly awaiting the next one.

“Tomorrow.” Katopesla whispered against Jiren’s lips, eyes twinkling.

“Tomorrow.” Jiren repeated. With one last smile, Katopesla turned and walked off down the hall. Jiren watched the policeman go until he was out of sight, and stared at the spot he’d disappeared for a moment longer.

That was when he saw it.

…

“Well then, looks like it’s ‘mission successful’. ” Vuon said, getting to his feet and tapping on the pad to order the drone to return to its station.

“I’ll say!” Cocotte agreed, stretching. “Honestly, I was a little worried for a minute there.”

Toppo, having finally stopped crying in happiness, shuffled around the other four and out of the cramped closet. “No one ever hears about this. Understand?”

“My lips are sealed Boss,” Zoiray said, hopping off of Vuon’s shoulder.

“I’m just glad I didn’t give up my reservation for nothing.” Kettol added “That restaurant is too good to be wasted on a bad date.”

Toppo decided to make himself scarce, it wouldn’t do for the leader of the Pride Troopers to be caught sneaking about. After he left, the other four Troopers continued to chat amongst themselves as they headed back towards their rooms. Not even a minute later, Zoiray noticed that the holo-pad now tucked under Vuon’s arm was flashing red.

“Hey, Vuon” the imp asked “Is your pad supposed to be doing that?”

Frowning, Vuon pulled out the pad and stared in confusion at the flashing red letters displayed on the screen. “‘Signal lost’? he said as the group rounded a corner, “That doesn’t make any-”

CRASH!

All four Troopers froze as they heard something hit the floor in front of them. Looking down, they saw the broken remains of the Justice Drone they’d been using slide to a stop at their feet.

“I believe that belongs to you.”

Cocotte gasped, Kettol trembled, Vuon whimpered, and Zoiray cowered behind his friends’ legs as they beheld a familiar grey alien enveloped in a menacing red aura advancing on them, murderous intent gleaming in his eyes.

“I would like to have a word with you all.” Jiren growled.

…

The next morning, the other Troopers noticed that Cocotte, Zoiray, Kettol, and Vuon were uncharacteristically jumpy. Jiren hadn’t actually hurt any of them, but he’d been certain to make clear his displeasure. None of them had blabbed about Toppo being an accomplice to their spying,
and Jiren was quick to let the matter rest. Perhaps he was still riding high off of his date with Katopesla, but the grey alien didn’t really have it in him to stay angry with his friends. In fact, things started to slowly change after that first date. Truthfully, Jiren would never have noticed if Toppo hadn’t pointed it out to him. Jiren and Katopesla would often be found at the other’s side, even when not on duty. They’d sit next to each other during meals with their shoulders pressed together, they’d exchange lingering looks and touches at almost every opportunity when they were alone together, and more than once Katopesla had given Jiren a heated kiss after a successful mission.

Their second date didn’t occur for another two weeks. Jiren truthfully had been completely clueless as to what to do for it. Every idea he could think of seemed ridiculous the moment he thought about it for longer than a second or got someone else’s opinion. (“Who the heck goes crime fighting for a date? We do that every day!” Zoiray had said incredulously when Jiren had told him his initial plan.) This was why, when Kettol had given Jiren two tickets to see a critically acclaimed opera that was playing in a nearby theater, the grey alien had jumped at the opportunity. The amphibious alien had sworn up and down that it would be a delightful, romantic evening.

In hindsight, Jiren really should have gotten a second opinion.

The theater was hot, crowded, the too-small seats extremely uncomfortable, and the opera was both unnecessarily loud and unbearably dull at the same time. Katopesla had ended up falling asleep on Jiren’s shoulder not halfway through it, not that he had minded much; in truth Jiren had found himself staring more often at the dozing policeman than the performance onstage. Careful not to disturb his date, Jiren had reached out to wrap his arm over Katopesla’s shoulders, content to watch him sleep… Well, until Katopesla’s loud snoring had gotten them both kicked out that is. The poor policeman was rather embarrassed by the incident and quite apologetic all the way back to base, despite Jiren repeatedly insisting that he hadn’t really been enjoying the opera (Jiren had to force himself not to say that he hoped he’d get to watch over Katopesla sleep a lot more in the future). Kettol had been less forgiving, rather miffed that Katopesla had actually fallen asleep during, what he insisted was “one of the greatest operas ever made in all the universes”. (Jiren wisely elected not to say that if that was the case then the other operas must have set an incredibly low bar.)

Meanwhile, Jiren found himself needing to masturbate almost every night in order to focus on his meditation. His fantasies had grown even more vivid now that he had actually kissed Katopesla, and each time their lips met for real the exchange became more and more passionate. Jiren found himself desperately craving more. He’d even done some… “research” into the matter, and that had ignited a whole new world of desire within him. The yearning was building and building just beneath the surface, and he could sense that Katopesla was feeling it too, but Jiren was unsure as to how to broach the topic. He’d tried asking Toppo about it, but his friend had gotten rather flustered and admitted he wasn’t the best person to ask about “that sort of thing”.

It wasn’t until after a particularly irritating mission that the dam finally burst.

Katopesla had just taken off his helmet aboard the ship he and Jiren had used to travel to the remote planet that, until just a few hours ago, had been laid siege to by bandits. “That could have gone better.” Katopesla noted with a wry chuckle.

The bandits had turned out to be particularly resilient, every time the duo had defeated one it seemed like another seven came crawling out of the woodworks. It had taken hours to finally subdue every last one of them and the endless frustration had left Jiren in a bad mood. The grey alien didn’t say anything as he walked over to the ship’s control panel and pressed down on the button to tell the autopilot to take them back to base, hard.

CRACK!
…Perhaps a little too hard. Jiren sheepishly pulled his finger away from the cracked screen as the ship took off. That was the fifty-third console he’d damaged. The Pride Trooper’s quartermaster wasn’t going to be pleased…

“Everything alright Jiren?” Katopesla asked, setting down his helmet on one of the chairs.

Jiren sighed and turned to face his partner. The ship was spacious enough to move about freely with only a few chairs near the front. In truth, the way the bandits had kept popping up reminded him a little of the end of the Tournament of Power, when Frieza and Android 17 had shown themselves the second he’d thought he’d defeated Son Goku. “Yes,” he lied “I’m just… tired.”

Katopesla frowned, approaching Jiren. “We have a few hours before we get back to base. You could take a nap if you want.”

“No!” Jiren’s raised voice seemed to catch Katopesla off guard, the policeman recoiling away from the grey alien. Embarrassed by his outburst, Jiren cleared his throat. “Apologies, I did not mean get angry at you. I… don’t nap.”

Katopesla blinked, a concerned look on his face “It’s the nightmares about your past isn’t it?”

Jiren nodded “Sleep and I… do not get along. I rest through meditation instead.”

Katopesla nodded, gesturing towards the empty space at the back of the ship “Well then perhaps you should meditate until we get back. I’ll be sure not to disturb you.”

Jiren nodded his thanks and, as he walked past the policeman, he felt Katopesla’s hand reach out and take hold of his, giving it a brief squeeze before letting go. Electricity shot up his arm and warmth bloomed in his chest. Smiling, Jiren sat down at the back of the ship, closed his eyes, and began to meditate.

Or… well… tried to…

Every time he’d try to concentrate, Jiren found himself opening his eyes to gaze at Katopesla sitting in a chair at the front of the ship, watching the stars pass by through the viewport. Jiren suddenly became aware of the fact that he and Katopesla would be alone on the ship for hours and that all of the leftover energy from the mission was starting to direct itself towards a very specific part of his anatomy. He couldn’t exactly masturbate, there was only the one cabin on the ship plus a small bathroom that was far too cramped for Jiren to properly fit. Squeezing his eyes shut, Jiren tried to think of something, anything other than the feeling of Katopesla’s hand in his, the brush of his lips on Jiren’s own, the press of his body against Jiren’s—Supreme Kai above!

After several futile minutes of trying to concentrate, Jiren angrily huffed and got to his feet. The bathroom would be cramped but it was the only option he had available to him. He was just about to start towards the bathroom door when Katopesla turned around in his chair with a concerned look on his face, clearly having heard Jiren get up.

“Is everything alri—” Katopesla stopped mid-sentence and his eyes focused on Jiren’s groin.

Jiren realized to his horror that the tent of his erection was plain to see, and as fast as he could, Jiren spun around, putting his back to the policeman and covering his groin with his hands for good measure. “I-It’s nothing!” he sputtered out. “I—I’m just having a l-little trouble concentrating! That’s all!” Supreme Kai above this was humiliating! Erasure was preferable to this!

“Heh, I’ll bet.” At the sound of Katopesla’s chuckle, Jiren looked over his shoulder to see the policeman getting out of his chair, hands on his hips and a familiar brilliant grin on his lips.
“I-It’ll go away in a minute. I just need to collect myself!” Jiren said quickly.

“Jiren, you don’t have to be embarrassed.” Katopesla said, “In case you’ve forgotten, we’re *dating*. There’s no need to feel ashamed about getting a boner around me.”

Jiren flinched and looked away “I’m sorry… this is just…” his voice failed him.

“New territory for you?” Katopesla finished. Jiren looked back over his shoulder and nodded. Approaching him, Katopesla put his hands on Jiren’s shoulders and gently turned him around. “It’s okay to be nervous Jiren,” Katopesla said kindly “But you don’t need to hide it.” He flashed a grin “And if you want some help with it, all you have to do is ask.”

Jiren’s eyes went wide “I-I…”

Katopesla released his shoulders, giving a shrug and stepping back “And if you don’t that’s fine too.” He nodded towards the bathroom door. “If you want to handle it yourself I’ll give you privacy. I’ll be up front if you need me.” With one last smile he turned around and made his way back to his chair.

Jiren’s mind raced at the speed of light. A part of him was so embarrassed he wanted hide in the bathroom and not come out until the ship arrived back at base… but wasn’t this exactly what he’d been waiting for? A chance to finally take that next step. Who knew when another opportunity like this would present itself?

He made his decision “Wait.” Jiren said. “I’d… like your help.”

Katopesla stopped in his tracks and looked over his shoulder, a genuinely surprised look on his face. “Are… are you sure? I don’t want pressure you into something you don’t feel ready for.”

Jiren nodded “Yes I… I’m sure.”

After a moment of looking dumbfounded, Katopesla regained his composure and turned back around, grinning as he said “Well then, allow me to assist you.”

Jiren gulped as the policeman stepped forward and reached out a hand to grasp the back or Jiren’s neck. Black eyes met blue, and Jiren allowed himself to be pulled into a passionate kiss. Jiren moaned against the other man’s lips and wrapped his arms around Katopesla’s shoulders, pressing them flush together. Katopesla responded by reaching his other hand around to grab a fistful of Jiren’s ass, grinding their groins together, eliciting a pleasantly surprised groan from the grey alien. Katopesla took advantage of the opportunity to deepen the embrace and plunged his tongue into Jiren’s mouth. Jiren whimpered needily as their tongues danced around each other, Katopesla was clearly the far more experienced kisser, but Jiren had gotten pretty good at it himself over the last few weeks. He tightened his hold and pushed back with his tongue, delving passed Katopesla’s lips. Their erections -and Jiren could feel that Katopesla was now *certainly* hard through the spandex -ground against one another, drawing needy moans from both men.

Suddenly, Jiren felt his back hit a wall. He hadn’t even realized he had been walked backwards. Katopesla’s hand strayed from his ass to finger around Jiren’s waste as he whispered against the grey alien’s lips “Help me get this off you.”

Jiren nodded and quickly reached a hand down to undo the nigh-invisible seal that seamlessly attached the upper and lower halves of his uniform. With his leggings no longer connected to his top, Jiren and Katopesla worked together to pull them down far enough for the grey alien’s cock to spring free. Jiren gasped as he felt the cool air of the ship touch his exposed skin.
Katopesla stepped to the side to inspect Jiren’s manhood. “I see you went commando.” He said with an approving grin.

The hand on the back of Jiren’s neck massaging small circles into the grey alien’s skin while the hand at his waist trailed over to brush against the throbbing length, eliciting a needy groan. Jiren clenched his eyes shut and pressed the back of his head against the wall as Katopesla traced his fingertips up and down Jiren’s aching member.

“Do you like this?” Katopesla asked in Jiren’s ear, fingers stroking down the underside of the grey alien’s cock, dipping to fondle his ballsack. Jiren whimpered and nodded. It was better than his own hand, better than his fantasies. *Fuck*, he’d never be able to get off just from masturbating again. He was ruined. “Say it,” Katopesla whispered, leaning into Jiren “Tell me how much you want this.”

Shivers were racing up Jiren’s spine as he opened his eyes to meet the policeman’s sapphire gaze. “Please…”

Katopesla smiled, “Good enough,” and his hand wrapped around Jiren’s cock, giving it a single, slow, pump from base to tip.

Jiren moaned, the smooth texture of Katopesla’s glove sent lightning through his skin. Katopesla pulled their lips together once more as he stroked Jiren’s cock, tongue diving hungrily into the grey alien’s mouth. Jiren greedily sucked on the policeman’s lips and tongue, one hand reaching down to cover the one Katopesla had wrapped around his cock while the arm still around the policeman pulled Katopesla closer. Together, Jiren and Katopesla milked the grey alien’s length as their tongues danced around one another.

It was pure bliss, finally having Katopesla’s hand around his dick, but far sooner than he would have wished, Jiren felt himself climbing to his peak. He tried to warn Katopesla, but the words were swallowed by the policeman’s lips. Moans muffled by Katopesla’s tongue in his mouth, Jiren felt his cock throb hard in their grasp. Jiren’s body shuddered as his dick pulsed and shot out ropes of cum that arced high through the air to splatter on the ship’s floor. Once… twice… three times… and it was over.

Once the final shudders of Jiren’s orgasm had faded, Katopesla broke the kiss and pressed his forehead against Jiren’s, his hand gently massaging the back of the grey alien’s neck as he softly asked “So… how was that?”

Jiren, breathing heavily, eyes clenched shut, and a bead of sweat trickling down his face, murmured back “It was… pleasant.”

Katopesla chuckled “I was hoping for a bit more than ‘pleasant’.”

Jiren opened his eyes and reached up to cup the back of Katopesla’s head, pulling the policeman into another quick kiss. “It was… *exhilarating*…”

Katopesla smirked against his lips. “That’s more like it.” Giving Jiren’s cock one final squeeze, the policeman stepped back, Jiren already missing the contact. “Think you’ll be able to focus on your meditation now?”

Jiren blinked, he’d forgotten about that. “I… yes.”

Katopesla grinned “Good, you start meditating, I’ll clean up the mess.”

Jiren was about to suggest he be the one to clean up the semen on the floor when he noticed that there was a very noticeable tent in Katopesla’s suit. Suddenly, Jiren felt immensely ashamed of his
own selfishness. He hadn’t even thought about reciprocating for Katopesla. “What about you?” he asked.

Katopesla looked down at his arousal and smiled sheepishly “Oh... that. Um... don’t worry about it. I’ll take care of myself. You don’t need to do anything.”

Jiren’s brows furrowed in confusion and he closed the distance between them once more, positioning himself so that Katopesla was the one who’s back was against the wall. “And if I want to?”

Katopesla blinked “I...” he sputtered, clearly at a loss for words. “Well I guess that... I suppose if you want you can- what are you doing?”

Jiren had gotten down on his knees so that his face was level with the bulge Katopesla’s erection. He wanted to try something he’d seen in his “research”. “What does it look like I’m doing?” Jiren said simply, looking up at Katopesla.

The policeman’s cheeks turned a surprising shade of purple “Have... you ever blown anyone before?” At Jiren’s cocked eyebrow, Katopesla said “Right... stupid question.” After a moment the policeman took a deep breath “Just... watch the teeth...”

Jiren gave what he hoped was a reassuring smile before he reached up a hand to stroke the bulge of Katopesla’s erect length, making the policeman’s hips jerk into his touch. Katopesla’s suit had a hidden fly and, with the policeman’s guidance, Jiren managed to get it open, freeing the erect blue cock trapped within to fly out and bop him on the nose. Jiren blinked, taken aback by the sheer size of Katopesla’s manhood. From up close it looked so big. The blue foreskin had rolled back slightly to reveal bluish, almost purple glans.

Jiren wrapped his hand around the shaft, giving it a few experimental jerks, making Katopesla wince “Ack! G-Gentler please.”

“Sorry,” Jiren said, embarrassed, and loosened his grip.

He gave the dick a few more light tugs when he noticed there was a drop of pre leaking out from the tip. Unable to resist, Jiren leaned forward, tongue reaching out to taste it, licking softly over the tip. The pre was salty, yet somewhat sweet. Closing his eyes, Jiren wrapped his lips around the cock’s glans and suckled lightly.

“Ahh!” Katopesla’s hips jerked as the policeman cried out.

Alarmed, Jiren pulled back and gave Katopesla a concerned look. “Are you alright? Did I do something wrong?”

The policeman shook his head “N-no! I’ve just... you caught me off-guard is all.” His hands were clawing at the wall, trying in vain to find purchase. “You were... you were doing fine... K-keep doing that.”

Relieved, Jiren allowed himself a small grin as he turned his attention back to the dick in his hand. Wrapping his lips back around the glans, Jiren hollowed his cheeks and began sucking on the cock in earnest. Katopesla’s hand came to rest on the back of Jiren’s head, causing him to look up at the policeman. Katopesla has his eyes clenched shut and his head resting against the wall, gasping heavily with every suck of Jiren’s lips or lick of his tongue. Feeling encouraged, Jiren leaned further in, taking more of the shaft past his lips, until he felt the head of Katopesla’s cock tickle the back of his throat.

“Ahh, Jiren...” Katopesla groaned, his hand gently pressing on the back of Jiren’s head “Please...
more…”

Jiren’s brows furrowed as he noticed how much more there was of Katopesla’s dick he had yet to swallow down. He’d have to take it deep into his throat if he wanted to get all of it. Perhaps he should do it all at once? Glancing up once more at the moaning policeman, Jiren removed his hand from around Katopesla’s shaft and, in one single motion, plunged his head all the way down to the base of the cock.

*That* turned out to be a mistake.

As soon as the dick passed into his throat, Jiren’s gag reflex kicked in and the grey alien choked as his throat contracted violently around the intruding length. Suddenly, he felt Katopesla’s hands on the side of his head and Jiren was quickly pulled off of the policeman’s cock. Jiren gasped for breath, drool dripping down the corners of his mouth. A thin strand of saliva connected Jiren’s lips to the tip of Katopesla’s dick.

“Jiren!” Katopesla said, voice filled with concern “Are you alright?”

Jiren looked up at the policeman and nodded “That… I was not expecting that to be so difficult.”

Katopesla sighed, one hand soothingly stroking Jiren’s head “I appreciate your enthusiasm trying to deep-throat me but *maybe* we should save that for when you’re a little bit more experienced- Jiren are you listening to me?”

Jiren was staring intently at Katopesla’s dick. This would not stand. Jiren refused to be beaten by anything, much less a penis! This was a just another challenge to overcome and he *would* conquer it! Steady his breathing, like he was about to go into meditation, Jiren shot one last look up at Katopesla’s concerned gaze.

The policeman frowned “Jiren, what are you- *oh FUCK!*

Jiren opened his mouth and dived back down onto the cock, albeit a bit more slowly this time. Jiren sank all the way down the shaft until his face was pressed against Katopesla’s pelvis, his sack resting against Jiren’s chin. When he found his throat start to contract and spasm at the intrusion, Jiren willed his body to be still. He refused to allow himself to be beaten by his own body. He *would* master this! After a moment, Jiren felt his throat relax, his body no longer trying to expel the intruding shaft. He couldn’t really breath with a cock down his throat, but Jiren wasn’t too worried, he could hold his breath for quite a while before he would start to need air. Jiren pulled back far enough that he could look up at the stunned policeman, doing his best to smirk around the cock in his mouth.

Katopesla gaped a Jiren for a moment before breaking out into a grin. “Well then, I suppose that’ll teach me to doubt you.”

“Hmm,” Jiren hummed affirmatively around the dick in his mouth, making Katopesla shudder.

The policeman gently caressed Jiren’s head “Well, whenever you’re ready-*eeeaiiiii!*”

Katopesla shrieked as Jiren took his whole cock down his throat again, holding it there a moment before starting to bob his head up and down the shaft. He looked up at the policeman every chance he got, satisfied to see Katopesla reduced to a blabbering mess. Jiren could only imagine how he looked, grey lips stretched around Katopesla’s blue shaft, spit making the cock glisten as it plunged in and out of his maw. Closing his eyes, Jiren sucked harder on the shaft and allowed himself to get lost in the motion on blowing Katopesla’s dick. The action was almost meditative, trancelike. He could feel his own heartbeat in his ears, a strong, steady rhythm. He even thought he could feel
Katopesla’s own quickened heartbeat through the blood pounding through the veins of the cock on his tongue. It was… relaxing.

Suddenly, the policeman’s fingers clenched hard around the grey alien’s head, breaking his trance. “Uhh… Jiren…” Katopesla moaned out “Jiren I’m going to…”

Jiren got the message and pulled back until only Katopesla’s glans were in his mouth, looking up at the other man’s face as he climbed to his peak. Jiren coaxed him on, suckling and licking ravenously on Katopesla’s cock. He was curious, he wanted to taste the policeman’s cum. With one final suck, Jiren felt the policeman’s cock twitch in his mouth as Katopesla cried out.

“Agh!”

Katopesla’s cock throbbed, and a thick, salty fluid flooded into Jiren’s mouth. Jiren remained on the dick, looking up at Katopesla’s face as he came undone and shot load after load of cum into Jiren’s maw. Finally, Katopesla’s orgasm subsided, and Jiren pulled off the dick. The cum was still sitting in his mouth, Jiren not entirely sure what to do with it. Was he supposed to spit it out? Swallow? It tasted like the policeman’s pre, only stronger. It wasn’t a bad taste, he concluded, but it was still odd. Katopesla was currently catching his breath, hand still resting on Jiren’s head. Jiren glanced up at the policeman and met his sapphire eyes. He made up his mind. Making sure to hold the policeman’s gaze all the while, Jiren swallowed down all Katopesla’s cum in a single gulp.

Katopesla, still trying to regain his composure, blinked at Jiren in surprise “You… you swallowed…”

Jiren wiped off his mouth on the back of his hand “I did.”

Katopesla’s legs seemed to finally give out and he slid down the wall to sit on the floor “Jiren, are you… are you sure this was your first time?” he asked.

Jiren nodded, “I am.” He frowned “Was my performance unsatisfactory?”

“‘Unsatisfactory’?” Katopesla laughed, “Jiren, you’re a natural. That was the best head I’ve ever gotten!”

Jiren cocked an eyebrow, “And exactly how many times have you ‘gotten head’?”

Katopesla hesitated for a moment “Um… maybe twice, not counting this time.” He admitted sheepishly. “B-But I meant what I said! You did fantastic!”

Jiren snorted, climbing off of his mildly aching knees and offering a hand to the policeman “Come on, lets clean up. I doubt the other Troopers would be happy to see us both with our dicks hanging out.”

Katopesla chuckled and took the hand but, when Jiren pulled him up, the policeman used the momentum to wrap his arms around the grey alien and pull him into another heated kiss. Caught off-guard, Jiren tensed for a second -no, a fraction of a second- but soon found himself sinking into the kiss, losing himself against Katopesla’s lips.

When they finally broke for air, Katopesla grinned at the grey alien “We should do this again sometime. Perhaps in a nicer place than the back of a ship?”

Jiren felt a small smile touch his lips and he leaned forward to press his forehead against Katopesla’s “I’d like that…”
No one was any the wiser that Jiren and Katopesla had had sex in the back of the ship, so thorough was their clean-up. Instead of meditating like he’d planned, Jiren spent the rest of the trip back to base just spending time with Katopesla. They didn’t really talk much, they just sat in chairs next to each other and watched the stars pass by. When they arrived back at the Pride Trooper’s HQ and reported their mission’s success, Katopesla had stated that he was going to go and take a quick shower and change out of his suit (Jiren almost offered to help with that). Instead, as it was just in time for dinner, Jiren decided to go and get something to eat, perhaps see if any of his friends were in the mess as well.

Jiren should have guessed that Zoiray would have noticed something about his demeanor.

After getting his food (“mystery meatloaf”, how delightful) Jiren found himself sitting down with Zoiray, Kunshi, Vuon, and Cocotte. “How’d the mission go?” Kunshi asked as Jiren sat next to him “Have any trouble?”

Jiren shook his head as he cut into the so-called “meatloaf”. “The bandits were numerous, but weak. It was more difficult finding them all than actually defeating them.” He noticed Zoiray eyeing him suspiciously across the table. “Is something wrong?”

The shortest Pride Trooper blinked, as if realizing he’d been staring “Oh, uh… nothing. You just look… surprisingly happy is all.”

Jiren’s brows furrowed as he plopped a piece of “meatloaf” into his mouth. He didn’t feel incredibly happy, more… content than anything else. Was that really so out of character for him?

“Did you catch the name of the group the bandits were affiliated with?” Vuon said suddenly, steering the topic back to Jiren’s recent mission. “Machina Horizon have been popping up quite a lot recently.”

Jiren thought on it for a moment before shaking his head “I did not recognize their sigil. I believe they were unaffiliated.”

Vuon sighed and looked forlornly at his food “Shame, I was hoping we’d dealt a blow to those bastards. They’re starting to become a serious problem.”

“How do you think Toppo will start to focus on them?” Kunshi asked “Or will he wait for Kahseral to get back? The General’s got a beef with them doesn’t he?”

Vuon shook his head “With how much damage those terrorists have been doing, I doubt he’ll wait. The General of all people knows that saving lives is more important than personal vendettas.” The reptile smirked “‘Sides, from what I hear, the old man’s got his hand full in U9. Knowing him he’ll probably refuse to return until he’s cleaned up the entire universe himself.”

“Horizon mostly uses bots and cyborgs don’t they?” Cocotte chimed in “Considering that’s what most of U3’s fighters were in the Tournament, I bet Katopesla would have a few ideas on how to take them on. We should ask him.”

“Toppo has likely already thought of that.” Jiren said after swallowing his food. “But I suppose it would not hurt to check.”

“Where is he anyways?” Vuon asked “You two are normally joined at the hip.”

“He said he wished to clean up and change out of his suit.” Jiren said “I suspect he will be here in a
“Holy shit!” Zoiray suddenly exclaimed, hopping up in his chair, eyes wide “You guys fucked!”

Despite the constant chatter of the mess hall in the background, the silence that fell over the table was absolute. Vuon, Cocotte, and Kunshi were all gaping at the imp in disbelief. Jiren felt his fork slip from his grasp and clatter noisily onto his plate, but couldn’t bring himself to care. If he were capable of visibly blushing, the grey alien was certain his face would be bright red right now.

Zoiray, to his credit, seemed to realize his slip-up and placed his head in his hands in shame “Aw, crap, Jiren… I’m sorry… I didn’t mean to say that out loud… I was just… I got so excited when I figured it out I just… I’m sorry.”

Awkwardly, Jiren cleared his throat. “It… it’s alright Zoiray.”

“Wait, so he’s right?” Cocotte asked “You and ‘Pesla finally did it?”

Jiren blinked and looked down at his plate “We… did something.”

“Well,” Vuon said sheepishly “I… uh… I guess congratula-”

“Wait, wait, wait, wait!” Kunshi said suddenly, ”You and ‘Pesla?” he turned to stare in disbelief at Jiren “Since when?!?

“They’ve been dating a couple weeks now, buddy.” Vuon supplied.

“And you knew?” Kunshi looked around the table, dumbfounded “You all knew?! Was I the only one who didn’t know?!”

“As usual, yeah.” Zoiray said. “Pay up.”

Kunshi glared at the imp “We made that bet only a week ago! You already knew they were together!” Regardless he reached into a pouch of his uniform and pulled out several credit chits, handing the money to the imp, who immediately handed it to Jiren.

“Think of it as… compensation for my outburst.” Zoiray explained at Jiren’s questioning look.

Recognizing that Zoiray would probably find a way to give the money to him anyways, Jiren reluctantly took the cash. “It’s… not necessary… but thank you.”

“I want details!” Cocotte said, eagerly leaning in over the table.

“I don’t!” Vuon grumbled. “Give the guys some friggen’ privacy ‘Cotte!”

“I never said I wanted explicit details!” The female Trooper shot back.

“You didn’t need to.” Vuon said, shooting her a smirk.

Cocotte held up he fingers threateningly, as if about to flick the reptilian Trooper’s snout again, making Vuon hurriedly move to shield it with his hands. Ignoring their bickering teammates, Kunshi turned back to Jiren and asked “So, you and ‘Pesla huh? I don’t think I’ve ever even heard of you dating someone before. How’s that going?”

Jiren hesitated for a moment “It is… pleasant.” He felt a small smile grace his lips “He is… a surprising man. I enjoy his company.”
Kunshi eyed him suspiciously “Who are you and what have you done with Jiren?”

Jiren’s smile was instantly gone “Am I truly behaving so oddly?”

Kunshi sighed, patting Jiren’s arm “It was a joke buddy.” He gave the grey alien a warm smile. “I’m happy for you, really.”

Jiren allowed himself another smile back at his friend “I appreciate that.”

Suddenly a familiar voice boomed out “Greetings, friends!”

“Well speak of the devil.” Zoiray said with a smirk.

Katopesla, dressed in casual clothing, approached their table with a tray of food in his hands and a radiant smile on his face. “Sorry I’m so late.” The policeman said as he sat down next to Jiren, brushing his hand against his boyfriend’s, sending a warm tingle up Jiren’s arm. “I wanted to clean up after the last mission.” He shot Jiren a warm smile which the grey alien returned before he noticed how everyone at the table was looking at him. “Is something wrong?”

“Nope.” Cocotte said with a smile, hand still raised to threaten poor Vuon’s snout “We were just talking about you is all.”

“Good things I hope?” Katopesla said, his eyes glinting in the light.

“Very.” Zoiray said, smirking.

“Hey, ‘Pesla.” Kunshi said with a grin from the other side of Jiren “Why didn’t you tell me you and Jiren were a thing? I lost a bet because of you!”

Katopesla blinked before breaking out into a grin “Oh really?” His eyes briefly shot to Jiren’s, twinkling merrily “My apologies then. I’ll be sure to keep you fully informed in the future.” His hand reached over to give Jiren’s a gentle squeeze.

“We were actually wondering ’Pesla,” Vuon said, still glaring warily at Cocotte “You’ve got some experience with robotic opponents right? Mind sharing a few tips?”

Katopesla smiled “Why, of course! What sort of robots are we talking here?”

As the conversation continued, Jiren couldn’t keep the smile off his face even if he wanted to.

...“What do you mean, ‘he’s plotting something’?” Toppo asked worriedly, frowning at the guest in his office from his spot sitting behind his desk. “That’s far too vague to be of any use.”

Universe 11’s God of Destruction, Belmod simply shrugged from his position leaning on the wall. “Sorry, that’s all Marcarita would tell me. The leader of Machina Horizon is ‘plotting something’ and that I should let you know.”

Toppo shot the angel standing quietly in the corner of the office a glare “I would like it if your warnings were a little less cryptic next time.”

Marcarita merely smiled sweetly “Now, now, you mortals need to learn how to take care of yourselves. You can’t rely on us gods and angels to do all the dirty work.”

Toppo frowned, but knew that she was telling the truth. The fact that the angel had seen fit to warn
them in the first place was something to be grateful for. “I will look into the matter. Thank you Lady Marcarita. And you as well, Lord Belmod.”

Belmod nodded and wordlessly looked out the window of Toppo’s office, yet made no move to leave. Toppo frowned, tensions had increased between the Pride Trooper’s leader and the God of Destruction ever since Toppo withdrew his candidacy for the position after the Tournament of Power, no longer feeling worthy of it. Belmod had certainly not been happy about that and made sure to make his displeasure perfectly clear, spending as little time with the Pride Troopers’ leader as possible. That he was lingering around meant there was something else on his mind.

“Is something wrong?” Toppo asked carefully.

Belmod turned to look at Toppo, the smile on his lips not quite reaching his eyes. “I hear Jiren has been getting along quite well with our guest from Universe 3.”

Toppo’s brows furrowed. This didn’t bode well. “He has. What of it?”

Belmod clearly recognized that Toppo was now on edge. “Nothing,” he said nonchalantly “I’m just concerned for his wellbeing is all.” He said carefully.

Toppo’s eyes narrowed, anger sparking just beneath the surface. “His, ‘wellbeing’?” he said incredulously.

“Don’t get me wrong,” Belmod said, straightening up off the wall “I’m happy for him, but I think you should have discouraged it.” Rage flashed behind his eyes, but Toppo bit his tongue so hard he tasted blood. The god continued “This will only end in Jiren getting hurt. Inter-universal romantic relationships are a bad idea, they never end well.”

Toppo couldn’t hold it back any longer “And what would you know?” he spat “Jiren has been happier these past few weeks than I’ve ever seen. Katopesla is good for him. I will not take that away from him!”

“And what happens when Katopesla has to go back to Universe 3?” Belmod’s words were like a bucket of water dumped on the flames of Toppo’s anger. Seeing he’d had an effect, the god pressed forward. “He won’t stay here forever. In a few months Katopesla will be returning to Universe 3 and then what will happen? Long-distance relationships are hard enough when you live in the same universe, imagine how difficult it will be for them to maintain it when they’re living in completely different universes. Sooner or later they will have to end this. The longer this goes on, the harder it will be for Jiren.”

Toppo’s shoulders sagged, as much as he was loathe to admit it, the god had a point. Still, he refused to give in “Arrangements could be made…”

“What ‘arrangements’?” Belmod challenged, walking forward “Do you think you can convince Katopesla to leave everything behind and stay in Universe 11? Or that maybe Jiren could go and live with him in Universe 3?” He stopped, standing on the other side of Toppo’s desk. “That won’t happen. Universe 3 wouldn’t be happy to lose Katopesla permanently, and Universe 11 can’t afford to lose Jiren, Toppo.”

For a second, Toppo was almost willing to admit the god was right, then he thought about the last few months, how much Jiren had grown from the aloof man he once was, how much Toppo had grown to care for his friend’s wellbeing, and in an instant, Toppo made up his mind. “Actually,” He said, getting to his feet and rising to his full height, looking down on Belmod “We can.”
Belmod’s eyes narrowed dangerously “You’d let him go?” he growled out, the façade of calm gone. “Let the strongest mortal in the universe -in all the universes- just leave? All for a relationship?!”

Toppo snarled, glaring down at the God of Destruction, his baritone voice declaring with all the authority it could muster “If that was what he desired? In a heartbeat.”

For a moment they just stared each other down. Then, after a long, heavy silence, Belmod’s anger dissipated like smoke on the wind. He smirked, and with a shrug said “Heh, maybe you were right to withdraw your candidacy after all. You’re too soft to be a God of Destruction.” Turning away, Belmod made his way over to Marcarita “I suppose there’s no need to worry about it now. For all we know, in a few months’ time they might not even be together. We can deal with this problem when it comes up.” Standing next to the angel, the god gave Toppo a little wave “I’ll be in touch.”

Just before the two vanished, Toppo’s eyes met Marcarita’s and he could have sworn he saw the smiling angel give him a knowing little wink.

…

In the days following their… activities in the ship, Jiren noticed a change come over Katopesla. While they had never tried to hide their relationship before, there had been a degree of professionalism in public that kept open displays of affection to a minimum when they weren’t alone. That was gone now. Every morning, regardless of who was around, Katopesla would greet Jiren with a kiss, every meal their hands inevitably found one another, and more than once Jiren found himself with Katopesla’s arm around his shoulders when they sat in one of the couches of the base’s lounge, watching as Kettol managed to beat Zoiray and Vuon in card game after card game (those two were both convinced Kettol was cheating but they, nor anyone else had managed to figure out how; why they hadn’t simply conceded they were no match for the amphibious alien like the rest of the Troopers had, Jiren would never know). Jiren, for his part, was still a little uneasy about initiating public displays of affection, but he’d tried his best to reciprocate.

Unfortunately, the couple never managed to find time for more… activities. There was always another mission to go on, more people to save and, increasingly, Katopesla was being called away by Toppo to advise on how to combat Machina Horizon’s latest line of warbots. The terrorist group had been stepping up development and production even more lately. It was starting to get so bad that the Troopers were running into them almost every mission. Jiren knew Toppo had been working around the clock trying to find Horizon’s base of operations, with no success. This meant that, due to his experience with robotic fighters, Katopesla was in high demand and rarely had any down time.

That was how Jiren found himself standing outside of Katopesla’s quarters the morning of their first day off in two weeks, a plan formulating in his mind. Ringing the buzzer, Jiren stepped back as the door opened and Katopesla answered it, wearing his suit sans helmet.

“Jiren?” The policeman’s initial smile soon gave way to an apologetic look. “I’m sorry, it looks like I’m going to be busy today. Toppo called me not long ago. Apparently he needs me to help him examine a new machine made by Horizon a team encountered on a mission yesterday. They’re calling it a ‘Bio-Android’.” Katopesla flashed a wry grin “So much for our day off, huh?”

Jiren already knew all of this, Toppo had already contacted him to apologize for it. Jiren had been disappointed at first, sure, but then he got an idea. “That is fine…” Jiren said “I have a few… things to take care of myself. I was… actually wondering if you would be… free later.”

Katopesla frowned. “Well, Toppo said that it would probably take all day. I most likely won’t be done until well after dinner.”
“No… I mean…” Jiren glanced away, his stomach suddenly doing flips at the thought of what he was about to ask. “I was wondering… tonight… we could… if you want…”

“Yes?” Katopesla asked, cocking an eyebrow at Jiren’s sudden flustered state.

Jiren took a deep breath to steady his nerves and, forcing himself to meet the policeman’s gaze once more, said. “Would you… like to spend the night with me?” after a second he added “In my quarters.” Idiot, like that wasn’t obvious.

“Oh…” Katopesla’s eyes widened “Oh!” cheeks turning purple, the policeman rubbed the back of his neck as he said “I… um… yes! Yes of course! I’d love to! I’ll… I’ll be there as soon as I’m free! Should I… would you like me to get anything?”

Jiren felt the tension slip from his shoulders and gave the policeman a small smile “No I… I’ll handle everything else."

Suddenly feeling particularly bold, Jiren grabbed Katopesla’s shoulders and pulled him out into the corridor, bringing their lips together. Katopesla instantly reciprocated, moaning happily into Jiren’s lips and wrapping his arms around the grey alien as the door to the policeman’s quarters automatically shut behind him. A second later, they broke apart, still wrapped in each other’s arms and grinning one another.

“‘A taste of what’s to come?’” Katopesla said eagerly, his eyes twinkling in the hallway light.

Jiren’s grin only grew “Perhaps… you’ll have to find out.”

Katopesla let out a brief chuckle “I’m looking forward to it.” Flashing him one last grin, Katopesla stepped back, turned-

“Katopesla, the door’s-"

THUD!

-And slammed face-first into the now-closed door to his quarters. “I’m fine! I’m fine!” The policeman said quickly, turning to flash Jiren another grin as he pressed the button to open the door and stepped back into his quarters “I’ll see you tonight.”

...

Jiren spent the rest of his day getting everything prepared for that evening. He’d done some research (no quotation marks here, he did actual research) on what they would need and set about acquiring the necessary items: mainly, lube and condoms. Everything he needed could be gotten from the med-bay, though Jiren had to sit through a requisite twenty minute lecture on how to properly use everything from the doctor on duty (including a rather graphic demonstration with the blandest dildo and fleshlight in the universe).

Once that was taken care of, Jiren realized with some embarrassment that he didn’t actually have any sheets or pillows on the bed. He so rarely used it that it had honestly felt unnecessary until now. He didn’t have any sitting around in his closet either. Heck, if the room hadn’t come with it, Jiren probably wouldn’t even have a bed in the first place. And if he was going to get any covers and pillows, then he’d have to visit… her.

Jiren actually shuddered and glanced over his shoulder, as if merely think thinking about that woman was enough to make her appear (and honestly, Jiren wouldn’t have been surprised if it was). There were only a few people that scared Jiren, and the Pride Trooper’s quartermaster was one of them.
Still, that was the only place on-base he could get the stuff for his bed. He’d have to swallow his apprehension and go to her.

When he arrived at the storeroom, Jiren first found it unoccupied, then a sweet little voice rang out “Why hello there, Jiren dear!”

Gulping, Jiren turned to face the object of his fears as she stepped out from behind a row of crates. The quartermaster was a short, pink-skinned alien woman in a Pride Trooper uniform who only came up to Jiren’s knees. She had curly purple hair, no nose, large saucers for eyes, and the most adorable smile in the universe. She was also absolutely terrifying.

“H-Hello there Mag…” Jiren said uneasily. “I was… I was wondering…”

“You know I had to replace another console because of you.” Mag said cheerfully, closing the distance between them and looking up at him with her big round eyes, smile never leaving her lips. “Are you here to apologize?”

Jiren flinched “Um… n-no I-Agh!”

Mag’s arm had stretched up like it was made of rubber, grabbed one of Jiren’s ear-holes and yanked, hard, pulling the grey alien down to her level. “I’m sorry, dear.” She said sweetly, lips pulling back to reveal several rows of jagged, razor-sharp teeth “I didn’t hear you. Are you here to apologize?”

Jiren cringed “I-I’m sorry for breaking the console…”

Her lips closed once more, hiding her terrifying fangs, her smile sugary sweet once more as she released Jiren’s ear. “I accept your apology dear. Now, what can I get for you?”

Straightening up and rubbing his sore ear, Jiren said “I-I require pillows and blankets for my bed. That’s all.”

“Oh?” Mag’s eyes flashed dangerously as she said gently “And what, pray tell, happened to your old ones dear?”

“N-Nothing!” Jiren said quickly, “I never had any.”

Mag blinked, but the fire behind her eyes was quenched for the moment. “Oh, and what would be the reason for you wanting them now dear?” Her eyes twinkled “It wouldn’t have anything to do with that sweet Katopesla boy I’ve heard you’ve been spending time with would it?”

“I-I… w-well…” Jiren stammered.

The small woman laughed “I see! I see! Hold a moment, dear. I’m sure we’ve got some around here somewhere.” The little quartermaster disappeared among the rows of crates once more, emerging several minutes later with a stack of blankets and pillows balanced in one hand. “Here you go, dear.” She said with a smile, handing the stack to him.

Jiren honestly couldn’t decide if Mag was scarier angry or happy, and he didn’t stick around to find out. Carrying the blankets and pillows in his arms, Jiren quickly thanked the terrifying little woman and rushed back to his quarters. With that traumatizing ordeal over with, Jiren allowed himself a moment to catch his breath after he made the bed. He still had a few more hours until Katopesla would be free to come meet him, he should probably get some dinner and clean himself up before that happened. It was rather early for dinner when he went to the mess hall, so none of his friends were around. Jiren quickly ate his food and went back to his quarters, not really in the mood to talk to anyone. As his rendezvous with Katopesla drew nearer, Jiren found himself getting more and
more nervous. What if he screwed this up? What if he didn’t do enough to prepare? What if one of them got hurt? What if-

Jiren shook his head, forcing those thoughts away. He could worry later, he still had more to do to get ready. Stripping out of his uniform, Jiren got into his private shower and began to clean himself, paying particular attention to… certain parts of his anatomy. Jiren had looked up how to properly and fully clean himself out, but he hadn’t anticipated just how weird it would feel, nor how long it would take. Still, he managed to get it done, and was drying himself off with his towel when he heard the buzzer for his door beep.

Jiren frowned and quickly checked the time, Toppo had told him that Katopesla likely wouldn’t be free for at least another hour. Who could that be? Wrapping the towel around his waist, Jiren went to the door and pressed the button to open it, revealing Vuon on the other side.

“Hey Jiren we were-” Vuon stopped as he took in the grey alien’s appearance: water still dripping off his skin and wearing only a towel. “Oh…” Vuon said dumbly, blinking “I’m sorry, did I interrupt your shower?”

Jiren shook his head “I just got out. Did you need something?”

Vuon rubbed the back of his head “No, no. It’s just… we haven’t really seen you all day and word is you’ve been running around the base doing something so the guys and I were just wondering if anything was wrong.”

“Ah,” Jiren said, suddenly feeling sheepish, he’d been so caught up in preparing for Katopesla he’d completely forgotten about his friends. He hadn’t even bothered to give them an explanation for why he was so busy. “Apologies, I’ve been…occupied.”

Vuon raised his eyebrows “Doing what?” His eyes slid passed Jiren into the room “Oh hey, you finally got sheets on your bed! Ol’ Mag didn’t give you too much trouble did she?”

Jiren winced “She…”

“Say no more.” Vuon said sympathetically “So what made you decide to get blankets finally? I thought you didn’t use your bed.”

Jiren glanced over his shoulder at the mattress and suddenly, to his horror, he realized he’d left the lube and condom out on the nightstand. Thankfully, it looked like Vuon hadn’t seen it yet, but to be sure, Jiren shifted himself in the doorway, blocking it from the reptile’s sight. “I… just felt like it…” he said lamely.

Vuon’s brows furrowed “You ‘felt like it’?”

Jiren nodded “That’s right.”

Vuon frowned “Jiren, we’re friends. You can be honest with me.”

Jiren looked away, sufficiently chastised “I… invited Katopesla to spend the night with me.”

“Huh, neat.” Vuon said, not even missing a beat “And is this also why you’ve been running around all day?” Jiren nodded and Vuon chuckled “You know you could have asked for our help right? It would hardly be the first time after all.”

Jiren frowned and shot the reptile a glare “I didn’t want you to spy on us again.”
Vuon winced “Okay, fair enough.” Leaning against the doorway, he asked “So, did you find some good mood music?”

Jiren blinked “Mood… music?”

Vuon cocked an eyebrow “That’s a ‘no’ then.” He sighed “Well have you at least planned out a good atmosphere? Scented candles, dimmed lights, that sort of thing?”

Jiren cringed; shit, he’d forgotten about that. “I… um… no.”

Vuon shot him a concerned look “Yikes. How long do you have until ‘Pesla gets here?”

“Another hour at least.” Jiren admitted.

“No time to go out and get the scented candles then.” Vuon noted, tapping a finger on his chin “Okay, you get changed. I’ll be back in a minute with some music you can put on when he gets here.”

Jiren blinked, taken aback, then narrowed his eyes suspiciously “Are you planning on spying on us?”

Vuon snorted “Please, I’m not ‘Cotte. I have some boundaries. Besides,” he cracked a grin “neither of you is particularly my type.”

Jiren studied the reptilian Trooper for a moment then nodded “Understood, go and get that music.”

Vuon did just that, returning only a few minutes later with a small chit he scanned into the sound system built into Jiren’s room. He showed Jiren how to play the music: a soft, slow, thrumming beat that Jiren could feel in his bones, how to set it on loop, and even took the liberty of dimming the lights for him. Once that was done, the reptile was off, wishing Jiren luck and leaving the grey alien to finish his preparations. Barely an hour later, the buzzer for Jiren’s door beeped once again. Taking a moment to make sure everything was in place, Jiren turned on the music and opened the door. Katopesla was standing on the other side this time, still wearing his suit, helmet tucked under his arm. “Um… hi…” Katopesla said, a small grin “Sorry I didn’t change. I was…” he sheepishly rubbed the back of his neck “I couldn’t really wait.” He took in Jiren’s attire. “You look good.”

Jiren smiled, he was wearing the same outfit he’d worn on their first date. Holding out a hand, Jiren said “Would you like to come in?”

Katopesla smiled back and took Jiren’s hand, stepping into the room. The door had barely shut when Jiren pulled Katopesla into a quick, but heated kiss. When they broke apart, Katopesla muttered against Jiren’s lips “I’ve been looking forward to this all day.”

Jiren smiled, now that Katopesla was here, in his arms, all of the grey alien’s nerves had faded away, replaced by delightful anticipation. “So have I.”

Katopesla briefly stepped back to set his helmet down, then he was upon Jiren again, lips hungrily against Jiren’s while his hands unbuttoned Jiren’s shirt. Jiren wrapped his arms around Katopesla, feeling for the hidden zipper on the back of his suit, tilting his head back as Katopesla’s lips moved from Jiren’s mouth, to his jaw, to his neck, and finally Jiren’s shoulders as the policeman pushed the grey alien’s shirt off of him. Before too long, Jiren’s clothes and Katopesla’s suit were lying on the floor, and the couple had moved to the foot of Jiren’s bed, hands groping everywhere and lips hungrily devouring each other. With a gentle shove, Jiren allowed Katopesla to push him onto the bed, allowing the policeman to finally behold Jiren in all of his naked glory.
For a moment, Katopesla just gazed at Jiren, his eyes flicking hungrily all over his grey muscles. “I’m the luckiest man alive…” Katopesla breathed.

Jiren felt heat rise to his cheeks, he knew his physique was impressive, but it still felt odd to be complimented on it. It was never something he’d actually strived for, merely a byproduct of his quest to grow stronger. “Um… thanks?”

Katopesla chuckled and climbed onto the bed, straddling Jiren’s waist. “Don’t mention it.”

Jiren’s eyes wandered over Katopesla’s blue form admiringly, the policeman was certainly pleasing to look at, his bulging muscles glinting in the dim light, his normally neat white-gold hair a mess from where Jiren’s hands had run through it. Reaching up, Jiren pulled Katopesla down to him, rejoining their lips once more. Katopesla moaned and grasped Jiren’s head, gently tilting it so that his tongue could have a better angle as it plunged into the grey alien’s mouth. Jiren wrapped his arms around the policeman and held him close. Jiren could feel their erections rubbing against each other, and he rocked his hips up, eliciting a pleased groan from Katopesla. In response, the policeman ground his hips back against Jiren’s, drawing out a gasp from the grey alien as their erection’s slid together.

Jiren was lost, engulfed in the pleasant bliss of his boyfriend’s embrace. He never wanted it to end, but stifled his needy whimper as he felt Katopesla pull back. Opening his eyes, Jiren saw Katopesla gazing down at him, a gleam in his eyes that set Jiren’s heart ablaze. “So,” Katopesla said “How do you want to do this?”

Ah, right. Jiren indicated for Katopesla to roll off of him and got up, going over to the night stand and grabbing the lube and a condom. Sitting back down on the bed, Jiren handed the items to Katopesla “Because of my… inexperience, I think it would be best if you were in charge tonight.”

Katopesla smiled as he took the lube and condom “Want me to show you how it’s done eh? Alright, I’ll need you to get on your hands and knees for me.”

Jiren nodded, rolling over as directed. “I cleaned myself out already.” He said. “You’re good to go.”

Katopesla gave a light pat to Jiren’s buttocks, saying with a chuckle. “You really did handle everything. I suppose it’s only fair that I take care of the rest.” Staring at the headboard of the bed, Jiren heard the sound of Katopesla uncapping the bottle of lube and squirting some onto his hand. “I’ll need to loosen you up first.” Katopesla said. “Otherwise this will hurt.”

Jiren nodded and gasped when he felt one of Katopesla’s fingers slide into his asshole, slick with lube. Jiren looked over his shoulder and watched as the policeman worked the lube into his ass, first using only one finger, then shifting to two. At one point, the pads of Katopesla’s fingers rubbed up against something very sensitive, and Jiren cried out in surprise, his leaking cock twitching in the air.

Katopesla blinked at Jiren’s reaction before breaking out into a sly grin. “Well, well, well…” He purred “It seems somebody’s sensitive…”

Jiren shivered as he felt Katopesla’s fingers seek out that spot once more. Now that he knew where to aim, Katopesla became far more ruthless, relentlessly teasing Jiren’s prostate as often as he could. Before long, Jiren was panting, his body quivering from the stimulation. It was strange and wonderful and intense all at the same time. He’d never known that such pleasure existed. Jiren grabbed a pillow and bit into it to stifle his moans.

After a few more minutes, Katopesla’s fingers withdrew, and Jiren heard the sound of the condom packet being opened. Glancing back over his shoulder, he saw Katopesla roll the condom onto his
cock and positioned himself behind Jiren, one hand on the grey alien’s hips, and the other on the policeman’s cock to guide it. Looking up to meet Jiren’s gaze, Katopesla said “Are you ready? I’ll take this slow, but let me know the second you start to feel discomfort.”

Jiren nodded, and then Katopesla pressed the tip of his dick against Jiren’s entrance. Jiren whimpered as he felt the ring of his asshole slowly expand around the invading cock. The lube was helping, but Jiren realized that he had never taken into account Katopesla’s girth. Would he actually be able to fit the policeman’s cock inside of him? Jiren had his answer only a few seconds later as he felt the ring of his anus fully swell the policeman’s glans.

Jiren groaned and buried his face in the pillow as Katopesla stopped pushing in. “How are you doing?” Jiren mumbled into the pillow. “What?” Katopesla asked

“More.” Jiren begged, lifting his face out of the pillow. “Please.”

Katopesla chuckled “With pleasure.”

The policeman resumed slowly and steadily pushing his cock further and further into Jiren, making the grey alien bury his face in the pillow once more to hide his moans. It felt so big. It hadn’t looked this big when he’d blown Katopesla, so why did it feel like it? It felt like his ass was stretched to the breaking point, his insides filled to bursting. It couldn’t possibly go any deeper, yet it did. There was a little bit of pain, but nothing he couldn’t handle, and it was mostly drowned out by the- oh. Jiren whimpered as he felt the head of Katopesla’s cock slide over his prostate, sending another bolt of pleasure rocketing up his spine and back down to his cock. Katopesla, the bastard, clearly noticed Jiren’s reaction, and rubbed his cockhead over that spot again, making Jiren’s limbs tremble. Mercifully, Katopesla didn’t continue to tease Jiren, and instead resumed pressing his shaft deeper inside the grey alien’s ass. After what felt like an eternity, Katopesla finally came to a halt.

“Is it all in?” Jiren asked, looking over his shoulder at the policeman.

“Yeah,” Katopesla leaned down and pressed his chest against Jiren’s back, the grey alien could feel the policeman’s breath against his ears as he asked “Are you alright?”

Jiren nodded “It feels… strange. But… not bad.” He felt so full, but the constant press of Katopesla’s shaft against his prostate was sending lightning arcing through his nerves. Jiren was growing to like this.

Katopesla smiled and placed a kiss on Jiren’s shoulder “I’m going to start moving now, is that okay?”

Jiren nodded “Y-yes… please.”

Slowly, Katopesla pulled his cock partly out of Jiren’s ass, only to slide it back in once more, then back out, then in, then out, then in, on and on, at a slow, steady rhythm. Jiren closed his eyes and allowed himself to slip away, leaving only the feeling of Katopesla’s cock pumping in and out his ass, every pass over his prostate blasting pleasure throughout his body. Jiren’s head fell on the pillow and he moaned, begging for more as Katopesla’s pace gradually increased.

“Fuck, Jiren you were made for this!” Katopesla gasped out, arms wrapping tightly around the grey alien’s chest.

Jiren could only whimper in response, too lost in his own pleasure to form a coherent sentence. For a long time, the only sounds in the room were the faint beat of the music, their gasps and moans of pleasure, and the smacking of flesh against flesh. It was like a hazy dream that Jiren never wanted to
end. It felt too good to be true, yet it was.

Suddenly, Katopesla was pulling completely out of Jiren’s ass. When he’d look back on this later, Jiren would realize with no small amount of embarrassment that the whine he’d made at the sudden emptiness inside him was rather undignified. At the time however, he didn’t care, he was already missing the feeling of Katopesla’s dick in his ass and was about to demand why the policeman had stopped when Jiren suddenly was flipped over onto his back, his legs were spread wide, and Katopesla’s cock was inside of him once again.

“S-sorry…” Katopesla gasped out, his face streaked with sweat “I just… I want to see your face…”

Jiren moaned at more than just the pleasure and his head fell back against the pillow while his legs hooked around the policeman’s waist, urging him to start moving again while his hand strayed down to his cock.

“Oh no you don’t.” Grabbing Jiren’s hands, Katopesla laced their fingers together and pulled them away from Jiren’s groin, pinning their hands above Jiren’s head.

Jiren gaped up at Katopesla as the policeman loomed over him, a sly grin on his lips. “W-What are you doing?” Jiren asked, an excited chill running up his spine at this new side of the other man.

“I’ve been thinking…” Katopesla said, leaning down until his face was inches from Jiren’s “Considering how sensitive you are…” he punctuated that by pumping a well-aimed stroke inside Jiren, striking his prostate and making the grey alien tremble “I wonder if you’ll be able to come from my cock alone.” He grinned “Would you like to find out?”

Jiren merely stared up into Katopesla’s sapphire eyes for a moment. It would be child’s play break the other man’s grip on him, but Jiren felt something stirring inside his gut, his mind flashing back to the time Katopesla had pinned him in the sparring ring, all those months ago. He wanted this… badly. “K-Katopesla…” Jiren breathed “I… please…”

The policeman’s grin grew and he leaned down to whisper in Jiren’s ear. “‘Please’ what? Tell me what you want, Jiren.”

Supreme Kai above he was going to make him say it wasn’t he? Gulping, Jiren stammered out “I-I want you to m-make me c-come with your cock. I-I need it… Please…”

Pulling back to gaze warmly into Jiren’s eyes, Katopesla whispered “Anything for you.” Then his lips were on Jiren’s, tongue plunging into the grey alien’s mouth, and the policeman started to move his hips once again.

Jiren moaned desperately into Katopesla’s mouth, his already leaking cock twitching with every thrust. He started rocking his hips in time with Katopesla’s, the two of them soon finding a stable rhythm. His hands clenched around the policeman’s, their tongues dancing together. It didn’t take long for Jiren to lose himself to the pleasure once more. Everything faded away except for him and Katopesla, they were the only two beings in the universe, together as one. He could sense Katopesla’s ki, how radiant it was, and allowed himself to bask in the glow. All too soon, Jiren found himself reaching the peak of his crescendo, and allowed himself to topple over the edge.

“Agh!” Jiren cried out against Katopesla’s lips.

His back arced. His muscles spasmed. Pleasure blazed out from his core and his cock throbbed in the air, shooting spurt after spurt of cum onto Jiren’s chest. Apparently, this was enough to send Katopesla over the edge too, the policeman shuddered, and Jiren felt the other man’s cock twitching
inside his ass as he came. Katopesla collapsed on top of Jiren when the last remnants of his orgasm faded away.

For a moment, neither of them moved, still too busy catching their breath. The scent of sex permeated the air, they were both slicked with sweat, and Jiren’s ass was aching mightily. Katopesla was the first one to finally move. The policeman gently extracted himself from Jiren’s ass and rolled off of the grey alien, breathing heavily.

“So,” Katopesla said casually “how are you feeling?”

Jiren sluggishly turned his head to look at his boyfriend “My ass is a little sore.”

Katopesla winced “Sorry, I guess I should have been a bit more gentle.”

Jiren shook his head “No, I… I liked it.”

Katopesla smiled, “Well, that’s good to hear.”

When they felt like moving again, Jiren and Katopesla cleaned themselves off with tissues Jiren had placed on the nightstand. Katopesla tossed away the used condom and Jiren turned off the music and picked the lube bottle up from where it had rolled off the bed and landed on the floor (no spillage thankfully) and returned it to the nightstand. Once they were finished, Katopesla started to grab his suit.

“What are you doing?” Jiren asked, still lying on the bed.

Katopesla hesitated “I… wasn’t sure if you wanted me to stay.”

Jiren cocked an eyebrow “I specifically asked you to spend the night with me, didn’t I?”

Katopesla’s shoulders sagged in relief and he dropped the suit, climbing onto the bed and curling up next to Jiren. “To be honest I don’t think I’d have had the energy to get back to my quarters anyways.”

Jiren wrapped an arm around Katopesla, pulling the policeman against him. “I agree.”

Katopesla rested his head in the crook of Jiren’s neck, sighing contentedly. “I think I’m just going to pass out now, okay?”

Jiren chucked and held his boyfriend closer. He managed to get both him and Katopesla beneath the covers, and contented himself to watch as the policeman’s breathing slowed. The hard angles of Katopesla’s face seemed so much softer when he was sleeping. Jiren felt warmth blossom within his chest and allowed himself the pleasure of observing as Katopesla slept away. Jiren wasn’t sure how much time had passed, but he became so enraptured in watching Katopesla, he was completely unawares when he too started to drift off into slumber.

…

Pathetic. Weak. Worthless. FAILURE!

“Jiren!”

The grey alien’s eyes shot open, frantically looking around, taking in his environment. He was in his quarters in the Pride Troopers’ base, not the bloody field of his memories. He was a grown man, not a powerless child. The voice that had called out to him wasn’t the monster who’d taken everything
from him, it was Katopes- wait, Katopesla? Jiren blinked in confusion at the policeman, memories of the previous night finally returning to him. Ah, that was why he was here. Jiren noticed the concerned look the policeman was giving him and felt shame build up within his chest.

“A-Apologies…” he stammered, quickly disentangling himself from Katopesla and sitting up with his back to the other man, too ashamed to look at him. “I did not mean to wake you.”

He jumped when he felt Katopesla’s arms wrap around him “Jiren…” Katopesla said softly, pressing himself against Jiren’s back. “I know about the nightmares, remember? You don’t have to hide from me.”

“It… it was just a bad dream.” Jiren said “You don’t… you don’t need to worry.”

There was a brief moment of silence, then Katopesla said “You know, my sister has a saying she likes to use on me: ‘Telling me not to worry is only going to make me worry more.’ Talk to me Jiren.”

With a sigh, Jiren turned to face Katopesla, forcing himself to meet those worried sapphire eyes. “It… it was the death of my master…” Bile welled up in the back of his throat and Jiren looked down “I’m pathetic…”

“No.” Katopesla’s voice was firm, making Jiren look up and meet his gaze. “You’re not invincible, Jiren. You’re allowed to be vulnerable sometimes.” Katopesla pressed his forehead against Jiren’s “You’re allowed to be vulnerable with me.”

There was a brief silence, then, Jiren released a choked sob, and wrapped his arms around Katopesla, burying his head into the policeman’s neck. Katopesla merely held him, his voice soothing and kind, and for the first time in decades, Jiren allowed himself a moment to truly grieve.

…

Jiren wasn’t entirely sure exactly when he and Katopesla had started sharing Jiren’s quarters. After that first night, Katopesla started to spend more and more nights with Jiren, and at some point they had just moved all of Katopesla’s stuff to Jiren’s (well, he supposed it was no longer ‘his’ but ‘their’) room. Living together, of course, provided more opportunities for sex, Jiren even took a turn or two topping. He remembered how he’d pressed Katopesla down into the mattress with his body, his shaft slowly burrowing deeper inside of the other man. He’d been so worried he was going to break the policeman, but it was worth it to see Katopesla come undone beneath him. Still, Jiren liked bottoming more, and told Katopesla as much, to the policeman’s inexplicable amusement. Jiren still preferred meditating to sleeping, but he was starting to not fear the nightmares as much as he once did.

Meanwhile, Toppo had started to focus the Pride Troopers’ resources on finding Machina Horizon’s base of operations. The terrorists had grown even more aggressive, attacking major population centers and not just the more isolated worlds. They had even been so bold as to attack one of the Pride Troopers’ bases, killing a number of good men and women. That turned out to be a fatal mistake. Before, the Pride Troopers had been pursuing Machina Horizon out of a desire to protect the innocent and see justice done. Now the Troopers were also pursuing them out of a desire for revenge. Their own had been attacked, had been killed, and the Pride Troopers did not take such things lightly. Every available Trooper in the galaxy dropped what they were doing to hunt the terrorists down. With that sort of manpower, it was only a matter of time until their hiding place was found.

Jiren, Katopesla, Kettol, Cocotte, Zoiray, Kunshi, and Vuon were called to the briefing room. Jiren
sat between Katopesla and Vuon as, at the front of the room, Toppo went over the mission plan. “Machina Horizon has hidden themselves on the world of Bellbar.” The large alien said, an image of a small habitable planet covered half by a single, massive continent and half by an ocean the color of rust. “Our sources tell us that their base is hidden in what the locals call the Badlands, here.” The image zoomed in on the desert that dominated the continent, focusing on a large crevasse. “The seven of you will be our strike force, you are to clear a path through Horizon’s forces and breach the facility.” Toppo looked to each person present, “Once inside, your objective is twofold: recover any information you can from Horizon’s database, and if possible, capture the leader of Machina Horizon.” Toppo gestured to the screen where the image changed to show a skeletal, lithe, draconic robot with glowing red eyes and several matching cords running throughout his body “Zero.” Toppo’s expression turned grim “Be very careful, our reports indicate that he is extremely dangerous, far stronger than most of you.” The giant alien’s eyes fell on Jiren “Most, but not all.”

Jiren nodded, understanding perfectly: capturing Zero would be his job.

“Will we have backup?” Kunshi asked.

Toppo paused “Horizon has demonstrated that they are capable of moving very quickly if they believe they have been compromised. A larger force would be spotted before they could get close to the base. As such, you will be our only forces on the planet. However, I will be commanding another force on a ship hidden behind Bellbar’s moon. Should you require aid, simply send a signal, and we will move in to assist.”

“So we’re on our own basically.” Zoiray said.

“You shouldn’t encounter anything you cannot handle.” Toppo said “Machina Horizon is dangerous, but the seven of you are more than enough to wipe them out.”

Vuon smirked “You mean, Jiren is more than enough to wipe them out. He could probably just blow the whole place up and call it a day.”

“And if he did we’d lose any intel we could have gathered.” Cocotte shot at the reptile.

Vuon shrugged “Hey, I wasn’t suggesting it, I was just pointing it out is all.”

“When will we leave?” Katopesla asked, stepping in before the two Troopers started bickering again.

“In an hour.” Toppo said, looking out over the assembled team “Gather your equipment and head towards the hanger. Are there any questions?” No one said anything. “Then you are dismissed.”

Jiren studied the entrance to Machina Horizon’s base from his hiding spot. It was built into the canyon wall and well camouflaged, had he not known what to look for he might have missed it. There weren’t even any guards visible, though Jiren doubted that meant they weren’t there. This wasn’t the only entrance either, all throughout the crevasse there were doors leading into the base.

“Is everyone in position?” Zoiray’s hushed voice said over Jiren’s com. They had split up to cover the different entrances, Zoiray with Kettol, Kunshi with Katopesla, and Cocotte with Vuon; Jiren would be alone.

“Affirmative.” Jiren said.

“Team B is ready.” Vuon said over the com.
“We’re not calling ourselves that.” Cocotte muttered.

“Kunshi and I are also in position.”

Katopesla’s voice in Jiren’s ear made his heartbeat quicken. He hadn’t been entirely pleased with the fact that he wouldn’t be there to look out for the policeman, but Jiren understood the logic behind it. By splitting up into teams they would be able to cover more ground, and Jiren was the only one who didn’t need any backup. It made sense, but that didn’t mean Jiren was happy about it.

“Right then,” Zoiray said over the com. “Let’s show these fuckers what happens when you attack the Pride Troopers.”

Jiren allowed himself a small grin, and in a flash he was in front of the door. The concealed sentry turrets around the door flared to life, but before they could open fire, Jiren unleashed a strong ki explosion around himself, destroying not only the turrets, but the door itself. Distantly, he could hear several other explosions, most likely his teammates beginning their assaults as well. The battle had begun. Still grinning, Jiren strolled through the ruined doorway and into the base.

It was not long until he ran into his first opponents. Rushing at him down the narrow hallway were several large warbots possessing considerable firepower in the form of laser cannon arms. Not even slowing his advance, Jiren raised a hand. Just as the warbot in front was about to open fire on him with its cannon, Jiren shot a single ki blast that tore through the machine and all the others behind it, destroying them instantly. The remnants of the once fearsome warbots crashed into the walls of the hallway, and Jiren proceeded uninhibited.

Every other encounter went similarly. Be they cyborg or robot, one or one hundred, Jiren tore through them all as if they were little more than dust in the wind. He proceeded through the base without any difficulty, and from the sound of things, it looked like the others were having similar ease. Jiren might have wondered if it was a little too easy, but he was used to being able to crush most his enemies pathetically quickly. To be honest, he was almost disappointed. That was a mistake.

Jiren entered what looked like a deserted factory floor. There were conveyer belts filled with spare parts and half-finished machines, likely abandoned the moment the Pride Trooper’s assault began. Jiren looked around, their intel had told them that the factory was the center of the facility, in all likelihood the others would be here soon to meet up with him, then they would proceed to the data center and the control room, and with any luck they would encounter Zero along the way. Everything was going according to plan, and yet…

Jiren frowned, something was wrong. He hadn’t encountered anyone defending the factory. Why was that? Surely their means of production was important to Machina Horizon. Why leave it unprotected? Jiren walked over to a conveyer belt, his eyes catching sight of something. Kneeling down, he ran a finger over one of the conveyer belt’s feet. There was no dust, not even a little bit. Was it was placed here recently? Jiren glanced around; all of the conveyer belts were dust-free. Did that mean-

**Hssssss…**

Jiren tensed, getting to his feet. That sounded like gas. Suddenly, he felt a tickle in his throat, and coughed. His skin was prickling, his lungs were starting to burn. It was then he saw it, a small nozzle attached to the wall, a faint, almost invisible yellow gas was spilling out of it and rapidly flooding the room.
Jiren’s hear stopped, and in an instant he activated his com and screamed. “IT’S A TR-” his voice caught in his throat and he coughed violently.

“Jiren?” Katopesla’s worried voice came over the com. “Jiren, what’s wrong?!”

Still coughing, Jiren said into the com “A trap… some kind of… gas…” he doubled over, his nerves on fire. Pushing through the pain, Jiren quickly fired a ki blast at the nozzle, destroying it, though he doubted it would make much of difference for him. The room was now completely filed with the toxic gas, with every breath, Jiren was inhaling the stuff. He tried holding his breath, but his diaphragm was spasming, he couldn’t keep it up. He was weakening.

Collapsing to his hands and knees, Jiren tried contacting Katopesla and the others again; but a bolt of energy suddenly blasted out from the shadows and struck his ear, destroying his com. Jiren turned his head towards the blast had come from, but his vision was starting to blur, and he couldn’t focus enough to try sensing energy. Everything hurt, his lungs, his limbs, his head, his very veins, all of it was consumed in a blazing inferno of pain. Jiren felt his arms tremble before finally giving out and he fell face first to the cold, concrete floor.

For a moment he lay there, unable to move through the pain, then a sharp, mechanical voice echoed throughout the factory. “How curious, that neurotoxin would have been enough to kill an ordinary man a thousand times over.” Out of the shadows stepped a sinister form. Jiren recognized him from the briefing. “Though, I suppose you’re not exactly… illustrious, are you Jiren?” his facsimile of a mouth formed a cruel grin, barring jagged metal fangs.

“Z-Zero.” Jiren growled out between coughing fits.

The ringleader of Machina Horizon bowed with a flourish “The one and only. I must say, it’s an honor to finally meet the illustrious Jiren the Grey, the mortal stronger than even the gods themselves.”

Jiren growled “You knew we were coming.”

“I did.” Zero admitted, “How do you think your pathetic Troopers found me in the first place? I allowed it to happen, all to lure you into a trap.” His sadistic grin grew “Of course, I never expected to catch such an… illustrious fly in my web.”

“This poison will not stop me!” Jiren snarled out, trying to will his arms to move.

“Toxin, Jiren, there’s a difference, and it seems to be doing a good enough job so far.” Zero chuckled. There was a loud explosion in the distance, causing Zero to tilt his head to the side. “My, my, I think I hear your friends.”

Jiren’s blood froze. They hadn’t listened to his warning… they were coming to find him… But if the others came here, then the toxin would… Katopesla would…

No.

Jiren unleashed a furious roar, his red aura flaring to life around him. With the last of his strength, Jiren rolled onto his back, raised his hand, and fired off a single, powerful ki blast into the ceiling… Nothing happened.

“What was that supposed to do?” Zero asked, staring in confusion at the spot where Jiren’s ki blast had hit the ceiling. “That was supposed to do something, right?”

Jiren grinned “Yes.”
Suddenly red cracks began to form along the ceiling, and then the entire room was engulfed in red light. With a calamitous BOOM, the ceiling, and all of the rock above it, exploded upwards and outwards, creating a gaping hole with a clear view of Bellbar’s orange sky. Fires ignited from the explosion, and the heat caused the gas to begin to rise and disperse into the atmosphere.

“I see,” Zero said, sounding oddly calm. “Clever, but that won’t save you, the toxin has already flooded your body. Until it clears out you’re completely helpless.”

Jiren let out a chuckle that morphed into a hacking cough. “That’s fine… the others will defeat you.”

Zero cocked his head to the side “Oh?” with a foot, Zero rolled Jiren back over onto his front, and pushed his head into the concrete “I don’t think I have anything to worry about. With the strongest Pride Trooper out of the way, the rest will fall easily.”

“Don’t… underestimate them…” Jiren growled into the floor “The Pride Troopers… are stronger than you know…”

“JIREN!”

Jiren’s heart stopped. No, not yet. He felt Zero’s foot lift off his head, and Jiren looked up, seeing Katopesla standing alone in one of the doors to the factory, his suit’s purple highlights indicating that he was in his Ultimate mode.

“Oh, it’s the intern.” Zero scoffed “And here I thought I was going to have a challenge.”

“Katopesla…” Jiren gasped out “The toxin…”

The policeman shook his head “My helmet protects me from such things Jiren.”

Of course. In his panic, he’d forgotten Katopesla’s helmet was air-tight. The policeman had nothing to fear from the remaining gas. That must also be why the others weren’t with him.

Katopesla stepped into the room, eyes angrily fixated on the robotic ringleader beneath his helmet. “You there! You are the one called ‘Zero’ correct?”

“I am.” This time, Zero made no move to bow “And you’re the oafish traffic cop from Universe 3 aren’t you?”

Katopesla did not answer that, instead he angrily growled “Step away from my partner.”

Zero tilted his head to the side, placing his foot back on Jiren’s head, resuming pushing his face into the floor. “And why should I do that?”

For a moment, Katopesla remained still, then, in a flash, he was gone, only to reappear a moment later behind the robotic ringleader, fist flying towards the robot’s head. Zero was quick to react, he instantly used Jiren as a springboard and backflipped away, avoiding Katopesla’s strike and landing on top of a conveyor belt.

Instead of pursuing, Katopesla, kneeled down and placed his hand over Jiren’s. “I’ll handle this, don’t worry.”

Jiren turned his head and met Katopesla’s eyes through his visor. Before he could say, anything, however, Zero was there, a kick striking Katopesla’s chest and sending the policeman flying. “Don’t lower your guard around me traffic cop.” The machine hissed as he stood over Jiren. “I’m no jaywalker.”
Katopesla got to his feet “Don’t you know it’s rude to interrupt someone when they’re having a moment?” he got into a fighting pose “It seems I must teach you some manners.”

For a moment, Zero said nothing, then “Was that supposed to be clever?”


Zero let out a dark chuckle and spread his arms wide “Try and make me.”

In an instant, Katopesla was on the robotic ringleader once more. The air shook from the collision of their fists, blowing away the gathering smoke from the fires. They began to battle across the factory floor. Katopesla’s strikes were a blur, but Zero was just as fast, blocking or dodging every single attack. Jiren couldn’t get a great view of the fight from where he was, but he could sense Katopesla’s energy. The policeman was giving it everything he had, but it wasn’t enough. Zero was just too strong, and all Jiren could do was furiously curse his own helplessness.

Zero lashed out with a claw, slashing into Katopesla’s suit. The policeman winced but countered with an uppercut. Zero merely spun away from the strike, using the momentum to send a kick straight into the side of Katopesla’s head, sending the policeman flying once more.

“That was a nice effort, but ultimately futile. You see intern, your strength comes solely from your suit, mine is built into my very being.” Zero said as he marched towards Katopesla’s prone form. “You cannot win against me.”

Katopesla struggled to his feet. Jiren could see that his visor had been cracked rather badly. Fortunately, it looked like the last of the toxic gas was finally gone, but that was the least of Katopesla’s worries. The purple highlights of his suit had faded back to blue. Katopesla was no longer in his Ultimate Mode. Katopesla lifted his damaged helmet off his head and tossed it aside. His face was streaked with sweat, his white-gold hair a complete mess, but his sapphire eyes blazed like the fires surrounding them.

Zero sneered “Still think you can win? Cute, but without the power of your suit you’re nothi- what are you doing?”

Katopesla was laughing.

“I’m afraid you have it quite backwards, friend.” Katopesla shook his head. “My suit doesn’t enhance my power.” That wondrous, brilliant, beautiful, blinding grin was on Katopesla’s lips as he said “It limits it.”

Zero tilted his head to the side. “What do you mean it ‘limits’ your pow-”

“Mode change: Final Terminus!”

The highlights of Katopesla’s suit glowed brilliantly for a moment, then, with a blinding flash, the light faded. The highlights of Katopesla’s suit had gone black and a large black T was placed on the center of his chest. Katopesla’s eyes gleamed with a dark fire, and he slowly approached Zero. “This is my full power.”

Zero paused for a moment, likely processing this new development. “Intriguing, but why limit yourself I wonder?” The red of Zero’s eyes seemed to glow brighter “Could it perhaps be that there is a drawback to this power?”

“There is.” Katopesla admitted, shifting into a fighting stance “But you’ll be scrap before I have to
worry about it.”

Tilting his head to the side, Zero raised a hand and fired out an bolt of energy from his fingertip. Katopesla wasn’t there when the bolt landed. Snarling, Zero adjusted his aim and fired again, and again he missed. With a growl, Zero raised both hands, firing wildly at Katopesla. The policeman charged at the robotic ringmaster, dodging every single bolt aimed at him. In an instant, the distance between them had been closed and Katopesla lashed out with a punch. The strike hit Zero square in the jaw, sending the robot flying into the wall.

Katopesla didn’t give his opponent time to recover, rushing after him and lashing out with a kick. Zero just barely managed to dodge in time, Katopesla’s foot punching a hole in the concrete beside his head. The robot lashed out with a punch, only for Katopesla to dodge away from the blow and strike Zero’s side. Forcing Katopesla back with a close-range blast, Zero used the wall as a staging point and jumped over Katopesla’s head, landing on a conveyer belt. Katopesla instantly followed him, leading up onto the belt and launching into another string of punches and kicks. Zero managed to block some of them, but for every strike he managed to defend against, another two hit their mark. The metal of Zero’s body was starting to become warped from the force of Katopesla’s blows, and soon the robotic ringleader was forced to retreat again.

Jiren watched their battle, finding a strange feeling welling up in his chest. He’d had no idea Katopesla was holding such power within him, unlike his other modes, not once had the policeman ever boasted about it. He followed Katopesla’s movements, the policeman had leaped so far ahead of Zero that Jiren had no doubt his partner would be victorious.

Katopesla ducked beneath another strike by the robotic ringmaster, and lashed upwards with a kick that sent Zero flying into the air. Katopesla flew up after him and started to pummel the robot mid-air, knocking him around like a toy. Zero tried in vain to fight back, but no matter what he did, Katopesla was faster. With a final kick, Katopesla hurled Zero back to the floor, creating a large dust cloud with the impact.

That was when Jiren saw it: Katopesla’s limbs were trembling. Jiren’s eyes widened and his heart stopped, the drawback to his power must be starting to kick in.

Katopesla landed, staring resolutely at the dust cloud Zero had vanished into. Suddenly, there was a horrible, distorted roar and the dust was blown away, revealing Zero standing in the middle of a small crater, a sinister red aura enveloping him.

“You… you wretched BRAT!” Zero raged “I will obliterates you!” The robot raised his arms, a dark red sphere forming between his hands.

Katopesla smirked. “If that’s how you want to play it, I’ll be happy to oblige you!” Katopesla’s gauntlets glowed yellow, and he raised an arm, posed with a finger pointed at Zero. A glowing green reticle appeared in front of his finger, and the policeman from Universe 3 cried out “Katopesla: THE FINAL MISSION!”

A beam of blue energy blasted out from the center of the reticle, at the same time as Zero fired off his own energy beam. The beams clashed, and it was no competition. Katopesla’s beam instantly plowed through Zero’s, heading straight for the robotic ringleader. The beam struck true and Zero was blown into the wall, a large explosion resulting upon impact.

Katopesla lowered his arm, breathing heavily, the black highlights of his suit fading back to blue. “See? What did I tell you? Scrap.” he turned to Jiren, flashing the grey alien another brilliant grin and a thumbs up. “I told you I’d handle it!”
Jiren opened his mouth, about to respond when Katopesla’s knees suddenly gave out and, still grinning, the policeman’s eyes rolled back into his head and he collapsed. Jiren’s eyes went wide in horror “Katopesla!” He willed his arms to move, trying to crawl his way over to the downed policeman, but his body still wouldn’t respond. Something burst out of the dust cloud left behind by the explosion made by Katopesla’s beam, and Jiren’s blood froze. He was heavily damaged, but Zero was still alive.

The robotic terrorist marched towards Katopesla, his now lopsided jaw curled into a snarl. “That was a good show, traffic cop, but the show is over now!” He stood over Katopesla’s prone form, hand raised as a red ball of energy appeared in his palm.

Jiren’s blood boiled. No… it was happening all over again. Memories flashed before his eyes… his parents’ broken bodies… his master’s back as he sacrificed himself for Jiren… his “friends” abandoning him… Jiren was about to lose someone he cared about and he was powerless to do anything. He wouldn’t… he couldn’t… NO! I WILL NOT BE POWERLESS AGAIN!

“ARGGGGHH!”

Jiren’s red aura blazed to life as he screamed. His very blood was set aflame as Jiren forced his body to move and launched himself at Zero, tackling the robot terrorist. Zero released a warbled shriek, striking Jiren full in the chest with the energy blast meant for Katopesla, sending the grey alien flying back, landing next to his partner.

Jiren looked up as Zero hissed and raged as he stood over them “You! You! I am done with you Pride Troopers!” The terrorist ranted, clearly a few screws loose. “That’s it! I’m not playing around anymore!” he raised his hands up high above his head, another ball of dark red energy forming between them. “You. Will. DIE!”

Jiren’s body still wasn’t fully responding to him, all he could do was shield Katopesla’s body with his own and hope that he still had enough strength left to withstand the attack. Just as Zero was about to bring the attack down, a lash of yellow energy wrapped around his arms, and the robot’s ball shot off into the sky. Jiren’s eyes went wide, and he looked to see the source of the Justice Whip: Vuon, standing in a doorway behind the robotic terrorist with an angry snarl on his face.

“Hey scrapheap!” Vuon snarled “Get the fuck away from my friends!”

With a snarl, Zero snapped the whip and whirled on the reptilian Trooper. “You want to die first do you?!” he stepped forward, and instantly the ground exploded beneath him.

Jiren looked down and saw Kunshi’s Energy Threads littering the floor around the robotic ringleader. Zero clearly noticed them too, as he snarled and leapt up, trying to go over them. However, he soon found himself unable to, as he hit an energy barrier and fell back to the ground, triggering yet more explosions. He was trapped inside the Cocotte Zone.

“Where do you think you’re going?” Cocotte snapped, rushing up to Jiren’s side with Kunshi beside her.

“I think our friend here is feeling a little confined,” Kunshi noted with a grin. “Let’s make that worse, shall we?” with a wave of his hands, Kunshi’s Energy Threads rose up and wrapped around the robot, causing a series of explosions, all confined within the Cocotte Zone.

Cocotte, lowered her Zone once the final blast was done, examining the smoke cloud left behind by the explosions “What do you want to bet that didn’t kill him?”

“I’d say it was guaranteed.” Suddenly, a dozen blue energy balls appeared around the cloud, and...
Kettol showed up besides Vuon. The instant Zero inevitably made a break for it, he found himself getting struck by the amphibious alien’s Guided Energy Balls.

Roaring, Zero raised his hand and fired off a series of energy bolts at Vuon and Kettol. Then, a small blur dashed out from behind the two Troopers and started spinning, creating a cyclone that deflected the bolts. The cyclone approached Zero, and soon the robot found himself caught up in Zoiray’s Justice Spin. Shrieking madly, Zero was hurled high up through the open ceiling towards the sky.

As Zoiray stopped spinning, he flashed Jiren a grin. “Sorry, we’re late. ‘Pesla wanted us to wait until the gas was cleared and backup arrived.”

Backup?

“Justice FLASH!”

Jiren looked up and saw Toppo standing on the top of the gaping hole Jiren had made, taking aim at the still flying robot, and unleashing a furious barrage that collided with Zero in a massive explosion.

Ah, that backup.

Debris rained down back into the factory, and Jiren saw Zero’s half obliterated head crash down to the floor. “So much for capturing him.” Vuon noted dryly, toeing a piece of the former terrorist.

Toppo jumped down into the factory and rushed over to his friend’s side. “Jiren! Are you alright?!” He asked, putting his ginormous hands on Jiren’s shoulders while Kettol, Zoiray and Vuon came up behind him.

Jiren grunted, everything still hurt like hell, but it was starting to become manageable “I’ll live.”

Toppo’s brows furrowed and he looked about ready to press the matter when Jiren noticed the giant alien’s eyes slide passed him and his face fell. Jiren’s heart seized, and as quickly as he could, he turned around to look at Katopesla. Cocotte was currently checking up on the policeman, Kunshi worriedly looking over her shoulder. When the female Trooper finally looked up, her expression made Jiren’s heart shatter.

No… please no…

“Toppo,” Cocotte said, clearly struggling to keep her voice even “We need a medic. Now.”

…

Jiren paced anxiously in the waiting room of the intensive care unit of the Pride Trooper HQ’s med-bay. The doctors had confirmed that the grey alien was completely clear of the toxin several hours ago, and had insisted Jiren just needed some rest. Unfortunately, rest was incredibly elusive at the moment. All Jiren could think about was Katopesla’s condition. If Jiren had been smarter, stronger, better, then the policeman would never have had to use his full power, and he wouldn’t be… No, he would not think like that. He… he couldn’t…

The others had told Jiren about what had transpired after he’d warned them about Zero’s trap. Katopesla had told the others to contact Toppo while he helped Jiren. With his suit and helmet on, the policeman was the only member of the team who could safely approach the factory without succumbing to the toxic gas. The others had reluctantly retreated and exited the base to wait for Toppo. That was when they saw the explosion from Jiren blowing out the ceiling and the gas starting to disperse into the atmosphere. Once Toppo arrived and their scans told them it was safe, to head inside, the team had rushed back in to Jiren and Katopesla’s aid. While Jiren and Katopesla were
receiving medical attention, Toppo had ordered the squad who had come with him to quickly sweep the remainder of the facility. They had found little, mostly shipping logs. The entire place had been a fake designed solely for the trap, but Toppo had been assured that they would be able to use logs to trace back to Machina Horizon’s real facilities. With their leader dead, the terrorist cell would hopefully be in disarray for a little while and the Pride Troopers could finally bring them down. Jiren hadn’t cared much about any of that, his only concern was Katopesla’s condition. They had rushed back to HQ as quickly as possible and Katopesla had been admitted into the intensive care unit. That had been nineteen hours ago.

Jiren didn’t even look as he heard the gentle fall of Cocotte’s footsteps as she returned. “Jiren?” Cocotte said, voice soft, “I… um… I brought you some tea.”

“I’m not thirsty.” Jiren stated coolly, still staring at the door

“Oh,” Cocotte’s voice fell “Alright, I’ll just… I’ll just leave it here then.”

He heard the sound of a paper cup being placed on one of the small tables in the waiting room, then a sigh and the squeak of worn leather as Cocotte sat down in one of the chairs. She, Kettol, Zoiray, Kunshi, and Vuon had all been taking turns standing watch with Jiren in the waiting room. A part of Jiren knew he was treating his friends rather poorly, especially when they were only trying to be there for him, and that they were concerned about Katopesla too, but honestly, he didn’t have it in his heart to care at the moment, not when Katopesla teetered on the brink of life and death.

Time passed, though Jiren wasn’t really sure how much, and at some point he heard two sets of footsteps. Glancing over his shoulder, Jiren saw Kettol and Vuon both enter the room. Vuon approached Cocotte “Come on, ‘Cotte…” he said, holding a hand out to her. “Let’s get something to eat, Kettol volunteered to wait with Jiren for a while.”

Cocotte stared at the hand blankly for a moment before nodding and taking it. Jiren noticed that her eyes were bloodshot and guiltily, he wondered if she had been crying. Vuon looked even worse, there were faint wet streaks still drying on his cheeks, evidence that the reptile had almost certainly been weeping recently. Unable to look any more, Jiren turned his gaze back to the door, shame sitting like a stone in his gut. He did glance back for a moment when Vuon and Cocotte left; the reptile had his arm around the female Trooper’s shoulders and was whispering soft words of comfort to her. Kettol too, watched them go, and once they were gone moved to stand beside Jiren.

“You do not have to be here.” Jiren said after a moment “I’m sure you are tired as well. I will be fine on my own.”

Instead of answering, after a long moment of silence, Kettol asked “Did I ever tell you about my mom?”

Jiren blinked, caught off-guard by the question. “Um… no… no I don’t believe so.” Why would he talk about something like that now?

Kettol nodded, “She’s the reason I joined the Pride Troopers.” he sighed “She would take me and all my siblings to these big fancy underwater concerts they had back on my homeworld, the water did some fantastic things to the sound.” His eyes gained a wistful expression for a moment before he shook his head. “Um… anyways, she got sick one day, like really sick, and I was the only one able to make it to the hospital. Not that the rest of the family didn’t want to be there mind you, but they were all on other worlds working and whatnot, and couldn’t make it back for another day at least while I was still just in school. So, I ended up sitting there, alone, for hours and hours.” His expression darkened “It was… I don’t think even the Tournament of Power was as stressful. I hated
the waiting, the uncertainty, the fear.” He glanced over at Jiren “But most of all I hated the loneliness.”

Jiren looked down at his feet. *That* was what this was about. “I… see.”

“Do you?” Kettol seemed to want to say more, but before he could, the door to the ICU opened and a very tired looking Toppo stepped out.

“How is he?” Kettol asked. Jiren had been too afraid to speak, fearing the answer.

“I don’t know.” Toppo sighed “They’ve had to resuscitate him five times already. He’s currently stable but the doctors do not know how long that will last.”

Jiren felt his heart sink so low he was certain it would never rise again.

“Do you know what’s wrong with him?” Jiren distantly heard Kettol ask.

Toppo shook his head “Not for certain. It seems like his body is… overloaded. We believe it is a side effect of his ‘Final Terminus’ mode, but we have no idea how to stop it.” The giant alien rubbed his eyes “I’ve requested that Dr. Paparoni be brought to Universe 11. He should know how to fix this.”

“When will he get here?” Jiren asked, voice hollow.

Toppo turned to look at the grey alien, expression grim “Tomorrow, at the earliest.”

Jiren’s shoulders slumped “I… I see…”

Kettol sighed “Then there’s no point in waiting around here. I’ll tell the others. Toppo, could you look after Jiren?”

The giant alien nodded and Kettol walked off. Jiren was still staring at the door to the ICU when he felt a large hand on his shoulder. “Come, Jiren.” Toppo said, voice firm yet kind “The doctors said you need rest.” When Jiren hesitated he added “If anything changes I will let you know immediately.”

Jiren wasn’t really satisfied with that, but he was simply too drained, both emotionally and physically, to argue. So, reluctantly, he allowed Toppo to lead him out of the waiting room. He was returned to the quarters he’d started to share with Katopesla only a few weeks ago. It felt so empty without the policeman’s hearty laughter and brilliant smile. Brain on autopilot, Jiren stripped out of his uniform and sat down on the bed. Looking around the room, Jiren’s heart ached as he saw all of the things Katopesla had brought with him when he moved in: pictures of Jiren, Katopesla, and the rest of their friends, mementos from noteworthy missions, even the policeman’s clothes, stored away in Jiren’s closet alongside the grey alien’s own.

Closing his eyes, Jiren lay down on the bed, trying in vain to ignore the gaping hole where Katopesla should have been lying next to him. He didn’t have the energy to bother trying to meditate, Jiren couldn’t even bother to get beneath the covers. He didn’t care what demons haunted his sleep, surely any nightmare in his head couldn’t compare to the one he was living right now…

He was wrong.

When Jiren awoke, his body was slicked in sweat, his heart hammering in his chest, fear and grief devouring him utterly. His hands grasped tightly at the empty place where Katopesla would have been, and the cold fingers of despair tightened around Jiren’s throat. Sitting up, Jiren put his head in his hands, limbs trembling. His mind had forced him to relive Katopesla’s fight with Zero over and
over and over again, but the memories were twisted. He saw Katopesla die a thousand different ways at Zero’s hands. Whether it was a broken neck, a hole blown through his chest, or his throat being crushed in the robot’s hands, Jiren had been forced to watch as the life left his partner’s eyes each and every time, helpless to do anything. He felt sick, like he was adrift in a tumultuous ocean without even a raft to help him stay afloat. He needed Katopesla… he needed him here to smile and tell Jiren that he was alright. But he wasn’t, and Jiren was all alone…

Right?

Suddenly, Jiren remembered Kettol’s words, and at last he understood. Quickly getting dressed, Jiren left his quarters. It was the middle of the night, but Jiren had a suspicion that the people he was looking for were all still awake. He found his them exactly where he’d expected to, sitting together in the otherwise empty lounge. Kunshi was sitting in a chair far too large for him, a paper cup filled with now cold tea clenched in his hands. Kettol and Zoiray were sitting across from one another at a nearby table playing a card game, neither one clearly all that into it (though Kettol was still winning, obviously). Vuon and Cocotte were sitting next to each other on a couch, Vuon’s hand rubbing the female Trooper’s back.

Kunshi was the first one to notice Jiren’s approach, shooting the grey alien a smile that didn’t quite reach his eyes. “Hey there, big guy.”

Cocotte looked at Jiren, brow furrowed in concern “Aren’t you supposed to be resting?”

Jiren shook his head, moving to take a seat in an unoccupied chair, “I… was unable to sleep.”

For a moment, no one spoke. Finally, Vuon said “You too, huh?”

Jiren nodded, glancing at Kettol. The amphibious alien gave Jiren a knowing nod, and then placed down a card that made Zoiray swear and throw down his hand. The shortest Trooper hopped down from the stool he’d been sitting on and gestured for Vuon to take his place. No doubt the two of them were trying once again to best their teammate, with predictable results. As Vuon got up off the couch and took a seat at the table, Zoiray sat down in a chair next to Jiren, flashing him a warm grin, and the group fell back into a comfortable silence.

For hours this continued, Vuon and Zoiray taking turns trying to beat Kettol, and failing every time. There was little talking, but the quiet that pervaded the air was not oppressive or awkward. It was gentle, like a warm blanket wrapped around one’s shoulders. No one needed to say anything, the friends simply sat together, quietly supporting one another through the long night.

…

Toppo sat with Jiren, Kunshi, Zoiray, Vuon, Cocotte, and Kettol in the ICU’s waiting room. Dr. Paparoni had arrived via angel in Universe 11 only an hour ago and immediately rushed to check on Katopesla’s condition. Toppo had summoned Jiren and the others to wait with him for the doctor’s diagnosis. The tension in the air was palpable. Kunshi was fidgeting with his fingers, looking nervously around the room, Cocotte was clearly forcing herself to sit still, and had started chewing on her lip as a result, Vuon seemed unable to get comfortable in his chair, shifting positions repeatedly, Kettol was playing a game of cards with himself (apparently it was something called “Solitaire” that Gohan had shown him) while Zoiray watched, and Jiren wasn’t evening sitting down, pacing about the room like a caged animal. Toppo himself was staring blankly at a datapad in his hands, trying to get through some paperwork he had to do. Suddenly, the door to the ICU opened and everyone shot to their feet. Out stepped Dr. Paparoni, face grim.

“How is he?” Cocotte asked as almost everyone crowded around the purple doctor. Toppo noticed
that Jiren was standing away from the group, his back to them.

Paparoni did not answer at first, looking at each of them in turn before saying “I’m afraid the situation isn’t… it isn’t good.”

Toppo’s brows furrowed “Were you able to identify what’s wrong with him?”

The doctor nodded “Yes… this situation is one I had anticipated would happen eventually.”

“What do you mean?” Toppo asked. “You knew this could happen?”

“Yes.” The doctor said “Knowing Katopesla, I had a feeling it was only a matter of time until he used Final Terminus.”

“But what is Final Terminus?” Vuon asked insistently.

“A last resort.” Paparoni removed his monocle and rubbed the bridge of his nose with a sigh. “Katopesla is far stronger than he appears, yet his body cannot handle his full power, that’s why he fights with the suit. It places limiters on his strength, lowering it to levels he can withstand and unlocking parts of it when he activates his various modes.”

“Wait, his suit isn’t what makes him stronger?” Kunshi asked, confused.

Paparoni shook his head “If the suit merely enhanced his power by adding onto it, he would never have been allowed to use it during the Tournament. Power-boosting items were strictly forbidden, after all.” He paused “Well, except for the Potara.” Rubbing his eyes, the purple scientist continued “Final Terminus releases all of his limiters, allowing Katopesla to access his full strength,” Paparoni paused for a moment, “but… it comes at a cost.”

“Then why give him that mode in the first place?” Zoiray asked with a cocked eyebrow “If his full strength is so dangerous for him, why allow him to use it?”

“It was meant to be only used as a final resort. Something he would turn to when he had no other option, and only for a few moments.” Paparoni scowled “I had not anticipated him to use it so recklessly.” The doctor’s shoulders slumped as he muttered bitterly to himself. “Stupid boy…”

“You can help him, right?” Vuon asked.

The doctor shook his head “There’s nothing more anyone can do I’m afraid,” Paparoni said grimly, gaze falling to the floor “the rest is up to Katopesla.”

A deathly silence fell over the group. In the corner of his eye, Toppo noticed Jiren tense; the grey alien was no doubt once more blaming himself for Katopesla’s condition. Curiously, the one who appeared to be most distraught was none other than Paparoni. The doctor looked incredibly fragile, like he would break apart at the slightest breeze. It was clear that Katopesla meant more to him than just a teammate. Toppo remembered the policeman mentioning an uncle who’d raised him. True, they had different skin tones and ears, but it wasn’t unheard of for a species to have such variety, even within a family. Could it be…?

“Can we see him?” Cocotte asked quietly.

Paparoni blinked and replaced his monocle “Yes, I believe so. He is stable at the minute.” The doctor sighed “If you’ll excuse me I… I need some air.” Without another word, Paparoni walked past the group and out the other door of the waiting room.
Cocotte, Zoiray, and Kunshi quickly rushed into the ICU, Vuon and Kettol following them at a slower pace. Toppo hung back, noticing that Jiren had not moved from his spot. Neither of them said anything, merely standing there in silence for a long while. Finally, after taking a deep breath, Jiren walked into the ICU, Toppo following behind him. The nurses directed them to Katopesla’s room and the moment they arrived, Jiren stopped outside the door. Toppo didn’t say anything, merely placing a hand on Jiren’s shoulder in quiet support. When he was ready, Jiren opened the door and stepped inside, Toppo following him.

The others were already in the room, standing around Katopesla’s bed. When they saw Jiren come in, Vuon and Kettol quickly stepped aside, making room for the grey alien. Slowly, Jiren approached Katopesla’s unconscious form. The policeman was still in his suit - apparently it was helping his body try and recover - but the gloves had been removed to make space for an IV drip. His face was relaxed, almost peaceful. Off to the side, a heartbeat monitor beeped quietly away.

Jiren reached out and took hold of Katopesla’s unmoving hand. Toppo couldn’t see his friend’s face, but he could see how Jiren’s hands were trembling. The grey alien was barely keeping it together. Toppo stepped forward, intending to place a hand on Jiren’s shoulder, but his friend suddenly stepped away from Katopesla and walked out of the room. Everyone present watched with concern as Jiren left. After sharing a quick look with the others, Toppo followed Jiren outside of the room.

The grey alien had made it all the way to the waiting room by the time Toppo caught up with him. Placing a firm hand on his friend’s shoulder, Toppo stopped the grey alien. “Jiren-”

SLAM!

Toppo recoiled as Jiren suddenly whirled around and punched the wall. SLAM! Again. SLAM! And again. SLAM! And again. SLAM! SLAM! SLAM!

“Jiren! Jiren stop!” Toppo commanded, grabbing hold of the grey alien’s shoulders.

With one final punch, Jiren complied, shoulders trembling. “Why Toppo?” he asked, voice small and fragile. “I couldn’t… what sort of Pride Trooper… what good is all my strength… what good am I if I can’t even protect the people I…” Toppo’s heart broke as he saw the first tear slide down Jiren’s cheek.

Toppo sighed and turned the grey alien to face him, pulling his friend into a hug. Jiren tensed, and for a moment Toppo wondered if he was going to push him away. Then, the grey alien’s arms slowly came up to wrap around Toppo, and Jiren’s shoulders shook as he quietly sobbed in the large alien’s grasp. For a long moment, Toppo just held his friend. Before the Tournament, Toppo honestly could have never imagined Jiren crying, and now that he’d finally witnessed it, Toppo couldn’t help but futilely wish that his friend would never have reason to cry ever again.

After a few moments, Jiren pulled back, wiping his eyes with the back of his hand and looking away guiltily, “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be.” Toppo said gently, large hand gently rubbing his friend’s shoulder.

Jiren winced “No… about…” He gestured sheepishly to the several holes he’d placed in the wall.

“Ah,” Toppo grimaced. “I’ll… have someone fix that.”

Jiren nodded, neither of them speaking for a moment. “What news is there of the remnants of Machina Horizon?” he asked, voice hollow, his eyes never leaving the holes he’d made in the wall.

Toppo hesitated, he knew why Jiren was asking that. He shouldn’t tell him, he really shouldn’t tell
him. He could not condone Jiren going after Horizon in revenge, but he knew that if he withheld the information, Jiren would simply try to find out another way. For a moment, Toppo feared what would become of his friend if Katopesla didn’t make it, but soon swore to himself that if that happened, he and the others would help Jiren through it. That was all they could do. Trying to prevent Jiren getting his vengeance would only make things worse. Nothing would stop Jiren, Toppo knew that, but perhaps…

“We have managed to locate a few more bases.” Toppo said. “Horizon is still in disarray, and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future. If we take this opportunity to strike, I believe we could end them for good.”

For a moment, there was silence, then Jiren nodded “I’ll take care of it.”

Toppo watched as his friend turned and walked off, desperately hoping he’d made the right decision.

…

Jiren basked in the fires of destruction that blazed around him. This was the fifth Horizon base he had destroyed over the past week, and the grey alien had yet to be satisfied. He’d made sure to apprehend all of the terrorists alive for questioning and they were all currently being rounded up by the team accompanying Jiren. Vuon, Cocotte, Kunshi, Kettol, and Zoiray had all volunteered to join Jiren on his mission, which the grey alien had accepted on the condition that they leave most of the fighting to him barring emergencies. After Katopesla… he wouldn’t allow another person he cared about to get hurt. Not again.

Jiren surveyed the wreckage, Horizon had set up shop in an abandoned city on a desolate planet with red skies. This factory had been constructing their new line of “Bio-Androids”, but Jiren had made short work of the few operational units. When he was finished, the facility had been completely destroyed. Jiren had wanted to kill ever last terrorist there as well, but his morals, and Toppo’s insistence that the criminals needed to be interrogated, had made him stay his hand. That didn’t mean he was happy about it.

“Having fun?”

Jiren’s blood boiled, and he turned around to face the insolent god who had dared to show himself. “Belmod.” He growled out “What do you want?”

The clown god stood amongst the ruins and flames, smiling innocently “Can’t a man simply check up on his friend?”

“We’re not friends.” Jiren snarled.

Belmod’s hurt look was almost convincing “Really? Well that’s such a shame… and here I was thinking we had so many memories together.”

Suddenly, Jiren heard Vuon coming up behind him “Hey Jiren, we’ve gotten all the baddies locked up and ready for transport back to-” Jiren heard Vuon’s footsteps stop as he came upon the confrontation. “Lord Belmod?”

Jiren didn’t look back as he said coolly “Vuon, go back to the ship. I will be there momentarily.”

Vuon hesitated “Jiren… what are you-?”

“I said leave!” Jiren hadn’t meant to snap, really, but now wasn’t the time to be soft.
For a long moment, there was silence, then Vuon said “Alright… just… don’t be too long.”

Jiren waited until the sound of his friend’s footsteps had faded into the distance before he spoke. “Why. Are. You. Here?”

Belmod shrugged “I told you, I came to check up on you.”

“Bullshit.” Jiren hissed. He knew the God of Destruction too well, Belmod never showed himself unless he had reason to, and more often than not it wasn’t anything good.

Belmod smirked “It’s the truth, I heard about what happened to Katopesla.” Jiren tensed, but allowed the god to continue. “I understand you two are- excuse me, were close. I wanted to offer my… condolences.”

Jiren clenched his fists. “That is… appreciated.” He ground out through his teeth. Toppo had warned him about how Belmod didn’t approve of his relationship with Katopesla. That the god was bringing it up wasn’t a good sign.

Belmod crossed his arms over his chest and leaned against a ruined wall, turning to gaze out over the destruction Jiren had caused. “I’m surprised actually. You’re normally not so… wanton in your destruction. What happened to him must really be bothering you.”

Jiren took a deep breath. The god was trying to goad him into a fight, he could see that. Why, Jiren did not know, but he would not give Belmod the satisfaction. “I don’t have time for this. Farewell, Lord Belmod.”

Jiren turned to leave when he heard Belmod say “Such a pity, really. I wouldn’t have expected you to fall for someone so… pathetic.” Jiren froze and slowly turned around. “Perhaps we should send him back home.” Belmod turned his head to flash Jiren a wicked smile. “After all, we have no need for such a weakling in Universe 11 do we? Especially not one that’s as good as dead already.”

Jiren’s eyes flashed red and in an instant, the distance between them had been closed as he tackled the God of Destruction. Jiren’s hand wrapped around Belmod’s neck and he slammed the clown into a ruined building hard enough to make it explode. When the dust cleared, only a crater was left behind, with Jiren pinning down Belmod by the throat at its center. Belmod smirked up at Jiren and his eyes flashed, emitting a blinding light that caused Jiren to release the god and stumble back. When his vision cleared, Jiren saw Belmod had hopped up atop a piece of rubble and was looking down at him smugly.

“My, my, did I touch a nerve? I had thought you had much better composure than that, Jiren.” Belmod sneered “That Katopesla sure has brought out the worst in you hasn’t he? Maybe it would be for the best if I just got rid of him.”

Jiren’s blood raged in his veins, fire igniting along his skin as he roared and fired a powerful ki blast at the god. Belmod jumped out of the way as the blast obliterated the rubble he’d been standing on, humming a merry tune. Refusing to let the clown god get away, Jiren flung himself at Belmod, swinging wildly with his fists. The God of Destruction ducked under the blow, jabbing at Jiren’s stomach. Jiren ignored the strike and continued to swing madly at the god, driving their battle higher and higher into the air as he tried again and again to hit Belmod, yet the god always managed to dodge at the last moment.

“You’re getting sloppy Jiren.” Belmod taunted, dodging another attack from the enraged alien. “Come now, I should be no match for you! Has that buffoon made you as weak as he is?”
Jiren growled and lashed out with another punch. Once again, Belmod dodged the blow, but this time, that was exactly what Jiren had been counting on. When he ducked beneath Jiren’s fist, he was wide open for the follow through kick to his chin. Jiren’s foot made contact, and Belmod was launched into a nearby building from the force of the blow, creating a large dust cloud on impact.

Jiren moved to pursue when he was suddenly blocked by a ball of energy that sprang into being around him: Belmod’s Imprisonment Ball.

The dust cloud cleared and the God of Destruction was revealed to be floating within the hole in the building he’d made when Jiren had knocked him into it, a bruise on his chin from where the grey alien’s foot had made contact. “That’s more like it, Jiren!” The god growled with a grotesque grin “Now we’re getting somewhere!”

Belmod raised up a hand, cards of energy appearing between his fingers. With a wave of his hand, he flung the energy cards at Jiren, still trapped in the Imprisonment Ball. Jiren growled and his eyes flashed. Instantly, red cracks appeared along the Ball, and a moment later it shattered, the fragments flinging themselves into the energy cards, destroying each other. Snarling, Belmod flung another batch of cards at Jiren. The grey alien merely raised his hand, red ki blazing in his palm, at the following blast obliterated the god’s pitiful attack, along with the top half of the building he had been floating in.

Before the smoke could clear, Jiren rushed Belmod, dodging the god’s reactionary kick and grabbed onto Belmod’s heel. Like a top, Jiren spun around in the air, swinging Belmod with him as the god cried out in alarm. The next moment, Jiren had released Belmod’s ankle, sending him flying through two… three… seven… thirteen successive buildings, culminating in Belmod crashing into the base of a derelict skyscraper, which promptly buckled and collapsed on top of the god in a massive cloud of dust.

“HAKAI!”

In a flash of violet light, the rubble atop the God of Destruction disintegrated, leaving a bruised, but grinning Belmod standing in the crater of his impact, that infuriating smirk still on his lips.

“I hope that isn’t all, Jiren.” Belmod said. “This isn’t even a warmu- Agh!”

Jiren cut the god’s boast short, blitzing down to him and lashing out with a punch to the gut that sent Belmod flying through the air once more. Jiren gave chase, flying after Belmod and throwing more strikes at the god. Try as he might, Belmod was unable to defend against Jiren’s onslaught, and was battered repeatedly through the sky. Desperately, Belmod trapped Jiren within another Imprisonment Ball. The sphere of energy was obliterated with a single punch from the raging alien, but it was enough time for Belmod to recover and begin his counterattack. They battled above the city, the very air vibrating with the force of their strikes. A series of cataclysmic booms ripped through the sky as Jiren and Belmod broke the speed of sound again and again in their exchange. Every time their fists made contact, it sent shockwaves that rippled to the ground, pulverizing the buildings below them. The very world itself was shaking from the force of their battle.

“Better! Better!” Belmod cackled as he and Jiren exchanged blows “This is more like the Jiren I know! You hate weakness! You-” he sent a punch into Jiren’s face and was rewarded with a kick to the ribs “-despise it! Remember?! Jiren the Grey has no need for friends! No need for love! Those fragile attachments are worthless to you! All you need…” flinging his arm back, a ball of energy appeared in Belmod’s hand, and the God of Destruction unleashed a furious blast at Jiren point-blank “… is STRENGTH!”

Jiren roared and, pushing through the blast, brought down a devastating overhead strike on Belmod’s head, sending the god smashing into the ground far below.
Belmod, bruised, battered, and a little bloody, got to his feet just as Jiren landed in front of him. “That’s why you’re out here, is it not?” the god said, with a grin, lashing out with a kick that Jiren effortlessly blocked. “You just want to prove that you’re strong! That it wasn’t your own weakness that’s practically killed Katopesla!”

“Shut UP!” Jiren roared, striking Belmod’s face with another punch that sent the god sprawling into the dirt so hard he left an impression of himself in the ground.

Still cackling, Belmod got to his hands and knees “Oh? Are you telling me I’m wrong? That this is your way of grieving?!” Jiren grabbed the god’s hair and smashed his face back into the ground. Belmod only laughed more and, elbowing Jiren in the face, knocked the grey alien off of him. “Don’t fool yourself, Jiren! You don’t care about anyone or anything but your own power! Never have and never will!”

Jiren roared, grabbing Belmod by the throat and lifting him up into the air. “You’re wrong!”

Belmod cackled madly “Am I? Then why are you out here?! Katopesla isn’t a corpse yet! Not like your family! Not like your master! Why are you out here raging at the universe when the one you care oh so much about still needs you?! Face it! You don’t care! You never did! You’re delusional if you think for even a moment that you could ever possibly love!”

Jiren screamed in blood-curdling rage and slammed Belmod into the ground, repeatedly punching the god in the face. “Shut! Up! Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! SHUT UP!”

“Jiren!”

As he pulled his fist back to once more try and punch that insulting, bloodied, grin off Belmod’s face, Jiren felt something wrap around his bicep. In a blinding rage, Jiren roared, releasing the bloody God of Destruction and whirling around to face the insolent insect who’d dared try to interfere, hand raised to unleash a ki blast that would obliterate them in an instant…

Jiren froze.

Vuon stood there, eyes filled with worry, the lash wrapped around Jiren’s arm coming from his hand. Cocotte, Zoiray, and Kunshi stood behind him, all looking equally as concerned. Shamefully, Jiren lowered his hand, the ki in his palm dissipating. Seeing that Jiren was no longer violent, Vuon released the lash and Cocotte rushed forward, wrapping her arms around Jiren and burying her face in his chest in a tight hug. “What are you all doing here?” Jiren asked quietly, throat sore.

Zoiray stepped forward “When Vuon came back and told us about Belmod… then we heard fighting we…” he glanced over at the God of Destruction who was just now sitting up “We were worried.”

Cocotte pulled back, looking up at Jiren as she asked worriedly “Are you okay?”

Belmod snorted “Oh, sure, ask if he’s okay, not the guy who’s face he just beat in!”

Jiren’s friends were clearly ignoring the clown god for the moment. Stepping up next to Cocotte, Vuon asked “What… what happened?”

Jiren looked away “I… lost control.”

“I’ll say!” Belmod added.

Kunshi stepped forward, “You really had us worried there big guy. I mean, I know you’re strong
and all but…”

Jiren winced, looking down at his friend. “Apologies. It won’t happen again.”

Cocotte sighed, “Yeah, I doubt that.” shaking her head, she said “I’m going to go let Kettol know you’re alright. He’s making sure the prisoners don’t try and escape, but he was worried about you too.” With that she walked off back in the direction of the ship.

Vuon watched her go briefly before turning to look back at Jiren “Why’d you and Belmod start fighting all of a sudden?”

Before Jiren could answer, he heard Belmod get to his feet. “We were just sparing, that’s all. It’s been a while since I’ve gauged Jiren’s power.” Surprised, Jiren looked over his shoulder to see the god stretching and giving him a knowing grin.

Zoiray crossed his arms over his chest “Yeah, you expect us to believe that? Look at the shape you’re in!”

Belmod shrugged “Eh, some of my trash talk just got under Ol’ Jirey-boy’s skin is all. I didn’t get anything I didn’t deserve.”

It was clear that neither Zoiray nor Vuon were buying it, but the two Troopers wisely decided to leave the matter be. Carefully, Kunshi approached Belmod “Um… we have some med kits on the ship. Would you like me to go get one or…?”

Belmod waved him off “Nah, no need.”

He snapped his fingers and Marcarita suddenly appeared beside him, waving her staff and instantly healing all of the god’s wounds. The angel smiled “Did you get what you were looking for, Lord Belmod?”

The god shrugged “More or less, I think we’re done here.” Just as he was about to turn around and leave, Belmod shot Jiren one last grin over his shoulder “Oh, you should probably head on back to base.” He winked “I’m sure Katopesla will be happy if you’re there when he eventually wakes up.”

…

Jiren looked up as Toppo stepped quietly into the room in the ICU Katopesla was staying in. Jiren’s team had gotten back almost an hour ago, and the grey alien had immediately rushed to his boyfriend’s side, both hopeful and worried by Belmod’s last words to him. Alas, when he arrived, the doctors told him there had been no change in Katopesla’s condition. Since then, Jiren had been sitting in a chair next to Katopesla’s bed, holding the policeman’s hand not connected to an IV and anxiously awaiting the moment he would finally awaken.

“To be honest, I’m surprised to find you here.” Toppo said, standing next to Jiren “You haven’t been back since your first visit.”

Jiren stared down at his hand in Katopesla’s, shame pooling in his gut. “I was… I was too scared to.”

Toppo was silent for a moment. “What made you decide to finally visit?”

Jiren hesitated before answering “Belmod.”

“Ah,” Jiren looked over to Toppo, his friend’s brows were furrowed and he could see that there was a frown hiding beneath his mustache. “I was going to ask you about that, actually. I heard from the
Others that you encountered him during your mission and that you two apparently had… an altercation.”

Jiren nodded, “That… is correct.”

“What did he do to make you want to fight him?” Toppo asked carefully.

Jiren didn’t answer right away, instead staring at Katopesla’s slumbering face. “He said what I needed to hear.” With a sigh, Jiren said “Toppo, I would… like to request a… leave of absence until Katopesla recovers. I… I think I should stay by his side for the time being.”

For a whole minute, Toppo didn’t say anything. Finally, Jiren felt a large hand being placed on his shoulder. Turning to look at his friend, Jiren saw nothing but warmth in Toppo’s eyes as he said “Of course.”

At that moment, the door to Katopesla’s room opened again, and Dr. Paparoni slipped inside, stopping upon seeing Jiren and Toppo. “Ah, forgive me, I was not aware he had company.”

Toppo shook his head “I was just leaving.” He lightly pat Jiren’s shoulder once before walking passed Paparoni out of the room.

Jiren gave the doctor a nod before silently turning his attention to Katopesla once more. He expected Paparoni to do a simple check-up on Katopesla’s condition and leave. What he hadn’t expected was for him to simply stand on the other side of Katopesla, staring curiously at Jiren.

Finally, after a long, awkward minute of silence, Paparoni spoke. “So you’re the one he’s been talking about in all his messages.” Jiren blinked and stared at the doctor in confusion. Smiling gently, Paparoni elaborated “I received a message from Katopesla once a week using an inter-universal communication device the angels gave him.” Jiren was familiar with it, he’d seen Katopesla writing some of those messages. “He talked about you quite a lot in them.”

Jiren glanced over at Katopesla’s sleeping face. “Is that so?”

Paparoni chuckled “Extremely so, yes. There were weeks where you were all he talked about.” The doctor smiled sadly “He really adores you, you know?”

Jiren felt a small smile pull at the corners of his lips. “I… feel the same. He… he is a surprising man.”

Paparoni nodded “Yes, I… I actually wanted to thank you.”

Jiren’s brows furrowed and he looked at Paparoni in confusion “Thank me?”

Paparoni nodded, turning his gaze back to Katopesla “Yes. Katopesla, he… he hasn’t had the easiest life. I wanted to thank you for… for making him happy. He deserves something good in his life.”

Upon noticing Jiren’s confused look, Paparoni’s brows furrowed “He… he hasn’t told you has he?”

When Jiren shook his head the doctor sighed “Of course not, stubborn boy.” Shaking his head, Paparoni said “Well, it is not my place to tell you, I’ll leave that to him once he wakes up.” Paparoni gave Jiren one last smile as he started towards the exit “I’ll give you some privacy. It was good to meet you, Jiren.”

…

Jiren felt something squeeze his hand, stirring him from the light meditative trance he had fallen into. Blinking his eyes open, Jiren’s heart skipped a beat when he noticed that Katopesla’s hand was squeezing his rather tightly. Jiren sat there, enraptured as he watched Katopesla’s body slowly begin
to stir over the next several minutes. When Katopesla finally opened his eyes, sapphire gaze meeting Jiren’s black, he felt the entire week of stress, worry, uncertainty, and fear slide off his shoulders. Eyes watery, Jiren got up and leaned down to press his forehead to Katopesla’s, his hand moving to stroke the policeman’s blue chiseled cheek.

“Why… hello… there…” Katopesla whispered warmly.

After placing a gentle kiss on Katopesla’s lips, Jiren pulled back to gaze warmly at his boyfriend. “It’s… it’s good to… to finally see you awake… again…”

Katopesla grimaced “I… overdid it… didn’t I? How long… have I been… asleep?”

“A little more than a week.” Jiren answered.

“Oh…” Katopesla winced and gave Jiren an apologetic look “I’m sorry… I didn’t mean to… worry you.”

Jiren shook his head, he almost wanted to say that he should be the one apologizing, but he held his tongue. Now was not the time to dwell on his failings. “There’s no need.” He straightened up, a quick glance told Jiren that it was the middle of the night. “I should let the doctors know you’re awake.”

“Ugh,” Katopesla groaned “So I can be… poked and prodded until I’m sore all over…? Please no…” he squeezed Jiren’s hand “Do you think you could just… wait a little while longer…”

Jiren didn’t have it in him to refuse so he sat back down in the chair he’d been meditating in. “Alright, just a little while.”

For a moment, a comfortable silence fell between them, then Katopesla asked “So… what did I miss while I was out?”

Jiren started to tell him. He got up to mentioning that Toppo had brought Paparoni to Universe 11 when Katopesla’s eyes widened in horror and he swore. “What’s wrong?” Jiren asked, worried.

Katopesla groaned and stared up at the ceiling “Paparoni’s going to be furious with me.”

Jiren couldn’t help the chuckle that escaped his lips.

Eventually, the doctors were informed Katopesla was awake, and soon the room was filled with a constant stream of visitors coming and going. Sure enough, Paparoni had chewed off Katopesla’s ear for using Final Terminus so recklessly. Toppo, despite his best attempts to hide it, had gotten tearful when he came to visit. Cocotte had given Katopesla a hug when she saw him, and Vuon had been forced to remove her before she broke Katopesla’s ribs. Zoiray had sat with them for a while, catching Katopesla up on everything that had happened while he was out. Kettol had snuck in some decent food for them and Kunshi had promised to find Katopesla some books to read while he was stuck in the med-bay. Katopesla dozed off a few times throughout all of this, but had always woken up with a smile on his face.

Several hours later, Jiren found himself alone with Katopesla once more. The policeman was sitting up in the cot, they were currently not doing much of anything, just sitting together in a comfortable silence. Jiren was reluctant to break the quiet, but he had something he’d been wanting to ask Katopesla ever since his conversation with Paparoni the previous day.
“Katopesla…” he said hesitantly “Do you mind if… I asked you something?”

Katopesla glanced up from the book Kunshi had gotten him, closing it and setting it aside. “Sure, what’s on your mind?”

Jiren took a deep breath “Paparoni told me you’d haven’t had… the easiest life. What did he mean?”

To Jiren’s surprise, Katopesla instantly tensed, his smile not quite reaching his eyes. “Oh, nothing. He was just being dramatic I’m sure. Don’t worry about it.”

Katopesla wasn’t a very convincing liar. “Be honest with me,” Jiren said.

Wincing, Katopesla said “It’s really nothing you need to worry about. I don’t… I don’t want to burden you.”

Jiren’s eyes narrowed “Am I a burden to you?”

Katopesla’s eyes widened “What? N-No! Don’t be…” he grimaced “Ah, I see your point.” Sighing, Katopesla stared down at his hands “My life… it really isn’t as rough as Paparoni makes it sound. It certainly has nothing on what you’ve been through.”

“Then tell me about it.” Jiren pressed.

Katopesla did not speak right away. Finally, he looked up and cracked another half-hearted smile “Well, if you insist.” He paused, “I… my parents… they were not good people.” His eyes darkened “They were scientists, and not the ethical kind either. They were trying to artificially create the ultimate warrior, not too dissimilar from Paparoni’s work actually. But while he focused on machines, their approach was more… organic.” He stopped, and Jiren said nothing, waiting for Katopesla to continue in his own time. “Honestly, I practically volunteered for it. I was just a small child, and my father told me it would turn me into some sort of superhero…” he chuckled bitterly “I suppose in a way, it did. They were found out before they could complete their experiment and arrested, and my siblings and I were taken away for our own protection.” His hands clenched into fists “For quite a few years, I forgot about it, then they… they found me again. They kidnapped me, and I was subjected to a number of… procedures.” Katopesla looked up and forced another smile “As you have probably figured out, I did not acquire my strength naturally. It was forced upon me.”

“That is why your body cannot handle your full strength.” Jiren concluded.

Katopesla nodded, “Yes. Paparoni saved me and, when I decided to become a policeman, designed my suit to suppress my power to a more manageable level.” That false smile grew, like he was trying to convince himself of its sincerity. “Funnily enough, I’d never actually used Final Terminus before the fight with Zero.”

“Then why did you?” Jiren asked.

Katopesla didn’t answer. Getting out of his chair and sitting down on the edge of the cot, Jiren wrapped an arm around Katopesla and pulled the policeman close to him, resting his chin atop his boyfriend’s head. Instantly, all of the smiles and bravado were gone, and Katopesla collapsed into Jiren’s embrace.

With Jiren rubbing soothing circles into his back, Katopesla said quietly “I’m sorry.”

Jiren shook his head and pulled back far enough that he could look Katopesla in the eyes. “There is no need to apologize.”
Katopesla didn’t say anything for a moment, his eyes boring deeply into Jiren’s own. “I… I was terrified. I thought… I thought that if I couldn’t defeat Zero then… then he’d kill you and I… I couldn’t…”

Jiren understood all too well.

Katopesla looked away “You must think me pitiful.”

“Never.” Jiren said firmly, pulling Katopesla against him once more. After a moment he asked “Why didn’t you tell me?”

Katopesla let out a bitter laugh into Jiren’s shoulder “You have enough of your own problems. I couldn’t add my own issues into the mix as well. It just wouldn’t be fair to you…”

Jiren felt like such an insensitive jackass. He’d been so focused on his own demons that he’d failed to even notice how Katopesla was struggling too. “You were the one who told me that I can let myself be vulnerable around you.” Jiren said softly. “I believe that the same should apply to you too, no?”

For a moment, there was silence, then Katopesla’s shoulders trembled, and Jiren felt something wet soak his uniform. “I’m sorry…” Katopesla said again through the tears. “I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry…”

Jiren held his boyfriend closer, and vowed to himself that he would never let go.

...

Jiren was constantly at Katopesla’s side during his recovery, supporting the policeman every step of the way. It only took a few days for Katopesla to return to full strength, and once more become his normal, cheerful self. Once he was sure Katopesla was better, Paparoni returned to Universe 3, warmly bidding the policeman and Jiren farewell. Things soon returned to a vague sense of normality, Jiren and Katopesla would spend their days going out on missions or with their friends, and their evenings alone with each other. Jiren was more content than he’d ever been in his entire life.

At the moment, Jiren and Katopesla were sitting outside the base, watching as Vuon and Zoiray tried once again to beat Kettol at cards. This time they were competing to see who could win that Solitaire game Gohan had shown Kettol the fastest. Naturally, Zoiray and Vuon were losing, badly.

“How are you so fucking good at this?!” Zoiray raged as Kettol once again managed to be faster than the other two.

Vuon threw his cards down on the bench they were using as a table. “You’re cheating! You have to be!”

Kettol simply shrugged “Nope, I’m just that good.”

“Bullshit!” Zoiray and Vuon said simultaneously.

From his spot sitting next to Jiren on the ground nearby, Katopesla chuckled. “As admirable as your persistence is, perhaps you two should finally admit defeat.”

“No way!” Zoiray growled out, still glaring at Kettol. “We’re going again! I’ve got you this time! I’m sure of it!”
Vuon glanced over at Jiren and Katopesla. “Why don’t you try and beat him ‘Pesla? Maybe you’ll have better luck.”

Katopesla held up his hands “Come now, gentlemen, even I understand when a fight is lost.”

“You haven’t even tried yet.” Zoiray pointed out “You can’t give up without at least trying!”

Katopesla hesitated, “That… is a fair point, but I still must refuse.”

Jiren, who’d been watching all of this silently, smirked. This was too good to pass up. Placing an arm around Katopesla, he said “It would hardly be fair.” He squeezed his boyfriend’s shoulder. “I have no doubt Katopesla would utterly annihilate Kettol.”

Kettol’s eyes narrowed dangerously “Is that a challenge?”

Katopesla looked at Jiren, eyes wide “You too, Jiren?”

Smiling, Jiren gently bumped his head against Katopesla’s “Do you doubt yourself?”

After a moment, Katopesla beamed “Of course not!” Jiren released him and Katopesla scooted up to the table, taking Vuon’s offered cards. “Right, Kettol! Today, your tyranny is at its end!” He paused a moment before adding sheepishly “Um… how do I play?”

Katopesla lost, naturally. However, the valiant policeman refused to be kept down. “That was just a warm-up!” Katopesla boasted “Now that I understand this game, I shall swiftly dethrone you, Kettol!”

Jiren continued to watch Katopesla and Zoiray constantly challenge and lose to the undisputed champion, thoroughly amused. Of course Katopesla brought the same level of enthusiasm to the game as he did everything else, making it incredibly entertaining to watch. Before he knew it, an hour had passed, and Kunshi and Cocotte arrived. They had invited Jiren to go see a movie with them they thought he might like (Katopesla had declined to go with them on account that the large screens at movie theaters tended to give him headaches). Jiren got to his feet, placing a hand on Katopesla’s shoulder as he was getting ready to make another attempt at dethroning Kettol.

“I’m leaving,” he said, making Katopesla look up at him.

Smiling, Katopesla nodded, “Have fun.”

Jiren smiled back and leaned down to press a quick kiss to Katopesla’s lips. When they parted, Jiren whispered softly “I love you.”

Katopesla blinked, his mouth falling open in surprise, and Jiren realized, with no small amount of embarrassment, that this was the first time he’d ever told Katopesla that he loved him. For a moment, Jiren feared that he’d said it at the wrong time, but then Katopesla’s grin returned and he whispered back “I love you too.”

Heart fluttering in his chest, Jiren pressed another kiss to Katopesla’s lips, lingering a moment longer than needed. In the background, Zoiray made a retching sound “Get a room!”

Jiren shot out a small, low-power ki blast from his finger, lightly knocking the heckling imp on his back. Breaking the kiss, Jiren smiled down at Katopesla as he straightened up.

Katopesla returned the smile with a charming wink. “I’ll see you tonight.”
His heart soaring, Jiren turned to follow Kunshi and Cocotte…

“Uh, Jiren, there’s a-"

_BONK!_

Jiren blinked as he walked face-first into a lamppost. When did that get there?

“Are you okay?” Katopesla asked, worriedly while Zoiray snickered in the background.

“I… am unharmed.” Jiren said, shaking his head and shooting a glare at the post. Instead of vaporizing it without a second thought, however, he simply went to join Cocotte and Kunshi, shooting one last smile over his shoulder at Katopesla.

His boyfriend smiled back before returning his attention to the game. As he walked away, Jiren could hear Katopesla boasting to Kettol “Alright, you tyrant! This time you shall surely fall, for now I have not only the power of justice, but _love_ on my side!”

…

Jiren’s eyes fluttered open. A quick glance at the clock on his nightstand told him it was around 0600, roughly the time he normally got up. He felt arms wrapped around his torso and a warm chest pressed against his back, and Jiren allowed himself a small smile. For a moment, he simply lay there, listening to the gentle (loud) rumble of Katopesla’s snoring. It took his groggy mind a moment to realize it, but it suddenly occurred to Jiren that he’d just had a full night of sleep without any nightmares, at least none that he could remember that is. Jiren felt a strange relief bloom within his chest and slowly, turned himself around in Katopesla’s embrace, facing the policeman. Wrapping his arms around Katopesla, Jiren placed a gentle kiss to his lover’s brow.

Katopesla stirred, blinking his eyes open and staring at Jiren in a drowsy confusion “Jiren?” he said groggily “What is it? Did you have another nightmare?”

Jiren smiled and nuzzled his forehead against Katopesla’s, allowing himself to be lost in his lover’s embrace “No…”

…

“Cocotte and Vuon are on a date.” Zoiray said one day during dinner when Kunshi asked where the two were.

Jiren blinked “Hmm.” He’d been wondering when that’d happen.

Kunshi spat out his water (spraying a less than pleased Kettol) “What? How did that happen?!”

“You _really_ haven’t been paying attention, have you?” Zoiray said smugly.

Tupper, who had just gotten back from Universe 2 the previous day, furrowed his brows “I leave for a few months and suddenly everybody is hooking up! And here I thought I’d just _left_ the love universe! I’m starting to feel left out!”

Katopesla chuckled from his usual spot next to Jiren. “Do not worry, friend. I’m sure that you will find companionship soon enough!”

Tupper grinned and raised his arms up to flex “Heh, I better! These muscles here need to be appreciated!”
Zoiray rolled his eyes “Don’t pretend you didn’t get plenty of action back in U2. I wouldn’t be surprised if they had weekly orgies over there.”

Tupper pouted, lowering his arms “Yeah, no. Apparently the ‘love’ and ‘beauty’ they gush about so much over there isn’t the sexual kind. Those people were more chaste than a convent.”

“I wonder if Dyspo’s had better luck.” Kettol said, still drying himself off with a napkin. “You know what they say about rabbits after all…”

Jiren frowned “I don’t follow…”

“I’ll be happy to demonstrate later, love.” Katopesla said with a sly wink, causing heat to rush to Jiren’s face.

Kunshi sighed, “Shame you won’t be here when he gets back, ‘Pesla. I’d have loved to see how you two got along.”

Jiren’s heart instantly sank and he stared forlornly at his food. That’s right, Katopesla would be returning to Universe 3 in only a few weeks. He’d been reluctant to broach the topic with his lover, but a small part of Jiren had been hoping Katopesla would extend his stay in Universe 11 indefinitely. It was foolish, he knew that, Katopesla had friends and family back in Universe 3, all of whom hadn’t seen the policeman in a fairly long time. No doubt Katopesla missed them as much as they missed him. Jiren was not a selfish man, he would not try and persuade Katopesla to stay, even if it was painful to be separated from his lover. And it wasn’t like their separation would be absolute. No doubt they could still communicate using the device Katopesla had been sending messages back to Universe 3 with. It wasn’t the best solution, but Jiren would take whatever he could get, even if it did little to soothe the ache in his heart.

Jiren suddenly wasn’t feeling very hungry. “Excuse me,” he said, forcing his voice into a neutral tone, “I have some training I’d like to do before bed.”

He got up, disposing of his remaining food in a nearby bin, and headed towards the door to the mess hall. As he left, he could hear Zoiray angrily scolding Kunshi “Good job, dumbass.”

“What did I do?!”

Jiren couldn’t bring himself to look back. He didn’t want to see the look on Katopesla’s face. He exited the mess and silently walked through the halls towards the sparring ring. Perhaps punching something would make him feel a little better. He was halfway there when he felt a familiar hand on his shoulder.

“Jiren.”

He’d been so lost in his own thoughts he hadn’t even sensed Katopesla. Jiren slowly turned around, careful to keep his gaze away from his lover. “Katopesla.” He said “Do you need something?”

Katopesla sighed, and guided Jiren to a nearby alcove. “We haven’t really talked about what happens after… after I go back.”

Jiren nodded, still not looking at Katopesla “I had assumed that we would maintain a correspondence using the same device you’ve use to communicate with Dr. Paparoni.”

Katopesla paused “That… is a possibility, but I don’t… I don’t want our relationship to be so… distant.”
Jiren didn’t say that he felt the same, instead he said “We both have responsibilities to our respective universes, responsibilities neither of us can abandon. If we are to continue this relationship, then distantly is the only option available to us.” Jiren gulped and clenched his quivering hands into fists “If… if you would-” Jiren’s voice caught in his throat. “Would no longer like to continue our relationship—”

“No.” Katopesla said suddenly, gripping both of Jiren’s shoulders “Of course I want— for fuck’s sake Jiren look at me!” Reluctantly, Jiren forced himself to raise his gaze and meet Katopesla’s sapphire eyes. “I don’t want to end this.” Katopesla said, eyes wide and pleading.

Jiren sighed, partly out of relief, and partly out of grief. “Then the only option available to us is to continue things distantly.”

Katopesla’s shoulders slumped “Jiren…”

“Could we… could we please just not talk about this anymore?” Jiren asked quietly “I want… I want to enjoy the time I have left with you as much as possible… Please?”

For a long moment, Katopesla didn’t say anything. Finally, Katopesla gave Jiren a slow, reluctant, nod “Alright…”

…

Toppo looked up from his paperwork as he heard someone knocking on the door to his quarters. He had a feeling he knew who it was. With Katopesla’s departure looming ever closer, he’d figured it was only a matter of time before Jiren would once again come to his door. Toppo turned off the datapad he’d been using and got up from his desk.

This could be a very difficult conversation, there was a very real possibility that Jiren would request to be able to join Katopesla in Universe 3. While it certainly would be a heavy blow to the Pride Troopers, and Toppo personally would be quite sad to see his friend go, he’d made up his mind a long time ago. Toppo would let Jiren leave Universe 11, his friend deserved that much. Going to the door, Toppo pressed the button to open it, revealing the person standing on the other side.

Toppo blinked. It was not Jiren. “Katopesla?”

…

Jiren did his best to enjoy the final weeks with Katopesla. For the most part, he was successful, but the ever growing specter of their impending separation loomed constantly in the background. All of Jiren’s time with his lover was tainted by the knowledge that soon it would be over. There was a constant ache in his chest, and Jiren’s mood became more and more melancholy. He tried his best to hide it, but he suspected Katopesla noticed nevertheless, he simply knew Jiren too well at this point. There were times when Jiren would think of the abilities of the assassin from Universe 6, and wondered if perhaps he could learn how to freeze time, just so he could spend a few moments longer with Katopesla. Alas, for all his power, Jiren could not stop the advance of time, and soon the dreaded day of departure had finally arrived.

They stood outside of the base, all of the Pride Troopers Katopesla had befriended here to see him off. The angel Campari stood off to the side, waiting patiently as Katopesla said his goodbyes. First, Katopesla said farewell to Kettol, giving the amphibian a big hug and thanking him for everything. (Jiren was also fairly certain he heard Katopesla vow to defeat Kettol at cards the next time they met. Truly, he had created a monster.) Next, was Zoiray, who laughed, and told Katopesla he’ll keep Kettol on his toes for their rematch, and then tired (and failed) to act indignant when Katopesla knelt
Cocotte had actually hugged Katopesla first, and proceeded to drag Vuon into it when her new boyfriend tried to get away with just a handshake. Kunshi had tackled Katopesla’s legs, almost knocking the policeman over, and bawled. Tupper, who Katopesla had only known for a few weeks, had naturally assumed that he would get a handshake. He clearly hadn’t been paying attention, because Katopesla pulled him into a hug anyways and Tupper, not expecting it, had reflexively shifted into his rock form, much to his embarrassment. Toppo gave Katopesla a quick hug before handing him the duffel bag containing Katopesla’s things he’d carried out for the policeman. Which left only one more person…

Jiren forced his racing heart to calm itself as Katopesla approached him, that wonderful smile on his face. The moment had finally come. Who knew when they would see each other again? Jiren’s heart felt like it was going to be ripped in two, but he forced himself to put on a brave face for Katopesla.

His lover came to a stop in front of Jiren and said “Are you ready?”

Jiren blinked, those were not the words he had been expecting. “Ready?”

“Jiren.”

Toppo’s voice made Jiren turn to look at him. Toppo tossed something to the grey alien that Jiren caught reflexively: it was another bag similar to Katopesla’s. Looking up, Jiren saw that a smile was beaming beneath Toppo’s moustache. “What is this?” Jiren asked, confused.

Toppo’s smile only grew “Why it’s your things of course! You don’t want to travel empty-handed now do you?”

Jiren’s eyes widened as his mind came to a screeching halt and he stared dumbly at the bag in his hands for a moment, then looked up at Toppo, then over at Katopesla, then back to the bag, then back to Toppo, then back to Katopesla, then the bag, then Toppo, then Katopesla. Bag. Toppo. Katopesla. Bag. Toppo. Katopesla. On and on until his brain finally rebooted enough to form a coherent sentence.

“…Huhwha?”

Well, mostly coherent anyways.

Katopesla’s brows furrowed, “You… you didn’t know…” he glared at Toppo “You said you would tell him!”

Toppo shrugged “You know Jiren. If I had told him beforehand then I’m not entirely convinced he wouldn’t have tried to decline out of some sense duty.”

“What is going on?” Jiren asked, still trying to process what was happening.

Katopesla chuckled “Why you’re coming to Universe 3 with me of course!”

Jiren’s eyes were practically popping out of his head at this point. “But… I can’t. I have a responsibility to Universe 11 as a Pride Trooper. To abandon that would be-”

“Not forever.” Katopesla said with a shake of his head “A visit. After all, you’ve shown me so much of Universe 11, it’s only fair I return the favor!” he beamed “Besides, I have some arrangements I need to make back in Universe 3, so I thought I could invite you along and we’d come back together.”
Jiren’s heart stopped. “Together?” For a moment Jiren wanted to leap for joy (he did not do that, of course because he’s Jiren the Grey not a child) but then his brows furrowed as a thought occurred “Would that be allowed?”

“Lord Belmod and Marcarita negotiated it with Lord Mule and myself.” Campari supplied from off to the side. “Besides, the whole point of the exchange program was to foster a closer connection between the universes. I’d say this certainly counts as a ‘closer connection’ wouldn’t you?”

Jiren had to admit the angel had a point. Looking back at Toppo he asked “Will… will you all be fine without me?”

Toppo snorted and crossed his arms over his chest. “Come now, Jiren! We’re not helpless! You know that!” he gave his friend a wink. “We’ll be fine. Go.”

Jiren looked out at his friends, his heart overflowing with gratitude. If it weren’t for all of them (well, minus Tupper), he likely would never have gotten together with Katopesla in the first place. They had all stood by him every step of the way, advising him, encouraging him, helping him. Jiren didn’t know how to properly express just how much he appreciated everything they had done for him, everything he’d learned from them. There were no words that could possibly communicate just what he felt, so Jiren settled for a simple smile.

“Come on,” Katopesla said, holding out his hand “I’m sure my family would love to meet you.”

Jiren gave one last look to his friends. Zoiray was giving him a cheeky grin, gesturing for Jiren to hurry up and move. Kettol was giving him a thumbs up and Kunshi was giving him two. Tupper was grinning, Cocotte was waving while Vuon, with an arm around her shoulders, gave Jiren a small salute. And Toppo, loyal, kind, wonderful, Toppo, was giving Jiren the biggest grin he could.

Slinging his bag over his shoulder, Jiren turned to Katopesla, smiled, and took his lover’s hand…

…

“Hey everyone! You miss me?” Dyspo hollered as he and Marcarita appeared in front of the Pride Trooper’s HQ. Toppo, Kunshi, Vuon, Cocotte, Zoiray, Kettol, and Tupper were all present to welcome their teammate back, as were a number of other Pride Troopers. “I’ve gotta’ admit, it’s good to finally be ho- Ack! No! Tupper! Watch the ears! Watch the ears!” Dyspo shrieked as Tupper pulled him into a headlock and started to give him a friendly noogie.

Thankfully, Dyspo was released a second later, and the speedster quickly moved away from the rocky alien, lest he be caught again. The rest of his friends greeted Dyspo in significantly less violent ways. “How was U10?” Kunshi asked. “Meet anyone faster than you?”

“Hah! That bunch of meatheads wouldn’t know speed if it kicked them in the face!” Dyspo boasted. “That being said, they were good training partners!”

“Excellent.” Toppo said “I’m keen for you to demonstrate what you’ve learned.” His eyes twinkled “It has been far too long since we last sparred.”

“Speaking of…” Dyspo looked around, noticing that one particular member of the Troopers was absent. “Where’s Jiren? I want to show him how much stronger I’ve gotten!”

“He’s visiting Universe 3 at the moment.” Cocotte supplied.

Dyspo cocked an eyebrow “Universe 3? Why would he visit those nerds?”
Vuon shrugged “He’s visiting his boyfriend’s family.”

Dyspo froze, he had to have misheard that. “I… I’m sorry…” he said, befuddled. “I… I think I misheard you… did you say ‘his boyfriend’?”

Vuon nodded “Yeah.”

Dyspo’s eyes went wide as his brain struggled to process this information. This didn’t make any sense. Jiren didn’t date. He’d never even shown a passing interest in anyone as far as Dyspo knew! How the hell did he get a boyfriend?! “What… how… who?”

Zoiray, from his position on Kettol’s shoulder, smirked “The guy who came to train with us from Universe 3 of course: Katopesla.”

Dyspo’s brows shot up “That guy with the colorful modes who slipped off the fighting stage in the Tournament?”

“Well, apparently he was tripped but…” Toppo smiled. “Yes, that is the one.”

Dyspo blinked, mouth gaping. For a long moment he was quiet, his brain trying to process just what absurd madness had occurred in his absence. Finally, when he could speak again, all he could muster was “WHAT THE ACTUAL FUCK DID I MISS?!”

FIN.

End Notes

Hey, thanks for reading this long-ass thing! I hope you enjoyed it. Feel free to comment and let me know what you thought of it!

I kind of want to write a series of one-shots connected to this fic (as well as the sex scenes I had cut out) but that’ll depend on the response this gets and the time I have.

Thanks again!

P.S.: I got the ideas for Katopesla’s other modes from this reddit post:
https://www.reddit.com/r/dbz/comments/8alln6/ideas_for_katopeslas_other_forms/

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